

# SECHABA

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## THE MZIMELA TRIAL

Fana Cletus Mzimela, a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe the military wing of the African National Congress was arrested in September last year after he had infiltrated the country in April 1971.

He was a veteran of the Wankie clashes in July-August 1967 and was arrested in Botswana when a group in which he was operating inadvertently crossed into this country from Rhodesia.

When he was brought to trial at the end of November, Mzimela pleaded guilty to two counts under the so-called Terrorism Act, Mzimela admitted that he was one of three groups which operated in Zimbabwe in 1967.

His group had been chosen to go into South Africa while the other groups were to keep the enemy occupied in the northern and southern parts of the country.

A traitor who deserted from his group during the Zimbabwe operations, Leonard Nkosi, gave evidence against him at the trial. Nkosi admitted having deserted his comrades in the face of battle and, having done so, returned to South Africa and joined the South African Police force.

In his evidence Nkosi said: "About midday on August 23, 1967, we came out of the Wankie Game Reserve (in Zimbabwe) . . .

"We had already heard, the day before, on our radio, that the Rhodesian Security Forces were on our trail. The news said that sooner or later the security forces would be on the 'terrorists' and would shoot.

"We prepared ourselves. We were in a semi-circular position facing the direction we came from. We had three machine guns - one on the right flank, one on the left flank and the third in the middle.

In between there were other small guns.

"At midday while we were resting we

heard guns going off in the direction we came from.

"We made a skirmish line and fired in the direction of the security forces.

"After a while the security forces withdrew, leaving bags and guns. We took food from their bags and their guns. We also took two radios which were used to sending messages. We then ran deeper into the bushes . . .

"We came to another place, stopped and prepared ourselves again. The security forces followed us.

"In the late afternoon we heard some noise on the other side. Our commander went to investigate. At that stage he had an FN rifle which we got from the war on the day before and he wore a security force beret. When he returned he was running. He said that the Boers were on the other side.

"We made a skirmish line again and before we finished the guns were firing. After a while they withdrew. Many guns were left behind by the retreating security forces. We carried what we can and hid others in a donga (ditch - Ed.)."

Nkosi added that they then hid their arms not far from a village and then mingled with the people. It was here that he decided to desert his comrades.

Mzimela, in a statement to court said that he had left the country to undergo military training because he saw his people oppressed and thought things should be changed. Mzimela smiled at his counsel and some friends in the public gallery when he was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SIX OTHERS ARRESTED

Six highly trained ANC guerrillas were to have landed on the Wild Coast of the Transkei earlier this year, but the steamship in which they were travelling to South Africa broke down.

Subsequently four of them entered the country through Swaziland.

This was stated by the Minister of Police in a press statement a few days before six men, four Africans, an Australian and an Irishman were brought to trial charged with belonging to the African National Congress. The men are: Theophilus Cholo, Justice Mpanza, Petrus Aaron Mtembu Gardiner Sejaka, John William Hosey an Irish citizen and Alexandra Moumbaris, an Australian citizen.

The case was adjourned after the men were formally charged.

Meanwhile, the wife of one of the accused, Mrs Marie Jose Moumbaris who was also detained in solitary confinement with her husband and the others and later deported to France as she is a French citizen, in a statement to the press made in Paris said that her middle-aged parents were unaware that she had been in prison for four months. All their efforts to get some news of her through the French Embassy in South Africa proved fruitless.

"They knew I was going to South Africa with my husband. Then I just disappeared. Although the French Embassy in South Africa is reported to have made several inquiries from the South African foreign office, the security police and the Minister of Police no information was given to them until one week before I was deported.

"In all the time I was in prison I was in complete isolation. I was given South African food. I could not eat it as it is so different from French cooking. I lost weight. Although at the moment I am seven months pregnant I must have lost several kilogrammes. In the four months she was in prison she saw her husband only twice.

She said: "I kept asking them to charge me formally with a crime, but they never did. I saw absolutely nobody from the outside and nobody from the French Embassy.

"One day my cell door was opened and I was told that I would be expelled. I saw my husband for the second and last time and a strong police escort took me to the airport and put me on a Paris-bound plane."

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## Inhuman Conditions in South Africa's Goldmines

by  
The Honourable  
Charles C. Diggs, Jr.  
(Member of the United States  
House of Representatives  
and Chairman of its  
Sub-Committee on Africa)



The following is from a statement by Congressman Diggs before the Joint Committee of the Congress of the United States on International Monetary Reform on 11 September, 1972. He declared that the South African gold-mining industry was based on a system of exploitation and oppression and as such, should not be encouraged.

gold should be laboriously dug out of the bowels of the earth in South Africa, only to be buried again in the bowels of Fort Knox. If we were not so obsessed by the tribal mythology of gold, this ritual would be seen for what it is. But it is very far from a joke. For the people who mine gold, it is one of the cruellest and most unjust systems of exploitation known to man at the present time. And our support for the industry, which is crucial to the economy and therefore lies at the heart of the apartheid system, conflicts with the expressed opposition to that system of the United States Government.

When experts come together to discuss gold, they tend to theorise to the point where we forget what we are talking about. There are some very urgent human issues involved in goldmining. Specifically, South Africa currently has a virtual monopoly of the gold market. And the methods used to force South African Blacks to go down the mines and dig the metal out amount to a mere variation of the age-old evil of slavery . . . Many observers have commented on how ludicrous it is that

### Cheap Labour

So let us look at the nature of this system. It is often argued that without the enormous supplies of cheap labour — labour without any human rights — the South African gold-mining industry would never have developed as it did. There was a great strike of African miners in 1946, which was ruthlessly suppressed by police attacks which killed and injured thousands of miners. At that time, the Chamber of



Mines announced that to grant the demand of R1 per day (then worth \$2) would put 35 out of the 45 currently producing mines out of operation. Since then no attempt at labour organisation has been tolerated. If we compare wages and conditions in South Africa with those in the mines in the United States and elsewhere, many of which are now uneconomic to operate, it is obvious that South Africa's monopoly position as a producer of gold is a factor of the cheap labour system.

The system in South Africa is controlled by the mining industry and the South African Government, working together to effect absolute control over the recruitment of African mine workers, in South Africa itself; the so-called Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, where South Africa is in illegal occupation, and the three countries within the South African customs union - Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. The mines recruit through the monopolistic Chamber of Mines, and have agreed among themselves to eliminate competition in wage rates, even at times of great labour shortages. Power is concentrated in a small elite group of companies with interlocking investments and directorates. (1)

## Government's Role

The State plays a vital role with bilateral agreements with Mozambique and Malawi for the supply of a given volume of labour units, for which payment is made to the labour-exporting Government in the form of compulsorily 'deferred' wages. Even more important is the system of influx control, whereby Africans in the labour reserves are prohibited from leaving without a contract and where a job in the gold mines is often the only alternative to starvation. It was in 1760 that slaves in South Africa were first required to carry passes in moving between rural and urban areas in South Africa, but it was the tightening of influx control after the 1930s that improved the mine labour supply from South Africa itself at a critical time, and still continues to be crucial to recruitment.

Africans are dominated by total Government control in all aspects of their lives and work. Government policy restricts educational expenditure on Africans to less than one-tenth of that for whites, so that 65% of all African adults have never been to school, and over 70% of those who did dropped out before they could become functionally literate. (2)

This gives them a crippling handicap to start with. Then there is no right of residence in any urban area, which is where employment is available. Families and whole communities are arbitrarily broken up.

There is no right of political participation, nor of political expression. Africans have no vote. They can be arbitrarily arrested and detained without charge or trial for any length of time if the police dislike their political views, and all their political organisations have been banned, and their leaders are dead, in prison or in exile. Special taxes together with acute poverty force people in the labour reserves onto the job market, where they usually have no choice of employer. Any attempt to go to the towns to find work freely is prevented by the complex network of pass laws, which are fundamental to the whole system of regulating Africans to serve the white economy as 'labour units', and they have been applied with increasing severity. Between 1936 and 1962 the proportion of convictions under the pass laws relative to the total African population rose from 1.9% a year to 3.4%.

If there were a free labour market in South Africa, the mining industry would have to double its wages to compete with the manufacturing industry. This competition is eliminated by the full machinery of a police state, forcing people to take the lowest paid jobs. It is clear, then, that the South African legislation which forces Africans to stay in the reserves until they are needed on the mines is largely responsible for the fact that the international monetary system has the gold supplies that it does.

## Foreign African Labour

Equally vital is the supply of non-South African labour, which was the major solution evolved in the 1930's to the problem of attracting more labour without raising wages. The Portuguese colonial Government in Mozambique supplies up to 80,000 Africans a year in terms of the 1928 Mozambique Convention. Since 1910, this territory has supplied over a quarter of the Africans in the mines. Apart from the few employed in the towns, Mozambique Africans are faced with the alternatives of the South African mines, or conscription as forced labour, to work on coffee and other plantations, or into the colonial army. When there is a conscription drive in any area, the South African recruiting offices have ample supplies of labour. The system is obviously capable of great abuse; however, it is said that conditions here are nothing compared to the degrading scenes in Angola, another Portuguese colony. (3)

Between 1936 and 1969 the total number of Africans employed in the gold mines rose from 318,000 to 371,000, while the number of Black South Africans fell from 166,000 to 131,000, less than one-third of the total. Of the nominally independent African nations, it is Lesotho, entirely surrounded by South Africa and with very few natural resources, which is most dependent on the employment of its nationals in the mines. Botswana had cut its contribution to 4% in 1961, and Swaziland to 1%. Tanzania, then a United Nations trust territory administered by the United Kingdom, provided 16% in 1952, but after the massacre at Sharpeville in 1960, it cancelled the agreement providing 10,000 men a year. Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in Africa, but is setting a widely respected example in self-reliance.

It should not be assumed, of course, that the recruitment of foreign workers means that they are worse off than Africans in South Africa. In fact, the labour reserves, or "Bantustans" of South Africa and Namibia are among the poorest areas in Africa in terms of income per capita, and even wages in non-mining sectors in South Africa compare unfavourably with a country like Zambia. (4)

There is of course a very high level of unemployment and underemployment throughout Africa, and throughout the Third World generally, and much larger movements of foreign workers can be observed into the industrial centres of East and West Africa than into South Africa.

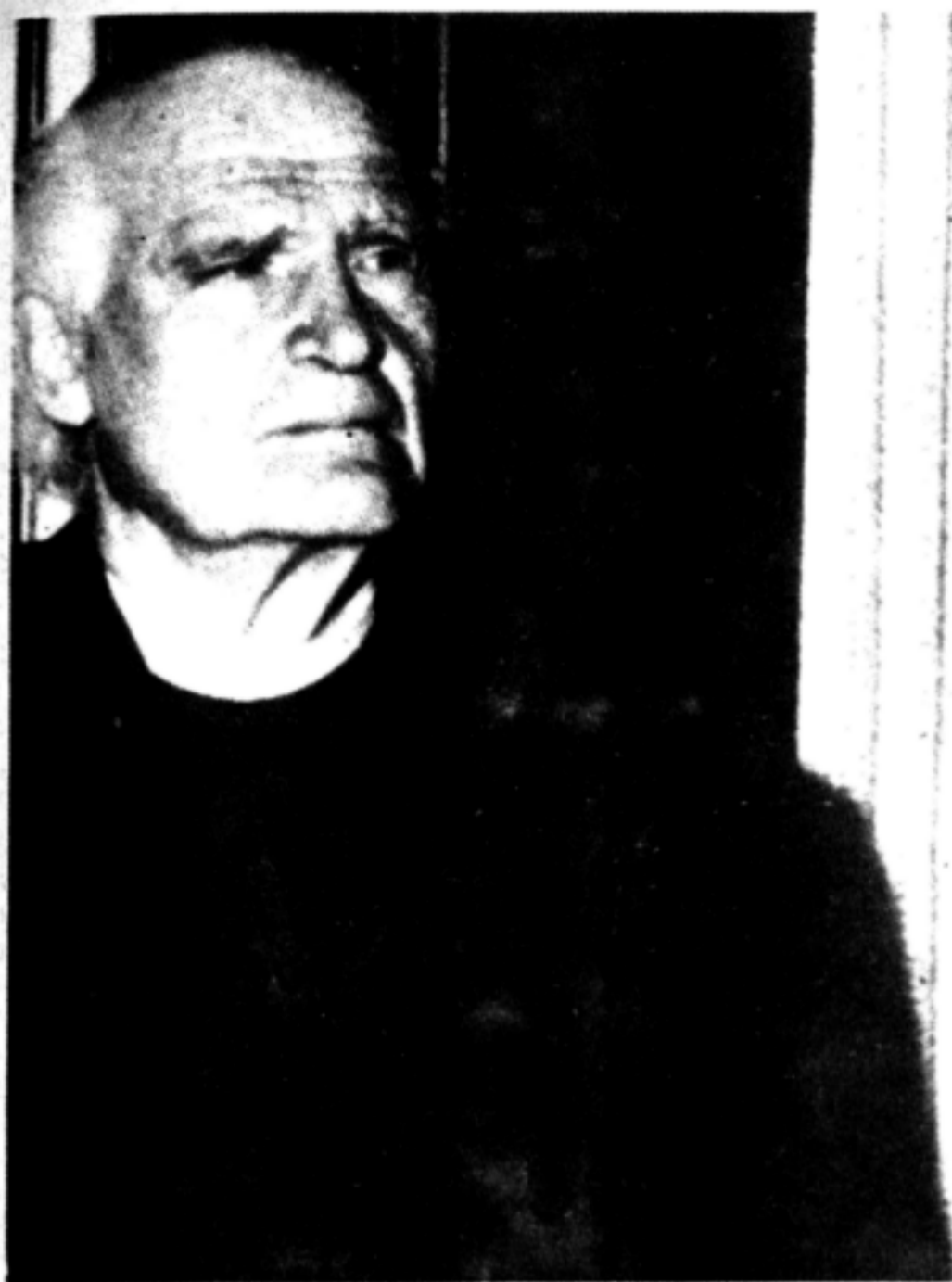
The main reason why Black South Africans form a declining proportion of the total labour force on the gold mines is because this is deliberate Government policy. In the first place, foreign workers are easier to discipline, and so the possibility of labour organisation, such as that which produced a general strike last December through February in Namibia, is reduced; and secondly, this is essential to the so-called "outward policy", which consists of increasing the dependence of southern Africa on metropolitan South Africa, a classic case of neo-colonialism. There is very great and rapidly increasing unemployment among Black South Africans, for which the Government feels it has to suppress the statistics, but which may amount, according to one calculation, the 25% of the working population. (5) In the South African Transkei, which is a traditional source of mine labour, many applicants are being refused, while recruitment in Lesotho, Botswana and elsewhere is still aimed at attracting the maximum possible number. The removal of the cream of the labour force from such countries is very harmful to their rural development.

## Menace to African Miners

I should like to indicate briefly the conditions under which the African miners work. By the simple legislative expedient of defining employees so as to exclude Africans, these people are deprived of all their labour rights. Since 1911 it has been a criminal offence to strike or otherwise break the contracts, which usually last about a year.

There have always been convicts used in the mines, but there is so little difference between the wages of regular





Among the beneficiaries from the profits of Consolidated Goldfields Ltd., is the Church of England (70 000 shares) whose head the Archbishop of Canterbury met Vorster during a recent visit to South Africa. On his return to England he defended foreign investments in South Africa

labourers and convicts that for all practical purposes they could all be convicts. They have no paid leave at all, and a rigid discipline that means they are allowed to lose far fewer days through illness or family problems than the whites. They also work longer hours, being underground for about ten hours a day, six days a week. One of the miner's demands which has been consistently refused has been the reduction of the working week to five or five and a half days, since the Chamber of Mines fears that giving the Blacks spare time would create unrest. Any time that they do have is rigidly organised —hence the mine dances on Sundays, for tourists.

The men work two miles and more underground at very high rock temperatures, and the rock drilling creates almost intolerable levels of noise and dust. The result is a string of accidents, mostly from falling rocks, and a number of occupational diseases, including heatstroke, deafness (for which the mine do not even bother to keep records), and silicosis of the lungs, which makes them more vulnerable to tuberculosis. Some mines contain highly explosive methane gas, and there is constant danger of the stope face bursting under pressure, or of flooding, as in the West Driefontein mine in 1969. The development stage of mining is especially dangerous, as in the Orange Free State mines in 1952–1957.

Between 1936 and 1966, 19,000 men, 93% of them Black, died as a result of accidents in the gold mines, an average of three deaths per shift . . . The Black death rate is almost double that of whites. There was also an enormous number of disablements from accidents. In 1968, a year when the fatality rate reached an all-time low, 491 Blacks and 18 whites were killed, and 25,000 Blacks and 2,000 whites were disabled for at least two weeks by accidents, 98% of which were estimated to have been due to the inherent

danger of the work. The overall accident rate for 1968 was 64 per 1,000 persons in service. In addition to this are the huge numbers of slow deaths and disablement resulting from lung damage and other occupational hazards, for which there seem to be no records but which, from direct observation in the Bantustans, appear to be astronomical. In the Transkei, tuberculosis has reached epidemic proportions, affecting almost one-quarter of those surveyed as opposed to almost none 25 years earlier. (6) This is also, of course, a result of chronic and increasing poverty in the reserves, which as early as 1914 were being described as little more than mining villages. If for no other reason than the enormous rate of deaths and disability, then, gold mining is a menace to the people forced to work there.

### The Wage Gap

The colour bar dominates every aspect of the industry. Apart from the mining companies and the Government, it is the white miners who benefit from the colour-bar in the goldmines. The white unions see the issue not as one "between white and Black labour, but between free labour and slave labour", as a white strike committee expressed in 1924. (7) They therefore seek to protect their jobs and very high salaries, to the total exclusion of the slave labour which threatens to undercut them. The gap between white and Black wages has increased enormously over the last century, from a ratio of 7.5:1 in 1889 to 20.1:1 in 1969 — probably the world record for wage differentials . . . Real cash earnings for Africans are lower than they were in 1889, probably by over 25%, and, as a proportion of total costs, the wage bill for Africans has fallen dramatically, from 13.7% in 1936 to 8.9% in 1969.



Between 1936 and 1969, when the productivity of all workers rose by 39%, Black wages fell. The benefits resulting from the increases in productivity go almost exclusively to the white miners, a minority of between 10% and 15%. An agreement in 1967 between the mining companies and white trade unions, for example, provided for the elimination of certain restrictive practices, and for the benefits resulting from the extra work of Blacks in these areas to go to the whites.

The very low African wages are often justified by employers by the idea that they are not intended to support the worker's family, who are supposed to live off the land in the labour reserves. There is a conspiracy of silence about the actual conditions in these areas; where there have been studies made, the consistent conclusion is that they are totally inadequate to support the very great and increasing population densities which have been forced into them, probably the highest population densities in Africa. This results in serious soil erosion and total exhaustion of natural resources. A Government commission reported in 1954 (8) that the reserves could only support half their current population at minimum subsistence levels, and since then the population has more than doubled. Contracts with the mines are therefore absolutely essential for a family's bare survival.

The available evidence indicates that the reserves are becoming steadily more dependent on migrant wages as time goes on. Since they are safely out of sight of the white community, however, the Government and mining industry can operate on the convenient assumption that they have no obligation to provide a wage adequate for the subsistence of a mineworker's family, or for the worker himself in times of illness, unemployment and old age. In this way the system is even worse than the old slavery, where the victims were visible to those responsible. In South Africa, it is illegal for any non-African to go and see the reserves without special permission.

In line with the assumption that only the worker as a labour unit need be considered, the mines feed their workers as

scientifically as modern cattle to make them fit for the gruelling labour underground. (9) For the same reason, to make them fit to work, they are given thorough medical attention, although there is no provision for their families – as there is for white families. On the other hand, housing is in bachelor barracks, with between twelve and ninety men to a room. Many of the older compounds have no beds and nowhere to eat except the dormitories. The system had been evolved for the Chinese indentured labourers used in the first decade of this century, and then applied to Africans whose families did not therefore have to be housed.

It is sometimes claimed that if fringe benefits are taken into account, the wage differential of 20 to 1 would not be so enormous. However, a comparison between the benefits available to whites, and above all to their families, and those for Blacks shows enormous discrepancies, covering such benefits as bonuses and cost of living allowances, paid leave, unemployment, pension and provident funds, "active service allowances" for World War II veterans, and advanced educational assistance – all for whites only; or medical care, educational assistance for children, subsidized housing (all with servants' quarters) – for the families of whites only; or recreation, subsidized canteens, disablement allowances, compensation for lung damage, the rate of overtime pay, and numerous other advantages – all very much more generous for whites than for Blacks. These benefits have not been quantified as an overall ratio of white to Black, but taken all together they add up to a picture analogous to that of the wage structure.

## Human Misery

It is quite impossible to convey here the degree of suffering imposed by the system. It is not simply a matter of physical deprivation; it is a question also of the mental suffering which results from the tearing apart of the fabric of African society, just as in the days of the old slave trade. I was able

A mine hostel





to gain some idea of the human problems inherent in apartheid, as it affects people in the township ghettos. But I was not allowed into the "Bantustans" which is where increasing numbers of people are being deported, by now over one million of them, mainly what the South African Government calls "surplus appendages" – the wives, children and other dependents of migrant workers. I should like to quote Dr. Anthony Barker, a doctor in the Zulu reserve for many years, on the effect of the system on African family life:

"Economic or even social analysis of migratory labour will fail to reveal the full picture of its cost in terms of human misery. To learn this you must listen to the lonely wife, the anxious mother, the insecure child . . . it is at family level that the most pain is felt, and we cannot forget that the African culture heritage enshrines a broader, more noble concept of family than that of the West. The extended family has proved a marvellous security for those for whom, otherwise, there was no security at all.

"Deprived of their natural guides, children of migrants grow through an insecure, uncertain childhood to an adult life whose sole preoccupation may be to escape the system. There must be a harvest of aggression, with the weeds of violence growing rank within it." (10)

## Neo-slavery

In the light of these facts, it is clear that South Africa's goldmining industry operates on a basis of a labour force which is totally without rights, even the right to choose between employers; and that the international monetary authorities, by providing a guaranteed market at a guaranteed minimum price for South African gold, is in a sense subsidizing the industry and its neo-slavery system. This has the effect of aid to the South African Government, which has also subsidized marginally economic mines very heavily in times of difficulty because the industry is so crucial to the entire white-owned economy, and therefore to the entire structure of South African society.

The economics of South Africa's gold, where the grade of ore is distributed uniformly over a wide range, operate in such a way that any changes in the cost structure or the price of gold affects the amount of payable ore reserves. Increasing costs reduce the payable reserves, and an increase in price increases the reserves. Although the expected life of the mines is increased, however, current output is reduced, as is happening now with the deliberate reduction in the grade of ore processed, at Government instructions. With reduced output, of course, South Africa can reduce the supply to the speculative market without violating the letter of the 1969 Agreement with the IMF.

In the case of the heavily subsidized marginal mines, the high premium on free-market sales has been of enormous benefit recently. In fact, a guaranteed rising price is crucial, since costs are accelerating in South Africa, and once a mine is closed down it is virtually impossible to reopen. From this it is obvious that South Africa's 1969 Agreement with the IMF has been crucial to keeping some of the mines open. The prospect of an increasing gold price has also been essential in order to attract foreign capital for new investment in the industry, and to present a general impression of infinite prosperity for anyone interested in South Africa as an investment.

International support for the goldmining industry – in the first place with an unlimited demand at the official price from the United States Reserve Bank, and now with a guarantee against falling prices and balance of payments problems for the IMF – has not been beneficial to the workers in the industry. The protection of an unlimited demand at constant prices encouraged the complete abolition of competition between the mining companies, which could therefore concentrate on matters of common interests, notably collusion to keep Black wages down. The times of large increases in the gold price have never prompted increases in Black wages. In fact a small increase in the early 1960s was prompted by international pressure against South Africa's apartheid system. (11)

As Dr. Wilson has pointed out, it is the margin of extra profit provided by international price guarantees that has been decisive in enabling the industry to avoid the pressures to ease the colour-bar, which is notable even in South Africa for its inflexibility and the inefficiency which results. The colour bar reserves certain categories of jobs for whites, and also limits the number of Blacks to be employed as a ratio of white employment. It was estimated in 1968 that a 70% replacement of white workers by Africans – who are in many cases at least as skilled as the whites – would result in a saving to the gold-mining industry of R30 million a year (about \$40–45 million), approximately 6 1/2% of working costs. The saving would be greater now since the last series of white wage increases.

A further result of encouraging South Africa's goldmining industry has been the development since World War II of the uranium industry, uranium being a by-product of gold in nearly half the mines. South Africa already sells uranium without peaceful uses safeguards, and with its new enrichment process could become a real menace to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. South Africa has not signed the Treaty.

I need hardly point out the historical importance of the gold-mining industry to South Africa, or its crucial role in the system which evolved to supply it, and later other sectors, with labour. The industry has long been the basis for South Africa's prosperity, and for the foreign exchange which it buys arms and equipment for its massive armed forces and police. In 1970 output accounted for 10.5% of GNP. Sales of gold in 1971 amounted to \$1.5 billion – repeat, one and a half billion dollars – equal to all other exports combined. (12)

Since over a century ago, the whole white supremacy system in South Africa has been backed up by gold. The expropriation of the best land and crowding of all the Africans into tiny reserves, under 11% of the total area, was to provide cheap labour for the mines. This industry served as a model for all subsequent sectors of the white economy. Above all, gold has attracted foreign capital, and paid for the enormous wastefulness of apartheid, its armed forces, secret police, constant political surveillance, the mass deportation of Africans, the detailed administration of segregation in all its ludicrous aspects, and the propaganda machine that represents South Africa abroad as a bastion of anti-communism and therefore indispensable to the West.

Any argument that the gold-mining industry of South Africa benefits the Africans who work there must be rejected, just as the arguments for continuing the old slave system had to be rejected. The system is rotten through and through, and can only survive on a basis of human suffering.

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## FOOTNOTES

- (1) Dr. Francis Wilson, *Labour in the South African Gold Mines, 1911–1969* (Cambridge University Press, UK, 1972) p. 28
- (2) *Rand Daily Mail*, Johannesburg, 14 March, 1972; Wilson, op. cit., p. 94; Mr. D. J. Marais speaking in the South African House of Assembly, Hansard, 11 April, 1972, col 4576.
- (3) Wilson, Op. cit., pp. 128–129
- (4) See Barbara Rogers, *The Standard of Living of Africans in South Africa*, United Nations, Unit on Apartheid, Notes and Documents No. 45 71.
- (5) Trade Union Council of South Africa, quoted in the *Rand Daily Mail*, Johannesburg, 12 April, 1972.
- (6) Study by Dr. Guy Danes, St. Lucy's Hospital, Transkei.
- (7) Transvaal Strike Legal Committee, *The Story of Crime*, (Johannesburg, 1924) p. 39.
- (8) Tomlinson Commission (Government Printer, Pretoria 1955)
- (9) Wilson, Op. cit. p. 55
- (10) Dr. Anthony Barker, "Community of the Careless", *South African Outlook*, April 1970.
- (11) Wilson, op. cit. p. 106
- (12) Department of Commerce, *Overseas Business Reports: Southern Africa*; July, 1972.



The recent strikes by Black workers at the Durban Docks and the refusal of Black dockers at Cape Town harbour to work overtime once again focuses attention on the plight of these workers who have kept up a running battle with authority in their efforts to win higher wages and better working conditions.

The following articles by KEN POTTINGER and NEVILLE FRASMAN published in the Rand Daily Mail, whilst not exhaustive, nevertheless, delve sufficiently into the problems of these workers, to give our readers some idea of the problems they face.

# HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

African stevedores in Durban Harbour have behind them a long history of strikes and struggles for higher wages and better conditions.

Since Union in 1910 there have been at least six strikes and two threatened actions. The latest strike was the recent two day stoppage.

All the strikes have a common theme – a demand for higher wages, less overtime and better conditions, generally.

On two occasions, strike action, or the threat of such action, had some success in obtaining wage increases for the workers.

A strike on August 17, 1941 led to demands for a minimum of 4s 6d a day, cost of living allowances of 6d a day, overtime at 8d an hour and Sunday overtime at 11d an hour, being met. Previously the wage rate had been 4s a day.

## WAGE SCALES

A strike threat in 1971, when the workers demanded R14,00 a week, influenced management in the introduction of new wage scales.

Stevedores first struck in 1919 at a time

when there was no organisation of their labour in the harbour. They wielded considerable power as "Togt" (daily) labourers and were able to take advantage of a prevalent labour shortage.

General labouring wage increases were made as a result of this action.

In 1940 stevedoring workers were included in the first unskilled wage determination made by the Wage Board. This was designed to "set a bottom" to wages in Durban – 4s a day.

The stevedores already received this wage and their demands for 4s 6d were subsequently met.

A charismatic African leader named Phungala was at this stage the spokesman for the stevedores. He was arrested after a further strike broke out on 28th July, 1942, but was brought from gaol on condition that he urge the workers to return to work. Instead he told them in Zulu to continue the strike because management refused to discuss wages.

## PROBLEM

The Government promulgated emergency measures giving the police

power to expel any workers from Durban who refused to work at the prescribed rate.

This strike highlighted the central problem of labour administration: the loose form of control over employment at the docks caused by the "togt" system.

If the workers decided not to report for work on a single day, their day, there was not much that could be done legally, apart from expulsion from the urban area. Contract labour would have made labourers liable for prosecution for a breach of contract. From this point discussions took place between employers, state officials and the municipality to abolish the "togt" system and introduce contract labour.

A strike in April 1958 occurred because a wage determination in the stevedoring trade provided different wage rates for indunas, windmen and gangwaymen for the first time. The indunas were set up as a special class with opposing interests to the mass of workers by this determination. This is an important point in the establishment of the Labour Supply Company which followed.

All the strikers were dismissed but gathered for a meeting in a compound where, after a police baton charge, 80 were arrested.

## OVERTIME

The Labour Supply Company was immediately set up and workers were only engaged or re-engaged as contract labourers. In 1959 the workers, (led by Stephan Dhlamini and Bafana Majosi of the South African Congress of Trade Unions – Ed.) protested against the new conditions imposed by this company and refused to work overtime, causing harbour congestion. The employers then dismissed the entire labour force and recruited new workers from outlying rural areas.

Dissatisfaction began to build up once again in late 1968 when a new method of tax collection was introduced. The workers did not understand the system and felt that they should not be taxed on overtime pay or on estimates of their monthly earnings.

A new wage determination came into effect on Good Friday, April 3, 1969, but the stevedores were not happy with the scales and the entire labour force refused to report for work that weekend.

Much pressure was brought to bear on the strikers – by the Department of Labour, employers, the South African Police and the Security Police, to return to work.



After negotiations broke down the workers were given the option of accepting the new wage rates or resigning – 942 workers resigned, were paid off and given four hours to leave the city. The manager of the stevedoring company said that the wage demands of the workers – R14 basic a week – would not be met.

Late in 1971, after prolonged negotiations over a bonus system which was eventually not introduced, stevedores placed a notice in their compound telling the employers that they wanted a basic wage of R14 a week introduced before the end of the week.

The management described the demand as "vague" but said the position was delicate and they were anxious to avoid any strike action.

A new set of wage scales was introduced before the end of the week. Although not close to the R14 demanded these were a considerable improvement on the existing rates. The strike did not take place and the employers denied that the new scales had been introduced because of the strike threat.

The following table indicates the weekly wage rates in the stevedoring trade over the years:—

	Indunas	Gang- waymen	Wind- men	Hands
6.2.59	R10.50	R7.00	R7.00	R6.00
24.7.64	R10.50	R7.00	R7.00	R6.00
3.4.69	R11.60	R7.60	R7.60	R6.50
1.10.71	R15.00	R9.90	R9.90	R8.50

\* R1.00 = £0.50 p.

From 1959 to 1964 wages did not rise but a daily allowance was introduced for each grade of worker.

### PATTERN

The strike which has just been resolved was settled by using the pattern developed over the years.

The workers were told their wage demands could not be met at this stage and that they should return to work or to homelands. Fourteen workers chose the latter course while the majority were obviously resentful.

### SECHABA COMMENT

Obviously this is not the last we shall hear of the dockers in Durban. They have a long history of struggle and have been the most militant supporters of the ANC and the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

The lessons they learnt from such great trade unionists as Phungula, Majosi and Dhlamini sustain their desire,

under the most difficult and often hazardous conditions, to remain organised and united.

Phungula died in exile. Majosi also died after a short illness soon after the 1959 strike and Stephan Dhlamini is living in a small village – Bulwer, in Natal – to where he has been banished by the government early this year, after serving seven years imprisonment on Robben Island, for participating in the activities of the African National Congress.

**Note.** Much prominence has been given, in recent months, in the white South African press and the press abroad, about increased wages being paid to sections of the Black workers. We hope to analyse these increases in our next issue.

# THE WORKER WHO IS JUST A NUMBER

In refusing to work overtime (5 to 8 pm) the Cape Town dockworkers are doing nothing illegal.

Overtime, after all, is voluntary. But those extra hours could be vital to the shipping bosses and to the economy of the country.

Since the walk-outs started on October 24 there has been no real pressure on the stevedoring companies. But these companies are praying hard that the

Dockers at work





number of ships needing servicing does not increase before the dispute is settled.

If there is real pressure on Cape Town docks, the companies are going to be in serious trouble.

The dockworkers know it, and they also know that their very legal stop-at-five campaign is their best bargaining weapon, if not their only weapon.

## CAMPAIGN

In a sense, the stop-at-five campaign is a case of cutting the nose to spite the face. (If this is so, then no Black worker should ever come out on strike as Black trade unions could not afford the luxury of paying its members on strike, strike pay - Ed.)

The 32c an hour that they earn overtime is gold to the lowly paid Black stevedore. But even if they work overtime every day of a six-day week, their wages still fall far short of the poverty datum line (PDL), not to talk about the effective minimum level (EML).

And this is probably the crux of the affair - he must work to earn a living, but he has no real means of improving his standard of living.

Literally, in the docks, each Black stevedore is just a number.

This number that appears on his pay packet is a symbol of vulnerability. So easily, that number can be taken away and given to someone else - while the previous incumbent is sent packing to

a remote kraal in the bundu of the Ciskei or Transkei.

## REGISTER

The homeland Black man's problems start when he turns 16. He has to register as a work seeker with his tribal labour bureau if he is not physically unfit or a full-time student. He has to register as a work seeker in a particular category - and for the rest of his life he can do work only in that category.

A dockworker, therefore, stays a labourer all his life.

The stevedoring companies, working through the Urban Bantu Labour Bureaux, take on the workers after it has been established by law that there are not sufficient work seekers in the city area.

After a myriad of formalities, the worker catches the nearest train to Cape Town, or wherever his contracts requires him.

He may not bring his wife and children, and is quartered in bachelor hostels. And there he is considered a migrant labourer first and last, a temporary sojourner with few privileges and fewer rights. His contract is for a year.

## INSECURITY

His insecurity in the docks is taken a step further when it is realised that, in theory at least, he will be paid only

when there are ships to be worked. In other words, he works on a day-to-day, or rather shift-to-shift basis.

A normal shift a day pays him about R2.30 and overtime 32c an hour. At the end of a full six-day week, with three hours overtime every day, the Black stevedore earns about R20. Bantu tax, in lieu of income tax, is deducted from this.

The companies are responsible for the worker's fare to and from his homeland, but this may be deducted from his pay.

Travelling to the docks every day, even with the ugly possibility looming that there may not be work for that day, costs the dockworker R1.50 even if fares are subsidized. Rent and food take another R5 to R6. Luxuries such as tobacco nearly R1, with clothing running a poor last.

In the end the Black worker has about R6 to R8 left to send home (based on average earnings of R15 a week). Most of these men have dependants. It is difficult to see the family man with five mouths to feed getting by on R40 a month.

If the worker puts a foot wrong while under contract, he is sent home and replaced. For this reason the dockworkers are not striking. They are just refusing to work overtime.

Previously they had a lunch break and a break before starting their overtime at about 5pm. They still have a lunch break but after lunch they have to work continuously until 8pm. And whereas overtime was previously until 9 pm, it now stops at 8 pm - which means that the worker loses one hour's overtime pay a day.

And this is why they are refusing to work overtime.

## POWER

They may not form trade unions and, therefore, have no bargaining power whatsoever. Increases in wages and improvement of working conditions depend entirely upon the goodwill of the employer and determinations by the Wage Board.

It was reported recently that a new wage determination for stevedores of South Africa is in the offing. It is difficult to imagine wages being improved to the extent that the effective minimum level of over R70 a month for a man with five children can be reached. Employers have, in fact, warned that should there be too much of a wage rise, shipping and cargo tariffs will shoot up, prices will rise and the man in the street will suffer.

Meanwhile, the man in the docks is suffering.

Normal living conditions in the dock compounds





# FRUITS OF SHAME

**Boycott South African Products:  
Statement by the Anti-Apartheid  
Movement, London**

**"Every time a South African  
product is bought it is another  
brick in the wall of our  
continued existence."**

**Voister, speaking at an Agricultural  
Show in Pretoria, reported in the  
Johannesburg Star 26 8 72.**



The boycott of South African fruit and tinned foods was at its height in the first half of the sixties and in 1965 as many as 57 local councils were refusing to buy South African goods. The campaign emphasis has since moved to getting companies, trade unions, universities and individuals to withdraw their investments from firms involved in Southern Africa, while campaigns against arms to South Africa, and against links in sport, cultural and academic fields, have been maintained.

A planned and coordinated campaign against South African fruit, of which Britain is the largest buyer, would help to inform the general public of the extent of British involvement in the maintenance of apartheid and the system they are supporting. It would also serve to counter the massive propaganda drive currently being made by the South Africans and, even if only partially successful, provide heartening evidence of solidarity for the African people. The above is, of course, true for all AAM campaigns but these tend to involve particular constituencies - a campaign of this nature, while involving students, local

AAM committees, trade unions, high school students, etc., can also bring in a general public not necessarily connected with these.

There is a group in Holland who are planning a campaign against Outspan oranges and groups in Sweden and Finland are also considering such a campaign. Esau du Plessis a South African resident in Holland has published a book: **OUTSPAN ORANGES: Fruits of Shame** in Dutch.

In 1970, South Africa earned £22,915,386 from the sale of fresh fruit in Britain alone. These sales are to an extent due to the fact that South African fruit is competitive in price and this again is a result of the low wages paid to Black workers and South Africa's continuing membership of the Commonwealth Preference Area (CPA) which she has continued to enjoy despite the fact of having left the Commonwealth in 1961. Thus oranges from Mediterranean countries pay an import duty of 7% on 37½p per hundredweight between April and November, whereas South African oranges enter free. South Africa's

Commonwealth Preference will, of course, be removed if Britain enters the EEC and applies the Common External Tariff.

## **Sales Promotion Drive**

24 specially chosen South African girls are at present touring the UK to promote the consumption of Outspan oranges. Travelling with two eight foot models of an orange, they are part of a major consumer promotion drive which started when a team of 58 girls arrived from South Africa on 18 June to tour the UK and continent. At the start of each promotion in a particular area, receptions are held for local retailers, wholesalers and multiple buyers before individual visits are undertaken. The entire exercise is augmented by press and Television advertising. This public relations drive is handled by Mr. D. Berlina of the Bureau of Commercial Information, 30 Eastbourne Terrace London W2-262 1095.

Britain is the biggest market for Outspan oranges followed by France, Germany and Holland. In Sweden, the





Farm workers trekking after ejection from the farms

At the end of a year's service, contract labourers have to be returned to their homelands at the expense of the farmers. Under the old system, train fares used to cost the farmer about R26 per labourer, but the new truck service will reduce the cost to about R8 a head. One of the objects of the new scheme is to prevent the desertion of farm labourers.

In the past, some 20 per cent of the 3,500 labourers recruited annually in the Transkei and Ciskei would desert after meeting other workers at stations and on trains. In terms of year-long contracts, these migrant labourers receive R5 for a 5½ day week, and free accommodation. They do not receive rations, sick leave, sick pay or any other fringe benefits, and in summer they are often expected to work from 5 am to 7 pm. Deserters are liable to imprisonment and sometimes have to complete their contracts after being released from jail.

### The Campaign

This would, of course, take a different emphasis in each area but the following suggestions are made by the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain for consideration:

- \* Letters from Anti-Apartheid Organisations to the major fruit buying companies and at the same time local groups writing to the major stockists in their areas – this as a first step.
- \* Pickets outside the major stockists in different areas coupled with the distribution of leaflets on the general situation and a leaflet on alternative sources of supply.
- \* Letters to and lobbying of local councils to implement the boycott.
- \* Letters to and lobbying of the Co-op; resolutions to be passed at local level.
- \* Students to campaign for their unions not to buy South African fruits.
- \* Area trade unions to be called on to protest against canteens buying South African fruit.
- \* Local housewives' groups to be approached to further the campaign.
- \* Letters to local newspapers which advertise South African fruit.
- \* Confront Outspan girls.

For further information on the campaign please contact:

U. K. Anti-Apartheid Movement,  
89, Charlotte St, London W. 1.

HOLLAND Esau du Plessis, Afrika  
Studiecentrum,  
Stationsplein 10, Leiden.

FINLAND Afrika Committe, c o J. Jele,  
Lonnrotink 25A,

Helsinki 18.

Co-operative Movement, which had refused to buy Outspan oranges for more than 10 years, lifted this boycott in 1971.

The production of citrus fruit is increasing in many countries, particularly France and Italy, and the competition for markets is fierce. South Africa, with a poor home market – though malnutrition is rife and in 1969-70 for instance the Johannesburg Municipality estimated that 70% of the African population of Soweto lived below the poverty datum line – spent £500,000 in 1962 in promoting the sales of citrus fruit abroad. This figure is now much higher. Similar campaigns are conducted on Cape Fruit – largely – with well-designed display material and handouts. The above gives some small indication of the scale of the promotion campaign.

### Farm Labour in South Africa

Agriculture in South Africa constitutes 11% of the GNP and absorbs more than one third of the economically active African population. A total of 1,441,470 Africans, 232,653 Coloureds and 6,721 Asians work on farms as registered employees, casual labour and domestic servants.

Wages and conditions of labour on farms are not governed by any industrial or welfare legislation. Working conditions are the hardest and farm workers, on average, receive the lowest pay of all wage earners. They are usually paid in cash and kind, but this varies from province to province

and on the Cape Western Fruit farms an adult African male is paid under 25p per day including payments in kind. A report in the Johannesburg Star of 19 12 70 referred to conditions in the Transvaal districts of Naboomspruit, Potgietersrust and Pietersburg: Farm workers claimed that they earned between R5 and R8 (£2.50 and £4) per month in cash and were given a bag of maize meal every month. No annual holiday was permitted and workers could only take time off from their 12-hour shift if there were other members of their families to replace them. Employers allowed the workers to build their own homes, usually mud huts, allocated small plots on which crops could be cultivated and some had built schools for the children of farmhands. Casual labourers earned 20 cents (10p) a day . . . On July 14 *The Friend* reported on conditions on farms in the northern areas of the Orange Free State. The report maintained that rusted and rotting old shacks were the only shelter for families of employees on farms of some of the wealthiest men in South Africa. Wages of R3 (approx. £1.50) plus three paraffin tins of maize meal a month, were common.

Conditions of African farm labourers in the Boland (Cape) were described in the *Star* on 24 July, 1972: The report mentioned that the Hexrivier Boeregroep, the largest farmers' association in the Boland, had been awarded a licence by the National Transport Commission to ferry thousands of Africans from homeland areas, to work on the farms of the group's 230 members.



**G.D.R. Promises...**

# **GREATER SOLIDARITY WITH ANC**

Oliver Tambo President of the African National Congress



Photo: S. Nair

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## **Joint communique on the visit of a delegation of the African National Congress of South Africa in the German Democratic Republic**

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A delegation of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) has made a friendship visit to the German Democratic Republic from November 5th to 10th, 1972, following an invitation extended by the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. (SED) The delegation was headed by Oliver Tambo, President of the ANC. It also included Alfred Nzo, General Secretary of the ANC, and two further leading ANC members.

The ANC delegation had talks with a delegation of the CC of the SED headed by Hermann Axen, member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the CC of the SED. Members of the delegation of the CC of SED were Fritz Muller, member of the CC and head of a department in the CC of SED; Dr. Egon Winkelmann, deputy head of the department for International Relations in the CC of SED; Dr. Siegfried Buttner, assistant in the Department for International Relations in the CC of SED.

During its visit to the County of Erfurt, the ANC delegation called on industrial and agricultural units as well as cultural facilities and had several cordial meetings with working people in this County. The delegation also paid a visit to the SED County Committee of Erfurt and had a friendly exchange of views with leading members of this Committee.

Discussions took place in a cordial atmosphere of friendship on further prospects of cooperation between the SED and the ANC. The two delegations exchanged views on topical international issues. The talks centered mainly on the safeguarding of world peace, on the situations in Africa and the Middle East and in Indochina, on the struggle waged by the ANC to liberate the oppressed majority in South Africa, on the reinforcement of the alliance between the socialist world system, the international working class and the national liberation movement.

The SED delegation expressed respect for the hard struggle waged by the oppressed African majority as well as all oppressed national groups and revolutionary forces of South Africa, who are all fighting with devotion and determination against the fascist Apartheid regime.

In spite of unrestrained terror and persecution, the ANC organised the struggle of the progressive and revolutionary forces, and is now intensifying the fight for the overthrow of the odious racist regime in South Africa.

The two delegations stressed that the liberation struggle in South Africa is closely connected with the struggles waged by the national liberation movements in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Namibia.

The SED and ANC strongly condemn the support rendered to the Vorster regime by the imperialist states, the increasing cooperation between NATO and the racist regime in South Africa, the neo-colonialist schemes of South Africa, Rhodesia, and Portugal, and their plans to set up a "White bloc" against both the independent African states and the national liberation movements in Africa.

The SED reaffirms the untiring solidarity of its Central Committee and rank and file as well as of all working people in





**Alfred Nzo, Secretary General of the African National Congress**  
Photo: E. Singh



**Hermann Axen, member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED**  
Photo: Zentralbild

the GDR for the ANC and the oppressed majority of the people in South Africa.

The delegations of the SED and ANC gave expression to their solidarity with the peoples of Africa and Asia who are fighting a just struggle against imperialism and colonialism, for national independence and social progress. They call upon all anti-imperialist forces of the world to continue giving political, moral and material support to the peoples of Africa, especially South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau who are fighting for their freedom and independence.

The ANC delegation was deeply impressed by the successes of the GDR and recognised the purposeful implementation of the resolutions adopted by the VIIIth Congress of the SED and appreciated the great achievements made by the working people of the GDR under the leadership of the SED in continuing their efforts to build in the GDR an advanced socialist society.

Construction of socialism in the GDR is considered by the ANC as an effective contribution to strengthening the forces of peace, national liberation, and socialism throughout the world.

The consolidation of the international positions held by the GDR, in particular the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the GDR and the Republic of India, is appreciated by the ANC delegation. The ANC delegation assured the SED of its firm solidarity for the struggle waged by the people of the GDR for an all-round consolidation of socialist workers' and farmers' power and for recognition of the GDR in terms of international law by all states.

The delegations of the SED and the ANC congratulated the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet People on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution and in particular the 50th anniversary of the founding of the USSR, the world's first socialist state. They expressed recognition of the leading and outstanding role played by the CPSU in its great contribution, on a world-wide scale, to the consolidation of peace and international security, the construction of socialism and communism, in supporting all anti-imperialist and democratic forces, as well as deepening the unity and coherence of the three main revolutionary trends of our time.

The two sides agreed to the effect that the balance of forces has continued to develop in favour of socialism and all anti-imperialist forces the world over. Further consolidation of

unity of the community of socialist states and their coordinated action are the principal factors in making further headway on the road to peace and international security. The two sides feel that relaxation of tension and strengthening of peace in Europe will have a favourable impact upon solving the burning international problems in Africa and other parts of the world.

The SED and ANC delegations held the view that a new situation has been created in Europe by the important agreements and treaties concluded on the basis of peaceful coexistence, and including recognition of existing reality and frontiers. In this connection both sides welcome the initialling of the Treaty on the Basis of Relations between the GDR and GFR as a new success for the policy of peaceful coexistence which lies in the interest of a further relaxation of tension. Favourable conditions have been provided for starting in Helsinki, on November 22nd, 1972, multilateral preparation of an all-European conference on issues relating to security and cooperation.

The two sides reaffirm their view to the effect that international security and cooperation require the immediate establishment of normal relations in terms of international law between the GDR and all states, including such relations between the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany, and admission, without further delay, of the German Democratic Republic as an equal member of UNO and its specialised agencies.

The SED and ANC have stated their full, unlimited solidarity for the heroic struggle of the peoples of Indochina against the barbarous US aggression. They have come out jointly for the immediate signing of an agreement on ending the war which has been unleashed against the Vietnamese people by the USA.

The two sides had detailed talks about the situation in the Middle East and pointed at the hazardous escalation of Israel's imperialist aggression against the Arab peoples. They demand both immediate withdrawal of Israel's aggressive troops from all occupied Arab territory and a just solution of the Middle East problem on the basis of the resolution adopted by the UN Security Council on November 22nd, 1967.

The delegations of the SED and ANC agreed to further develop and deepen their relations to the benefit of their common struggle for national and social liberation, peace and socialism.

Berlin, 9th November, 1972.



To come to fruition, the artistic spirit needs a combination of conditions which are seldom found together – the time and opportunity to compose, the stimulus to communicate and achieve an objective, an inter-relationship between the artist and society which makes communication meaningful, the possibility of publication, and so on – not to mention the requirement of artistry or genius on the part of the producer. Because of Apartheid laws, these conditions do not exist and, this, therefore places ...

# SOUTH AFRICAN CULTURE IN CHAINS

meeting of which all or the majority belong to another population group or to other population groups. Thus multi-racial parties are illegal. So are multi-racial trade unions.

Outside the political sphere separation is also enforced. Under the Group Areas Act separate areas are set aside for residential occupation by the various groups, and it is illegal for a White to enter an African area without a special permit from a Government official. White and Black cannot sit down together in a restaurant to have a meal. Cohabitation between Black and White is a criminal offence punishable by up to seven years imprisonment. Marriage between Black and White is legally impossible. Black and White actors cannot appear together on the stage. Black and White cannot be members of the same audience at a play or concert. Black and White sportsmen cannot belong to the same team, or even compete against one another in separate racial teams. Qualified Black nurses cannot attend White hospital patients.

## Exceptions prove the Rule

These are the general rules which govern social contact between the races in South Africa. There are exceptions here and there. Permission is occasionally given for a Black VIP to be allowed a meal in a White restaurant or accommodation in a White hotel. Black sportsmen are occasionally allowed to compete in White sporting fixtures so that South African official representatives can adduce arguments to facilitate the return of South Africa to the international sporting fields from which she has been barred because of her apartheid policies.

There are also illegal breaches of the rules. Some lightskinned Blacks cross the colour line whenever they can escape detection. There have been occasions when Whites have blackened their faces and worn Black attire (such as Indian saris) in order to gain admission to segregated Black shows from which they would otherwise have been barred.

But the exceptions merely prove the rule. Nor does the separation stop at the Black-White barrier. Even the Whites are separated, (although not by law) with Afrikaans and English-speaking Whites belonging to separate institutions from one end of their lives to the other. At school Afrikaans-English separation is enforced by law,

No man is an island, and no man has yet been found who is content to create in an ivory tower without thought of his creation ever being brought to the notice of another human being. Even the casual diarist, who hides his inmost thoughts from those closest and dearest to him, thinks of posterity. The lover must have a mistress or the image of a mistress before he can dash off a sonnet. The prisoner in solitary confinement or in the death cell will scribble something on the wall in the hope that someone else will read and learn of his condition. The suicide leaves a note because he cannot bear to be misunderstood. The man who sings in his bath hopes that someone will overhear and know that he is happy.

The apartheid laws deliberately place barriers in the way of communication, and these barriers are so obstructive that it is a tribute to the human spirit that anything gets through at all. The very word "apartheid" means the condition of separateness, and in terms of the apartheid laws there is no South African people but only a number of separate racial groups whose contact with one another must be reduced to the minimum.

Under the Population Registration Act of 1950, the population is divided into three main categories – Whites, Africans and Coloureds, and the Govern-

ment is given the power to proclaim sub-categories within the African and Coloured categories. The following categories have been proclaimed for Coloured persons – Cape Coloured, Malay, Griqua, Chinese, Indian, other Asian and other Coloured. (For trade purposes Japanese have been classified as honorary Whites). The Africans, again, are classified into ten ethnic sub-groups – Xhosa, Zulu, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga, Swazi, Venda, Southern Ndebele and Northern Ndebele. By law the racial identity of every person is entered in a population register, and every South African citizen must carry an identity card stating his racial classification.

## Divide and Rule

The purpose of these racial classifications is to make communications between the various groups more difficult, so that the White racists may continue in power on the well-worn basis of "divide and rule". Politically this separation is today enforced by the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968 which prohibits any person belonging to one population group from (a) becoming a member of any political party of which any person who belongs to another population group is a member, and (b) addressing any



which lays down that children must be educated in their mother tongue. Outside of school, separation is enforced by social and politically encouraged custom whereby there are parallel institutions for the two groups in every sphere of life – separate chambers of commerce, teachers' and students' organisations, youth organisations, and the like. The purpose of this separation between the two White groups is to establish the hegemony of the Afrikaners in every sphere of life, and to ensure that Afrikaans culture is not submerged by the stronger world-wide English culture.

### White Dictatorship

Describing South Africa as a collective White dictatorship, a Cape Town university professor, Jan Loubser, in a speech on October 9, 1972 said that within the White group there was a dictatorship of the Afrikaner over the English-speaking South African. "Over the past 24 years (since the first Nationalist Party Government came to power in 1948) an Afrikaans imperialism has developed over the English speakers", he said. "This imperialism is evident in the police, the armed

forces, in the radio service and in many other institutions", all of which are dominated by Afrikaners. Were it not for the economic power the English-speaking section wielded, said Professor Loubser, their position today would have been very much the same as that of the Africans.

### Cultural Deprivation

What does all this mean for the creative artist in South Africa? In the most obvious sense, the cultural facilities available to the Black majority are far inferior to those of the Whites – and in some cases simply non-existent. In the giant African township of Soweto, from which Johannesburg draws most of its labour force, there is only one cinema for a population of nearly one million, and the number of films which may be seen by audiences at that cinema is grossly restricted by a censorship which places all Africans on the same level as White children under the age of 16. The best libraries in the country are barred to Blacks. Very few Blacks have ever seen the inside of a theatre or a concert hall.

But there is an even deeper sense in

which cultural deprivation cripples the artistic spirit. Nobody – literally nobody – knows life in South Africa well enough to describe it adequately, let alone tell the truth about it, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, as is expected from the artistic as well as the legal witness. The artistic vision is restricted by the apartheid barriers, and even the most vivid imagination is no substitute for experience.

In the western capitalist countries there are, true, class barriers which divide the nation. But a writer or a painter can cross these barriers. He can merge himself with any section of the community, and live their day to day life just as they do. The educated middle class writer can go "slumming" for his raw material, as Gissing, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell and others did in Victorian times when they became aware of the way in which the industrial revolution had divided the people of England into two nations. Or the poor boy can rise to the top, as Dickens did, observing and noting the habit and condition of the various strata as he passes through.

But in South Africa the wall is impenetrable. No White can live in a Black township, eat, drink and sleep there, make love and marry there, bring up a family there, starve and die there. He may observe a little from outside the fence, but he can never get inside a Black skin and feel in his bones what it is like to be Black. He may imagine hunger, but it takes one who has known hunger in a certain milieu to describe the way in which hungry children, having eaten their portions but remained unsatisfied, continue to scrape their spoons round the bottom of their porridge bowls in the hope that somehow the metal may be transformed into a further quantity of food ... an image captured in all its pathos and simplicity in one of the early short stories of the African writer Alfred Hutchinson, who died recently in Nigeria at the tragically early age of 48. (See page 18).

### Black and White Minstrel

No writer in South Africa can see life steady and see it whole. Out of his own experience he can only tell what he has seen and known, and this is inevitably only part of the total picture. No White writer has yet managed to create a real and convincing Black character, and vice versa. Nor has any writer, White or Black, been able to describe the relations between



Mariam Makeba





Zakes Mokat

whites in their own country and abroad. Paradoxically, the group which suffers most from apartheid in culture is the Afrikaner tribe, who are the most isolated in their own homeland in which they enjoy political hegemony. Afrikaans as the language of the conqueror, the administrator, the policeman, soldier, location superintendent and pass officer is detested by the non-Afrikaans majority in South Africa.

The newspapers which are directed towards the African market – even those owned by supporters of the Nationalist Government – are written in English. So are most of the books produced by non-Afrikaans writers.

### Some Fight Back

Today, we notice a new phenomenon:

A section of the Afrikaans intelligentsia are finding it more and more difficult to speak to their own people because they find themselves out of sympathy with its objectives. Moral conflict has almost destroyed a writer like Uys Krige, who loves his language and its heritage, but finds himself not only unable but possibly also unwilling any longer to communicate with his fellow-Afrikaners who are moving in a direction where he cannot follow. The poet Breyten Breytenbach, because he married a Vietnamese woman, is unable to live in South Africa where his marriage would not be recognised, and so is today an exile in Paris though acknowledged as the greatest Afrikaans poet of his generation. Many Afrikaans novelists have achieved publication with parables and fantasies because to handle the truth is too difficult or too dangerous. And many are reduced to silence.

The Johannesburg "Sunday Times" wrote on October 22, 1972:— "The completed manuscripts of several prominent Afrikaans authors are being preserved until South Africa's censorship laws are abolished or sufficiently relaxed to permit their publication. In this way a treasure house of Afrikaans literature is being built up for the enjoyment of future generations."

The paper quoted one of the leading Afrikaans authors, Andre Brink, as saying: "The Publications Control Board and the Government, which condones its operations, are strangling Afrikaans literature. They are creating a desert in the development of our culture".



Nathan Ndledle

Brink had had his latest novel "Die Saboteurs" accepted by a British publisher for translation and publication in English, but said: "I have withdrawn it from publication abroad because I want it first to be published in Afrikaans here, in my own country. The book has a special meaning and a message for Afrikaners who, I feel, should read it first".

There were other Afrikaans writers, said Brink, who were grappling with the same problem. "They are prepared to preserve the manuscripts intact for publication 100 years hence if need be, rather than agree to deletions or censorship in any other way. In this way, contemporary literature will not be lost."

The South African Government is spending hundreds of millions of rand every year in its bid to keep the South African peoples apart from one another, but stronger forces, both political and economic, are forcing them together in a common mould. In the ranks of the South African liberation movement, it has been demonstrated that South Africans of all races, creeds and colours can work together as equals to achieve their common objective – freedom. When the apartheid walls have finally been broken down, the tremendous creative forces of the peoples of South Africa will be unleashed, not only to create a better material world, but also a richer and more profound culture than was ever dreamed of in the past.

White and Black which are accurate and valid for both parties. A Nadine Gordimer can tell the reader in delicate and precise prose how a White liberal looks at the Black world, she can even portray accurately how a Black appears in the eyes of a White observer, but she cannot get inside the Black body and look outwards.

Similarly, the White characters in the novels of Peter Abrahams are caricatures, stiff and unreal. They speak and act abruptly, crudely, like puppets lacking flesh and blood. Alan Paton's Black priest in "Cry the Beloved Country" is a sentimentalised White do-gooder with a Black habit, a sort of religious Black-and-White minstrel. Such creative failures are inevitable in a divided society.

A subsidiary problem for the South African writer is – for whom does he write? What is the market for his work? To whom does he address himself. This is partly a question of language. The African who writes in his mother tongue, even the Afrikaner, starts with a tremendous handicap by comparison with the English-speaking South African who has a world language at his disposal. It is partly a question of economics. Book production for a tiny market is unprofitable.

But above all it is a question of attitudes. The political and literary lingua franca of Black South Africa is English, which enables all Africans to communicate with one another across the ethnic border, and also to address





**Alfred  
Hutchinson**

The African National Congress of South Africa announces with deep regret the death of Alfred Hutchinson who died suddenly in Nigeria in mid-October. Alfred Hutchinson, known to all his associates simply as "Hutch" had gone to Nigeria early last year to join the education department there after having worked as a teacher in England for several years.

Born in 1924 in the Transvaal, Hutch graduated from Fort Hare University College and worked as a teacher in South Africa. During the 50s he took part in the Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws and served a term of imprisonment, as a result of which he was victimised by the Transvaal education authorities. He then joined the staff of the Johannesburg Indian School established as a community protest against the Group Areas Act. In 1956 he was one of the 156 accused in the famous Treason Trial. During the period of the State of Emergency declared at the time of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, Hutchinson escaped from South Africa and made his way to Ghana and after a period in Africa came to England where he worked in Brighton and then in London as a teacher.

However, Alfred Hutchinson was best known as a writer and many of his short stories appeared in South Africa in such magazines as "Fighting Talk" and the newspaper "New Age" banned in 1962 by the South African government. As a writer his short stories were full of life of the oppressed African people of his country, dealt with great compassion and brilliant imagery. His work was published in collections outside his own country and his major work was "Road to Ghana" published shortly after he left to go into exile, which, apart from being an account of his escape from South Africa, was also in a way a personal testament.

Unfortunately for the South African literary scene, Hutchinson did not pursue his literary career as fully as would have been hoped while in Europe, and it was anticipated that his return to Africa would stimulate further writing. Alfred Hutchinson's passing has therefore left a lasting gap in South African literary life, and for all who know him the absence of his tall, powerful and jovial personality will always be remarked with regret.

We reprint hereunder a brief report on the famous Treason Trial of 1956 which was written by Hutch while in the dock and published in FIGHTING TALK, vol 10. No 12, February 1957 ...

# IT COULD NEVER BE IN VAIN

Sometimes it is the "sunset touch" – the splash of sunlight trembling on the wall – that brings intimations of the outside world. Another day sunk. The business of living goes on; must go on. At his hour the smoke of evening fires hangs thick in the location air, thick like the voices of the children at the end of their play. It is the hour of the tottering ride in the packed train, the bus crazily swaying. At the end of the journey is home. But the cell is not desolate. A game of "Spoof", an argument, writing home, physical jerks – these bring forgetfulness of the days of waiting that lie ahead. The splash of sunlight dies on the wall and the day ripples to a close. Night sets in and memories come alive.

"Halt who goes there!" The challenge rings in the quiet night. The gasp, the surprise, and the words roll in the night. "All's well ...". The words of assurance ring strangely unnecessary in the fastness of the Fort. You are alone. You think of Achie's little Zida who asked him to bring bugs and lice home ... "Halt ...". Nothing but the night marking on, and one day less of waiting. December 5th 1956. The newspapers scream: "High Treason". Dawn swoop and country-wide arrests. It is the talk in the bus, in the train, at the street-corner ... At school, it is a day of waiting; waiting for an unknown footfall and of silent preparation. Perhaps ... The next day comes the footfall. The tremulous "Afrika" as the children say goodbye. I remember the unmarked examination scripts ...

Marshall Square. The key rattles in the lock and the heavy door swings open. Blankets in hand I stumble into the dusk and fetid smell. A number of men are lying or sitting on the grey smelly blankets, waiting for the morrow. Pass, permit, curfew, theft ... But mostly Pass. "Things will come right ..." I marvel at the man whose fount of hope has not dried up. The cell is slowly filling, the rattling door announces a new arrival. A group of boys noisily recount their adventures in Bethal and the potato fields. They are afraid, for all their big talk. Slowly the cell takes on the appearance of a club, a rendezvous. Friends meet: I am alone.

Henry Nxumalo and the nose-crinkling smile. Henry complaining of the difficulty of getting arrested. On the track



of another story? The smile again. The natty bow tie and Henry as dapper as on the previous day. A few weeks later Henry is dead: He will not follow another story.

The cement floor is a huge vampire, sucking all warmth from the body. You squirm but there is no respite from the lice. The cell is a tortured symphony of scratching. Perhaps lice are as much a part of goal as the harshness, the bewilderment, the jog-trotting, the stench, the banging ponderous doors, the perpetual lining up, the counting and recounting ...

I am waiting in a cell at the Magistrate's Court. I used to think that pacing cells was theatrical stuff. Now I am doing the same. Will the waiting ever come to an end? It ends and I am among friends again. Is this another Congress of the People - drawing all South Africans together? Now we are swinging in the huge singing and I am singing too: Izokunyathela i Afrika ... Afrika will trample you underfoot. Unrepentant. People seen through the mesh: surprise and dawning understanding. The thumb raised in reply. Mayibuye i Afrika!

The Fort is in Johannesburg, but it could be anywhere in the land. The high walls, the locks and keys, cut off Johannesburg: its sounds, its life. There is a patch of sky ... but men have no wings. From the general Hospital it resembles a mound, a huge molehill, a subterranean lair. Impregnable, a fastness of retribution.

The Minister of Justice has placed the figure at two hundred. The Fort has room for many more.

Who will be next? More come, singing and in groups. Walter, Moses, Ruth, Duma, Rusty, Jack, Ismail Meer ... Children suddenly orphaned. The morning and evening papers bring drifts of the outside world. There is widespread agitation, a ferment. Things are happening, things are being done: a protest meeting in Sophiatown, a treason fund ... At seven o'clock every morning Babla's gruff voice, announcing breakfast. We do not want ...

Visiting day is an institution, a fraud, a form of lung exercise. Your visitor is three feet away, across a no-man's land. You stand in line and wait for the order to speak.

Two dozen hearts are crying for expression, for news. It is Babel let loose. It is a question of the survival of the loudest voice, of talking your neighbour into submission.

A fortnight of waiting. The fraternity of strong men in the "lower house" building muscles ... Joe Modise in his enthusiasm landing up in the prison hospital. Robert Resha taking longer rests than exercise spells. "General China" Chamile whittling at his wooden spoons. Mosie Moollo constantly posing in the hope that Alex La Guma will deign to sketch him. Dr. Naicker and his "small walks". The perennial youthfulness of Rev. Gawe, found where the song is thickest and the dancing most spirited ... And Mini's glorious voice riding the sea of song like an unerring pilot homeward-bound.

The joint sessions of the "upper" and "lower" house are an inspiration ... Rev. Calata speaking on music; Prof. Matthews on the American Negro; Dr. Letele on African medicine; Debi Singh outling the history of the struggles of the Indian people ... Chief Luthuli joining hands in dedication and rededication to the fight for freedom. And then the burst of song, beginning sometimes as a solitary voice and gathering strength until it is an irresistible torrent making the walls ring with sound.

But the jog-trotting, frightened youths stab the heart. Hounded, assaulted ... It cannot be endured. We protest. For the prison is run by the prisoners and the strongarm men are the bosses. After our protest things improve ... Tomorrow, December 19th, is "Treason Day". The days of waiting are drawing to an end. A tide of excitement is rising. Bail or no bail we will leave the Fort for a while. "Haltwhogoesthere!" Only the night marching to the morrow ...

And now we are in the swinging kwela-kwela again. We have met our European comrades-in-arms after days of separation. The world is lovely though seen through mesh ... There are crowds, huge crowds, outside the Drill Hall and their warmth beats on you like strong sunlight after rain-planting life. And you know, as you never knew before, that you could never be lost: that if you fell another would take your place: that the struggle could never be lost. It could never have been in vain.



Mass demonstration against Treason Trial - Johannesburg



# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A Reply to Dan Crowe on . . .

## **Black Consciousness**

from Arnold Selby

In reading Comrade Dan Crowe's thoughts on Black Consciousness I was struck by the fact that he does not once mention the African National Congress, which heads the revolutionary struggle for the liberation of our beloved South Africa, and the Freedom Charter.

The African National Congress is the organisation of the people. It is the true representative of the aspirations of the African people for national liberation. At the same time the ANC represents the true interests of all those who know South Africa as their motherland - whether they know it or not or whether they like it or not. The only alternative to the present racist fascist dictatorship in South Africa is an African National Congress Government.

The Freedom Charter, the blueprint for a future ANC government in South Africa, was drawn up at Kliptown in 1955 by the most representative gathering ever held in the history of our beloved country. To ignore the Freedom Charter is to ignore the voice and demands raised by the people in 1955. The Freedom Charter cannot be changed in its fundamentals or revoked without the authority of the people. This blueprint is as valid today as it was when adopted in 1955.

The preamble to the Freedom Charter opens with the following words:-

"We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people".

In explaining this, the book *Apartheid*, edited by Alex La Guma, says: (Page 231):-

"The expression 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White', embodies the historic principle which characterised the policy of the African National Congress towards the peoples who have settled in the past centuries".

In our struggle for a free and happy South Africa we have the full support of the socialist countries, the independent African states and other forces of the world anti-imperialist movement. Thus our fight is based on an anti-imperialist ideology and international solidarity.

So when analysing the South African situation one is bound to arrive at wrong conclusions if one does not take into account the leading revolutionary role of the African National Congress, anti-imperialism and international solidarity, and the demands of the Freedom Charter.

Of course, one must not ignore the formation of the Black Peoples' Convention at home. Indeed the ANC must do everything possible to encourage the BPC in mobilising its followers against the white fascist dictatorship. In doing so the BPC is drawn ever closer to the struggle for the realisation of the principles of the Freedom Charter. This is realised in the furnace of the day-to-day struggle against apartheid. And wherever this struggle takes place and no matter what the circumstances one finds the ANC, its spirit and its influence.

However, it is not only the BPC which must be supported. The role of the Coloured Labour Party, even though for the moment it is reluctantly working on a dummy body, in the fight against the iron heel of Pretoria must be encouraged. Through the experience of everyday life and given revolutionary guidance by the ANC the activity of the Coloured Labour Party can be channeled into positive lines. Misguided and well-intentioned Bantustan leaders, too, cannot be ignored. In their discontent and demands for larger Bantustans and real independence the process of consistent revolutionary struggle can clearly expose to them the fraud of Bantustans and that there can be no liberation, blessed by Pretoria, in a number of small pockets in the country.

All this serves the cause of the South Africa revolution, led by the ANC, and has nothing to do with "Black Consciousness", "Black Power", and similar slogans. It is true that these slogans have been used by patriots and progressives to promote the revolution, but it is equally true that in various guises these and similar slogans have also, in greater proportions, been used by reactionaries to propagate racial exclusiveness and other causes harmful to the revolution.

In dealing with the question as to whether white revolutionaries, whom Comrade Dan Crowe calls well-meaning whites, should be accepted into the mainstream of the South African revolution, Comrade Dan Crowe says that they should work among their own people. Quite so. But then Comrade Dan Crowe is not advocating anything new. Before it was banned the Congress of Democrats was doing work among the white population. Indeed COD was formed on the advice of the African National Congress to carry out this activity. No doubt, today white revolutionaries of the COD stamp continue to work among the white population wherever and whenever possible.

In his advocacy of white revolutionaries aiming their activities at the white population Comrade Dan Crowe is vague. Does he mean that they do this in isolation from the mainstream of the South African revolution? If so, then he is putting forward the idea of racial separateness in the revolutionary movement. In working among the whites, white revolutionaries do so as a component part of the South African revolution under the guidance of and subjected to the discipline of the African National Congress. But white revolutionaries working among whites should not be a hard and fast rule for here again this can lead to racial separateness - the very thing we are fighting to destroy. There are times and circumstances when African leadership can guide white activity into positive channels. The recent students unrest with its demonstrations and strikes is an example for this. At all times the liberation struggle in South Africa, led by the African National Congress, is a revolution headed by Africans.



Comrade Dan Crowe says that the government in South Africa is representative of the whites because it is elected by them. But he stops there. So let us take this a little further. White dictatorship in our contry is the instrument of the imperialist capitalist monopolies who are the real rulers of our beloved country. It is they who keep the white fascist dictatorship in power. If the capitalist monopolies could find a way to continue their super exploitation of African labour at home, if they could find a way to continue reaping their super profits without using the white minority as their instrument they would drop white South Africa like a hot potato. When one understands this, one can see the role of imperialism, particularly British imperialism in South Africa. This also shows that our fight is not isolated but part and parcel of the world-wide anti-imperialist struggle.

The whole kernel of Comrade Dan Crowe's argument is to be found in his concluding remarks. He writes:—

"Are the young fighters after the battle going to be satisfied to exchange the present type of South African colonialism for a new type of neo-colonialism, with our erstwhile

enemies now our advisers, as has happened in some other parts of Africa? I think not!"

This requires a little looking into. In independent Africa, with the exception of countries like Guinea and Algeria, there was a transition period with the African governments moulding the former colonial apparatus into the state machine. From here some governments adopted progressive policies while others moved along conservative lines. There have been coups and counter-coups. But whether independent African states are following a progressive or conservative course they all have one common factor. Each one, in diferent forms or varying degrees, is involved in a bitter struggle against the neo-colonialist activities of the capitalist monopolies. This struggle in spite of different approaches is an important factor in promoting the cause of African unity. Recent examples of this are Africa's rejection of dialogue with the Pretoria racists, the fraternal aid rendered to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea by a number of African states when the imperialists staged an economic blockade and recalled all their specialists in order to paralyse that country's economic development. And

last but not least the African states came out in support of the Republic of Guinea during the Portuguese agression in 1970.

With the eventual triumph of our revolution in South Africa, there will be no taking over of the old state apparatus. Our revolution will completely destroy the old state machine in all spheres from top to bottom. The new masters of the new state machine will be drawn from the masses. This means that the new state machine will be in the main run by people who have not had the advantages of a high standard of education. But they will be able to do the job while learning, teaching and working. And a revolutionary ANC government will give the guidance and inspire the confidence in carrying out this task.

In this our people, supported by the world's anti-imperialist forces, will achieve amazing results.

The keynote in our revolutionary struggle for a free and happy South Africa is not Black Consciousness or Black Power but an anti-imperialist ideology based on the principle of international solidarity.

All power to the people!



Agostino Neto on the . . .

## Domino Theory

In the course of a lengthy interview published in **ANGOLA IN ARMS**, Vol. 4, No. 2, Dr. Agostino Neto, President of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), was asked the following question by the interviewer:

The increasing tendency to give priority to putting pressure on Portugal as the potentially weakest link in the Southern African power structure was noticeable at the recent OAU summit at Rabat. This seems to imply acceptance of a "domino theory" — once Guinea Bissau falls, it can only be a matter of time before Mocambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa are also liberated.

Some South African freedom fighters are known to be unhappy about this theory since it does not take into account Vorster's need to protect South African capital, and border security, and thus the probability that he will intervene militarily to stop the liberation processes in other countries. What are your views on the subject?

Neto: Our idea in MPLA is that it is

not very good to separate the parts of the liberation struggle in Africa. There are several divisive tendencies in the Continent — trying to separate the liberation movements from the independent African States, for example, and trying to separate the Portuguese colonies from other dominated countries that are not fighting with arms. It is necessary to open different fronts in Africa; to fight in Rhodesia, South Africa and so on . . . If not we shall always be in a weak position. I don't agree that it is necessary to liberate first one country, then to go on to another. It is necessary to struggle everywhere using every means possible.

If independent African countries, mainly those with resources, like Kenya and the Ivory Coast, consider the struggles of those countries that are still dominated as their own struggle and give full support to the liberation movements, this would obviously make things a lot easier and the enemy attacked from different points, would face defeat sooner.



# BOOK REVIEW

Reviewers  
do not necessarily  
reflect the views  
of the  
African National  
Congress

## HISTORY SPEAKS FOR FREEDOM

### FROM PROTEST TO CHALLENGE

(A documentary history of African politics  
in South Africa 1882-1964)

#### Volume 1 Protest and Hope 1882-1934

by Sheridan Johns.

Hoover Institution Press. U.S.A.

Here is the story of the genesis and development of the struggle of the African people in the modern period and in the setting of the political forms of control imposed by white domination. It is a story told, not in the sometimes artificial terms of the historian, but in the dramatic original documents of the actors.

The drama is there because the situation was critical; the language of the writers is poignant and deeply expressive because their very existence was at stake; and we are carried through the long history of the white man's dissimulation, betrayal and deliberate oppression by the utterances of the men who saw unfolding before their eyes the concentrated power of a white state which was ever improving its function of domination.

The story opens in the late nineteenth century when the military power of the African people had been broken and when the new conditions brought about by the organisation of white power in new political institutions imposed on the African people new ways of combatting the White man's rule. We see how Africans were obliged to cast about for channels of protest within the new framework, how they sought to develop a new all-African unity, how they tried to win allies among the Whites, and how they tried out various forms of struggle when their representations went unheeded. This is a history rich in events of the most stirring kind and we are moved all the more when we are forced back to the realization that the struggles of the present day have long, long roots in the destiny of a people who have striven ceaselessly to live in freedom in the land of their birth.

The editors of this series, Thomas Karis and Gwendolyn Carter, have provided us with a great archive.

In this the first of three volumes consisting almost entirely of original documents of African political leaders and movements, we have a unique opportunity to savour the authentic voice of African protest and test the theories and notions we have grown up with. The documents will enable us to reinterpret some of the events which political folk-lore has mystified and to reassess their importance in the history of South Africa. The opportunity ought not to be missed. The first section comprises documents up to the Act of Union in 1910. There are extracts from editorials from the first African newspapers in which we find bitter descriptions of living conditions together with political exhortation to combine in the face of oppression. "In fighting for national rights, we must fight together", says the extract from *Imbumba Yama Africa* of 1883, a paper dedicated to African unity. But there are also documents like Petitions to Queen Victoria in 1887 which are couched in the most modest terms and which seek some relief from a supposedly generous sovereign. The explanation is of course that the African people were deeply perturbed at the growing power of the settlers and at the clear signs of Britain's impending extrication from the mechanisms of control in South Africa. Alarmed at the prospect of White consolidation, ("responsible government has been prematurely granted to the colonies") the South African Native Congress which was founded in 1902 and was in some ways the precursor of the African National Congress, said that if Natal and the Transvaal were an indication of what the future has in store for all Africans, it would be preferable for the British Crown to retain control. Clearly the Africans feared a settler government and they continued to make representations to Britain against this eventuality.

However, as the prospect of British withdrawal increased, the demand for political rights rose proportionately and we find the South African Native Convention of 1909 urging "This Convention places on record its strong and emphatic protest against the admission of a "colour bar" in the Union Constitution as being a real, vital basic wrong and injustice, and respectfully pleads that a clause be inserted in the "Charter" providing that all persons within the Union shall be entitled to full and equal rights and privileges subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all citizens without distinction of class, colour or creed". But there was more than supplication and verbal protest too. We are reminded in the introduction to this section that it also was the period of the Bambata Rebellion (though no documents are available in this connection) when an impi of Zulu warriors attacked British troops with much initial success though ultimately Bambata was defeated with the loss of 4000 African lives.



## AFRICAN UNITY

The realization that Union was approaching brought an intensification in the calls for African unity.

The paper *Imvo Zabantsundu* urged that an entirely new chapter in South African history was opening up in which Africans must become united politically, though this particular paper which had some White financial support and was edited by the moderate J. T. Jabavu, continued to plead for close cooperation with White Cape liberals. This policy was rejected by Africans in the rest of the country and the South African Native National Congress (later to become the African National Congress) was founded without him in January 1912.

The ANC was intended to be the "voice in the wilderness bidding all the dark races of this sub-continent to come together ..." and to "bring together into common action as one political people all tribes ... to defend their freedom, rights and privileges ... to agitate and advocate for the removal of the "Colour Bar" ..." It was not long before it was called upon to bring the newfound unity into action.

With the passing of the Native Land Act in 1913 the carving up of South Africa's land was formalized. The principle of territorial separation was at the heart of the Act and African land ownership was restricted to the "scheduled areas" which constituted 7.3 per cent of the total land area of South Africa. Congress protested strongly at this measure which was seen, the editor tells us, "as primarily a measure to compel Africans to accept service with the whites upon disadvantageous terms that would result not in separation but further inequitable integration."

Thus right from the start, government Bantustan policies were understood to mean an intensification of oppression and not security from White encroachment. This was particularly obvious since the demand for African labour from the reserved areas was actually increasing rapidly at the time.

The squeeze upon the land was accompanied by harsh exploitation in the urban areas. Africans were now employed in large numbers in the mines and in industry. Trade unionism found its roots among Africans and a series of strikes broke out on the Rand and in Cape Town. With the growth of the urban proletariat a new dimension was added to African political opposition both from the point of view of the tactics used and of demands made. In the Presidential address of the ANC conference in 1919 Mr. S. M. Makgatho analysed how the oppressive pass laws assisted the exploitation of labour. He showed how white workers were able to combine in relative freedom to win increases while Africans were hounded by the police at the first sign of protest.

The third section of the book opens with a number of fascinating documents on the Governor-General's conferences with African leaders. Here, the stubborn resistance of the African spokesmen to government blandishments is revealed in page after page of dialogue. But, enmeshed in the process of consultation and representations, it seems that the ANC was for a time locked in a process from which it could not disengage. It was a time of bitter denunciation of white oppression but the denunciations fell on deaf ears. It was in the arena of trade unionism that the struggle then came alive. The Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union (ICU) set out to

highlight the demands of African workers but soon came to embrace broader demands as well. Combining straight forward economic demands with challenging political rhetoric of the capitalist character of the system of exploitation and of White rule, the ICU made rapid headway. The documents reveal a striking confidence and boldness that reflects the concrete organisational work going on at the time under the leadership of Clements Kadalie. And the stirring achievements remained on the record for African trade unions to marvel at and strive to emulate in the years to come. And so we are brought to the close of this first volume which is full of memorable speeches and articles and which brings much needed life to the historiography of the South African liberation movement.

But something must be said about the work of the editor. Each of the three sections are introduced by a short matter of fact statement on the contents to come. The statements are sympathetic in the main but exception may be taken on two grounds. On the one hand there is excessive emphasis on the non-racial principles of the movements concerned, and this often combined with great stress on the "integrationist" outlook of African leaders who "hoped for a role in the larger South African society".

Now it is indisputable that these policies were frequently articulated by African leaders, and one must accept the view of the introductions that recognition by the wider society was particularly important to leaders who had attained a higher education and were often professional men with considerable status in their own community. But the emphasis in the editor's comments looks very much like a need for reassurance that Africans are not racist and that they want to live in a common society as a matter of prime principle. I find this position hard to accept. While the moderation of some of the leaders of this period is well known, and while it is also accepted that many were strongly influenced by white liberals and thus came to state their demands in non-racial and integrationist terms, it seems to me that one must see this in context.

The editor tells us that in a petition to London in 1914 "Congress protested against the Natives Land Act of 1913 and dwelt closely upon moral and legal obligations of the Crown to uphold non racial principles." (p67) Of Mr. Makgatho, the President of Congress in 1919 it is said, "He represented the dominant wing in the Congress that was unprepared to compromise with the ideal of an ultimately non racial society." (p.66)

Elsewhere there is a reference to the "African elite's steadfast commitment to the ideal of a non racial South Africa ..." (p149) and "In its efforts to register protests and achieve its integrationist ends, ..." (p153). Of the ICU it is said, "It held out the ultimate goal of a colour-blind socialist society ... for the full inclusion of the African within a non racial integrated system." (p155)

Now there are two points to be made about this view. First, there ought to be no need these days to labour the point that South Africans are non racist in principle. This kind of apologia has appeared in numerous books e. g. Janet Robertson's *Liberalism in South Africa* and is meant to show that South Africans are nice, decent liberals. But the documents show that the dynamics of African policy were much more complex than this kind of presentation would have us believe. The government of the day was doing its best to institute race segregation territorially, socially and politically. The African leaders



saw the threat this represented to their real situation and objected. They were against segregation on these terms and pressed their claim for franchise rights so that they could defend their interest. Furthermore, they claimed a stake in what had become a common society in the sense that the fruits of their labour could not be unscrambled and should therefore be enjoyed by all. This was the sense of their "integrationism" and of their "desire for a role in the larger South African society". Furthermore, their persistent use of white created institutions for making representations (perhaps over-use) was probably dictated as much by their inability to see any other way out as by their acceptance of these institutions.

Given the power of the white state what else were the Africans to do? Opt out? Instead, they used the channels given them and in doing so inevitably fell into formulating their grievances in terms that seemed "integrationist". I would say that a close reading of the documents reveal such a deep bitterness and detestation of white

rule and its society that if there had been any other option Africans would have taken it rather than remain within the White framework.

This is the way the appeals for protection to the British Crown should be read.

Let me end by Reaffirming that the ANC Perspective for South Africa is Non-Racial and that it Believes that there can be no Unscrambling of the Territory of South Africa nor of its Economy (though it is Quite Ready to Identify White Domination and to Stress the Importance of Black Solidarity).

But the Basis of its Policy is not a Prior Notion of Integrationism nor is it Centred on Non-Racialism as a Primary Moment of Policy. It is Based on the Realistic Assessment of the Requirements of a Policy of National Liberation, which in the Context of South African Society Means Treating that Society as an Integrated System of Socioeconomic Relations.

# THE ROAD TO FREEDOM IS VIA THE CROSS



**SOUTH  
AFRICAN  
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3**

South African Studies  
No. 3

«The Road to Freedom  
is via the Cross»

is now available from all ANC  
offices. This book deals with the  
various speeches made by  
Chief Albert Lutuli dealing  
with the South African  
freedom struggle.

★

Studies No. 4  
«Nelson Mandela Speaks»  
will be available shortly.