

OCTOBER 1987



# SECHABA

official organ of the african national congress south africa



**PRESIDENT O R TAMBO**

# SECHABA

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Telephone: 01-837 2012

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# EDITORIAL

## ON 'NEGOTIATIONS'

In the pages of Sechaba we have consistently exposed the imperialist manoeuvres vis a vis our revolution. It seems this is an unending process. It is a problem which will be with us for as long as we struggle. We must struggle harder so that they have difficulties in hatching out new schemes, plots, scenarios and plans about our revolution.

We are being pushed in two different directions which are in essence one direction namely, anti-communism and renouncing armed struggle. We are not prepared to move in any of the two.

This became more evident during and after the Dakar conference/meeting between the ANC and Afrikaner intellectuals. The media overkill with the aim of portraying the Dakar meeting as an 'historic breakthrough event' was calculated at giving an image that the ANC is now prepared to abandon armed struggle; it is prepared to talk to the Boers. Nothing is further from the truth.

The truth of the matter is that the whole question of 'talks' and 'talks about talks' started unfolding in 1985 two years ago when we met business men. Since then we have met many and diverse forces. We are very selective on who we meet. We can't meet the AWB, Sebe, Matanzima or even Gatsha Buthelezi, we decide who to meet and so far we have met:

1. The White businessmen
2. Nafcoc — Black businessmen
3. the democratic forces.
4. and the Afrikaner intellectuals.

What has brought about these talks? The present crisis in South Africa started with the Soweto Uprising in 1976 but it definitely took new dimensions in 1984. This was the period of the tricameral election and the Inkomati Accord. It was a period of mass resistance and stay aways. New and more radical forces were emerging in South Africa and they were becoming more vocal. The prestige of the ANC was rising and its real existence and impact within South Africa was more visible than before. The divisions within the White block and the crack in the

granite white wall became more visible and the reformist 'alternative' trends became more apparent. What was our strategy going to be in this new situation?

Some people regard talks with the above-mentioned forces as an opposite of armed struggle. Are we now opting for soft options? Are we now about to abandon the hundreds of comrades who died, were and are detained jailed, for long sentences or those who fought in Wankie or those who were in camps since 1961? Are we now preparing for elections in the Lancaster House style?

What is called 'dialogue' with the racist Botha regime is turning out to be suggested monologue from the racists. We have our monologue and this revolves around such questions as armed struggle, one person one vote, the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners, the legalisation of the ANC and the return of exiles. If there is to be an indaba between the ANC and the Boers there can only be one item on the agenda; how to dismantle apartheid and transfer power to the people. We are not interested in the so-called 'hurtful' aspects of apartheid which by implication mean that Botha is about to 'reform' apartheid. Apartheid must be abolished.

It is in this context that we should view the policy of talking to the white businessmen and Afrikaner intellectuals. We aim at widening the crack on the white wall. We want to neutralise some of the elements who under normal circumstances would be our enemies. This is not to say we regard them as our allies. The ANC has its permanent allies; The SACP, SACTU, Cosatu and UDF. Sayco etc but there are temporary allies you can fight with to achieve the immediate goal. We are not suggesting that the White businessmen and Afrikaner intellectuals are our temporary allies but we do suggest that if we can manage it, let us detach them from the most reactionary clique, the Botha regime. Let us weaken our enemy so that armed struggle should triumph. Let us make the way for Umkhonto we Sizwe and relative easy one and these talks serve to do just that.



# PRESIDENT O R TAMBO

## POLITICAL PROFILE



### on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday

**By Francis Meli**

It has become a tradition in our movement that when an historical event or an important occasion takes place it is commemorated, indeed celebrated, in a fitting fashion. This is all the more so because the collective memory of the people usually translates itself into mass consciousness, and historical memory being what it is passes from one generation to another - in fact it lingers over the heads of generations. The masses - it is said - make history. But individuals too make their imprint. The role of the personali-

ty in history and politics does influence the course of events. One such personality is OR Tambo, President of the ANC, who is celebrating his 70th birthday this month. OR (as he is affectionately called) has been at the centre of political action all his adult life and has been pivotal in all the innovations and developments within the ANC and South Africa as a whole.

### Early Beginnings

Born on October 27th 1917, in Bizana (the peasants in the area call the place Mbizana) Eastern Pondoland, Transkei, Oliver Reginald Tambo grew up in the rural areas. His father, Frederick, a peasant farmer, had several wives and his mother gave birth to two children - Oliver and his sister, Lydia. At the age of 12, O.R. Tambo attended the mission school at Ludebe in Holy Cross near Flagstaff. Thereafter he got a scholarship from two English missionary women and went to St. Peter's School in Johannesburg where he completed matriculation with a first class pass in 1938. He was awarded a scholarship by the Transkeian Bunga and then proceeded to Fort Hare University college in Alice where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1941.

But even before he graduated a 'simple' incident, which had repercussions on his later political life, influenced him. A white boarding master assaulted an African woman employee and when no charges were filed, a student protest broke out and Tambo was a key actor in that protest. This was the beginning of his political baptism, his own activism and action against 'authority.' OR has this to say about the incident:

"I was just an ordinary student ... I'd always got along with authorities quite well ... I found myself playing quite the leading role in the protest against what happened to this woman."

He graduated and went to Johannesburg where he met ANC politicians, notably Walter Sisulu. By the time he went back to Fort Hare for a post graduate course in Education - University Education Diploma - he had close contacts with some ANC leaders.

Tambo as the elected head of the hostel approached the warden of the hostel about reconditioning an old tennis court. He got permission but when he asked if they could play on Sundays the warden was horrified at the thought. Tam-

bo's hostel was Anglican and the warden feared that this was going to tempt the Methodists and Presbyterians - who were not allowed to play tennis - to play on Sundays. The students protested. Their weapon was 'non-co-operation.'

They would go to the chapel, get there and just keep quiet throughout the service. This went on for a week. The students were then brought before a disciplinary committee. Tambo was expelled. This was in 1942. He was not the only one to be expelled - the whole hostel comprised a quarter of the student population - and some left voluntarily, in sympathy with those expelled. OR Tambo remembers:

"These events - they pulled me out of my sense of security."

After expulsion from Fort Hare he went back to Johannesburg where he re-established contacts with the ANC. Tambo was 'forced' into political activity by the situation of racial discrimination that surrounds every black man. He taught at St. Peter's - though he did not have a University Education Diploma, a licence to teach. His students included Duma Nokwe, later to be Secretary General in an Executive headed by Chief Lutuli and OR Tambo. President Tambo remembers taking some students from St. Peter's to an Anglican cathedral on a Good Friday in the mid-40's. They were two thirds of the way up in the church when a White priest came around and said:

"Would you please go to the back of the cathedral, because this section is reserved for Whites?"

OR ignored him and when he came next time he found OR kneeling and he (OR) said:

"Please, don't interrupt me."

Up to then OR thought that the church was part of the struggle. He taught at St. Peter's until 1947. He turned towards politics.

We relate this story because it has relevance for the younger generation of today. OR studied Science; was disillusioned with the church and had discarded his ambition of being a medical doctor - he had now turned to law, on the advice of Walter Sisulu. In 1947 he was 30 years old but today children of 15 are already involved in politics. This is not only a change in attitudes but in the politics of our times; it is not a so-called

generation gap but a continuation of a process of injection of politics into education - a process started by the founding fathers of the ANC but definitely developed by the generation of OR Tambo.

### **The ANC Youth League**

In the mid-forties young men and women in their mid-twenties or early thirties, mainly teachers or students of medicine or law, became dissatisfied with the manner in which things were done by the ANC and the pace with which they were done. These were young intellectuals. Walter Sisulu, a worker, was a noticeable exception.

These were prominent members of provincial and/or local student associations who articulated the aspirations of their generation and the masses of the people as a whole. They held political discussions frequently.

The African youth were concerned with the deteriorating conditions of our people; the rise of fascism in Germany and Mussolini's barbaric attack on Ethiopia in 1935-36 aroused interest not only about the fate and future of South Africa but of the whole continent. The growth and new militancy of African trade unions (the mine workers) and the activities of the Communist Party were other factors which led to the rise of the ANC Youth League. These young people participated in militant mass actions.

It was in response to this situation that the annual conference of the ANC on December 21, 1942 resolved that "this annual conference of the African National Congress authorises the Executive to institute a youth League of the African National Congress to include students at Fort Hare" and the 1943 annual conference adopted a similar resolution. These young men consulted with the ANC leadership, especially Dr Xuma - the ANC President General before the ANC Youth League was formally established at the inaugural meeting held at the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg in April 1944.

Anton Muziwakhe Lembede became its first president and OR Tambo was a prominent leader. There were many others, the most noticeable being Lembede, Mandela, Sisulu, Tambo, Mda, Njongwe, Nkomo, Ngubane, Sobukwe, Ntsu Mokhehle and others. The aim of these young men and women was simple and honest: a desire to remould the ANC, and there was a noticeable

shift towards recruiting a broader circle and organising a permanent youth wing within the ANC.

The other aims of the Youth League were: to articulate ideological questions such as African Nationalism; to work out political strategies, militant policies and programmes and to map out organisational structures.

The moving spirit in the Youth League was Anton Lembede, a controversial but certainly one of the most misunderstood personalities in our history. Lembede was militantly nationalistic, with very strong views on the Africanness of our struggle - his philosophy, he called it, "Africanism". But Lembede's ideas were not static but changing with the times.

On March 9, 1947 a meeting of the Joint Committee of the ANC, the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses was held in Johannesburg. Present were Dr. A.B. Xuma, in the chair, Dr Y.M. Dadoo (TIC), Debi Singh (NIC), J.B. Marks (ANC), M.P. Naicker (NIC), D. Tloome (ANC), C.S. Ramohano (ANC), Y.A. Cachalia (TIC), J.N. Singh, A.B. Meer (both NIC) and, significantly, A.M. Lembede.

A sub-committee, consisting of Drs Xuma and Dadoo, Singh, Meer and Lembede was appointed to draft a joint declaration. The joint declaration which was read and accepted, stated:

"... that the next meeting of the joint committee be held on 23 March 1947 at 11.00 am to which representatives of APO should be invited to attend."

What we are saying is that Lembede was part of a Joint Committee of Africans and Indians and was a member of a sub-committee which appealed to the Coloureds to join the Africans and Indians in the struggle. This call for a united front of all democratic forces could only be realised in the 1950's. Even ideologically he was developing and changing his views, attitudes and ideas about the Communist Party. Unfortunately he died in July 1947 at the tragically early age of 33.

Tambo was part of this collective. He served for a while as the National Secretary of the Youth League, then became its Transvaal president and, in 1948-49 was National Vice-President. Even before that, in 1946, he had been elected to the Transvaal Provincial Executive Committee of the ANC. These were the days of the African

mineworkers' strike of 1946, the massive Indian resistance of 1946, and the Xuma-Dadoo-Naicker pact of 1947. The Youth League produced the famous Programme of Action of 1949, which became a rallying point, and, at the ANC Conference of 1949, it was adopted as an ANC document. At this conference the Programme of Action was thoroughly scrutinised, paragraph by paragraph, and then accepted and adopted in its amended form, and it was pointed out that only those people who signified their willingness to carry out this Programme should be elected on to the incoming Executive.

At this 37th annual Conference of the ANC, held in Bloemfontein on December 15th-19th 1949, the Reverend JA Calata explained the significance of raising the right thumb when singing the National Anthem. The first four fingers symbolise unity, determination, solidarity and militancy, while the thumb was raised as a supplication for Africa to come back. The symbol was first introduced by the Congress Youth League at the Cape, and it had been found appropriate to adopt it universally in Congress.

OR Tambo was first elected to the NEC in 1949. Since then, he has been rising from an ordinary member of the NEC to the position of the Secretary-General, then Vice-President and then President.

### **OR Tambo and Nelson Mandela**

When Lembede, the lawyer and leader of the ANC Youth League, died, Walter Sisulu approached OR and said:

"Lembede died - why don't you take up law?"

In 1948 he began to study law, and in December 1952 started in legal practice with Nelson Mandela, establishing an African legal partnership. He has this to say about this period:

"Mandela and Tambo,' said the brass plate on our office door. We practised as attorneys-at-law in Johannesburg in a shabby building across the street from the Magistrates' Court. Chancellor House in Fox Street was one of the few buildings in which African tenants could hire offices: it was owned by Indians. This was before the axe of the Group Areas Act fell to declare the area 'white', and landlords were themselves prosecuted if they did not evict Africans. 'Mandela and Tambo' was written huge across the frosted window panes on the second floor, and the letters stood out

written huge across the frosted window panes on the second floor, and the letters stood out like a challenge. To white South Africa it was bad enough that two men with black skins should practise as lawyers, but it was indescribably worse that the letters also spelled out our political partnership.

Nelson and I were both born in the Transkei, he one year after me. We were students together at Fort Hare University College. With others, we had founded the African National Congress Youth League. We went together into the Defiance Campaign of 1952, into the general strikes against the government, and sat in the same Treason Trial dock. For years, we worked side by side in the offices near the courts. To reach our desks each morning, Nelson and I ran the gauntlet of patient queues of people overflowing from the chairs in the waiting-room into the corridors.'

Nelson Mandela from dungeons of Pretoria confirms:

"Oliver Tambo is much more than a brother to me. He is my greatest friend and comrade for nearly 50 years. If there is any one amongst you who cherishes my freedom, Oliver Tambo cherishes it more, and I know that he would give his life to see me free. There is no difference between his views and mine".

Mandela made this statement in 1985. They first met for the first time in 1940 at Fort Hare during the student strike. Their friendship is anchored in struggle - the struggle united them, not only the struggle in general but the struggle in their legal profession. Mandela has this to say:

"Right at the beginning of my career as an attorney, I encountered difficulties imposed on me because of the colour of my skin and further difficulty surrounding me because of my membership and support of the African National Congress. I discovered for example, that unlike a White attorney, I could not occupy business premises in the city unless I first obtained ministerial consent in terms of the Urban Areas Act. I applied for that consent, but it was never granted. Although I subsequently obtained a permit, for a limited period, in terms of the Group Areas Act, that soon expired, and the authorities refused to renew it. They insisted that my partner, Oliver Tambo, and I should leave the city and practise in an African location at the back of beyond, miles away from where clients could reach us during working hours. This was tanta-

mount to asking us to abandon our legal practice, to give up the legal service of our people, for which we had spent many years training ...

For some years we continued to occupy the premises in the city illegally ... It was an act of defiance of the law. We were aware what it was, but nevertheless, that act had been forced on us against our wishes, and we could do no other than to choose between compliance with the law and compliance with our consciences."

This comradeship developed further in the day to day struggles such as resistance against the removal of Sophiatown, bus boycotts, the potato boycott and of course the 1952 Defiance Campaign and the 1956 Treason Trial where 156 leaders of Congress were arrested following the adoption of the Freedom Charter at Kliptown on June 26, 1956.

It was at this time that OR married Adelaide Tshukudu a woman who proved to be a pillar of strength in the following years. Adelaide was friendly with Winnie who later became Nelson Mandela's wife.

Comrade Tambo was the ANC Secretary-General during the period of the introduction of Bantu Education. This was in 1955 and in 1958 he was elected Deputy President General and after the death of President-General Albert Lutuli, he obviously became President of the ANC.

In 1954, he was served with Government orders under the Suppression of Communism Act, banning him from attending all gatherings for two years and restricting his movements to the magisterial districts of Johannesburg and Benoni for the same period. And in 1959, he was served with a further Government order prohibiting him from attending any gatherings for a period of five years.

The legal practice he and Nelson Mandela had set up as a means of defending Africans charged with 'crimes' was seriously affected. He could not now travel to places like Namibia as he had done before, to represent the Africans facing political charges and involved in political disputes with the Government. A week after the Sharpeville shootings on March 21, 1960, and two days before the declaration of a State of Emergency on March 30, he was directed by the ANC National Executive to go out of the country in order to put the case against South Africa in world forums.

### **A Sincere Revolutionary Democrat**

OR is a very straightforward, sincere and simple man. You need to see him in action to fully appreciate this. His sense of justice, dedication and passion for discovering the truth - these are some of his characteristic features.

In May 1950 the Unlawful Organisations Bill became known. The NEC of the ANC called an emergency conference in Johannesburg to protest against the banning of the Communist Party. Present were the South African Indian Congress, the APO and the Communist Party. There were a number of speakers on that occasion. One of them was OR Tambo. He said:

"Today it is the Communist Party. Tomorrow it will be our trade unions, our Indian Congress, our APO, our African National Congress".

These were prophetic words. There was more to it. Here Tambo was not only attacking the regime for its draconian laws: he was defending the right of the Communist Party to exist legally as an independent organisation. At the 60th anniversary of the Communist Party in 1981 he reiterated and expanded his views thereby telling the whole world to know - in uncompromising terms - the relations between the ANC and the Communist Party. His speech in terms of historical significance for our movement can be classified with those of Seme when he called for the formation of the ANC or Gumede when he came back from Moscow or Mandela's Rivonia Trial Speech.

The Western Countries are mounting a campaign against the ANC. We are told that the ANC is a communist front organisation and therefore it must not be supported; in fact people are called upon to fight it. The ANC is told to loosen its ties with the Soviet Union and dissociate itself from the South African Communist Party; it must abandon armed struggle - it must be part of the 'reform' process.

In this connection it might be instructive to relate what President Tambo told George Schultz, American Secretary of State. The Soviet Union has no interests in Southern Africa that are separate and different from those of the rest of humanity. It wants an end to apartheid. What the U.S. should consider is having discussions with the Soviet Union with the aim of seeking ways and means of devising a joint plan of helping us overthrow apartheid. This is what is called consistency



in struggle — a characteristic feature of OR.

In the 1970s South Vietnam was liberated and Vietnam united or rather re-united. OR Tambo was so inspired by this victory that he led an ANC delegation to study the experience of the Vietnamese people. These were questions connected with armed struggle and mass mobilisation. This was before the formation of the UDF and other mass organisations. This experience proved useful in the development of our theory of armed struggle and mass mobilisation.

One of OR's contributions has been the drive for the release of all political prisoners and the struggle for unbanning the ANC: a process which took the form of transforming the ANC from an African organisation into a national organisation of like-minded people, united by their hatred of colonialism, racism, exploitation and national degradation; sharing a common goal - the Freedom Charter - and whose activities consist in propagating its ideas amongst the people and fighting in a constituency which it itself defines. This was realised at the Second Consultative ANC Conference in Kabwe in June 1985. The subsequent meetings between the ANC and organisations from within the country have vindicated the correctness of this line.

### **His Internationalism**

The ANC NEC foresaw that our movement is going to be banned: hence they instructed OR to leave the country and mobilise internationally. This proved to be doubly important because when the ANC leadership was arrested at Rivonia in 1963, the External Mission of the ANC had to take over the tasks of the Men of Rivonia - armed struggle - and OR features here prominently. He is a military theorist, strategist and organiser of armed struggle.

When the External Mission had to shoulder the tasks which were the province of the Rivonia Trialists — armed struggle, OR Tambo together with Mgwenye (senior cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe) initiated the participation of our young army in the Zimbabwean struggle. This was OR's internationalism. There were heroes of ours who had fallen in Rhodesia and comrades of ours who were arrested and sentenced to death by the Smith

regime and those who were caught in Botswana and even in South Africa. Some were executed (Mini, Khayingo, Mkhamba) and others sentenced to long term of imprisonment. These include the men of Rivonia.

These were some of the problems that faced OR and his executive in the 1960s.

OR, together with Uncle J.B. Marks and Moses Mabhida (Moses Kotane was at this time incapacitated) helped to give directions in the difficult deliberations of the Morogoro Conference and later became central in the struggle against the 'Gang of 8'.

Comrade Tambo's role in arousing world consciousness has had an immense impact on international opinion about South Africa. His basic thesis is that by liberating South Africa we are contributing to the international community's struggle for justice and therefore assistance to us is not an act of charity: it is a revolutionary duty. Apartheid is not only fraudulent, says Tambo, but anachronistic.

Our struggle against apartheid is therefore connected with the worldwide struggle for peace — our armed struggle is basically a struggle for peace.

Since coming out of South Africa in 1960, he has earned the respect of many world figures by his honesty, his modesty, his incisive intelligence and his historic indictments against the apartheid regime at the United Nations and other world forums. He has met practically all African Heads of States and world leaders including recently Gorbachev. In this he was continuing the work he and Mandela started in 1961. So ably has he represented the case against South Africa that he has come to be regarded as a man whose authority cannot be challenged on such issues. He has travelled widely and continues to do so. The esteem with which he is regarded in Africa can be judged by the fact that the movement he leads, the ANC, is regarded as the authentic and representative voice of the Black masses of South Africa. He knows personally almost all African leaders on the continent - except Banda - who have a great respect for his opinions. His speeches have been published and translated into many languages.

This is OR, the man of the people leader of the oppressed masses in South Africa and maker of history.

# THE WORKERS FLEX THEIR MUSCLES

**By Thozamile Botha**

The ANC has always stressed the centrality of the working class in the national democratic revolution. It has called upon the working class, the trade union movement in particular, to take its rightful place in the struggle for the seizure of power.

The struggle of the workers against the capitalist bosses — the consumer, rent boycotts and the rejection of Bantu Education by the students and the black community should be seen as part and parcel of the ANC's call on the nation to render the country ungovernable and apartheid unworkable.

The occupation of factories, the work of workers' strike committees this is conducted in the context of the embryonic organs of people's power mushrooming in the townships. The challenge the workers pose against the bosses is a challenge to the legitimacy of the state (apartheid). From wage demands the workers are surging forward to political power, people's power.

## **The Strike**

A strike which the Chamber of Mines expected to last only a few days turned to be three weeks long and the biggest single industrial action in South Africa's labour history. The mining magnates were seriously bruised both in terms of public image, as well as their profit. Half of the country's gold mines and a fifth of its collieries were ground to a halt, leaving the mine owners with a deficit of £100 million.

What has for many decades been regarded as the strongest Management among South African industrial giants, had to admit, in the words of Naas Steenkamp, the president of the Chamber of Mines: 'The employer has learnt that the union has muscle, organisational capacity, determination and skill ...' (The Times 1 August, 1987)

The fallacy of Anglo-American's liberal policies (Anglo-American employs 80% of NUM workers) has been exposed, so has its interest in the maximisation of profits. As the strike was a dress rehearsal for the 40 000 strong National Union of Miner workers (NUM) it was also a dressing down of the mining giants.

## **Workers Determined to Fight On**

The Chamber of Mines offered the workers 16 to 23.5 % wage increase against the Union's demand of 30 %. The NUM was later ready to back down, dropping its wage demand to 27%, but Management still remained arrogant and intransigent. This inevitably sparked off a critical point of confrontation.

Cyril Ramaphosa, Secretary of NUM, reacting to Management's inflexibility said: 'We have observed a lot of barbaric acts on the mines ... What we have seen in the past week is only just the beginning. They will try to crush the strike in a military style.'

But he vowed to continue the strike until the workers' demands were met. He warned the Management that if the workers were 'forced to move, something terrible will happen.' This statement by Ramaphosa should be seen in the

context of the pledge he made at the conclusion of the strike when he described it as a dress rehearsal for 1988's wage demand.

Management argued that: 'To give in, would give the NUM carte blanche to strike every year for inflated wages' (The Independent 28 August, 1987). What the Chamber of Mines described as 'inflated wages' would in fact have put the miners wage at well below the minimum living level'.

Where as Anglo American says its employees earn a monthly average of either R523 (£160) or R650 (£200), the NUM officials put the average mining industry wage for an unskilled worker at R225 (£69) a month. This figure is 50 per cent below what the Bureau of Market Research at the University of South Africa described as 'minimum living' of R419 a month by last February. (The Independent 28.8.87).

When they realised that they had underestimated the strength of the Union and the strike was continuing, the Chamber offered to increase the holiday pay by 10 per cent and double the death payment from 2 to 4 years. It was easier

for Management to bend on the fringe benefits as they would make little dent on their profits.

The NUM refused to be deviated from its line of struggle by rejecting the offer. Management on the other hand resorted to its old strike-breaking tactics; they threatened to shut down the No 6 shaft in the Western Transvaal Reef's Mine if the 3 000 work force in the area did not return to work. The workers were not moved an inch by this threat, instead they saw it as 'a subterfuge ... to force them accept terms and conditions which they find unacceptable'.

In a desperate attempt to create confusion and to break the strike, Anglo American claimed that 700 strikers had returned to work at Landan Coal Mine after the company had threatened to close down. The NUM explained that the Mine security used dogs and fired tear gas into a hostel at Gencor's Bracken Goldmine, forcing miners to go underground. One worker reported that about 2 000 miners staged a sit-in underground to which Management reacted with increased violence.

In addition to this unprovoked violence, Union activists were barred from entering the mining premises, allegedly because they were intimidating those who wanted to return to work including scabs. Anglo American dismissed more than 20 000 miners, and turned the hostels into military barracks for the mine security guards. In addition, they adopted a devious tactic of offering to negotiate with the strikers exclusive from the other mining houses, thus seeking to weaken the single voice of the strikers.

### **Difficulties Encountered**

The strike took place against a host of emergency regulations, a heavy presence of mine security guards and the state police. Tens of thousands of workers were forcibly bussed to hundreds of miles away from their work place, the scabs were recruited from the neighbouring states and from the bantustans under hostile puppet governments. The military climate surrounding the mine area rendered it impossible to hold mass meetings both within and outside the mine premises. Even before the strike began, the South African racist police and the private mine security guards were already milling around the hostels. The absence of regular meetings during a strike, coupled with intimidation by the police makes it difficult for the leadership to check the continued support of



*General Secretary of NUM Cyril Ramaphosa*

the workers.

With the strikers scattered in the remote areas of the bantustans and the neighbouring states, with weak or no organisational presence in those areas, this made the struggle of the miners against scabs go uphill. Furthermore, whilst accepting that the strike had both political and economic aims there were serious problems. Without an adequate strike fund, the Union could not have conceivably sustained the strike indefinitely. Worse still was that organising or receiving a strike fund, had been rendered impossible by the increased police presence and there was the factor of long distances.

Nevertheless, the Union scored tremendous victories given that it was waging an unarmed war against a formidable enemy. The Union was left with the choice of either preserving the gains they had already achieved that is, wage increase even if less, fringe benefits and the unity of the workers on the one hand or retreating in disarray on the other.

It is against this background that we should understand that going on strike is like going to war and that tactical retreats should not be equated to defeat. The decision by the NUM leadership to call off the strike should be viewed in this context.

If the success of a strike were to be measured purely on the basis of the catalogue of demands at the negotiating table, many workers' actions would have ended in disaster. But because the strike weapon cannot be compared to a boxing match where victory is either measured by a knock out or by scoring points, the workers retreat is not always tantamount to capitulation.

The success of a strike also lies on the extent to which it has drained the capitalists profits and the degree to which it has tarnished their image and the demoralising effect it has on them. But most important is the consolidation of workers and the injection in them of a spirit of confidence for the bigger battle ahead. Winning a battle is different from winning a war. In the case of the strike the latter is certain.

### **Lessons for the future**

Started in 1917 Anglo-American is the country's largest transnational, valued at over \$5.5 billion. It controls the world's deepest gold mine, which contains a three-hundred-mile, six-inch seam of the precious metal. Anglo-American also con-

trols De Beers Corp. which owns the world's largest diamond mine and dominates the world diamond market. This wealth would be impossible without black cheap labour. There are 20 black workers for every white worker on the company pay roll.

The NUM strike as did the 1946 African Mine workers' strike, was 'defeated' not so much because the union gave in but because of increased state violence which left 9 miners dead and about 300 injured. This time the mine and road accidents which could only be attributed to carelessness took their toll. All considered, the mining magnates are responsible for the blood bath and loss of life during this strike.

About 25 miners died in a bus accident on their way home whilst 50 were killed in a mine explosion only hours after the settlement of the strike. This follows the Kinross mine disaster in which 177 miners died only a year ago. There were 800 reported mine deaths in 1986 alone and 8 000 in the past decade. All these deaths are due to the mining company's disregard for the lives of those who produce their wealth.

As if this was not enough, the regime through its under-cover agents and vigilantes in solidarity with the mining bosses bombed the offices of Cosatu in Cape Town. The regime regards the challenge against the mining bosses as an attempt to undermine its authority and an onslaught against the entire apartheid state.

As South Africa's strategic industry is becoming increasingly militarised, incidents of violence between the armed and unarmed workers should be expected to rise.

In the course of the past 70 years since the Russian socialist revolution, the power of the working class has been asserted in many countries including South Africa under different trying conditions. That great revolutionary tactician, VI Lenin, taught us that 'the need to educate the masses to the idea of a violent revolution is the basis of Marx and Engle's theory ... (State and Revolution).

History has also confirmed the correctness of Lenin's assertion that the capitalist state cannot be shaken without a violent revolution. Therefore as the struggle intensifies, the trade unions and the entire working class and its allies are going to have to prepare for this day which is beginning to dawn in South Africa. The burning ques-



*NUM members carrying the president of NUM Mohlatsi*

tion today is not whether to defend the workers and their organisation but how to defend them. The answer is to be found in the structures of the democratic organisations and the entire liberation movement.

As Cosatu is fast gaining strength and its affiliates begin to emerge from every action with greater resilience, it should be expected that the ruling class is going to resort to more violent and subtle divisive mechanisms. The different mining houses will continue to seek to divide the workers by proposing separate collective bargaining agreements, they will pursue the close-down-threat when faces with strike actions. In the absence of a strong and well organised regional trade union centre and a rural based organisation, it will remain extremely difficult for the migrant workers — from the bantustans and from the neighbouring states to protect their jobs against scabs. This poses a challenge to the United Democratic Front, Cosatu, the South African Youth Congress and the Congress alliances to seriously address this problem.

As Che Guevara once said 'it is never possible to conceive of a self defense zone as complete in itself ... while the entire zone beyond remains free of disturbances' As a delaying tactic, the

bourgeoisie is capable of inflating the real danger, a move which can deceive the revolutionaries themselves and make them believe that it's only a matter of time before they fall while the enemy is preparing for a deadly blow — on the people's movement.

The success of the workers struggle will depend not so much on the number of strikes carried out over a certain period, but also on the correct timing and the effective synchronization of those actions with the rest of the democratic struggle, the systematic and well calculated support action with other organs which seek to undermine the status quo.

The other section of the miners — the White miners — which did not join or take solidarity actions with the affected miners should be made to understand that their future does not lie with the bosses nor with the apartheid regime, but with the oppressed sections of the community.

The consciousness gained, the unity and determination which sustained this historic strike should inspire every miner to be an NUM member. The net gains of this successful united workers actions must be a vehicle to greater victories until the total seizure of power by the democratic majority. The trade union movement is here to stay and unity of purpose is the key to workers freedom.

# CHRISTIANITY AND REVOLUTION

## A Battle Fought on Many Fronts

By Cedric Mayson

"I hear the ANC has a religious committee," said a London journalist recently. "Isn't that rather a contradiction in terms? What has the ANC to do with religion?" This remark was a blatant example of the propaganda war that the enemy has been pursuing against us, which has led to a common view in the West that the ANC is a creeping collection of bloodthirsty, uncompromising, communist-controlled terrorists who must therefore be ungodly, irreligious atheists with no concern for justice, peace and reconciliation.

This was one of the myths dissolved into nothing when Comrade President O R Tambo told the World Council of Churches (WCC) Lusaka Consultation in May 1987:

"The African National Congress has a long history of association with the Church. Our founders were church men and women. Throughout our 75 years, that link has never been broken ... Indeed, we shall resist all attempts to inject any anti-religious notions into our midst. Indeed, proceeding on the basis of old traditions within our movement, we are in the process of establishing an inter-faith chaplaincy within the movement."

Long before that small group met to form the Congress in 1912, the commitment of people of faith in the quest to form a new, united, just South Africa was clear. It has been marked in prominence on such occasions as the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize to Chief A J Lutuli, when he said:

"I also, as a Christian and a patriot, could not look on while systematic attempts were made in almost every department of life, to debase the God-factor in man or to set a limit beyond which the human being in his Black form might not strive to serve his creator to the best of his ability. To remain neutral in a situation where the laws of the land virtually criticised God for having created men of colour was the sort of thing I as a Christian could not tolerate."

This faith has also been marked in private a

million times in the hopes and prayers of faithful people: like those who pencilled memorised copies of the Psalms and the Freedom Charter on the walls of the cells below Pretoria Supreme Court while they waited the call to the dock; or those who meet in services in churches, mosques and temples, from thundering celebrations in Regina Mundi in Soweto to lonely wakes in tiny township houses; or the local chaplain entering the prison to share Umthendeleko (Communion) with Nelson Mandela.

British Bishop Jim Thompson of Stepney reported from the WCC Consultation:

"It is impossible to spend a week with the leaders of the liberation movements without seeing the profound influence of theism, and especially Christianity, on the whole society ... the spiritual content of politicians' speeches, the reverence for freedom and life, the nature of the franchise they envisage ..."

But there is a world of difference between personal faith, the teaching of the churches, and the political clout of religious bodies.

### Ambivalence in the Churches

The teaching of the churches has varied between outright support for the apartheid regime with a rigid racist structure in the Dutch Reformed Churches, the assertion of multi-racialism by many English-speaking churches, an expressed desire to eschew politics by many independent churches, and a rampant American evangelicalism by yet others. Through the years, led by the South African Council of Churches (SACC), churches have become increasingly anti-apartheid, but they have not taken a pro-liberation-movement position. Most continue to view askance the 1976 Christian Institute resolution in support of the liberation movement and the principles of the Freedom Charter.

In political, economic and educational spheres, the initiatives of our people demanded revolutionary changes in their objectives and structures,

but this was a slow starter in the religious field. Mighty battles raged for rights within the church, which sometimes suggested a competition for power between White and Black racists on a liberal paternalist platform, which fell far short of the vision of a national liberation struggle and its relationship to the Kingdom of God. The banning of the Christian Institute in 1977, and action against progressive christians, seemed to inhibit even further any fundamental theological developments. People half-heartedly wooed the churches, but did not expect them to be revolutionised. And then came the State of Emergency, and the people turned the teaching of the churches upside down.

### **Oppressor and Oppressed in the Same Church**

In April 1985 a group of christians in Cape Town, endorsed by the SACC, sent out a call for prayer for a change of government, and asked for courage to struggle for the end of unjust rule. In July 1985 in Soweto a group of christians met to face the problem that both oppressor and oppressed claimed loyalty to the same church.

"There we sit in the same church while outside christian policemen and soldiers are beating up and killing christian children or torturing christian prisoners to death while other christians stand by and weakly plead for peace."

152 individuals from most denominations published a document called *Challenge to the Church*, and subtitled *The Kairos Document* (from a biblical word meaning, The time has come, the moment of truth has arrived). Then came *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, from members of the charismatic and pentecostal groups. These groups were not throwing down the gauntlet to the government, but to themselves.

They challenged the traditional teaching on state theology, which was "simply the theological justification of the status quo, with its racism, capitalism and totalitarianism." The oppressive regime used this false teaching to promote a law and order which was unjust, to make a god of the state, which was an idol, and to make communism its symbol of evil "as a convenient way of frightening some people into accepting any kind of domination and exploitation by a capitalist minority."

Under the heading, *Church Theology*, they denounced the common view of reconciliation, justice, non-violence and "the type of faith and

spirituality that has dominated church life for centuries." Reconciliation does not mean standing apart from the struggle, but adopting "a biblical theology of direct confrontation with the forces of evil, rather than a theology of reconciliation with sin and the devil." Justice does not mean reforms made by oppressors with a problem of personal guilt, but a radical change of structures brought about by the people from below. The attitude which condemns all violence equally does not reflect the biblical differentiation between the illegitimate violence of wicked oppressors and the legitimate physical force necessary to defend oneself against aggressors.

None of this has a biblical foundation; it results from centuries of emphasis on a false spirituality which confines christianity to private and individualistic concerns, and excludes public affairs and social problems.

### **Taking a Stand**

The Kairos Document then calls for a prophetic theology which "does not give the impression of sitting on the fence but is clearly and unambiguously taking a stand." This arises from a social analysis which recognises the reality of our struggle between oppressor and oppressed in which no compromise is possible: we must stand on one side or the other. Both in the Bible and in history oppression is a major theme in which christians are called to take sides against tyranny, where government is established against the common good of the people.

"A regime that is in principle the enemy of the people cannot suddenly begin to rule in the interests of all the people. It can only be replaced by another government — one that has been elected by the majority of the people with an explicit mandate to govern in the interests of all the people."

This teaching fuels the hope that is at the heart of the Gospel, because it sees that God sides with the oppressed, and it calls christians, if they are not doing so already, to participate in the struggle for liberation and for a just society.

"The Church should not only pray for a change of government, it should also mobilise its members in every parish to begin to think and work and plan for a change of government ... the Church of Jesus Christ is not called to be a bastion of caution and moderation. The Church should challenge, inspire and motivate people."

The teaching focused in these documents did not originate in the official church structures, but from the bottom up, from christians engaged in the liberation struggle with a vital relevant faith who are able to express their reflections upon their experience in theological terms. Some in the churches have sought to resist the revolutionary blast, but it is so true to the people's experience and the message of scripture that the new teaching has taken the initiative. Members of congregations and students in theological colleges don't ask their preachers and lecturers where the text comes from in the Bible, says Rev. Frank Chikane, now General Secretary of the SACC: "They ask to be shown where it is in the Kairos Document!"

### **Mobilising the Ecclesiastical Battalions**

But although christian individuals may be involved in the struggle, and although the revolutionary social aspects of christian teaching have been unearthed after being hidden for centuries behind a facade of oppressor's heresies, to mobilise the ecclesiastical battalions for political and economic battles is quite another challenge. Churches throughout the world are enmeshed in the prevailing oppressive structures and reluctant to engage in conflict or, in the words of the New Testament to "turn the world upside down."

"The churches seek to win concessions from oppressive systems instead of seeking to change those systems,"

says Comrade Rev. Barney Pityana. Those seeking liberation thus have to enter the lists of battle to bring change within the religious sector. It is a battle fought on several fronts.

Despite all the efforts spent on the information front, people in the churches both in White South Africa and in the west simply do not appreciate the severity of the tyranny on the one hand, and the legitimacy of the liberation movement on the other. Supporters of the system have been highly successful in hiding or excusing the horrific nazi-like oppression, and in promoting false stereotypes of the ANC: many do not want to see the truth.

Our task is to head the churches agenda with the promise of the new united non-racial democratic South African nation on the basis of the Freedom Charter; to insist that any discussion on violence begins with the regime, and the

forces available to the ANC to remove the ability of the tyrant to oppress; to show the appeal to 'pacifism' is simply an excuse for racism, when Blacks (like African states) are criticised for actions which are not held against Whites (like SA or the USA); and to refuse to let them implant the East-West conflict on communism into our situation.



Churches have undoubted influence on the political front but often refuse to use it because they lack the political courage to believe in their faith. Many believers criticise governments but refuse to confront them; some in South Africa and the United Kingdom would rather deny their faith than relinquish the financial support of oppressors by opposing their policies. Calling christians to repentance means enabling them to make choices between oppression and liberation, between good and evil, between the regime and the liberation movement: there is no third way.

The cultural struggle includes deliberately raising political pressures to challenge and divide church membership, to make the making of choices unavoidable, to shake the interests in which their complacency is vested, and seek to convert and regenerate so that "we might by all means save some."



Churches will continue to be manipulated by politicians until their grass root members insist that their faith guides their politics.

Some churches have entered the economic front by declaring themselves in favour of sanctions, but the battle to remove church investments and pension funds from their dependence on the bloody exploitation of South Africa's poor is being stifled by much talk and little action. British churches have several hundred million pounds invested in South Africa but 'The Church of England Synod is bored with the sanctions issue,' says Bishop Jim Thompson. It is a boredom deliberately induced by supporters of the system which brings to mind the words of a previous incumbent of Stepney called Huddleston: "The church sleeps on: sometimes it talks in its sleep."

Some church leaders have called for total sanctions, for massive investments in the Front Line States, major contributions in material aid, and direct financial involvement in the liberation movement. Our task in the churches is to ensure that in President Tambo's words:

"... those who say they are opposed to the apartheid system should act and be seen to act against this system ... and look into the question of ways and means of ensuring that our resolutions are translated into reality."

The suffering front also engages the churches. Their emphasis on taking up the cross to follow Jesus, who voluntarily chose the dangerous path of confronting violence himself to open the way for a new society for others, is not just a poetic sentiment. Journalists often fit tough talk and braggart jargon to the lips of ANC cadres, but in truth the liberation struggle springs from a deep caring and compassion minted in the same crucible as the anger of Jesus, and without the harmonics of grief and groaning our cries of commitment and assertions of victory would be but a thin and reedy sound.

Those in the churches who challenge the misinformation, overturn the false doctrine, demolish the stereotypes, strive for clear understanding, face their own failures, push for political pressure from church leaders, demand that the churches relinquish their adherence to patterns of western greed and commit their resources to making a new nation, are certainly in for trouble. They will also liberate themselves and their religions.

Thousands of religious people in the ANC are seeking to do just that, and the London journalist who mocked the idea of the ANC and religion could do with a touch of liberation himself. Or have his soul saved: same difference.

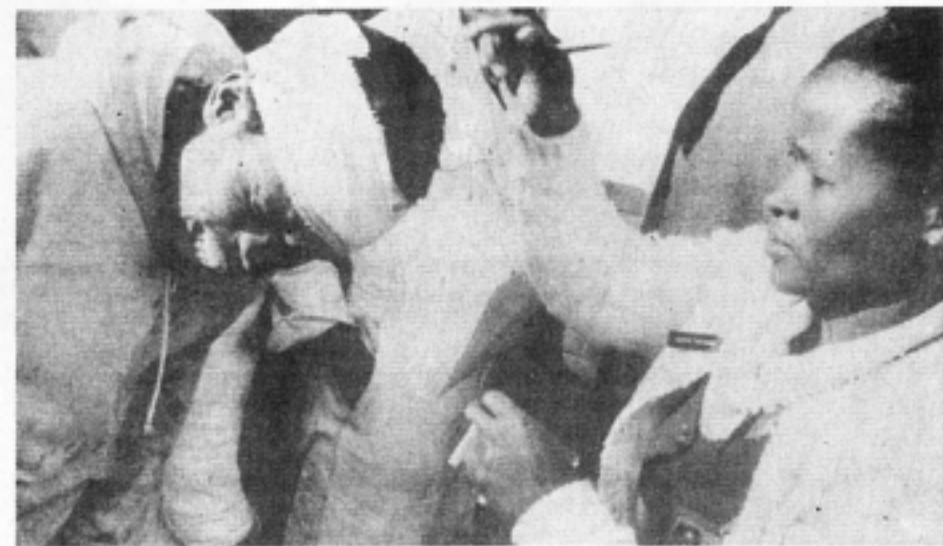


**'THE EXORCISM' - BOTHA AND THE CHURCHES**

# WORKERS DEMAND A LIVING WAGE



The president and secretary-general of NUM Ramaphosa and Motlatsi on a living wage negotiations with representatives of Anglo-American Corporation during the miners strike.



A mine worker being treated for injuries during the strike for a living wage.



Workers singing revolutionary songs at the launch of the NUMSA

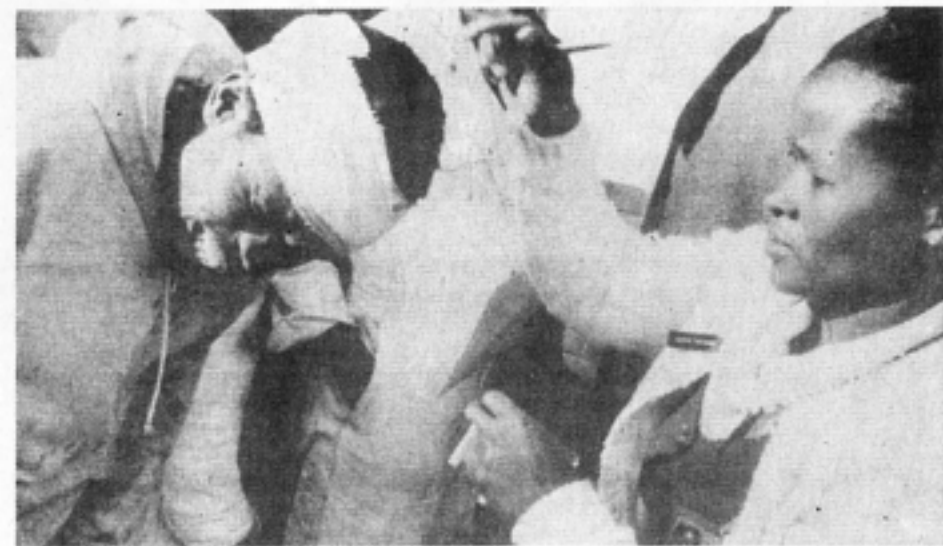


Members of Mawu demonstrating in front of General Electric's head office for a living wage.

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# ANC INTERNATIONAL

The French finance company Suez has investments in Anglo-American, that is 15 mines, to the tune of 50 million francs. Almost all French banks have investments in South African gold mines. Among them are Credit Lyonnais, Banque National de Paris and Society Generale that have 6% investments in Driefontein, Randfontein, Beatrix and Western Deep Level. France is one of the most important lending countries. At the end of 1986 South Africa's debt to France was 2 billion francs.

These are some of the factors which generated solidarity activities in France with the striking South African miners. In Paris about 5 000 people gathered in front of the apartheid embassy where CGT General Secretary, Henri Krasucki demanded that France applies UN sanctions against South Africa and in Lyon several hundred people demonstrated in front of the South African Airways and there were demonstrations at 5 police headquarters in the Northern Province. At a demonstration in front of the South African Consulate in Lille a motion demanding the closure of the consulate was adopted. On August 23 the young communists occupied the offices of South African Tourism in Paris.

## Angola

The ANC Chief Representative in Angola Comrade Uriah Mokeba welcomed a delegation of the Finnish Afrika Committee (a sub-committee of the Finnish Peace Committee) on July, 1987. The Finnish delegation was on a working visit: to put a fence around the Moses Kotane Social Recreation Centre and to get first-hand information about our struggle as well as meeting SWAPO of Namibia in Angola. They were interviewed by Comrades Preston Selepe and Anderson Maseko for the ANC Department of Information in Luanda. They reported:

that 60 political parties, students', women's, church, intellectual and trade union organisations are affiliated to the Finnish Isolate South Africa Campaign. The workers in Finland through their organisation, the Transport Workers' Union, boycotted cargo planes and ships that deal with goods to and from South Africa. Loading and off-loading these ships and planes means promotion of the apartheid system.

On the assassination of Olaf Palme they had

this to say:

"The late Prime Minister of Sweden, Olaf Palme, was a very respected figure in the Nordic countries. We loved and honoured him. Most of us were inspired by his unwavering anti-apartheid stand. His death revealed to us that apartheid is not only a threat to South Africans and Southern Africa but also to the world as a whole. Instead of demoralising us, his death stimulated us to fight harder than we did."

## President Tambo in the Caribbean.

In July President O R Tambo paid a visit to the English-speaking Caribbean Islands. The welcome was enthusiastic. Antigua and Barbuda a tiny eastern Caribbean country with a population of 80 000 donated about £20 000 to the ANC. The Prime Minister, Mr Vere Bird who handed the cheque to the visiting leader for the ANC urged that the money should be used to destroy apartheid.

He proceeded to Guyana. In Venezuela President Tambo met the foreign minister Simon Alberto Consalvi and other government officials. Venezuela has no diplomatic relations with South Africa and has long supported efforts in the United Nations to isolate the Pretoria regime.

In Trinidad he met Prime Minister ANR Robinson and addressed a joint session of parliament. In Jamaica where he met anti-apartheid fighters such as Michael Manley he laid a wreath at the graveside of Marcus Garvey, the national hero of Jamaica, whose centenary is being celebrated throughout the Black world. In Kingston, capital of Jamaica he told journalists that the international cultural and sporting ban is yielding results and generating internal pressure on Pretoria's apartheid regime. This comment came against the background of discussion in the region over how to treat sportsmen who go to South Africa and the issue of the rebel West Indian cricketers who toured the racially divided country in defiance of the sporting boycott.

During the anniversary celebration in Nicaragua he was the central figure. He was greeted by President Daniel Ortega who awarded him the Order of Carlos Fonseca — the highest award of the Sandanista government — for his lifelong fight against the apartheid regime.

# AFRICA REJECTS APARTHEID SPORT

The General Assembly of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) met in Nairobi on July 28th-29th, 1987. This was just prior to the 4th All-Africa Games which took place in Nairobi — 9 years after the 3rd All-Africa Games which were held in Algiers. The President of Kenya, Daniel T. Arap Moi officially opened the 4th All-Africa Games on Saturday, 1st August, 1987 at the Moi International Sports Centre, Kasarani, Nairobi said:

"Many of you will recall, that last year, Kenya and other sister nations in the continent, pulled out of the Commonwealth Games, as an expression of our solidarity with our sisters and brothers who continue to suffer under the apartheid regime of South Africa. We, therefore, appreciate the sacrifices which our brothers and sisters in southern Africa are undergoing to bring about the end of apartheid in South Africa.

We believe that their sacrifice towards this desirable end is part of the fight which brought about the wind of change in the continent of Africa. It is a just war which all of us started, in this continent, and it is a war which all of us are obliged to fight to the end. It is, therefore, necessary that we offer the material and moral support they require to finish off what we all started many years ago. This is the reason why we Kenyans have decided to offer the African National Congress facilities to open up an office here in Nairobi.

It is in the same spirit that Kenyan workers unanimously decided, during Labour Day celebrations this year, to make individual contributions in support of the liberation struggle in southern Africa. This is a gesture of the unwavering support all the people of Kenya have for the just struggle for freedom being waged by our suffering brothers and sisters in southern Africa. It is our conviction that these concerted efforts will bear fruit soon and that apartheid will be wiped out from our midst.

I am fully aware that there are some people who feel strongly that politics should be kept out of sports. We can appreciate their desire to have fun, but we cannot accept to have fun and at the same time shut our eyes to the abuses inflicted by apartheid on human dignity. I do believe that most of us would find it extremely difficult to engage

in sport, with a man who has just killed an innocent brother, sister, mother, father or child. The enjoyment of sport cannot co-exist with apartheid."

Sam Ramsamy, Chairman of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) an organisation which has campaigned tirelessly for the international isolation of apartheid in sports told the General Assembly of ANOCA:

"As we assemble here apartheid South Africa and its overseas lobby are secretly manoeuvring to re-open the issue of South African participation in the Olympic Games. All of us are intent on not even allowing any discussion on reviewing South Africa's position until apartheid and White domination is abolished. But we should neither ignore nor underestimate apartheid South Africa's lobby.

The pro-South African lobby is now trying desperately hard to convince the naive that the international ban on South African sport is penalising Blacks — the majority group — who are the victims of apartheid. To provide ammunition for its overseas lobby, White South Africa is now singling out a section of Black athletic talent among selected migrant labour groups and developing this talent to act as a battering ram to open up the way for White international participation.

This manoeuvre is being specifically aided by South African mining groups and conglomerates which benefit tremendously by cheap labour ensured by the evil system of apartheid. South African mining groups which at one level encourage selected Black employees to take up competitive athletics, on the other, continue to house these very same Blacks in the most inhuman conditions. The Commonwealth Eminent Persons' Group stated in its report in 1986 that these migrant workers "often live in the cities for eleven months of the year in singlemen's quarters — a euphemism for crowded huts and amenities devoid of any semblance of privacy and violating the most basic norms of human decency."

The case for excluding apartheid South Africa from world sport is overwhelming but the pro-South African lobby who have now become the self-proclaimed guardians of morals and ethics, joined by some naive administrators who are not part of the pro-South

African lobby, are persuading Africa to review the South African issue.

Mr Samaranch, the President of the IOC made it clear after the Olympic Congress in Baden-Baden that a mission of survey to South Africa "can only be settled if its creation does not give rise to opposition or problems from our African colleagues".

The IOC must be told that any review of South Africa's position must be shelved until apartheid is abolished.

It should be now recognised that the sports apartheid issue is primarily an African problem; and as such the South African question can only be initiated by African countries and not by the so-called do-gooders of Western Europe and North America.

Those who are devoting their energies advancing South Africa's cause, be it divisive or naive, should be told in no uncertain terms that they are wasting their time and they should rather be concentrating on addressing the root cause of the problem namely apartheid itself.

Apartheid ensures White privilege and elitism in sport as in all other facets of South African society. Apartheid secures 80% of all sports facilities for Whites who make up less than 20% of the total population. Only the abolition of apartheid can re-distribute facilities and create genuine sporting opportunities for all South Africans irrespective of race, colour and ethnic origin.

The IOC must be made to realise that any accommodation of South Africa would be to deal the most grievous blow imaginable to the Olympic movement; the consequences would be incalculable.

Although the campaign to isolate apartheid sport is steadily progressing — thanks to the intervention of many governments and some European sports organisations like the Swedish Sports confederation and with the formation of the International Campaign Against Apartheid Sport — South Africa is beginning to nibble at our successes and shortly we can see the slow erosion of many of our precious successes.

This, I believe, is the result of our silence at congresses of international sports federations. South Africa and its supporters are fully aware of this and are beginning to exploit the situation. As a result South Africa is now

openly inviting teams and individuals to participate with them. Some of South Africa's closest supporters, especially the USA, United Kingdom and Switzerland, are even encouraging the violation of international sports rules.

If the lion stops its roar the other animals around it soon realise it is getting weak.

The introduction of tennis into the Olympic Games can, if we are not careful, present us with a new problem. The International Tennis Federations's (ITF) antiquated colonial type of constitution is being used to protect apartheid South Africa. Numerous efforts to expel South Africa have been blocked by the loaded voting strength of the Western countries.

Tennis has now become the only Olympic sport which accommodates South Africans in international competitions. South Africans compete regularly in all the major competitions in Western Europe (except Scandinavia and Holland), North America and Australia.

Not only are Western countries determined to fortify South Africa's position in international tennis; some of them intend extending South Africa's participation into the Olympic Games, the weird pretext being that South Africans, are participating as individuals and are not representing their country. The ITF has certainly not been sympathetic to Third World problems.

We have already informed the ITF and the IOC about this matter. ANOCA and the SCSA should now demand that any new recognition by the IOC should comply with the parameters of ANOC's 1984 Mexico Declaration which urges the exclusion of South African affiliation of the appropriate international federation.

The expulsion of South Africa from all international sports federations will greatly diminish apartheid's international sports exchanges. We have to intensify this campaign. ANOCA and UCSA must urge African countries to present motions to international congresses for the exclusion of apartheid South Africa. Many international federations will be holding their congresses in 1988. Of the 29 federations which have full Olympic recognition South Africa is still a member of 15. We should set ourselves the task of expelling South Africa from as many as possible in 1988".

# FEUDS AND TENSION IN THE TRANSKEI

By Russell



The recent farcical feuds between the Matanzima brothers in the Transkei bantustan, as well as that between the Ciskei and Transkei bantustans, have attracted considerable interest in the liberal press both within South Africa and internationally. And yet, these squabbles, between the bantustans and within them, are entirely consistent with the very system of apartheid and should consequently come as no surprise to anyone. As part of the programme to divide and contain the rural masses, such quarrels serve only to distract attention from the harsh reality of these pseudo states, that of grinding poverty and ruthless oppression. They are of interest, nevertheless, not because it is of any particular relevance which puppet rules a bantustan, but rather because of the political climate which the conflict has generated, and for the possibilities which it may expose for progressive forces within the region. It is the intention of this article to detail the factors underly-

ing recent developments in the Transkei bantustan and to assess their import for the struggle.

## **The 'Retirement' of Kaiser Matanzima**

Kaiser Matanzima is in every respect the founding father of the contemporary Transkei bantustan. From the outset, he was one of the most openly collaborative chiefs in the territory, and early in his career, nailed his flag to the apartheid mast, correctly anticipating in its development the prospects for self-enrichment and regional power. In 1963, without a popular mandate, he accepted 'self-rule' on behalf of the Transkei, and in 1976, following the wishes of his masters in Pretoria, he committed the region to a sham 'independence'.

As the first 'prime minister' of the bantustan, he subsequently elevated himself to the post of 'state president' in 1979; a ceremonial position which, in practice, he soon converted to ex-

ecutive status. Under him, his younger brother George Matanzima, who was no less ardent a supporter of 'separate development', first held the portfolio of 'minister of defence' and then that of 'prime minister' when he himself became 'president'.

Throughout this period George lived in the shadow of his older brother (whose power was seemingly unassailable) and his position as 'prime minister' was often largely an administrative one.

In January 1986, for reasons that have never fully been explained, Kaiser retired as 'president' and returned to his rural constituency in Qamata. Despite his departure from formal bantustan politics, however, it was widely believed that he had every intention of establishing himself as the power behind the throne; the elder statesman who derived his support from charisma and from his 'traditional' status as a paramount chief.

His position as the paramount chief of Western Tembu-

land, in fact, ensured that he would always (in terms of the bantustan's 'constitution') be an ex-officio member of the Transkeian 'legislature' and that he would be able to participate in 'parliamentary' debates should he so wish.

### **Rule by Remote Control**

Kaiser, nevertheless, left nothing to chance, and before his departure had prepared the way for his intended rule by remote control, by removing from office senior administrators whose loyalty he doubted, and by shuffling 'ministerial' portfolios within the bantustan's 'cabinet'. The appointment of Tutor Ndamase, the compliant paramount chief of Western Pondoland as his successor, ensured further that the position of 'state president' would revert to being one of purely ceremonial significance. At the same time, it was commonly believed that Kaiser had selected his heir apparent in one Liston Ntshongwana, an opportunistic playboy, rumoured to be his illegitimate son.

George Matanzima however had ambitions of his own, and with the departure of his elder brother, and the ready compliance of Tutor Ndamase, he began increasingly to assert himself in the centre of the bantustan's political stage, removing from office those functionaries who were clearly Kaiser's men.

Kaiser himself, however, was not slow to reassert his influence, and in April 1986, in an effort to forestall a hero's funeral for his arch-rival, Sabata Dalinyebo, whose body had been returned from exile for burial, he marshalled a group of soldiers from the Transkei 'defence force' to assist him in snatching the corpse from a funeral parlour in Umtata, and enforcing its burial in a site of his own choosing. This macabre operation flagrantly violated a number of the bantustan's laws, but despite the fact that it had been undertaken without George Matanzima's consent, George, at that stage, lacked the confidence (or perhaps the interest) to challenge his brother's actions.

In May, just four months after his departure, Kaiser let it be known that he was not happy with the way things were developing in Umtata in his absence. In response to student protest at the University of Transkei, he sent an extraordinary open letter to his brother cautioning him about what he saw as a deteriorating situation:

"The singing, distribution of pamphlets, insults on the leadership at UNITRA, are a clear beginning of the South African Black revolution and unless nipped in the bud ruthlessly by any means, it will escalate and violence will be the order of the day ... This letter is the beginning of the stand I am going to openly take in the political campaigns. I will take the stand in your support. I cannot sit down and watch you being fooled around".

Kaiser's fraternal concern however soon gave way to antagonism as the brothers clashed in the run-up to the bantustan's general election, scheduled to be held in October 1986. Kaiser was annoyed that he, along with other paramount chiefs, had been excluded from the Transkei National Independence Party (TNIP) committees appointed to select candidates for the forthcoming election. As the founder of the party, he accused his brother of disloyalty and of insulting the paramount chiefs.

Although a major split was averted by intermediaries, Kaiser nevertheless made his displeasure felt by throwing his support behind a number of 'independent' candidates within the party who stood against official TNIP candidates. Seventeen of these independents were successful in the election, and two managed to unseat 'cabinet' members in the process; an occurrence



which greatly rankled with George. At this juncture, the battle lines between the brothers Matanzima had been drawn. Ultimately, however, it was a number of external factors which served to accentuate the divisions and harden the conflict between them.

### **A United 'Xhosaland' — the Matanzimas' Dream**

While both Matanzimas had long nurtured the idea of uniting the Transkei and Ciskei into a greater Xhosaland under their control, for George it had become something of an obsession. Unaware of the irony, he used frequently to refer to 'that puppet state to our south', and at a public function in 1986 had declared that he would never rest 'until Transkei and Ciskei are one state undivided by artificial boundaries'. With the feud between the Sebe brothers and the growing political tensions within the Ciskei, George Matanzima saw the chance to advance his cause.

In October 1986 Charles Sebe, who had been incarcerated by his brother Lennox for 'treason', was sprung from the Middeldrift gaol in the Ciskei and taken to Umtata by members of the Transkei's contingent of ex-Rhodesian Selous Scout mercenaries. At the same time Lennox Sebe's son, Kwane Sebe and a senior Ciskeian official, were kidnapped and taken across the border into the Transkei.

Lennox Sebe responded by expelling a number of Transkeian residents and restricting movement between the two bantustans, but he was for the most part powerless to do anything in reply. Reflecting the general air of unreality that pervades the bantustans, he appealed to the international community for support, stating that he was going to take the case to the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

In December, with the intervention of the Pretoria regime, a pseudo-dramatic 'prisoner swop' was conducted on the Kei Bridge, where Lennox's son was exchanged for those junior members of the Sebe family (including Charles' sons) who were still incarcerated in the Ciskei.

The talk at the time was of a new era of reconciliation but the Ciskei bantustan had nevertheless been thoroughly humiliated by George Matanzima, who had lost nothing in the exchange and had consolidated his support among Ciskeian 'dissidents' resident in the Transkei.

The era of peace that Lennox Sebe had hoped for

was not to last. In January 1987 the Transkei claimed that they had foiled a Ciskeian plot to kidnap Charles Sebe, now a 'refugee' in Umtata.

In retaliation George Matanzima, emboldened by his earlier successes, authorised a raid by members of the Transkei Defence Force (TDF) on Lennox Sebe's 'palace' in Bisho, in an effort to kidnap or assassinate him. The raid was a fiasco; one Transkeian soldier was killed, five were captured and the rest fled, abandoning all their equipment in the process.

### **The Pretoria Regime Intervenes**

The failure of George Matanzima's expansionist dreams precipitated a further sequence of events in his fraternal struggle with Kaiser. The initial response of the Pretoria regime to the squabbles among its siblings was predictably restrained. Given that the initial design of the apartheid programme entailed the direct process of divide and rule, the conflict between the rulers of the two Xhosa bantustans must have seemed reassuring evidence that the policy was working. The tensions between its offspring moreover, however farcical to the international community, served an added ideological function to the racist regime.

The excesses of the bantustan elite are used in National Party propaganda as explicit evidence of the type of chaos that would ensure should there ever be majority rule in South Africa. Thus, immediately after the abortive attack on Sebe's palace, the then Deputy Foreign Minister, Ron Miller, was to state patronisingly that 'rivalry is endemic in Africa' and that it must be expected that 'these things will happen from time to time'.

The ideological advantages to be derived from the conflict between the bantustans were, however, evidently outweighed by the prospect that the Transkei might in some way (however improbable) be succeeding in its expansionist objectives of forming a united Xhosaland. More importantly perhaps, the continuing conflict was cutting across Pretoria's most recent attempts to restructure the form of apartheid, under the guise of 'regional development'. In terms of this initiative it is envisaged that portions of the Ciskei, the Transkei and East London will be planned as one functional economic region. This so-called 'Kwa Border' initiative (following the KwaZulu/Natal programme) would inevitably necessitate a considerable degree of co-operation

between the two bantustans, which was by that time non-existent.

In an endeavour to construct some form of truce between the two bantustans, a high-level delegation from Pretoria, including the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Police, was despatched to the Ciskei and the Transkei. During this visit Lennox Sebe was able to convince his mentors that the major destabilising factor in the region was the presence of the Selous Scouts mercenaries in the Transkei 'defence force', in that they gave the Transkei an unfair advantage militarily.

This fact had not been lost on the Pretoria delegation either, and it is certain that the issue was raised when they subsequently held talks with George Matanzima in Umtata. The eventual expulsion of the Selous Scouts from the Transkei was not precipitated by Pik Botha and his colleagues, but they undoubtedly exerted pressure in that direction.

### **George Matanzima's Mercenaries**

The ex-Selous Scouts settled in the Transkei in 1981, after their former commander Ron Reid-Daly (now their employer) was awarded a contract to train the Transkei 'defence force'. Reid-Daly's involvement with the TDF was strictly mercenary, and although he initially assumed a position as head of the 'armed forces', he was in actuality a private consultant who hired out the services of his security company (Transkei Security Services) to the bantustan on a commercial basis.

Reid-Daly was directly responsible to George Matanzima, who in addition to his position as 'prime minister', also held the portfolio of 'minister of defence'. As George's confidant, he and his henchmen were able to secure a number of additional lucrative security contracts, including one to protect designated key installations around the bantustan.

The presence of these mercenaries in the Transkei was by no means appreciated by all in the bantustan's armed forces however, and for some years there were rumours of dissatisfaction among the troops over the arrogance and racism of George's White military advisers. In particular, it was said, subordinate White officers refused to submit themselves to the command of their African seniors. This problem was accentuated in 1986 when, on expiry of his first con-

tract, Reid-Daly 'officially' handed over control of the TDF to General Zondwa Mtirara. In terms of their new contract, the Selous Scouts were now merely 'advisors' to the TDF, and yet they continued to exercise effective control through Mtirara, who had been appointed for his compliance and pro-Selous leanings.

Among the most outspoken critics of Reid-Daly and his men at this time, was the newly appointed 'chief of staff', Brigadier Bantu Holomisa, who was subsequently detained in January 1987 (on the authorisation of George Matanzima but on the instigation of the Selous Scouts), on the pretext that he had been involved in the attempt to kidnap Charles Sebe and return him to the Ciskei; (he maintained he had been silenced because he had questioned the legality of new contracts being entered into by the Selous Scouts).

The detention of Holomisa was not popular with members of the TDF, who felt he was being victimised by the White advisors for his outspokenness. This dissatisfaction grew with the failed raid on Sebe's palace, the death of a Transkeian soldier, and the general disgrace of the bantustan's 'defence force'. While the raid had unquestionably, been initiated by George Matanzima himself, anger within the TDF was focused on the Selous Scouts, who were felt to be the source of destabilisation between the two bantustans and of discord within the armed forces.

### **The Bantustan 'Army' Revolts**

In April 1987 the simmering unrest within the TDF broke out into open revolt as troops in the army headquarters outside Umtata mutinied. An Action Committee (led by four officers under the command of a Lieutenant Colonel Craig Nduli) delivered an ultimatum to George Matanzima: that he should release Holomisa and appoint him as head of the defence force in place of Mtirara, that he should expel Reid-Daly and his men and, somewhat incongruously, that he should authorise a pay rise for all lieutenants in the force. George initially balked at the first two of these suggestions, but having been briefly detained by the soldiers and in the face of a certain coup he reluctantly conceded. Umtata was at this stage under virtual martial law, with administrative buildings under cordon and with blocks on all major arterial roads.

The following day, after a meeting with his

'cabinet' who had pressured him to take urgent action, George gave notice that the Selous Scouts' contracts were cancelled with immediate effect. Members of the Action Committee however, took matters into their own hands and arrested 17 Selous Scouts including Reid-Daly (a further 10 had already fled), and subjected them first to public humiliation in front of the troops and subsequently to interrogation (and some to assault), before escorting them out of the Transkei. With the departure of his mentors Mtirara resigned from the TDF, and was immediately replaced as head by the newly released Holomisa.

While George maintained afterwards that he had always been in charge of events, it is certain that he was merely reclaiming lost control, and that his dominance over the bantustan will, in the short-term future, depend on whether he is able to maintain the support of the 'defence force'. In that respect it is clear that Kaiser himself had been instrumental in fuelling the mutiny within the armed forces, a factor alluded to by Mtirara on his resignation. Never a strong supporter of the Selous Scouts (even while still in office), he saw in their expulsion an opportunity to diminish the power of his brother. George notwithstanding, managed to weather the storm, but his position had unquestionably been weakened, and against his will he was pressured by Pretoria (and by members of the army and his own cabinet), not only to expel the Selous Scouts, but also to enter into a peace agreement with the Ciskei.

The signing of a 'tri-lateral pact' between the Transkei, Ciskei and Pretoria in late April, reflected the regime's broader intentions for the region, in that it was accompanied by the establishment of a 'Regional Commission for Security and Co-operation', which has as part of its brief the promotion of economic co-operation between the bantustans. George Matanzima, however, was less than enthusiastic about the agreement, and stated at its conclusion that he hoped it would not go the same way as the Chamberlain/Hitler pact in the 1930's.

**Kaiser Matanzima tries to Return to Power**  
Having failed to reassert himself in the Transkei via the army, Kaiser Matanzima's next move was

to come at the annual general meeting of the TNIP in May, following the expulsion of 11 of the 17 'independent' MPs from the party (for having broken ranks during the October election). Infuriated by the dismissal of his supporters, Kaiser launched into a full scale attack on the TNIP in general and George's 'government', in particular. Accusing his brother of 'bribery, corruption and deterioration', and with a threat to return as prime minister, he led a walk out from the meeting, followed by roughly a quarter of the delegates, most of whom were chiefs.

Now fully intent on to a return to power, Kaiser announced the establishment of a new political party, the Transkei Independence Party (TIP), which predictably differed from the TNIP only in name and not at all in policy. His stated objective at this time, was to return to power for a limited duration until the Transkei was 'back on the right path', at which time he would hand over the reins to a 'certain young man', whose skills he was developing. In pursuit of this goal, he went so far as to approach George in private and suggested that the matter could be settled amicably, if his brother agreed to step down as prime minister and once again become his second in command. George refused and made public Kaiser's confidential suggestion.

Incensed at the insensitivity of his brother, Kaiser Matanzima led his new party into the 'House of Assembly' in the belief that he would defeat George's 'government' in the forthcoming 'no confidence debate'. The 'House' broke up in an uproar, and order was only finally restored when Kaiser and his followers were expelled by the 'Speaker' for having brought in an unregistered party. Immediately thereafter, George moved swiftly to neutralise the very real threat his brother was posing. A new bill, the Transkei Constitution Amendment Act, which prohibits the return to politics of a former 'state president' was rushed through the bantustan's legislature in one day. Among the rationalisations given for the bill was the fact that, in addition to his present income of R147 000 per annum (derived from his pension as a former 'state president' and his existing position as a paramount chief) Kaiser would, if he did in fact become prime minister (a definite fear for George and his supporters), be able to draw an additional salary of R74 000 per annum, raising his total

income to R221 000, a figure which was said to be unreasonably high.

### **Kaiser Matanzima Banished**

Kaiser gave notice that he was contesting the legality of the new Act, but his return to power received a serious setback when he was served with a banishment order (signed by George Matanzima Ndamase) confining him to his home district of Qamata. The rich ironies of this dramatic development can have escaped few, that Kaiser Matanzima (protesting his innocence all the while) was himself now subject to the same restrictions that he had so often in the past used to silence political opponents including, in one instance, his own son-in-law Prince Madikizela.

Having, temporarily at least, neutralised Kaiser's offensive, George moved to consolidate his position within the bantustan with the same ruthlessness with which his elder brother had come to be associated. The leaders of the new TIP party (De Villiers Qunta, the leader, and Simon Burhali, the deputy leader) were arrested and Kaiser's 'certain young man', Liston Ntshongwana, was removed from his key position as 'prime minister's adviser' and head of the Cabinet and Development Secretariat, and was subsequently detained while attempting to seek 'political asylum' in the South African 'embassy' in Umtata. At the same time Qunta (the new party's administrative chief) proved to have been so intimidated by this show of force that he resigned from the TIP immediately after his release from detention.

It is unlikely, nevertheless, that the feud has come to an end. Kaiser Matanzima, in contesting his banishment, has accused his brother of being under the influence of a clique of 'leftists and communists' within the bantustan's 'cabinet', and has vowed to return. It is also evident that the Pretoria regime is capitalising on the present leadership crisis, and is attempting to reassert its absolute authority over the bantustan. Following years of financial mismanagement, the Transkei is being increasingly coerced, through the agency of the Development Bank of Southern Africa and other state-sponsored regional development bodies, into accepting Pretoria's current economic and technocratic approach to regional planning. Thus, in the absence of concerted opposition by the bantustan leaders the limited budgetary autonomy of the Transkei is

being gradually eroded as financial control increasingly returns to Pretoria.

### **The Struggle Ahead**

The actions of the leaders of the bantustans frequently operate at the level of farce, and highlight the absurdity of these puppet 'states'. Nevertheless, there are important inferences to be drawn from recent events within the Transkei bantustan, over and above the greed and lust for power of the Matanzima brothers. Their power struggle, which has no ideological or political content in itself, comes against a backdrop of increasing resistance in the region, and has in many respects been precipitated by this defiance. Numerous protests and strikes by students and scholars, together with a series of successful raids by MK fighters have served to raise the level of political consciousness in the region to the extent that it can no longer be considered a 'safe seat' for Pretoria's puppets.

The Transkei region is thus increasingly volatile and unstable politically, and in this climate of uncertainty. The Transkeian 'armed forces' might emerge as a 'wild card' since their loyalty to neither Matanzima is a certainty. Indeed, it is evident that many of those who join this 'army' do so purely out of financial desperation, since jobs are hard to come by. Their commitment to the ultimate defence of the bantustan is thus questionable, and their loyalty is by no means assured. This in itself could become an important factor as the bantustan is drawn more and more into the main stream of the struggle.

Of more significance is the fact that the present political crisis has severely shaken the confidence of the bantustan's ruling clique, and few if any can now consider the 'Republic of Transkei' as a viable long-term proposition. Largely as a consequence of this, a form of stasis has overtaken the bantustan's administration, and the implementers of policy lack both commitment and resolve. This lack of morale is eminently exploitable by progressive forces in the region. What is required however is a considerably higher level of community organisation in the region coupled with a concerted programme of politicisation. The process, nevertheless, is under way and the tradition of heroic resistance is once again resurging in the birthplace of Mbeki, Tambo, Sisulu, Mandela and many other heroes of the struggle.

## Johnson Ngwavela

Johnson Ngwevela, 'the King of Langa' as he was affectionately known in the forties and fifties, died in Cape Town on the 27th July. He was in his late eighties. His 'constituency' stretched from nearby Nyanga, Elsie's River and Windermere to the distant areas of Paarl, Stellenbosch, Worcester and many other areas in between and beyond these better known areas in the vastnesses of the Western Cape.

He knew and visited practically everyone of the many shantytowns in this wide expanse. Every shack was open house to this modest, caring and popular man — a leader of the most downtrodden of his people.

Ngwevela in his early years worked as peddler and labourer but later became the secretary and interpreter for Sam Kahn's legal practice. He also became the political agent for several candidates standing for office to Parliament and provincial and town councils.

But Ngwevela's main interest lay in organising the extra-parliamentary opposition to the various racist governments. He became chairman of the ANC in the Western Cape and also served for many years on the District Committee of the Communist Party in Cape Town.

In the run-up to the Anti-Communist Bill of 1950, Ngwevela was given the unenviable task of officially dissolving most of the C.P. branches in the various African areas. He met with bitter hostility from those who initially believed the dissolution to be a ruse: He promised to return and give them guidance and this he did by surreptitiously travelling at night after work for hundreds of miles over many months to persuade them to intensify their work in the ANC and this, they did because of their great trust in him.

Ngwevela was one of 12 signatories who appealed to all black people to stay away from work on July 26th in 1950 in the Western Cape when the Nats were issuing all kinds of dark threats to the oppressed masses. Later, in May 1952, he was amongst the first to receive banning orders from the ANC and many other organisations. He had already been placed on the 'black list' of 'named' Communists by the so-called Minister of Justice — 'Blackie' Swart.

Ngwevela appealed against these bannings and the Appellate Division held that the Minister could not impose such a ban without being given a hearing. As a result of this judgement scores of 'named' people were allowed to speak in public again and received 'unbanning' notices to the great embarrassment of the Nationalist government. The law was later amended to reimpose these bannings.

Comrade Johnson was the first person to defy the unjust laws in 1952 when he was smuggled into the packed Salt River Institute to declare the start of the great Defiance Campaign.

Ngwevela was a deeply religious man and argued that he could see no incompatibility between religion and Marxism since it was the great many similarities between the two and not the differences which mattered in the fight against apartheid.

Over the years Ngwevela was gradually losing his sight. He was refused permission to go overseas for an operation to his eyes. The effect of the many bannings and his poor health restricted his activities but this did not prevent the authorities from interning him for the duration of the Sharpeville emergency in 1960.

In the last years of his life, Ngwevela was



*Comrade Johnson Ngwavela (centre) with members of his family in 1985*

restricted to his home in Langa by a combination of banning orders and almost complete blindness.

We send our condolences to his widow, Isobel and family in South Africa and our special sym-

pathy to his grand-daughter, Pauline his great-grandchild in exile in our ranks of the ANC in which cause he was such a great champion.

Hamba Kahle.



# MARCUS GARVEY

## Son of Africa



*Michael Manley with President Tambo at Marcus Garvey's Memorial in Jamaica*

Lewis Rupert, *Marcus Garvey, Anti-colonial champion*, London 1987.

One of the most important imports of modern Africa are ideas. Through the press, radio,

books, schools and African students/intellectuals 'from abroad' new and 'attractive' ideas are imported and in some cases these ideas are not helpful to the cause of African liberation.

The people of Africa are called upon — and

this is more relevant now than before — to discover their glorious traditions of history, to heighten their vigilance against neocolonialism, which plunders and cripples their culture, to close ranks in the struggle against imperialism and to discover and map out their place in this world-wide struggle and revolution. The development of a progressive and patriotic historical consciousness and thinking is part of our struggle for economic and social emancipation from colonialism, racism and neocolonialism.

One of the forms of the ideological class and national struggle in sub-Saharan Africa is the growing historical consciousness. This is closely connected with the general process of polarisation which is taking place in Africa and this process encompasses the writing of history. The theorists of imperialism distort and even hide the history of the African liberation movements. But the progressive African historians demand a history freed from imperialism and neocolonialism. It is the task of progressive African and Black historiography to expose and demolish this colonial — apologetic — history. It is our task to research, honour and record these heroic struggles and accord them their rightful place in history. What we are saying is that writing history is an obligation; a struggle against the forces of darkness and doom.

This is what Rupert Lewis attempted to do in his book on Garvey. Rupert Lewis is Head of the Department of Government, University of the West Indies, Jamaica, a Garvey scholar of long standing and a specialist on Black nationalism and Marxism in the Caribbean. Himself a Marxist, an activist and leader of the Jamaica Workers' Party he was for some time his party's representative at the *World Marxist Review* in Prague. This book is a product of years of research, listening and political activism.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey — the National Hero of Jamaica — was born on August 17th, 1887. In this context Lewis's book can be regarded as part of the commemoration of the centenary of his birth. But there is more to it. Rupert Lewis attempts to put the record straight; he destroys some of the distortions, myths, falsifications and social stereotypes aimed at denigrating Garvey. There are so many of them. For the purpose of this review we shall select but a few and concentrate on those issues which have a direct bearing on our situation.

Garvey, says Rupert, did not in fact preach the philosophy of mass exodus to Africa:

"Instead his words and deeds indicate that whilst the liberation of Africa was central to the future of Blacks in the modern world, the struggles in the United States, Caribbean and other areas of the diaspora were equally important" (p.13).

Garvey was strong on the question of 'race consciousness' which he, according to Rupert, viewed positively as an anti-colonial concept:

"It asserted the humanity of a race of people, regardless of class, whom capitalism oppressed and exploited and branded inferior. In this context racial oppression and class exploitation stemmed from the same source. Therefore race consciousness ... was very often both the national cry of a people and also a class cry, but the latter was not the cry of one class but of several classes linked by a common yoke of suffering" (p.27).

The formulation that 'national cry' was different from 'class cry' which was not 'the cry of one class, but of several' seems to us a contradiction in terms because a 'national cry' is a cry of 'several classes linked by a common yoke of suffering' — a common national grievance.

Obscured by silence and later battered by the printed word:

"Such distortions, even among progressive people, have fulfilled colonialist plans to perpetuate the image of Garvey as a common criminal or else a nincompoop" (p.194).

Garvey, this son of African slaves, played an important role in the early beginnings of the African resistance movement. His actions and philosophy were influenced by the reality in his native Jamaica where the 'mixed race' (Coloureds) and 'well-to-do Negroes' were "often more vitriolic in their hostility to radicalism than the Whites" (p.36) and where the most oppressed section of the poor peasantry and semi-proletarian masses produced Rastafarianism.

Garvey travelled widely in Latin America, the Caribbean, USA, Britain and Europe and spoke in numerous meetings and this widened his political horizons thus linking the emancipation of his race with world-wide issues such as the anti-colonial struggles in India and Ireland. In 1914 he formed and led the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League (UNIA). His



popularity and prestige among the Blacks throughout the world rose and he spoke more authoritatively on these issues.

Marcus Garvey was very, very Africa-conscious. Rupert Lewis says the wide influence of Garveyism in Africa, and the "popular response to the hope of salvation from colonial bondage through a Black messiah" (p.167) is probably underestimated but as far as it is known to date in around 1920, the UNIA had eight branches in South Africa, three in Sierra Leone, two in Gold Coast, two in Liberia, two in South West Africa (Namibia) and one in Nigeria.

Lewis has some interesting things to say about Garveyism in South Africa:

"There were very active UNIA divisions in Johannesburg and Cape Town which maintained regular correspondence with the New York headquarters ... Some West Indians were also based there and notable among those in the Garvey movement were J G Gumbs and Arthur McKinley ... In the Eastern Cape, Garveyism was subjected to mystic interpretation by an African non-conformist religious sect, a phenomenon not uncommon among similar churches in various parts of the continent ...

Indeed, Garveyism exerted a formative influence on Clements Kadalie, organiser of the Industrial and Commercial Union and influenced leaders of the ANC such as Sol Plaatje and Selope R. Thema. Garvey frequently referred to Abantu — Batho (People), organ of the ANC, in his speeches, and material from it was published in the Negro World" (p.160-161)

In the context of a growing racist offensive and oppression in South Africa Garvey's message found fertile ground especially among the non-proletarian, and educated Africans. Garvey had influence even among the peasants. J. Barnard Belman, a Negro World agent reported:

"The general opinion of the Black people in the Transvaal is that the Honourable Marcus Garvey is the Great King. They simply swear by him. I am sure they would go through fire and water for and with him" (p. 161)

Garvey's slogan was "Africa for the Africans". This simply meant 'repossession of Africa by Africans'. There was nothing sinister about this.

This has actually become a reality in independent Africa. If one considers that this slogan was

coined by Garvey when the continent of Africa 'belonged' to British, German, French, Italian, Belgian and Portuguese powers, one cannot miss the revolutionary content and dynamism of "Africa for Africans". Was the slogan suitable for South African conditions? If one considers that at this stage the liberation movement in South Africa was grappling with the problem of understanding the concept of national self-determination and the slogan of the 'Black Republic' — which was essentially the same thing as "Africa for Africans" with the distinction that it had other premises, that is, viewing the 'Black Republic' as a stage towards or a form of transition to a Workers' and Peasants' Republic — it is understandable that some people had misgivings about the dynamism of Marcus Garvey's anti-colonial slogan. In South Africa the slogan "Africa for the Africans" tended to appeal to sectarian forces, ultra-nationalistic elements (PAC) who ignored and distorted Garvey's message of anti-colonialism and unity.

It is true that Garveyism had inherent contradictions which are basically the contradictions found in the nationalism of oppressed people — the contradiction between subservience and belligerence and the lack of balance between social/class issues and national liberation issues. There were negative influences and pressures which led to what the Comintern characterised as "Negro reformism". This led to serious problems between Black nationalism and communism.

There are questions which are left open in the book by Lewis — the relationship at times sour — between Garvey and Du Bois. These are two giants who had basically the same interests, Panafricanism, which they interpreted as African unity and anti-colonialism, but could not understand each other. What were the reasons for their differences? Unfortunately Lewis does not enlighten us on this.

In the South African liberation struggle ideological questions are becoming sharper by day and a discussion on the life and times of Garvey is part of that ideological process. We need to understand Garveyism in its totality — not just aspects of it — so that we can discard what is not relevant to our situation and apply and develop what we think suits us. This book by Rupert Lewis helps us to do just that.

FM

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Thanks ever so much for the opportunity accorded Sechaba readers to study and respond to a thought-provoking discussion article 'Two Nations: The character of the war in South Africa,' by Christos Theodoropoulos (Sechaba, June 1987). It is my considered opinion that the above-mentioned discussion article may well turn out to be a foundation stone of a more serious re-examination of the national question in South Africa and its implications for the national liberation struggle.

Our specialists can and should provide answers to key questions, e.g., we talk and write in the ANC about the Zulu people, the Venda people etc. Does this mean that we have a people or peoples in South Africa? People, is this a class or national (nationality) category or both? What is a population group? Against the background of a relatively high level of development in South Africa, can we seriously still talk of tribes? If not, what would be the meaning of tribalism in our context? Is there anybody who is prepared to stand up and be counted saying that over five million Zulu people are a tribe? It must now be clear that we need qualified answers by specialists to such questions.

I am of the view that using such terms as civil war, insurrection, insurgency or rebellion in relation to the national liberation struggle in South Africa, wittingly or unwittingly, downgrades and localises our struggle unfairly. It is also an astonishing understatement! Another understatement is over-emphasising struggle against apartheid as if we are looking forward to the past pre-1948 period.

The struggle in South Africa is not civil strife or unrest aimed at securing some civil liberties within the present racist constitutional set up. The racist 1948 constitution does not even mention us (Blacks, with the exception of Coloureds and Indians), let alone accommodate us. It is as if we do not exist at all.

Some time ago I read an ANC News Briefing in which the President of the ANC was quoted as saying (replying to a question) that the struggle in South Africa is basically, essentially and fundamentally a national liberation struggle. As I understand this statement, it fully accommodates the two nations thesis. Similarly, Comrade Joe Slovo correctly and rather convincingly pointed out in his hard-hitting lecture delivered in Maputo (Sechaba, February, 1985, Reforms

and Revolution in South Africa,) that while historically, political control of the country has shifted from an externally based to an internally based ruling class, the colonial status of the Blacks has, in substance, been maintained (albeit in different forms) from 1910 until now; the immediate struggle in South Africa is not just against apartheid or merely to achieve civil rights, but it is a struggle for national liberation in the full meaning of that term. (Sechaba, February 1984)

Comrade Joe went on to explain that whatever side one chooses in the debate (whether South Africa is an independent and sovereign state or not), one must surely agree that independence and sovereignty do not dispose of the political and social question whether the existing South African state is a legitimate representative of the people. It seems to me that those who propagate the one nation theory of South Africa and contend that South Africa is an independent sovereign state want to deny us the vitally important international support, which would be regarded by them as unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of another nation.

In the future free South Africa won't there be various nations developing out of former tribes? This is a legitimate question. Today there are various Slav nations inside and outside the Soviet Union that came into being historically from several slav tribes. In fact, in the USSR they never talk of Soviet Nation, they say there is no such and talk only of the Soviet People or Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian etc. nations. I have used these examples only to show the need for us to learn from others while working out our own solution on our own.

Finally, I just want to say that the aforesaid discussion article by Christos was long overdue and could not have come at a more opportune moment. Let us, therefore, hear from our researchers and other interested comrades as well. I strongly believe that all contributions from comrades to the discussion will go a long way towards achieving political clarity on important problems and formulating realistic and politically sound policies.

Patrick Ratshinyiwaho-kha-Tshinyiwe  
Ramabulana

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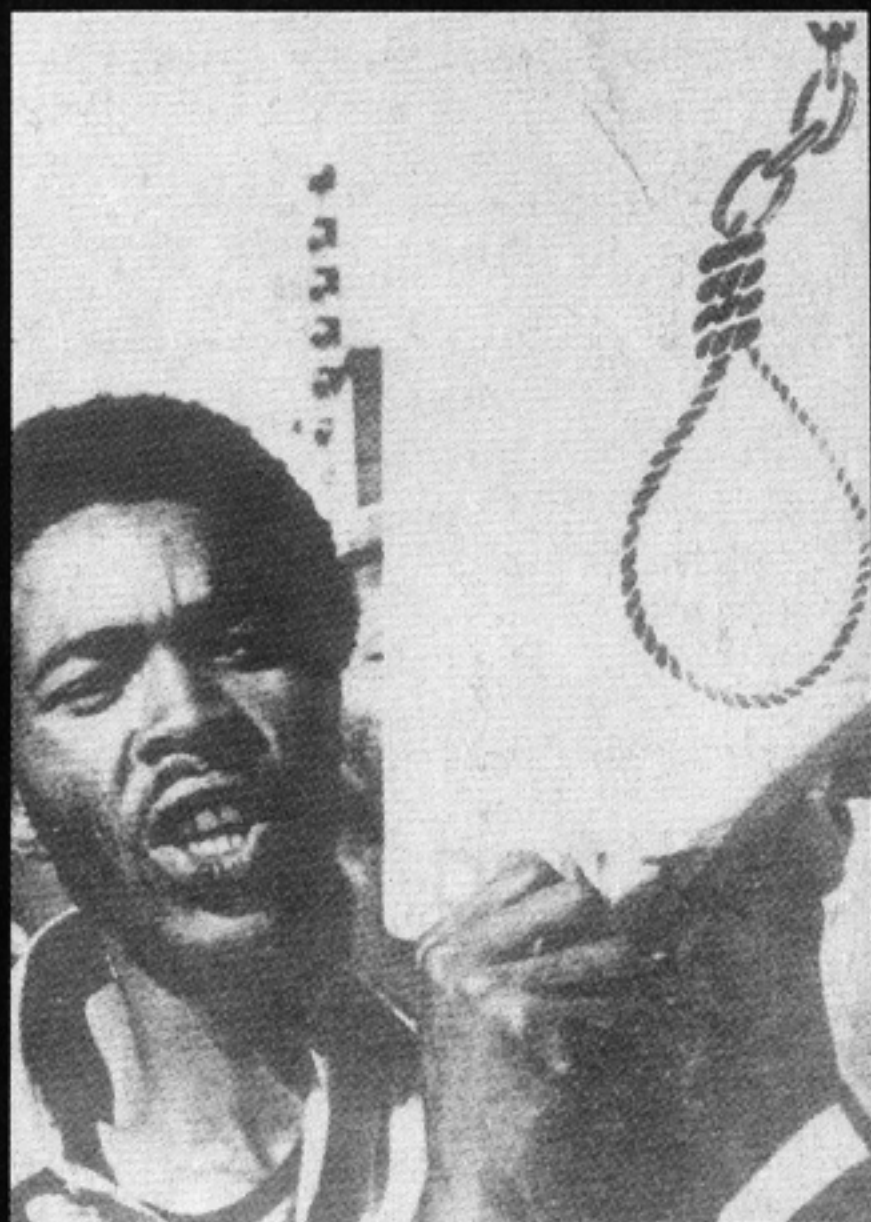
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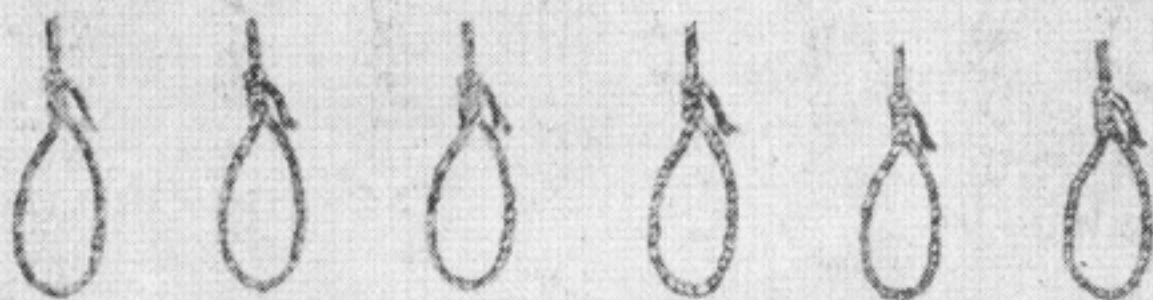
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