

JAN 1986



# SECHABA

official organ of the african  
national congress south africa



**FORWARD TO BATTLE**



# SECHABA

## JANUARY 1986

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Front cover: picture taken at the funeral of the victims of the Mamelodi massacre, 3rd December, 1985.  
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# EDITORIAL

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## SACTU Welcomes COSATU

The launch of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), during the last days of November, was historic in many respects. Durban — the scene of the 1973-74 strikes which ushered in the new trade union and working class militancy — was chosen as a venue. Gatsha Buthelezi and his Inkatha were conspicuous by their absence.

930 delegates representing 37 progressive trade unions formed a trade union federation — the Congress of South African Trade Unions. This federation represents nearly half a million Black workers. Surely it is the biggest and most representative workers' movement in the history of South Africa.

The new federation represents a merger between factory-based unions and community-centred general unions, including unions affiliated to the UDF. This was a product of hard work — four years of 'unity talks' and much more; hard slogging, day-to-day explanations, and mobilisation of the people on bread and butter (or, to be more precise, mielies and sour milk) issues.

This also means that a powerful new voice has been added to the politics of South Africa. This new extension of trade union co-operation is a new source of strength, not only to the new worker body but to the democratic trade union and working class movement in South Africa in general.

At a mass rally at the Durban King's Park Stadium, Elijah Barayi, vice-president of the National Union of Mineworkers and the newly-elected president of the federation, addressed an audience of 10 000 cheering and chanting people. He told them that COSATU is fighting for better wages and working conditions; it is also fighting against apartheid. The new organisation wants to ensure that its worker-oriented policies "are eventually made the politics of the oppressed people of this country," he said. He demanded the nationalisation of the mines and industries, and supported the call for disinvestment, and went on to say that unless the regime scrapped apartheid within six months, the new federation would organise a campaign of pass-burning.

This is not an empty threat if one remembers that at the funeral in Queenstown on 7th December, African youths wearing khaki (ANC) uniforms, decorated with ANC colours and carrying wooden sub-machine guns (AKS) and revolvers, sang revolutionary songs of Umkhonto We Sizwe and acted out battles in which the Whites were killed in a hail of bullets. The people at home mean business.

The principles on which this new federation is formed are: non-racialism; one industry, one union; worker control of the unions; representation in COSATU on the basis of paid-up membership; co-operation among the unions at a national level in the new federation.

There are many problems to be resolved and lots more to be solved. The Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) and the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU) stayed away because they subscribe to a policy of "black leadership" rather than non-racialism. There are 560 000 workers organised in White-dominated, racist trade unions, and only 14% of the total work force is organised in any trade union.

In welcoming the formation of COSATU, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) stated:

"Our revolution requires a united and strong trade union movement, determined to satisfy demands for higher wages, good working conditions, removal of colour bars, equal opportunities to work and the achievement of complete emancipation. The new federation, COSATU, can and will fulfil these aims. It must become a truly democratic centre of organised activity for all workers who are determined to liberate our country from its existing oppressive and exploitative social system ... The Federation, in unison with the national liberation movement and its allies, is called upon to perform an historic task by calling on its members and the organised workers to participate fully in the struggle for liberation, social justice and equality."



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# THE EYES OF OUR PEOPLE ARE FOCUSED ON THIS CONFERENCE

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## Part 4

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In 1980, one Dr Chester Crocker, at that time no more than a university professor, said:

"I would say (the Whites in South Africa) don't have a long period of time, that the current window of opportunity could be shorter than they realise ... You mention large-scale revolutionary warfare. I would argue that the options are more likely to be in the area of urban rioting, of large-scale strikes, perhaps general strikes, of passive resistance efforts and things of this nature, consumer boycotts, the South African state is weakest in that area."

Thus began for us a decade which our own people inside the country characterised as the Decade of Liberation.

If we may jump to more recent events, this week the US Senate voted to repeal the Clark Amendment which the US Congress had adopted ten years ago. That Amendment had prohibited any military involvement of the US Government against the People's Republic of Angola. We have now come to the point where powerful forces within the same US Congress are willing and ready to free the hand of the Reagan administration to engage in any military adventures against heroic Angola that it may choose.

### **The Cold War Resuscitated**

As we began the Decade of Liberation, the most aggressive and reactionary forces of imperialism had gained or were gaining the upper hand in the countries of the West, including and ultimately in the United States. These forces began to resuscitate the cold war everywhere. They assumed an active posture against the progressive movement throughout the world and launched an economic and political offensive against the ordinary people and the democratic movement within the imperialist countries.

As a result of these policies, the process of detente between the socialist countries and the imperialist world came to a halt. New nuclear weapons have since been deployed in Europe. International tensions increased as did the danger of a nuclear war. To this day, the US Government has refused to ratify the SALT-II Treaty. The arms race continues to escalate.

A determined effort was set afoot to roll back socialism, to reverse the victories of the national liberation movement and to force the peoples of the world to succumb to the wishes of imperialism. Hence we saw the complicated situation that arose in Poland. The offensive against democratic Afghanistan continued and intensified.

The US openly invaded Grenada, funded and assisted the removal from power of the progressive forces led by Michael Manley in Jamaica and has laid siege to Nicaragua. At the same time, it is actively involved in a campaign to defeat the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front in El Salvador, and openly supports the most reactionary and murderous regimes in Central and South America.

US imperialism has also helped to sabotage all efforts to resolve the problem of Western Sahara by giving maximum support to King Hussian of Morocco to defeat the Polisario Front. In the Middle East, it has encouraged the forces of reaction to liquidate the PLO and permitted Zionist Israel to invade the Lebanon in an effort to turn it into a pacified dependency of this ally of racist South Africa.

As a token of their intent to intervene everywhere in their own interest, US imperialism and its allies have established Rapid Deployment Forces which are designed to reach any part of the globe quickly.

In an interview he gave during 1980, while still campaigning for the Presidency, Reagan's



assertion that the Soviet Union was achieving world domination was challenged by a journalist. He replied:

"... You have forgotten, even though the Russians did not do it directly but through their proxies, there is Ethiopia, there is South Yemen, there is Angola, there is Mozambique, they have moved and advanced their positions — and in the Caribbean we are seeing by way of Cuba the export of revolution to the point that our sea-lanes for the essential things we must have, particularly in minerals and energy, are much endangered right now if the Soviets should decide to adopt that course ... (To) say that they have lost ground in Latin America, I think is to ignore the reality there. Right now, Colombia, Bogota, is having a great infiltration of the same kind of people that have brought the downfall of other countries there in Central America, the moving into Africa, Afghanistan, Iran — once the great bulwark between the Soviet Union and their advance southward to the Indian Ocean is shattered and gone ... (The) communists are the menace to civilisation in the world today ... (As) Pope Pius

XII said at the end of World War II, when the Soviet Union — when it looked as if the world might go into a thousand years of darkness: "... The American people have a great genius and capacity for performing great and generous deeds. Into the hands of America, God has placed afflicted mankind." I want to see — I want to help us get back to those fiercely independent Americans ... and I believe in their greatness and I believe this country has a destiny."

Hitler, too, believed that Nazi Germany had a destiny to cleanse an afflicted world. He therefore set out to destroy socialism in the Soviet Union, to stamp out all progressive and democratic forces in Europe and to colonise people.

### **Life-and-Death Confrontation.**

That, also, was the awesome meaning of the words that Ronald Reagan uttered. If they chilled and horrified the forces of progress throughout the world, they were like music in the ears of P W Botha. They signified that



*Students at the University of Durban-Westville; August 1985*



when Reagan assumed the Presidency of the United States, the Pretoria regime would have a powerful ally in Washington and would have the United States behind it in any action to remove what Reagan referred to as 'Russian proxies' in Angola and Mozambique. Like the Iran of the Shah, which Reagan described as the "great bulwark between the Soviet Union and their advance to the Indian Ocean," apartheid South Africa would also win a place in US strategy as a bulwark between the Soviet Union and its 'advance' into Southern Africa.

Thus we were to come face to face with the world forces of counter-revolution in a way that we had not experienced in the period 1974-1979. Like the great Vietnamese people before us, whose experiences were studied by a delegation of our movement which visited Vietnam in 1978, we had to win this life-and-death confrontation first and foremost in the battlefields of our motherland, but also in the streets of the United States and the other imperialist countries which back the Pretoria regime.

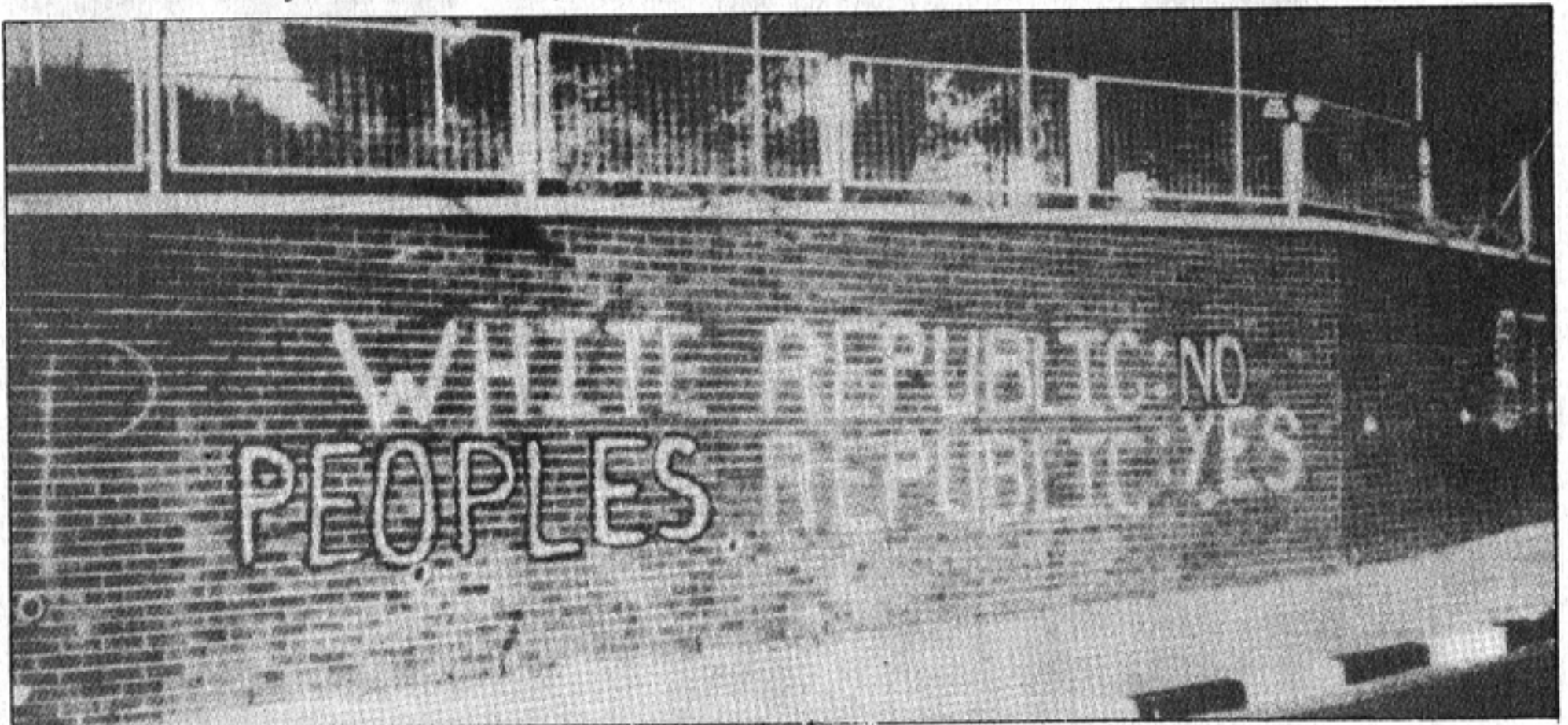
In 1978-79, we undertook an extensive review of our internal work, our structures handling this sphere, and our strategy and tactics. As a result of this review, we were better prepared to enter the Decade of Liberation, to build on the achievements we had scored and to help create the situation in which we can sense that victory is not far away.

Our observance of 1980 as the Year of the Charter was an important stepping stone in the process of that preparation for victory. The struggles of the previous ten years had resulted in the activation of millions of our people and the formation of many democratic organisations. Many of the struggles that our people had waged were around local issues. The situation had therefore arisen in which it was necessary and possible to bring the mass movement together, to influence it to act as one and to focus the minds of our people beyond local to national issues.

### **Year of the Charter**

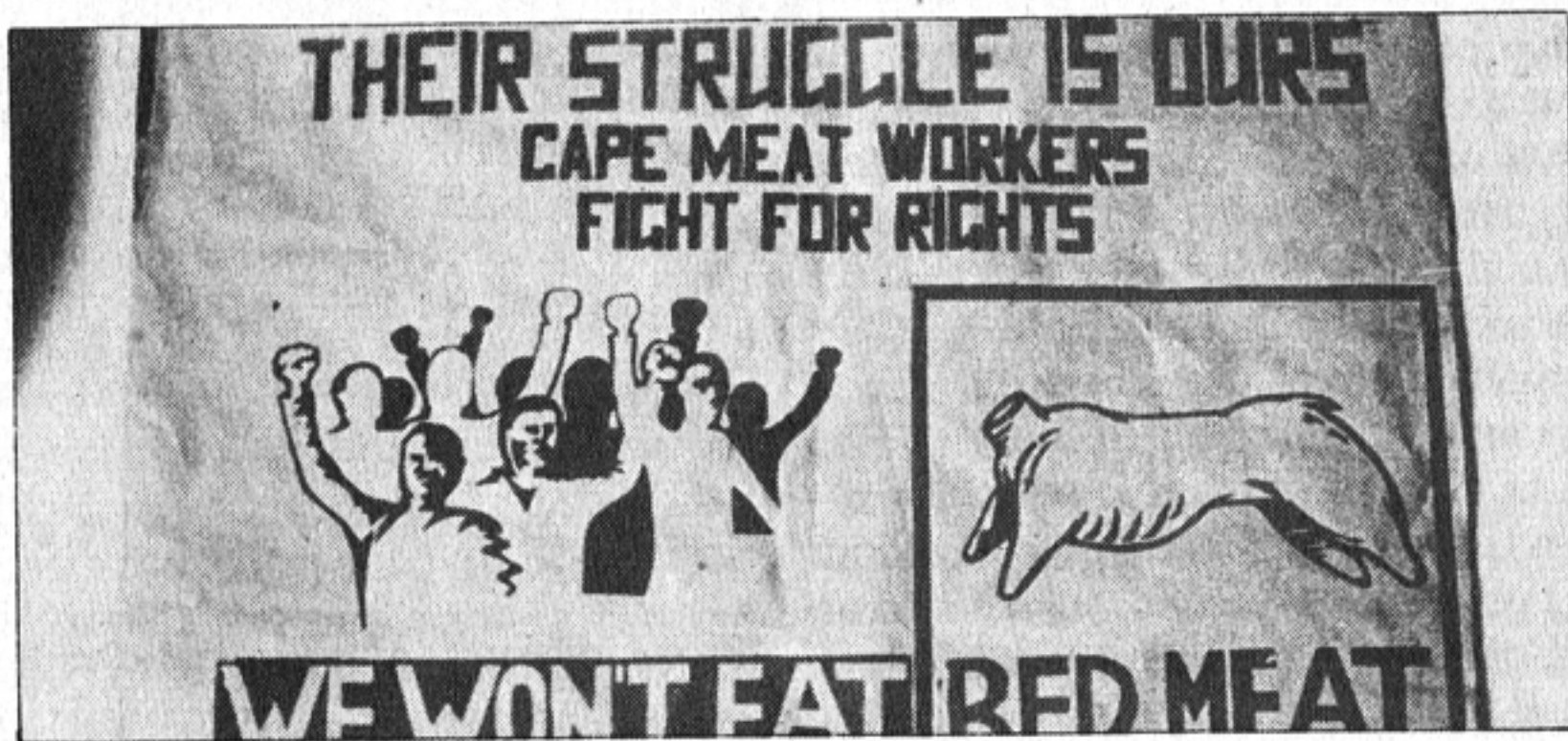
To produce these results it was necessary that we should in the first instance, achieve the political unity of the masses of our people and their democratic movement — therefore what better to do in observing the 25th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter than getting the masses of our people, in a sense, to re-adopt the Charter as their perspective of the South Africa they were fighting for, their lodestar, as we said when we proclaimed the Year of the Charter.

As we have said, it was also during this year that the struggle for the release of political prisoners took root within the democratic movement as the Free Mandela Campaign. The combination of these two campaigns, the Freedom Charter and the Free Mandela, gave



*Anti-Republic protest, Johannesburg, 1981*





the active and conscious masses of our people the common political base from which to proceed and enabled them to unite behind the authentic leadership of our people.

These results, which were and are of decisive importance to our struggle, also meant that the democratic movement was projecting a consistent perspective in opposition to the enemy's political programme, especially the 'separate development' programme, and declaring its rejection of the leadership that the enemy had appointed to help administer its schemes and to pose as the genuine leadership of our people.

By the time that the 20th anniversary of the proclamation of the fascist and racist Republic of South Africa came, in 1981, we had managed to ensure the political cohesion of large sections of the democratic movement, enough for this movement to act together in opposition to the celebrations that the enemy was planning. More than this, the masses of our people could, on the basis of the Freedom Charter, pose the vision of an alternative democratic Republic to challenge the racist Republic which had brought untold suffering to the majority of our people for two decades.

This was the first time since 1961 that we had the possibility to test the readiness of our people, in their millions, to act in unity on the fundamental question of state power in our country. The increasing political and organisational unity of the people had already been demonstrated in such campaigns as the Fatti's and Moni's, the Red Meat and the Ford Motor Company struggles.

### **Massive Involvement of the 'Coloured' People**

In this regard, we should also mention that in 1980 we experienced the massive involvement of the 'Coloured' people in the mass struggle. Of particular importance is the fact that this struggle took place in the Western Cape, the main area of concentration of these Black masses and, historically, the main stronghold of Trotskyism in our country. Furthermore, these 'Coloured' masses acted together with their African brothers and sisters. The stay-at-home, called in the region for the days June 16 and 17 of that year, succeeded because both sections of the Black population supported it. Even when the fascist police shot down 40 patriots at the end of June that year, the only result was to weld the 'Coloured' people even more firmly to the mass forces of our revolution, committed to the objectives spelt out in the Freedom Charter and loyal to the leadership of our movement.

This is the period when the Labour Party, with whom our movement had been in contact, responded to mass pressure to the extent of bringing about the downfall of the CRC, declaring its adherence to the Freedom Charter, supporting economic sanctions and announcing its intention to co-operate with the ANC. It is of course clear now that the leadership of this Party, even after it had changed with the demise of Sonny Leon, could not withstand the combination of enemy terror and bribes, and it abandoned these positions. By the time it deserted to the side of the enemy, it was clear that large sections of the 'Coloured'



population had come over to the side of the democratic revolution and that there was no significant organised political force in their midst capable of challenging the policy, strategy and tactics of our movement.

The Anti-Republic Campaign of 1981 turned out to be a great demonstration of the political and organisational unity of the democratic movement of our country, an affirmation of the acceptance of the Freedom Charter, our strategy and our tactics and an assertion of the authority and prestige of our movement in the eyes of our people.

What the fascists had intended to be a celebration had, for them, turned into a demonstration of how much the masses of our people, including many Whites, accepted the leadership of our movement without question.

### **The ANC Emerges**

At this time, we began to summarise the results of 20 years of struggle by saying that the people had lifted the ban on the ANC and imposed on our situation their own system of legality. This was an expression of the inevitable process of our emergence, in practical political terms, as the alternative power, the formation which commands the loyalty of the majority of the population of our country.

1981 was, for us, the Year of the Youth. Nevertheless, it was dominated by the events of which we have just spoken, as well as by the rejection by the Indian people of the South African Indian Council on the same basis and to the same extent as our people had rejected the racist Republic of South Africa.

Despite what we have said, it is also equally true that, five years after the Soweto Uprising and 20 years after the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe, our youth was in the forefront of our struggle as never before. In particular, they had carried the armed struggle forward in a manner and with results which enormously expedited the political outcome that we have been talking about.

An American publication issued in 1981 has this to say:

"As South Africa enters the 1980s, perhaps the most dramatic trend in Black politics is the

resurgence of the African National Congress. The ANC's renewed prominence was symbolised on the night of June 1, 1980, by the glow from burning SASOL oil-from-coal plants, which could be seen by people in Johannesburg, some fifty miles away."

It then quotes the *Rand Daily Mail* as saying that:

"South Africa has entered a state of revolutionary war."

Proud inheritors of the patriotic traditions and fearlessness of the heroes of Isandlwana, whose centenary we had celebrated in 1979, the youth not only made our armed struggle a matter of daily life in South Africa during the first half of the Decade of Liberation. They, together with the rest of our people, ensured that the combatants who died in the front line, such as those who fell in Silverton, vilified by the enemy as terrorists, were buried as great heroes.

During 1982, the historic 70th Anniversary of the ANC gave us the opportunity, once more, to celebrate the memory of these and other heroes and to take up the theme of Unity in Action of all the oppressed masses and the democratic movement that has been the hallmark of the ANC since it was founded. Unity in Action and United Action, which was our main slogan for 1983, constituted a perspective which we put in front of the masses of our people to encourage them to proceed beyond temporary alliances to stable and continuous co-ordination of the common offensive for the overthrow of the apartheid regime.

### **Political Maturity: The UDF**

The United Democratic Front, that outstanding example of the political maturity of our people, is a product of the years that our country's forces of progress have spent first to mobilise the masses of our people into action and to draw them into mass organisational formations, second to ensure that these masses adhere to a common political platform and, third, that this political unity finds expression in the kind of organisational unity which enables the people to move as one mass political army of revolution, under one com-



mand, focusing on the central question of all revolutions, whether peaceful or violent, the question of state power.

We take this opportunity to salute the countless patriots of our country who acted correctly and at the right moment, to make the UDF a reality, as a mass instrument of democratic change which inscribed on its banners the fundamental issue which we are about, namely the struggle for the birth of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

Over the years, as we worked to build this mass political army of revolution, it became ever-clearer that the entire progressive movement of our country had a responsibility to ensure that the women of our country should be active in this political army in their millions. The ANC Women's Conference held in

Angola in 1981 made an important contribution towards the realisation of this objective.

### **The Place of Women in the Struggle**

During 1984, our Year of the Women, we devoted even more attention to this important issue. Further progress was achieved in the mobilisation and organisation of our women. The position has now been firmly established in our movement that the liberation of women is an essential element and an integral part of our struggle for national and social emancipation. The end of the Decade of Women, this year, does not and cannot mean the end of the struggle for the liberation of women. We must continue this fight and ensure the active and conscious involvement of the women of our country at all levels of our mass offensive.



*Women in their place; 1985*



# THE FIGHTING TRADITION OF THE VENDA PEOPLE

By U. v.d. Heyden

*Dr v.d. Heyden is a political scientist in the German Democratic Republic, and this article was translated from the German by Helga Ramsamy.*

The members of the Venda tribe, who have been living in the area south of the Limpopo for many centuries, can reflect on more than 100 years of combat traditions. Like many others, Vendas fight courageously in the ranks of the ANC today for the liberation of their homeland from the racist reign of the apartheid regime and against the puppet government which has been installed and maintained by Pretoria. Their ancestors previously fought bravely against the White racists. The anti-colonial struggle of the Vendas takes a worthy place in the history of the heroic liberation struggle of the peoples of South Africa.

Although the combat conditions in the last century were very unfavourable because of the division of the tribe into three sections and the final subjugation of the Vendas by the Boer colonial conquerors in 1898, Venda anti-colonial military resistance illustrates that the struggle against opponents who possess superior arms technology and who are numerically stronger can be crowned with temporary success.

In 1867-68 the Vendas succeeded in driving out, by force of arms, the Boer farmers who had settled on the borders of lands which had been Venda territory since the beginning of the 1860s. The Boers had built the settlement of Schoemansdal there, and had ventured upon prolonged raids into the territory of the Vendas. The Boers conscripted young warriors who had to help them with elephant hun-

ting and to act as porters and servants in exploiting the natural wealth of the country. As the exploitation intensified the Vendas took up arms. The expulsion of the Transvaal Boers from Vendaland, according to the historian, Bulpin, "shocked the whole of the Transvaal Republic." However, in the years that followed, the Vendas did not succeed in uniting against colonial subjugation. The feuds amongst the three chiefs, Makhado, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli, prevented a joint combat alliance of all the Vendas.

These feuds were partially inflamed by the missionaries of the Berlin Missionary Society, who had been residing among the Vendas since 1872. Up till 1877 the Society had a mission station in each of the three territorial areas of the paramount chiefs, and from there it constantly attempted to convert the members of the tribe to Christianity.

## **Territorial Dispersal: Internal Strife**

The political and territorial dispersal of the tribe and the absence of a central power resulted in many of the minor chiefs often quarrelling with each other. There were also conflicts with neighbouring tribes. Because of these quarrels the Vendas were distracted from their main opponent, the White colonial conquerors.

Thus, by the end of the 1870s, the Boers were again able to expand up to the borders of Vendaland, after having subjugated other tribes in Northern Transvaal. However, the White colonialists did not succeed in enslaving the Vendas or in making them pay tributes, though attempts were made to do just that. On-



ly during the British annexation of the South African Republic (Transvaal) between 1877 and 1881, the Vendas paid a non-recurring tax to the Government in Pretoria. This was done after a visit by the Royal Administrator, Sir O W Lanyon. Later on, the demand by the Transvaal Boers that the Vendas would have to recognise the sovereignty of the Government was based on this tax payment to the British administration in Pretoria. After the Boers had resumed governmental power in 1881 they demanded on several occasions that the Vendas pay taxes. The tribal chiefs, however, resisted, and consequently did not pay any taxes to the White colonialists.

During the mid-eighties of the 19th century the White occupiers again began showing interest in the land of the Vendas. At the beginning only individual Whites, mostly traders, followed the missionaries into the tribal territory. White farmers settled on the borders of Vendaland. The constantly increasing White population also carried on salt mining, and felled wood for the long-distance trade. They were soon followed by government officials who came to survey the land, but the brave chief Makhado and his warriors drove the land grabbers away. However, the survey of the land could not be prevented.

### **Gold Prospectors**

The government officials who fled reported to Pretoria that there was gold in Vendaland. As a result, soldiers of fortune increasingly invaded the north of the Transvaal to look for the desirable precious metal.

German missionaries reported that these Whites were "barbarous, godless people against whose excesses no protection could be found." Even the historian, I J van Oordt, who was friendly to the Boers, had to admit that the Whites who settled there "belonged to the scum of the earth, criminals and runaways who regarded themselves to be outside the arm of the law."

But the Vendas knew how to defend themselves against the White land grabbers — the invaders were driven away or killed. Because of this Vendaland remained, for the time being, largely inaccessible to Whites. Also for

this reason, the Boer urge for expansion led, firstly, to the subjugation of the Ethnians of the Lobedu (1890-94), who lived in the vicinity of the Vendas, the Bagananoas (1893-94) and some smaller ethnic minorities.

Sadly, the two paramount chiefs, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli, did not settle their quarrels, although the permanent danger of Boer land rustling lingered on. Naturally this resulted in a weakening of the tribal organisation, which worsened when the tribe had to suffer high human losses in 1893-94. In those years many members of the tribe died from smallpox which was brought in by the European invaders. At the same time large locust swarms devastated the fields and destroyed the harvest. Rinderpest decimated the livestock of the Vendas considerably and a famine became inevitable.

### **Patriots' Deaths**

The great famine also caused the chief, Sellebul, who lived in the southern part of the Soutpansberg, in alliance with some other chiefs living in the neighbourhood, to invade the fertile flats of the southern slope of the Soutpansberg which by this time were densely populated by Whites. His aim was to recapture the land of the Vendas. But the Boers organised a large commando and defeated the African fighters after a bloody battle. The Boers killed Chief Sellebul and locked the survivors up in reservations. Only Magoeba, one of the chiefs, allied with Sellebul, managed to get himself and his warriors out safely and thus escaped persecution.

Thereupon the Boers erected three forts — secured by iron armour plating. But Magoeba managed a temporarily successful guerrilla war against the White garrison. In the summer of 1895 the Boer general, Piet Joubert, deployed a strong commando against Magoeba. It was more than ten times the size of Magoeba's armed forces. Almost all the African warriors were killed. Magoeba was taken prisoner and was beheaded on the spot, and his head served as a trophy for the Boers.

The fight put up by Magoeba and the member of his tribe deserves a permanent record in the history of the combat traditions of the South African people. It took the several



thousand White colonists and their African 'auxiliaries,' as well as an artillery unit, more than seven weeks to overcome the resistance of less than 250 warriors. Earlier, Magoeba had successfully warded off a six-month attack by about 150 White mercenaries barricaded in the forts.

In December 1894, inspired by the victory over Magoeba, the Transvaal Boers had made another attempt to force the Vendas to pay dues and thus to bring them under the sovereignty of Pretoria.

### **Makhado, "Lion of the North"**

The first attempts were made by officials of the Boer Republic in the western part of Vendaland. Paramount Chief Makhado, who was known as the "lion of the north" and who lived there, was able to increase his influence considerably with both friend and foe. Conscious of his military power he was able again to expel the officials from his land. But he increasingly saw the danger of colonial subjugation approaching himself and his tribe. Although he did not want a military conflict with the Whites — he mentioned this several times to missionaries and to European traders, officials and even to a correspondent of the magazine, *The Pretoria Press* — Makhado foresaw the impending danger facing his tribe. He therefore called a meeting of all members of the tribe under his rule in order to discuss the necessary measures to repel the expected attack of the Transvaal Boers. The meeting discussed the storage of foodstuffs and enlarging the fortifications. It was also decided that they obtain more firearms from Delagoa Bay.

The Transvaal Boers also intended subjugating the other Venda chiefs after the overthrow of Magoeba, an operation which was initially planned for the spring of 1895. But the relationship between the South African Republic (Transvaal) and Great Britain and the Cape Colony, under the leadership of Cecil Rhodes, had deteriorated so much that the Boers did not dare to engage in a prolonged war with the Vendas, which presumably would have been welcomed by the British. In September 1895, shortly before the conflict which broke out because of the 'Jameson

Raid,' between the Boer Republic and the British South Africa Company, Makhado died. He was succeeded by his son Mphephu.

First of all, Mphephu tried to settle the old tribal conflicts in the interests of an alliance of all Vendas. But Tshivhase did not see the urgent need for a firm cohesion of all members of the tribe. It was learned from conversations he had with missionaries of the Berlin Missionary Society that he intended to surrender to the White colonialists without a fight. He expressed his willingness to pay taxes to the government in the Transvaal.

Although Mphephu's efforts for an alliance brought little success with the other paramount chiefs, he could still count on the faithfulness and readiness for battle of his own chiefs. He even gained the support of chiefs from Tshivhase's and Mphaphuli's area of authority for the alliance.

### **Land-Grab**

Mphephu's efforts for a united resistance of all Vendas had become all the more necessary at the end of the 19th century, because the Republic of Transvaal began to subjugate the last African tribes who were still independent in order to grab their lands for the extensive agricultural plans of the Boers and to begin capitalist development of the Boer Republic. On October 16th 1898 the Transvaal Boers occupied the mission station of Tschakoma, which was situated in the middle of Vendaland. Although the Boers and the African 'auxiliaries' who collaborated with them departed after a short while, the incident was serious enough to inform the Vendas of the intentions of the Transvaal Boers, and they consequently adopted counter-measures.

In mid-October 1898 a strong commando of Boers crossed the Doorn river, which formed the border to Vendaland, and marched to below the mountain fortification of Mphephu. The commando was headed by the Boer general, Piet Joubert, who, according to historians, estimated the Venda forces at about 30 000 warriors, many of whom were equipped with modern firearms. Therefore he initially shied away from a direct attack. But as the Vendas did not have many warriors



available for this battle they applied a ruse of war. They came into the Boer camp and exchanged goods with the Whites. These exchanges partially covered the provision of the Boer commando. However, this ploy was not effective in the end. On October 21st 1898, the Vendas attacked their careless enemies from behind, initially with success. But when the Boers realised the situation they trained their cannons on the Africans, who possessed inferior arms technology. The Boers thus managed to kill many of the brave attackers.

### **The First Surrender**

Many members of the tribe did not want to believe the alarming news of the Venda warriors' defeat. But when some survivors confirmed the failure of the attack, some fickle chiefs of Mphephu as well as the paramount chief, Tshivhase, and his respected chief, Makoarele, hastened, in the words of the Berlin missionary, Gründler, "to assure General Joubert of their devotion and to request for peace ... They looked for an opportunity to show the Boers particularly their permanent friendship and subservience." For Tshivhase the proof of "friendship" consisted of four head of cattle and £234 sterling, as well as an offer to wish to participate in the capture of Mphephu.

A missionary of the Berlin Missionary Society, Beuster, served as a mediator. This missionary was not neutral in the clashes during the colonial conquest of Vendaland, as was repeatedly claimed in contemporary literature, but was clearly partial to the colonial conquerors. He not only used his influence to prevent the paramount chiefs Tshivhase and Mphaphuli from forming an alliance with Mphephu — though quite a number of Tshivhase's minor chiefs, especially his sons, were interested in an anti-colonial alliance of all Vendas — but during his efforts to mediate he also handed Joubert a self-made map of Vendaland, which made it substantially easier for the armed forces of the Boers to find their bearings in the unknown terrain. During this negotiation, Beuster succeeded in convincing the Transvaal Boers that Tshivhase would not oppose colonial conquest. After that Joubert

made a speech to the assembled Africans and the missionary Beuster during which he made it clear that the Boers wished to bring in more reinforcements in order to subjugate all those Vendas who still put up a resistance. The Boers expected help from Tshivhase and, above all, a free passage for the Boer armed forces through his territory.

### **Hunted Like Harassed Game**

As it took several weeks to bring in further Boer commandos and as they did not dare, without these reinforcements, to attack the African warriors who were ready for battle and who gathered in Mphephu's mountain fortress, Mphephu still had an opportunity to strengthen his defence installations. He now sent for all warriors who were faithful to him to assemble at his fortress to ward off the anticipated attack by the Whites. But his appeal got no response from the two other paramount chiefs, nor from some minor chiefs.

On November 16th 1898 the Boer forces, after having obtained reinforcements, succeeded in storming Mphephu's rock fortress with relative swiftness after a barrage spreading death and disaster. Only a few of the brave defenders managed to escape; Mphephu was among them. He managed to evade his pursuers for a month, although, according to an eye-witness, he "was hunted by Joubert and his allies, like harassed game, from one ravine to another." Finally, tired of constantly fleeing from his enemies, amongst whom Tshivhase distinguished himself, Mphephu assembled his followers on December 15th and left it to them whether they wanted to surrender or accompany him across the Limpopo to English territory. Only a few of his warriors remained with him. One day later he surrendered to the British colonial authorities and, together with his warriors, he was disarmed.

The other Vendas who had fought with Mphephu had to demonstrate their submission to the Boers at a meeting called by the Transvaal government, after the Whites and their African allies had robbed and devastated Mphephu's territory. The German trader, Moerschell, who was able to observe the subjugation of the Vendas from close quarters,



described the actions of the African 'auxiliaries' in his memoirs as: "Like bloodhounds these, five thousand strong, forced their way into each kraal, each hut, all hiding places, and stabbed and beat to death all old men, cripples, women, children, chickens and cats that were to be found." Another German, the missionary Gründler, wrote the following about the consequences of the subjugation campaign: "This war has brought unspeakable misery to the defeated. Many parts of Mphephu's land are depopulated. The kraals have been burned. The livestock has been stolen. The men have been killed; women and children have been made prisoners."

### **Captives Imprisoned**

On January 10th 1899 General Joubert pronounced 'judgment' on the captured chiefs and warriors. First of all the Venda warriors who had not handed in their arms had to do so. Most of the chiefs who had been taken to court were then given long prison sentences. They were taken to Pretoria to be imprisoned. Part of Vendaland was declared a reservation which the members of the tribe were no longer allowed to leave without permission of the White authorities. Whites settled in the remaining territory of the old Vendaland. Near Mphephu's mountain fortress, the Whites built the town of Louis Trichardt. New chiefs, who were prepared to collaborate with the Whites, were appointed by the Pretoria Government. The situation did not change either at the beginning of our century, when the British annexed the two Boer republics. "After the Anglo-Boer War," the ethnographer, Stayt, wrote in his book about the Vendas, "the whole country was divided into locations under White administration, a large part being demarcated for White settlement."

In summarising, the following can be said about the anti-colonial Venda struggle at the end of the 19th century:

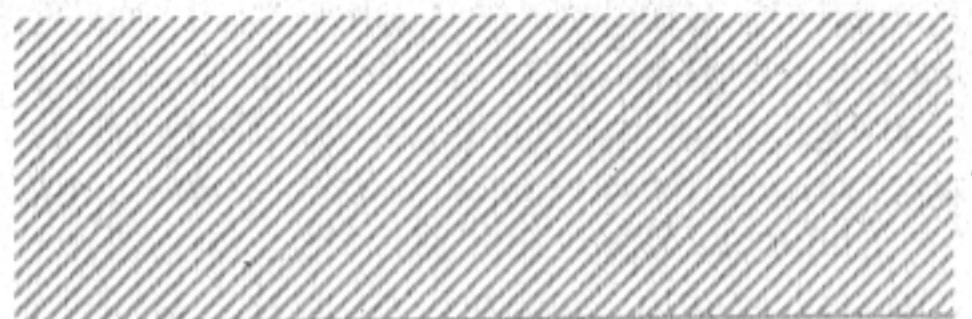
■ The Vendas succeeded in maintaining their independence until the end of the 1890s, after managing to drive off the Boer settlers from Schoemansdal in 1867-68. This was accomplished despite the division of their tribal

unit into three sections after the colonial conquest of the Transvaal. However, there was no lack of attempts to subjugate the Vendas, both by the Boers and the British colonial conquerors who temporarily ruled the Transvaal. Although some chiefs, in particular Makhado and his successor, Mphephu, tried to get an anti-colonial alliance of all Vendas, their efforts were without success, because of the prevailing ethnic particularism and rivalries among the chiefs.

■ At the end of the 19th century, when the Transvaal Boers wanted to subjugate the last of the Venda tribe which was still independent on the territory of today's Republic of South Africa, they met vehement resistance. Only by mustering a large army were they able to break the heroic resistance of a section of the members of the tribe. Not all Vendas supported Paramount Chief Mphephu in the battle against the Boers. Many of them, under the leadership of the other two paramount chiefs, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli, surrendered to the colonial conquerors without a fight.

■ The struggle of the Vendas against colonial subjugation is one of the keynotes in the history of the African population of the Republic of South Africa.

The contradictory traditions of the Vendas' will to resist and the policy of submission which developed among some sections during the 19th century is still evident today. But the majority of the members of the Venda people, together with the African majority of the population in the Republic of South Africa, supports the ANC's just struggle for national liberation. Another part, especially the corrupt chiefs and members of the upper strata of society, became officials of the racist government, and now take part in the exploitation and oppression of their own people.





# TORTURE AND SUFFERING IN DETENTION

*By Justitia*

When Malesela Benjamin Moloise defiantly sang his way to the gallows on 18th October 1985, the world not only watched — it protested. All eyes were on the young patriot bravely facing execution for an act not of his doing. Drawing support from the liberation movement of which he was a part, Moloise became an international symbol of resistance. He was by no means the first to die at the hands of Pretoria's racists — this year alone over 677 people have been killed. Like those others, his death is an indictment of apartheid.

But in particular the killing of Benjamin Moloise is an indictment of South Africa's legal system. He was judicially murdered — a slow death extending over more than two years from the time of his arrest until the final act of execution. Moloise's fate highlighted the

murderous nature of apartheid 'justice.' Repressive legislation has long replaced the rule of any natural law. His blood is on the hands of those who detained him, those who interrogated him, those who extorted a statement from him and those who wrote it down, those who prosecuted him and those who condemned him. In Moloise's death the world saw the violence at the end of the legal system of the regime. That violence is present in every step of the process, though sometimes cloaked in the respectability of a legal camouflage.

## **Prison and Police Cells Overflowing**

Not only Moloise's death is stirring the world's conscience about the increasing brutality of apartheid. The powers of the regime, institutionalised most recently in the state of



*The funeral of Andries Raditsela, murdered 6th May, 1985*



emergency, are drawing an increasing number of opponents of apartheid into the ambit of legal repression. Over 6 000 have been detained so far this year. The prison and police cells of apartheid are full to overflowing — even tents are now used to accommodate the ever-increasing number.

Though conditions may vary, the essentials of detention remain the same; physical and psychological torture, isolation from family and legal advice, interrogation to satisfy the regime's endless desire for information. Abdullah Omar, lawyer and recent detainee, called the system of 'security' laws:

"an act of violence against the individual, his family and loved ones. It makes a mockery of the law courts, the judicial process, because justice is decided by the police in the prison cells. It forcibly makes you an informer on yourself and your comrades, and subjects one to a degrading and inhuman process."

A report on detention issued in September by the University of Cape Town graphically demonstrates that, whereas the scale of detention in South Africa today has not been known since the early 1960s, the brutal methods of apartheid torturers remain the same. Working from a sample of 176 people detained in the decade 1973-1983, the researchers analysed their experiences — of arrest and detention, physical and psychological treatment, permitted contacts, health.

### **What Detention Means**

What does detention for interrogation mean?

Only a third of those interviewed had experienced interrogation for periods of less than 4 hours. Almost half (48%) had undergone sessions lasting between 5 and 8 hours, a further 13% had been interrogated for between 9 and 12 hours at a go, and some 6% described typical sessions of between 16 and 24 hours. And lest it be thought that such lengthy interrogation sessions need not require repetition: 36% of the sample had had to endure more than 10 sessions, and 60% had been interrogated on more than 5 occasions. To complete the picture: 70% of detainees had faced three or more interrogators during these sessions.

In two-thirds of the sample, the police were eventually rewarded for their efforts with a written statement by the detainee. These are the statements which are brought to court — these are the statements of state witnesses and accused — all equally discredited by the duress under which they were obtained, but all equally acceptable in the kangaroo courts of the regime.

Current examples abound of the kind of treatment detainees can expect during interrogation. With so many people in custody not all truth can be concealed, even by Pretoria's sophisticated censorship. Torture is routine — it is not an aberration — it is an integral part of the system. Physical assault is commonplace — with blows to the head frequently leading to perforated eardrums. One prisoner assaulted in this way was Billy Nair who smuggled a letter to his wife telling of his assault, and adding:

"I said I will make no statements."

Perhaps most dramatic, because most comprehensive, was the evidence of district surgeon Wendy Orr in a court action alleging assault in Port Elizabeth. Her statements conveyed the scale of the state of emergency — there were days when she saw 360 detainees. They had been assaulted, beaten, whipped, made to drink petrol or eat their own hair. The evidence was irrefutable.

Torture has long been shown to be not only physical but psychological. Shirish Soni was detained in Durban at the end of June — described as "fine and very strong" he was a worker for International Youth Year. Six weeks later he was in a psychiatric ward suffering from severe depression. In spite of his condition he was taken back into detention only to require further treatment, now as a suicide risk. A psychiatrist advised that:

"further interrogation would result in permanent damage to his mental condition."

Only two weeks in detention under the state of emergency reduced detainee Johnny Mashiane (aged a mere 15 years) to a 'psychotic' in need of urgent psychiatric care. Two months after his ordeal began he was at home, but a shadow of his former self:



"his teenage stride ... reduced to a mere shuffle."

He hallucinated, and was unable to resume his former life — only the "wild look in his eyes" had gone.

### Child Prisoners

Analysis of the first lists of those detained under the emergency indicated that two-thirds were under 18 years. Long term detainees may be as young as 13 years. Like Johnny Mashiane, these youths face the full brutality of apartheid's armed forces. Vusi Dlamini (15 years old) was admitted to hospital after less than a week in custody — a desperate phone call to his mother told her he was partly deaf in one ear, had a broken jaw and suspected fractures of the skull and forearms. He told a magistrate:

"They asked me to speak the truth. I told them the truth but they said I was lying."

Seven youths in Grahamstown, aged between 12 and 19 years, were held in connection with the death of a policeman, and horribly tortured. As well as being assaulted, beaten and made to undergo strenuous physical exercises, one was put through a mock hanging. Three were forced to be photographed in a mortuary with the charred body of a policeman. The youngest had a tyre placed round his neck and was threatened that it would be set alight.

Examples of the suffering of individual detainees are mere pointers to the brutal reality of life in custody, at the mercy of apartheid gaolers. As the people's resolve hardens and their resistance spreads, the regime resorts to greater repression. According to the Detainees' Parents' Support Committee, so far this year there have been 16 deaths in police custody and one in detention. Emergency detainees in Modder Bee prison have been baton-charged; in the North-Eastern Cape others were tear-gassed in their cells. And in those bantustans, those integral parts of apartheid repression, detentions are also soaring.

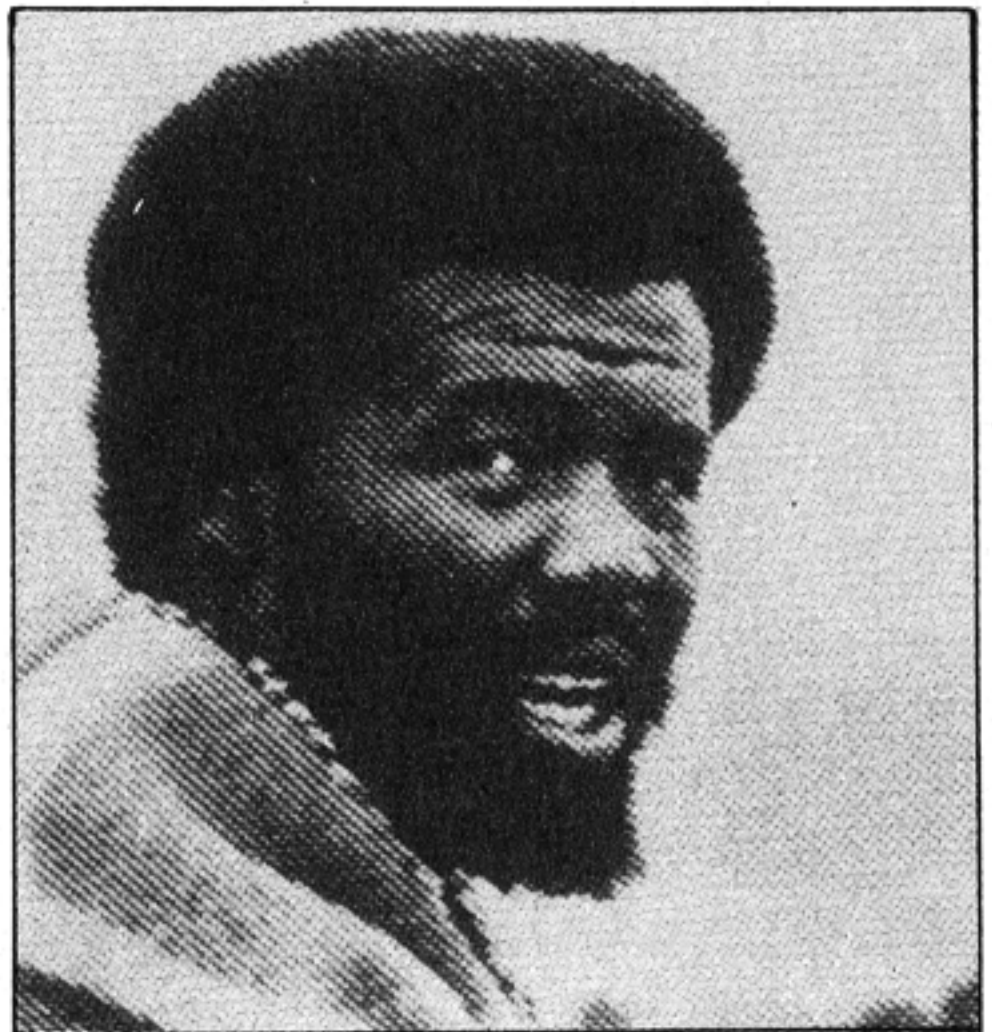
In September, Transkei was said to be holding 872 people. Former student activist Batandwa Nondo was gunned down trying to



*Johnny Mashiane in hospital*

escape from police who had taken him from his home. Bantustan puppet leader Matanzima claimed Nondo was killed for involvement in the bombing of the Umtata fuel depot in June. No one has been charged with his murder. However, many members of Nondo's family have been detained.

Repression is the answer the regime makes to the struggle of the people. Thousands will be pulled into detention and dragged before the courts. It is our responsibility to expose the violence of this legal fraud — the violence of the police cell, the violence of the dock and the witness-box, the violence of the hangman's noose.

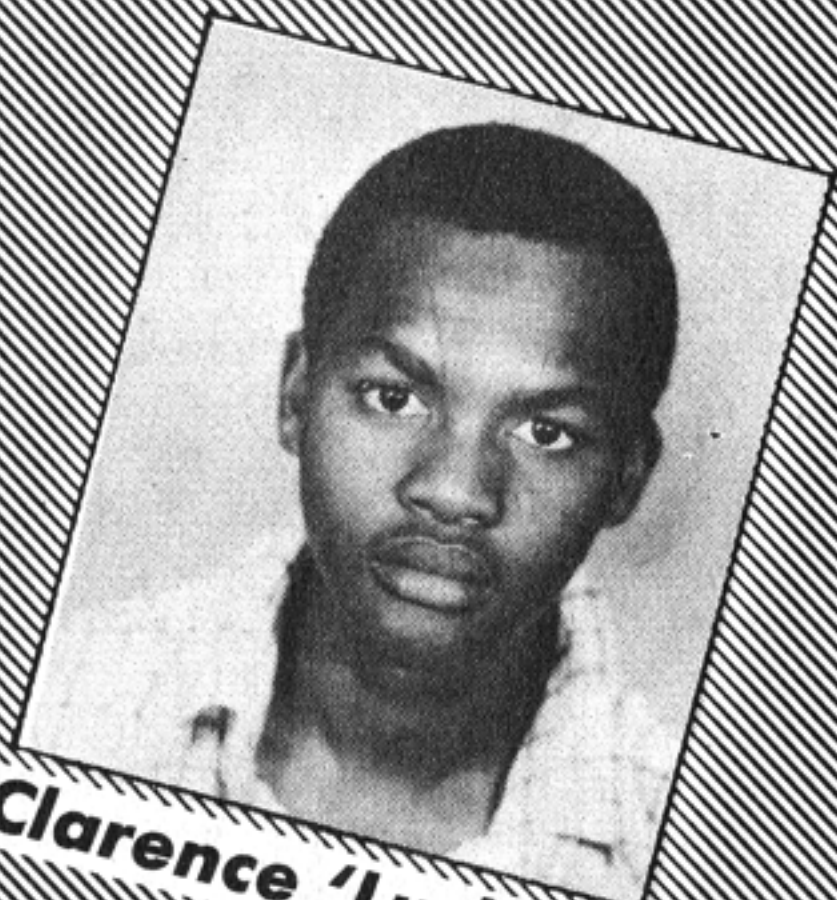


*Batwandwa Nondo*



# DEMAND PRISONER OF WAR STATUS

**STOP  
APARTHEID EXECUTIONS**



**Clarence 'Lucky' Payi**



**Sipho Xulu**

**FIGHT TO SAVE THEIR LIVES**

Charged in November 1981, being combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe, Norbert Buthelezi, Wilfred Maphumulo, Robert Dumisa and James Maropane have declared:

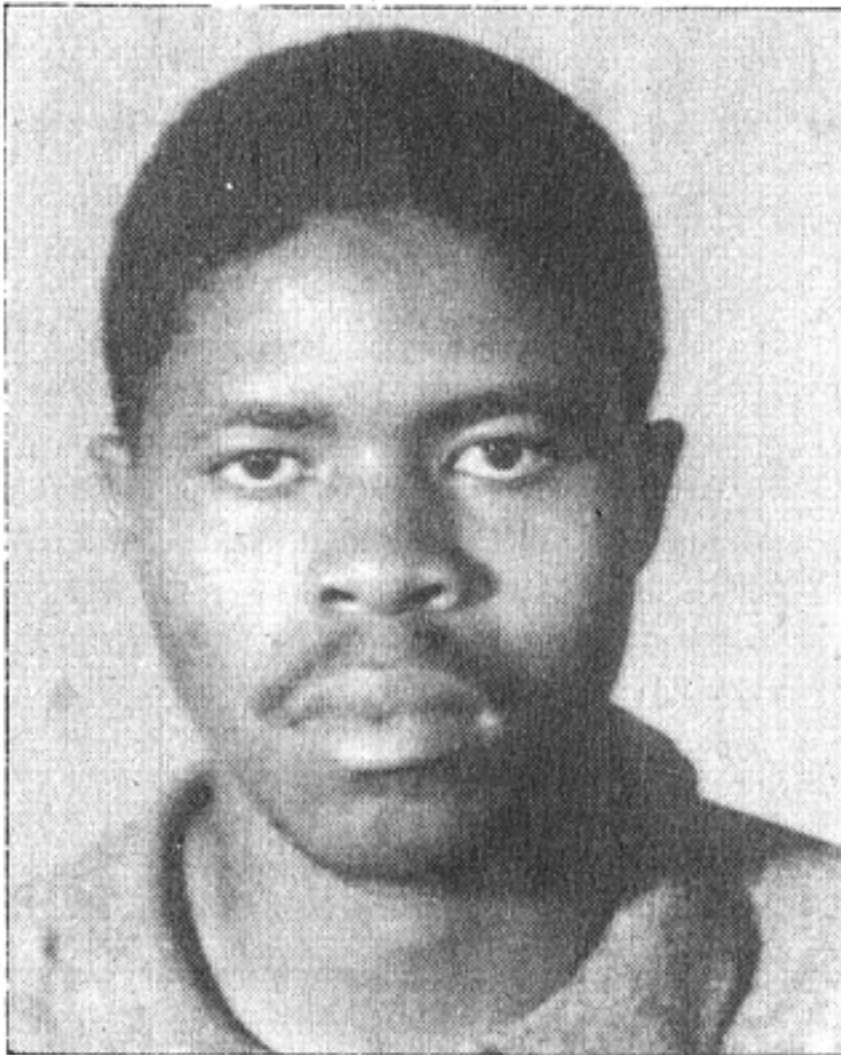
"We are members of the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and we are involved in the revolution against the apartheid government ... That is why we should not be in this court. This is not a people's court. It is apartheid that should be condemned by the world. We therefore feel that participation in an apartheid court will be a betrayal to the millions of Blacks who suffer daily here, and to the international community which has declared this policy a crime ... Proceed without us, and we are prepared to face whatever consequences, however bad they may be. We do not believe there is no price we cannot pay for our human dignity. We were captured in the process of executing our historical mission of liberating our people. Under the Geneva Convention, we must be accorded prisoner of war status."



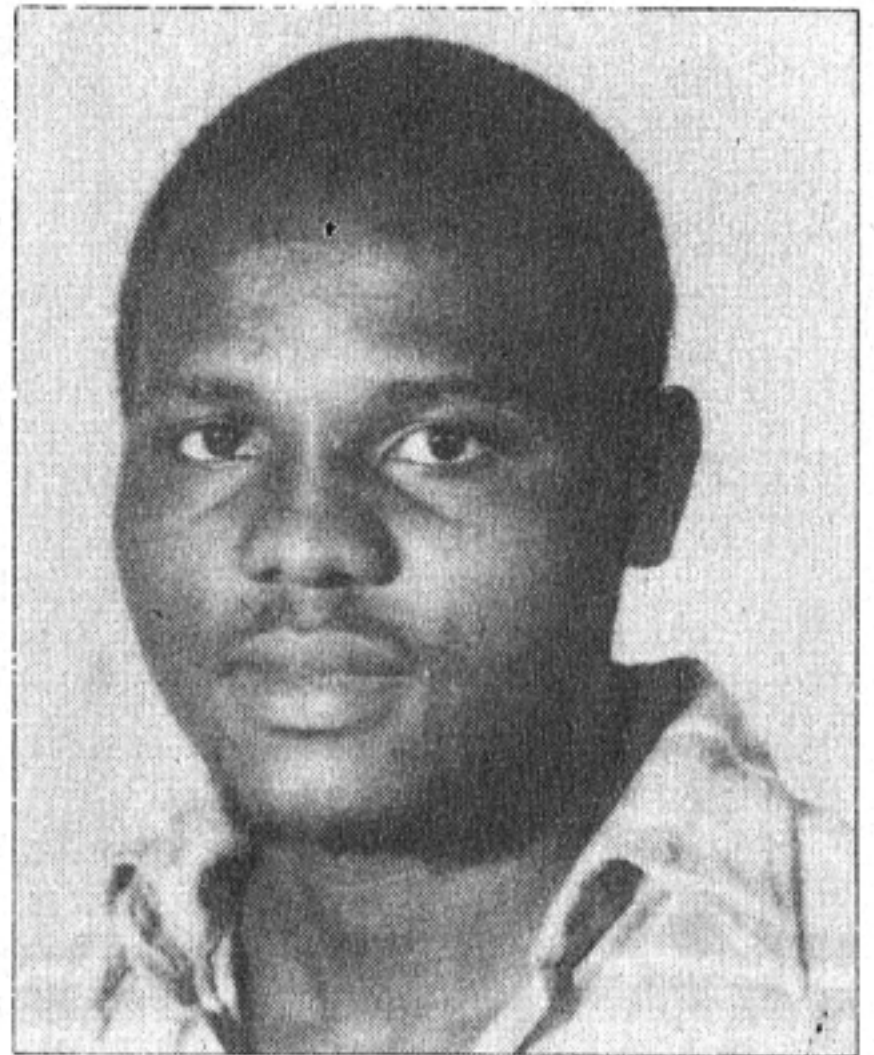
# FOR CAPTURED FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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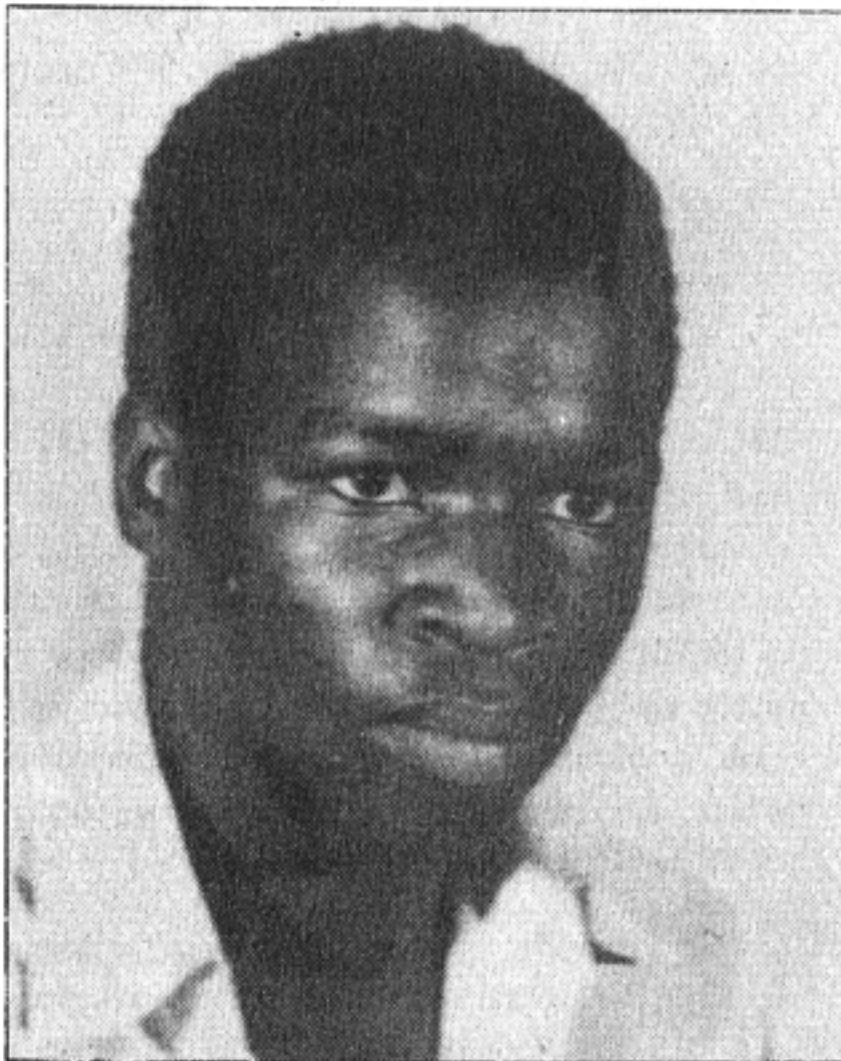
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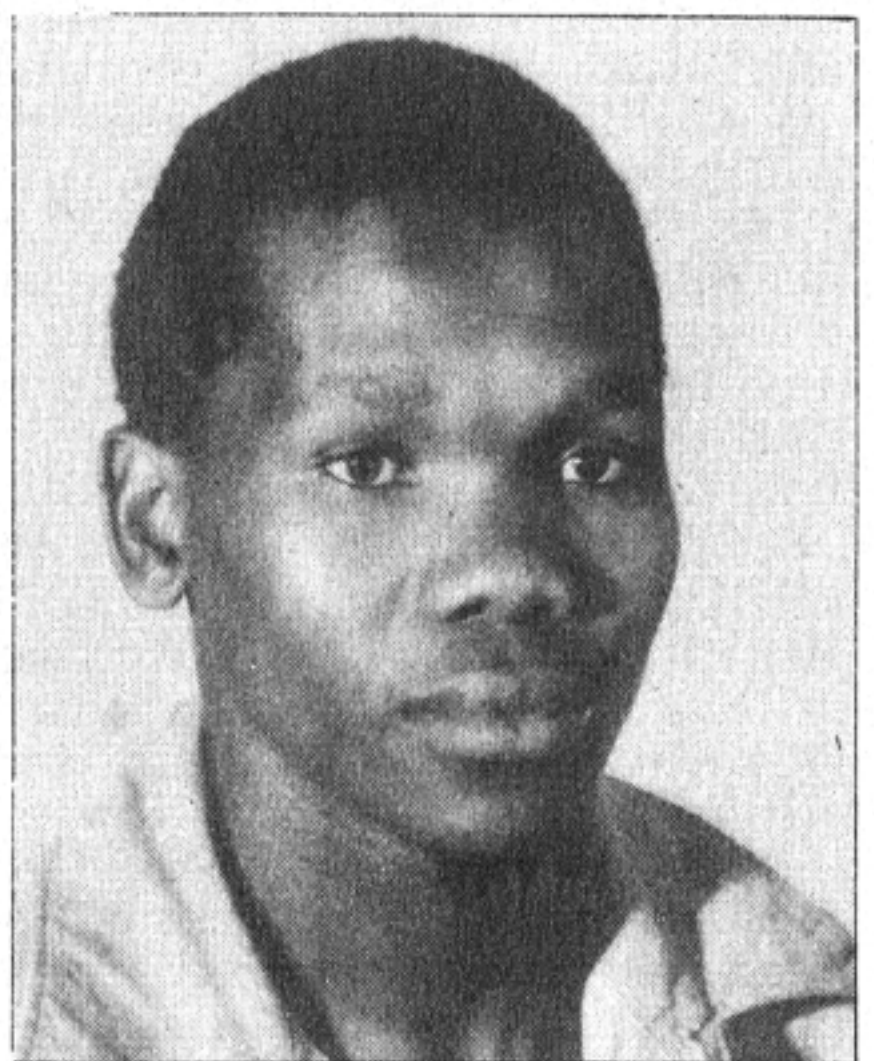
**Norbert Buthelezi**



**Wilfred Maphumulo**



**Robert Dumisa**



**James Maropeng**



# ANC INTERNATIONAL

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## **MATERIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT FROM THE GDR**

A working brigade at the 'Erich Weinert' printing works has been given the name of Nelson Mandela at a solidarity meeting in the town of Neubrandenburg in the German Democratic Republic.

The brigade is responsible for the printing of *Sechaba*, and since 1967 it has printed over three million copies. Its members welcomed the name of Nelson Mandela, whom they regard as a symbol of the struggle for a free South Africa.

The meeting was attended by senior officials of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) of the GDR, officials of the factory and a representative of the Solidarity Committee of the GDR, Renate Schnabel. The ANC delegation included Comrade Nelson Miya (Deputy Chief Representative of the ANC in the GDR), Comrade Ignacio Torres (*Sechaba* correspondent in the GDR) and Comrade Eric Singh.

The director of the printing works, Otto Barthel, and Gerhard Schiederwitz, editor-in-chief of *Freie Erde*, the district organ of the SED, assured the ANC delegation of their continued solidarity and support in the just struggle of the people of South Africa against the apartheid system.

They further called for the immediate release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners in South African gaols.

In his closing remarks, Comrade Miya thanked the workers and the leadership of the factory for the active solidarity and support they have given to *Sechaba*.

## **Youth Demand Mandela's Release**

At a ceremony in Berlin, GDR, a symbolic postcard with over 1 800 000 signatures demanding the release of Nelson Mandela was handed over to Anthony Mongalo, ANC Chief Representative in the GDR.

The signatures came from the young people of the GDR, and had been collected in a tremendous, two-week campaign. They were handed over by the GDR youth leader, Eberhard Aurich. Among the many people from a number of nations attending the ceremony were the Vice-President of the GDR, the President of the World Peace Council and the President of the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

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## **MURDER OF COMRADE MOLOISE: MESSAGES OF PROTEST**

People from many parts of the world have expressed their indignation at the callous murder of Comrade Benjamin Moloise. We give here some of the messages we have received.

A meeting held on 4th November at Students' Hall, Calcutta, adopted a resolution, of which this is a translation:

"This meeting condemns the way the fascist and racist Botha regime has killed the Black poet Benjamin Moloise, ignoring world opinion and appeal. This meeting expresses its deep respect for the martyr-poet and at the same time demands release of Nelson Mandela along with all the



prisoners. This meeting demands establishment of an independent and democratic government in South Africa and end of the racist and fascist White regime."

The Springdales School in New Delhi held a special assembly on Saturday, October 19th, to mourn Comradé Moloise's death, and two minutes' silence was observed. The Africa Club at the school issued the following statement:

"A proud son of Africa, a dedicated patriot and a strong believer in the freedom of the human spirit has been felled in the prime of his life. The strong dissident voice against the racist regime that inspired millions in their struggle for freedom is stilled for ever.

"Benjamin Moloise is no more.

"Flouting a world-wide appeal for clemency, Pretoria's racist regime has added to its mounting atrocities by going ahead with the hanging of Benjamin Moloise.

"We, the members of the Africa Club of Springdales, express our heartfelt grief and condolence at this inhuman execution. We condemn this barbaric act with one voice and reaffirm our solidarity with the South African people and their movement for freedom.

"Your path is difficult but the goal is near and no measure of oppression can drown the voice of millions, which will be quietened only with freedom.

"We are with you in spirit, in your endeavour and we know that you will succeed before long. Victory will be yours. Amandla Maatla!"

From S Muchineripi at the University of Zimbabwe, we received a letter saying:

"There is no amount of weapons that can stop an organised revolution by a determined people.

"To the African National Congress, I say fight harder ... To the family of Comradé Moloise I say, do not lose heart. Feel proud of the heroic death of your beloved son. Be proud of his great achievements...

"I give you my revolutionary farewell, Comradé Benjamin Moloise. Your death will not go unavenged."



*Comrade Aaron Mnisi with Steingrimur Hermansson, Prime Minister of Iceland*

## **ANC REPRESENTATIVE VISITS ICELAND**

Recognition of the ANC as the authentic and genuine spokesman of our people is flowing from all corners of the globe.

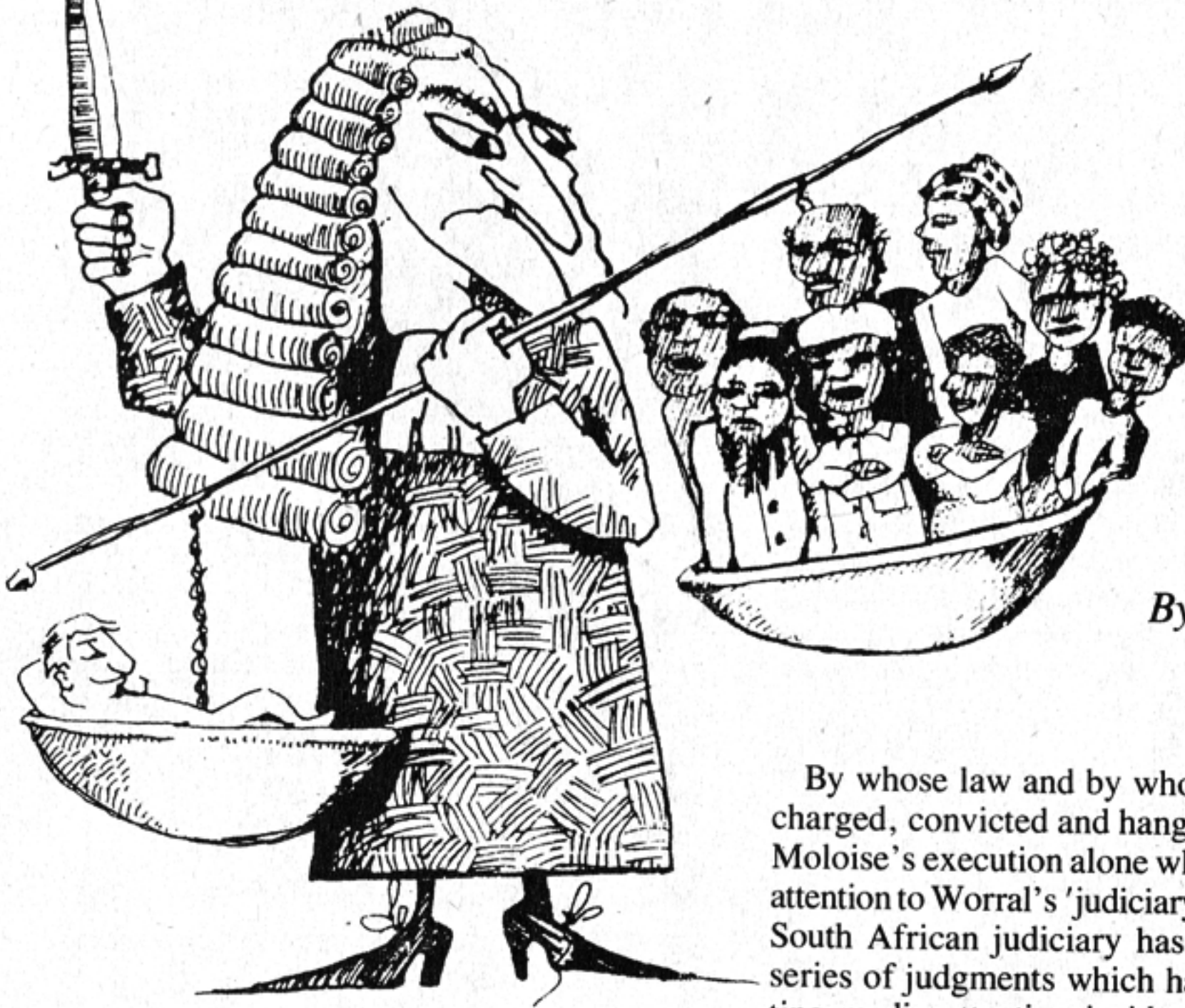
One such development is reflected in the concrete and positive response to the visit to Iceland by the ANC's Danish Chief Representative, Aaron Mnisi, on October 15th-21st. He was invited by a broad co-operation of political parties and trade unions, and this invitation led to meetings with the Bishop, with the Prime Minister, Steingrimur Hermansson, with the Ministers of Fishing and Industry, the National Presidents of the Trade Unions Council and the White Collar Workers Union.

As a result of his meeting with the National Transport Workers' Union, this union is to participate with its equivalents in other Nordic countries in a blockade and campaign against South African imports and exports.

Comrade Mnisi's visit received wide coverage in the media, including national television, and was crowned with an undertaking by a number of trade unions, political activists and individuals, to launch an Anti-Apartheid Movement in Iceland on 24th November.



# YOUR LORDSHIP IS A BIASED RACIST!



By Sello Moeti

The death sentence passed by a Pretoria Supreme Court judge on Benjamin Moloise allegedly for killing a special branch man, P. Selepe, was carried out three months ago. Two others Siphon Xulu and Clarence Payi are still in Pretoria Central Prison's death cells. The racist ambassador to London, Dennis Worrall, at the height of the national and international outcry that greeted Moloise's hanging, claimed that his execution was not political but was a 'judicial matter and was carried out according to law.'

Benjamin Moloise was executed despite numerous appeals for clemency and in spite of a statement by the ANC pointing out that he had had nothing to do with the killing of Selepe. The Appeal Court ignored these statements and rejected his appeal. Nothing could be expected from the strongman of Pretoria, PW Botha, by way of clemency. So Moloise was hanged.

By whose law and by whom was Moloise charged, convicted and hanged? It is not just Moloise's execution alone which has brought attention to Worrall's 'judiciary' and 'law.' The South African judiciary has been making a series of judgments which have been attracting media attention inside and outside the country in both political and criminal cases.

The first case is from the Eastern Cape:

■ "Mr Justice JPG Eksteen granted an urgent interdict in the Port Elizabeth Supreme Court restraining police from assaulting detainees in the region. The order, among other things, said: (2a) Interdicting the South African Police from assault upon (1) any of the persons listed; (2) any person who is at present being detained in terms of the regulations under Section 3 of the Public Safety Act (the emergency regulations) at St Albans or North End Prisons, Port Elizabeth; (3) any person who is in the future detained in terms of the emergency regulations in the magisterial districts of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage where such persons are under detention".

The second case is ostensibly criminal, and was reported in the newspapers as:



■ Two men were found guilty in the Klerksdorp Circuit Court yesterday of the murder of Miss Ginny Goitsoine whose charred body was found in the boot of a burnt-out car. George Schweepes and Schalk Burger were found guilty without extenuating circumstances and sentenced to death. Schalk Burger and George Schweepes were also convicted with Jacobus Matthysen and Daniel Durant of rape and robbery with aggravating circumstances.

Evidence was that the four — Burger, Schweepes, Matthysen and Durant— found the couple in their car, pointed a toy gun at them claiming that they were police, first robbed the man of his money, watch etc, stripped him and hit him on the head with a hammer, poured transmission oil over him, especially over his genitals, and when he finally escaped, they raped the woman, forced her into the boot of the car, poured petrol over it and set it alight, despite her begging them not to kill her. The last two the court found raised objections to killing her. The death sentence was double.

These two judgments attracted a lot of attention. The former because it is the very first time in South African judicial history for a judge to issue an order restraining the police from torturing detainees and the latter because it is also the first time that a White person has actually been sentenced to death for killing a Black person, let alone had that sentence carried out. We have yet to see whether this will happen.

In Natal the Supreme Court was not to be outdone. The Natal Division of the Supreme Court made two rulings which greatly excited the various schools of law, drawing extensive comment both from them and the media.

■ In the case of *Hurley and others vs the Minister of Law and Order*, the deputy judge president of Natal, Justice Leon, declared the detention of Paddy Kearney, director of Diakonia House, unlawful and ordered his release. Kearney was detained by the police in terms of Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. This was the first judgment of its kind under the law since the Suppression of Com-

munistism and Terrorism Acts, with all their amendments, were updated and combined into the latest Internal Security Act of 1982. In the course of delivering his judgment Mr Justice Leon said, among other things, that:

*"The first and most sacred duty of the court, where it is possible to do so, is to administer justice to those who seek it, high and low, rich and poor, Black and White, to do justice between man and man, and man and state ... Thirdly, and most importantly, we are enjoined in construing this kind of legislation not to lean towards one side or the other!"*

Mr Justice Leon was however not mentioning that while not 'leaning towards one side or the other' he himself belonged to one of the sides and was in fact implementing the laws made by one side (Whites) to control the other side (Blacks).

*"If it's true that detainees are being assaulted in the custody of the police, it is a state of affairs which no civilian nation, and particularly one which professes to follow Christian principles, can tolerate for one moment."*

These were some of the things said by Mr Justice Milne delivering the judgment of the Full Bench of the Natal Supreme Court in the case of *Elsie Nair vs the Minister of Law and Order*. The court issued an order restraining the security police from further assaulting and interrogating Billy Nair, who was hospitalised as a result of their interrogation.

All comment was unanimous on these cases, especially those handed down by the Natal Supreme Court. They show that the courts of the regime can protect the individual against executive power. Some even contended that the Natal judgments were not only a 'landmark' but demonstrated that the judicial system can secure justice for the detainees.

### **The Myth**

All in all, these judgments and the publicity given to them come at the height of Botha's attempt to crush resistance to his rule by staging massacres daily throughout the country. In fact the effect of this publicity is to reinforce the myth of the independence and impartiality of the South African judiciary; a myth which



was assiduously created by the British and maintained with great care, skill and a host of laws by the regime's judiciary. A little over ten months ago the British Foreign office Minister, Malcolm Rifkind, was waving away demands by the public that his government demand the release of the leaders of the UDF with: "The South African courts have a healthy reputation for independence." He refused to take any action 'until all legal procedures have been exhausted.' The South African judges themselves are quick to point out that the British judges consider only them as their equals. The question, therefore, is how fair, independent, and impartial are the 'justices' dispensing the law of apartheid?

The belief that a system that is so profoundly unjust, so overtly for Whites only and brazenly criminal in its practice as apartheid could have an independent, impartial judiciary is most surprising to say the least.

The first point to make is that apartheid is a crime against humanity. It has been declared so by the majority of the people of South Africa (including some Whites) who are engaged in the struggle. The whole international community, be they governments, organisations — governmental and non-governmental —, left or right, all find apartheid repugnant. The United Nations has for decades been saying the same thing in countless resolutions that apartheid is a crime against humanity. Therefore, from the point of view of the Rule of Law, the Pretoria regime has no standing except as an example of a band of racist criminals who rule by spilling the blood of the innocent.

### **White Constitution, White Law, White Judges**

The role of the judiciary in the system of apartheid still needs to be exposed to more people, for often the regime claims that its victims have passed through the 'due process of law.' The myth of the independence and impartiality of the courts needs to be dispelled once and for all and the role of the red-robed judges in the crime of apartheid exposed. But even more so because the day of real judgement is fast approaching, and the guilty must be sorted out from the innocent.

All laws start off with the constitution of their makers. In South Africa today a parliament makes the laws of the land. Effectively it is a Whites only parliament. In reality, this parliament, constituted by representatives of only 20% of the population, is a rubber stamp for decisions of an even smaller minority of the minority White population. These laws are then enforced with particular crude and brutal force on the voteless, voiceless and rightless 80% majority. The preamble of the so-called new constitution, that is, the fundamental law from which the parliament derives its power, states clearly that:

"In humble submission to Almighty God ... who gathered our forebears together from many lands and gave them their own; who has guided them from generation to generation; who has wondrously delivered them from the dangers that beset them ..."

The new constitution and its parliament, therefore, is for those whose "forebears ... were gathered from many lands" and "given their own ... guiding them ... from generation to generation." Those who constituted the "dangers that beset them" are not for this parliament.

The judges and magistrates implement the laws of this parliament which, for all intents and purposes, is White. The judiciary, especially in its most important areas, is completely White, whilst the law enforcement agencies are White-controlled and led. The result is that the Blacks get White justice or to be more precise, become victims of White injustice in both its legal and social form.

Being a White judicial officer in apartheid South Africa is an aggravating factor in the case between us, the Blacks, and the system which is racist and biased against us, because the judiciary is divided into a few Whites whose allegiance is to the English-speaking community with its liberal but very firm anti-Black positions or the Afrikaner group. Like in so many areas of South African life, the Afrikaner, with the coming to power of the National Party, felt the courts were hostile to their 'aspirations' and filled the Bench with 'loyal Whites of correct upbringing' to use the jargon



of the Broederbond, which supervised this operation. Evidence surfaces time and again exposing the Broederbond membership and National party support as the major criteria for choice of judges. The charge then against the judiciary of apartheid is one of being White South Africans, dispensing laws made with the explicit intention of protecting Whites and their privileges, and whilst pretending as if the opposite were true.

**"The White man makes all the laws, he drags us before his courts and accuses, and he sits in judgment over us."**

That is how Comrade Nelson Mandela, a lawyer by training, puts our case.

The incriminating evidence against the judges' Whiteness is found not in their skin colour but in their judgments, as the following cases indicate:

■ *Weenen farmer Johannes Bekker's story 'was not necessarily the truth' but it was 'acceptable,' Magistrate Basil King found when he acquitted him and two minors of assaulting seven labourers.*

*Evidence was that the farmer had gone to a farm workers' compound and beaten up six of them, setting dogs on them.*

The word of all six could not stand against the word of the farmer. The revealing thing about this particular case is that the same magistrate sat over a case earlier on, in which the same farmer had torn the back of a Black woman with a sjambok, and fined him only R50. On the case of assaulting the six, the magistrate barred the public from the trial on the grounds that the trial involved minors and that the Black press had queried his leniency in the earlier sentence of assaulting a Black woman.

■ *A Thabazimbi farmer, his son and a sixteen-year-old boy were found not guilty of stealing a labourer and suffocating him to death in a steel drum. Evidence before the court was that Mr Phuti was taken by the two armed boers from his home, beaten and held for a day in a four-metre steel drum on their farm. The drum ends were sealed with concrete and steel pipes welded over its open end. He died from*

*'technical' suffocation. "Get this thing out of the drum," the farmer is reported to have told one of his workers. Mr Justice D J H Le Roux ruled Mr Phuti's death was not due to the actions or negligence of any of the accused. On the charge of manstealing, Mr Le Roux found the farmer did not intend to deprive Mr Phuti of his liberty. As a private citizen, the farmer was entitled to arrest Mr Phuti for questioning if he believed the labourer was involved in stock theft, and in the final event, intended handing him to the police".*

There was the case in Meyerton where a farmer chained a man to a tree stump beating him to death and later throwing his body into a veld. These cases, all within the past ten months, are but some which highlight the frequency of murder of Blacks by White farmers. Even without the facts of the case being subjected to minute scrutiny, the reasoning of the magistrate on a 'story' other than the truth being 'acceptable', or citizens making arrests after whipping that results in death — as a surgeon testified that Phuti died from injuries inflicted on his lungs— clearly shows that Blacks cannot be given justice in a White man's court, because only Whites are citizens and only they have the right to arrest and question as the practice is and the ruling here accepts. It is obvious that the same judge would have sentenced a Black man to death for kidnapping and murder if he had 'arrested' a White person and wanted to 'question' him about the theft of the land.

■ *A policeman, Neil Harker, was fined R30 for assaulting a coloured breakdancer Benito Holmes. Mr Holmes died in hospital a day after the attack. Evidence was that the policeman attacked Mr Holmes because he was travelling with a White Canadian girl friend. He was fined R30, which is a fine far less than for a parking offence!*

We can quote the case of the four immigrants who picked Blacks at random in Johannesburg and killed two with pickhandles, baseball bats, kieres etc. We can quote the case of the two young Whites who marked their birthdays by killing a Black chosen at random in the street



or the young student, during breaktime at college who broke the monotony of being White by picking a Black man and killing him. We can go on quoting such cases endlessly. Everywhere the sentences ranged from small amounts of money, weekends in prison to only a few years in gaol. All the cases quoted above came before the courts in the last ten months. Whether the victims live or die does not mean anything to the White judges. What matters is the colour of the accused and the accuser.

### **The Conspiracy of the Policeman, the Judge and the Hangman**

Comrade Benjamin Moloise is one of about sixty people executed in Pretoria in the last 10 months. According to the Prison Service, 238 other prisoners are condemned to die in Pretoria's Central Prison. In 1984 alone 115 people were hanged, almost all of them Black. Indeed in many years only Blacks are executed. The Pretoria hangman is one of the busiest in the world, hanging about 100 people every year. In the last five years, ten members of the ANC were sentenced to death and five were executed: Solomon Mahlangu, Marcus Motung, Jerry Mosolodi and Simon Mogoerane, and now Benjamin Moloise. Xulu and Payi are in the death row. In the case of Comrade Solomon Mahlangu the presiding judge noted that he did not shoot the two Whites who had died. He was, however, sentenced to death and hanged for being found guilty of 'common purpose' with the comrade who actually shot the two whites. The 'common purpose' of the Whites only legislature, judiciary, the policeman and the hangman can be seen clearly without any legal training. The hangman receives his victims from the judge who in turn got them from the policeman. Together with the SADF, the police, judge and the hangman form a noose around our necks.

In theory the judges are chosen by the state president in council on merit from among practising attorneys or from the Bar. The magistrates, though sometimes chosen as judges, are in fact civil servants like the policemen. Both are employed by the same vicious master to maintain law and order. A

recent study by the Johannesburg based Lawyers for Human Rights, a series of cases tried by regional magistrates and judges shows a pattern of sentencing which varied on the lines of colour and politics: Blacks, invariably opponents of the regime, received consistently higher sentences than others convicted of similar offences. Take for instance the following cases: A young Black worker was sentenced to five years in gaol for scribbling 'Release Mandela' on his mug in a factory canteen. A young White man viciously attacked a petrol attendant, crushing his skull and killing him 'until there was blood everywhere' by his own admission. This businessman was fined only R2 000.

Winnie Mandela is better placed to know the impartiality of the magistrates and judges at regional and magistrates courts for she has been appearing before them at least once or twice a year for the past 25 years. She says:

**"It is difficult to win a case outright in the magistrate's and regional courts ... You seem to feel the hot air coming from the nostrils of the magistrates, breathing fumes of hostility that consume you as you are sitting there in the dock."**

So, with the facts, the red-robed judges in the circuit or supreme courts and even in the Appeal Court, dispense injustice. In fact, taken on the basis of their own judgments and comments when making rulings, the South African judges are given to acting the policeman, protecting the rights and privileges of the White minority and apartheid.

The third member in the conspiracy is the South African Police. The policeman, the judge and the executioner. He is not only enforcing the law but is the law itself. While in other countries people are sent to gaol as punishment, in South Africa they are sent to gaol for punishment. The South African policeman strangles, throws through windows of tall buildings, mutilates, kills with his hands, assassinates with his truncheons and shoots to kill. He has the power to do anything, anywhere, anyhow. The S.A. Police is one of the police forces in the world which has the



power to keep a person as long as they want, isolating them from family, lawyer and no court can question them. Nothing about them can be written without their approving it. In a word, they are the law like the kings of yore.

Interestingly enough, the policeman and the judge have similar powers and relationship with the hangman. They both stand in the same queue killing the Blacks in the streets (in the case of the police) or facilitating and passing them over to the hangman to finish the job. Both have the power of life and death over us. And both do what they like with it. Both cannot be criticised openly and so on.

### **Judges: Watchdogs of White Political Power**

The first thing the Nationalists did on coming to power was to make all political expression by Blacks illegal. This they did with the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. The ostensible target for this little piece of repressive measure was to purge the SACP and Marxist ideas out of South Africa. In their own words, to treat all opposition as 'a problem of law and order.' This law was quickly followed by others — 90 Day Detention Act followed by the 180 Days Detention Act. Then came the Suppression of Terrorism Act, Internal Security Act, Unlawful Organisations Act followed by hundreds of amendments, all aimed at crushing all political resistance of the Blacks. In fact in every parliamentary sitting more security laws are passed. In 1982 the other security laws were combined and called the Internal Security Act which was a blank cheque to the police. They could do what they wanted with whoever they wanted without any court interference.

As in so many other aspects of South African life, with the boers filling the Bench with National Party loyalists and crowding the Bar with Broederbond members, whatever law there was went out through the back door for the Blacks. All pretence at fair trial at political trials was dropped. Not that seen from a Black man's point of view there was ever just Roman Dutch law. No. The point is the crassness, crude racist regulations were openly implemented, substituting the subtle, class-based discriminatory controls of the liberal English

establishment.

At first detention and the threat of it was the main form of police action. When that would not do, torture, vicious crushing of skulls, drowning, strangulation and throwing people from high buildings were tried with longer periods of detention. But as these methods could not stop resistance and got exposed over a time, the regime fell back on show trials. Using the laws, the police and now the courts the regime could now destroy its opponents 'legally'. The aim of show trials is, among others, to immobilise and paralyse all political organisations operating legally and bleed them white financially in costly, hopeless legal cases.

The role of the judiciary in this situation is a simple one as seen by the boers. While on the one hand protesting their innocence that theirs is to apply the law, on the other the judges have been handing down stiff prison terms for political offences tried in the most shameful way. The accused and the witnesses in political trials are usually the same people, some appearing in both roles. The reason can be found in the following cases:

■ *"A teenage Galeshewe youth, giving evidence in trial of five Galeshewe youths told a Kimberley Regional Magistrate yesterday morning he felt he would rather die in solitary confinement because he had not been allowed to talk to anybody.*

*He also said that he felt the time would come when he would go mad because he had spent all the time in the cell talking to himself. He said he felt he was being ill treated by being kept in solitary confinement.*

*The youth said he had not complained to the security police about being kept in solitary confinement. The youth said he would like very much to be free from solitary confinement."*

■ *A trial of four youths on a charge of sabotage — 1980. Outcome: five years' imprisonment for each defendant.*

*During the trial a schoolboy witness whose age was not given denied the truth of a statement he had made to the police. He said, "They hit me so that I should tell lies. What I have*



told now is the truth." The prosecutor applied for the arrest of the youth on a perjury charge.

■ Trial of two people under the Terrorism Act, 1983. Outcome: Five years' imprisonment for one defendant and three years for the other.

■ In a 'trial within a trial' concerning the admissibility of statements made during detention, one of the defendants, Nomakephu Ntsatha, told the court how she was tortured:

*"Miss Ntsatha told the court she was arrested in Aliwal North by a Warrant Officer Bezuidenhout on November 22, 1981. She said she was taken to the security offices there where W/O Bezuidenhout slapped her until she fell on her back. He then sat on her stomach and suffocated her with a small blanket she had wrapped her baby in and asked her how she felt.*

*Miss Ntsatha said the officer hit her again on her face with his open hands when she stood up. At one stage W/O Bezuidenhout asked a policeman to hold her hands behind her as he assaulted her. She said the officer and a policeman pulled out her hair and showed it to her, saying that they were going to shave her head in that manner. W/O Bezuidenhout pulled a bag that looked like a canvas 'bank' bag over her head and tightened it around her neck. It felt wet and suffocated her and she could not speak. After a while he took it off.*

*Miss Ntsatha said on the following day she was taken to the King William's Town security offices. W/O Bezuidenhout entered the office with other men. Mr Hattingh had a money bag that appeared to have something inside. Between six and eight men held her on her back. Some held her by her shoulders, some her waist and others by her legs. Miss Ntsatha said Mr Hattingh pressed what was contained in the money bag against her from the jaw down to her lower parts. He pressed it against her breasts and arms as well. The 'thing' shocked her and she felt cramps in her body. She was screaming all the time because of the pain. Later Mr Hattingh said he was tired and gave it to Mr Fouche.*

*The magistrate ruled that the statement she made in detention was admissible as evidence.*

As the examples show, the police play the major role in the functioning of the judicial system of apartheid. Everything comes from them. They detain those they want to accuse and those

they want to use as witnesses. The time is unlimited and the detainee is completely at their mercy. They extract a 'confession' from the accused and force the witness to memorise what, very often, is from them. When this is done the magistrates presides over the signing of the 'confession', flanked by the interrogators. The judge finishes off the job. The judges and magistrates, therefore, are in the thick of battle against the opponents of apartheid. They are legitimising the 'confessions', giving the hangman enough victims to keep him busy the whole year round, banning political meetings, helping put leaders behind bars, ruining young lives with long terms of imprisonment, getting the criminals off scot free, and laundering the reputation of the regime, with their 'reputation'.

### **'Landmark Judgments': A Whitewash**

Therefore the so-called 'landmark judgments' are nothing more than part of Botha's so-called reforms. It is an interesting coincidence that the judiciary are only now making these 'landmark judgments', after having sentenced more than 40 000 people under the security laws in the past years. They in no way show that the judiciary can protect the rights of individuals accused by the system, whose laws they take oaths to implement to the best of their abilities

The judgements do individually save a life here and there but they only show the depth of the complicity of the judges. Obviously there is space for manoeuvre, to save more lives and yet they breathe fumes of hostility and hate against the victims of the system.

To show that these rulings do not even constitute flashes in the pan, in November an attempt to protect three detainees from further torture in Protea police station (obviously inspired by the Port Elizabeth rulings) was foiled by a judge who threw the case out with costs on a technicality. In Windhoek another judge making the usual racist judgement based on confessions which were clearly made under torture and rejected the evidence of the accused that they were forced to 'confess' and those of the state witnesses who revealed that they have been tortured to incriminate the accus-



ed. The relevance of the torture of the accused and the state witnesses 'was not clear to the court,' he said, finding the accused guilty.

The thing is not to encourage the judges to make 'landmark judgments' of saving one man and sentencing twenty to death. This amounts to saying apartheid can be just. It cannot and was never designed to be. Those of the members of the judiciary who when confronted with their complicity in the crime of apartheid claim that they are implementing the laws as best as they can as South Africa has no Judge-Made Law are cheating only themselves. Bram Fisher, an able lawyer and Afrikaner of the first order long resolved their so-called dilemma by saying:

**"I accept the general rule that for the protection of a society laws should be obeyed. But when laws themselves become immoral and require the citizen to take part in an organised system of oppression — if only by his silence or apathy — then I believe that a higher duty arises. This compels one to refuse to recognise such laws,"**

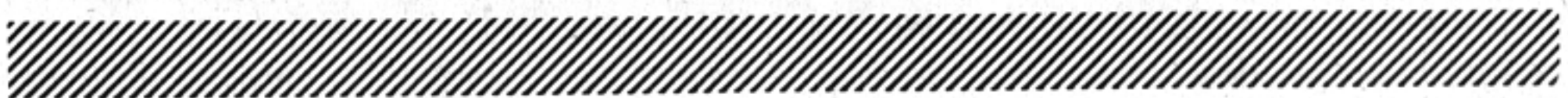
let alone implementing them to the best of one's ability we may add.

Most communities, be they big or small, have a traditional conception of justice and natural law. The boers are quick to point out that their legal tradition is that of Roman-Dutch law. A simple look at the history of the boers, the accumulation and final evolution of the Afrikaners to this day shows they were those sections that European society was purging itself of. They were the scum, the dross of one type or other of those societies. In South Africa these fallouts, elevated the concept of armed robbery, theft of land, cattle, enslavement of women and children, murder to a right and developed the belief that what can be stolen, pillaged and plundered successfully is a gift from God. Roman Dutch law is therefore as important to them as their Jesus Christ who approved of their crimes. Looking at the noisy sessions of the racist parliament in Cape Town, the boers who get elected, those who elect

them, the laws they pass and the reasons for making them, one gets the idea that they have the tradition and know as much about Roman Dutch Law as a cow in their farms does about the subject. And yet this is where all the laws and important decisions are made.

Clearly the Roman Dutch Law tradition of these boers is the Sunday jacket of the professors at the law schools. The legislature, judiciary and police have no idea of the rule of law. Perhaps this explains why these boers have not honoured any of the accords and agreements with the neighbouring states. Traditionally therefore, the boers have been outlaws, going to great lengths, including the so-called Great Trek, just to be outside the law. The interesting thing about the Great Trek is that the arrest by the British colonial police of an Afrikaner for beating his servant is quoted as one of the reasons for their leaving the Cape. Is the killing of the farm workers what they had in mind when they wanted to establish proper relationship between master and servant?

Finally, it can be said with certainty that the Pretoria regime has been exposed, criticised, denounced and condemned. There is need now for exposing it to more people. What is even more important is for the people of South Africa, led by the ANC, to be given the support necessary to take on the job of removing the regime violently to its logical end: Legally speaking, the violent overthrow of the Boers will not be the end of the story. It must never be. The destruction of the regime will merely be the ending of the crime. The principles must be laid down of assessing the damage of apartheid on South Africa. We are talking about justice. Implied in the concept of justice is just retribution. Let us openly say now that each crime will be investigated and those responsible punished. The victims must be avenged. The whole fight is for justice. Today the rivers run with tears and blood. The regime builds hills and mountains of bones. Everywhere there are graves of the innocent. We must never spit on these sacrifices by adopting positions of reconciliation with criminals.







## **Hamba Kahle Comrade Alex la Guma**

Alex La Guma, who died of what has been described as a 'massive heart attack' in Havana on 11th October this year, was one of the most talented writers the Movement has produced. Very few, if any, have described the lives of the ghetto dwellers so vividly and starkly as he has done. And, since the people who live mainly in the areas which he describes so graphically are Coloured, it can truly be said that his is the authentic voice of this oppressed section.

But above all, Comrade Alex was an internationalist and freedom fighter. He lived and worked for the liberation of the oppressed. At the time of his death he was the Chief Representative of the ANC in Cuba.

La Guma came partly of French and Malagasy stock. His father, Jimmy La Guma, had played a very prominent role in the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union and the Communist Party during the twenties and thirties. They were traumatic times for these organisations. Many prominent figures found themselves cut adrift and in the political wilderness for some time. But most of these victims, like S P Bunting, Bill Andrews and La Guma Senior, returned to continue the fight when those responsible for the expulsions faded from our political scene.

Alex was born into and during this political cleansing process in 1925.

It was only natural that he would be greatly influenced during his formative years by such a politically motivated parent. When World War II broke out, Jimmy La Guma joined the Indian-Malay Corps, and in 1940 went up north to participate in the Abyssinian campaign as a staff sergeant. Alex was in his middle teens. His father was finally demobilised in 1947, when Alex was 22 years of age.

By this time, Alex had matriculated from Trafalgar High School and had gone on to the Cape Technical College. He worked in turn as a clerk, book-keeper and factory hand. He had graduated politically from the YCL, and became a fully-fledged member of the Communist Party. He also became a member of the Franchise Action Council to oppose the disfranchisement of the Coloured people.

He went through a very lean period after the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948. But everybody who knew him well was certain that sooner or later he would surface again. And he did so with a vengeance.

Later, when the South African Coloured People's Organisation was formed, he and his father played a very active part in its affairs. As a matter of fact, their house in the lower



part of District Six was given over to the Movement to be used as the headquarters for this organisation. Together with Reg September and Barney Desai, he helped to revive the militancy of the Coloured people in the struggle against the racist government.

Alex married Comrade Blanche Herman, who worked side by side with him in his political life thereafter. They went to live in Athlone, which today is in open revolt against the Botha regime. It was there that in 1962 he was placed under 24-hour house arrest for five years. But in 1966, before this term expired, Alex and his family went into exile and lived in London for many years before being posted to Cuba.

After joining *New Age* newspaper as a journalist, Alex appeared to gain the necessary confidence in his own ability, which was to lead to the flowering of one of the finest literary talents to come out of South Africa. He also revealed an artistic talent as a cartoonist, with a strip that appeared weekly in our Congress newspaper.

His political activities in the fifties led to his arrest together with 155 others in the infamous Treason Trial, which for him lasted until 1960, when he was released. In the State of Emergency following on the Sharpeville massacre, he was arrested again, and held in Worcester prison for over five months.

Over a period of years La Guma was blacklisted, and received a spate of banning orders which isolated him politically and socially from his colleagues and friends.

But the irony of it all was that these restrictions may very well have provided him with the time to exploit his undoubted skill at writing, which was in fact his greatest contribution towards exposing the wickedness of the apartheid regime.

The ghettos and shanties of the Cape were his *milieu*, and he never depicted the lives of the impoverished with either rancour or self-pity. The powerful strokes of his pen painted a picture of the starkness and reality of their lives. He allowed the tin and hessian fabrics of the rat-infested, leaking hovels to spell it out. The hell on earth amidst the paradise of the Whites emerged loud and clear from such novels as *A Walk in the Night* and *A Threefold Cord*.

District Six has been proclaimed a 'White' area now, and many of the houses and shops razed to the ground by the racist bulldozers. It was an area graphically described by La Guma as one where the down-and-outs, prostitutes and gangsters were "doomed for a period to walk the night." In his first novel, *A Walk in the Night*, La Guma has ensured that the guilty will not escape their just deserts. This infamous ghetto, instead of being wiped off the face of the earth as the guilty men hoped it



*Cape Town today*



would be, will, in this book, remain alive for future generations to ponder over man's inhumanity to his fellow men.

La Guma's description of places like Windermere, Elsie's River and Nyanga, which are so vividly portrayed in his books — the shanty towns of galvanised iron and cardboard structures — could apply to thousands of similar places in every corner of the land. His vivid pictures are exactly echoed by these stanzas from *Slumtown*, by Phyllis Haring:

"Weary little children,  
Rickets in their bones;  
Got no dolls or marbles,  
Playing games with stones.  
Crowded little shanty,  
Got no water tap,  
Mother on her doorstep,  
Baby on her lap.  
People's souls are rotting.  
In the yard behind ...  
Woman with consumption,  
Beggar going blind.

"And when you're leaving slumtown,  
When your tour is done,  
Turn and see our hovels  
Huddled in the sun ...  
Rows and rows of coffins,  
See them from afar —  
It's a living graveyard  
Where my people are."

In his other books such as *In the Fog of the Season's End*, La Guma has depicted life in the underground movement, and the torture and death suffered at the hands of the secret police.



At the time of his death, Alex was not only our ambassador in Cuba but was also the Secretary-General of the Afro-Asian Writers' Union, as well as being a member of the World Peace Council.

The Lotus Award, which is the highest literary distinction given by the Afro-Asian countries, was received by him from the hands of the late Indira Gandhi at a large ceremony in New Delhi. More recently, in Moscow, he was awarded the Order of the Friendship of the Peoples of the USSR.

His stature as a freedom fighter and as a novelist has been established throughout the world. His books have been translated and published in many parts of Africa, Asia and the socialist countries, as well as being increasingly referred to in the English-speaking world.

But what of the man himself? Those of us who were fortunate enough to 'grow up' in the Movement with Alex relished his company and comradeship, and marvelled at the manner in which the man and his works matured. Many of us remember him as a tall, gangling youth, full of fun and always ready for a lark. He loved mimicking the mannerisms and jargon of the Cape Coloured working class. This he did out of sheer love and togetherness with them. La Guma was an extrovert, and retained his love of fun and love of life right until the end. The prestige which he gained and the respect he attained throughout the world never spoilt him. He mixed well with the most eminent writers and poets in the world, but retained the common touch which made it easy to fraternise with him. He was a great favourite of our youth in Havana.

He retained a nice edge of aggression and sharp criticism against both paternalism and racism, and was ever alert to come down heavily on these two vices, but I have watched him tongue-lash a PAC man at a social for daring to deny the right of Whites to become integrated in the freedom struggle.

He was a devoted family man, and doted on his sons, and enthused about their rapid growth as teenagers when they grew beyond his own six foot stature.



With his more intimate comrades, and especially around the New Year, which most 'Kaapenaars' celebrate with a *Tweede Nuwe Jaar*, Alex loved nothing better than to relax and get geared up for his favourite Cape songs and ditties, which he sang into the early hours of both New Year days. The 'skollie' slang and jokes would keep us in fits of laughter — and more than a little nostalgia.

He loved the Cape, and especially Cape Town, with a deep, patriotic emotion, and when this little bit of 'regional chauvinism' was pointed out to him, he would shrug his shoulders and say, "Who can blame me? — when Drake himself said it was the fairest Cape of them all, when he completed his round the world trip."

When I last spoke to Comrade Alex in London a few months ago and asked him if he was writing another book, he replied that he had already finished it and now needed to put it to paper — and pointing to his head he said, "It is all there, and I have been storing it up for a long time now."

Having read most of his novels and short stories, I've often enthused at his mastery of words, his adept turn of phrase and vivid descriptions of both beautiful scenery and miserable townships. I've enjoyed his writing

immensely but have always been left with the impression that somewhere inside him was a great, jumbo-sized classical novel struggling to emerge.

Lewis Nkosi has compared his writing in some respects to that of Dostoevsky, which, when one considers that the Russian writer is one of the greatest of all time, is high praise indeed. But while I agree that La Guma was a vastly talented writer, the impact that his novels had on me was that he had a very good mixture of the genius of a Damon Runyon mixed up with some of the pre-revolutionary prophecies of Gorki. But Alex wrote it as it is. Alex's writing was essentially La Guma.

At his funeral in Havana on 20th October, the eulogy was delivered by Jesus Montand, an alternate member of the Cuban Political Bureau. The ANC was officially represented by our Secretary-General, Comrade Alfred Nzo.

After hearing about his death, the thought struck me that perhaps Comrade Alex took with him to the grave that novel which would have put the seal on La Guma as a great writer in the mould of Dostoevsky or Dickens; the novel he told me was in his head.

*ANC Veteran*



*The University of Cape Town pays tribute to Alex La Guma: an exhibition in the African Studies Library, November 1985*



# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Comrade Editor,

The 12th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow was a great experience, one that has left an indelible imprint on my heart and mind — to see Moscow in a festive mood, so warm and young. With wide opened arms she welcomed the thousands of young people to marvel at her ageless beauty, herculean strength and undaunted courage. Adorned in the bright colours of the festival gear, she sang and danced with the young. Together with us she trembled with anger and seethed with hatred at the forces of militarism and reaction, aggression and violence. For did not Moscow witness the horrors of war? Does she not still bear the ugly scars of that war?

The Festival brought together 20 000 young men and women from more than 150 countries. A mixture of nations, countries, continents. Young people of different political views and persuasions, believers and non-believers, from different social strata, spoke out against imperialism, colonialism, racism, zionism and apartheid. It was a colourful, multilingual, giant display of the impassioned enthusiasm of the young to make this world a better one. This holiday of solidarity of the world's young people was a powerful manifestation of their predilection for justice and honesty, their energetic determination to fight for lasting peace on earth.

The Festival took place on the blood-drenched soil where, 40 years ago, the heroic Soviet people smashed Hitler fascism to smithereens. We learned of the trials and tribulations, pain and sorrow, the price the Soviet people had to pay for their freedom and independence; that 20 million lives were lost in defence of the motherland, socialism, life itself. Despite the untold sufferings and hardships brought by the Nazi invasion, the Soviet people fought valiantly. The brunt of the war was borne by the youth. For war is most cruel to the young. It ruins childhood and adolescence; denies the young a future. The thousands of young delegates paid sacred

homage to the Soviet people who fought and died to make our earth a bright and peaceful home for all people.

Our ANC delegation of 150 militant young men and women lived up to the highest expectations of our people and organisation. They justified the movement's trust and confidence in them. At meetings and discussions, formal and informal, we told the youth of the world about our bitter fight against a new form of fascism in South Africa. In song and dance, painting and writing, talks and speeches, we told of the fierce battles being fought by the fighting masses, and in particular the death-defying youth and students of our country. We told of the just war raging in South Africa.

Wherever we went we were heartily received. An American delegate excitedly embraced one of us and exclaimed, "Oh, man, you ain't 150 — you are 450 here!" (The American delegation consisted of 300 young people.) I say with confidence that the youth of the world, the spring of mankind, is with us in our noble fight to rid the world of the scourge of racism and apartheid.

The Festival was a magnificent school for all of us. Apart from the personal discoveries made, the intellectual and spiritual push we received, our eyes were opened. We saw for ourselves the wide range of opportunities given to the younger generation in a socialist society. We left that proud homeland of Lenin with confidence in the future. We left knowing that there is something better, purer, than the poverty, squalor, disease and hopelessness so common in the western world. The Festival slogan, "For Anti-Imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Progress," found a genuine place in the hearts of so many of us. The delegates to the 12th Festival of Youth and Students will forever remember the warmth and hospitality so lavishly showered on us by the youth and people of the Soviet Union.

Amandla!

Rosita.



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