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HAMBA KAHLE COMRADE YUSUF!

Comrades in the struggle for South African freedom and, indeed, comrades and internationalists all over the world, learned with sorrow of the death, on September 19th 1983, of Comrade Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo, at the age of seventy-four. He had served as Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of the African National Congress for fourteen years and was at the time of his death one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Politico-Military Council. For fourteen years he had been Chairman of the South African Communist Party.

Holding high office in both the ANC and the SACP, he exemplified the close and long-standing alliance between these two organisations. More than that, however, the character of Yusuf Dadoo, the story of his life and the political role he played all symbolised, in the widest sense, the unity of aims and ideals among progressive forces both within South Africa and across the borders of nations throughout the world.

In 1936, on his return to South Africa from his medical studies in Edinburgh, he became a leader of the Transvaal Indian Congress, which, with the Natal Indian Congress, united Hindu and Muslim, Tamil and Gujerati speaking people under one banner in the fight for the rights of the Indian people in South Africa.

A Vision of Unity in the Struggle.

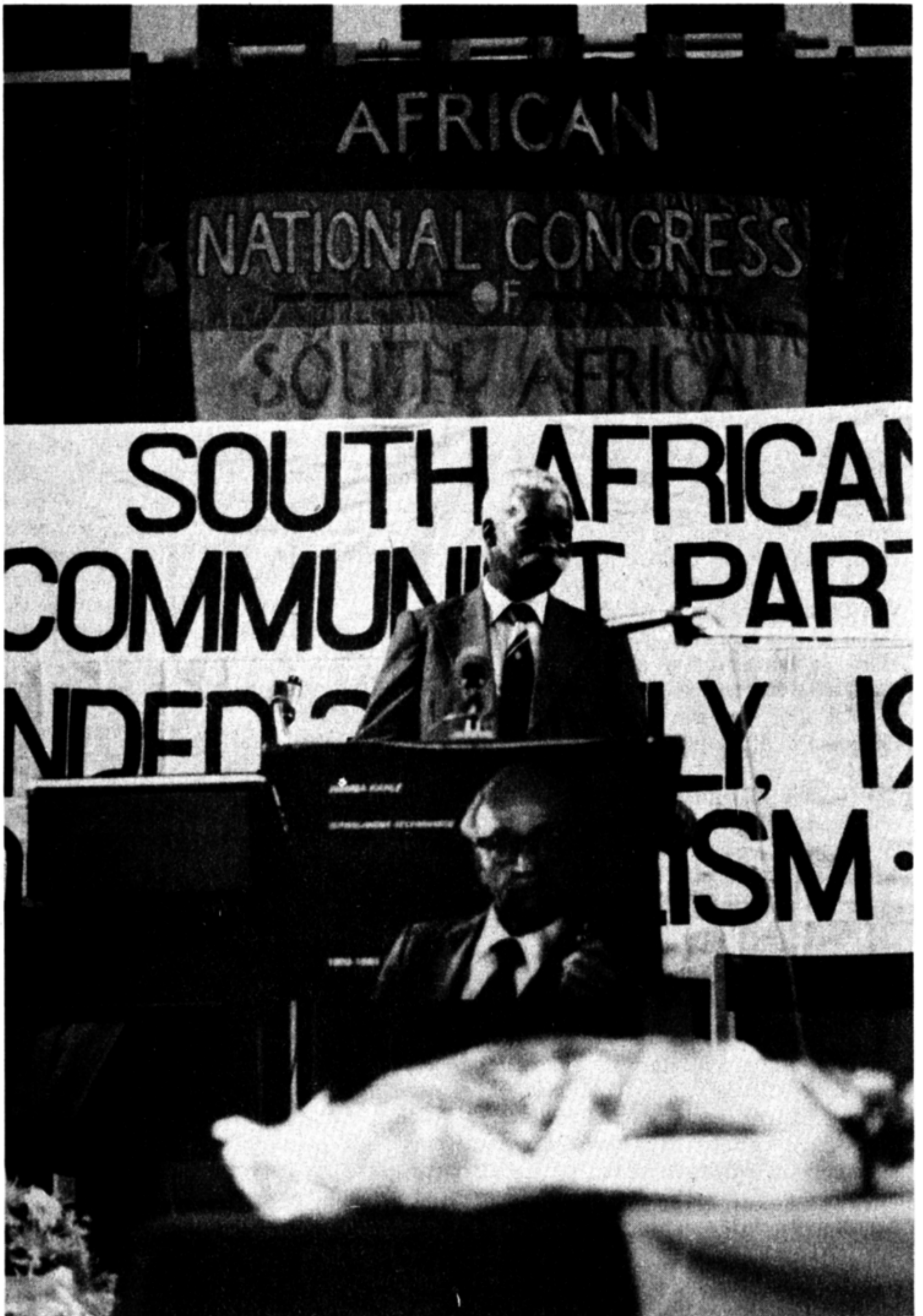
But Comrade Dadoo saw a need for the widest possible unity in the struggle for

liberation of the oppressed people of South Africa; he was convinced that, in their struggle, the Indian people should work in close co-operation with the organisations of other national groups. "And so," said President Tambo in his funeral address, "he worked tirelessly to get the Indian people to see the solution to their own problems within the context of a broader national struggle, involving Africans, so-called Coloureds, and progressive Whites."

In 1938, he was one of the founders of the Non-European United Front in Johannesburg. A powerful orator and a household name in the Indian community in the Transvaal, he constantly addressed meetings in African townships, and called for united mass action against the injustice of apartheid. In 1945, when the National Anti-Pass Council was formed to organise action against the pass laws, Dr A B Xuma, then President-General of the ANC was elected Chairman, and Dr Dadoo Vice-Chairman.

In 1946, the Dadoo-Xuma-Naicker pact was signed between the Transvaal Indian Congress, the African National Congress and the Natal Indian Congress. It was the forerunner of the Congress Alliance.

Yusuf Dadoo was elected President of the South African Indian Congress in 1950. In 1951, he assisted the Franchise Action Committee in Cape Town to fight against the removal of Coloured voters from the common roll. In 1952, he was a member of the Joint Planning Council set up by the



2 *Comrade Moses Mabhida gives his funeral address*



Part of the crowd at the funeral of Comrade Dadoo at Highgate Cemetery, with the tomb of Karl Marx in the background



Part of the crowd that heard the funeral speeches

ANC and the South African Indian Congress to prepare for the Campaign of Defiance Against Unjust Laws. This was the beginning of the Congress Alliance, which was soon to include the Congress of Democrats (an organisation of progressive Whites) and the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

In 1955, at Kliptown in the Transvaal, the historic Congress of the People, organised by the Congress Alliance, adopted the Freedom Charter, the document which still expresses the aspirations of the oppressed people of South Africa. At this Congress, Comrade Dadoo was awarded the traditional African title of Isitwalandwe-Seaparankoe. The word, 'Isitwalandwe' means 'the one who wears the plumes of the rare bird,' and the honour was traditionally bestowed on those brave warriors who had distinguished themselves in the eyes of all the people for exceptional qualities of leadership and heroism.

In Yusuf Dadoo's vision of the struggle for freedom, all oppressed and progressive people were united, not only in South Africa, but throughout the world. "As a true patriot," said President Tambo, "Dadoo understood already in the thirties that the struggle in South Africa is part of a much wider struggle against capitalism, colonialism and for national liberation, peace and social progress." Proletarian internationalism was the cornerstone of Comrade Dadoo's political life.

He joined the Communist Party of South Africa in 1939, and in 1953, three years after this party had been banned, he was elected a member of the Central Committee of the newly formed South African Communist Party at its first, illegal, conference in Johannesburg.

After the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, when the ANC had been banned and the racist regime had declared a state of emergency in South Africa, the Communist Party sent Comrade Dadoo overseas to organise an external apparatus and solidarity work.

This was when his international work began in earnest. During the rest of his life, he led many delegations of the SACP to dif-

ferent parts of the world, and on his seventieth birthday his work was recognised in the honours given him – the Order of Dimitrov by Bulgaria, the Order of Karl Marx by the German Democratic Republic, the Order of the Friendship of the Peoples by the Soviet Union, the Gold Medal of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation, the Scroll of Honour of the World Peace Council, the Decoration of the Hungarian Peace Movement, and the Wielki Proletariat from Poland.

Spear in Hand

He was a theorist, clear-thinking and incisive; a far-sighted planner and an organiser in the freedom struggle, but he was also a participant in that struggle, and a brave fighter. He led by example. He was arrested in 1940 and again in 1941 for printing and distributing leaflets of the Non-European United Front. He was one of the first to be imprisoned in the Passive Resistance Campaign against the anti-Indian laws of the Smuts government in 1946. In the same year he was arrested, together with Bram Fischer and other leaders of the Communist Party, on a charge of sedition for organising the strike of African mine workers. In the Defiance Campaign of 1952, which he had helped to plan, he was once again one of the first to be arrested and imprisoned, when he attended a public meeting, thereby defying the ban the regime had imposed on him.

During the last months of his debilitating illness, his courage did not fail and he did not give up. ANC comrades in London will remember his presence at the day-long annual general meeting of the London branch early in 1983; those who were at the demonstration in Trafalgar Square at the time of the hanging of the three soldiers of Umkhonto We Sizwe will remember Comrade Yusuf standing among us with his wife, Comrade Winnie, who was also in poor health at that time. Listeners to BBC radio in Britain may remember his angry telephone call to the *Today* programme at eight o'clock one morning, when he expressed his indignation at

Richard Attemborough's plan to show the film, *Gandhi*, to white audiences in South Africa.

Just before he died, he dictated a letter to the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, apologising for being unable to attend a meeting, and giving the committee his last political message. It was the first time since 1953 that he had failed to attend any meeting of the committee, and the first time since he had been elected as Chairman in 1972 that he had failed to preside. On his deathbed, he said to the comrades gathered around him, "You must never give up. You must fight to the end." At his funeral, President Tambo said of him, "He died spear in hand, like a true warrior."

A Great Leader: a Humble Man

Comrade Doc – Mota – for these were his nicknames, affectionately given and used – was known by all who met him as a man of great humanity, of kindness, gentleness and humour, unassuming and modest. It was typical of him that in one of his last messages he should pay tribute to those leaders who had influenced him. It was typical of him that he should write from his deathbed to the ANC comrades in London, thanking them for their "kindness and concern," and saying, "I have been overwhelmed by everyone's sincere interest in my well-being ... I have been deeply moved by such attention."

At his funeral, Comrade Joe Slovo described how, in his last hour of consciousness, Comrade Doc urged those around his bed to continue the struggle, spoke to his wife and family one by one, then spoke and laughed with his friends and asked them to sing a freedom song to him, before he lapsed into his final coma. "Who but Yusuf," asked Comrade Slovo, "could have turned this moment of irreversible defeat into a victory of pure will? Who else could have turned such a moment of immense sadness into laughter, inspiration and song? We were there to comfort him, and instead he comforted us in his very last hour."

In South Africa, after his death, many

who had known him in the old days of the Congress Alliance paid public tribute to him, praising his brilliance as an orator and as an analyst of political events, his sincere dedication and commitment to the struggle, his honesty, the simplicity of his life, his courtesy and warmth. The racist regime feared him, even in death, as an opponent, for it banned a commemorative meeting in Lenasia, that had been planned in his honour.

Comrade Yusuf Dadoo now lies buried in Highgate Cemetery, in north London, not far from the grave of Karl Marx.

Both *Nkosi Sikelele' i-Afrika* and the *Internationale* were sung at his funeral, and his coffin was draped in the red flag of socialism and the black, green and gold of the ANC. In the packed hall, those who came to pay their respects to him included leaders of the SACP, ANC and SACTU, and representatives from the embassies of African and socialist countries. Representatives of the Natal Indian Congress, the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Free Mandela Committee in South Africa came to London to attend the funeral, and bring the condolences of those at home to the bereaved family. A number of Communist Parties were represented, and there were messages from many others.

In his address, Comrade Moses Mabhida, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, said:

"He never relented in the fight for the alliance of the oppressed people ... He was a man who never lived above any other person. He never defied the word of his organisation ... In his humility, Dr Dadoo was a real servant of the people ... Yusuf was the man of his people. He was the man of the world. Yusuf was living in the future of a united people, of a struggle against capitalism ...

"Our Party, our people, would like to say in this last minute with our brother: He has travelled seventy-four years, but that is not what we are counting. He is leaving that glorious legacy, the legacy of revolutionaries, the legacy of fighters. He did not die with his strength, maybe like all old fight-

ters. He said his strength, his spear, must be left with those who are still continuing to fight. And for us, for every one of us, we must take up his challenge.”

President O R Tambo of the ANC said in his speech:

“Loved and admired throughout our movement, Doc — as he was popularly known — combined the best qualities of a revolutionary patriot and dynamic leader ... He was one of the foremost national leaders of our country, of the stature of Chief Luthuli, Moses Kotane, J B Marks, Bram Fischer, Nelson Mandela and others ... it would be wrong to see him only in the context of political giants, for Doc was at home with the younger generation ... This accessibility flowed from his friendly nature and simple disposition...”

“At this moment, when the regime seeks to divide out people with its ploy of a tripartite parliament, it is fitting to recall Comrade Dadoo’s precious legacy in his own words: ‘The lesson of our history is that the key to freedom is a united people, fighting for a single common goal — people’s power over every inch of indivisible South Africa. While deriving inspiration from the deeds and traditions of the past resistance, we must deepen the unifying national consciousness of all our people ... which is a prerequisite for a nationwide uprising and victory along the lines of the Freedom Charter.’

“We assure you, Comrade Yusuf, the struggle WILL go on. Victory SHALL be ours. This grievous occasion brings us together less to mourn your tragic departure than to close ranks and advance, united, to the completion of your unfinished task.”

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL. SOUTH AFRICAN MINING UNIONS BY MATHE DISEKO

The mining industry forms the backbone of the South African economy. It is the single largest employer of migrant workers, relying on over 692 000 African workers, whose conditions of employment are most inhuman. The level of super-exploitation is always at a maximum. Thus it is not surprising that the mining sector accounts for over 70% of South Africa’s export earnings. The regime exports 80% of its minerals, representing 55% of total exports. In a number of cases 100% of minerals mined are exported.

Capitalist exploitation through the mining industry uses many ways to exploit the

workers. Some of these are the migrant labour system, the bantustans, the pass laws, the prison-like conditions of the single-sex hostels which are highly regimented to suppress strikes, extremely low wages, all of which leave the worker completely devoid of any rights, for he has entered into a contract with the mine boss.

The safety of the workers is not protected by the mines in their greedy rush for profits. The bosses’ profits and the regime’s income from taxes as a result of the mining industry is enormous, and both partners take care to ensure that this industry grows and

survives at the expense of the black workers. After catering for generous allowances and privileges, the regime claims from the mines 40% of a defined 'taxable income;' 20% of South Africa's total tax revenue, enough, in 1980, to cover the budget for the apartheid war machine – army, navy, air force, police and prisons.

Many workers die in mine 'accidents' and contract many incurable diseases because of squalid working conditions. 'Production is more important than safety.' This statement by the chief safety engineer of one of South Africa's big mining companies explains the appalling safety record of South Africa's gold mines. In 1982, accidents killed 596 miners and injured 15 250 badly enough to keep them away from work for two weeks. (The 1981 figures were, 619 killed, 18 538 accidents.) The fatality rate in 1982 was around 1.25 per thousand workers, over 600 African workers. Over one 30-year period alone, 93% of deaths on the mines were Africans.

These figures do not include the many thousands who die from occupational diseases hidden away in the 'dumping grounds,' the bantustans. In 1976, over 25% of migrant workers from the mines living in the Transkei had tuberculosis (TB). Hardly any compensation is paid to African workers temporarily or permanently injured. In most cases, when African mine workers contract silicosis (a fatal disease of the lungs) the mine bosses, without compensating them or even informing them, simply pay them off before the date of expiry of the contract, and send them off to the 'dumping grounds.' The incidence of silicosis is higher than that of TB. Therefore, figures for mine accidents and deaths conceal the true total amount of death and injury on the mines, of those who suffer gradual disablement and die slow death from lung diseases and other occupational hazards for which the companies keep no records.

This is the real cost of mining in South Africa, which is ruthlessly paid for with the lives of the black working class.

Some mines go as deep as 12 000 feet. High temperatures, complex geographical for-

mations and high turnover of unskilled workers add to the fact that mining in South Africa is highly dangerous. Mines with the worst accident rates, such as Anglo American's Western Deep Level, also have the highest turnover. Frequent big accidents push up absenteeism and resignations. The overall fatality rate has barely fallen in the past two decades.

In 1975, the Erasmus Commission of Enquiry into industrial health showed that little of no attention was paid to health and safety at work. Little or no monitoring was done – information was scarce – what was available was a horrifying picture of death, disease and suffering. The Nieuwenhuizen Commission, reporting to the racist parliament in March 1982, declared that 'the incidence of occupational diseases connected with the mines was expected to rise.' Only one person is employed at present to inspect the conditions of 700 000 people working on the mines, far below the legal requirement laid down in 1975. In practice, information in this area is suppressed.

When profits are threatened, bosses immediately increase the rate of exploitation of their workers, and neglect any health and safety precautions. Responsibility for ensuring safe working conditions is being placed with the employers, the very people who are the cause of the problem.

According to the Nieuwenhuizen Commission, the mine owners are responsible for providing facilities and arrangements for examinations for all miners, with the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases continuing to have overall responsibility. This Bureau does not cater for the 692 000 Africans, who are left to the 'mercies' of the Chamber of Mines. These conditions can only give a hint of the scale of shocking conditions facing black workers, despite reformist and state propaganda allegations that working conditions are improving.

The Wiehahn and Rieckert Commissions
Within the mining industry, these two commissions have formed a major front in the re-

gime's strategy as to appear to the outside world as moving towards 'reform.' Black workers have always resisted the repressive labour laws, which have failed to stem the growing force of the independent progressive unions. Faced with this situation, the Wiehahn Commission set out to create a single system that would subject all workers to the state-controlled industrial relations bureaucracy. It was during this period of the regime's so-called reform that it increased its physical force in dealing with Black trade unions which continued to challenge the structure of capitalist exploitation and oppression. Torture, murder, bannings, evictions, 'deportations' to the bantustans, intimidations and brutal forcing into exile of many trade unionists were the real indications of the regime's 'good will' and 'reform.'

In 1981 the regime accepted the latest proposals from Wiehahn, which recommended that the hated Mines and Works Act be amended. These amendments included 'safeguards' for white workers. The amendment to the Act was given over to the white mining unions and the Chamber of Mines to work out. Until such time as they agree, the law remains the same. The largest of the white mining unions, the Mineworkers' Union, (MWU) is totally opposed to black job advancement on the mines, and has demanded an extension of their closed shop agreement on the mines, so as to cover all additional jobs at present being done by black workers.

The Wiehahn Commission reports, together with the myriad of laws and other strategies such as the EEC Code of Conduct, and the Sullivan principles, provide a climate of capitalist investment, enforced through the callous and brutal repression of the democratic trade unions throughout the country.

The 5:1 differential between white and black mine workers' wages remains, despite claims from the mine owners and the international propaganda acts of the regime, designed to attract increased investment. No democratic bargaining channel exists for

black mine workers. The Chamber of Mines unilaterally sets the wages.

Last year's annual wage announcements led to the massive uprising which swept through all the major gold, coal and platinum mines. 30 000 black mine workers struck, accusing the bosses of keeping their increases low to allay the fears of the racist white miners, who wanted to maintain their 'white privileges.' The Chamber had given in to the white miners' rejection of a 9% wage increase, in the face of a 'strike ballot' by white workers (who are legally allowed this) and gave white workers 12% plus R200 bonuses to 'compensate' for the late agreement on the year's pay award. For black miners, 12% was given (this ensuring the continued growing gap in absolute terms between white and black miners) with no bonuses.

Starting wages for black surface workers was set at R100, underground at R129 per month. Average underground pay at last year's wage levels for Blacks was set at R240 and for Whites at R1 000 average. Black underground workers work on an average a 10-hour shift, six days a week. This is often extended to 13 hours, due to the considerable time it takes to travel from the compound to the pit face.

With the increase in trade union activity, and the failure of the regime to repress true democratic unions, the regime has attempted to create institutions to tame the workers' force. Certain trade unions are created by both the regime and the bosses, to further their own interests. These structures form the basis on which the working class is to be formed into a docile class to be co-opted into the regime's repressive bureaucratic system. We can already see part of this strategy shown by the preference of the state for registered unions over unregistered ones, and the way the regime protects the leadership of its favoured unions from the harassment normally meted out to the progressive unions.

Wiehahn recommendations for the mining industry, devised by the regime in collusion with the industrialists, was handed to the

Chamber of Mines and the reactionary white mining unions for consideration, tightening and implementation. The conspiracy is clear between those who are responsible for discrimination and exploitation of the black working class, and who now are asked to be neutral and become judges in their own cause. Wiehahn, seeking to find a solution to the regime's problems, had to make sure that developments on the mines remained under the control of the mine owners, who have always exercised control over workers on the mines. This is what the oppressive class and their favoured unions have in mind when they speak of 'reform.'

It is for these reasons that workers must have one strong and democratic union on the mines to protect their interests against the organised power of the bosses and the regime.

Worker Organisation on the Mines

For over thirty years there has been no black miners' union. During this time, the mine bosses ran 'workers' committees,' toothless bodies that served only the interests of management. During this time, no union or organiser was allowed access to black miners. This was the position for black workers on the mines, who are the second largest sector of unorganised workers in our country.

Early in 1982 the Black Mineworkers' Union (BMU), which has strong ties with TUCSA's Boilermakers' Society, became the first black union to be granted access to the mines under the control of the Chamber of Mines, to recruit black mine workers.

Since then, there has been a drive to recruit black miners. Behind certain of these moves lies the calculated scheming of the regime, which has been forced into a position to open up recruiting by black unions on the mines. It is no accident that we have seen a number of 'reformist' moves by the regime in our country, particularly in the labour field, to contain the power we have in our common struggle in the progressive trade union movement. Those responsible in these underhand manoeuvres are the old unholy al-

liance of the manpower department, the Chamber of Mines, and the white-controlled unions on the mines.

The three white-controlled Officials' Associations — the Mine Surface Officials' Association (MSOA), the Underground Officials Association (UOA) and the Mine Coloured Staff Association — have attempted to divert workers from joining black unions that do not have access to the mines, by opening their ranks to Blacks. This move was taken after approval from the racist Minister of Manpower, and application to the industrial registrar to represent black workers, making it possible for the Officials' Associations to conclude an agreement with the Chamber of Mines to negotiate on behalf of Blacks on any matter on the mines. Their motives are clearly to control the black workers on the mines.

The main drive to recruit black miners is coming from five unions:

1) Federated Mining Explosives and Chemical Employees' Union (FMECEU).

This union is registered to represent coloured and asian workers, and has applied for an extension to represent all workers. It is white-controlled, with the well-known racist, Ike van der Watt, as its General Secretary, who is also General Secretary of the Boilermakers' Society. FMECEU is a 'parallel union' of TUCSA's making, organised by the Boilermakers' Society.

It became the first union to be granted bargaining rights by the Chamber. This agreement allows the union to negotiate on behalf of specific categories of workers on certain gold mines and diamond mines where it has signed up a significant number of workers. It is recognised by the diamond mining industry, where bargaining rights have been signed with De Beers. Van der Watt gave notice that the FMECEU was to become a member of the Confederation of Associations and Mining Unions (CAMU), in line with Chamber of Mines policy that various unions in collective bargaining must make joint representations. The Chamber wants centralised bargaining which allows for strong input from the

management at plant level.

2) *National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)*. The NUM is affiliated to the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), and was the first black-organised union to recruit workers on the mines. By March 1983, it claimed a membership of 18 000, and at April this year was negotiating with the Chamber of Mines at four mines, and was organising at 13 mines in the Free State, Orkney, Carletonville and Westonaria.

At its first conference at Klerksdorp in December 1982, the NUM rejected an industrial council for the mining industry (because the regime has a strong control in its administration) as well as union registration. It decided not to seek membership of the newly established CAMU, accusing the body of being an alignment of white racist mining unions. Other resolutions at the conference:

- * opposed job reservation on the mines, and white mining unions which support such reservation,

- * rejected the Chamber of Mines criteria for recognition, and called for open talks without the Chamber dictating terms. The NUM stated that the 'Chamber of Mines recognition criteria are designed to divide the workers and weaken the representatives of the union,'

- * opposed unfair labour practices exercised by mine management against mineworkers.

CUSA, to which it is affiliated, has a somewhat more conservative approach to the trade union struggle than other unions. Its affiliation to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) is undoubtedly a problematic issue. Of the 12 CUSA affiliates, only two are unregistered. Four participate in Industrial Councils, and only two are not the product of the Urban Training Project (UTP), set up by officials of the defunct African Affairs Section of TUCSA.

3) *Black Mineworkers' Union (BMU)*.

This was the first black union to be granted access to the Chamber of Mines to recruit workers. Although its leadership has made big noises about its growth, it has done little. Led by Chillian Motha, the union claimed 800 members in October 1982. Motha ap-

proached several employers for donations, with little or no success. BMU have received aid from the TUCSA-affiliated Boilermakers' Society, which gave the union office accommodation and has helped to set up BMU's international organisation.

During the widespread mineworkers' uprising of July 1982, which affected the major mines, there was no evidence of its presence or assistance. The union has made little headway so far.

4) *Black Allied Workers' Union (BAWU)*.

BAWU's interest in recruiting black mineworkers has been known for some time. Its affiliate, the Black Allied Mine and Tunnel Workers' Union (BAMTWU) was the third black union to be granted access to recruit by the Chamber of Mines. It has been active at some collieries in Natal. BAWU has suffered splits in its membership in recent years, and has not yet demonstrated that it can be a force in the mining industry.

5) *Confederation of Associations and Mining Unions (CAMU)*.

Formally constituted in February 1983, it replaced the all-white Council of Mining Unions (CMU). It has brought together the white mining unions and two of the three Officials' Associations. The racist Mine Workers' Union of Arrie Paulus agreed to join. As an indication of CAMU's racist nature, it refused to admit the mainly coloured and asian FMECEU. CAMU has stated that it will have nothing to do with unregistered black unions like the NUM, and will talk with registered black unions only. The NUM has rejected CAMU, accusing it of being racist.

11% of black workers on the mines are at present unionised.

Recognition of Unions on the Mines.

The Chamber of Mines lays down criteria for recognition of unions wanting to recruit black miners, and also for those unions wanting to recruit black mine workers:

- * Unless the Chamber gives permission, no union is allowed access to mine property.

- * The Chamber will deal only with unions

that are registered. Any unregistered union is refused access to mine workers, unless that union is scrutinised by the Chamber in respect of its views on labour, politics and registration.

* Registered unions will only be negotiated with by the Chamber if they meet further criteria.

* Unions wishing to recruit black mine-workers will be investigated by the Chamber to establish whether they are subversive.

Unions such as those proposed by the Chamber would promote little change in black mineworker conditions. At the December Conference of the NUM last year, the meeting rejected totally the Chamber's criteria for recognising unions. It called on the Chamber not to dictate its terms to the union, and asserted that the criteria set for job categories was designed to divide and weaken the representativeness of the union.

The restrictions placed on unions organising on the mines is typical of the 'agreement' between the Black Mineworkers' Union (BMU) and SA Coal at Witbank. BMU had first to be introduced to the officials on the mine. Rules are that no disruption to the normal process of the compound is allowed, that is, no formal meetings are held. Any literature or notices must be cleared with the manager of the mine before distribution. All these conditions can at any time be changed by management.

Those parallel unions of TUCSA who are organising black workers on the mines have been deliberately introduced on to the mines against the will of black workers, on a closed shop basis with salary deductions for the 'union.' The intention is to split the recruitment of black workers and thus prevent the establishment of one mining union to represent all workers. Although it tries to present a 'multi-racial' image, TUCSA remains dominated by whites in its attitude and leadership, having a close relationship with the employers and the regime. There still exists control by white secretaries over the voting behaviour of delegates from its African 'parallel' unions.

Any registered union recruiting on the mines is operating with a blueprint for control over the union's activities by the authorities. Before union organisers are given access to mine property, information on the union is sent to the head office of the mine, who decide to allow access to organisers, and also inform the regime. Therefore, before the union is approached, the politics of that union are first vetted by the bosses.

The policy of the Chamber has always been to get rid of anyone trying to organise black workers on the mines. The African Mineworkers' Union (AMWU) of J B Marks, from its formation in 1941 till when it was brutally smashed years later after organising the biggest strike ever on South African mines, was prevented by the mine companies from organising on mine property. It is therefore ominous that the Chamber has granted the NUM access to mine property.

What is clear is that the Chamber recognises the fact that it can no longer pretend that the NUM does not exist. What the Chamber of Mines is trying to do is to corrupt, subvert and co-opt the leadership of NUM, so that the aspirations of the workers can be compromised. By its own confession, the Chamber sees the NUM as a 'negotiating body,' a form of liaison committee. As SACTU stated, "the intense dissatisfaction and anger of the miners is something which the regime is trying to co-opt through methods like Wiehahn."

As the regime's 'secret report on the mines' admitted, "Black mine workers are highly conscious politically and will co-operate to an increasing degree to realise their political aspirations." Non-political trade unions on the mines under conditions of apartheid are those organised by the stooges of the regime.

The Chamber has consistently advised mines not to bargain with black unions unless registered. The much-publicised De Beers recognition of two TUCSA unions, the SA Boilermaker's Society and the Federated Mining, Explosives and Chemical Workers' Union is in keeping with this acceptance of 'tame' unions.

The bosses and the reactionary white unions stand against our advancement in wages, working conditions and skilled work. The formation of our own independent union, controlled by us, is a minimum requirement. Those miners already in recognised registered unions will be used to strengthen the reactionary forces which defend and strengthen the exploitative system.

The massive uprising on the mines during July 1982 was the direct result of demands by black miners for decent wages and better working conditions.

The utterances of the regime and the Chamber of Mines that the Mines and Works Act has been amended is totally false. So long as these two collaborators continue to prevent any change in the conditions on the mines, further strikes and attacks on property of the mine bosses will and must continue. The total lack of sincerity with which these enemies approach our demands is reflected in their willingness to leave the outright racist Mineworkers' Union — who are totally opposed to job advancement for Blacks, who wish to extend the closed shop and accuse the apartheid regime of being too 'liberal' — and the profit motivated employers to implement change to the mines.

With no channels to express rejection of the inadequate wage offers, without the right to refuse to go underground, workers are left with few options. Because of the inhuman conditions of living and working on the mines, miners have to be organised for conditions where safety of lives is secured. The force needed to eliminate the discrimination and the exploitation can only come from an organised labour movement on the mines. The pressure for the revival of a union along the lines of the African Mine Workers' Union of Uncle J B Marks, who, amongst mass mobilisation on the mines brought together 100 000 workers from more than 21 mines in 1946 to demand basic principles which we still demand today — the right to organise, an end to the tribal segregation of mine workers, wage increases — is now even greater. The regime and the mine bosses, to-

gether with international capitalist forces, recognise this and are trying to control the development of the unionisation of black miners.

Unity and organisation are essential. A strong, united black mine workers' union must be built. In the past, workers have fought for this. Such a democratic union must fight to ensure the health and safety of its members in the mines. In organising workers, the union must at the same time organise its members against the political system that maims and kills workers in their thousands in search of profits.

- * A union cannot organise mine workers with the consent, monitoring and directorship of the management.
- * There must be one democratic union on the mines, run by the miners, for the miners, and not by and for the management.
- * The union must be run in the compound, not by the clerical employees or any other similar petty bourgeoisie.
- * Organisation must involve all national ethnic groups, and destroy the tribal system of the regime-bosses' alliance.
- * The union must protect the workers' health and safety, and enforce these as a right, not a privilege.
- * Workers must have their own shop stewards elected by them and acting according to their demands, not imposed by the bosses.
- * The existing liaison committee system must be rejected, destroyed and replaced by the union.

Real change in the mines can be effected only by being true to the directive that was handed down by the African Mineworkers' Union. Our demands on the mines are no different now from what they were then. They are a historical continuation of our struggle against those who oppress us.

There is nothing to suggest that the apartheid regime, mine management and international investment will ever tolerate a strong, progressive black miner's union. It is

a mistake to act on this basis. SACTU's underground work enables the organising of workers on the mines where access to workers by legally operating trade unions is usually

denied. In doing this, SACTU sows the seed for the formation of a strong miners' union to emerge with a seasoned leadership in struggle and in organising.

TRADE UNION UNITY A MATTER OF URGENCY

By SIPHO PITYANA

Sipho Milo Pityana is a former National Organiser for the Motor Assembly and Components' Workers' Union of South Africa (MACWUSA) and the General Workers' Union of South Africa (GWUSA).

Talking about trade unionism in the South African context is to talk about an extraordinary type of trade unionism, a kind of trade unionism which is totally different from that of Britain, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, and so on. This is not because of the difference between South African workers and the workers of these countries, but because of the society in which the trade union is practised. It is practised in a society where the black workers have no say in the decisions that affect their social life, a society where the voice of the black workers is replied to with guns and other forms of oppression.

The seventies was a decade of mass mobilisation of the workers. During this decade, the importance of involvement of the workers in trade unionism was not looked at from

the same point of view. TUCSA only encouraged workers to join their trade unions so as to get more membership and more money. Their unions went to the extent of having closed shop agreements with many employers, which meant that workers, Africans, had to join TUCSA unions as a condition of employment, although, by doing so, they were denied the right to fight apartheid.

There are differences in approach among other unions, which can broadly be described as the democratic unions. A number of unions amalgamated into an umbrella body, the Federation of South Africa Trade Unions, (FOSATU), which aimed to organise workers, as workers, to fight for wage increases and improvement of working conditions, but separated this from the people's struggle against racism. This division is to the detriment of the cause of the workers' and the people's struggle for freedom. This is the issue that led to the formation of the many so-called 'militant' unregistered unions.

We saw the formation of the General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU) and the 13

South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU), and many workers resigning from TUCSA unions. MACWUSA and GWUSA emerged in opposition to FOSATU and the General Workers' Union. Many others also grew.

These unions resulted in the widening of discussions and analysis of trade unionism in South Africa. Many of these unions refused to register with the regime. They opened their doors to all those committed to the workers' struggle, irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex. They are committed to involving trade unions in the struggle against apartheid as a whole.

This challenge was not very welcome to those trade unions which did not see anything wrong with their style of trade unionism.

During this whole process, the struggle for wage increases, the improvement of working conditions, resistance to mass removals, and protests against high rent increases was going on at high speed. The reply from the apartheid regime was, and is, increased repression and firing of workers by the employers. This repression involved the expulsion of the Black Municipal Workers' Union members to the Bantustans after their strike in Johannesburg. Detention of SAAWU officials, banning of MACWUSA officials, imprisonment of Post Office workers (GWUSA), the murder of an African Food and Canning Workers' branch secretary, are many such examples.

Consultation and Co-operation

All these, therefore, are issues which necessitated the coming together of all worker representative groups. Others came because of pressure from membership, others came because of pressure from international groups, and other came because they saw the need for unity.

Impregnated with all their differences, these trade unions discussed their principles around the Conferences. The opportunity to iron out their differences was provided. Those who wanted to make use of this did so. During the whole period we were all interested to see these trade unions coming together.

The workers were eager for unity. The World Federation of Trade Unions, ANC, SACTU, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, as well as the American Central Intelligence Agency, were all interested in unity, but had different motives. Some, such as the CIA and right wingers in the ICFTU, see the need for a body that will be 'independent' of the 'communist controlled ANC,' and that will enable them to have contact with the South African workers, without having anything to do with the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). Yet others like the ANC and SACTU want unity and the formation of an umbrella body for all unions because it will increase the strength of workers and bring us close to achieving liberation.

This problem of different motives was experienced by the unions in the Unity Conference. But the recent period has been a demonstration of the recognition of the need for unity of those inside and of those outside South Africa.

With FOSATU against registration, prepared and ready to accept the participation of the trade unions in political matters, and with the unregistered trade unions also being prepared to disband and to join hands with the registered unions, especially MACWUSA; with CUSA being prepared to withdraw the insistence on black leadership, the major stumbling blocks are removed for the paths of genuine concrete unity. Workers are now all saying, 'unity is a matter of urgency.'

The unions have agreed on the issues of registration, disbanding, formation of the federation, involvement in the political issues, and other issues concerning workers as a whole. A feasibility committee has been formed to work out the problems and a basis for unity in a single federation. This involvement is most encouraging, because of its progress, made in the midst of detentions, bannings, sackings of workers, imprisonment of workers, and all other forms of harassment by the apartheid regime.

INTERNATIONAL

Scottish City Opposes Trade Delegation to South Africa.

Comrade Ruth Mompoti, Chief Representative of the ANC in Britain and Ireland, and the Lord Provost (the Mayor) of Dundee in Scotland were the two speakers at a meeting in Dundee early in October.

The meeting was held to protest against the trade delegation to South Africa, which was being planned by the Dundee Chamber of Commerce.

The Dundee Anti-Apartheid Group is campaigning for a total Dundee boycott of South Africa, and, in its fight to stop the trade delegation leaving the city, had enlisted the support of the Dundee district council, Dundee members of parliament, local trade union branches and the local council of churches.

The Lord Provost, James Gowans, representing the district council, said at the meeting:

"Dundee has historically opposed such things as fascism and apartheid, and we feel we are carrying on the work of our forefathers in supporting the anti-apartheid group."

Comrade Mompoti praised the people of Dundee for honouring Nelson Mandela and the people of South Africa, and for giving their support in the fight against the 'inhu-

man and violent' policies of the racist regime.

"Trade relations with South Africa can be seen as supporting the brutal murder and oppression of my people," she said.

The Dundee Anti-Apartheid Group had collected 2 000 signatures to a petition which it presented to the Chamber of Commerce.

ANC Publications Sold at International Fairs

The ANC had its usual stall at the annual fair organised in Paris early in September by the French socialist newspaper, *l'Humanite*. Copies of *Sechaba* were sold, as well as badges honouring the Rivonia leaders, and an ANC T-shirt, which proved popular. Most important of all, many people came to the stall not only to buy but also to ask for information about the situation in South Africa, and to engage in political discussions.

The journals of liberation movements from all over the world were represented at the fair, and great interest was shown also in the stalls representing the people of El Salvador, Nicaragua and Chile.

Similar good reports were received from the stalls at the l'Unita fair in Milan and the Moscow Book Fair.

FREEDOM FOR NELSON MANDELA

AND ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS OF SOUTH AFRICA!



„During my lifetime, I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African people... I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free

society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and

I hope to achieve. But if need be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”
Mandela in the Rivonia Trial 1964

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United States Citizens Ask for Information About the ANC

The campaign being fought by the ANC mission in New York against United States involvement in Southern Africa has borne fruit in the shape of a number of letters we have received in the *Sechaba* office in London, from United States citizens. These letters ask for subscriptions to *Sechaba*, for informat-

ion about South Africa, and information about the ANC. Many of the writers say they intend to use the question of South Africa as a campaigning issue in the forthcoming presidential, state and local elections.

Since the formation of ANC Support Groups in Australia, we have begun to receive letters from Australia as well.

THE COLOURED PEOPLE AND LIBERATION PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Aziz Pahad's recent exposition of the constitutional proposals (*Sechaba*, April 1983) highlighted once more the way in which the racist government in South Africa has managed to manipulate racial differences to suit its own devious ends. The real issue is not merely one of strategies to bring about change; rather, the whole matter hinges on the question of interests and how these are defined. It was, therefore, remarkable, though not unexpected, that the Labour Party actually displayed such lack of insight and historical perspective. Even when one argues that it was not the Labour Party as a whole — taking into account the many resignations afterwards — but rather the misleadership of Allan Hendrickse and David Curry, then their decision to collaborate with Botha in the oppression of the black people of South Africa is even more significant. To understand why this is significant, we have to turn our attention to the past.

Ever since that historic sell-out by the British in 1910, white politicians of various

persuasions have been arguing the need for the government to try to 'uplift' the Coloureds, and to try to include them in the kraal of white politics. It was, according to them, in the interests of white survival to do so. It was also in the interests of the coloured people, because such a move would prevent them from being drawn down to the 'low standard of civilisation' of the African people. Although General J B M Hertzog had been advocating this policy in his Black Manifesto since 1921, it was only in 1926 that these ideas were first put before the white parliament.

Hertzog argued that the Coloureds were "brown Afrikaners," and that they had to be separated from the African people. During the 1929 'black peril' election, the National Party of Hertzog actually received the active support of a group of Coloureds in the Cape, who had organised themselves into the 'Afrikaanse Nasionale Bond — a coloured National Party! They praised the Hertzog government for trying to separate them from

the "blanket or raw native." When the Hertzog-Smuts coalition (United Party) succeeded in removing the Africans from the common voters' roll in 1936, D F Malan and his 'purified' nationalists protested that the coloured people should also have been removed from the roll. When, twenty years later, the Malanite nationalists removed the coloured voters from the common voters' roll, there were still coloured 'leaders' who believed that the racist government was acting in their interests! Then, they were organised in the Coloured People's National Union, which became the Federal Party under Tom Swartz, and today survives as the 'Freedom Party' under Julies and Africa.

Hendrickse and Curry: the Voting Cattle

By 1963, any leader worth the title had been eliminated by the government's vast arsenal of draconian security laws. Among those who survived was the Labour Party and its leaders. Up to perhaps the late 70s, the Labour Party managed to maintain a certain amount of credibility because of its anti-apartheid, anti-government stance. It was even a member of Gatsha Buthelezi's 'Black Alliance.' It wasn't until January 1983 that the country was allowed to see the true colours of Allan Hendrickse and David Curry — to see where their true interests lay: in the survival of P W Botha and in their pockets! No observer of South African affairs could fail to see that P W Botha, shrewd political tactician that he is, would fail to win the hearts and minds of the Labour Party leadership with the same empty arguments of 30 years ago, about the interests of the coloured people.

All this can, however, be explained. When one considers that Hendrickse and Curry themselves belong to that fragment of the coloured people who had the vote 30 years ago, their decision makes some sense. It has long been known that Botha wanted to correct that mistake the National Party made in 1956 by removing the coloured voters from the common roll. To achieve this, he adopted a subtler form of Hertzog's 1926 policy, viz.

that the coloured people were in fact "brown Afrikaners," and appointed the President's Council to work out the details constitutionally. (The economic aspects of his plans require an article on their own.)

This, then, is all that has happened to date. Hendrickse and Curry belong to a forgotten generation of 30 years ago, a generation of coloured voters in the Cape who were nothing more than 'stemvee' — voting cattle! They are playing the politics of 30 years ago! On the other hand, however, it explains the reaction of the majority of the coloured population to the decision of the Labour Party to collaborate with the racists in the continued oppression of the black people of South Africa. The present generation know nothing of that spurious vote some Cape Coloureds had 30 years ago; they know only the devil called apartheid. They know only the inventory of heinous crimes, political, social and economic, committed by the racists in power since 1948 — crimes which are to continue, only this time with the help of the Labour Party, in the interests of white survival, no more, no less!

But these debilitating facts represent only one side of the story. In the interests of those inside the country, who will read this account, the full story must be told to put our present position into perspective. Unity between the coloured and African leaders had always been the goal of the early leaders of these groups. This political unity was never quite achieved, on the one hand because of the tactics of divide and rule so relentlessly applied by the government and on the other, because of the political naivete of leaders like Abdurahman and Jabavu.

In his early years as leader of the African People's Organisation, political unity was a constant theme of Abdurahman's speeches. Shortly before the founding of the African National Congress in 1912, Abdurahman noted that "if the Europeans insist on their policy of oppression, there will one day arise a solid mass of black and coloured humanity whose demands will be irresistible." When the 'Plague Act' (Natives' Land 19

Act) was passed in 1913, the A.P.O. newspaper commented that it was "the most audacious act of piracy on the rights of man that has been committed in South Africa — that quintessence of tyranny and falsehood ... Nothing so base had issued from a parliament that since the day of its foul birth had loaded this land with loathsome rottenness in every conceivable form of colour legislation."

But even these fiery words could not remove the obsession coloured people had with their skin colour and hair form — the 'hair and complexion syndrome.' Other factors such as geographical isolation; barriers of language, custom and race; economic differences and inequalities of status, restrained the Coloured and African from merging into a single organisation. Within the coloured group itself, gradations of colour blocked the growth of unity. The failure of the early coloured leaders to develop an alternative conception of the Coloured's role in the politics of South Africa was their biggest failure in the years up to 1939. The coloured people remained 'stemvee' — voting cattle of unscrupulous white politicians.

The late 1930s witnessed a change in this attitude. A new generation of intellectuals and a handful of artisans in the Western Cape refused to play second fiddle to Whites of any description. In fact, Abdurahman's own family led the revolt against his strategy of collaboration with the Smuts-Hertzog United Party. All the workers of South Africa, they argued, were "inevitable allies." In 1939 it was decided to form the Non-European United Front, but it wasn't until June 1955 that a group — a gathering, in fact, of thousands of South Africans of all races — accepted the Freedom Charter of South Africa.

The preamble of the Charter reads: "We the people ... declare ... that South Africa belongs to all who live in it." Because of government repression, however, the late 50s and early 60s saw most of the leadership eliminated from politics above ground, and brought about a relative lull in open political action until the mid-70s.

Youth and the Freedom Charter

The Soweto uprising of 1976 was an historical turning point for the young black people of South Africa. The pent-up anger of these young people suddenly exploded into the open, and the white government was given a frightening reminder that oppression had only served to make them a more vibrant, politically conscious force — one that cannot be tamed by shotguns and armoured cars. Coloured scholars and students threw in their lot with their fellow oppressed, and proved that the time for playing pigmentocratic politics was over. They were racially different, by no fault of their own, but they realised that they had a common historical experience of oppression under white rule. The time for academic debates, for procrastination and vacillation, was over.

It took some time before the student leaders at the University of the Western Cape matured politically. After years of trying to develop an alternative conception of their role in South African politics, they now accepted that the cause of freedom demanded unity at all levels. In the western Cape, where they had their political base, they used every opportunity to show the government that the cause of freedom in South Africa was the cause of all its black people.

By far the most important development in this regard, however, is the fact that these young people now openly identify themselves with the vehicle for African liberation, the African National Congress. In 1981, during the fascist republican celebrations, the ANC flag was raised on the campus of the University of the Western Cape; the Freedom Charter was displayed across the walls of the university hall, and freedom songs were sung by up to 2 500 students at a time. Others wore sweaters bearing the symbols of the ANC. It was a calculated show of strength. As the Lesotho Foreign Minister reminded the South African Government not so long ago, the ANC should not be sought inside the borders of Lesotho, but inside the borders of South Africa itself!

To conclude therefore: the treachery of

Hendrickse and Curry has served only to heighten the consciousness of the people to the cause of justice and liberation in South Africa. From Stellenbosch and Tygerberg in the Western Cape to the distant towns of Namaqualand, Hendrickse and Curry found themselves rejected by the very people they purported to represent. The same happened in other provinces.

The lack of insight of the Labour Party has also had positive side effects, the most remarkable being the fact that all over the country people are forming a united front against the government. This event, indeed an unprecedented phenomenon in South African history, will be an important factor in the future of the liberation struggle within the country.

There is no room for complacency, how-

ever. The decision of the Labour Party to collaborate with Botha is bound to have other important consequences. For example, we know that the quid pro quo for giving this sham vote to the Coloureds and Indians will be the introduction of military conscription. Only time will teach us how to handle this dilemma. It will add a new dimension to the struggle when it happens, but it won't deter the people from their chosen path of freedom. It is bound to strengthen the resolve of coloured and Indian youths not to have anything to do with the nationalists' repressive machinery. Abdurahman's words in 1912 come to mind: "If the Europeans persist in their policy of repression, there will one day arise a solid mass of black and coloured humanity whose demands will be irresistible." That day has long come!



THE LIBERATION OF CHRISTIANS

BY CEDRIC MAYSON

Cedric Mayson, a Methodist minister, was formerly editor of Pro Veritate, the Christian Institute journal, now banned. In December 1982, after having been detained for some time, he was brought to court and charged with high treason, or alternatively with participating in terrorist activities. It was alleged that he was a member or active supporter of the ANC. In February 1983, when the key witness for the prosecution disappeared, the trial was adjourned for two months, and before it resumed, Cedric Mayson secretly left South Africa.

Christians who are committed to the struggle can usually discern a liberation taking place in their own understanding, a rebirth of Christianity which is worth examining.

It comes from the inherent conflict in human experience between belief and the vehicle of that belief; between Christian faith and religious institutions; between Christianity and Churchianity.

Christian *belief* about God, People and the World has developed amongst those who follow Jesus, carpenter of Nazareth, and is based on the Gospel which has no national, financial, racial, sexual or class hang-ups. The *churches* are religious institutions based on western capitalist society, reflecting its structures, assumptions, oppressions, attitudes, priorities, fears and way of life. That's a recipe for conflict.

It is not a new tension. The scriptures and history record a perennial war dance between Prophet and Priest, dramatically nailed

to the centre page by the crucifixion of Jesus on a charge of High Treason at the behest of the religious authorities of his day.

The Gospel—like every vision from political programmes to economic theories and falling in love—becomes institutionalised as it is worked out in practice, and needs constant re-evaluation and revitalisation if it is not to rot into corruption. Jesus said you have to be reborn to see it.

This rebirth or liberation of Christians brings them to a new understanding of the *position* of the church, and of the *objective* and *method* of Christians in the struggle.

The position of the church

Father Trevor Huddleston at his recent address to the UN General Assembly expressed his concern for the church:

'As a Christian leader I bow my head in shame at the failure of the Christian Church to witness effectively against ... the blasphemy of throwing in the face of God as if it were a useless thing, the crown of his creation, man made in his image.'

The word is *effectively*. It took some of us years to realise that. Filled with enthusiasm for the liberation we sensed in the Gospel we threw ourselves into church affairs without realising the abject failure of the church to put its precepts into practice.

Some devote themselves to personal piety, massaging their own souls into a state of coddled satisfaction; affluent suburbs have thriving congregations seeking an ex-

perience to absolve them from the guilt of enjoying the fruits of oppression, and an assurance that riches are God's reward for the righteous; others stomp circles to the beat of drums or the creening of voices seeking ecstasies as a palliative to oppression; yet others lock themselves within the confines of their church traditions, practice and protection, to escape the world.

There is no doubt from the pronouncements of the church that it believes apartheid to be incompatible with the Gospel, but so often these interminable resolutions cloak an irresolution of action.

The scriptures indicate an economic system which distributes power and wealth into shared ownership rather than the hands of a few; gives priority to the eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease; promotes human sized enterprises; seeks co-operative patterns of work and leisure, motivated by need rather than profit; and conducts its social engineering from the insights of the poor and oppressed. Jesus called people to commit themselves to a new community, bound into small groups of disciples which gave up many of their former rules of social behaviour, changed their religious practices, established new rules, shared their wealth, faced life together, found a new justice, joy and love, and produced a new theology out of their own experience.

The real problem is not that the churches have failed to put these things into practice, even within their own structures, but in their refusal to examine the contention that the Gospel cannot be enacted in an oppressive western capitalist society, or in its particularly obnoxious offspring: apartheid society.

The insistence upon analysing human problems in terms of individual sin, rather than in the structures of society, is a complete denial of the emphasis of Jesus. Jesus' message was centred on the renewal of society on Earth, what he called the 'Kingdom of God', and all his concern for individuals was within that Kingdom. It means fundamental change in the society we live in, but the churches have become so dependent

upon the concept of white western Christian civilisation — which is neither Christian nor civilised — that their acceptance of the status quo has become an addiction to it.

Churches which do these things are not just failures: they are barriers. One cannot question the devotion or sincerity of many who have spent years of work and anguish seeking to improve their work and witness of the church: their dedication often shames us all. What one questions is their analysis of the situation of oppression, and of the nature and task of the church.

Many of us, brought up to love and revere the church, found it hard to accept that we were in the succession of those who have had to challenge it at the roots. We spent too long discovering that the church is not making mistakes which can be put right, but comprising a barrier to liberation that has to be overcome.

It is not part of the liberation movement that has lost its way: it is the religious part of oppressive society that needs to be liberated. Confronted with the heresy of some churches and the hesitancy of others, small groups of Christians are still carrying the Gospel of liberation forward, but their task is not to tell the church to get off its ass, but to get out of the way.

Jesus was quite explicit about it: 'No-one pours new wine into used wineskins ... new wine is poured into fresh wineskins and both will keep in good condition'.

The Christian Objective:

From Reform to Revolution

To a person nurtured in the church, reform has a nice, godly sound, and revolution is more devilish, yet in fact the reverse is true. Reform means a struggle to bring changes within the present society, not to change it, and the Kingdom of God is in the change business.

Gradual improvements and relaxations are designed specifically to prevent the total eradication of economic and racial discrimination which cause apartheid. The Kingdom demands a total change of objective, attitude, 23

structure and method in human society, and that is not reform but revolution.

When Bishop Desmond Tutu led a delegation from the SA Council of Churches to interview Prime Minister P W Botha, they were highly criticised and the talks were a failure. Appeals for the reforms of the apartheid system are itself an acceptance of it, a fact which PW Botha realises in his search for accolades as the great reformer.

Our task is to get rid of oppression, not improve it. Apartheid is evil and must be destroyed, not pushed into shape.

30 years ago my mentor was the Rev Seth Mokitimi who later became the first black president of the Methodist Church. A saintly man, with no political ambition, he knew what it was all about. 'Never forget', he said, and I haven't, 'that although apartheid appears to be a black/white problem, that is only a surface distinction. The real question is not a race problem, but a class problem, the problem of rich and poor that runs throughout the world'.

'Reforms' of apartheid regulations which do nothing to change the basic facts of political exclusion and economic exploitation are not reforms at all. Changing the race of office bearers in churches is no substitute for changing the structures of church and society. That requires a revolution.

Appeals for reform can only succeed amongst those who have the same ultimate aim, and those who talk in terms of reform—be they Nats, Progs, churchmen or homeland leaders—are defining the limits of their vision. The idea of reforming our society until one day the edifice of apartheid is transformed is simply a very stupid idea. Evil does not get reformed: it has to be destroyed and replaced.

Another aspect of revolution may be approached through the words of the German theologian, Professor J Moltmann, who writes:

'Freedom means more than to be realised: it must be celebrated'.

Reform is a deadly serious business, burdened with mammoth tasks, enormous

problems, arduous circumstances, and very, very heavy decisions to be made after very, very serious consideration at very, very, very long discussions. Of course, they are hedging their bets.

But revolutions burst out all over. Nothing is more heavy and serious and responsible, but you cannot tie it down. It constantly erupts into the celebration of freedom yet to be. Revolution is an exultant business.

One of the things that kept me going in prison was the absolute conviction that nothing they did was going to stop the revolution happening. I suppose you get bit 'fey' under those circumstances, knowing what these same men did to others in these same rooms on this same 10th Floor. But I snapped through the fear of death into a definite exultation that I am a child of the revolution and nothing on earth or heaven or hell is going to prevent it. They might kill me but they couldn't stop us.

I don't think you'd feel that way campaigning for blacks to use white toilets. Whether it is a bloody revolution depends on the government and its supporters. Whether it is a religious revolution or not depends on the churches. Whether it is a speedy revolution depends on the West. But revolution it must be.

Jesus was never in the reform business. He was a liberator, a maker of newness. He did not ask the money changers in the Temple to lower their prices. He kicked them out.

The Christian method:

From Reconciliation to Struggle

One night a few years ago five Christians from different churches met at a remote house outside Johannesburg for an illegal meeting. Four were banned. The discussion concerned the attitude of churchmen to the Liberation Movement, and one man supported a common position:

'I cannot join any particular group. My calling is to reconcile men. If I take sides I cannot be a reconciler'.

The reason the vicar is often asked to umpire village cricket, an *umfundisi* is stuck with the job of judging the choir concert, is because they are not supposed to take sides. They are to be impartial, standing on the middle ground, able to play the role of reconciler if there are disputes.

But the idea is carried to ridiculous extremes by Christians who refuse to take sides in political and economic struggles. Where there is a right and wrong — and few deny the evil of fascist apartheid — it is the clear task of a Christian to join the struggle. Trying to play God by being on hand to reconcile the contestants is a cop-out for the craven, for neither winner nor loser will want to know you.

Reconciliation does not come from avoiding trouble, but from conquering it. It starts with confrontation and struggle: it is an end, not a means.

Jesus did not adopt a centrist position in which he nodded benignly at left and right, but took sides firmly with the outcasts.

'New Testament eschatology is a call to arms, a summons not to be content with the existing situation of oppression, but to take sides with the oppressed and the poor and subsequently for the new humanity and the new world'. (Boesak, 114)

Some churches seem to have an obsession with placating the rich and the mighty, and will go to great lengths to avoid upsetting the Bishop, the Chairman, or the Bank Manager, but that is not our priority. It is a stratum of society with which an alliance with the needy may lead to confrontation, and we hope so.

Reconciliation is often a by-product. Much talk in South Africa about reconciling black and white, or English and Afrikaans, or Catholics and Protestants, teaches the clear lesson that such stylised discussion illuminates problems but does not solve them. Those of us who are engaged together in the struggle for liberation find such problems are rapidly solved, however. Those who struggle together find a comradeship from which other matters can find reconciliation.

Radical Christians sometimes feel lonely and this is usually because they have only half completed their journey into rebirth. Let them take courage and be assured that they are correct in their radicalism, even if the church tries to freeze them out, for Jesus was a radical, totally committed to fundamental change.

Some have the task of taking the struggle for liberation into the church and establishing guerrilla bases in enemy occupied territory. When you do, the timid will appear from behind the bushes and out of the dusty corners and say: 'We've long been waiting for someone to lead us into the struggle'. Before you know where you are, there will be a small group of you which is the seed bed of the revolution.

'All liberation movements began with a few people who are no longer afraid and who begin to act differently from what is expected by those who are threatening them'. (Moltmann)

And above all, radical Christians must remember that Jesus was not a Christian, and not particularly religious, and that they must *not* look for their allies amongst conservative Christians inside the churches, but amongst the poor and oppressed outside. That is Jesus' place.

When the vision of the prophets is overtaken by the control of the priests, or the vigour of the revolutionary is captured by the rigours of the bureaucracy, or old age and corruption set in ... a rebirth is necessary. That is the liberation of the Christians.

'When the Christians dare to give a whole-hearted revolutionary witness, then the Latin American revolution will be invincible'. (Che Guevara)

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY FILMS IN OUR STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

By **BARRY FEINBERG**

At the recent Thirteenth Moscow Film Festival, attended by more than one hundred countries and more than a thousand delegates, our new film, 'The Sun Will Rise,' was awarded second prize by the international jury in competition with 86 other documentary films. It was also awarded the high honour of the special prize of the Soviet Youth Committees (Komsomol). Two delegates from the ANC attended this important festival and had discussions there with many film makers and film organisations from all over the world, with a view to securing assistance in order to help us increase the effectiveness of our film unit.

Here, Barry Feinberg, who was the producer of 'The Sun Will Rise,' and one of our delegates to the festival, offers some thoughts on documentary films and the national liberation struggle.

The universal experience of film, especially through the medium of TV, confirms its potential for influencing human behaviour. Lenin recognised this potential while occupied with the problems of socialist construction in the USSR: 'The Cinema is the most important of all the arts' (1) he declared and correctly predicted that the role and influence of film would increase under socialism. Eisenstein was prominent among Soviet film makers who, through their work, not only recorded Soviet reality but also helped to shape it.

'The cinema is culture's greatest weapon', attests Sergei Bondarchuk, a well known modern Soviet film director, confirming the work begun by Eisenstein and his contemporaries, 'It can elevate man but it can also empty his soul, and maim his psyche'.

Film overcomes the limitations of the individual's personal life by allowing him to participate, vicariously, in an alternative highly intensified existence, identifying in it attitudes and experiences which echo his own and finding in those experiences answers which are relevant to solving his own problems. This process of 'cognition of man in the world and of the world in man' is true of the way all art forms function. But because

film comes closest of all the arts to imitating reality it has the greatest potential for shaping peoples lives.

Nothing captures an audience's attention more effectively than moving pictures, which match every person's visual experience of life. The larger the picture, the more detail is observable, the more hypnotic the medium. On the other hand, such is the magnetic power of film, that even reduced to miniature on TV, it draws the attention of millions, cutting through traditional communication barriers, like illiteracy, which often inhibit the effectiveness of other art forms.

The significance of film has not escaped the notice of the racist regime in South Africa. The early years of Afrikaner nationalism were well charted by film makers loyal to the volk who, ironically enough, were strongly influenced by the *technical* innovations of Soviet film makers, especially Eisenstein. The state controlled TV system in South Africa is today one of the chief means by which the apartheid system reinforces its ideology and hegemony. Because of the total control, increasingly institutionalised, of the white minority over the film industry, there has been minimal development of black skills in the technology of films. Those very few blacks who have survived the successive racial selection process have been quickly and quietly absorbed by white production companies and their values — which are always essentially those of the regime. More recently, in order to respond to the growing hunger in the black urban areas for TV with a greater relevance to the black communities it has been useful, even necessary, for the regime as an insulation against black radicalism to encourage the development of a stronger element of black surrogate participation in film and TV production.

Without the presence of a viable, independent film making and distribution apparatus which does not have as its function exploitation and the systematic distortion of South African reality, every film produced in South Africa will be a deception, present-

ing a corrupt, lying and ultimately cynical view of life.

Unlike other 'underground' art forms which challenge the racist monolith, and sprout through the fertile top soil of black urban South Africa faster than the regime's censorship apparatus can scythe it down, film has no effective clandestine existence to speak of. Due to the complexity and cost of its technology, local, unofficial productions have been confined mainly to the film departments in white universities where the privileged life style and orientation of the students is often as big a constraint as the problem of reflecting the programme and actions of the illegal ANC.

There is therefore a heavy dependence by anti-regime forces in South Africa on films made abroad; especially those where the ANC, because of its acknowledged role as an external amplifier of the voice of the oppressed in South Africa, is increasingly influencing editorial direction.

Quite apart from the impact such films have in international solidarity work, where it has been possible for these productions to circulate inside South Africa, they have been of inestimable value in helping to expose the lies and distortions of the state by depicting apartheid realities as well as the option of resistance to the system through concerted action at all levels of social life.

Until such time that it becomes possible for an alternative film-making machinery, controlled by film workers integrated with and accountable to the needs of those engaged in struggle against the system, to operate effectively inside the country, it is necessary to organise, extend and develop the size and quality of ANC influence on films produced outside South Africa, while at the same time exploring every possibility of supporting internal anti-apartheid film making activity. In this regard the optimum situation would be for the liberation movement to make and distribute its own films. Organising film as part and parcel of ANC propaganda activity would also have the effect of speeding up the establishment of a serious internal film

apparatus. The decision, therefore, to set up an ANC film unit in Africa couldn't be more timely. In the meantime it is useful to look at the provenance and quality of responses by film makers based outside South Africa (who are sympathetic to the ANC) to the struggle against apartheid in order to sharpen our focus for the future. The only genre of film examined is the social documentary because, quite apart from the greater complexity and prohibitive expense of feature films, it is the main category of film making concerned to expose the evils of the apartheid system and to give exposure to the forces struggling to defeat it.

It was the Soweto uprising of 1976 which not only created a new level of struggle in South Africa, but also led to vastly increased interest by the international media in the working of apartheid and especially the struggle against it. So for the purposes of this article we will look at the period 1976 – 1982, when there was not only a great increase in critical social documentaries about South Africa (approximately 40 films on the British media alone, fairly evenly distributed between BBC and ITV) but also a significant increase in the number of films made by independent film makers, including expatriate South Africans – almost none of which were shown on British TV because their political focus was always more partisan than that allowed for by the so-called balance and impartiality of the media. A few of these films have been shown on other national TV networks, notably Holland. This is not to suggest that independent film makers have always adequately recorded the South African reality, let alone reflected the viewpoint of the liberation movement, but increasingly especially with the burgeoning of, and support for, the ANC in South Africa they have been more open to influence than those film makers directly commissioned by the media.

There have, of course, been exceptions among media-sponsored films. Anthony Thomas' 1977 trilogy (2) was an early example of a politically modest but penetrating look into the injustices of life and

work under apartheid, including the hitherto financially invisible but crucial dimension of British investment in the system, exemplified by an expose of the role of Tate and Lyle and British Leyland in exploiting their black workers. So effective was Thomas' dissection of the anatomy of Tate and Lyle's South African subsidiary and its ruthless drive for profits that the film, the third and last in the series, is to this day, following legal action, locked away from international public scrutiny.

Anthony Thomas was also exceptional in his decision to defer to the liberation movement's viewpoint both when preparing for his project as well as at the editing table. It is worth mentioning in this context that while his principals at ITV were prepared to back him through thick and thin, even in the face of concerted legal action against him, they backed down when presented with the prospect of overt ANC participation on their planned discussion panel following the screening of the trilogy. Instead British viewers were treated to the all too familiar placatory formula of 'right of reply' involving diplomatic hooligans from South Africa House (3).

In the meantime, on the independent side, a young Dutchman Roeland Kerbosch, with a lot of journalistic initiative, was taking a similar path of consultation towards making his assessment of post-Soweto South Africa. But where Thomas preferred to make tactical use of orthodox channels, as well, including obtaining the blessing of the high priests of Apartheid culture, to give himself and his crew maximum scope and mobility, Kerbosch on the other hand opted for secrecy Super 8, and face to face encounters with victims of Apartheid. With discreet help from the liberation movement unique footage was obtained including interviews with the then newly released Joe Gqabi and the early beginnings of the school at Mazimbu(4).

While the work of Anthony Thomas and Roeland Kerbosch, each in its own way, was a cut above the products of other film journalists and companies working in this field,

largely because of their willingness to recognise the benefits of co-operating with the ANC, it was the American public, albeit through the rarified confines of the educational network, that were treated to the first look at the spearhead of organised resistance to Apartheid — the ANC's military wing. *The Battle for South Africa*, made by CBS (5) follows the progress of young ANC guerilla fighters from the time of their flight over the border, after Soweto, through some tantalising glimpses of training at an ANC military camp in Angola (a sequence filmed for CBS by an ANC cameraman), to the action at Goch Street which led eventually to the legalised murder of Solomon Mahlangu (6). Not even their tendentious interpretation of the growing armed struggle as a 'race war' manipulated by the USSR could soften the impact of this dramatic footage on liberation movement activists and supporters outside South Africa (and inside as it later transpired), who were inspired by visual confirmation of the increasing effectiveness of the ANC in the military field.

Also offering inspiration at this time was another Dutch film by Frank Diamand, again with the co-operation of the ANC. A biography of Mandela largely constructed around interviews with his daughter, friends and political colleagues, it anticipated — and reinforced — the growing campaigns for his release which necessitated an updating and reissue of the film in 1980 (7).

It was also in 1980 that an historical film reflecting the growing interest in the politics of the ANC was produced by IDAF in London. Perhaps it was inevitable that the experience gained in advising other film makers on South Africa would eventually be used to make a film which would be concerned to illuminate the policies of the liberation movement. Even so *Isitwalandwe — The Story of the Freedom Charter* (8) represented no deliberate decision by the ANC but was the initiative of individual ANC members working through a support organisation with highly developed visual resources and other film making facilities. It was also

apparent that favourable conditions for the production of a specifically ANC film had been created in the first place by the efforts of the ANC in the forward areas of struggle, resulting internationally in a boost to all those seeking support for the ANC, who in turn needed refuelling with propaganda materials keyed to consolidating and developing that support. The international response to the film, including its selection for seven film festivals and broadcasting on several national networks, emphasised the need for a greater ANC commitment to exploring the potential of the medium. Another film drawing strongly on ANC participation was *You Have Struck a Rock*, produced by the UN in the same period (9). Like the Freedom Charter film, it too sought to illuminate the current struggle by examining key periods and events in history; in this instance the role of women.

By the end of 1980 the ANC was emerging in the country, with massive popular support, as the only real alternative to the racist regime. It has already been indicated that the ANC role in films grows with its increasing definition on the ground inside South Africa. Nowadays, film production credibility on the Apartheid front is difficult to maintain without a clear perspective of resistance (as compared to the pre-1976 preoccupation with victims) which inevitably leads to an estimation of the ANC as the only organisation demonstrably capable of achieving liberation. Reflecting a reality difficult to conceal and stimulated moreover by effective ANC international solidarity work, the BBC produced *South Africa — To the Last Drop of Blood* (10), which was the first sympathetic British media investigation of the revolutionary character of the ANC and the nature of the response to it in South Africa. (It is not without interest or significance to note at this point that the film turned up in South Africa, prominently displayed on the shelves at video shops, under the title of 'Black Beauty' with a forged certificate of approval from the Publications Board).

It has been through the medium of 29

video that many of the above films have circulated internationally as well as clandestinely inside South Africa. With the growth and development of the video format, linked with the relative ease of access to domestic video players and recorders, unprecedented opportunities now exist for the distribution of more films, including those specifically produced for video, inside South Africa as a counter to the regime's campaign of lies about the liberation movement.

The viewpoint that national liberation should be the target for all art work was underlined in July 1982 at a unique gathering of South African cultural workers. More than 600 art activists from every section of South African society, and from every field of artistic endeavour, met in Gaborone, Botswana, at a *Culture and Resistance* event. They resolved to work out regional culture programmes to 'align themselves with the people of South Africa for the liberation of the country'. The conference, which included participation by exiled cultural activists, created unprecedented opportunities for mobilising and uniting South African artists, including film makers, on the key question of contributing their skills in a conscious and organised way toward the overthrow of apartheid.

By linking the cultural activities and aspirations of the South African people with the national liberation struggle the historic Gaborone conference demonstrated, in the words of Fanon, that 'to fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation, that material keystone which makes the building of a culture possible. There is no other fight for culture which can develop apart from the popular struggle'. (11) The inseparability of culture and national liberation was stressed in December 1982 at *The Cultural Voice of Resistance* in Amsterdam. Set up by Dutch anti-apartheid and cultural organisations, it brought together South African artists under the wing of the ANC, with artists active in Holland. The prime object of the conference was 'to accomplish a new bilateral imple-

mentation of cultural contacts between Holland and South Africa' following the 1981 severance of the 30-year-old Dutch cultural agreement with the Apartheid regime. Exemplifying the need for a new cultural accord (with a resulting flow of funds to the ANC for cultural projects) two new films, made secretly inside South Africa but with the full co-operation of the liberation movement, were shown at the Amsterdam event. Both films, which were made on a 'shoe-string' budget, demonstrate the effectiveness of creative work which is rooted in the hopes and struggles of the people and organisations depicted. *Forward to a People's Republic* and *The Sun Will Rise* are concerned with the quality of resistance to the South African regime (12). *The Sun Will Rise* in particular represents a significant development in the role of film in not only reflecting the South Africa struggle but in helping to attain its objectives. While the film was planned and produced especially to reinforce the international campaign to try to save the lives of six Umkhonto we Sizwe cadres sentenced to death, it is relevant at several other levels, not least of which is as a powerful demonstration of the growing popularity and authority of the ANC in South Africa.

It is evident that there is an equation between the political relevance of film production on South Africa and the level of input of the ANC. However, experience shows that even at its highest level deferment to the needs of the liberation movement and sympathy with its aims cannot guarantee that a film is free of political errors. For example, in a recent important Dutch film about Somafo the ANC school in Mazimbu, (13) reference is made to the well-designed solid buildings which we are told are not temporary residences and therefore 'suggest ANC's pessimism about the progress of its struggle'. And just in case we fail to get the point, the 70th anniversary of the ANC is described as 'a rather sad jubilee as it seems as if nothing has been achieved'.

The decision, therefore, to set up an ANC film unit is of enormous importance.

With the financial and technical help promised by our friends the ANC will be able, for the first time, to make decisions about the form and content of its own films rather than be subject to the goodwill of independent film makers or the mercies of the media. At the same time it will be possible to give urgent attention to the crucial problem of responding to the developing struggle in South Africa from the point of view of those involved, shooting relevant footage and ensuring that resultant films are distributed to the maximum effect both inside and outside the country.

Notes:

- 1) Eisenstein, Lectures and Essays
- 2) Sandra Laing, 1977, directed by Anthony Thomas, ATV, 50 mins: race classification and the indoctrination of white children; Six Days in Soweto, 1977, ATV, 50 mins: a chronicle of police violence against black school children; British Stake in Apartheid, 1977, ATV 50 mins: British companies in South Africa with special reference to working conditions.
- 3) The most recent example of this attitude was a half-hour programme given over to the South African Ambassador in London, Marais Steyn, after his complaint about a 'one-sided' view of South Africa presented by a Channel Four anti-apartheid production on Feb 7, 1983
- 4) Voices from Purgatory, 1978, directed by Roeland Kerbosch, Varavisie, 50 mins: interviews with various victims of apartheid; Apartheid Inside, Outside, 1978, Varavisie, 45 mins: resettlement, 'tot' system, Crossroads, ANC school at Mazimbu
- 5) The Battle for South Africa, 1978, CBS, 50 mins: includes interview with OR Tambo
- 6) The film also includes a dramatic interview with George Masebuko, the only one of the Goch Street combatants who escaped.
- 7) Portrait of Nelson Mandela, 1978 and 1980, directed by Frank Diamand, Varavisie, 20 mins: includes interview with Ruth First
- 8) Isitwalandwe, 1980, directed by Barry Feinberg, 51 mins: rare footage of Congress of the People and Treason Trial, includes interviews with Tambo, Nzo, Nkobi, Gaetsewe, Huddleston. Made especially for the Year of the Freedom Charter
- 9) You Have Struck a Rock, 1981, directed by Debbie May, 28 mins: Includes footage of historic events like the women's march on Pretoria in 1956. Interviews with veterans of

the women's section of the ANC, including Annie Silinga and Dora Tamana

- 10) To the Last Drop of Blood, 1981, BBC Panorama, 50 mins: Interviews with OR Tambo and members of Umkhonto we Sizwe
- 11) Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth
- 12) Forward to a People's Republic, 1981, 20 mins: demonstrations against Republic Day celebrations; Police tear gas attack on Soweto anniversary meeting at Regina Mundi church
The Sun Will Rise, 1982, 37 mins: includes interviews with parents of condemned ANC guerrilla fighters, solidarity demonstrations, Neil Aggett funeral
- 13) Mazimbu - ANC Outpost for a Liberated South Africa, 1982, Belbo film production and Novib, 30 mins.





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