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DECEMBER 1980



# SECHABHA

official organ of the african  
national congress south africa



**SAM NUJOMA**  
**SWAPO President**

# SECHABA

December Issue 1980

P.O. Box 38  
28 Penton Street  
London N1 9PR  
Telegrams: Mayibuye  
Telex: 299555ANCSAG  
Telephone: 01-837-2012

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# BOTHA'S MANOEUVRES

This year there has been a great deal said and written about political change in South Africa and a massive propaganda exercise is under way to project P.W. Botha as the opponent of apartheid, the agent of change, the prophet who is to lead the South African people into a land of justice and equality. Yet beneath the glossy public relations exercise the product that is being peddled is the same apartheid. Let there be no naivety about the motives of the Pretoria regime, nor illusions about its intention. Any so called change that is made is designed not to eliminate apartheid, but to preserve it and strengthen its essence. The manipulation of institutions and the constitution are intended to establish new structures upon which it is hoped that apartheid can rest more securely.

Recently the National Party has debated at length, the all-white parliament and the white owned press have indulged in an orgy of discussion, and Commissions and Parliamentary Select Committees have deliberated for months to produce the latest child of Botha — the Presidents Council. This Council is to consist of 38 whites, 11 Coloureds, 4 Indians and 1 Chinese. The membership of this council is not representative of the South African people; even when it starts functioning its deliberations will not have any legitimacy because it will not command the broad assent of the population. Its aim is to divide and cut across black unity and win over the so-called official opposition — the PFP.

This council is totally irrelevant to our aspirations and our conditions. Its shortcomings are clear and obvious:

- \* it was solely conceived and created by white politicians. Like all other decisions about political action or change in our country the views of the majority of the population were not taken into account.



- \* those Blacks from the minority groups such as the Coloureds, Indians and Chinese who have accepted nomination have been denounced by their own people.

- \* the Council excludes totally 80% of the population of South Africa.

What is worse is that while Botha is busy establishing the Presidents Council, racist laws stand out as a sore thumb in the lives of the Blacks. Before we can think of a President's Council or any council for that matter, Apartheid must be abolished.

It is not necessary for us to expound here upon the injustices of apartheid, the inhumanities perpetrated daily against our people, the institutionalised violence and repression — the sheer brutality — the negation of all that is human, and humanist. No, that is not necessary.

# THE BEAST IS IN THE OPEN

*An International Conference in Solidarity with the Struggle of the Namibian People was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on September 11-13, 1980. More than 500 delegates attended, including Foreign Ministers, Ambassadors and other diplomatic representatives of 50 countries, 24 international governmental organisations including the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity, and 160 national and international non-governmental organisations which included anti-apartheid and solidarity movements.*

*The Conference adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action together with Reports of the Political and Action Commissions and other important documents of the Conference. The Conference called for a massive campaign of solidarity with SWAPO during the period 27 October onwards — the Week of Solidarity with the Struggle of the People of Namibia.*

*Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO, and Oliver Tambo, President of the ANC delivered the main speeches. Below we print the African National Congress message to the Conference.*

We have come to the end of the International Conference in Solidarity with the People of Namibia. In the view of my delegation, this great conference has been a resounding success, and therefore, a source of strength and inspiration, not only for SWAPO and the Namibian people, but also for all who support and participate in the Namibian struggle. The conference has revealed a high level of agreement on the nature and demands of the Namibian struggle, a deep commitment on the part of all participants to the resolute prosecu-

tion of that struggle, and an unmistakable conviction in the inevitability of defeat for the South African racist regime. We are thus left in no doubt that 500 years after the first African country was occupied by a European power, the continent of Africa stands poised to rid itself for ever of the yoke of colonial domination. It is significant that the 1980's have opened as a decade pointing to the certainty of victory over the forces of reaction for the peoples of Southern Africa.

## Historic Victory

The heroic Zimbabwe people led by the Patriotic Front alliance, the governments and peoples of the African states in Southern Africa which stood, as they continue to stand, in the front line of the struggle, the consistent and principled political and material support of Africa and the rest of the world forces for progress, all combined to demolish the political and military strategies of Ian Smith and the South African racist regime, and brought the frontiers of freedom to the Limpopo, the northern border of South Africa.

This historic victory, like the great Angolan victory of 1976, demonstrated that the much-vaunted economic and military might of the Pretoria regime is powerless to stop the historical process leading to the liberation of the people of Southern Africa. It is powerless to stop the liberation of Namibia. It is equally powerless to stop the liberation of the people of South Africa.

The record of rule by the white racist minority is a harrowing catalogue of vicious repression, torture, murder, massacres, invasions, bombings, and destruction of property. Intended to subdue the people

and crush the liberation movement, these criminal acts have had the opposite effect. In South Africa a powerful revolutionary movement of the people has emerged and is attacking the regime in a growing offensive, that includes actions by ANC armed guerrillas. In Namibia SWAPO's armed forces have established themselves firmly among the people throughout Namibia. Zambia stands solid in support of the liberation struggle. The People's Republic of Angola the greatest victim of fascist aggression on the African continent in recent times, is resolute, unbending and ever more determined in its support of the liberation struggle of SWAPO and the ANC.

The failure by the racist regime to achieve its objectives represents a defeat of considerable strategic significance. The trend has become familiar: the tactics of terror by Portuguese colonialists and the white minority regimes in Southern Africa failed against Guinea Bissau, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The tactics of promoting 'internal settlements', installing puppet Prime Ministers and administrations to stop the revolutionary process likewise failed.

In Namibia, in a desperate bid to keep the waves of liberation at bay, the apartheid regime poured thousands of troops into the country - - to no avail. It tried to divide, weaken and rule the people through the Bantustan system. But that scheme too has collapsed irretrievably. The racist regime proclaimed December 31st, 1978, as 'the date for the independence of South West Africa'. That mirage vanished before the dawn of January 1st, 1979.

The saga continued, with the formation of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance by the racists, the holding of false elections, and the installation of a puppet legislative assembly. Lately, there has come into being a 'Council of Ministers' and a 'Prime Minister'.

So, in Namibia, the pattern is repeated as the South African regime follows the beaten path that leads to guaranteed defeat. Victory is Certain

The central issue before this Conference has therefore been one of time, for the victory of the Namibian people is certain. The question is: How much more life and

property must the regime be allowed to destroy before the day dawns when Namibia declares her independence? In calling for solidarity and material support, SWAPO is calling attention to the time factor - it is of the essence.

In the Declaration and Programme of Action, which is a response to the call by President Sam Nujoma on behalf of SWAPO and the Namibian people, this Conference has been addressing itself to the time factor. I wish, Comrade Chairman, to emphasise some aspects of our common response to this call.

Firstly, Namibia is the only major trust territory which, 60 years after it was created, has still not been liberated. It is the first and so far the only territory, entrusted to the international community, whose people have had to embark on a war of liberation against a former mandatory power, after the United Nations had revoked the mandate and assumed direct responsibility for the administration of the territory and its preparation for independence.

To allow such a situation to continue, would suggest that, confronted by this white minority regime, the United Nations is powerless.

Secondly, no single country has done more to damage and undermine the authority and effectiveness of the UN Security Council than the Pretoria regime; and there can be no greater threat to world peace than a toothless Security Council.

Comrade Chairman, the UN, its Charter and institutions, including the International Court and Security Council, were created for the protection of every national and people. They are not perfect, but they are the foundations upon which we must build. If persistent defiance, constant contraventions and repeated aggression, are to be allowed to continue, then there is no alternative for mankind but a holocaust in which all shall perish.

Thirdly, when the world community and the majority of the member states were no longer prepared to continue tolerating the contempt with which the South African regime was treating the UN and its resolutions, - at that crucial moment, the Contact Group of Five emerged. The efforts of this Group have sought to accord

a new legitimacy to the South African regime in the Namibian situation. The Pretoria regime is being transformed from the criminal to the virtuous. It grants audiences to representatives of the Contact Group — purporting to speak in the name of the UN and sometimes even of SWAPO. The regime is pleaded with, and appealed to for co-operation. From defier of the international community, Pretoria is being allowed to dictate terms to it. In the latest of these, it is demanding of the United Nations that 'preferential treatment of SWAPO should now cease'. The United Nations is apparently expected to obey this order, this command. But to demand that the world community should be impartial as between SWAPO and the puppet groups is to ask this community to be impartial in the contest between illegality and legitimacy, between colonialism and independence, between war and peace, between fascism and democracy.

In our view, the slightest concession by the United Nations in favour of this outrageous demand would at this point in time be a betrayal of the very purposes for which the United Nations was established, and a violation of its own most sacred principles. For as we understand it, the United Nations is, as SWAPO is, a militant combatant for independence, peace and democracy. It is common cause that certain forces have from time to time sought to use the United Nations for subverting these objectives, but that does not subtract from the fact that, by its nature and decisions, the United Nations, has to be partisan against colonialism and against war and fascism.

Within the spectrum of Namibian politics there is only one unique force that represents exactly the positions of the United Nations and the international community on such questions as colonialism and independence, war and peace, fascism and democracy. That force is SWAPO — SWAPO is the leader of the people of Namibia; SWAPO is the people of Namibia.

It is clear that the role of the Five Western Powers is sinister in the extreme. They are trying to subvert the Security Council to the service of a criminal regime, reducing it to a state of impotence in the

face of the most flagrant violations of the UN Charter. In the result, the South African regime is assuming control and dictating not only terms but also the pace at which the international community moves.

It uses the time it has gained as it has used the past two years, to kill and murder as many Africans as it can find in Namibia, Zambia and Angola. It could continue with that exercise another two years or more.

The central issue is time. But the central problem is the Western powers — for they are the joint beneficiaries from the occupation of Namibia and the exploitation of its mineral wealth. From this point of view, the world community has four principal tasks which are incorporated in the Programme of Action, already adopted by this Conference, and which I have selected for emphasis.

#### Key to Peace

The first is to give massive political and material support to SWAPO, enabling it to launch and sustain a general political and military offensive to drive the South African racists out of Namibia.

The second is to rally to the defence of the People's Republic of Angola and other countries threatened by South Africa, and employ and sustain an effective deterrent to armed aggression by the Pretoria racist forces.

The third is to deal with the Western powers as comprising the greatest source of misery and suffering in Namibia, as elsewhere in the world, and the greatest obstacle to freedom and peace. The role of these powers — Great Britain, USA, France, West Germany, Canada and Japan, especially in Southern Africa, must be brought to the attention of their citizens so as to mobilise them to act to change the policies of their governments. Only they can do it; and they, like the people of Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, comprise the young and old, the youth and women, workers, patriotic intellectuals, MP's, political parties. (There is of course no MP in Namibia and none for the majority in South Africa). But we are talking about people who must feel as we do about these things. And I believe that one of our tasks,



jointly and severally, is to work out ways of mobilising the people in the western countries that are such thick allies of the racists in South Africa.

The fourth of these tasks is to deal with the transnational corporations. We must pay attention to their role and find ways of dealing with these heartless vultures which feed on the sweat and blood of enslaved millions in Namibia and South Africa.

We believe that to concentrate our efforts on these four tasks in particular, as well as carrying out the other tasks in the Programme of Action, is to shorten the duration of the regime's continuing occupation of Namibia. It is to hasten the process leading to the national liberation and social emancipation of the people of Southern Africa and of South Africa. It is the key to peace. It relates to the time factor.

### Solidarity

In South Africa we have benefitted and drawn strength from the victories of struggling peoples throughout the world. Today we extend our solidarity to all these friends throughout the world — in Asia, in Africa, in Europe and Latin America.

Speaking as the leader of a liberation movement, I would like to assure our comrades-in-arms in the liberation struggles

Polisario, Fretelin, the PLO, the fighters in the Canary Islands, that by definition their struggle is ours. Every victory they win advances our cause against the forces of imperialism and racism. We fight in our countries to advance their struggle. As far as the PLO is concerned our fight is carried on in the knowledge of the degree of intimacy — and political, military and economic alliance that has developed between racism and Zionism.

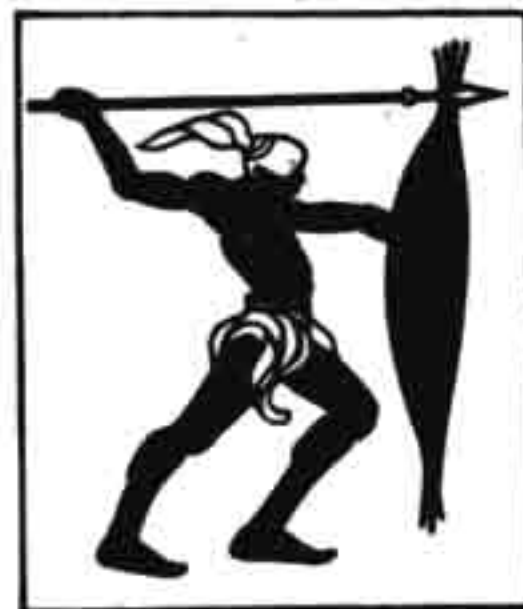
Finally, I should like to address myself to you, Comrade President Sam Nujoma, to the militants of SWAPO who are here today. I should like to do so in the name of your colleagues and mine, members of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress, in the name of Umkhonto we Sizwe, in the name of our entire membership and movement,

in the name of our people. You have sacrificed lives already to defeat the enemy — the exploiter and oppressor of the people of South Africa. You have made great inroads, you have corroded the apartheid power structure in Namibia, which within South Africa itself, remains relatively unshaken. We admire your gallantry, your courage, your efficiency, your capability on the battlefield.

By your actions you have forged bonds of unity between yourselves and us, the Namibian people and the people of South Africa — bonds of brotherhood and comradeship, forged in blood, and for that reason indissoluble.

We of the ANC have come to this Conference, not so much to talk of our struggle but to participate in yours. We would like to pledge before you in the name of all our people and particularly in the name of our leaders, including Herman Toivo ja Toivo, who are now being held indefinitely on Robben Island and elsewhere — we pledge, that we shall fight, and fight, and fight, until this our common enemy is defeated not only in Namibia but also on South African soil.

**A Luta Continua!**





# GOVAN MBEKI - ISITWALANDWE

*We print the following article in tribute to Govan Mbeki, ISITWALANDWE, who has recently marked his 70th birthday on Robben Island where he is serving life imprisonment.*



*Comrade Govan Mbeki*

On June 26th, 1980 the Secretary General of the African National Congress, Alfred Nzo, announced the conferring the time-honoured title of ISITWALANDWE on Govan Mbeki. Govan Mbeki was not present to receive the highest honour that his people and his movement can bestow on any individual, because he is serving a life imprisonment sentence on Robben Island, the fascist South African regime's notorious prison island where other great leaders of our people are serving life and other long-term sentences.

ISITWALANDWE, literally translated, means "the one who wears the plumes of the rare bird" and was traditionally bestowed only on the bravest warriors of the people, on those who distinguished themselves in the eyes of all the people

for exceptional qualities of leadership and heroism.

Govan Mbeki is such a warrior. A revolutionary, an educator, a publicist, organiser and leader of our people over many decades. A man who brought with him the rare qualities of selflessness and utter devotion to the cause of the oppressed and exploited millions of our country.

Two years earlier, on January 9th 1978, the University of Amsterdam conferred an honorary doctor's degree in Social Science on Govan. The dossier compiled for the occasion noted that the event was a remarkable one in many ways:

"... it is the first time in Dutch academic history that a University has honoured someone himself unable to attend the ceremony because he is serving a life sentence in one of the most infamous prisons in the world. It is indeed no daily occurrence that a revolutionary sentenced to life imprisonment in his land of birth for organising acts of sabotage, should be awarded the highest honour of a Western European University. And it is certainly exceptional that someone should receive a doctorate for a book which was written for the most part on toilet paper and then smuggled out of prison".

But then Govan Mbeki is a remarkable man.

## Makings of a revolutionary

Govan Mbeki was born in the Transkei on the 8th July, 1910. He spent the better part of his early life in the Transkei and came to gain a first hand knowledge of the conditions and problems facing the majority of the small peasants in the area, a phenomenon which was to be found in most other parts of South Africa at the time.

From being one of the most important

producers of grain and wool for export at the time of the discovery of gold and diamonds the Transkei at the turn of the century was gradually being reduced to critical dependence on the developing capitalist economy ushered in by the mining revolution. State legislation in 1913 made the private ownership of land by the African people impossible reducing the entire African population of the country to less than 13 % of the land.

Already in 1895, the colonial administration enacted laws which restricted African occupation of land to no more than 4 acres per family in an effort to drive more and more independent producers off the land and into the mines and factories. By the early nineteen hundreds the Transkei, like so many of the Reserves were being reduced to vast pools of migrant labour. From being a producer the Transkei by the 1920's had to rely on food imports. It was the intimate knowledge gained during this time that enabled him to write with such incision on the relationship between migrant labour and capitalist production:

"The basis of the South African economy is the exploitation of labour that is unsettled, labour that has no home, labour that can be directed along certain channels as water is diverted to run along certain furrows, labour that has no security of tenure, labour that is always on the move, always migrating from one to another form of slavery, and what is more, the slave must pay the expenses to ensure that slavery continues".

As early as 1956 (1) when this analysis was made Govan had identified the essential mechanism whereby super-profits (not just profits) is extracted from the migrant worker. What is meant by "... the slave must pay the expenses to ensure that slavery continues" is that the boss, apart from exploiting the labour power of the worker to gain profit, in the case of the migrant worker he witholds from him the portion of the wage necessary for the upkeep of his family which he is forced to leave in the Bantustans. And to the extent that the capitalist class withold the full value of labour power (wages) from the migrant to that extent has the worker himself to pay this expense.

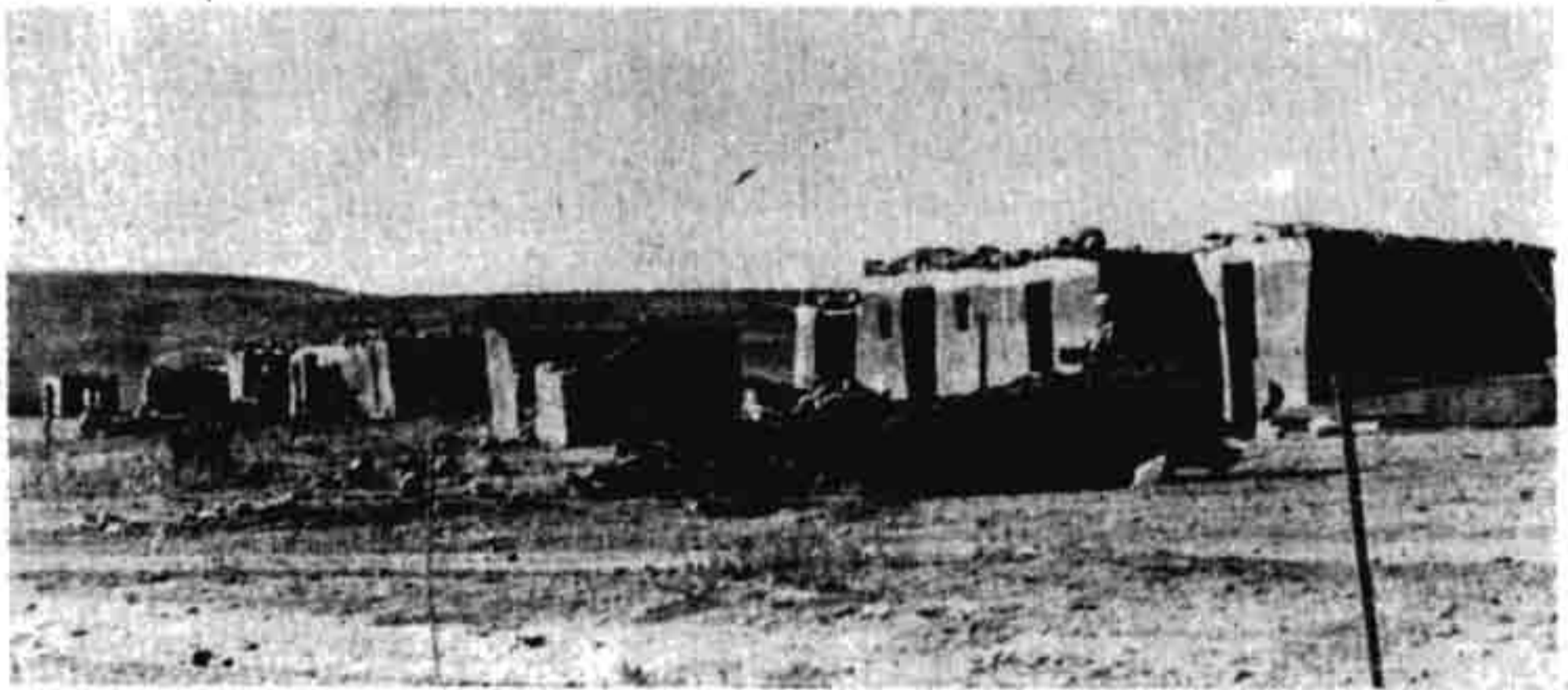
It was on the foundations of such analyses that the movement not only condemned the Bantustans as a political fraud, but as a policy of extreme economic exploitation and deprivation of the mass of the people in the Bantustans. The test of the analysis is to be found in the conditions of absolute want and poverty, high malnutrition, infant mortality, disease and debility suffered by the peoples in these areas.

Govan received his early education through mission schools. He passed his high school examinations and went on to study for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University College of Fort Hare. In 1936 he completed his degree in Politics and Psychology together with a Teaching Diploma. His teaching career was shortlived. It ended with the sack on every occasion because of his political activities among the students and the local community, and for organising workers and trade unions. If the conditions in the Transkei made a deep impression on Govan, his experiences in Johannesburg, where he moved to early in 1929 completed the picture of the desperate plight of the African working people throughout the country:

"Once again I saw the poverty of the black Africans. Where I lived — in the city and in the suburbs — police raids were always taking place. Either they wanted to check our passes, or were looking for illegal drink. No other event up till then had provoked my anger as much as those raids and I decided definitely to join the struggle to put an end to such a system." (2)

Earlier in 1925 he had become interested in the activities of the Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union (ICU), the first mass-based worker's movement in South Africa of black workers. It was both a general trade union organisations as well as a political movement, and despite its weaknesses in attempting to fulfill the work of a trades union federation as well as a political movement, "the ICU played an important role in awakening the consciousness of black Africans ... it can be said that Mbeki was first politically active in the ICU." (3)

By 1938 he had abandoned the idea of a career in teaching and back in the



### *Bantustan resettlement camp*

Transkei devoted himself to local politics and writing. The first publication was a magazine called "Territorial Magazine" later renamed "Inkundla Ya Bantu". In 1939 he published his first essays in book form, "The Transkei in the Making". By 1941 he was actively involved in a number of local and regional organisations such as the "Transkei Voters Association", "Transkei Organised Bodies", and the Transkei Territorial Authorities General Council, the Bunga, as it was commonly known, a government inspired creation of elected members, such as Govan, and nominated chiefs, which had very limited administrative powers in the Transkei.

Govan was to refer to the latter organisation as "a toy telephone. You can say what you like but your words have no effect because the wires are not connected to an exchange". Almost the same can be said of the Bantustan "parliaments" today. What was important, however, was the widespread contacts he established during this period and working through such organisations. At the same time, through his writings and his activity, he came to be respected and accepted as "a man of the people". Always the practical revolutionary Govan, even in this period, did not confine himself to agitating and organising people politically, but attempted to assist the small peasants by encouraging them to form simple cooperatives, to pool their resources and labour, so as to improve production.

He published an easily understood pamphlet on cooperative farming.

### **The Liberation Press**

A newspaper is an organiser and a mobiliser. Without the services of mass media such as radio and television, liberation movements have to rely on the spoken and written word to inform, educate, agitate and create the vision of the alternative society in the minds and eyes of the oppressed.

Govan Mbeki is among those who early on recognised the power of the written word as much as that of action by the people in the liberation struggle. As well as possessing a sharp mind, he has a literary ability which is capable of translating the reality that is South Africa in its social, political, economic and other facets into the written word. His early efforts were mainly due to his own initiative. But in 1954 he joined the editorial board of New Age which was to be the only national newspaper serving the liberation movement for the next eight years. Together with Ruth First and Brian and Sonya Bunting and the other members of the editorial board, Govan played an immensely important role in ensuring that the pages and columns reflected the conditions of the black peoples, their demands and aspirations.

At the same time much of what was happening in the country that went reported



*Dutch anti-apartheid activists call for Mbeki's release*

in the white-controlled press was picked up by New Age journalists and camera people. Investigative journalism, in the conditions of South Africa with its myriad of press censorship laws, restrictions on reporting and harassment of reporters is at most times difficult and requires a courage of its own. Those writing for, producing and distributing the liberation press were however political activists. It is to their credit that the inhuman conditions under which agricultural workers on the potato farms of Bethal and such places was exposed, around which an entire campaign for the boycott of potatoes became so successful. Govan and his staff on the "Eastern desk" of New Age were responsible for opening the eyes of black South Africans, especially the political leadership of the movement, to the fierce and bloody struggles in the countryside between the fascist regime and the peasants from the period 1956 to 1960. Sonya Bunting recalls:

'A New Age office was not only a local editorial desk, but also a political centre, where people came with their problems and grievances. And Govan had in the East the most amazing contacts. Everyone

respected him and he was the man everybody east of Cape Town would consult. That was also why much of our news came from that region" (4)

A newspaper transforms what is local and regional into something that is national if it strikes a spark in the minds of people who share a common condition, shared experiences and goals. In this it acts as a powerful instrument to forge unity and developing political consciousness. An example of this can be seen from this report by Govan of the historic bus boycott of Alexander Township in 1957:

" 'Azikwelwa' rang out ghost voices in the dark on the evening of February 9th. In less than 48 hours the people of the Eastern Cape responded to the call to boycott buses in sympathy with the Reepretoria people... the marchers on the Reef, the marchers in the Eastern Cape, the marchers everywhere have forged unity with their fraternity, their most effective weapon which the oppressor fears most. It is a weapon which can only be kept in a state of readiness for use if it is always sharpened in united action. That is the challenge for the liberation movement".(5)

In November, 1962 the then Minister of Justice, J.B. Vorster, banned *New Age*, a fate which had befallen its predecessor, *The Guardian*, almost 10 years earlier. When the Editorial Board came out with its successor, *Spark*, Vorster went one step further by banning, not the newspaper, but its editors and writers stopping them from having anything to do with the preparation, editing, printing and distribution of the paper. Changing the names of the liberation newspapers had been the name of the game till then. Changing its makers proved impossible.

Rather than remain cut off from the movement Govan went underground. The first explosions of the armed struggle had already rocked South Africa on the 16th December, 1961.

### South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt

Between 1956 and 1960 one of the fiercest of confrontations between oppressor and oppressed in South Africa took place. The epic of the heroic resistance and violent confrontation is to be found in Govan Mbeki's book "*South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt*". The book, which was begun on rolls of toilet paper and smuggled out whilst Govan was awaiting trial under the Explosives Act, earned him international recognition and an honorary doctorate of Social Science from the University of Amsterdam.

Its contribution to our understanding of the South African revolution and what it entails is immeasurable. In it he lays bare the political and economic foundations of the Apartheid regime's Bantustan policy and the migrant labour system. The essence of the quotation cited earlier about the relationship between capital and migrant labour is drawn out and developed. What emerges is not the miracle of the "independent states of South Africa", but the pain and poverty of the millions entrapped in the nightmare existence of the Bantustans. Not the grand parliaments and ministers, but organs of political and economic control over the reserve army of labour — the migrants and their families — by hirelings of the Apartheid state. Toy telephones and puppets, who, manipulated

by their creators, become the willing instruments for the further impoverishment, oppression and exploitation of the people.

All this was predicted with "prophetic force", but in the heroic struggles of the downtrodden and impoverished of the countryside and Reserves, Govan points to a force of the revolution that cannot be ignored.

Much of the book deals with the revolutionary potential of the poor peasants and agricultural workers. Between 1956 and 1960 revolts broke out in many parts of the countryside. Notably in Zeerust, Sekhukhuniland, Zululand and finally in Pondoland where the confrontation took on the form of a sustained armed conflict. The causes were many: the imposition of government-favoured chiefs, the deportation or arrest of popular ones; pass laws for women and increased state taxes; forced removals, cattle culling and dipping, land rehabilitation schemes. The terror and repression let loose was terrible as armed units of the fascist state moved in with armoured cars and helicopters. In Sekhukhuniland 16 peasants, including women, were executed. In Pondoland more than 5,000 were arrested and detained. In every area hundreds of arrests, imprisonment and deportations were taking place.

The height of organised revolt to white domination and its local lackeys was in Pondoland where the people set up their own administration — *Intaba* — The Mountain Committee. Resistance was skilfully organised, fearless and sustained.

The peasants, Govan concluded, had demonstrated to the movement in practice what it had always preached in theory, namely, impoverished peasantry, many of them semi-proletarians, constituted a revolutionary force of immense potential, once organised.

### Armed struggle

Even as editor of the *New Age* in the Eastern Cape, Govan was immersed in the practical politics of mass political mobilisation, organising branches of the ANC, publicising the movement's policies. He was chairman of the ANC in the Eastern Cape, and places 11

# WE SAY

# SPARK

New Series, Vol. 1 No. 22

PRICE 5c

March 28, 1962

## GOODBYE BUT WE'LL BE BACK

### Vorster Murders "SPARK"

VORSTER HAS STRANGLERED "SPARK" AND THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE OF "THE PAPER" AS YOU OUR READERS HAVE GOT TO KNOW IT EACH WEEK. Three months of hearings, two of which take effect on April 1, have made it absolutely impossible for us to continue. A full statement is made on page 2.

So now we say goodbye. We have tried everything. Believe us, but this is the end of the road. We hope that others can to some extent fill the gap, until the day comes when we reappear in a free South Africa. Then we promise to be yet bigger and brighter, and to come out just weekly, but every day.

- Thank you for your magnificent support during all this time.
- Thank you to the five great journalists who have helped us make our mark in South Africa and through the world. Goodbye, until we meet again. **WE'LL BE BACK!**

★ FRED CARNESON ★



★ GOVAN MBEKI ★



like New Brighton became synonymous with ANC militancy. At the same time he was an active member of the underground Communist Party.

When the limits of peaceful, non-violent struggle were exhausted and the decision taken to continue the political struggle using all means, including armed struggle, Govan became one of the key figures of the underground leadership. It was in this capacity that he was arrested at Rivonia

and later sentenced to life imprisonment with Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Elias Motsoaledi, Ahmed Kathrada, Denis Goldberg, Raymond Mhlaba and Andrew Mhlangeni.

Govan Mbeki, Isitwalandwe. We salute you.

*(All references are quotations from the dossier compiled by Amsterdam University)*



# THE WORKERS' STRUGGLE

Two forces, two ideologies face each other in South Africa. There is no common ground between them and no possibility of compromise or reconciliation. It is wither them or us.

They represent apartheid. Their aim is the good life for the few and maximum profit with minimum effort. In their eyes white is right, clean, intelligent, noble and upright and black is something else. Their system is carefully designed to extract the greatest wealth from South Africa and its people while keeping them divided, poor, defenceless and degraded. It is best described as a prison system where the prisoners are black, the "boss boys" Bantustan stooges,

and the warders and prison chief white. The profits from the prisoners forced labour goes to faceless bankers and corporations who inhabit the so-called "free" world of America, Britain, West Germany and their friends.

We, the prisoners, are much more numerous, intelligent and far sighted.

Because of our common humanity and oppression we recognise fellow humans by their actions and deeds; by their common suffering and bravery in our cause. Colour, religion, origin or the way they earn their bread do no concern us; to be with us in our struggle is our measure of their humanity. And in this struggle for an

identity for unity we have established our ideals, our model of the new free South Africa when the prison walls will be broken down and the forced labour and mass exploitation system destroyed. The model, this plan is the Freedom Charter.

But what of the workers? Where do they as a class fit in? Where do they stand in relationship to the Freedom Charter? And what of the white workers, are they not exploited?

To be a worker, to be exploited, does not automatically make you a lover of freedom, does not qualify you to be a just, kind or human person. Just because the white workers in South Africa are employed, are exploited, are working does not make them working class. They will join the working class when they join the African workers in the struggle, when like Denis Goldberg ( a long standing trade union member) they join us in prison because they fight against apartheid. The white workers of South Africa have yet to prove that they can claim that honorable title of being working class. When like French Dockers they refuse to live cheaply off the sweated labour of African coal miners, when like Soviet craftsmen they make guns with which we can defend ourselves, when like Australian or Canadian workers they send us strike pay, then perhaps they will join the working class. It's not a question of colour, it is a question of where you stand, brother and sister, in relationship with the Freedom Charter.

For the Freedom Charter speaks of our new land, of our desires, our aspirations. It reflects our wishes because it was drawn up by the people themselves. Some strange journalists of the "free" world seem to think it was written by some individual in his study under inspiration from Moscow, but those of us who were there at the run up and at Kliptown know how it happened. Thousands of bits of paper, letters, notes, in many languages came in from all over the country, from a shop in Eloff street demanding the nationalisation of all industry, from Bethal wanting to be able to leave the farm prison, from mothers demanding education for their children, workers wanting the abolition of pass laws, from priests wanting peace. These

were sorted out into piles of similar demands and then written down to form the charter. There were no demands for killing all the whites. There were no requests for torture chambers or for special privileges for whites. The fascists, the racists, the anarchists and the voices of capital were silent. They were not interested in a Charter of Freedom. They already had their charter — the all white parliament and its racist laws. So the Freedom Charter summed up the views of the people and because the workers are people it expressed their needs and desires.

Workers no less than peasants, share croppers, petty traders, priests, professors and the odd jobs man demand:

'The people shall govern.

All national groups shall have equal rights. The people shall share in the wealth.

The land shall be shared among those who work it.

All shall be equal before the law.

All shall enjoy equal human rights.

There shall be peace and security.

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened.

There shall be housing, security and comfort.

There shall be peace and friendship."

Workers if anything need these rights even more than some other sections of the population, because they have even less than most. A trader owns the shop, a priest has the church on earth and his kingdom in heaven, the peasant his scrap of land and the professor an intellectual's escape, the worker has nothing but labour power. All the worker has to keep the family from starvation, rain and frost, from death itself are two hands and the ability to work.

Because the workers are the most exploited section of society, because they see every day the fruits of their labour stolen from them by the bosses they are most aware of what is wrong in South Africa and what needs to be changed. Together with all the oppressed people they are building now the basis of the Freedom Charter.

Let us consider a few examples mostly from present day struggles which are





*Strikers meet near the SASOL complex*

extending and deepening those struggles that went before. The Freedom Charter says "the people shall govern". In factories throughout South Africa bosses had tried to impose unelected, undemocratic organisations on the workers; liaison committees, settlement of disputes committees, parallel unions, codes of conduct and now "registration" and the manpower services commission. Each and every one has been rejected and the workers have chosen again and again trade unions of their choice with leaders elected by the workers themselves. Where such leaders have betrayed the workers they have been rejected.

Workers are in a continual battle to govern themselves and against all odds they still exercise the right to run their own affairs. This is but part of the battle to govern South Africa. The rejection of Bantustan elections is a reflection of the demand that the people shall govern. In brief periods, in limited areas the people have governed, in Uitenhage during the motor workers strike, in Soweto during 1976, and on other occasions there was a glimpse of the future.

Together with the demand for self government is the demand for all national groups to have equal right. The workers have consistently demanded unity of all workers irrespective of race, colour or creed. To their shame only the white workers, with notable exceptions, have rejected this call. There is still a lack of complete clarity on this matter and no wonder in a state based on racism. Some,

as yet not fully experienced, trade union leaders call for separate Black trade unions for "Africans only". A Council of Unions of South Africa, has been projected which will be "non-racial" but rejects any non-blacks in the leadership. Others like FOSATU also claim to be "non-racial" but resentment is caused by the high handed methods of leadership which foster thoughts of racism and white domination. The Black Allied Workers Union has been abandoned by the workers who have split off to form new unions because the interpretation of Black Consciousness by the BAWU leadership was too narrow and exclusive, stifling democracy and the fight for freedom in South Africa. Only a system based on the principles of the Freedom Charter can solve this problem for the Trade Union movement in South Africa. The struggle of the workers is against capital, against exploitation. This struggle demands unity of workers irrespective of race, colour or creed, unity of the workers against the exploiters. This can only be built around the struggle of the Black workers for their rights, a unity of Coloured, African and Indian workers, and those white workers who abandon their "whiteness" for working class solidarity.

The basis of this struggle has existed for many years in South Africa and SACTU, formed in 1955, is its most positive expression. SACTU has been forced underground by the apartheid state but still leads the struggle for unity. The creation of such unity is the creation in practice of equal rights for all national groups.

In spite of the cruel penalties imposed on the workers they are more and more exercising their rights as written in the Charter. In Crossroads and other squatter camps the workers set up their houses and exercise their "right to live where they choose". Workers travel within South Africa without passes and permits. They travel "illegally", they work "illegally" in towns, their children exercise their right to receive the education they want and to refuse what the apartheid state gives them. And it has long been the practice of workers to "share" their meagre "wealth" with fellow workers who are on strike or unemployed. These actions all reflect demands written into the Freedom Charter.

Internationally peace and friendship and close cooperation between the workers of South Africa and workers of all lands is growing stronger in spite of all the restrictions of apartheid. The ANC and SACTU are implementing section 10 of the Charter.

As the workers and the people expand their opposition to apartheid so the calls of the Charter become clearer. If the workers are to have jobs, if unemployment is to be abolished then "the natural wealth of our country, shall be restored to the people.", and "Industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people". If the mineworkers are to be freed from compound labour, from the terrible toll of silicosis, asbestosis and premature death then there is no other way but that "The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole".

The farm workers are now more exploited than ever because they have not only lost their land but are also forced to operate complex farm machinery without proper safeguards, training, or adequate food and wages. The most important step to changing this is that "The land shall be shared among those who work it." The farm worker is no doubt different from the peasant and some have for generations not been in a position to have even a small plot of land for their own use. But a farm worker is different from the peasant and some have for generations not been in a

position to have a small plot for their own use. But a farm worker is different from a factory worker and so the Charter expresses their wishes and desires for land. Factories and mines can only be operated as units they cannot be divided and this the Charter recognises when it calls for "ownership of the people" no doubt there are farms which can be run as factories and the workers of those farms will decide how they "work it". The urgent necessity is that those who "work it" shall have "land".

Of course the main clause that affects the workers is that "there shall be work and security". These demands remain very much the same today as they were in 1955. The Charter also forms the basis of the Demands submitted by SACTU to the South African employers in June 1977 and the updated demands resubmitted August this year. These demands have been taken up by the various trade unions and federations in South Africa and become the property not only of SACTU but of all workers.

In particular the section of the Charter which says "The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work..." in many ways sums up the essence of South Africa. Millions are unemployed and starving and the State answers their cries with deportations and banishments. The apartheid state utterly refuses to recognise our "right to work". On the other hand cafes, nightclubs, gambling dens and recreation centres thrive where the idle rich reject their "duty to work".

Each sentence of the Charter reveals more telling arguments for the destruction of apartheid. It is a document written by the people and containing their wisdom. It is a document written by the workers and reflects their real life's struggle. This unity of purpose of the workers and the people must be deepened, extended and maintained. Only in this way will freedom come more quickly and be a real freedom not a new form of colonial and capitalist exploitation.



*PUTCO drivers discuss strike action*

## **S.A. WORKERS DEMAND**

- 1) We demand the immediate recognition of the right of all workers to form and join trade unions of their own choice free from government interference and control.

Black workers in South Africa can only be subjected to poverty and degradation for as long as they are prevented from organising to improve their lot. Victimisation, harrassment, bannings and imprisonment continue to hamper efforts by workers to organise themselves into trade unions. We reject the system of government-imposed works committees, liaison committees and so-called registration as a substitute for free and independent trade unions. This form of representation is used by employers to dissipate discontent on the factory floor, and not to provide the workers with a

weapon which they can use to fight unemployment and low wages. Only trade unions which reflect the will of the workers can effectively serve these ends.

- 2) We demand the abolition of the pass laws, the Citizenship Act (which deprives the African people of their birthright), and the abolition of the migratory labour system and demand the right to live with our families anywhere in South Africa.

Apartheid is a system of brutal labour control, which is exercised through the pass laws; laws which are now streamlined and strengthened following the recommendations of the Riekert Commission. Workers are placed at the beck 17

and call of the employers throughout their working places of South Africa to minister to the needs of the employers, and sent back to the poverty-stricken rural areas when their labour is no longer required. This migratory labour system cuts to a minimum the costs to the employers of the upkeep of the workers, both in the form of social services, and in wages. Starvation wages for black workers mean handsome profits for the factory and mine owners. The pass laws lie at the very heart of exploitation and oppression in South Africa, and strip black people of the most basic human rights.

- 3) We demand the unconditional right to strike for all workers in support of their demands.

All workers in South Africa are forced to sell their labour in order to survive. The main weapon they possess to demonstrate their anger and to further their struggle for a decent life is the ability to withdraw their labour. Our strikes are answered more and more by arbitrary unrest, banishment, police violence and now by direct confrontation by the army. These only serve as provocations. Until the needs of the workers are satisfied, such strikes will continue and will escalate, spreading to neighbouring industries and gaining solidarity and support amongst the population and abroad. Only the recognition of our right to strike by the employers and the state will begin to ease such industrial unrest.

- 4) We demand a national minimum wage for all workers, regardless of race or sex, of R75 per week.

We believe that the implementation of a R75 per week national minimum wage is an essential first step in relieving the mass of working people from poverty and starvation. The crisis of inflation is not of the workers' making and workers cannot be expected to bear the brunt of it. The level of a national minimum wage must be fixed by negotiations between the trade unions and the employers at regular intervals to keep ahead of the increase in the cost of living.

- 5) We demand the abolition of all

discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of sex or race, and an end to all forms of job reservation.

Any system of job reservation or discrimination in employment is used by the employers and government to divide and weaken the trade union movement. A system of equal opportunity, mutual assistance and trust will create the conditions where good industrial relations have a chance to succeed.

- 6) We demand free and compulsory education for all children, regardless of colour or creed, and extended training facilities for all workers. We demand the abolition of discrimination in education and training, including apprenticeships.

The education system provided for the black people in South Africa is intended to equip them for perpetual servitude. It is limited in scope to only those areas and subjects which it befits unskilled workers to know. We demand that immediate steps be taken to revolutionise the education system in South Africa, and to overcome wide-scale illiteracy. We believe that free and equal access to education both at school, technical college and at university is a basic right.

- 7) We demand the right to work and it is the duty of the government and employers to satisfy this demand. An 8 hour working day and a 40 hour basic working week should be the maximum in all employment.

All workers have the right to employment in order to support his or her family. When workers are at work they are expected to do hard manual labour for long periods each day. For many, the working day begins in the early hours of the morning and ends late at night because of the long hours and the great distances which have to be travelled to work. It is essential that workers have adequate time for leisure and rest.

- 8) We demand that workers should not be compelled to work overtime, and when overtime is worked, the total

number of hours worked per week, including overtime, should not exceed 50 hours. Workers should be paid double their normal rate for overtime and-a-half times the normal rates on weekends and public holidays.

At the present time, many employers ignore the provisions of even the Factories Act regarding overtime. We demand that the recreation.

- 9) We demand four weeks paid leave per year for every worker.

At present, contract workers are forced back to the rural areas each year on enforced 'holidays', for which they are not paid. We demand that these workers be paid for the period they spend in the rural areas, that they be given fares for the journey and that they be given an extra week's holiday in order to cover the time spent in travelling back to the cities.

- 10) We demand that every worker be entitled to twenty-one days sick leave per year with full pay, to be extended in cases of serious illness.

This benefit must be given as a right-workers should not have deductions made from their wages in order to qualify for these benefits.

- 11) We demand that all workers should enjoy full medical benefits.

Full free medical attention should be provided for workers and their families, with free medicine.

- 12) We demand unemployment pay and injury compensation for all workers, without exception or time limit, and fixed at 100% of current salary.

Every worker has the right to a living wage, and if the present system cannot provide jobs for all as a means of securing a decent wage, then workers should not have to suffer the consequences. All workers must be covered by full unemployment benefits. Workers who are injured while in the service of employers must be provided for adequately. Families of those killed on the

job must be covered by adequate pension provisions. To ensure the proper enforcement of these benefits, all employers must register the full names and addresses of their employees and their next of kin.

- 13) We demand that all workers should be eligible for retirement at 60 years of age, on full pension.

- 14) We demand that women workers be able to participate fully in all aspects of production, without discrimination in wages, training, job allocation or pension benefits.

We demand that all women workers be given the option of leave from work for three months prior to the birth of a child and for six months afterwards, and that during this period, women should be covered by full unemployment benefits. Women should be guaranteed their jobs back after the birth of their children. Women workers should not be compelled to do night work, and the practice of appointing women to jobs solely on the basis of their supposed 'willingness' to do night work must be abolished. Creches and day nurseries must be made available free of charge for the children of workers.

- 15) We demand full political rights equally for all South Africans.

To organise independent trade unions, and to fight for the demands set out above, the workers require the right of free association; to hold meetings and to move freely. They need also the freedom to pressurise the government in their own interests. The workers of South Africa are the creators of her wealth, and yet most of them are denied any control over how this wealth is used. We therefore demand a universal franchise in South Africa.

John Gaetsewe  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF TRADE  
UNIONS  
6th October, 1980



*Comrade S. Dlamini, President of SACTU*

# SEMINAR IN GRENADA

On March 13th 1979, the People's Revolutionary Army under the leadership of the New Jewel Movement overthrew the tyrannical regime of Eric Gairy. This ended 20 years of tyranny especially the last 5 years when Grenada functioned as an independent nation.

The objective conditions that made this change possible were mainly the result of the personal corruption of Eric Gairy and his supporters. He had almost totally personalised and centralised political power in his hands. His arrogance led to intimidation of large segments of the political directorate. He was therefore, surrounded (even at cabinet level) by a number of frightened individuals whose loyalty to him was fragile. He organised around him, armed criminals, Mongoose gang — who roamed the streets terrorising the people who opposed his rule. Illegal detentions, and searches, torture, murder and random violence became the order of the day. It is not surprising that his main supplier of arms and link in the regime was the fascist Pinochet regime of Chile.

Gairy was hated by all sections and social strata of the Grenadan population. He used his office to gain patrons for his hotels and restaurants and confiscated land estate owners to buy support for his regime. This led to antagonism from the business and landed sections whose trade was affected. His interference in trade unions as President of the General Manual and Metal Workers Union, by imposing this union and taking a personal hand in the dismissal of protesting workers or managers, caused grave hatred of him by the workers.

The regular police had no particular commitment to him; the Army was undisciplined, largely untrained and underpaid — thus they functioned only as errand boys

for Gairy and his colleagues. In short Gairy was alienated from all the sections of the Grenadan population and it was these objective conditions that made Grenada ripe for a revolution.

## STUDENTS' SEMINAR

An International Students' Seminar on "the struggle against Apartheid, Fascism and Reaction" was held in St. George's, capital of Free Grenada. It was organised by the International Union of Students (IUS) the Latin American and Caribbean Students' Organisation (OCLAE) and the National Students Council of Free Grenada.

The Seminar was attended by 29 representatives of 21 National Youth and Students Organisation from Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. The representatives of the Youth and Students Section of the liberation movements of Southern Africa, SWAPO of Namibia, the ANC of South Africa and the Patriotic Front of newly independent Zimbabwe and the representatives of IUS, OCLAE and AASU (All African Students Union) were present.

The choice of Free Grenada as the venue of the seminar was of importance because this came at a time when imperialist acts of destabilisation against Jamaica (attempted coup) the murder of Dr Rodney and bomb attacks in Grenada itself were at their height. These darstardly acts taking place, as they did, in the midst of military manoeuvres in the Caribbean and the creation of the US "Task Force" to police the area. In short, the Seminar took place in an atmosphere characterised by real dangers posed by imperialism in the region.

The Seminar was opened by the Prime 21

Minister of Free Grenada, Comrade Maurice Bishop, whose speech set the correct tone and mood of the deliberations. Soon after the opening ceremony, he held talks with each delegate explaining the policy of Grenada towards each country. Present also in the opening ceremony was the Minister of Education, Youth and Social Affairs (who spoke on the education policy of Free Grenada and how it is unfolding); the Minister of Works and Communication and the Cuban Ambassador.

During the deliberations, the participants, traced in depth the evolution of imperialist global strategy and the deperate attempts to bring the world on the brink of war. Also considered were the inter-connections between the collaboration of imperialism and racist South Africa, the fascist regimes in Latin America, the creation of a task force in the Caribbean on the one hand and provocations in the Indian Ocean, the attempts to deploy new nuclear missiles in Western Europe and the promotion of the arms race on the other. It was in this context therefore, that the attempts to create SATO were considered and condemned as an extension of the NATO military offensive to other continents.

The urgency of US imperialism and its allies for establishing SATO was seen as directly linked to and necessitated by the rapidly growing struggles of the peoples of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular the victories of the people of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and the daily advances by the liberation forces in Namibia and South Africa. In Latin America and the Caribbeans, the consolidation of the Cuban revolution, the heroic victories achieved by the people of Grenada and Nicaragua, the combative struggle of the people of El Salvador and Guetamala, the increasing fight of the popular masses against fascist and reactionary dictatorships in the continent — in Chile and Uruguay among others — and the Puerto Rican people's struggle against U.S. colonial domination.

The following countries were condemned for their collaboration with Apartheid — USA, Britain, France, F.R.G., Italy, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Japan and Israel in all forms, and especially in the

military and nuclear field. Uruquay, Chile, Argentina and Paraguay were singled out as accomplices in the dangerous imperialist plots to threaten peace in the region contributing to the imminent threat to world peace.

The participants finally called for the strengthening of links between organisations and peoples engaged in the fight against this common enemy and active concrete support for all those locked in physical combat with the enemy.

### Solidarity Meeting

There was a rally held in solidarity with the leadership, Government, people and youth of Free Grenada. The rally was addressed by representatives of the IUS, OCLAE, AASU, Jamaica (on behalf of the Caribbean students) ANC (SA) (on behalf of the liberation movements of Southern Africa) and His Excellency, the Prime Minister of Free Grenada, Comrade Maurice Bishop. The meeting was simultaneously transmitted through Radio Free Grenada.

### General Observation

To be in Free Grenada only a year after the revolution one could not but be impressed by the confidence with which the people, the party and Government are consolidating people's power. All over the air is filled with revolutionary enthusiasm, vigilance and a high sense of internationalism. The people and in particular the Youth are very much aware of developments internationally and the stand of Grenada on each country — from Afghanistan to anywhere.

Another remarkable feature is the consciousbuilding of people's organisations — youth, students, women and workers' organisations. An inspiring development too, is the open call by the leadership for people to join the militia — for the defence of the revolution. The response, particularly from the youth is fantastic.

Of course the most striking and unforgettable feature of the Grenadan people is their hospitality and unity. Grenada shall be free forever!



**THE**

**WHEEL OF UNCLE**



**WEARS  
OF THE  
FREEDOM  
CHAPTER**

# WHAT HAPPENED

## ON DECEMBER 16?

*To mark December 16th, Heroes Day, we print an article originally published in New Age on December 11th, 1958, by the late Lionel Forman.*

On December 16 there will be the usual spate of nauseating claptrap from pulpits and platforms and press about how, at Blood River, on December 16, 1838, the forces of civilisation and of light, the messengers of God Himself, destroyed the power of barbarism and darkness in the shape of Dingane's Zulus.

It may be a good idea to arm ourselves in advance against being submerged in the wave of emotion by taking a look at the facts.

It is one of the facts of history up to now that in the relations between tribes or nations, when two neighbouring peoples have had an urgent economic need for something of which there was not sufficient for both, the stronger community has seized by force that thing from the weaker.

It is only with the advent of socialism, when man obtains rational control of his society and is able by his use of science to satisfy the economic wants of all that wars and all the horrors that go with them cease to be the stepping-stones of history.

South Africa's history is no different from that of other countries in this respect. In the quest for good land for men and cattle the strong dispossessed the weak. They did it by trickery if possible; by brute force if necessary. And those who were defending their land used the same weapons.

While the Europeans were establishing their rule in the Cape, the Free State and

parts of the Transvaal, the Zulus were establishing theirs in Natal.

### Zulu and English meet

When the first Europeans — Englishmen — came in 1824 the Zulus gave them permission to settle and establish Port Natal (now Durban).

In 1828, the Zulus, disturbed by the behaviour of the whites, sent some of their men, including a chief, Jacob, to the Cape to study the way the Europeans had behaved towards the Xosas there.

Jacob reported:

"At first the white people came and took part of their land, then they encroached and drove them further back... they built houses (missions) among them for the purpose of subduing them by witchcraft ... the soldiers frequently asked what sort of country the Zulus had ... and said "We shall soon be after you". They would then build a fort, when more would come and demand land, who would also build houses and subdue the Zulus and keep driving them farther back, as they had driven the frontier tribes."

In spite of this explicit (and prophetic) warning, Dingane, who succeeded Tshaka in 1828, took no hostile action against Port Natal, although the white settlers numbering until 1836 no more than thirty people, were completely at his mercy.

Three times his councillors recommended the destruction of the settlement, and three times Dingane vetoed the proposal.

He did not molest them even though he had cause for resentment because the Port Natal white settlement, happy to have black labour and black allies, was proving a haven for the Zulu tribe's outlaws and political refugees. The white settlers were treated as chiefs by no fewer than 3,000

of these people and in the words of Theal "exercised power even of death over their followers".

"The European settlement," noted the white settler, H.F. Flynn, "was objectionable not only because it was an imperium imperio (i.e. a Kingdom within a Kingdom) but because it harboured many that could be assumed to have vowed everlasting vengeance ... and were consequently plotting to bring about his downfall." In addition the settlers were actively fomenting tribal feuds and disunity.

Alarmed at the possibility that Dingane might attack them the Europeans held a meeting and agreed to approach the Zulu ruler and give him an assurance that they would cease to harbour fugitives in return for a guarantee that they would not be attacked.

### Prediction

Dingane willingly entered into a pact with the Europeans in April 1835, saying at the time "I will keep my word, but I know that the white people will be the first to break the treaty."

Fynn comments, "As the despot himself correctly surmised ... it was indeed broken and surprisingly soon." Two white traders, Jalstead and Snelder, were, within two months, hard at work in the Zulu territory smuggling Zulu women through to Port Natal, where there was a very great demand for them among the Europeans.

In spite of these infringements, the general effect of the treaty satisfied Dingane.

A year of close co-operation between the Africans and the Europeans followed. When in 1836, Dingane launched an attack on the Swazis, one of the colonists noted:

"The whole of the British inhabitants with three or four exceptions have voluntarily joined the Zulu army and by means of their firearms killed and wounded a number of his enemies for which they have been handsomely rewarded with the cattle they have captured."

(Those who cite Dingane's wars against defenceless tribes as examples of African savagery should be reminded that Europeans with their guns formed the spearhead of the Zulus in at least one such attack. Savagery

knows no colour bar.)

### Boers Arrive

In 1837, the Voortrekkers arrived in Natal.

Dingane saw them in a completely different light from the men at Port Natal. He saw the Boers as a threat to the Zulu people. He believed that they would seize the Zulu land as they had seized the land of other people before.

Nevertheless his first dealings with the Voortrekkers were friendly. On October 31, 1837 he wrote to the Voortrekker leader Piet Retief telling him that he had discovered another chief in possession of a number of sheep belonging to the Boers. He returned the sheep together with the letter.

Retief followed this up with a letter asking Dingane for a grant of land. "Our country is small, and we, becoming numerous, can no longer subsist there," he wrote.

Dingane replied on November 8, saying that he was considering the request, but charging the Boers with the theft of his cattle: "A great number of cattle have been stolen from my country by a people having clothes, horses and guns. The Zulus assure me that these people were Boers ... the Zulus now wish to know what they have to expect.

"My greatest wish, therefore, is that you should show that you are not guilty of the matters alleged against you, for at present I believe that you are. My request is that you recover my cattle and restore them to me; and if possible, hand over the thief to me. That proceeding will remove my suspicions, and will give you reason to know that I am your friend: then I shall accede to your request. I shall give you sufficient number of people to drive the cattle that you may recapture for me; and that will remove all the suspicions that the stolen cattle are in the hands of the Dutch."

Retief assured Dingane that it had not been the Boers, but a Mosotho chief Sikonyela who had stolen the cattle:

Whether or not Sikonyela had stolen any cattle no one knows. But Retief and his men, accompanied by some Zulus, without 25



further ado, made for his kraal.

They were already acquainted with Sikonyela, for he and his tribe had helped to show the Voortrekkers the best way to get their wagons from the Highveld through the difficult Drakensberg mountains into Natal.

### Retief's Trick

Retief received a hospitable welcome, and, in return, offered to demonstrate to the chief a pair of handcuffs he had with him.

Sikonyela was kept, bound hand and foot, for three days until his people had rounded up a sufficient number of cattle for Retief. The helpless tribesmen, according to an account obtained by Dr. John Philip, asked Retief indignantly:

"Is this the way you treat the chiefs of the people?"

"Being answered in the affirmative, with coarse and offensive expressions, he asked 'Would you treat Dingane in this way were he in your power?'"

"To this they made reply 'We shall treat Dingane in the same manner should we find him to be a rogue'."

Unknown to Retief, there was one of Dingane's councillors among the Zulus with him.

"From that moment," said Philip's informant, "Dingane's councillor became restless and uneasy, and as soon as it became dark he disappeared, proceeded with speed to Dingane, related his story, along with his own impression; and the chief, taking fear from his councillor, had made his preparations for the destruction of Retief and his party before their arrival with the cattle."

### Reasons for Fear

Though this may have been the deciding factor, other facts too have been cited as confirming the view of Dingane's councillors that the Boers were a very real danger to Zulu security.

The Zulus had heard from Retief's own lips how the Boers had defeated the Matabele and massacred them — and the Matabele were the kinsmen of the Zulus.

And according to the short biography of Dingane in Mveli Skota's "African Yearly Register", "On more than two occasions reports were brought to him by his spies that the Boers were seen by night on all sides of the village in which the Royal Kraal was situated."

It is also suggested that the Zulus who accompanied Retief in his raid on Sikonyela reported back that the cattle seized here were not those which had been stolen from the Zulus, thus confirming Dingane in the belief that the cattle had been stolen by the Boers.

Theal records too that there were very strong rumours at the time that one of the British settlers had influenced Dingane in his decision to kill Retief by telling him that the Boer claim that they were short of land was patently untrue, for they had left good land in the Cape, that they were deserters from British rule, and that the British therefore would not view their punishment with disfavour.

When Retief and his sixty followers came to Dingane's kraal with the cattle,

the chief, who now, in his own words "had no doubt that they were enemies masquerading under the guise of friendship," tricked them with professions of friendship, just as they had tricked Sikonyela, and had them killed on the spot.

Then immediately the Zulus attacked all the Boer camps in Natal, killing on the Boer's estimates, not fewer than 375 white men, women and children and 200 of their African servants.

### Worst Disaster

This was by very very far the worst disaster the whites had ever suffered at the hands of the blacks in South Africa.

The Boers and Britons immediately united to counter-attack. Thirty Durban settlers led an army of over 1,000 Africans

against Dingane, while 350 Boers mounted and armed with muskets attacked from Pietermaritzburg.

The Zulus won a series of extremely costly victories and on April 26, the missionary Owen recorded "the whole country is at their disposal."

But Dingane did not follow up this victory.

The writer Mnguni says: "With Port Natal at his mercy and with the enemy taking to the boats, Dingane returned to his capital. This major blunder was due to the fact that he thought still in terms of tribal war-ethics; he had shown his superiority and he thought the enemy would now live in peace with him; so he did not extend his sway over the Boer-British force he had routed. The Boer-British front exploited Dingane's politeness, re-



grouped and under Pretorius, killed 3,000 soldiers at Blood River."

December 16

That was on December 16, which the Afrikaners now celebrate as a public holiday to mark what they have been taught by Nationalist "historians" to believe was the decisive battle between white and black.

In fact, however, Blood River was by no means a decisive battle. The Afrikaners lacked the military power of the British, to whom must go the dubious honour of having won the engagements which smashed the main tribes, including the Zulus.

It was only in January 1840, when Dingane's treacherous brother Mpande placed himself at the head of a number of

dissident Zulu tribes, united with the Boers, and led an army of nearly 6,000 Zulus spearheaded by 400 mounted Boers against Dingane that the latter was defeated and forced to flee.

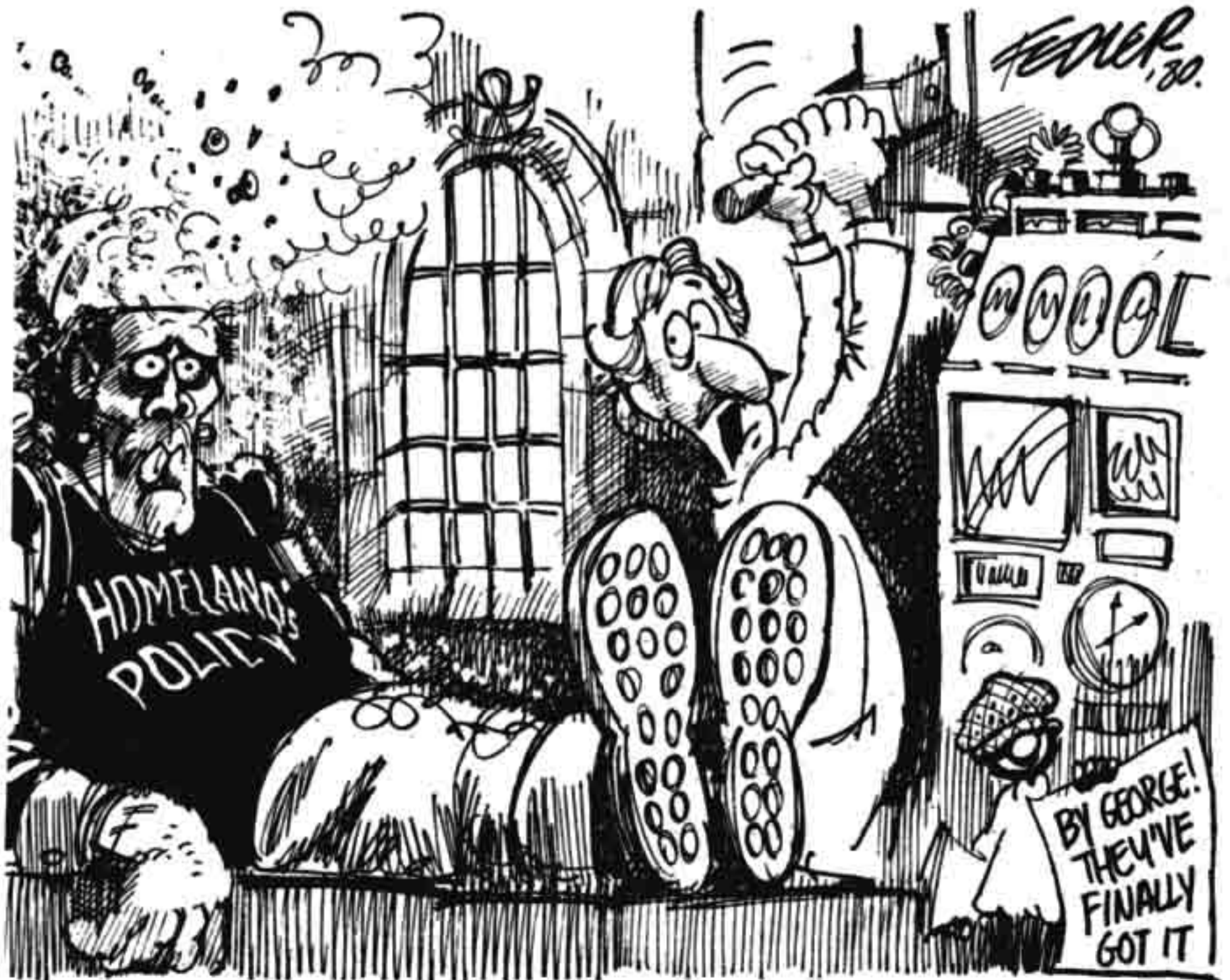
The Zulu military machine remained relatively intact but Mpande became a puppet chief in the service of the Boers.

But just as there was nowhere a black man could go and be left in peace by the white man, so there was nowhere a Boer could go and be left in peace by the British.

Within a few months of the establishment of the Boer Republic in Natal, reports reached London that there was valuable surface coal in the territory. At the same time awareness was growing of the value of Port Natal as a naval base.

In 1842, after a short battle with the Boers, the British took over.

For the Zulus nothing changed.



"It doesn't work!"

# SACTU MAKES HISTORY

*Organize or Starve!, The History of the South African Congress of Trade Unions; Ken Luckhardt and Brenda Wall, London, 1980.*

The celebration of 25 years of militant struggle by the South African Congress of Trade Unions has been marked in a tradition true to the history of this non-racial trade union federation. The Year of the Mobilisation of the Workers, called by SACTU at the beginning of 1980, has been one which has seen an unprecedented level of trade union organisation and action by the black working class. To understand how this powerful attack on the enemies most vulnerable area, the economy, has developed and grown, to grasp where the roots of this struggle lie, one should turn to SACTU's official history, published in honour of their 25th year.

*Organize or Starve*, traces the struggle of South Africa's black workers to organize and fight back against a system of national oppression and class exploitation unparalleled in its brutality. The book's interest lies in the fact that the authors, Ken Luckhardt and Brenda Wall, have used as their sources, the spokesmen and representatives of the workers themselves, basing their work on both documentary and verbal accounts of SACTU's history from the makers of that history - the cadres and leaders of the South African Congress of Trade Unions and the liberation alliance as a whole.

In order to understand the challenge facing South African trade unionists one has to grasp the nature and weight of repressive legislation enacted in South Africa in an attempt to emasculate and divide the working class. These laws are detailed in the opening chapters of the book, laying bare the Nationalist regime's strategy "to create an even more racially

divided working class and even stronger employers' organisation in the ongoing class struggle." (p114) But this onslaught by the employers and the state was to be matched by what the book describes as the first systematic attempt to organise African workers into trade unions.

The birth of SACTU was made possible through an earlier history of struggle. Events like the historic miners' strike of 1946 underline the tremendous work carried out by cadres of the Communist Party of South Africa in pioneering the work of organising African labour at the point of production. The final break up of the Trades and Labour Council which had never served the needs of the African majority was to open "up new possibilities to determine the kind of trade unionism necessary for South Africa - that based on the principles of equality and unity of all workers in the struggle against class exploitation and national oppression." (p90) From October 1954 until March 1955, a small group of progressive trade unionists threw all their efforts into building this kind of trade unionism.

Fighting all obstacles placed in its path, the South African Congress of Trade Unions went on to build the first powerful non-racial trade union coordinating body in South Africa. One of the strengths of this book is its rich and detailed account of SACTU's day to day campaigns among the masses. The success and significance of the national £1 a day campaign during the 1950s and 1960s is underlined: 'Demanding a legislated, national minimum wage of £1-a-day for all workers, the campaign touched a central nerve and pinpointed the cause of the misery suffered by the majority of the people: the perpetuation of the cheap labour policy, fostered by the South African ruling class.' (p151)



The impact of SACTU's work in organizing the unorganized was concretely manifested in its affiliated membership. In 1956 this numbered 20,000 workers in 19 unions. Three years later, SACTU represented an affiliated membership of 46,000 in 35 unions.

Relating the history of SACTU means too the history of the liberation movement as a whole and "Organize or Starve" covers the turbulent period of struggles by the Congress Alliance in the 1950s. In doing so the relationship between the trade unions and the national liberation movement, the African National Congress, is clearly drawn — one built on many years of work amongst the masses in very difficult conditions. The spirit in which South African revolutionaries approached their tasks is stressed: "ANC and SACTU campaigns were never regarded as separate from one another, and members of both organizations committed equal energies to all Congress work." (p230)

This official history also analyses in depth the major strike actions by the black working class between 1955 and 1964, attempting to show both extent of class consciousness of the workers and the responses of capital and the state in each

case. Thrown up by these struggles of the working people were many outstanding trade unionists. The book covers the biographies of such revolutionaries as Vuyisile Mini, Elijah Loza, Stephan Dlamini, Ray Alexander, Elizabeth Mafekeng and many others who in their total dedication to the cause of the working class, won themselves the privilege of being leaders of the oppressed and struggling people of South Africa.

As a trade union movement, SACTU was always conscious of the role of international solidarity between workers of all countries. Two chapters of the book deal with this aspect of SACTU's history and emphasise the crucial importance of these links between the anti-imperialist and anti-monopoly forces of the world.

If there are any weaknesses in the book, they are to be found in the last section which deals with SACTU's work in the last decade and a half. There are objective reasons for the authors' problems in dealing with this period. This is a time of underground struggle, of new forms of work necessitated by the repression and brutality of the state against leaders and cadres of SACTU. That this era of struggle has born fruits is evidenced by the growth of the independent



trade union movement over these years. Readers will have to wait until victory is won in South Africa before they will be able to gain any real insight into the work carried out by SACTU and its allies, the ANC and South African Communist Party, under conditions of illegality and fascist repression.

So many books have been written about the South African revolution. Here is one actually drawn from the experience of the masses themselves, a history of working class battles that underlines the truth that the struggle for economic rights is inseparable from political demands.

The publication of this book is an important tribute to the black working class in South Africa — the working class of an oppressed nation; a class that owns nothing

but its labour power and who in Mandela's words is the "standard-bearer and vanguard of the people". It will no doubt become a handbook for all revolutionaries in our country and for our supporters worldwide. The book ends on a practical note reminding us that SACTU's work is located in the arena of day to day struggle in apartheid South Africa and not in the realm of academic theory:

"We, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, have now told you our story of a quarter of a century of struggle and sacrifice. Our victory is certain! That victory, however, requires the principled solidarity from everyone who shares our goals and aspirations to create a free and democratic South Africa". (p494)

H.R.



'It's not another garbage strike, just more anonymous pamphlets!'

# 1980 - THE YEAR OF SACTU

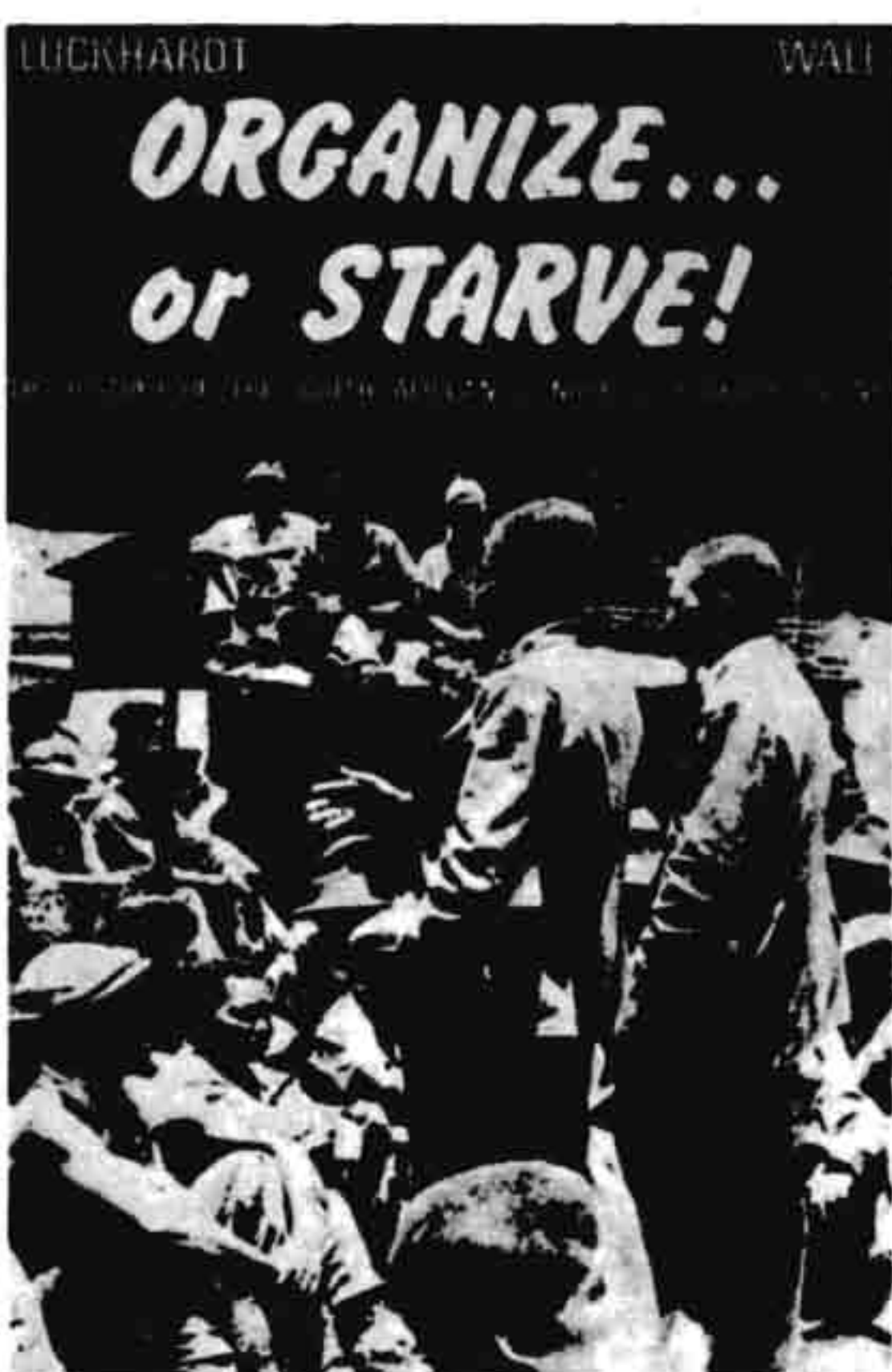
'The story that appears in these pages has never been fully told before. Many people have written about South African workers, but up to this day we have never heard from the oppressed workers themselves; they have struggled and sacrificed in silence.'

- John Gaetsewe  
General Secretary,  
South African Congress of  
Trade Unions (SACTU)

To commemorate our twenty-fifth Anniversary, SACTU has produced **ORGANIZE OR STARVE**. The book is based on extensive research which combines life - history interviews and recovered documents spanning the 1950s and 1960s. This 2-year project was made possible through the financial assistance of trade unions and Anti-Apartheid organisations throughout the world.

SACTU urges everyone to read this book in 1980 -- the Year of Mobilisation of South African workers against racism and exploitation!

500 pages; 68 historical photographs, June 1980 publication, Lawrence & Wishart, London.



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