Today we are all gathered here, those from home and close friends from Zimbabwe to celebrate and give honour to Com. I. Bangani Tabata on his 80th birthday. An outstanding fact of history comes to mind that a liberation struggle can and does attract the most intelligent and most noble of \$\psi\$ mankind. We can say without the least doubt that Com. Tabata has in the course of his long life from his early twenties to his eighties, a period of more than 50 years, never swerved from the revolutionary path he had early decided to follow. He has maintained throughout his life the outlook of a revolutionary whose theory matched his praxis. For in truth he has always been no armchair politician, and has contributed an untold wealth of ideas, knowledge and hardwon experience and has been and still is a source of inspiration, not only to the members of the many organisations he helped to found but to the society at large - the international community foe so all em-embracing are his interests.

At home he was regarded as an indefatigable organiser, an orator with warm natural gifts, a political philosopher but also as a gifted writer. He is a co-founder of a host of organisations on the national liberatory front as well as on the radical left.

The first organisation which he helped to establish was the All-African Convention in 1935 to meet the onslaught of the then Hertzog Government against the last remaining political and land rights of the African voters in the Cape Province. In his book "The Awakening of a People" at an early age, he reveals his understanding of the issues at stake and the early groping of a people towards the understanding of their plight and their failure to free themselves at that time from White liberal tutelage and forge an independent struggle. It is a classic of the period, much in demand and much sought after.

When soon after the Government launched another onslaught against the Coloured people to rob this section of their voting rights and create a separate Coloured Affairs Council and a Coloured Affairs Department along the same lines as the Blacks, Com Tabata and others formed an organisation called the ANTI-CAD COM. to oppose this scheme and launched a Boycott campaign against those quislings who wanted to stand as candidates in this apartheid representation. The BOYCOTT struggle roused the Coloured people from their slumber and provided an unique opportunity to put before the masses what the real aspirations of the oppressed were i.e. the struggle for full democratic rights in the land of their birth.

It was then that the seeds of unity were planted amongst the oppressed. The method of divide and rule giving one section i.e. the Coloured people a few

more rights and so divide them had come to an end and the time had come for unity amongst the oppressed and demand their rights to live as free human beings with democratic rights. In 1943 members of the All-African Convention and the Atti-Cad met in Bloemfontein and agreed to form the Non-Europea n Unity Movement, now the Unity Movement, on the basis of a common programme - the 10-POINT PROGRAMME and a policy of NON-COLLABORATION WITH THE OPPRESSOR.

Thus armed with the success of establishing unity at least amongst two of the oppressed groups (as we know at that time the Indian organisation the S.A.I.C. was dominated by the merchant class which was only interested in retaining their business rights and licences and when approached said that that they did not want upset the status quo) the Unity Movement now launched a massive campaign against the 3 Native Acts and those who had stood for elections to the NRC and those who represented the Blacks in the Senate and in the Assembly. By this time the people were already bitterly disillusioned with the NRC and the growing oppressive laws which appeared on the statute book. Com Tabata and other members of the Unity Movement played an active part in all these campaigns. It was then that he work I have the Senate and Struggle.

But it will be his work amongst the peasantry that will be remembered by many

in South Africa. Every year he would spend months amongst the peasantry, learning to understand their problems, learning to understand their kind of language enlightening them and organising them. In his pamphlet "The Rehabilitation Scheme - the New Fraud" he exposed and explained the scheme to the peasants as a diabolical method to rob them of their remaining cattle and their land and was able to find a loophole in the Act, namely that the peasants had to agree first before the scheme, could be imposed. The purpose of course was to smoke them out of the reserves and provide cheap labour for the mines and the It was in the Transkei in Mt Ayliff where he was arrented During the trial he apecialally prolonged the outcome of the case so that the peasants could come to know that the Rehabilitation Scheme could not be imposed by force if the peasants opposed it. The peasant strugglesof the 40's and 50's which those in the urban areas knew nothing aboutwere massive revoltsspreading throughout the Transkei, Pondoland, Natal, Pietersburg in Transvaal and Wisisshook in the CFS . These areas were literally on fire, the army was called in and hundred exiled killed and massacred over all the harsh measures to rob the peasantry of their cattle and mutities land.

In 1948 The Nationalist Party came to power and soon after the arch Nazi Hendrik Verwoord became Prime Minister. It was he who formulated the obnoxious ideas During the sixties, opppression against the Blacks increased under the Apartheid regime and most political organisations went underground or disbande Yet in spite of that the leadership of the U.M. deided to form "The African Peoples 'Democratic Union of S.A. (APDUSA) to cater for the need to rally individuals rather than first bodies. In his Presidential Address to APDUSA he stated "APDUSA believes that in any society the people who create wealth and civilisation and therefore are responsible for the progress of mankind, are those who provide labour in its many forms. Here in S.A. the bulk of the peoplewho create the wealth of the country are precisely those despised and neglected workers in the gold and coal mines, on the sugar plantations (Natal) the White farms and in the "Native Reserves".

"We believe that only that class which has a historical future can lead society out of the present crisis. History has placed the destiny of our society in the hands of the toiling masses. If we are to succeed in our task of liberation we must link ourselves dynamically and inseparably with the labouring classes. Without them we are nothing. With them we are everything and nothing can stand in our way. No power on earth can hold us back in our march."

In April 1963 Co. Tabata left Cape Town for Natal where the last meeting of the U.M. was held with representatives from all the provinces. The Con. decided to send COmrades Tabata, Gool and Honono out of the country for reasons of their personal safety and also to seek help for the organisation from the OAU. Com Tabata kanagemat was free from his ban, Com Gool was still under a ban and Com Honono was under house arrest in the Transkei. On Saturday, the 10th August they mannerally farademaximatemat secretly left Swaziland for Tanzania and finally reached Dar es Salaam on the 14th August 1963.

In September this year we will be 26 years in exile but during this period Com Tabata has never ceased to write pamphlets, articles and a number of books dealing both with the international problems but also with the struggle on the national front. In conclusion one may in absolute terms here is man whose life has been up with the liberation struggle at home and with complete pursuance of that goal.