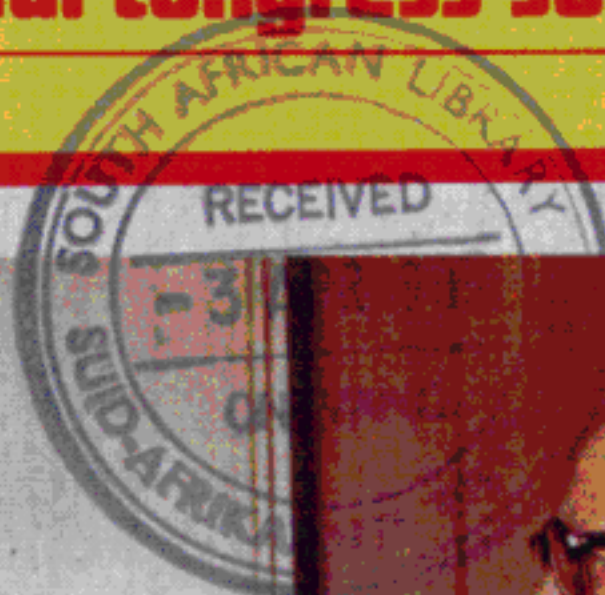


DECEMBER 1984



SECHABA

official organ of the african
national congress south africa



THE TWO ANTI-IMPERIALISTS HONOUR MANDELA

SECHABA

DECEMBER ISSUE 1984



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Indira Gandhi:

Friend of our People



As we go to press, things in India are not all that good. The cause of it all is the assassination of Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India.

India has a special significance for our struggle. The mere presence in South Africa of almost a million people of Indian origin tells the story. These people have fought side by side with Africans, Coloureds and democratic Whites, and some of their leaders, like Dadoo

and Naicker, became, during their lifetime, national figures in our liberation struggle. Others have spent years on the notorious Robben Island — Billy Nair, who spent 20 years on Robben Island is now in the British Consulate in Durban and can go back to gaol any minute, and Ahmed Kathrada is serving life imprisonment together with Nelson Mandela and others.

There are also linguistic and cultural ties between India and the Indian people in South Africa. Even family ties: the grand-daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, Mrs Ela Ramgobin, is an important personality in South African Black politics. By the way, Mahatma Gandhi got his political baptism in South Africa at the beginning of this century, when he formed an organisation for Indians that inspired the formation of the ANC. This was before he became a leader in India.

This is not all. India was one of the first countries to take cognisance of the oppressed people in South Africa. India broke economic and cultural ties with racist South Africa in 1948 — a year after its independence — because of apartheid. Since then India's record at the UN and other international bodies, such as the Afro-Asian movement, has been clearly an anti-apartheid one.

Mrs Indira Gandhi was instrumental in granting the Nehru Award to Nelson Mandela, recognising not only the plight of political prisoners and the oppressed Blacks, but also their struggle as symbolised by Nelson Mandela and the ANC. President O R Tambo received the Award from the Premier, Indira Gandhi, on behalf of Nelson Mandela.

New Delhi, during the premiership of Indira Gandhi, had become a haven of anti-apartheid activities, and numerous conferences on the demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean took place. These conferences pointed a finger at racist South Africa. It is common knowledge that the ANC office in India receives assistance from the Indian Government and people; that the movement's national days (January 8th, June 26th and August 9th) are commemorated throughout India, and articles from *Sechaba* are translated into the various Indian languages.

By the time of her death Indira Gandhi was the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement — a movement which has earned for itself the wrath and anger of the imperialist countries, including South Africa. At international organisations such as the World Peace Council, the Women's International Democratic Federation, the World Federa-

tion of Trade Unions or the World Federation of Democratic Youth, representatives from India always stand with us against apartheid.

It is for these reasons that Black South Africa mourned Indira Gandhi's death. At one memorial meeting in Lenasia, Johannesburg, more than 1 500 packed into Patidar Hall on October 31st to pay tribute to the late Indian Premier Indira Gandhi. The memorial service, organised by the Hindu Seva Samaj and the Transvaal Indian Congress, was addressed by (among others) A R Dawood, Albertina Sisulu and Maniben Sita. Similar memorial services were held elsewhere in the country.

These and many other reasons force us to reject as hypocrisy the letters of condolence sent to the Indian Government "on behalf of all the people of South Africa and particularly South Africans of Indian origin," by the racist Prime Minister, P W Botha. The Rajbansis, the Reddys and other stooges followed suit. How can they speak "on behalf of all South Africans" when in the recent elections they were rejected by the people? How can they talk like that when they incarcerate Nelson Mandela, who "speaks for all South Africans," and is a hero of India? How can they "regret the tragedy which has befallen India," and "extend sincere sympathies" when they militarise the Indian Ocean so as to attack countries like India?

All this double talk cannot blind us from facts: the people in South Africa are up in arms, and whether the racists like it or not they cannot stop our people and movement from their declared path of liberating South Africa. The military occupation of Vereeniging — which virtually meant that the racists have declared our people an enemy population — will not save the racists from the people's anger.

Indira Gandhi always understood and supported our struggle. This is what we shall remember Indira Gandhi for: her conviction in and fight for the triumph of our cause!

**A DISCUSSION
ARTICLE**

BLACK WOMAN- HOOD AND NATIONAL LIBERAT- ION

By Phyllis Jordan

This article deals with important aspects of the nature of women's oppression in South Africa, and the struggles of Black women. To mark the end of the Year of the Women, we publish it as a 'discussion article,' because we feel that the question of the position of women does not disappear with the end of the Year of the Women, 1984.

The most crucial question facing liberation movements today is the question of political programmes and perspectives. This is evidenced both in current tactical disputes among partisans and allies of such movements, and the wealth of literature that has been produced on the subject. In this respect our South African freedom movement is no different. Being engaged in a struggle to storm the citadel of reaction and imperialism on the African continent, its future course is of great importance, not only to South Africans today, but also to the world movement of which it forms a part.

It is one of the ironies of history that the most pervasive and total oppression, the oppression of women, has been to a large extent neglected by scholars within the ranks of the movement. This can be explained, in part, by the male chauvinism which has been the bane of colonial liberation movements, and also the imprecise terms in which we discuss the future socio-economic order we envisage for a free South Africa.

And yet, the success or otherwise of our struggle may depend on the extent to which we are able to involve as wide as possible a front of liberation forces against the oppressor regime. Women, specifically the Black women, will and must form a central pillar of such a front. We submit, Black women have no cause to commit themselves totally to the liberation struggle, unless the freedom to be achieved will in turn grant them equality and human dignity.

The importance of our liberation struggle derives from the strategic significance of South Africa in the world. Our country has historically been regarded as the gateway to the African continent. It stands at the confluence of the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans, and consequently has an important place in the strategic considerations of imperialism. It is the chief industrial nation on the continent, and as such, wields an inordinate influence in the world and African economy, an influence which could play a decisive role in the economic development of our continent. Thus, the liberation movement in South Africa has implications that go far beyond the immediate boundaries

of our country, as the culmination both of the freedom struggle on the continent, and of the struggles of the peoples of African descent for equality throughout the world.

Black Womanhood and National Liberation

The effect of White domination on the Black people is perhaps most glaringly expressed in its treatment of African women. Not only has it debased us as members of an oppressed people, but debases us to a position below that of objects. Here segregation, 'White leadership with justice,' apartheid, 'separate development,' call it what they may, appears without its rhetoric or the velvet gloves. The bare knuckles of its iron fist stare one in the face, and its vicious voice crackles like a whip. In its treatment of Black women, White racism has not even bothered to try pretending.

Because they are the most oppressed and exploited, firstly as Africans, as producers of wealth in an exploitative society, and also as women, this article addresses itself to the position of African women, whose liberation must be the pivotal issue around which can be elaborated a strategy for the emancipation of women.

As a gender, Black women occupy the lowest status position in the racist dominated society. Firstly, as members of the colonised and nationally oppressed groups, they are victims of White racism, secondly as the 'second sex' in a patriarchal society. women at home

and in the community at large are dominated by institutions created and controlled by men; lastly, as producers in a capitalist society they, like other workers, are robbed of the value of their labour. Hence we speak of the triple oppression of Black women.

But this condition is neither inevitable nor is it natural. In order to better understand how it came into being, we will cast our eyes back into history, examine briefly the position of women in pre-colonial African society, look at what took place through conquest, and then the aftermath, the condition of African women today.

Women in Pre-colonial South Africa.

The pre-capitalist African societies that existed in South Africa before the arrival of the Europeans may be characterised as pre-class societies. Though there were hierarchies of power within them, none exhibited the features of class societies, that is, societies divided into two or more groups, one of which controls the means of production and exchange, the other being a group of producers who produce more than they consume under the command of the super-ordinate group. The decisive means of production, the land, was collectively owned. The chief repository of wealth was livestock, owned by individual families. In the course of their evolution from simpler forms they had acquired a sexual division of labour. As settled mixed agriculturalists, the African

TABLE I

Based on 1936 Census of Native Females
Page XVI of 1936 Census

Ages	10+	20+	30+	40+	50+	60+
Agriculture	50 ths	36 ths	29 ths	19 ths	13 ths	9 ths
Manufacturing	650	996	767	486	272	144
Transp/Commun	59	47	19	14	4	22
Prof/Sport/Ent	648	26 281	683	240	89	28
Comm/Finance	34	81	52	38	19	15
Dom Serv	83 086	77 803	41 609	23 765	11 175	4 422
Other	4 467	1 759	829	451	390	276

people engaged in both tilling the land and the raising of livestock. In general, responsibility for tilling devolved on the women, while raising and maintenance of livestock was the responsibility of the men. There were, of course, exceptions to this general rule. Among the Mpondo of the Eastern Cape, for example, men took part in tilling.

On the whole, these two spheres of economic activity were of equal importance to the communities concerned. Women, as both the direct producers of the staples of the diet, and the reproducers of the community itself, were regarded as essential contributors to the sustenance and survival of their communities. This was given symbolic recognition through the custom of *lobola* — bride wealth — which the family of a prospective husband paid to the bride's family to compensate them for the loss of her labour power and skills.

Despite their equal economic responsibilities, women were not accorded the same political and social status as men. African traditional society was both patrilineal (tracing descent through father to the child) and patriarchal (dominated by men). The unit of social organisation was the family, headed by the father, who was considered master of the homestead. All persons attached to such a homestead — whether as wives, children, retainers or clients — were subject to his authority and regarded as his wards. A woman could never aspire to be the head of a homestead. This was a function solely fulfilled by men. Thus a widow became the ward either of her eldest son or of the male relatives of her deceased husband.

In politics it was men who had the right to attend the political assembly (the *kgotla* or the *nkundla*), where court cases were tried and the policies of the community decided. Each adult male was eligible to attend these and participate fully in the discussions. If he distinguished himself as eloquent and wise, he could aspire to being appointed to the inner councils of state, or the position of headman for his village.

With an inferior status, women derived their rights through their male guardians. Before

marriage a woman's rights were vested in her father. In the event of his death they were transferred either to a paternal uncle or to her brother. After marriage, these rights were vested in her husband.

Checks and Balances on Men's Power

There was, however, a rational kernel in the sexual division of labour. Women, socialised to assume the responsibilities of child-bearing and raising infants, were assigned work that was more sedentary and close to the home. Men, on the other hand, took on the work that entailed mobility and absences from the home.

Though suffering all these disabilities, women in traditional society enjoyed certain clearly defined rights, and there were checks and balances against the abuse of their power by the men. A woman who was a specialist — a midwife, a traditional healer, diviner — was unequivocally entitled to all the earnings she made in pursuance of her skill. A female artisan — a matmaker, potter, leather-goods worker — in her craft was considered a legal senior, and all her earnings were hers. Apart from these forms of personal property, the *ubulunga* cattle given to a woman by her family on her marriage never became part of her husband's property, but were hers until her death. On her death, all these and any offspring thereof were handed down to her youngest child. A woman's personal property could not be attached to pay off her husband's debts, even by a court of law. If her marriage dissolved, all this property was hers to take with her. Though the missionaries and 'Native Commissioners' of the 19th century were loth of admit it:

"the traditional rights of women in Africa were, in some places, and in some respects, greater than the rights of women in Victorian England." (1)

It was only in the religious sphere that women enjoyed a status equal to and even superior to that of men:

"... the great majority of diviners were women; they were the clairvoyants, the

mediums of traditional African society, but their status was much higher than that of a medium in contemporary western society, for traditional diviners were believed to interpret the will of the ancestors." (2)

In Southern Africa, two of the best known historic mediums are women: Nongqawuse, the daughter of Mhlakaza, amongst the Xhosa during the mid-19th century, and the Nehanda medium who played such a prominent role in the Zimbabwean Chimurenga of 1896-7. The Rain Queen of the Lovedu in the Transvaal is a similar figure, who combines the role of high priestess with that of queen.

The position of woman as the fount of life was given recognition in a variety of ways which awarded her a special status. The notion of unequivocal love/kindness is expressed, in Nguni, as *ububele* - literally, female-breastedness, which is evocative of a mother fondling a nursing child. Only a woman, by throwing herself over a defeated fighter, could save him from being finished off by an assailant. In sharp contrast to our present-day modern ways, wife-beating was considered scandalous, and the ultimate form of craven-heartedness. Thus did custom, through group pressure and traditional notions of masculine honour, temper the power men exercised over women in pre-colonial African societies.

The Transition to Capitalism

South Africa's transition to capitalism was initiated through military conquest. Within the space of a few short decades, social relations throughout the country were almost totally transformed. The watershed of this process was the opening up of the mines — first in Kimberley in 1870, then on the Witwatersrand in 1885. The mines irrevocably implanted the capitalist mode of production in our country, and, for the first time, in a form that would involve ever-growing numbers of the African people. They set in motion a veritable social revolution, affecting the three major sectors of the rural economy: (a) the African peasant sector, (b) the White commercial sector of agriculture, and (c) the pre-capitalist African traditional peasant sector.

The impact of colonialism on African agriculture could be described as both destructive and vitalising. Historically we have always emphasised the destructive aspect, both because it is more readily visible and because its impact was more thorough. After each war, land was seized from African possession and handed to White colonists. Its former occupants either had to seek work on the farms carved out of their former lands or were driven into over-congested areas still under African control. Needless to say, ecological problems, unknown in the traditional setting, now beset these agrarian communities — the land was over-utilised as bigger numbers of farmers tried to cultivate an ever-diminishing territory, the pasture was overgrazed as larger herds were squeezed on to a shrinking commonage. With the advance of colonial government into African-held lands came taxation, labour tributes and forced labour — all of them extorted with the threat of armed force. By these and other means the Africans were enmeshed in the web of the White-controlled colonial economy, while the economic base of traditional peasant agriculture was gradually undermined and ultimately destroyed.

There was, however, another facet to the impact of colonialism, which we wish to focus on here. From about the 1830s there were Africans in the Eastern Cape who were adopting agricultural techniques copied from the Europeans. Mission stations in the area helped popularise irrigation canals, the plough and the planting of orchards, so that by the third quarter of the century, there was already a substantial body of Africans who had successfully made the transition from traditional to modern methods of cultivation. From amongst these grew a landowning peasantry, which, in turn, became stratified into three different categories as some proved more successful than others. By the 1870s one could speak of a rich, a middle and a poor peasantry, all of whom were modernists.

The rich and middle peasants almost invariably were converts to Christianity who owned fertile farmland. Such a successful African farmer might branch out into other

fields of private enterprise such as transport driving, send his children to a boarding school to improve their chances in life, invest his savings in more plant and equipment, and was usually also a voter, taking a keen interest in the politics of the Cape parliament. The extent to which this stratum of African farmers had succeeded may be gauged from the comments of a traveller through the Eastern Cape in 1871:

"... taking everything into consideration, the native district of Peddie surpasses the European district of Albany in its productive powers." (3)

Another traveller wrote in 1880:

"... man for man the Kaffirs of these parts are better farmers than the Europeans; more careful of their stock, cultivating a larger area of land, and working themselves more assiduously." (4)

By the end of the 19th century it could be said that not only had a substantial number of Africans been drawn into the capitalist economy, but a large chunk of this number had successfully adapted to it. The traditional peasant was, in the meantime, marked out for extinction.

The commercial sector of agriculture was, from its beginnings, the domain of the land-grabbing White colonist farmer. In the Eastern Cape it had been practice to drive the Africans completely off the land. In the Boer republics the Voortrekkers sought to establish military control over the land, then force the traditional peasantry into some semi-feudal form of labour coercion.

The Bambata Rebellion

In Natal, the Whites grabbed the choicest portions of land, then allocated inadequate infertile portions to their African subjects, who would thus be forced by economic circumstances to seek work on the White farms. The Boers had a more direct means of securing their labourers. Periodically they launched punitive military expeditions against the in-

dependent African communities on their periphery, with the object of capturing 'apprentices' — in fact, slaves — who were then shared out among the Boer farmers.

In spite of its crass brutalities, the Voortrekker farming economy was grossly inefficient. Pressure from its interaction with merchants and the needs that arose in the context of the mining industry gradually affected change within it. As a rule the Voortrekkers did not allow Africans within their republics to own land, ride horses or purchase firearms. Tenant farming and various other forms of landlordism were, however, permissible. Boers slowly began to appreciate that these were less costly means of extracting the surplus product from the direct producers. The system was adopted also in the British colony of Natal, where, by 1874, it was estimated that five million acres of White-owned land was leased to African tenant farmers.

Tenant farming involved a semi-feudal relationship between the landlord and the peasant. In return for a piece of land on which to set up a home and cultivate, the peasant paid the landlord rent either in cash or labour time. By hard work and frugality, a number of peasants found it possible to pay their rent, pay their taxes and still have a marketable surplus. Those who were most successful in utilising the system even branched out into transport driving, trades and other forms of enterprise. In some areas peasants made such a success of tenancy that farmers preferred to lease out all their land rather than hire labour. By the 1880s they constituted the largest portion of the modern peasantry, which by its industry and initiative threatened to outstrip White landowners as competitors on the market place.

After 1880 there was a concerted effort made to separate the African peasantry from their land. The chief instigators of this were the mining interests, allied with White agriculture. Mining required a mass labour force, which could be only at the expense of the African peasant; White agriculture sought to crush a potential competitor while modernising its own methods of exploitation. The creation of the Chamber of Mines in 1890 gave the mining

TABLE 2

Distribution of Female Professional and Salaried Personnel by Race, 1970.
Based on Table 4, Ch. 31, South African Yearbook, 1975

	Whites	Africans	Col.	Asians
Ph. Scientists	230	0	0	0
Ph. Sc. Tech.	490	60	10	0
Architects	110	0	0	0
Engineers	60	0	0	0
Surveyors	0	0	0	0
Draughtsmen	860	0	0	0
Eng. Tech.	60	0	0	0
Aircraft/ship Officers	10	0	0	0
Life Sc.	270	0	0	0
Doctor/Dent. Veterinarians	870	20	40	60
Nurses/Midwives Aux. Nurses	25 070	25 780	5 640	860
Medic. Aux.	3 860	160	110	50
Accountants	120	0	0	0
Jurists	100	0	0	0
Teachers	33 730	26 880	8 870	1 910
Nuns	900	780	60	10
Other Prof.	9 920	840	420	50

interests the leverage they needed. As a well-organised and wealthy interest group, no government could ignore them. As fate would have it, the pressure from these two interest groups coincided with a Rinderpest epidemic in 1897, which killed off some 80% of African-owned cattle. Poverty drove thousands into the waiting arms of the labour recruiters.

A number of structural factors also conspired to render the African peasant easy prey for the mining interests. The completion of the railroads linking the Witwatersrand to the coast was a direct threat to the transport wagon operator. These railways also by-passed the areas where African peasants were concen-

trated, thus effectively shutting them off from the market. Imported US grain serviced the bakeries of Kimberley, while rich wheatlands in the Caledon valley went without a market. Peasant discontent erupted in the Poll Tax Rebellion of 1905-6, which was ruthlessly crushed by the Natal government. The yoke of the migrant labour system could now be firmly fastened on the neck of the African peasant. The male population was increasingly creamed off the land in the African rural areas, producing the cyclical effects associated with labour migrancy. The *coup de grace* was delivered with the passage of the Natives' Land Act of 1913. This put an end to the tenant

farmer and brought into being the tenant labourer. Simultaneously it had the effect of transforming the White landlord into a capitalist farmer. The transition to capitalism on the land was complete.

The mining industry was the catalysing agent in the entrenchment of capitalism in South Africa. It definitively shifted the country's economic centre of gravity from the rural areas to the towns, began the most dramatic demographic changes the country had ever experienced and laid the bases for the future development of heavy and secondary industry.

Its most profound effect, however, was the creation of an indigenous proletariat. The capitalist mode of production requires a 'free' labour force, 'free,' that is, from any other means of subsistence other than by the sale of its labour power. It was in order to create such a labour force that the colonial governments imposed onerous taxes on the African people, restricted or abolished our right to own land, and destroyed the political independence of African kingdoms. As the Simonses comment in their *Class and Colour in South Africa*:

"South Africa's industrial era was baptised in the blood and the subjugation of small nations."

It was also, specifically, in the mining industry that the racially exclusive character of South African capitalism has its source. By 1872 the White diggers at Kimberley had laid down that Africans and Coloureds should be excluded from the diamond fields unless they were in the employ of a white, that Africans be prohibited from owning and operating a mine, and that Africans be barred from owning or dealing in diamonds. When gold was discovered on the Rand these measures were exported lock, stock and barrel, to buttress the racist laws of the Kruger republic. These measures ensured that whatever shape it assumed, South African capitalism was to be for Whites only — the owners, controllers and manipulators of the system would be White — whether South African or from abroad. The place of Blacks in the system was as pre-defined labourers.

The establishment of the Chamber of Mines

in 1890 gave a uniform shape to the emergent capitalist order. Low wages, the compound system, the pass laws and the destruction of African rights became the basic features of the system. When the Act of Union was passed, all these were institutionalised as the means by which the ruling class secured the processes of capital accumulation and maintained control over the predominantly Black working class.

The Impact on African Women

The impact on African women of the developments recounted above was very far-reaching:

* As a modern African peasantry grew up, they relinquished the traditional division of labour. Men and the oxen they tended now took over the predominant role in tilling. The women in the modern peasant household became bound to the kitchen, and their role in production became marginal.

* As the African peasants, both traditional and modern, were drawn into the orbit of capitalism, cheap imported manufactures displaced the African crafts, especially wares produced by women — pots, mats, calabashes, etc — further reducing their economic role.

* Women were re-introduced into cultivation only when the migrant labour system was systematically taking men off the land. This occurred in a context of decay and rural decline characterised by droughts, livestock epidemics and falling production. By 1900 it was evident that most districts in the Transkei, for example, could no longer produce sufficient grain to feed themselves. This situation has steadily deteriorated during this century, so that one can no longer even speak of a subsistence economy in the reserves. Most families in the Bantustans today rely on the remittances of migrant labourers.

* The Land Act, the pass laws and the Urban Areas Act (with all its subsequent amendments) have confined African women to the rural areas, where they are either trapped in the poverty of a survival Bantustan economy or chained to the backbreaking toil of farm labour. The migrant labour system thus defines the special oppression suffered by the African

woman. It has firstly forced a substantial section of our women into a position of almost total economic dependence on their menfolk, and secondly, by its working, imprisons us in the lowest status work.

The so-called 'modernisation' of South Africa has, thus, had an enslaving effect on the African woman. This status has been institutionalised in the Natal Code and the Natives' Administration Act of 1927. In terms of the Natal Code, which is applicable to all African women resident in that province, African women are legal minors, under the guardianship either of their fathers, their husbands or their male relatives. Exemption from the provisions of the code is in the hands of the Native Commissioners.

The Natives' Administration Act of 1927 extended the provisions of the Natal Code to the other provinces. Section (b) reads:

"A Bantu woman who is a partner in a customary union and who is living with her husband shall be deemed to be a minor and her husband shall be deemed to be her guardian."

The rightlessness of the African woman is in large measure related to her economic marginalisation. It is to the role of African women in the economy that we must now turn.

Colour, Class and Gender

South Africa is a capitalist socio-economic formation, and, as in others of this type, political, economic and social power derives from the ownership and control of the main sectors of productive property. What distinguishes South African capitalism from all others is that there is an absolute legal bar against any Black person raising himself to such positions of power. In addition to being racist, South Africa is also a patriarchal society in which women are subordinated to men — by law, social custom and convention. Thus, when referring to stratification and the distribution of power in the society, we necessarily have to deal with three categories, those of colour (race), class and gender.

South Africa is marked by the low level of female participation in the economy outside the home. As compared with a country like Britain, where 50% of the adult female population is considered economically active (i.e. in gainful employment outside the home), the comparable figure for South Africa is 25%. The discrepancies are even greater when one examines the different sectors of the economy. Only approximately 4% of the African female population is involved in the industrial sector. The overwhelming majority of Black women are employed in agriculture and domestic service. In the industrial sector, they are invariably in areas supposedly related to 'women's domestic role' — in food processing, textiles, garment making. In the service sector they are overwhelmingly in catering and laundering.

African women began to arrive in the cities only after the droughts and livestock epidemics of the 1903-5 period. Economic imperatives forced growing numbers of women into the towns in search of a living. This pattern repeated itself after the agricultural depression of 1911; in the aftermath of the Land Act in 1913 — when whole African families were driven off the farms into the cities; during the Second World War there was another big urban migration, which continued into the 1950s.

Domestic work was the first area into which African working women entered. This was, firstly, because it was the one area where they encountered the least resistance, either from men or women of the other racial groups. Secondly, in the context of South Africa's racist society, every White family aspires to have a servant, hence there was an ever-growing demand. In Johannesburg and other centres the churches set up Native Girls' Industrial Schools, where girls were taught the rudiments of housekeeping. By the 1920s, African female domestic servants were becoming the norm on the Rand and other urban centres.

In contrast, the White women who came to the towns came as wives either of the *nouveau riche* capitalists or of working men. From 1902, a group of Empire Loyalists organised

the immigration of some 11 500 British domestic servants, as they saw it, to bolster the English element on the Rand. Most of these soon left domestic service to become wives to immigrant British workers, or found vocations as hoteliers or eating-house owners. It is only with the arrival of large numbers of South African-born White women in the cities in the 1920s, that one can speak of a female industrial working class.

The expansion of the South African manufacturing industry took place through windfalls and the misfortunes of international capitalism.

The first big leap was occasioned by the First World War, when South Africa was cut off from foreign imports, and local manufacturers got the chance to establish a market. The next growth spurt came about through the installation of the Nationalist-Labour Pact in 1924. The government of Hertzog was committed to industrial development; state funds set up ISCOR and ESCOM, tariff barriers protected local industry from outside competitors, and anti-working class legislation kept the lid on industrial relations. By the time Hertzog went into the coalition with Smuts, in 1935, there was already a substantial female working class, based mainly in manufacturing and in the services.

According to the 1936 census of the African population, there were 2 329 681 African women over the age of ten in the Union. Of this number, 1 919 319, or 82.4%, were gainfully employed, of whom 1 659 349, or 86.5% were engaged in agriculture. Of the total number of African women engaged in agriculture, 1 618 746 were classified as peasants.

Of the 1 919 319 in gainful employment, 12.7% were in domestic service. 82% of these domestic servants were under the age of 40.

In the industrial work force African women were distributed as follows:

Unskilled workers	2 609
Laundry workers	814
Dressmakers	221
Machinists	100
Potters	89

There were a total number of 4 335 African women classified as professionals, and of these 3 441 were teachers and 571 were nurses.

The tables give a general idea of trends in the female labour force between 1936 and 1970.

It is readily evident that there is a historical trend of growing female participation in the economy. This is however conditioned by the racist character of South African capitalism. Thus, during the period of rapid industrialisation, though employers sought women workers, they exercised racial selectivity. White women were the first to be drawn into the industrial work force in large numbers, then Coloured women; last were the African women. It was during and after the Second World War, when African urbanisation made a quantitative leap, that African women were brought into the factories in large numbers. Between 1951 and 1970, it is estimated that the African women industrial work force increased by 23%. Despite this growth, the African women still constitute a tiny minority of the industrial proletariat. As the figures indicate, the majority are confined to domestic and agricultural work. In the professions the African women are concentrated in two professions, teaching and nursing. The relatively low figures for White women in the higher professions is indicative of the sexual discrimination affecting women in general in the society.

When one therefore speaks of one out of every three African workers being a woman, we have to be clear exactly what we are referring to. Well-nigh 80% of these are domestics and farm workers. According to figures released recently, the same picture is beginning to apply to Coloured women in the Western Cape agricultural areas (*Die Burger*, 2nd February 1983, as quoted in the *ANC Newsbriefing* No 9, February 1983).

Domestic workers are directly employed by persons of their own gender, the proverbial 'White madams' of South Africa. Though one may speak of a cleavage between men and women in all patriarchal societies, in the South African context, this cleavage is clearly subordinate to a more fundamental cleavage between

White and Black, and the cleavage between employer and worker. The position of the majority of Black working women bears this out. In their day-to-day working lives they confront not men, but White women employers as the immediate and visible exploiter and oppressor. This experience must, therefore, necessarily inform any strategy for the emancipation of women in our country. In defining the decisive interests of women in our society, the yardstick must be the interests of the Black women.

Gender and Class

The over-arching importance of the national question should not, however, blind us to the class differences and conflicts which also affect relations within the Black communities. Such differentiation will assume greater importance in the context of the regime's 'total strategy,' which involves concessions — such as the 99-year lease and opening up of central trading areas — for the Black middle strata.

While it is perfectly clear that the aspiring Black bourgeoisie was smothered in the cradle with Land Acts, exclusion from the cities, and restrictions on its rights to trade, in the present climate the regime's policies are aimed at encouraging this stratum to perceive its sectional interests as separate from those of the rest of the community. Amongst the Asian community, where a visible and substantial class of merchant capitalists has emerged, though constrained by innumerable racist laws, it is evident that the property-owning layers have a keen sense of their particular interests.

Amongst the Africans the petit-bourgeoisie consists primarily of professionals, a handful of small property-owners, the commercial sector in the urban townships and the few African business executives who have appeared since the adoption of the Sullivan Code by imperialist investors. With the exception of the latter, the African petit-bourgeoisie operates almost completely within the African community. Confined to the poorest parts of town, threatened by the arbitrary powers that municipal, provincial and national state officials wield like a sword of Damocles over their heads, they are insecure in their careers

and pursuit of their business. African women of these layers, though they might be exempted from the more degrading aspect of 'Native Law' and African customs and traditions, are limited in their opportunities by their gender. In addition to restriction to one or two professions, they are invariably paid less than their male counterparts in the same jobs. Traditional attitudes also greatly influence the investment parents are prepared to make in the training of their daughters. After all, many parents assume, if she 'makes a good match' (that is, marries a well-to-do man) her future is secured.

The hold of traditional attitudes affects Asian women perhaps the most viciously, by discouraging their seeking work outside the home.

In spite of their small numbers, the petit bourgeois African women are the moulders of opinion and leaders of African women's community organisations. They have thus left their stamp on all of these; the counsel of moderation, the politics of indecision and conciliation, which mark these movements, derive from this influence. The role model for the petty bourgeois African woman is the White suburban woman, whose frivolities and foibles they emulate with an embarrassing mimicry. Specific individuals from these layers have, however, written many a glowing chapter in the history of the liberation movement.

The loyalties of the petit-bourgeois Black woman are today being assiduously solicited by every fraction of the White monopolists. Mrs Bridget Oppenheimer these days hosts teas to which she invites Black professional women and the wives of Soweto notables; the Mayor of Durban entertains the wives of the executive board of the African Chamber of Commerce; no western embassy function in Pretoria is considered complete without its token number of invited Black guests. Every effort is being bent to cultivate a collaborationist layer that will prove willing to deflect the radical demands of the masses. The temptations for the petit-bourgeoisie to pursue its own sectional aims are legion, especially when weighted against the prospect of a protracted liberation war



whose outcome, in their terms, is uncertain.

The African Working Women

Unlike the middle layers, the African working women have to spend most of their working lives interacting with the other racial communities. Such contact is in itself liberating and helps to forge new points of contact and mutual interests, as workers cross the boundaries of race. This was most vividly demonstrated during the strikes in Cape Town, where joint action did more to dissolve the hostilities that separated African and Coloured workers than thousands of propaganda tracts.

According to some estimates, 95% of the African women in the clothing industry are unionised. The Food and Canning Workers' Unions, historically containing a high percentage of women workers, are exemplary for their militancy and commitment to the liberation struggle. The discipline of the labour process, the importance of united action and the need for organisation, taught by the experience of the working class, have made the Black industrial working women a formidable force, despite their numbers. It is not surprising that the most outstanding women militants of our movement are drawn from their ranks.

The domestic workers, though comprising

a substantial majority of urban working women, are isolated from each other in their daily lives. Until recently it has proved rather difficult to organise them, for precisely this reason.

South African agricultural workers are the most exploited and most brutally oppressed layers of the entire Black population. They are also the most defenceless, because they are in the main untouched by political campaigns. Surveys undertaken in the past two years have brought into the public eye the scandalous conditions on the farms of the Transvaal, Natal, the Free State and the Cape. Conditions are so bad that even in areas of high unemployment, the jobless prefer the uncertainties of the dole queue and the humiliations of the pass office to work on the farms.

A researcher for the Catholic Bishops' Conference found that in the South-Eastern Transvaal farm workers were earning the paltry sum of R10.00 per month, plus a bag of mealie meal. Domestic workers in the farm homesteads were being paid R1.00 for three days of washing. Other investigators in 1982 found that it was not uncommon that farm workers were paid no cash wage whatsoever. Their hours of work, apparently regulated only by the rhythms of the sun, were sometimes as long as 17 hours a day. The housing provided was criminally inadequate, and child labour was legally permitted.

In areas of Natal, researchers found that the tenant labour system, though technically banned, was alive and well. Some 200 000 labour tenants are still being exploited in terms of labour contracts with White farmers. These entail the shockingly low wage of R5.00 per month paid to the family head, plus a bag of mealie meal. The adult sons of the tenants' family are paid half this sum plus a half bag of mealie meal. Wives, daughters and children under age are not paid a penny! During the six months of the year that the tenants are not required to work on the farm, they are allowed to enter the migrant labour market. Researchers found that it was remittances from migrants that in fact sustain the families of tenants throughout the year.

Labour Bureaux

The labour bureaux system, which empowers the regime to designate a worker as a farm labourer in perpetuity, is the chief means by which farm workers are chained to their jobs. Once a worker's pass has been endorsed to the effect that he is a farm worker, it is virtually impossible to transfer to some other category of work.

The peasant women of the reserves and Bantustans present the starkest picture of exploitation and degradation. Trapped in these hell-holes of poverty and economic backwardness, they are forced to live as widows, though they have husbands, are impressed into being mother and father to their families, and consequently can be neither. South African capitalism has assigned them the role of producing labour units. Whereas in the past it was supposed that the peasant woman supplemented the income of her migrant husband, it is clear that the total collapse of the Bantustan subsistence economies means that the majority of peasant women rely on cash sent home by migrant breadwinners. We must understand the 'illegal' urban migration of African women and their families in this context. The so-called 'squatter camps' at Crossroads, Unibell, etc, represent sites of heroic struggles by peasant women, who flatly refuse to be consigned to the darkness of the Bantustans, away from their husbands, away from life, deprived of even the common decencies of subsistence. They represent, on the one hand, the determination of the landless peasant to become part of the urban working class, and, on the other hand, the Canute-like insistence of the regime that they remain peasants.

In spite of their differing class situations, Black women in general share a number of disabilities peculiar to them as members of the oppressed nationalities and as a gender group. The interwoven steel net of colour and gender has to be seriously addressed in the definition of a strategy for women's emancipation. We need to focus on, and identify, a number of specifically feminine issues — the wrongs suffered by women — which will have to be redressed by the victorious liberation move-

ment. A number of these have already been formulated in the Women's Charter, which forms a sound basis on which we can begin to elaborate.

The Emancipation of Women and National Liberation

An unfortunate attitude has taken root in our movement against what people loosely term 'feminism,' and sometimes 'Women's Lib.' More often than not this attitude shields and is a convenient cover for traditionalist attitudes against the rights of women, and masks the fears and inadequacies of men who feel threatened by the loss of the power they at present exercise over women.

Traditionalist attitudes and opposition to 'feminism' in South Africa have in one sense acquired legitimacy because of the history of the White suffragette movement in our country. Historically, this movement has been linked to reactionary and racist causes, which have in a way tarnished the very issue of women's rights.

The first recorded incident where women demanded the right to vote occurred in Natal in 1843. A group of Voortrekker women, dedicated to the proposition that there 'shall be no equality between White and Black in the church or the state,' presented a petition to the British governor of Natal, demanding a full franchise for White women. The present-day Kappie Kommando draws its inspiration from such traditions.

Subsequent efforts to extend the vote to women were, so to speak, affected by this evil birth sign. White suffragettes and their champions almost invariably appealed to racist sentiment in presenting their case. Thus, J M Orpen, the member of the Cape Parliament for Wodehouse, in 1895, argued in support of his motion that the Franchise and Ballot Act include qualified women, that it was inconceivable that a respectable White woman could not vote, while her Black male servant could.

The South African Labour Party, which adopted women's suffrage as one of its planks, compensated for this apparent liberalism and

enlightenment with a viciously anti-African 'Native policy,' which included elements of what is now the Bantustan policy, job reservation and forced removals.

The Women's Enfranchisement Act, passed in May 1930, was intended by Hertzog to help dilute the weight of the Cape African and Coloured vote. Needless to say it applied exclusively to White women. These associations give unwarranted credence to anti-women traditionalist attitudes.

But the reactionary nature of White bourgeois feminism should not be allowed to detract from the sound principles of women's emancipation, any more than Botha's calling himself a 'nationalist' tarmishes the image of nationalism in general.

It is clear that there are a number of gender specific disabilities suffered by women. To point to these is no more divisive than recognising that national oppression affects the Black communities differently. Thus, no one can decry our emphasis on the Pass Laws, which are specific to Africans, as an issue around which the entire liberation movement should rally.

Black women, especially the African women, are the victims of threefold oppression. One dimension of this is the traditions and mores of their own communities. It is our fear of addressing these retrograde customs and traditions which lies at the root of people's opposition to the issues of women's emancipation. It is clear that this is a responsibility we can no longer shirk. Doubtless such an exercise will encounter resistance. But, as is the case with all new ideas, those who have been brought up with the old feel uncertain and threatened by this process. If these ideas have any value, they will in the end win converts and become generally accepted in our ranks. What is absolutely impermissible is that we censor or outlaw radical ideas merely because they cause some of us discomfort.

Within our Black communities, it is patriarchal attitudes and institutions that oppress and degrade our women. It is high time we had the courage to grasp the nettle and subject all these to withering criticism. The ones best suited to the task are the women from the communities in question.

The struggle for freedom is at base an act of refusal, the refusal to be submissive and to defer to those who exercise power, the refusal to bend the knee to the tyrant! By this very act of refusal the liberation fighter reclaims the humanity the oppressor seeks to strip her/him of. The wholeness Black women seek can be attained only by our throwing off the tattered garments of submissiveness and obedience to men. Only by asserting our rights as equal human beings will Black womanhood be able to make her own special contribution to the reclamation of our common humanity.

In conclusion I'd like to quote the words of Salvador Samayoa of the FMLN of El Salvador:

"It is a mistake or danger for the movement to begin to forge the new person, the new society at the point of taking power. This is not possible unless, during the process of the military-political struggle, the organisation's lifestyle involves new social relations."

The most basic social relationship is that between man and woman. This is the challenge that the Year of the Women presents to us.

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BISHOP TUTU: A PROFILE

It is said that Archbishop Trevor Huddleston once said: "The Church sleeps on, though sometimes it talks in its sleep." He was referring to the churches in South Africa in the 1950s. Today the situation has changed, and if there is one person who embodies that change in the attitude of the churches it is Bishop Desmond Tutu.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born on October 7th 1931 in Klerksdorp, a town seventy miles west of Johannesburg. His African name, 'Mpilo,' means 'health,' and his grandmother gave it to him because he was a delicate baby who was not expected to survive. "That was my first commitment to faith," says Bishop Tutu.

His father was a Methodist school teacher, teaching in a primary school. Desmond Tutu was educated at a Swedish Mission boarding school at Roodepoort, after which he attended a secondary school. When he was 12 the

family moved to Johannesburg, where his mother took a job as a cook in a school for the blind. He found himself surrounded by compassion and dedication. In 1945, at the age of 14, he contracted tuberculosis, and spent twenty months in a Sophiatown hospital run by the fathers of the Community of the Resurrection. It was here that he met the man who was to have the biggest single influence on his life, Father Trevor Huddleston, a parish priest in the Black ghetto of Sophiatown (now designated a 'white area' and renamed 'Triomf') whose magnetism and commitment made him the best known and (by Blacks) the best-loved church leader. The impact of Trevor Huddleston on Desmond Tutu can be seen in the fact that Desmond Tutu named his son Trevor in tribute to Huddleston. Archbishop Trevor Huddleston is now President of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement.

In 1950, after recovering from TB, Tutu

completed his studies and went on to a teacher training college in Pretoria, where he spent three years. He had originally wanted to become a doctor, and had gained a place at a medical college, but there was not enough money to pay the fees.

The next four years were spent teaching in Johannesburg and Krugersdorp, and during this period he married Leah, also a teacher, and a former pupil of his father. But when Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, introduced Bantu Education, Desmond Tutu decided to 'have no truck with it,' and subsequently decided to enter the ministry. The Church was his third choice as a career. In 1957 he was accepted by Bishop Ambrose Reeves (later to be President of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement), and was made a deacon in 1960. He worked in the Benoni district of Johannesburg, and was ordained in 1961.

In 1962 he went to England, and studied at King's College, London, where he remained till 1967, working in St Albans, and for the World Council of Churches. Back in South Africa, he worked in the diocese of Grahamstown, and from 1970 till 1974 he was a lecturer at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. He then spent another year in Britain, working in the diocese of Southwark. On his return to South Africa in 1975, he was appointed Dean of Johannesburg, the first Black man to be appointed to such a post in South Africa, and, following the Soweto uprising of 1976 he rose to prominence as a fighter against police brutality. In the same year, he was made Bishop of Lesotho, but he resigned this post one year later, in order to become the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC).

In 1979, Tutu made a European tour during which he called for a boycott of sales of South African coal. His passport was withdrawn in January 1980 as a result of this. He was arrested in May 1980, together with 53 marchers who were protesting against the arrest of the Reverend John Thorne, former General Secretary of the South African Council of

Churches. This incident caused Tutu to comment:

"No longer are we going to be churches that merely pass pious resolutions."

This explains why Bishop Tutu refuses to carry a pass, carrying instead some other form of identity such as a driving licence, or a passport, when it is not impounded!

He was given back his passport in January 1981, but not for long. In February and March 1981 he toured Europe and the USA, where he said that the South African regime was the most vicious regime since the Nazis. His passport again was confiscated — three months after he had received it.

This is not to suggest that Bishop Tutu makes these comments only when he is abroad. Even inside South Africa he is an outspoken critic of apartheid: *Crying in the Wilderness*, a collection of his speeches and statements, published in Britain, testifies to this. In the June 1984 issue of *Sechaba*, we published a transcript of the verbal reply made by Bishop Tutu to the findings of the Eloff Commission, which attempted to smear the SACC. In this reply, Tutu comes across as a deeply religious man, committed to non-violence, serious and courageous:

"Until my dying day I will continue to castigate apartheid as evil and immoral in an absolute sense, and I will burn my Bible, as I have promised before, and cease to be a Christian, if anyone can prove to me that I am wrong in my view about apartheid."

On the ANC he has this to say:

I have said before and I will say it again — I support the ANC wholeheartedly in its aim to work for a truly democratic and non-racial South Africa; but I do not support its methods. I have never hidden the fact that I meet with the leaders of the liberation movements when I go abroad. It is one of the first things I announce when I return to South Africa ...

"Whether the Government and Whites like it or not, I won't have the South African Government dictate to me who my friends are going to be."

Though Bishop Tutu disagrees with the ANC on the question of armed struggle, he is realistic and democratic enough to accept that there are people who think differently from him, and one notices a sense of pride in him for our guerrilla cadres:

"It will not do for Whites, nor for their government, to fulminate when I say that those they call terrorists are our brothers and sisters, our fathers and mothers, our sons and daughters. Nothing can change that biological fact. If my brother should commit murder, that will not alter the fact that he is my brother. White South Africans must know, whether they like it or not, that, just as much as they have their 'boys' on the border, so the Black community, too has their boys on the other side of the border. That is not sedition. That is not treachery. It is stating just a plain truth."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This is Bishop Tutu, the winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize for his role as a church leader and a man of peace. Bishop Tutu is the General Secretary of the SACC, which has 13 million non-Dutch Reformed Church Christian members, 80% of whom are Black. (The Dutch Reformed Church withdrew from the Council in 1978.) Like Chief Albert Lutuli, the then President-General of the ANC, who received the Nobel Peace Prize 23 years before he did, Bishop Tutu has a constituency amongst our people and is a voice which cannot be simply ignored. On a personal level, he is jolly and humorous, without malice and vindictiveness, a father and a loving husband. The Reverend Jesse Jackson, the Black American civil rights activist, hit the nail on the head when he said the award has put racist South Africa and its policies in the world spotlight.

ANC STATEMENT ON TUTU AWARD

The ANC made the following comment on the news that Bishop Tutu had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1984:

The African National Congress has learned with profound joy of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1984 to Bishop Desmond Tutu, Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches.

This illustrious tribute to the personal bravery and unstinting sacrifice made by Bishop Tutu in the interests of a free and democratic South Africa, free of racial hatred and oppression, is at the same time unequivocal recognition of the maturity, perseverance and humaneness shown by our people in the face of extreme provocation and brutal repression from the ruling clique in South Africa...

The ANC and the people of South Africa, whilst rejoicing at the award, call upon the international community to logically complement this award with the imposition of comprehensive sanctions and the complete isolation of the racist Pretoria regime. This is the behest of Albert Luthuli and Desmond Tutu.

We reiterate the call of our people to the international community to enhance, through sanctions, immediately and effectively, the capacity of the democratic movement in South Africa to uproot and destroy this evil system and establish a free, democratic and peaceful South Africa, based on the full recognition of the fundamental rights of all its citizens.

TWO ANTI-IMPERIALISTS HONOUR NELSON MANDELA

The German Democratic Republic has awarded Nelson Mandela the 'Star of International Friendship' in gold, on the occasion of his 65th birthday, which took place last year.

The award was handed over to Comrade President O R Tambo by Erich Honecker, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, and Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). The ceremony was held in Berlin, in the house of the Central Committee, on 27th August 1984.

The GDR state leader reiterated the call for the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners incarcerated in South Africa's dungeons. He submitted comradely greetings to all South African patriots who are determinedly waging a courageous struggle against the obnoxious apartheid regime.

President Oliver Tambo, receiving the award on behalf of Nelson Mandela, expressed deep gratitude to the GDR for its active solidarity with the just struggle of our people against apartheid, and underlined that this high award will for ever remain a great encouragement for Nelson Mandela and all other imprisoned patriots of South Africa.

The awarding ceremony was the highlight of the meeting between President Tambo and Erich Honecker, a meeting that was held in an atmosphere of friendship and cordiality.

Erich Honecker informed the ANC leader about the active efforts of Party and government of the GDR, together with the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries, to solve the most important problems of the present time — to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war and to secure peace in the world. The GDR leader assured our President of the continued support and solidarity of the GDR with the people of South Africa under the tested leadership of the African National Congress.

President Tambo briefed Erich Honecker about the growing militancy of the oppressed South African people, which manifests itself in numerous mass activities against the so-called constitutional reforms of the Botha regime and its hated Bantustan policy, about the growing African trade union movement, and the effective strikes taking place throughout the country. The President stressed that the racist regime has not abandoned its anti-human and war-mongering aims inside the country and against the neighbouring states in the region.

Erich Honecker and Oliver Tambo strongly condemned the policy of confrontation and rearmament of the most reactionary forces of imperialism, which is dangerous, not only for the peoples of Europe but for the whole of mankind. They confirmed the traditional, close relationship existing between the SED and the

ANC in their common anti-imperialist struggle to maintain peace against colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and apartheid.

They both stressed the importance of the efforts of the Front-Line States and the liberation movements in Southern Africa to strengthen their unity and co-ordinate their struggle against the apartheid regime so as to defend the interests of the peoples and states in the region. They expressed their conviction

that the international struggle against the apartheid regime and the world-wide solidarity with the liberation movements of ANC and SWAPO will further increase.

President Tambo conveyed best wishes to the Central Committee, to the government of the GDR and to its people, for further big successes in the construction of socialism and the excellent preparation for the 35th anniversary of the founding of the GDR.

INTERNATIONAL

RELEASE MANDELA WORLD CAMPAIGN

Half a million signatures to the international petition for the release of Nelson Mandela were presented to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 11th October, the United Nations Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners. The signatures - the first batch - were taken to New York by Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, President of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, and Christopher Child, a member of the Executive Committee of the AAM.

The petition was part of a campaign for the release of Mandela launched two years ago by Archbishop Huddleston.

Countries where it was circulated included Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bermuda,

Bulgaria, Canada, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Guyana, Iceland, India, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Lesotho, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, St Lucia, Sweden, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, USSR, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In New York, Archbishop Huddleston consulted with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid and others, on the further development of the campaign. He also addressed a press conference.

SOLIDARITY IN THE US

In September, the US Congress unanimously passed four resolutions concerning South



A schoolgirl in the city of Sverdlovsk in the USSR signs the world-wide petition for the release of Nelson Mandela.

Africa, one of them calling for the release of Nelson Mandela. The others called for the release of all detainees held in the Mariental detention camp in Namibia, condemned the forced removal policy of the Pretoria regime, and condemned the arrest in South Africa of some 200 leaders and activists in the election boycott movement.

SOLIDARITY IN ETHIOPIA

A mass gathering in solidarity with South African and Namibian Women was held in Addis Ababa on 26th August (writes the ANC Department of Information and Publicity unit in Ethiopia). It was organised by the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association (REWA) and the Ethiopian Peace, Solidarity and Friendship Committee, together with the ANC Mission to Ethiopia. Present at the gathering were ambassadors, representatives of international organisations and mass organisations, and other invited guests.

The ANC Chief Representative to Socialist Ethiopia, Comrade Zola S T Skweyiya, stressed that the ANC had decided to proclaim the

year 1984 as the Year of the Women in recognition of the fact that the women's struggle in South Africa is closely interlinked with the struggle for national and social liberation.

Comrade Asegedech Bizuneh of REWA, in the chair, reiterated the unstinted support of Ethiopian women to their struggling sisters in South Africa.

There was a cultural performance by ANC Youth and Students in Addis Ababa, and a showing of the film, *You Have Struck a Rock*.

IRISH ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

At its 20th Annual General Meeting, held in September, the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement congratulated the ANC on declaring 1984 the Year of the Women. It condemned the violence of the apartheid regime, the harassment of women leaders in South Africa, and the "genocidal policy of bantustanisation which particularly affects women."

It called on all Irish women's organisations to join the international campaign of solidarity with the women of South Africa and Namibia.

SOUTH AFRICAN MINE WORKERS: THEIR CONDITIONS AND RIGHTS

The main cause of recent anger and unrest on South Africa's mines is the complete failure of the Wiehahn Commission to defuse a situation brought about by the Black mineworkers' rejection of discriminatory wages, appalling safety regulations and the generally inhuman conditions under which they are forced to work. There is and can be no peace on the mines as long as the mine bosses and the regime do not accept and listen to the demands of even legally constituted unions. The deaths of seven miners, the militancy of the miners, and hundreds of injuries caused by police action testify to this.

As the NUM has grown in strength its leaders seek its full participation in striving for trade union unity. The President, Cyril Ramaphosa, spelt out that the Black union movement has a decisive role to play in the liberation struggle, which calls for unity of all the oppressed. He stressed that, despite the Wiehahn recommendations of 1981, 'job reservation' was still a major factor in entrenching cheap Black labour. Although, as the report recommended, Black workers were now doing scheduled work by exemption (or partial exemption) they were still being paid

less than their White counterparts, despite the efforts of the NUM to change this.

In January this year the NUM won a major victory by signing three further recognition agreements with mining companies, bringing the total number of agreements signed to 14. The latest agreements provided representation for the previously ununionised mine hospital workers, and Ramaphosa stated that the union was also negotiating paternity leave provisions for most migrant workers.

At the end of January, 450 workers struck at the Union Carbide vanadium mine at Brits inside BophuthaTswana, after the company refused to recognise the NUM. This followed a directive by the BophuthaTswana 'government' to companies operating in the Bantustan, not to deal with unions based outside it. The NUM, which, like all progressive unions, does not recognise the Bantustans or their 'governments,' planned action against the BophuthaTswana 'government' and Union Carbide in the courts, as South African Industrial Council legislation still operates there. However, Bophuthatswana intends to introduce legislation outlawing unions based outside the territory.

January also saw 1 000 NUM members fired at Impala Platinum Refinery for striking in support of a demand that seven workers be reinstated. The seven workers were dismissed after refusing to work, following assault and verbal abuse by their White supervisors. NUM workers were also involved in a strike at Rietspruit coal mine near Witbank, sparked off by 'disciplinary action' against a worker. The worker had participated in a stoppage at the mine following the death of two workers.

Towards the end of February ten workers were killed and hundreds of thousands of rands' worth of damage was caused when workers rioted at Anglo American's Geduld gold mine near Welkom in the OFS. An NUM spokesman said that the workers took the action because of the death of a mineworker the previous week at the hands of mine security officials. The police confirmed that four men had been arrested and charged with 'public violence.'

Towards the end of March the Chamber of Mines held discussions on the implementation of the Wiehahn Commissions' recommendations for scrapping job reservation. NUM President Cyril Ramaphosa was not invited, and he stated that in consequence the NUM would not participate in the proposed Industrial Council for the industry unless job reservation was completely scrapped. He accused the Chamber of Mines of trying to pretend that all was well in the industry.

At the end of May the NUM put in a wage demand of 60% for its unskilled members, 40% for semi-skilled members and 30% for monthly paid members. This was followed by an offer from the Chamber of Mines of 8% for all workers. At a follow-up meeting the NUM reduced its demand to 25% and stated that it did not have a mandate to reduce the demand any further. The Chamber of Mines put forward an offer of between 9.5% and 10.9%, suggesting that this could be improved 'a bit' if the NUM got a mandate to negotiate further.

Ramaphosa then indicated that a special NUM national conference would be called to discuss planned action by the Union. The Chamber of Mines, he said, was offering a

smaller increase than that for 1983, and this was clearly unacceptable. The conference would be the implementation of a resolution adopted at the Second National Conference of the NUM in December 1983, where it was decided that negotiations should take place in May of each year and be concluded by June 1st, giving miners a month to consider action before their traditional increase date of July 1st. In 1983 the Chamber of Mines had used the 'time factor' to force the NUM into accepting the wage agreement, refusing to re-negotiate.

Ramaphosa also accused the bosses of holding on to cheques and membership lists they were meant to forward to the NUM.

These disputes and work stoppages continued up to the time of writing. They took place at various mines at Goedehoop and Kriel collieries in the Eastern Transvaal, at Rand Mines' Douglas Colliery near Witbank, at Rietspruit and DUVHA at Vryheid Coal and Rail Company. At Durban Deep, miners clashed with police, resulting in 111 injuries. The strike was over pay and in solidarity with the NUM. Over 8 000 miners came out. Police injured 250 striking miners at Anglo's Wester Holdings Division, Welkom Division and President Brand.

Confusion over the settlement means that over 36 000 miners were still on strike. At the same time that the settlement was being announced, police attacked picketing miners at Western Areas, killing seven and injuring 89.

Space does not allow us to enumerate all the heroic struggles by the miners. But we shall generalise as follows.

Significantly, the miners' action has taken place in the context of the continuing uprisings which have rocked South Africa over the past months, forcing the regime to abandon its facade of 'reform' and resort to repression, declaring a virtual state of emergency in order to install its 'new deal.'

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

The utterances of the regime and the

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

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

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

the consent, monitoring and directorship of the management.

* There must be one democratic union on the mines, run by the miners for the miners, and not by and for management.

* The union must be run in the compound, not by the clerical employers or any other similar petty bourgeoisie.

* Organisation must involve all national ethnic groups, and destroy the tribal system of the alliance between regime and bosses.

* The union must protect the workers' health and safety, and enforce these as a right and not as a privilege.

* The majority demands of the underground workers must have priority over other sectional self-interests if workers' power is to return.

* Workers must have their own shop stewards, elected by them and acting according to their demands, not shop stewards imposed by the bosses.

* The existing system of liaison committees must be rejected and destroyed, and replaced by the union.

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

There is nothing to suggest that the apartheid regime, mine management and international investment will ever tolerate a strong, progressive Black miners' union. It is a mistake to act on this basis. The underground work of SACTU enables the organising of workers on the mines where access to workers by legally operating trade unions is usually denied. In doing this, SACTU sows the seed for the formation of a strong miners' union to emerge with a seasoned leadership in struggle and organisation.

An injury to one is an injury to all!



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Comrade,

When I first read the article on the issue of the terminology, "so-called Coloured," in *Sechaba*, I said to myself that this is one subject which does not deserve any space in this journal. I said this not because I think that we have completely gone over such trivialities, but because I thought we have, over the years, at least here in exile, almost completely buried most of those hang-overs and divisive labels. I have, of course, followed with much interest all other responses (or, may I say, opinions) expressed on this issue. Much as I have pondered over it, I still find it extremely difficult to justify what really could have provoked it.

If anything, this issue is, to my mind, not just trivial and divisive but pervasive with immeasurable political uncertainty, while at the same time I am afraid it is dangerously playing into the hands of both our political foes and the racists themselves. What makes me even more wary about this issue is that it is likely to undo what the forefathers of the liberation movement, and just recently the Congress Alliance, laboriously endeavoured to knock together.

The question, 'was Paul Peter son a so-called Coloured?' can equally be asked of other comrades such as Peter Tladi, Benson Tsele,

George Motusi, who, together with Comrade Paul Peterson, went into the battlefield to liberate our motherland and not so-called territories, provinces, regions or districts within South Africa.

Now that the issue is apparently open for discussion I would like to take it further than just derogative terminology and probe deeper into what one writer calls a definition of a nation, as:

"... a historically formed community of people, distinguished first of all by common material conditions of life, territory, economic life, community of language, psychological make-up and also certain traits of national character, manifest in the national specifics of its culture."

Given this definition, therefore, it becomes glaringly obvious that we do not constitute what can philosophically be called a nation, just as we exist and struggle for that eventuality, albeit in a loose kind of Congress Alliance, each Congress retaining its identity.

Now the beginning and our ultimate identification as an indivisible entity striving to reach and achieve our ultimate goal and dignity as a South African nation should not be subject to or be measured by what the oppressor elects to call and identify us as, but by what we are and by what is called a sense of belonging. Whilst it is true that the majority of Black South Africans are the most brutally oppressed and exploited by the White racist minority as compared to both Indian and Coloured communities, that is just a degree, and the most effective method of the divide and rule policy of apartheid. That the Black African majority receive the severest blows of racist exploitation and humiliation does not make them belong either more or less than any other section of the exploited and harassed masses of South Africa. South Africa could have been some other country were she not located at the southernmost tip of Africa and without the different national groups, which groups the Freedom Charter clearly states belong to it.

I should think rather than sit and try and improve on the dehumanising dictionary of the

racists we should use that time to remind ourselves of, and reviving the spirit of, the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Joint Declaration of Co-operation of the 1940s, the Congress Alliance of the 1950s, the Morogoro Conference and its offspring, the Revolutionary Council of the 1960s, not to mention the united mass activities of the 1970s and of course the unity in action of this decade. All these decades demonstrate, more than anything else, a total rejection of how the racists would like to portray us — the non-existent kaffir, Hotnot, Coolie — people who belong nowhere.

In order to revive and keep alive the spirit of the past decades it will of course be necessary for us to look at our structures as they stand at present. Do our structures as a liberation movement clearly demonstrate what

we stand for, a people bent on destroying all discriminatory barriers? Is it still necessary for the signatories of the Congress Alliance to retain their identity? Are there any efforts towards opening up for all national groups to be elected or co-opted into the higher decision-making bodies of the Congress?

Let time and space not be a convenient excuse for setting in motion those parts of the Freedom Charter that can be easily applied here in exile. Let preferences of being called Coloured, Indian, African, over 'so-called' not linger on us. Rather let the spirit of a new South African nation prevail over all such preferences.

Yours,
Silver.

Dear Comrade,

I have been following with great interest the debate in *Sechaba* as well as in the *African Communist* recently on the question of whether or not it is correct to prefix the word 'Coloured' with 'so-called' as has become common among some people in South Africa and also among some of us in the African National Congress here abroad.

South African people in general, and the liberation movement in particular, are not strangers to the debate about terms of identity. There is an old debate about the terms, 'Bantu' and 'Native' and so on, as references to the African nationality. These terms were being rejected in preference for 'African' because they were derogatory. Few people today refer to the Africans as 'Bantus' except for a few racists — strange enough, even the racist government no longer refers to us as this; they call their law "The Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill." The oppressed nationalities in South Africa refer to themselves as 'Blacks.' This clearly indicates that certain terms are rejected by the people in their struggle for self-identity, an aspect that is inherent in the struggle for liberation and

self-determination. No one wants to be called a 'Coolie' or 'Hotnot;' during the old SASO days when we were still students in South Africa, we argued that we reject the term 'non-White' because of its negative and derogatory essence ... we reasoned that if someone is not James one cannot then be called 'non-James;' one is either Vusi, Sibongile or Themba. To repeat, this struggle for self-identity is part and parcel of our rebellion against oppression and colonialism, we want to define ourselves, and not by others.

But not all rejections of old terms of reference have been of popular origin ... debates about terms of reference should be assessed from the standpoint of the popular masses and not merely cliques (no matter how eloquent they may be) and also from the standpoint of the historical background of the term and debate. At times, before we jump into any fashionable phrase or slogan, one must know what certain political forces hope to gain by advancing certain terms or slogans — or, maybe, by failing to advance certain terms or slogans.

The hair type of Indians, the skin colour of Africans or any other racial characteristic does

not have in itself the reason for the unequal level of social, economic and cultural development of people of different races in South Africa. History, and not nature, is responsible for this inequality. To advocate that the solution of racial inequality is in the mere rejection of the 'concept of race,' or, for that matter, the prefixing of racial terms of reference with 'so-called' and so forth, is a shallow suggestion that assumes that it is either nature or mere terms themselves that are behind racism and inequality.

It is true, of course, that there may be no pure races in the world. A process of race mixture was engendered long ago by migrations, mestizations and so forth. Moreover, the absence of 'pure' races does not mean that there are no races. Moreover, our problem is not the presence or absence of races but the presence of racialism. Races were there long before racialism.

The question of race, in the political sphere, is significant to us insofar as we advocate for racial equality, racial unity and the rejection of all manifestations of racialism. As historical realists, we do not solve the problems of racial inequality by a nihilistic denial of the existence of races, or calling races 'so-called,' etc. We are faced with material inequality here, whether such groups are pure races or not, whether they are called this or that. Biological and anthropological concepts have relevance to this question in the negation of the pseudo-scientific theories that seek to link race with ability.

Comrade Alex La Guma has every reason to continue singing with his group, "We, the Coloured people, we must struggle to exist ..." as they used to on the occasion of the adoption of the Freedom Charter at the Congress of the People. The Coloured nationality of our country (in other countries they are called *mulattoes*) has no reason to be ashamed of their race, no matter how many Boer soldiers at Cape Town station shout, "Hey, jou klein Capie, waar's jou suster? Ek wil 'n meid naai!" It is these racists and not the insulted Coloured people that must be changed. The Coloured nationality or national group in our country has

a proud history of struggle and continue to have a revolutionary role in our democratic revolution.

To suggest that people need only call themselves 'South African' is to ignore the reality that South Africans are composed of Indians, Coloureds, and even, for that matter, Zulus, Xhosas, Sothos, etc. Our democratic Republic will definitely develop the positive aspects of my Zulu culture, language, and so on, so that I, together with those of my ethnic group, can contribute a cultural flower to the banquet of South African culture. In the Soviet Union, dancers from the Ukraine sing in their native language in glory of the socialist culture that exists in the Soviet Union.

The Coloured people in the Western Cape of our country will have a right, in a democratic South Africa, to demand that an Afrikaans newspaper be printed for them, that their courts should conduct the legal proceedings in their own language, in the same way that a Xhosa worker in King Williamstown will speak his beautiful language in court, church or municipal council.

Such is democracy, comrades!

Mzala

Editor's Note:

With these two letters (or rather one letter and extracts from another) we end our debate on the terms, 'Coloured' and 'so-called Coloured.' This by no means indicates that the debate should not continue, more so that the contributors seem to be divided on this issue. We shall therefore direct all further correspondence on this question to the relevant department.

The editor wishes to thank all those who contributed to the debate; a thought-provoking debate which proved to be more than just an 'exercise in democracy,' but a dress rehearsal for the oncoming battles! The contributions have shown one thing — that the debate cannot be exhausted in the pages of *Sechaba* or any other journal for that matter.

Soul- searching at Wits

Bozzoli, B. (ed.): *History Workshop 2 — Town and Countryside in the Transvaal, Capitalist Production and Popular Response*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1983, £12.95.

Hindson, D C, (ed.): *Working Papers in South African Studies Vol III*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1983, £7.95.

The escalation of our struggle in the 1970s, which expressed itself in the 1976 Soweto uprising and the consequent mass demonstrations, school boycotts, armed struggle etc, have affected every aspect of South African reality, including academic research and intellectual life. These two books, which are a collection and compilation of diverse academic papers, are a reflection of this process. To avoid confusion we shall call them *History Workshop* and *Working Papers* respectively.

The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) — in fairness to the other White universities

and campuses it must be stated that it is not the only one — has been undertaking some interesting research, which at times takes the form of soul-searching. In 1978 and 1981, two history workshops were organised at Wits. In the first workshop the main focus was on the Witwatersrand, and the second — which is under review — dealt with the Transvaal as a whole, hence the title: *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal*. It should be remembered that the Wits African Studies Institute:

"has a well-established Oral Documentation Project in which the testimonies of rural Africans are being recorded, and where numerous other interviews are also lodged. The South African Institute of Race Relations has also recently begun a similar project. Some of the fruits of the ASI programme are already evident in this book." (*History Workshop*, p.43.)

The History Workshop was originally conceived as a "local version of the "History Workshop" first based in Ruskin College, Oxford, but now a national movement ..." in Britain. (p.43)

In the Introduction to the *History Workshop*, Bozzoli tells us:

"The word "history" to most who have been through the South African school system (whether privileged whites or Bantu-educated Blacks) conjures up images of great men, abstracted dates, lists of "causes" and endless replays of the Great Trek. To those who have any access to alternative historical accounts, the capitalised "History" connotes the distorted and one-sided version of our past which Christian National Education has imposed upon us, with its teleological view of the unfolding of the *volk*, its objectification of Blacks, and its implicit or explicit racism. To those who have escaped these twin evils of boredom and indoctrination, "history" may signify the more measured tones of the liberal historiography prevalent in English-speaking universities, with its powerful critique of racism and tyranny, and its

scholarly rigour. But pervading many parts of our culture is a deep distrust of, and disdain for, depictions of the past. Perhaps the overt manipulation of history-writing and teaching by our rulers has bred this sense of disdain; even liberal historiography, although less overt in its intentions, implies a "ruling class" perspective, with its tendency to focus on rulers, governments, power, policy and politics." (p.1-2)

She goes on to discuss questions related to the "new school" of "radical historiography (which) has over the past decade made some inroads into the cultural philistinism which prevails." (p. 2) We shall deal with this "new school" later.

The second book is a collection of papers that were presented to the African Studies Seminar of the African Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand between May 1980 and September 1981. With one exception they "all are 'working papers,' namely early formulations of new scholarly work."

In the Introduction to *Working Papers* one reads:

"... studies of Southern Africa during the 1970s were dominated by questions and concerns thrown up by the debate between "liberal" and "revisionist" scholars. One of the central questions on which liberal-revisionist controversy focused was to do with the relationship between capitalist development and the state. Much of this research was undertaken in order to try to understand to what extent racial state policies inhibit or foster the process of economic expansion. "Liberal" protagonists generally supported the former, and "revisionists" the latter interpretation of the effects of racial policy. With revisionist interpretations of the relationship between Cape policy and administration and capitalist interests, in the late nineteenth century, all the authors who contribute to this volume attempt to break with the terms of this debate.

"There is no single dominant question underlying the papers, but all, bar one, deal with the issue of class conflict — its sources, nature and outcome. Several of the authors expressly address the issue of the impact of the struggle of

dominated classes on authoritarian state policies and structures and, in this respect, depart radically from liberal and revisionist works, which previously tended to avoid this question."

"The change of focus reflected in this collection is clearly an outcome of the escalating social conflict in Southern Africa in general during the 1970s; and in South Africa in particular since the widespread urban upheaval symbolised by Soweto in 1976."

The two books deal with diverse political, economic, cultural and social themes such as *The 1913 Natives' Land Act in the Highveld Maize Belt*; *Capitalist Development and Response to the ICU in the Transvaal Countryside*; *Slumyard Culture in Johannesburg 1918-1940*; *Introduction to the History of Football in South Africa*; *Indian Flower Sellers of Johannesburg*; *Indian Passive Resistance in the Transvaal, 1906-1908*; *From Refuge to Resistance: Botshabelo, Mafolofolo and Johannes Dinkwanyane*; *Cape Liberalism in its Terminal Phase*; *the South African State and the Resolution of the African Urban Housing Crisis, 1948-1952*; *Political Implications of Industrial Unrest*, etc etc.

The authors include Belinda Bozzoli, Modikwe Dikobe, Molete Nkadimeng, Tim Couzens, Ruth Tomaselli, Maureen Tayal, Fred Cooper, Phyllis Lewson, Peter Wilkinson, Eddie Webster, etc etc.

Some of these authors have interesting things to say. Julia Wells, for instance, in her article on: *The Day the Town Stood Still: Women in Resistance in Potchefstroom 1912-1930* makes the point:

"A good deal of South African social and labour history has focused on the ways in which migrant labour has served industry and the mines. The nature of the demand for this labour makes it a virtually sex-exclusive phenomenon. It is males who are wanted and who are the migrants. Thus the focus only on wage labour as the measure of the degree of proletarianisation of the peasants, is in itself a sex-exclusive concern which prevails in much of South African historiography at least until recently."

(*History Workshop*, p. 269)

This is a point we need to pay special attention to, especially in this Year of the Women.

One would agree with Tom Lodge in his article on *The Destruction of Sophiatown*, when he argues:

"In the historiography of Black South African resistance the role of criminal gangs has been largely ignored. This is due to the traditional focus on institutionalised forms of opposition and also the ostensibly apolitical character of gangsterism. Recently, historians, concerned with the documentation of informal manifestations of class consciousness, have begun to pay attention to criminality." (*History Workshop*, p. 348)

He does admit that these gang regiments, the "lumpenproletarian army at war against privilege," which were largely based in Sophiatown, "the centre of gangland activity and the incubator of more gangs than any other single township or location," were unreliable: during the 1957 Bus Boycott these gangs "would take PUTCO's money and ride the buses in the evenings wearing woollen balaclavas, and be the first to turn up the next morning to add their weight to the boycotters' picket at the bus terminal." (p.351) These gangs gave themselves all sorts of names: Russians, Gestapo, Berliners, Americans, Vultures, etc.

Lodge maintains:

"Though it would be an exaggeration to assert that the working class community saw gangs as fighters for social justice, nevertheless it was popularly believed that gangs 'seldom harm ordinary folk.' Most of their non-interneecine violence was directed at universally disliked people: the more prosperous traders, the South African Police and the Municipal 'Black jacks.' Gangsterism could not right wrongs nor remedy injustice. But it could provide a sense of identity for the gangsters, and more vicariously a heroic mythology for the community from which it had sprung. Like social bandits, the gangsters were constrained by their individualism, their limited social vision, and their lack of ideology." (p.350)

Although one cannot but agree with the above remarks, Lodge's assertion that Robert Resha "was one of the first Congress politicians to try and bring gangs into the political arena," (p.356) "his reputation for toughness extended even to the gangsters of Sophiatown;" and Berliners made efforts "to influence Congress in favour of violent confrontation" underplays the internal dynamic within the ANC and minimises the role played by the Youth League in Sophiatown. It was the politics of the ANC that attracted the Berliners and not Resha's "toughness," though one has not to ignore the important role played by Resha and others in Sophiatown. Here it is a question of putting into proper perspective the role of the individual in history.

This brings me to the "new school of radical historiography" mentioned earlier in this review. Bozzoli explains:

"We have moved from the "Townships" to "Town and Countryside." This regional focus is not born of parochial concerns but has an important basis in theory. On the basis of local studies, we have begun to move towards a situation where we can identify certain peculiarities of class structure, struggle and consciousness in this region: to know some of the reasons, for example, why black resistance on the Rand takes particular forms (stay aways, popular uprising and a growing trade unionism) rather than others, which may characterise the Cape (squattening, boycottism, Trotskyism) or Natal (mass strikes, 'Zulu' nationalism)." (*History Workshop* p.35)

Bozzoli talks of the "unique and stifled intellectual milieu of South Africa today" and advocates a "challenge to the rejection of the past, so prevalent in the culture at large." The "new historiography," we are told, seeks to expose, through a re-examination of the past, the roots of the recent system of exploitation and oppression; to sketch out the "hitherto uncharted path of the development of a capitalist system of production; to make links between its economic and its wider social, political and cultural effects." There is also an awareness

that the origins of particular classes have to be investigated and the interactions between classes have to be traced over time.

The first History Workshop sought to "decolonise history;" a task which needed a new approach to history and research, and posed a challenge to "ruling conventional wisdoms." There was also noticeable a shift in emphasis and priorities which expressed itself as a focus on the lives of ordinary people, rather than on "great men and women," or abstracted structures and concepts. This "alternative history" makes use of oral and other sources not normally developed by conventional historians, and benefits by drawing from and engaging with other disciplines — in short an interdisciplinary approach which rejects the confinement of disciplinary boundaries.

In other words what is called "new historiography" or "alternative history" is a search for a new methodological approach to our history, and this inevitably leads to questions connected with a relevant theory of history.

There seem to be two problems in this regard. The first is the fact that:

"the dominant philistinism and anti-historical character of the culture has affected the left (by which she means 'left' academics at universities — FM) as much as the mainstream. The search for immediate relevance in every intellectual enterprise has led too many aspiring radicals into undertaking quick but perhaps sometimes shallow examinations of current issues rather than the slower, more painful, historically based analyses of major processes of class formation, struggle and interaction. This is not to imply that current issues are not worth studying. It is simply that our knowledge of the major outlines of the development of our society is still so weak that placing those current issues in any sort of historical and structural context remains, and will remain, immensely difficult in the absence of longer-term, more ambitious, and perhaps less instantly gratify-

ing work." (p.2)

The second reason, we are told, is the "strong hold over radical scholarship in this country of an Althusserian and/or structuralist method of analysis, at least until recently."

The second reason perhaps explains why Bozzoli is against what she calls "the anti-historical bias of structuralist Marxism," (p.3) "orthodox Marxism," (p.7) "remote and unappealing Marxism," (p.33) and "a cer- some of them probably among the witnesses circles." (p.35)

The implication here is clear: there are different kinds of Marxism — the 'creative' and the 'dogmatic' and this explains why many of the authors in these two books derive their inspiration from Althusser, Gramsci, Poulantzas, etc.

One of the glaring omissions in this envisaged "alternative history" is the analysis of the brutal national oppression and national degradation of the oppressed Black majority. In a slightly different context, Alf Stadler was hinting at this problem in his article on *The Politics of Subsistence: Community Struggles in War-Time Johannesburg*, when he wrote:

"Firstly we should remember that there is a limit to state repression. Where that limit is drawn depends on a number of factors. In a situation where the poor have evolved out of a conquered people, these limits are likely to be very high. Myths of racial superiority are used to justify repression on a scale inconceivable in societies in which legitimising myths assert that some kind of consent provides the basis for its institutions. In societies based on colonial conquest and domination the limit to repression is likely to be drawn at a point dictated by its disutility to dominant interests rather than by the assumption that government is based on consent, or when underclasses can provide some base for a strategic alliance for groups on the dominant classes.

"Secondly, colonial conquest historically provided the base from which industrial capital recruits its labour force, the conception of disutility is likely to be linked with

the bare survival of the work force. Both conceptions of disutility are consistent with very high levels of repression." (*Working Papers*, p.61)

In South Africa today, where colonialism is not just a relic of the past but a reality, this thesis needs more emphasis. A proper understanding of the relationship between national struggle and class struggle will help not only in the search for a democratic 'popular history,' but also in putting a stop to the artificially created dichotomy between 'cultural nationalists' and 'worker orientated historical materialists.'

"In South Africa it seems to be increasingly the case that the contenders for legitimate use of the "popular" label are cultural nationalists on the one hand, and more worker-orientated historical materialists on the other." (Boz zoli, p.6)

The politics and ideology of these "worker-orientated materialists" will lead them to the inescapable conclusion that the fight against national oppression is a priority in our conditions.

It must be stated — as a matter of fidelity to independent research and genuine academic and professional scholarship — that the motivation of these authors is not the same; in some cases even suspect. Dunbar Moodie's reasons for doing research for his article on *Mine Culture and Miners' Identity on the South African Gold Mines* is a case in point:

"I directed the mine study on behalf of the Anglo-American Corporation in 1976, while I was Professor of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am most grateful to Anglo-American for granting me permission, prior to the commencement of the research, to make use of my findings in scholarly publications." (*History Workshop*, p.195)

One of the disturbing features in South African academic circles is that Blacks, and Africans in particular, are either conspicuous by their

absence or appear in their token capacity. One does not have to read much into this: it might be another indictment of apartheid — there are no qualified Blacks — a reminder of the intellectual corrosiveness of national oppression. But the sum total of it is that it affects not only research but also its credibility, however well-intentioned it might be.

The two books under review are in many cases an eye-opener as to how much work has still to be done in terms of historical research, theory of history, priorities and points of emphasis. In this respect there is a crying need for a proper balance between historical research, politics and ideology, for, whether we like it or not, historical interpretation is partisan and research is therefore a commitment. Although the authors have done some important research in their fields, the articles tend to be too much localised and issue-oriented, and because there is no common underlying theme — no signpost as it were — there is no proper balance between the peculiar, the specific and the general. The weight and depth of the articles is uneven.

History as a science helps us to unravel the past or to discover the depths from where we have emerged; to grasp and master the present and sharpen our swords for future battles. Our movement needs to take these research projects undertaken in South Africa more seriously, because these professors - through their colleagues, bookshops, distributing agents and research institutes and journals in countries like Britain — tend to become the "authentic voice of the other South Africa." There is another compelling reason, and that is the fact that our struggle for national liberation is also a struggle for academic freedom, and therefore there cannot be room for aloofness from the ongoing struggle, a struggle which inspires genuine academics and therefore liberates them intellectually.

The two books are available from Third World Publications, 151 Stratford Road, Birmingham B11 1AD, United Kingdom.

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