

JANUARY 1985



SECHABA

official organ of the african
national congress south africa



**PEOPLE DEFY
PRETORIA'S
TROOPS!**



SECHABA

JANUARY ISSUE 1985



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COVER CAPTIONS:

*The photographs on our front and back covers
show recent resistance in South Africa.*



This 'Constructive Engagement' Is Becoming 'Constructive Marriage'

As we go to press anti-apartheid demonstrators in the United States are up in arms against the so-called "constructive engagement" policy of the Reagan administration, which has, since the re-election of Reagan, become "constructive marriage."

This campaign was described by the *London Observer* (9th December, 1984) as "one of the most extraordinary bursts of public campaigning in recent American history." Civil disobedience and campaigning made apartheid the public issue in America. The recent elections in the US divided the Americans, but the struggle against apartheid is uniting them. This time the main issue in the US is not apartheid in general — anybody can protest against that — but Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement." The Black Americans are in the forefront of this campaign, and surely the election victory of Reagan has something to do with it.

It is said:

"The South African Ambassador became quite excited, making wild comparisons with Iranian seizure of the US Embassy in 1979, but the wider world was largely unmoved.

"But, like a bushfire, the protest spread to other cities, where consulates were picketed, to Capitol Hill, where the ubiquitous Bishop Tutu received an unprecedented standing ovation from both Democrats and Republicans for a savage assault on "constructive engagement."

Bishop Tutu described the US policy towards South Africa as "evil, immoral and totally un-Christian." He told them:

"You are either in favour of evil or you are in favour of good; you are either on the side of the oppressed or on the side of the oppressor. You can't be neutral."

The Reagan regime says firmly that it will stick to its course, but in public will speak out so as to placate its critics. The concept of "constructive engagement," Reagan's foreign policy towards South Africa, is meant to "soften" apartheid and "free" Namibia, thus producing a "regional peace settlement" on condition that the Cuban internationalists leave Angola. Interestingly enough they talk about the presence of Cuban forces in Angola, when American forces are in Western Europe, Cen-

tral America, Grenada, South Korea and even Cuba.

Bishop Tutu, on his way to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, said in London:

"If the West had done anything about the South African crisis the whole thing would have been resolved, but if the whole thing bursts they should not blame us for the Armageddon."



In the Norwegian capital, Oslo, the ceremony at which Bishop Tutu of South Africa was being given the Nobel Peace Prize was interrupted by an anonymous bomb threat. All 600 people attending the ceremony had to leave the hall where it was being held.

The President of the Nobel Peace Prize Association had just spoken, and Bishop Tutu was about to give his speech of thanks, when there was a commotion, and officials announced that the hall should be emptied immediate-

ly. Scores of uniformed police entered the hall.

Security men had checked the hall for bombs earlier, but the BBC correspondent in Oslo said that with King Olaf, the Bishop, the Norwegian Cabinet and most of Oslo's diplomatic corps in attendance, they did not wish to take any chances.

It is the first time the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony has been interrupted in this way in the 82 years it has been held.

SOUTH AFRICAN MINE WORKERS: THEIR CONDITIONS AND RIGHTS

The first legal strike by Black mineworkers signalled a new turn in this industry. Over 80 000 mineworkers on eight mines where the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has organised, responded to the intransigence of the Chamber of Mines over discussing the wage increases.

Background to the Strike

The present dispute between the NUM and the Chamber of Mines has as its origin the difference in wage increase offers for Black gold miners, overtime rates, hours of work, accident rates, deaths and death benefit schemes.

The demands of the NUM, after receiving the mandate to negotiate further, were:

- ★ 25% increases across the board for Black miners in the gold mining industry,
- ★ reduction of 14 hours per fortnight,
- ★ increase in overtime rates (7% on weekdays and 8% on Sundays),
- ★ improved service bonuses.

The response of the Chamber of Mines:

- ★ 13.3% and 14.4% increase for skilled

and unskilled miners respectively,

- ★ two-hour reduction in fortnightly working hours,
- ★ slight increase in overtime rates.

The Chamber unilaterally announced that "wage increases for miners will be implemented as from July 1st." Meanwhile the Chamber reached an agreement with the exclusively White mineworkers' Union and the all-White Mine Surface Officials Association. Both the Chamber of Mines and the MNSOA refused to disclose the contents of these agreements, further encouraging division of the working class.

After the NUM had declared a dispute with the Chamber, a Conciliation Board was appointed by the racist Minister of Manpower. This step by the NUM, an unregistered trade union, meant the first legal strike by Black miners in the labour history of South Africa.

It meant that if no agreement was reached within 30 days the NUM could call for a ballot. Whilst this was being prepared, another dispute between the NUM and the Chamber of Mines was declared in the coal mining in-

dustry, after talks had broken down.

Results of the Ballot on 8 Gold Mines

40 244 out of 40 440 voted in favour of strike action. In the words of the NUM General Secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa:

"We predict industrial action in the forms of illegal strikes as well as legal strikes when we are unable to reach an agreement using the Conciliation Boards."

Whilst this was going on, workers at the Penge asbestos mine also went on strike in demand of the recognition of their union, the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union (BAMCWU) and improvements in the safety standards. At the Montrose chrome mine, workers forced management to negotiate with their union, BAMCWU.

The overwhelming YES vote for the strike forced the Chamber to another round of talks with the NUM on the days of the strike.

The NUM finally settled for:

- ★ an increase of 50-75% of the miners' wages in leave benefits,
- ★ an effective 2.3% increase in the annual leave wage of miners, that is, 16% increase in miners' wages.

The ban on meetings and the massive presence of racist police on the mines denied NUM officials access to their members, making it impossible for them to discuss negotiations and further action.

In an attempt to divert the strike, management decided to convey the message of the agreement to the miners themselves. The racist police and army's response was typical of the fascist dictatorship of Pretoria and the Chamber. Police with troop carriers, ten trucks and one sneeze machine attacked miners at Welkom with rubber bullets, batons, dogs and tear gas, injuring at least 250. A similar pattern of terrorism was recounted across those mines out on strike. As the strike entered its third day, at Western Deep Levels in a six-hour battle between miners and fascist police, seven miners were killed and 89 injured. Extensive

damage to mine property was caused, including offices and miners' files and records.

By the fourth day the situation remained tense, with wildcat strikes recorded in a number of mines, and miners' deaths rising as a result of racist police brutality. At Hartebeesfontein, miners demanding the recognition of the NUM were attacked. Two were killed. By the end of this bloody strike, more than 16 miners had been killed by murderous police and South African Defence Force troops, and hundreds more injured.

Commenting on the strike, Cyril Ramaphosa said:

"We are starting to ask ourselves whether the agreement is worth the paper it is written on. It's an agreement written in blood."

On the deaths of the miners, Ramaphosa added:

"One lesson we've learnt is that we should organise the industry more vigorously. It reminded us of the 1946 Black miners' strike on the Witwatersrand. We are continuing that heritage. We are continuing the struggle started by J B Marks."

Lessons From the Strike

Brutality of the racist regime and the greed of the capitalists have shown that profit and not workers' welfare determine industrial peace in our country. The heavy racist police present in and around the mines demonstrates the unity of the apartheid regime and the mining bosses.

The Chamber's delaying tactics on the basis that not all miners were members of the NUM, and also the fact that of the 41 gold mines only 8 went on strike, should be a matter of concern for both unionised workers and union officials.

The NUM was formed out of the demands of Black mineworkers to have a union to represent their demands. To date this union has a membership of about 90 000 out of about 530 000 Black mineworkers. Tough negotiations towards the indifferent attitude of the mine bosses has forced the Chamber to

negotiate with the NUM and other Black mining unions like BAMCWU in the coal, gold, asbestos and chrome mining industries, and to accept the inevitable growth of unionisation. The Chamber has clearly shown it cannot respond to the demands of Black mineworkers except by violence. These demands for better wages, an end to appalling safety regulations and inhuman working and living conditions are being put forward by unions that represent the choice of workers, and those management has tried to impose on the workers.

The Chamber has adopted the typical strategy of divide and rule by recognising and allowing a number of unions to recruit on the mines. This is with the whole aim of promoting competition between Black mining unions, and giving the bosses the chance to play one union off against another. We must be aware of these traps laid down for us, for it is in the interests of the mining companies to keep workers divided and weak.

The compound hostel system is not favourable for communication between workers and their union, since it gives greater control to management and the murderous police, who force miners back to work at gun-

point. We must be prepared for this eventuality in advance.

The need for more UNITED efforts to increase organisation is now! The time to form one united democratic union to represent the interests of miners is NOW! Let us unite, organise, mobilise around those issues which unite us! Let us demand:

- ★ The right to organise freely and for the abolition of the liaison committee system. Mining companies have got to negotiate directly with the union which is serving the interests and genuine aspirations of the workers,
- ★ an end to the tribal segregation of workers and the compound system,
- ★ an end to migratory labour and the pass laws,
- ★ increased wages, better working conditions, establishment of health and safety standards which will guarantee protection of the workers!

**ONE UNION, ONE INDUSTRY!
UNITY IS STRENGTH!
AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN
INJURY TO ALL!**



EDUCATION IN CRISIS:

1976 AND TODAY

By Freedom Mkhwanazi

Days and nights preceding June 16th 1976 were like a gathering storm characterised by debates, arguments and anger. From rotten crumbs that had fallen from the table of White education could be traced one grain of wisdom and a source of both anger and irony: "The language of the conqueror in the mouth of the conquered is the language of slaves." So ran the rhetoric of the Boers during their war with the British (1899-1902), arguing for the use of their language as opposed to English as a medium of instruction. History was to repeat itself in 1977.

Ironically, the same rhetoric was now being mouthed against its composers by student leaders in Soweto, 77 years after. Having themselves tasted the bitter pill, the Boers had, since 1948, been impatient to prescribe an overdose of the same pill for the sons and daughters of the African working nation. What had been a nightmare to them during yester-years of resistance against British imperialism all of a sudden became a dream to perpetuate White minority rule.

This naive solution to their problem of racial domination and capitalist plunder left the South African body politic wounded and bleeding, with an atmosphere of racial polarisation and a climate of rebellion among the victims of settler colonialism. The imposition of Afrikaans

as a medium of instruction provided the students with an excellent tool to begin the process of crushing the walls of apartheid education.

The concept behind Bantu Education was stated by Dr Verwoerd in 1953, when he unashamedly declared:

"When I have control of native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them ... There is no place for him (the African) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour."

The aim of this is — and has been — to discard the African majority from their historical place, to blur and distort their perspective of history and their place in it, and to pull them by the ear in a direction where their eyes would see only what the colonialists would like them to see, where their ears would appreciate the music and language appreciated for them by the colonialists, and where, finally, they would be herded like cattle into what is supposed to be their kraal. The aim is to make sure that the African is always ready to oil and tighten the nuts of the factory machine, and be there wherever and whenever needed for the wheel of capitalism to keep in motion. Education for

Blacks in South Africa is opium for the African majority — calculated to reduce them to a state of semi-slavery.

South African Education Remains Racist

After the country-wide uprisings of 1977, the racists abandoned the detested name of Bantu Education, and re-named the Department of Bantu Education the Department of Education and Training. In spite of this contemptible pretence at change, the essence of education for Blacks in South Africa has not changed, and racism remains prevalent in educational institutions. A prescribed Afrikaans dictionary, *Die Verklarende Woordeboek*, contains racist expressions such as, "as drunk as a Coloured teacher." Worse still, we find in textbooks such statements as, "The Black man brings the bricks and the White man places them in the wall." It is clear that as long as apartheid exists, racial categories will still suffuse the minds of White educationists.

Crisis of Struggle

Parallel to this is the struggle of Black students in South Africa for a better education, for student representative councils, and for an end to the age limit for Black students in schools. In this struggle they have generally been supported by their parents — over the past year, campaigns have been conducted by student-parent organisations in Alexandra, Kwa-Thema, Katlehong, Wattville, among other places. Lack of proper representation, refusals by university authorities to discuss student grievances, solidarity actions with striking workers, with rent protests and other general protests — all are focal points around which students' protest actions converge.

Many recent incidents attest to the endemic crisis in Black education itself. On the eve of White Republic Day, two well-known student organisations, COSAS and AZASO, declared a day of national protest in solidarity with all the schools, colleges and universities throughout South Africa that had been closed by student boycotts. This initiative was backed by more than 1 000 Wits students. Placards echoed the message of 1976: "Reject Gutter Education."

All in all, 60 townships have been transformed into centres of resistance against Black education — a resistance which became merged into a resistance against all the manifestations of apartheid rule — 25 in the Transvaal, 13 in the Eastern Cape, 10 in the Western Cape, nine in Natal and three in the Orange Free State.

The following account of some events in the past few months draws a picture of the scope of the uprising and the horrendous nature of apartheid's terrorism and violence.

★ About 120 000 students boycotted classes in Soweto when schools opened on 26th September, 1984.

★ Elsewhere, many of the 93 000 who had stayed away earlier refused to return to school. They demanded a reply to requests they had made to the Lekoa Town Council in the Vaal Triangle to reduce rents to R30 a month and to release all the detainees arrested during the unrest.

★ About 5 000 pupils at seven schools in Cradock in the Eastern Cape continued their seven-month-long boycott of classes.

★ In Thabong, near Welkom, there was a 50% attendance at three of the secondary schools hit during the year by prolonged periods of student dissatisfaction.

★ Students at the University of the North (Turfloop) resolved to lay charges of victimisation against three of the lecturers at the university. They were protesting against rules stipulating that they must complete a three-year degree within five years, and face expulsion if they fail two years in succession.

★ About 8 000 students at Fort Hare and Turfloop boycotted classes in protest against the tricameral parliament.

★ All full-time students at the University of Transkei were expelled by the 'Minister of Education and Training,' Mr H H Bubu, because of their "intransigent attitude towards the authorities."

★ During the stayaway of November 1984, 153 000 students stayed away on the East Rand, 93 000 in the Vaal Triangle and 30 000 in the Eastern Cape.

Cases of Murder, Violence and Detention

The Committee for United Action — a body of doctors and lawyers formed after the violence in Lenasia before the tricameral elections some months ago — reported, "A number of people injured during the uprisings in the Vaal and other places have not been treated, because they fear arrest if they go to hospital." Hospital clerks had been ordered to report all cases of quirt, sjambok and birdshot wounds.

Birdshot alone, used by the police, has caused death and serious injuries. Other deaths and injuries were caused by rubber bullets, plastic bullets and live bullets, used against demonstrators by the police.

Jacob Mololeke of Sebokeng, aged 16, was killed by a bullet that passed straight through his head. In Grahamstown, a youth and a two-year-old girl were shot dead. Schools came to a standstill in Soweto during the funeral of the 19-year-old Bongani Khumalo, the local secretary of COSAS; and during the funeral another youth was killed. A Vaal youth, about to be released without charge after a week in gaol, was shot dead outside the Sebokeng police station. 15-year-old Vusi Diale, a pupil at Tsakane High School, was shot while standing outside his uncle's house, and died instantly. Mrs Mary Mvala died at her home at the end of September when a rubber bullet struck her in the mouth.

The exact number of dead is not clear, but four funerals of victims of the unrest were banned from being held on a Saturday, and there have been reports of demonstrations at a number of other funerals in places as widely scattered across the country as Port Alfred and Thokoza. The family of Mr Moeletsi Rathebe, a father of five from Klipspruit, who died during the uprisings, were unable to bury him because police were withholding the body. Many attended funerals in defiance of bans. At the funeral of Joseph Sithole in Evaton Cemetery, 500 people were arrested and charged with attending a prohibited meeting; they were later ordered to pay R50 admission of guilt or R50 bail.

The Detainees' Parents' Support Committee announced in November that during the

first ten months of 1984 more than 530 school pupils, students and teachers had been held under the security legislation. Many executive members of COSAS were among these. At the time of writing, detentions continue.

To quell the storm of protest the regime has called in units of the Defence Force, which now patrol Black townships, and it has been announced that, as part of a new security plan, the South African Police will be increased from the present 47 000 to about 68 000 men.

The Chief of the Defence Force, General Constand Viljoen, has lost no time in recognising 'total onslaught' as underlying the political climate inside the country. Le Grange, the Minister of Law and Order, has stated that the situation is now more serious than it was in 1976, and has accused the UDF of being responsible for the wave of rebellion sweeping black townships.

Defiance and Repression Continue

The Release Mandela Committee, COSAS and UDF reacted angrily to the claims of the regime. They stated that 'legitimate' protests and grievances of oppressed people were being blamed on what they called 'faceless instigators.' The statement said the blame for the tearsmoking, sjambokking and killing of our people should not be placed at the door of those who are struggling for freedom, but where it rightfully belongs, at the door of the South African racist government.

At the time of our going to press the student boycotts and defiant demonstrations continue, as do the brutal and repressive police actions. These events indicate that the student community has, since the 1976 uprisings, been united in a common bond of suffering and struggle. The students have expressed their sentiments, that they will not lose heart, no matter what turn history takes, but shall not allow history to take a turn without participation. They believe that as students they do not constitute an independent social force, and they strive hand in hand with the workers and other social forces to unite in action against the system of education which is based on capitalist exploitation. South Africans of all races have

now been brought into one front in the struggle against the racist system of Black education.

The resolve to struggle is a consequence of the system of apartheid education designed to reduce the majority to a state of perpetual subservience. Here are a few frightening details:

★ A University of Cape Town study of adult illiteracy in South Africa has found that the number of illiterate people in the country could be as high as nine million.

★ 33% of Black people over the age of 15 can neither read nor write, while the figure for Whites over the age of 15 years was only 0.72%.

★ Among Coloured people, 15.15% are illiterate, and the figure for Asians is 7.79%.

★ Less than 2% of adult Whites do not have a Standard 4 school pass, compared with five million Blacks.

★ Admission of Black students at university is 2% as compared to Whites (86.1%).

The oppressed majority are promised nothing more than a raw deal as long as apartheid as a programme and policy of the White minority government presides over the country. The subordination of the African majority to a barbaric system of education is necessary to White political and economic domination. This system of separate and unequal education serves as a nexus between the powerful and the powerless — the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.'

In normal circumstances, education should remain as essential an element in society life as the bread we eat or the air we breathe. But in the case of South Africa, where there is insufficient bread for the poor to eat, and where the poor cannot determine where and when they can breathe fresh air, education itself is compartmentalised along racial or 'tribal' divisions, and serves the interest of the White minority.

Racist Culture is a Desert

Education as an important component of culture has *nostimulus* within the social en-

COSAS

EACH ONE

STUDENTS



SUPPORT

TEACH ONE

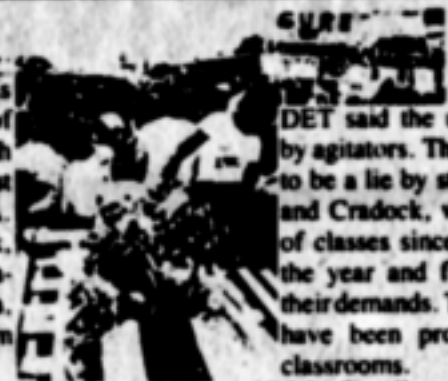
DEMANDS

SOLIDARITY

'AFTER MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS OF APARTHEID EDUCATION THEY EXPECTED TO SEE TOTALLY BRAINWASHED, PERFECT LITTLE 'HOTNOTJIES' AND 'KAFFIRTJIES' WHO KNEW THEIR PLACE IN THE

WORLD. INSTEAD THEY FIND THE MOST POLITICALLY CONSCIOUS GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE DETERMINED TO STRUGGLE FOR A BETTER FUTURE' — REV ALLAN BOESAK.

Ever since the beginning of this year there have been a number of incidents of unrest in schools, which symbolises dissatisfaction amongst the students of SOUTH AFRICA. Those affected are in Cradock, Atteridgeville — Saulsville, Tembisa, Warmbath, Port Elizabeth, Soshanguve, Queenstown, Welkom and many other areas.



DET said the unrest was caused by agitators. This has been proved to be a lie by students in Pretoria and Cradock, who have been out of classes since the beginning of the year and firmly standing by their demands. The agitating issues have been problems inside the classrooms.

Therefore the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) calls upon all students, parents, and all members of the community to support the demands which are:

DEMANDS

- Formation of and recognition of democratic SRC's
- The application of corporal punishment as laid down by the DET regulations
- Free supply of textbooks to all students/pupils
- Age limit regulation to be scrapped in all schools
- End to sexual abuse of female students/pupils, be it by a teacher or another student/pupil
- The DET should work to end the continual presence of unqualified teachers in our schools
- Release all detained students and teachers

REASONS

- Representation in the interests of improving relationships between student/pupils and teachers
- Punishment for correcting and not assaulting students/pupils. A democratic SRC would help to build and maintain discipline among students/pupils
- All students/pupils should be able to study
- Education for all regardless of age
- Female pupils (girls) must be treated as human beings and not as sexual objects. A democratic SRC would promote and improve understanding and a better relationship between staff and students.
- For the improvement of matric results and the standard of black education. 73% of black teachers are underqualified as compared to 3% in white schools

vironment that denies equal education or work opportunities, and refuses the majority the right to vote and to be governed by their chosen leaders. The culture of the White minority regime is engendered and pampered by myths of racial superiority, and generally suffers from the fear of the 'black menace.' Thus the collective memory of the White man's culture has been blacked out by cultural alienation from the culture of the majority. It can neither grow by itself nor be influenced by indigenous culture. It has doomed itself to a cultural desert by its own definitions and practices of racial stereotypes that turn men against men — and that stand challenged and mocked by the claim that men are distinguished from the animals by a higher intellect.

PRETORIA INVOLVED IN ARMS SMUGGLING

By Mike Terry

The writer of this article is Administrative Secretary of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain.

The press and public benches of the small Magistrates' Court in the English Midlands city of Coventry were packed solid with local, national and international press early one Monday morning at the end of October 1984. Outside the court, television crews waited in the shadows of the ruins of the old Coventry cathedral, destroyed by Nazi bombers, a poignant reminder of the destructive power of fascist armaments. The first case to be heard in Court No 1 was the committal proceedings against eight men on charges of arms smuggling to South Africa.

But four of the men, popularly known as the 'Coventry Four' were not in court. Instead, there was a battery of lawyers and legal experts, including a First Secretary from the South African Embassy. Stephanus de Jager, Jacobus le Grange, Hendrik Botha and William Metelerkamp, the 'Coventry Four,' were safely at home in South Africa.

The men, all senior officials and consultants for Armscor and its guided weapons subsidiary, Kentron, had been arrested following a Customs raid on a London hotel at the end of March 1984. They had been taken to Coventry, where they had been charged and remand-

ed in custody. Pretoria reacted angrily by recalling the then Ambassador to Britain, Marais Steyn, for consultations. After the four men had spent ten days in custody, magistrates agreed to their release under stringent bail conditions and guarantees from the South African Embassy.

Then, on 22nd May, a few days before the visit of P W Botha to Britain as a guest of Mrs Thatcher, a High Court judge, sitting in chambers, in an unprecedented decision, relaxed the bail conditions by allowing the 'Coventry Four' to leave the jurisdiction of the British courts before trial, and return to South Africa. The judge was presented with affidavits from the First Secretary of the South African Embassy, Andre Pelsler, in which the South African Government undertook to return the four men to Britain to stand trial if they did not do so voluntarily. In addition, bail was fixed at £400 000. In fact, the four men did return for a brief hearing on 25th June, but when the time came for the committal proceedings on 22nd October, they were not there.

The court proceedings began with the Customs seeking, not only warrants for their arrest, but also on the much more serious charges of conspiring to smuggle spare parts for guided weapons systems to South Africa. The four British men, who did appear in court,

also face these conspiracy charges. Taken together, the case clearly represents one of the most serious alleged breaches of the 1977 United Nations mandatory arms embargo that has come to court.

The senior counsel representing the 'Coventry Four,' as well as the First Secretary, Pelsler, and the South African Government, sought to justify the non-appearance of the men by linking this case with the presence in the British Consulate in Durban of the three leaders of the United Democratic Front and the Natal Indian Congress. He argued that the sanctuary provided to the leaders was an abuse of the Consulate facilities and a breach of international law. The British were preventing South African "justice," it was claimed, from taking its course, and so the South African Government had the "right" to retaliate by preventing the 'Coventry Four' from returning to stand trial. The decision that they should not return, it was explained, had been taken at the highest level in South Africa and ratified by the Cabinet. The magistrates ignored these arguments, granted the warrants and decided that all £400 000 would be forfeited.

British Government in a Dilemma

These developments placed the British Government in a dilemma. Four senior officials of a South African state agency had allegedly conspired to smuggle parts of guided weapons systems to South Africa — even the British Government could not deny the gravity of these charges. The South African Cabinet had been directly implicated in a conspiracy to frustrate the course of "British justice." The South African Government had broken a solemn undertaking to the British courts that it would ensure that the men returned to stand trial.

All this illustrated total contempt for Mrs Thatcher and her administration — which is, after all, certainly P W Botha's closest ally in Europe. How did the British Government respond to such mockery? One hundred years ago, imperial Britain would have gone to war with the Boer republics for a lesser provocation. Today, however, the British are more

'civilised' in their relations with Afrikanerdom — as Mr Rifkind explained to the British Parliament the following day, 23rd October:

"I called in the South African Am'bassador this morning and conveyed to him the Government's strong condemnation of this breach of faith. I also told him that, following the issue of warrants for the arrest of the four defendants, we now expected his Government not to impede their appearance in court."

As if to taunt the British Government even more, the Armscor called a press conference the following Saturday, at which the four men appeared and proudly boasted of their activities in seeking to sabotage the UN arms embargo.

And yet, to this day, the British Government has taken no effective action, thus reflecting the true nature of Britain's commitment to the arms embargo.

'Durban Three' Victimised

Yet, to be fair to the British Government, it did show that it could be tough and resolute when it judged that this was needed. We have only to contrast the case of the 'Coventry Four' with that of the 'Durban Three' to see this. The three leaders of the United Democratic Front and the Natal Indian Congress had "had the temerity" to give an interview to Independent Television News. This interview was broadcast in Britain in early October. Then, on 18th October, they broadcast a statement jointly in Durban and London, stating the conditions under which they would leave the British Consulate. For these 'crimes' the British Government banned — on 21st October, the eve of the Coventry trial — all visits by their families and lawyers, thus cutting the three men off from the outside world. Despite numerous representations, the British Government has been resolute in refusing to lift this ban.

The oppressed people of South Africa will draw their own conclusions. For Mrs Thatcher, nothing will be done to undermine her cordial alliance with apartheid South Africa — everything will be done to undermine the people's struggle for liberation.

by Justitia

TRIAL OF OUR COMRADES: THE SOWETO FOUR

"We shall be free! Down with the racist regime!"

The slogan sounded in the Rand Supreme Court on 18th October, as policemen rushed forward to take four men to the police cells. The policemen had sprung into action when Enoch Vusi Mthombeni, just sentenced to 12 years for treason, started singing *Nkosi Sikelel' i Afrika*, and supporters who filled the courtroom joined him in singing the national anthem.

Norman Mhlanzi was also sentenced to 12 years for treason. He and Mthombeni, both part of the ANC since 1977, had sabotaged an electricity sub-station near Vereeniging in December 1982, and attempted to sabotage another near Roodepoort. Two other men, Samuel Vulindlela Myeni and Jabulani Makhubu, were sent to prison for 18 months for furthering the aims of the ANC; amongst other things, they had driven the first two on their sabotage missions.

The last minutes in the courtroom before the four joined the ranks of apartheid's political prisoners illustrated vividly how the struggle is carried defiantly right into the enemy's camp.

In sentencing the four, the judge also showed clearly how the courts are instruments of

repression. His words of condemnation would have been praise anywhere outside the institutions of an oppressive regime. He said that Mthombeni and Mhlanzi were "irreversible enemies" of the apartheid regime, which they were "seeking to overthrow by violence."

The history of the four men is now a familiar one, heard many times. All four were from Soweto, ranging in age from 22 to 28 years. Mhlanzi and Mthombeni took part in the uprising of 1976, when they were 15 and 17 years old respectively, and left the country for Swaziland. They went abroad, became members of the ANC, and in time received military training. Returning to South Africa in 1982, they carried out acts of sabotage, using explosives from supplies established by others.

The four were detained in December 1983, at a time when security police claimed to have found supplies of arms and explosives in at least two houses in or near Soweto. A number of others were detained at the time, some of them probably among the witnesses whom the state was going to call to testify at the trial.

As well as high treason, there were alternative charges under the Internal Security Act and the Terrorism Act. There were several charges in all — undergoing military training; being members of the ANC, or conspiring with the ANC with the aim of overthrowing the government between 1977 and 1983; being in possession of explosives and ammunition; and participating in sabotage during the same period.

Apart from what has been written above, little else came out of the trial. After a first appearance in June and a preliminary hearing in August, the hearing of evidence and the conviction took less than 45 minutes. The convictions were based on statements made by the accused.

As in many political trials, the question of proof seems to have been settled in the detention cells and at the hands of the security police.

But although the legal machinery of apartheid has consigned these four to prison, their defiant exit from the court-room shows that they are unbowed in their resolve to help defeat the enemy.

By Sipho Jama

QUESTIONS OF JUSTICE AND WAR

All revolutionaries fight for the sake of justice, and struggle against injustice. In this fact lies the moral superiority of the revolutionary. This means that it is basic to the revolutionary project that we ask questions about the justice of particular struggles and the methods used in them. This article is an attempt to ask just such questions about the armed struggle in South Africa, and to answer them by using the doctrine of the just war.

This doctrine is a useful tool in our project. Though it was developed by Christian thinkers, it is not bound by Christian doctrine, and has come into its own as a tool for answering questions about the justice and injustice of struggles in today's world. A young South African White man used the just-war theory to show that it is morally wrong to serve in the South African army, by showing that the war waged by the apartheid regime is ruled completely unjust if one looks at it in terms of the just-war doctrine. ⁽¹⁾

How does the armed struggle of the ANC match up to this test? I would like to argue that the just-war doctrine shows that it is a just struggle waged by just means.

Peaceful Means Have Been Exhausted

It was only in 1961 that the ANC turned to armed struggle, and this was because it was clear

that all peaceful means had been exhausted. In the course of the 1952-1963 sabotage campaign, bloodshed was scrupulously avoided wherever possible. The struggle had its peaks and troughs, but reached an all-time high in the aftermath of the Soweto uprising of 1976, and the signs are that the struggle is bound to intensify until victory is won. The period since 1976 has seen the establishment of the ANC as the major opposition force in South Africa. The movement has conducted a successful campaign in which targets of particular strategic and economic importance have been attacked. These have been chosen for public impact — actions have been demonstrative, 'armed propaganda,' and there has been a concerted attempt to avoid civilian casualties where possible. At the same time, notorious informers and collaborators with the apartheid regime have been assassinated in a programme of vigilante justice.

It should be mentioned that the ANC became a signatory to the 1977 Geneva Protocol I in November 1980. This implied a measure of international recognition for the justice of the ANC's struggle. Since then, a number of substantial operations have been carried out, including attacks on several power stations, including the Koeberg nuclear power station. A 13

rocket attack was launched against the Voortrekkerhoogte military complex, and in May 1983, the South African Air Force headquarters in Pretoria was bombed. In all, South Africa is in the throes of "the most sustained violent rebellion in South African history, and all the indications are that it will develop into a full-scale revolutionary war." (2) Let us now look at the tools we are going to use in testing whether this armed rebellion and revolutionary war is just.

Killing of the Innocent is Wrong

Most people would agree that it is always wrong intentionally to kill innocent people, and that killing is bad. We would like to say that someone who murders offends against his or her humanity, and against the demands of our own humanity. This is at the root of our moral indignation at, say, the Nazi extermination policy against the Jews, and against the crimes of the apartheid regime. It is always wrong to kill or injure for its own sake. At the same time, there are circumstances where one has to kill or injure as a necessary means to a good end.

I am in a bar, and I observe someone who has drunk too much coming at me with a knife. If I am quick enough, I manage to step aside, and knock him out. What I try to do is to defend myself, but perhaps the circumstances are such that I cannot avoid doing him or her grave injury. I am not likely to have any hang-ups, since I was obviously bound to defend myself, and hit my attacker because it was the only way I could stop him or her from harming me. **That** was my intention. The fact that the attacker was injured was something I may well have known would happen. It was perhaps a consequence I could foresee, but it was not something I directly intended by my action. If, on the other hand, I had no choice other than to defend myself with a pistol, and chose to shoot my attacker through the heart, although a bullet through the leg would have done the trick, I would have been guilty of murder. I would have chosen to use means of defence which were bound to kill, where they were not strictly necessary. In **that** situation, I might be perfectly justified in using a pistol to defend myself,

but I used it in a way which shows that causing grave injury and death was part of my direct intention. I would have used more violence than was strictly necessary.

In the example we have just examined, my aim is to ensure that I am not cut up and killed. I act in order to prevent something bad (my injury or death), and in order to achieve something positively good (that I should live unharmed). It is not my direct intention to cause injury. I use violent means because I cannot do anything else in the circumstances, and the degree of violence I use is more or less the minimum necessary to achieve my ends.

This applies, of course, to the case where I acted in a way which was clearly not directly intended to kill. One could think of cases where one had no way of avoiding the death of the attacker without risking one's own death, and that would also be a just action. Where there was a choice, and one chose to use more force than was strictly necessary to achieve one's ends, the means used would be unjust, though the ends might be just.

What Are the Aims of the Struggle?

These considerations apply to wars between nations and organisations as well. We need to ask whether something bad is being struggled against, whether the aims of the struggle are good in themselves, and whether the means used are in keeping with the ends. If the means are violent, we want to know whether this violence is strictly necessary, and whether it is kept down to the minimum necessary to achieve the ends, or thereabouts. To be precise, the question is whether loss of innocent life is kept to a minimum.

In our example, the first question was whether one was justified in using violence under the circumstances. In the case of wars, the question is whether it is morally right to wage war in particular circumstances. The just-war doctrine lays down a number of conditions which must be met before we can say that a nation or organisation was indeed justified in going to war. There are five conditions which must be satisfied in this respect:

- ★ The war must be waged by a legitimate or competent authority;
- ★ It must be waged in a just cause;
- ★ It must be undertaken with the right intention regarding its ends, which must be humane;
- ★ It should be waged only when all peaceful means have been exhausted;
- ★ It should be waged only when there is a reasonable hope of success.

I think there are also circumstances where failure to fight a war, even where it is hopeless, is wrong. The Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto were surely justified in waging war against the Germans rather than being passively carted off to the extermination camps. They were saying, in effect, that the Nazis were not to be allowed to get away with their crime without resistance. Their action was demonstrative — it was meant to show the German soldiers and the local population that Jews **could** fight, and that they had retained their self-respect and ability to organise. They also needed to remind German soldiers that they were party to a criminal act, and would be held responsible for it. Armed resistance was the only way the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto could affirm their human dignity, and demands of dignity made it necessary for them to take up arms, although they had no chance of winning their local struggle. In the light of this, we can modify our last condition to read:

- ★ It should be waged only when there is a reasonable hope of success, or where it is impossible to preserve human dignity without resort to war.

Are the Means Justified?

In the example of our fight in the bar, we asked a second question: were the means used to defend ourselves justified under the circumstances? We were clearly right to defend ourselves, but were we right to do so in the way we chose? The just-war doctrine lays down two more conditions which help us to answer this question in the case of war. They are tests to see whether the means we use to wage a war are themselves just, and are as follows:

- ★ The means used must be proportionate to the ends of our struggle — there should be an attempt to cause the least damage possible without endangering the achievement of the just ends of war;
- ★ There must be no intentional killing of innocent people.


What is a "legitimate competent authority?" A few reactionaries perhaps claim that only an official government fits this description. One can, however, think of governments which are clearly unrepresentative, illegitimate and unjust. One can also think of movements which, while not constituting recognised governments, have so much popular support that they are surely able to make decisions on behalf of the people, and whose actions are the genuine will of the people. What is a 'just cause'? What is 'justice'? These are questions concerning which there is a great deal of debate. At the same time, it is commonly recognised that justice involves a fair distribution of wealth and conditions which make for a dignified life.

The Injustice of Poverty and Degradation

What are these conditions? Much ink has been spilt in trying to answer this question, and we do not need to give a positive answer to these questions in order to carry on our present enquiry. Most people agree that great poverty imposed on some in order that others can enjoy wealth is an injustice, as are conditions which degrade and humiliate people. It is just to aim at doing away with situations of this sort.

The Geneva Conventions lay down some laws which try to ensure that there is a measure of justice in the means used to wage war. The ANC is, as we saw, a signatory to the first Protocol of these Conventions, drawn up in 1977. It must be said that the fact that a party to a war complies with the terms of the Conventions does not in itself guarantee that a war is just. This is because a war is truly just if, and only if, it is fought for just reasons.

A government may wage war without good cause, and its soldiers might nonetheless fight with great humanity. In that case, we would hold that the war itself was criminal — the government was a government of war



**Jubilant Ibhongo High students —
detained colleagues released without being charged**

YOUTH DEFY APARTH

Youths in Sharpeville setting up a roadblock for a SADF 'Hippo'



Students protesting at funeral of Emma Sathekge

— 15 year old schoolgirl who died under the wheels of a police van

ID!

criminals — though we might not want to call the soldiers criminals. We would hold their governments responsible for all death, damage and injury caused in that war.

A war might, on the other hand, be waged for the best of reasons, but in an unnecessarily bloody way. In that case, we would say that the war is just in regard to its ends, but not in its means. It is a just war fought in an unjust way, where the first case was of a war which was unjust through and through as far as those who initiated it are concerned, fought by soldiers acting on the assumption that it was declared for good reason, fighting justly by their own lights. We would exonerate the soldiers, and hold the government responsible. If the means, too, were unjust, we would hold both government and soldiers responsible for the criminal act.

What is Terrorism?

The Geneva Conventions condemn terrorism, and the ANC is called 'terrorist' by the apartheid regime. It is therefore important to note what terrorism involves. A terrorist act maliciously and intentionally injures innocent people. Parcel bombs, of the sort which killed Ruth First, are a terrorist weapon, and actions like the Lesotho raid and the raid on Matola are terrorist actions in international law. Attacks on strategic installations of the enemy, or upon the armed forces of the enemy, are not 'terrorist actions' in a war. The 1977 Geneva Protocol I also recognises "armed conflicts in which people are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination." It also condemns as war crimes "practices of apartheid and other inhuman and degrading practices involving outrages upon personal dignity based upon racial discrimination."

In conventional wars, soldiers wear uniforms which clearly identify them as soldiers rather than civilians. Guerrillas wear no uniforms, and merge "into the people, to whom they belong and of whom they are a part," as was pointed out in a document illegally circulated in South Africa in 1970. Does this

make guerrilla warfare immoral? I think not, and for this reason: No guerrilla struggle can succeed without popular support. The people protect guerrillas and hide them from the enemy because they support them, because the struggle of the guerrillas is the struggle of the masses. The surest sign that a particular guerrilla struggle is just is the fact that it succeeds. As an American moralist points out, such a war "cannot be won and should not be won" by the oppressor, "because the degree of civilian support ... makes the guerrillas the legitimate rulers of the country," and the struggle against them "is an unjust struggle that can only be carried out unjustly." ⁽³⁾

What is a Legitimate Authority?

Is the ANC a legitimate authority? In the 1950s, the ANC successfully mobilised many thousands of people in vast public demonstrations. Though it is now an illegal organisation, support for the ANC is at a peak. The vast majority of South Africans recognise that the gaol-ed ANC leaders are their own leaders, and foreign analysts recognise that "Nelson Mandela ... would easily defeat any other potential presidential candidate, White or Black," if free multiracial elections were held today. ⁽⁴⁾ The ANC is, in effect, given legitimacy by the oppressed majority of South Africans, while the apartheid regime is rightly considered illegitimate. Umkhonto We Sizwe is what most South Africans believe it to be, the people's army, and the ANC, by virtue of its support in the country, is surely the legitimate voice of the people of South Africa. This conclusion draws support from the massive demonstrations at the trials of captured guerrillas of Umkhonto We Sizwe and at funerals, and by the fact that most people who join Umkhonto see service in its ranks as a contribution to the struggle, and service to our people.

Is the ANC's war waged in a just cause? What we are asking here is whether apartheid is bad in itself, so that the struggle to defeat it is waged in a good cause. It is difficult not to see that apartheid is unjust. A small minority, South African Whites, live in comfort,



because the vast majority of South Africans are super-exploited and are therefore caused to live in poverty. This is clearly a grave injustice. The trappings of apartheid, which deny civic rights to the oppressed majority, break up families, restrict the movements of people, and subject people to arrest and deportation to the so-called 'homelands,' where there is neither work nor food — these things and more clearly combine to make apartheid a massive and sustained assault upon human comfort and dignity. Apartheid is surely a crime against

humanity which we must fight against.

Controlled Violence

The Freedom Charter, which puts forward the positive aims of the ANC, will help us to judge whether the struggle is being waged with the right intention. A 'right intention,' in terms of the just-war doctrine, can only be a just and lasting peace, and this intention is surely fundamental to the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter, itself the product of what was surely the most representative gathering in

South African history, is based on the belief that "only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure to all their birthrights without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief." It calls for a democratic order in which a stable peace without oppression is possible. The ANC clearly displays the right intention in its aim.

The turn to armed struggle was made after the Sharpeville and Langa massacres, and after pleas that the government call a national convention had proved fruitless. It was by then clear that the exclusive use of peaceful means was no longer possible. In addition, this period saw the outbreak of spontaneous acts of violence on the part of some of the oppressed, which had to be channelled in order to prevent indiscriminate and fruitless acts of violence. Armed struggle was clearly the only way greater loss of life could be avoided. The choice was for effective and controlled violence as against ineffective and uncontrolled violence, given the fact that other alternatives had failed. Was there a reasonable chance of success? There was, and there is a reasonable chance of success. Many foreign analysts work on the assumption that the ANC is bound to succeed in the medium run, and the precedents of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe confirm this. In any case, it should be clear that armed struggle would have been justifiable on grounds of dignity alone.

Targets of a Just War

The sabotage campaign between 1962 and 1963 was marked by notable attempts to avoid bloodshed. The few actions which resulted in bloodshed were exceptions rather than rule. Such incidents are a foreseen but unintended consequence of any armed struggle. Respect for life clearly continues to be a principle stressed in the training programmes of Umkhonto, as is shown by the testimony of some ANC guerrillas caught and tried by the apartheid regime.

South African police and army personnel and installations have been attacked, and these are surely licit targets in a just war. They are part and parcel of the oppressive apparatus

which attacks the South African people. The South African press waxed indignant at the loss of life when the Air Force headquarters in Pretoria was attacked. It is noteworthy that all the 19 people killed worked in the building, and the fact that there were not more deaths shows that there was discrimination on the part of the ANC. A military installation is a legitimate target, and it is the duty of those who would place major installations in civilian areas to guarantee the security of civilians in the area. It is surely easier to bomb buses and cinemas, but the ANC has rightly refused to do so. Were Umkhonto interested in simply causing death, its cadres would have bombed civilian targets. The fact that this was **not** done in Pretoria reflects the fact that the concern of the ANC was to attack a military target, and that Umkhonto is **not** a terrorist organisation like the South African army and police.

Umkhonto We Sizwe has been responsible for the assassination of notorious informers and collaborators with the apartheid regime. This is not, properly speaking, an act of war, but constitutes the administration of vigilante justice by an organisation recognised by the oppressed in South Africa as its own government. **It expresses the fact that dual power exists in South Africa.**

In conclusion, the armed struggle carried out by the ANC is just with regard to both its ends and the means it uses. Actions of Umkhonto We Sizwe seek to preserve life. Where civilians have been injured, this has, on the whole, reflected the fact that the regime has sited military targets in civilian areas. The intention of Umkhonto is to bring about a just and lasting peace rather than cause unnecessary loss of innocent life.

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AMONG INTERNATIONAL

BRITISH CITIES HONOUR IMPRISONED ANC LEADERS

Aberdeen Honours Mandela

The highest civic honour, the Freedom of the City, was conferred by the city of Aberdeen in Scotland on the freedom fighter Comrade Nelson Mandela and his wife Winnie, on 29th November 1984.

The scrolls marking the award were received on behalf of the Mandelas by Solly Smith, chief representative of the ANC in Great Britain and Ireland, and Mrs Adelaide Tambo, wife of the President of the ANC.

In a moving ceremony, attended by representatives of the City Council of Aberdeen, but boycotted by the Conservative opposition councillors, Lord Provost Henry Rae described the fight for freedom and equality pursued by Nelson Mandela in the years prior to his imprisonment. He told the gathering that Nelson Mandela has spent the past 20 years in gaol in South Africa for his activities against apartheid, and has spent only two of the 25 years of his married life with his wife. Each month, he said, Mrs Mandela flies 650 miles to visit her husband.

Lord Provost Rae stated:

"Despite their treatment, Nelson and Winnie Mandela remain symbols for the aspirations of South Africa's non-white majori-

ty, and represent persecuted and exploited peoples throughout the world."

In his speech of thanks, Comrade Solly Smith spoke proudly of the:

"... defiant and resolute actions of the people within South Africa."

He also said:

"Though Nelson Mandela has been imprisoned for more than two decades, he remains a potent and international symbol of resistance against the White minority regime ... For although Mandela is entombed alive, his figure towers higher than the prison walls ... they have dismally failed to rob him and his people of a vision of a free, unitary and non-racial South Africa."

The Freedom of Aberdeen has been awarded 31 times this century. Previous recipients include the Queen Mother of Great Britain, Sir Winston Churchill and Field Marshal Jan Smuts, former prime minister of South Africa.

Following the official part of the proceedings, members of Aberdeen University and Aberdeen Labour Party anti-apartheid groups led a torchlight procession through the streets of Aberdeen from Cowdray Hall to the Beach Ballroom. The finale to the events took

the form of an evening meal and social gathering at the Beach Ballroom, with the appropriate national emphasis on not only the food but also the music and entertainment — the District Six band from South Africa performed.

Also present was North Aberdeen Member of Parliament, Robert Hughes, a lifelong campaigner against the apartheid regime in South Africa and National Chairperson of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement.

Stoke-on-Trent Honours Sisulu

The imprisoned ANC leader, Comrade Walter Sisulu, was awarded the Freedom of the City of Stoke-on-Trent, in the Midlands of England, at a ceremony on the 22nd November 1984. The award was received on his behalf by his son, Max.

Proposing the award, Mr Ron Southern, Leader of the City Council of Stoke-on-Trent said that Comrade Sisulu's only crime was to fight for a democratic South Africa, and that:

"he remains a shining example of patriotism and courage."

Mr Southern told the council that Walter Sisulu was joining a list of 40 Freemen of the City honoured by Stoke-on-Trent over the years for their services to politics and other spheres of national and international life. However, another councillor reminded the audience that the list did contain one name that was a "stain" on the city — that of General James Hertzog, whose Nationalist Party laid the foundation for apartheid.

Comrade Seretse Choabi, representing the ANC, made a speech of thanks in which he told the story of how he first met Comrade Sisulu in 1954, when Comrade Sisulu came to address a meeting of the ANC Youth League. He spoke of him as:

"a humble and simple man who respected his equals and opted to serve them in the cause of liberty."

He spoke of him as an inspiration to the young, a man who refused to indulge in gossip and mudslinging at any man within the ranks of the movement, and who insisted that the truth should be told at meetings. He spoke, too, of



Comrade Max Sisulu receives the Freedom of the City of Stoke-on-Trent, on behalf of his father, gaoled ANC leader Walter Sisulu.

Comrade Sisulu's courage in refusing to accept release from prison if it meant that his people continued to be subjugated.

Comrade Choabi received a standing ovation when he concluded his speech by saying:

"Your action to honour this man, respected by my people as a leader, is greatly appreciated. This City has decided to identify itself with the liberation struggle of the people of South Africa. We appreciate everything you have done to create this opportunity — thank you, thank you, thank you."

A spokesman for the Conservative opposition on the City Council of Stoke-on-Trent accused the ANC of "acts of terrorism," and the Conservative councillors opposed the award.

CENTRAL AMERICAN SOCIALISTS CONDEMN SENTENCE ON MOLOISE

As Malesela Benjamin Moloise, sentenced to death on a false charge, is still confined in a condemned cell in Pretoria, we learn of a resolution that was sent to the State President in Pretoria by the People's Socialist Party of the Yucatan Peninsula in Central America:

"We bring to your notice our condemnation of the attitude taken by your government against the patriot Malesela Benjamin Moloise. At the same time, we strongly manifest our repudiation of the policy which the Pretoria government imposes on the African people in their struggle for self-determination. For a South Africa free and democratic!"

**A DISCUSSION
ARTICLE**

COOKING THE RICE INSIDE THE POT

A HISTORICAL CALL IN OUR TIMES

By Comrade Mzala

Great political events are unfolding before our eyes. To the overwhelming majority of our people it is already obvious that a great revolution is in the wings in South Africa. Today South Africa is a spectacle of a people utterly resolved and completely devoted to the cause of revolution. The democratic movement that has developed in the heart of our country is a powerful testimony of our people's unwillingness to accept reforms of the system. Our people have long ago discovered that what is needed in South Africa is a new society, a new political and economic system, a radical change of all that is existing.

Lenin remarks somewhere that every political upheaval, if it is not a mere change of cliques, is a social revolution. The revolution that is developing in our country, one that obviously is not going to leave the pillars of the racist house standing, is indeed a great social revolution.

We have finished the boycott campaign against the Botha Constitution. The results of the Coloured and Indian elections are already common knowledge to all our people and to the world in general: a massive rejection by the Coloured and Indian peoples to join the existing political order! The overwhelming majority of the Coloured and Indian nationalities, which are a part of the oppressed nation, remain untarnished by any compromise with the discredited apartheid regime. The op-

pressed people definitely reject as unworthy of them any petty and ill-fated 'freedom' handed out by the oppressors, they are prepared to forsake immediate petty political 'gains' and reformist handouts in the belief that they are a part of a victorious revolution.

Towards a People's Republic

Writing in the pamphlet, *The Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Socialist Revolution*, Lenin advanced for the Russian revolutionaries the concept of a 'Provisional Revolutionary Government' as an indispensable stage that the liberation movement should reach in the course of the struggle to conquer power. Lenin, who led the struggle of the Russian people for democracy and freedom from Tsarist autocracy, argued that it was necessary to spread among the people in general, and the working class in particular, a concrete idea of the most probable course of the revolution, and of the necessity, at a certain moment of the revolution, for the appearance of a 'Provisional Revolutionary Government.' In South Africa we are also struggling against racist autocracy and for seizure of power by the people; as a result, the significance of this thesis for the South African democratic revolution cannot be ignored.

The African National Congress differs from the liberal democrats and other reformists by its demand for the immediate overthrow of the

racist government and its replacement by a revolutionary people's government. If the unavoidable result of the present political mass movement in South Africa is a revolution, then this implies that the racist State should be overthrown and the old colonial relationships abolished. The passing of State power from the racist minority to the mass of the democratic people will be the principal sign of a revolution in the practical political meaning of the term. At the moment the state power in South Africa is in the hands of the White minority that is backed up by imperialist economic power; the so-called Republic of South Africa is a class State of the bourgeoisie that operates for the purposes of denying us our national right to the wealth of the country, the right to participate in its administration, and to enjoy all human rights that are consistent with any democratic society.

During the process of our liberation struggle for political power, there will gradually emerge new organs of people's power as nuclei of our new State. The principal issue of the revolutionary struggle of the masses in political actions and armed struggle is to seize political power from the enemy, to destroy the previous form of government both in the villages and in towns, and to start creating new organs of self-government. Finally the overthrow of the racist government will result in the formation of the 'Provisional Revolutionary Government' that will be an organ of that political victory. Such a revolutionary government will represent the interests of the people; it will guarantee the fullest measure of political freedom to conduct an election campaign for the convening of the People's Assembly that will draft the new Constitution for South Africa.

In any democratic republic it is absolutely necessary to convene an assembly of people's representatives, elected on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, by secret ballot. The People's Assembly will promulgate laws that will declare all racist laws null and void; it will pass laws that are in conformity with the Freedom Charter. No agreement can be reached with the racist regime to convene such a

People's Assembly; no racist government can guarantee the holding of free and fair elections in South Africa, and therefore no peaceful negotiation can lead to the creation of a democratic State without the racists and the imperialists, and against them. Such a condition requires political and military victory by the organised masses, the only condition that will clear the ground for the implementation of the Freedom Charter.

A Mass Movement is Essential for Revolution

Great social objectives in history have been accomplished by mass movements. Our revolution in south Africa can be victorious only when it mobilises and organises the masses at the grass-roots level; it can be an invincible force only when it is an offshoot of the embattled workers, rural toilers and other democratic forces. The decisive role of the masses in revolution cannot be substituted by an elite corps of professional revolutionaries ... we seek to establish the power of the people and not of the vanguard movement.

During the age of capitalism it is the working class that forms the majority of the masses; all "previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of the minorities," the democratic movement that is led by the working class is truly a mass movement. Only a mass movement that is led by the working class will have nothing to secure and to fortify in the present South Africa, since the working class has the objective mission to destroy, not just appearances, but, on the contrary, the essence of oppression; not just its form, but the thing itself, the root of the social evil. A mass movement that is rooted among the working masses is no longer a formal organisation but an actual material force, and no amount of banning orders can destroy it, no amount of arrests of its leading persons can weaken it ... it is invincible!

How can we develop the current people's upsurge against the Botha regime into an invincible mass movement? Let us mention another condition. It may be said without exaggeration that we are now passing through a

period of history when our people, more than ever before, prefer to die fighting in open struggle against this infamous racist system rather than perish from constant starvation, dying prematurely from diseases caused by horrible conditions of poverty. The desperate outbursts of our people point to the imperative necessity for strong organisation and leadership in order to wage a skilled political struggle for victory. It is not enough to call ourselves the vanguard contingent, we must act in such a way that all the other contingents recognise and are obliged to admit that we are not tailing behind semi-spontaneous mass upsurges but are marching in the vanguard. The arena from which alone it is possible to organise the masses and provide real, dynamic and comprehensive leadership, is among the people themselves.

We often meet people who imagine that when we talk of the working people swelling the ranks of our movement we are referring to the exile structures of our organisation. This is incorrect thinking. Leadership, in the final analysis, means going to the masses, merging with them into an invincible fighting force. History's great call to our movement headed by the African National Congress is to begin a process of de-exiling ourselves, of transferring the initiative of the liberation process to the actual arena of our struggle, inside South Africa. We must fight our way back into our country, we must find ways of dispatching units of our political and military leadership to the various pockets of mass resistance inside South Africa. Yes, let us always remember that while we engage ourselves in building pyramids in Egypt, the main task is still to cross the Red Sea back into our own land.

Commenting on the Nkomati Accord between Mozambique and racist South Africa, the Editor of *The African Communist* put it thus:

"The ANC leadership outside South Africa, like the Communist Party leadership, has never seen itself as permanently in exile. It has always seen itself as a temporary caretaker for the movement which had to be

rebuilt, regrouped and re-established at home ...

"Within South Africa today, every aspect of our people's struggle contrasts sharply with the bleak days of 1960. Today there is everywhere widespread readiness for struggle, which flares up repeatedly in a myriad of local actions by workers, peasants, squatters, students, householders, professionals and politicians. Everywhere, on a local level, there are respected and trusted local spokesmen and leaders, together with local organisations, who fill the vacuum created by the 1960 setbacks ...

"This is not to claim that every mass popular resistance to the regime in township and factory is organised by the ANC. Far from it. But the ANC presence is there, everywhere; its influence and reputation, upheld and spread by the external leadership, give coherence, unity and self-confidence to every popular movement. **To this extent, the external ANC leadership has fulfilled a large part of its task — the essential part — of sponsoring the spirit of mass resistance among the people** without which there can be no safe basis for a rebuilt organisation. And the SACP has played its full part in all this ...

"And so the external leadership has done what it set out to do — in part at least. It has created the conditions for a return of the organisations and their leadership to South Africa. It has fought a way back, via propaganda and underground organisation; and it has fought a way back via foreign training and cross-border return of the armed forerunners of the people's liberation forces ... Our organisations have had over twenty years' hospitality in the Front Line States to make this possible. If the curtailment of facilities in Mozambique is to have any long-term influence on our movement, it will be simply to lend urgency to the pace of this process of fighting our way back into the country; and thus to expedite the date at which an internal revolutionary leadership is once again established — this time securely surrounded by an armed cadre and

an aroused and supportive population. The difficulties for us arising from the Nkomati Accord are short-term; the challenging opportunities are long-term." (No 98, 3rd Quarter 1984)

The present all-round crisis facing the ruling class in South Africa, the current revolt following the rejection of the latest racist Constitution, in which dozens of our people have been killed by the army and police, this unprecedented situation of ungovernability in South Africa, puts intense pressure on us to meet this long-term challenge and re-establish revolutionary bases and leadership centres of our liberation movement within the borders of South Africa, among our fighting masses. This is a formidable challenge, which requires supreme sacrifice from all of us — anyway, it is no more formidable than our decision to leave our country to seek assistance from other lands ... we have no choice here, otherwise we will be attempting to cook the rice outside the pot.

Arming the Masses and Building a People's Army

Che Guevara once remarked that:

"Guerrilla warfare is not, as is so often thought, a small-scale war, a war conducted by a minority grouping against a powerful army. No, guerrilla warfare is war by the entire people against the reigning oppression. The guerrilla movement is their armed vanguard; the guerrilla army comprises all the people of a region or country. That is the reason for its strength and for its eventual victory over whatsoever power tries to crush it; that is, the base and grounding of the guerrilla is the people." (*Granma*, Havana, December 3rd 1967).

What are the possibilities of developing a guerrilla war of a mass character at the present moment in South Africa? What are the prospects of arming the masses in corresponding process as the development of our People's War? This is no longer a theoretical question; the current events throughout the country and in the Vaal

Triangle in particular demonstrate in no uncertain terms that the masses have definitely resolved to change the situation by organised violent means. As I am writing I am looking at some statistics of this violent revolt at present taking place in the Transvaal (see *The Sunday Express* of the 7th October 1984); these figures are part of the first official account of deaths, injuries and damage in the current unrest throughout the country which was reported to the Transvaal congress of the Nationalist Party by the racist Minister of Police, Louis Le Grange:

Buildings Damaged	
Schools	50
Churches	2
Clinics	7
Shops	85
Motor Garages	4
Administrative Board Buildings	17
Beer Halls	26
Bottle Stores	16
Homes (SA Police members)	8
Homes (Private persons!)	90
Banks	4
Post Offices	6
Hostels	3
Bus Depots	2
Technikons	1
Boarding Houses	1
Offices	2
Halls	1
Libraries	3

Vehicles Damaged	
SA Police vehicles	113
Private vehicles(!)	208
Buses	356
Post Office Vehicles	3
Administration Board Vehicles	20
Municipal Vehicles	1

Louis Le Grange told the Transvaal Congress of the Nationalist Party (NP) that the army (SADF) is to play a greater role in combating unrest and violence in the townships, supporting the police force, which is clearly failing to cope with the furious army of angry yet unarmed people in the townships. As it is, in-

deed more than 7 000 members of the South African army went into Sharpeville and Sebokeng locations recently on a killing and maiming mission, under the guise of searching for weapons. The casualty toll among our people is soon approaching one hundred dead persons, mostly youth.

The Regime is Vulnerable

Joint operations by the police and army to 'control' internal unrest are not new to South Africa, although they have been rare. Military historians inside South Africa say that in the earlier decades of this century the calling out of troops was a signal that the police had lost control of the situation. Where the army had to be called in it usually meant that the country was close to a state of emergency. Today the use of troops to patrol South Africa's Black townships and to man road blocks may not only be a sign of deepening political crisis and panic on the part of the regime but also an indication that the police force has been stretched to its limits. These are interesting revelations to our own strategists. If Soweto and the other areas in the Vaal Triangle alone are able to draw into action such a vast sector of the racist forces of suppression, then this is a sign that the regime is even more vulnerable than many people tended to believe thus far.

A revolutionary crisis is maturing in South Africa, and, sooner than many of us expect, it will come to a head and the government will no longer be able to suppress the mass resistance. The masses themselves have realised that the only way out is to wage a war on the regime. The people's combat diary is there for everybody to inspect ... show me any army anywhere in the world which, despite such odds, and armed with old bottles and dustbin lids, caused the damage enumerated in the above-mentioned statistics! Such is the present mood of the masses. Umkhonto We Sizwe has demonstrated the way forward through an armed propaganda campaign; now, more than ever before, the time has come for both our movement and the masses in general to be placed on a war footing.

As the revolutionary situation is gradually

maturing every day, the central problem facing the masses in their daily life is how to fight the enemy and win victory. What policy, what strategy will link us stronger with such a fighting people? It is one that will proceed from the programme of the arming of the masses for a real and decisive victory over the racists in correspondence with the development of our army inside the country; in this way, it will no longer be a war by a few scattered groups, but a planned national war. Our task in this regard is to continue (as we are already doing) to form the nuclei of armed guerrilla units, operating both in the towns and countryside, which should exist not merely to fight to destroy the enemy's military strength, but also to shoulder such important tasks as mobilising the masses, organising them, arming them, and helping them to form revolutionary organs of self-government. Unless our liberation army shoulders these tasks, its fighting will lose its meaning and also the reason for its existence. Proceeding from this approach, the guerrilla operations will be in harmony with the daily struggles of the people as well as with their aspirations. At the grass-roots level, armed struggle must be de-mystified, workers and peasants should be capable of imagining that they themselves are capable of carrying out combat operations.

The Spanish Experience

Late in 1948 the revolutionaries in Spain decided to abandon guerrilla warfare, and all commanders in the field were instructed that guerrilla units should be disbanded ... the war was just not winning victory! Writing almost in lament, General Lister, who was one of the commanders in the military campaigns that were led by the Communist Party of Spain, says that:

"it was painful to have to discontinue the guerrilla movement in which so many men and women had fought with supreme courage."

What had gone wrong in Spain? Why couldn't the guerrilla war succeed? General Lister has this profound lesson to share with us:

"In organising a guerrilla movement one should never confuse popular sympathy with popular support; these are two different things. In Spain the guerrillas enjoyed the sympathy of the people, who regarded them as heroes. But the sympathy did not go beyond that. It never became the active and massive support for the guerrilla operations which was essential, and on which the guerrillas had counted."

The Spanish experience teaches us that an organisation which is thinking in terms of initiating a guerrilla war should know that a guerrilla movement must proceed from the concept of peoples' support; a guerrilla war can grow into a mass movement provided the people are organised, armed to take part in it, using the forms of combat suggested by the actual situation and objective conditions in the country, including armed insurrection as an art.

Mandela Said It

Waging People's War of a guerrilla type within a highly industrialised capitalist state, one which has not only mobilised and armed a vast colonial community but, in addition, is supported by almost all the major imperialist countries financially and (though covertly) militarily, is an extremely difficult venture, it cannot be denied. Sustaining guerrilla operations inside the country without safe supply lines (which almost all countries that waged guerrilla war had, with Cuba as a notable exception) makes our war even more hazardous.

Those who rely on these and similar

arguments to dismiss the possibility of our victory over the Pretoria regime, forget or underestimate the most important factor which will make our revolutionary war of liberation victorious, that is, the organised character and proper leadership of our armed people. Future historians, who will judge our situation with the benefit of hindsight, having the advantage of the so-called 'bird's-eye view' will indeed say that we won our victory because we truly fought a people's war.

One racist general is reported by *The Star* of 27th January 1973 to have confessed:

"The objective for both sides in a revolutionary war is the population itself ... military tactics and hardware are all well and good, but they are really quite useless if the government has lost the confidence of the people among whom it is fighting. And by the time their confidence has been lost, more armed force will cause the population to become more antagonistic."

Even here in the military field of organisation, our task is to provide on-the-spot military leadership to the people's combat efforts. The task is to contextualise Shaka's strategy of 'shortening the spears,' to fight a sustained people's war for victory.

Said Nelson Mandela:

"Between the anvil of united mass action and the hammer of armed struggle we shall crush apartheid and White minority racist rule."



SOL PLAATJE - GREAT SON OF AFRICA

Willan, B, *Sol Plaatje — South African Nationalist 1876-1932*, London (Heinemann), 1984, £8.95.

Sol Plaatje needs no introduction to the readers of *Sechaba* except to say that a review of his biography in the January 1985 issue of *Sechaba* is a welcome 73rd birthday present to the ANC. Brian Willan's book is not only the first full-length biography of Plaatje; it is full of hitherto unknown information about this great son of Africa, Solomon Tshekiso Plaatje.

Brian Willan modestly and optimistically introduces his book:

... I hope I may encourage others to undertake biographical research into the lives of other men and women of Plaatje's background and generation. The longer this is left, it need scarcely be added, the less there will be to recover.

"Writing this book has presented a variety of difficulties and challenges. Foremost amongst them has been Plaatje's own extraordinary range of talents, particularly in the field of languages — he spoke eight different languages, European and African, and wrote regularly in half of these. I make no claims to such linguistic competence myself. Where appropriate, I have relied upon others for assistance in translation, and have taken comfort in the knowledge that, were Plaatje to await a biographer with a range

of linguistic skills which matched his own, it is doubtful if an account of his life would ever be written. I hope that others more qualified than myself to assess Plaatje's contribution in the field of Tswana literature, in particular, will be encouraged by my findings to investigate this subject further."

Both Plaatje's first names have biblical connotations — Tshekiso meaning 'judgement' — testifying to the Christian background of Sol Plaatje, a fact which influenced his political and adult life. As for the surname, which is not African, Brian Willan tells us:

"Family tradition has it that it was while living at Philipolis that Plaatje's forebears first acquired the name Plaatje. Meaning 'flat' in Dutch, the name was reputedly given to Selogilwe, Plaatje's grandfather ("Au Plaatje"), by a Dutch-speaking Griqua farmer on whose land they lived; "Au Plaatje" was supposed to have had a flat-looking forehead, and the Griqua to have been either unable or unwilling to pronounce the family name of Mogodi correctly. Whatever the exact circumstances of its acquisition, the name stuck and has been retained by one branch of the family ever since." (p.10)

Plaatje came from a relatively well-off family ("materially speaking, the Plaatje family were

comfortably off," p. 14) and what distinguished Plaatje's upbringing " from that of many of these (his) contemporaries was the depth of experience his family and forebears had accumulated in reconciling African and Christian tradition, in forging a distinctive way of life which represented a synthesis of the two." (p.26)

At the age of 22 Plaatje married Elizabeth Lilith M'belle, a sister to Isaiah Budlwana M'Belle (He called himself Isaiah Bud-M'Belle), Plaatje's mentor and friend. This was in Kimberley in 1898. But his marriage was not without problems. The parents and relatives of the couple (from both sides) lived in Pniel in the Orange Free State, and in Burghersdorp in the Cape, that is, outside cosmopolitan Kimberley, and were not used to inter-ethnic or 'inter-tribal' marriages, in this case between a Tswana young man and a Xhosa girl. Plaatje has this to say about this problem (perhaps not without a hint of sarcasm):

"My people resented the idea of my marrying a girl who spoke a language which, like the Hottentot language, has clicks in it; while her people likewise abominated the idea of giving their daughter in marriage to a fellow who spoke a language so imperfect as to be without any clicks." (p.50)

All the same, parental disapproval notwithstanding, they got married in Kimberley.

One of the blessings of Kimberley, a cosmopolitan diamond-digging town which attracted Africans from all over South Africa, was that it afforded Plaatje the opportunity to improve his English and Dutch; to learn Sesotho and Xhosa — he learned Zulu later — besides Tswana, which was his mother-tongue, Koranna and German which he had learned at Pniel, where he was born on October 9th, 1876. Kimberley also aroused his interest in Shakespeare. Plaatje later became a court interpreter/clerk in Mafeking (which was later besieged by the Boers) and developed to become a journalist-cum-editor for successive Tswana/English newspapers

Plaatje lived at a difficult time. This was the period of the discovery of diamonds and gold; the Anglo-Boer War, which expressed among

other things British imperialist greed; the 1910 Act of Union; the 1913 Native Land Act; the First World War and the general erosion of the few rights Africans had, for example the Cape vote, besides the new laws which sought to entrench racism and African deprivation.

This was also the period of the emergence of African nationalism and the socialist movement; the rise and fall of the ICU; the formation of the African Women's Organisation and so on. This is to say nothing of the strikes by White miners; the demonstrations of the ANC; the strikes by African miners; the anti-pass campaigns of African women; the resistance of the Indian community led by Gandhi, and the struggles of the Coloured community under the leadership of Abdurahman's African People's Organisation.

Plaatje grappled with these problems, or, to be more precise, with some of them. He saw the formation of the ANC as the key to the solution of these problems. He was not the only one to come to this conclusion, but he did play an important role in the formation of the ANC:

"An awareness of the importance of achieving unity of this kind was not, of course, new, and even before the Act of Union some experience in trying to reconcile the immense political and regional differences that existed had been gained in organisations like the South African Native Press Association, in which Plaatje had played a leading part in 1903 and 1904, in the Native Convention held in Bloemfontein in 1909, and then in the formation of a permanent — if not altogether representative — organisation of the same name, which maintained a somewhat discreet existence throughout 1901 and 1911; in this, too, Plaatje had played a part, occupying the position of Assistant Secretary.

"It was from this experience of the South African Native Convention that Congress actually emerged, and it is clear that a great deal of discussion and deliberation, in which Plaatje was much involved, had taken place before Pixley Seme, a lawyer trained at Columbia University, USA, and Jesus College, Oxford, who had recently returned to South Africa, was able to issue his now famous

clarion call for unity at the end of 1911. Plaatje had been amongst those who attended a special meeting of the executive committee of the Convention, held in Johannesburg early in August 1911, which provided Seme with the first opportunity to expand upon his ideas about the need for a more vigorous, more representative, above all, a more united, political organisation. Later, indeed, Plaatje claimed to have made possible the establishment of Congress by persuading the leaders of the two main Transvaal organisations already in existence, the Transvaal Native Congress and the Transvaal Native Political Organisation, to set aside their differences and rivalries and to co-operate in setting up a single, national political body; there seems no reason to doubt his claim." (pp150-151)

The story of the formation of the ANC is fascinating. The founding fathers of the ANC were not always unanimous on everything — a testimony to the fact that the ANC has always consisted of people with different political views and outlook but united by their common hatred and rejection of national oppression.

One of Plaatje's main preoccupations was the land question and the 1913 Land Act which motivated him to write his classic, *Native Life in South Africa*, which was published with great difficulties in 1916 and republished by Ravan Press in 1982.

The story of the two ANC delegations which went abroad in 1914 and 1919, in both of which Plaatje was a member, is well known. Two things need to be emphasised in this connection. First is the fact that with the inspiration of Plaatje, his sympathisers in Britain decided to form "a committee to watch over Native interests;" in effect to carry on Plaatje's work now that he was departing for home, as Willan puts it (p.203). This was the forerunner of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

The second point is that the US Consulate in London, together with the British Government, **collaborated** with the South African authorities to refuse Plaatje a passport to go to the US (pp.250-251). What Plaatje did not tell the South African High Commissioner in London was that he was going to the US via

Canada, which did not insist upon a passport as a precondition for entry, and whilst in Canada he was issued with a Canadian passport. This situation, the Western Governments' **collaboration** with apartheid and the support our struggle receives from the people of Western Europe and America has not changed over the years since the days of Plaatje.

When Plaatje returned home he found himself embroiled in the ups and downs of the ANC; there were also pressures from the government and mining companies like De Beers and the Chamber of Mines, and outright attempts to undermine the ANC and its publication, *Abantu-Batho*.

Plaatje became more and more involved in the battles for a new Tswana orthography — a fight for the introduction of a phonetic script — a problem he saw as an aspect of the defence and development of African languages and culture. There were other reasons for this:

"The unsatisfactory state of written literature in Tswana was also underlined — in Plaatje's mind more than anybody else's — by the progress that was being made in the other vernacular literatures of Southern Africa. Although Setswana had been one of the first Bantu languages to be committed to writing in the early part of the nineteenth century, and had been very fortunate in the quality of the linguistic and translating work carried out by the first missionaries working amongst the Tswana people, it had, by the 1920s, been far overtaken by work that had been done in other languages, particularly in Xhosa and Sotho. For both these languages the problems of orthography had been, for the most part, overcome, and in each language Xhosa and Sotho writers had progressed a long way beyond the purely religious, didactic works that still, in the 1920s, constituted the bulk of published literature in Setswana. Apart from Plaatje himself, indeed no native Tswana-speakers had written or at least published any books in their language. Xhosa and Sotho, by contrast, had produced widely known writers like S E K Mqhayi and Thomas Mofolo, whose novel, *Chaka*, published in 1925, had met with immediate acclaim, and was soon

to be translated into English. For Plaatje, the effect was only to emphasise the extent to which Tswana had fallen behind. It possessed, in the 1920s, no literature beyond Plaatje's compilations and a limited amount of religious and didactic material, an inadequate dictionary, no commonly accepted means of representing the language in writing, and no mission press that was either able or willing to publish anything other than its own denomination's religious material. The closest approximation to Lovedale or Morija amongst the Tswana was the London Missionary Society's institution at Tigerkloof, but this was severely handicapped by lack of funds; it used an orthography not accepted by the other missionary societies; and such publications as it produced were based uncompromisingly upon the Tlaping dialect. In the past Plaatje had been very critical of the society's generally poor performance in the field of education; he saw no reason now to change his opinion." (p.325)

By this time Plaatje had translated some of Shakespeare's works into Setswana and also translated Tswana idioms and proverbs into English. In 1930 after "ten years of disappointment" (p.350) Plaatje managed to have his book *Mhudi* published ("the first book of its kind, in English, to have been written by a Black South African"). When one considers the number of lost manuscripts or those unfinished such as on the history of the Baca, one gets a picture not only of the wide range of interests of Plaatje but also of the rate at which he worked.

Plaatje had political and ideological problems which were partly objective; he did not become conservative with time; he was consistent as far as he saw his role and that of his contemporaries. What changed was the socio-economic and political situation; he could not understand or cope with the effects of industrialisation and the resultant emergence of the African working class; he regarded himself as a champion and spokesman of the rural Africans. Plaatje held contradictory views on many points: he hated strikes but preferred lobbying; he was anti-Boer but pro-British;

against the emergence of the African working class but defended the peasantry. Plaatje mistakenly thought that Cape 'liberalism' was antagonistic to political and territorial segregation, hence his love for Victorian values, confidence in British 'fair play' and — of all things — faith in the British Government.

There were other problems. Plaatje was always in financial difficulties and this led to a situation where he did not only have no money, but could not raise money to get his manuscripts printed — some got lost in the process. He became financially and therefore politically dependent on De Beers.

Plaatje, frustrated, disillusioned, drifted away from practical political work and ended up being what Brian Willan calls a "leader without a people."

All this and much more is related with great care and skill by Brian Willan in his well-researched book. The photographs and pictures, documents and places connected with Plaatje, his family, friends and contemporaries make the story vivid and lively. This book is a wealth of information not only about Plaatje but also about historical events, personalities, trends and developments in South African history. Brian Willan states in the Preface:

"The vast majority of South Africans, it would be true to say, have never even heard of his (Plaatje's) name. Such a state of affairs stems not so much from the lack of recognition accorded to Plaatje during his own lifetime ... but rather from South Africa's capacity to obscure and distort its own past, to neglect the lives of those whose ideals and aspirations have been in conflict with official orthodoxies past and present. The South African historical memory, to put it another way, has been highly selective in its recall.

"I hope this book may contribute to challenging the dominance of this form of historical memory ..."

With this book Brian Willan has done just that. But Brian Willan seems to exercise so much care about his hero — defending Plaatje (even when it is not necessary) and carefully explaining his theories — that he refrains from commenting where he could and should, and at

times he finds it difficult to 'distance himself' from Plaatje. Not that he does not comment at all. But his assessment of Plaatje's ideas and actions is on some questions not acceptable to this reviewer.

This might be connected with the difficult question of putting into proper perspective the relationship between masses, party or movement and leaders. It is true that the role of the individual in history is important, but its importance becomes more meaningful in direct relationship to the struggles of the masses under the leadership of their organisation. One would also have expected Brian Willan to say something about the 1913 African women's anti-pass demonstrations in the Orange Free State; incidents about which Plaatje wrote so passionately.

Plaatje's life is full of lessons for all of us today. He struggled against forced removals in 1916 — an acute problem today — and fought for the respect and development of African languages, culture and literature; he upheld the rights of the African people to self-determination, although his ideas were ill-defined. By internationalising our campaign he contributed to the international condemnation of colonialism. As editor/journalist he was an opinion maker.

One of Plaatje's greatest contributions is that he and his colleagues founded and led the African National Congress and by so doing established African political opinion as an autonomous factor in its own right in South African history.

It is for these reasons and many other reasons that we remember Plaatje and in the words inscribed on his tombstone, we say:

**Ikhutse Morolong: Modiredi Wa Afrika
Rest in peace, Morolong, you servant of
Africa!**

At a time when the racists are portraying themselves in Africa and elsewhere as the 'Voice of South Africa,' the voice of Sol Plaatje needs to be heard; reading this book is a must.

FM

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SOUTH AFRICA AT WAR

