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SYSTEM IN CRISIS

In South Africa today we witness a number of strikes, school boycotts, mass resistance, intensified guerilla activity; in short people's resistance. What is behind these actions? What causes such unrest?

The contradiction between sugar-coated words and bloody actions of the regime is not a new one. It has manifested itself in many ways. In 1948 the Nationalist Party came to power ostensibly because of the differences between international business interests and Afrikaanerdom. Today this conflict has shifted to within the Nationalist Party itself. The strategy of Botha and Koornhof represents a powerful convergence of military and industrial interests.

The essential features of these "reforms" are.

a) control of black labour through restrictive legislation and the movement of huge numbers of the black population into areas designated as 'homelands' or 'independent states', from areas arbitrarily designated as white;

b) monopoly of political and military power in white hands;

c) super-exploitation and national oppression of the Blacks.

During the economic boom of the 1960s Africans were either forced by anti-squatter legislation from increasingly mechanised white farms or were attracted from overpopulated rural areas by employment prospects in the towns. The drift from poverty-stricken countryside to overcrowded townships was accelerated. Thus the internal dynamism of South Africa's industrialised economy acted, in some respects, in contradiction to the ideology and demands of apartheid — hence more vigorous control over black labour was enforced.

There was a flood of migrants. The solution was seen to be their "regulation" by draconian "influx control" mechanisms.

which ensured that only the "economically useful" (predominantly men) were given access to towns whilst "appendages" (children and wives) were left in the countryside or dumped in squatter areas like Dimbaza.

This is the meaning of the spirit and letter of the recommendations of the Wiehahn and Riekert commissions which aimed at tightening up "influx control" and suppressing strikes by workers while ironing out sources of irritation for a section of the black urban workers and professional men.

During the 1970s South Africa was unable to maintain a steady growth rate for a variety of reasons:

- 1) the quadrupling of oil prices;
- 2) fluctuations in the gold price;
- 3) world recession;
- 4) the unwillingness on the part of foreign investors to invest as a result of the 1976 uprisings;
- 5) rise in the level of black unemployment that is 25 per cent of the black work force (2 million).

What was the racist government's response? It accelerated its "independence" programme for the "homelands" — Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda. It began a computer control of black labour with workers carefully monitored for work record and docility. The army was "modernised" and the government changed from being a police state to a military state: an efficient instrument for conventional warfare — blitzkrieg — against the frontline states. What South Africa faced now was no longer the breakdown of "law and order" but a war situation, it was argued.

Magnus Malan's rise to become the chief ideologue of the South African national security and Botha's ascendancy to premiership are evidence of the growing

militarisation of the social, economic and political life in South Africa.

This was happening at the time when the rival BOSS intelligence agency and its leader General Van den Bergh was being discredited in the wake of the information scandal. The results of this scandal were catastrophic: The advocate of national security, PW Botha came to power, the State Security Council (SSC) became a senior cabinet committee and increasingly dominated government decisions. The information scandal did help to transform the machinery of government to produce the present military state.

All this is meant to maintain white affluence and black poverty. It is happening at a time when inflation never went below 10 per cent in the 1970s, when the price of maize, the African staple food, has risen by 60 per cent since 1975.

This explains the unrest, strikes, school boycotts, support for guerilla activities inside the country and the emergence and growth of new political organisations.

It explains the enthusiasm with which our people welcomed the emergence of Zimbabwe under the leadership of the Patriotic Front alliance headed by Comrade Mugabe. It explains the national campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners. The campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela is closely linked with the developments in Zimbabwe but also with the strikes that are going on now. The first half of 1980 saw a level of labour unrest unprecedented in our history. The initiative now lies with the workers, students, the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe.

NZO: THE PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE

Speech delivered by Comrade Alfred Nzo, on behalf of the African National Congress to the International NGO Action Conference for Sanctions against South Africa, Geneva, 30 June - 3 July, 1980.

On behalf of the oppressed people of South Africa, on behalf of the African National Congress and its peoples army Umkhonto we Sizwe, I bring revolutionary and warm fraternal greetings to the organisers and participants of this most important conference.

Over the years there has been many conferences to discuss the burning issues of Southern Africa, however this conference has an added urgency because it is taking

place at a very decisive stage in the unfolding of the revolutionary situation in Southern Africa.

At the NGO conference against apartheid held in 1978 we hailed the victories of PAIGC, Frelimo and MPLA. Today we meet in the wake of the stunning victory scored by the Zimbabwe people led by Zanu and Zapu. These advances in Southern Africa are an integral part of the deepening revolutionary processes taking place throughout the world.

1980 -- a new decade

1980 marks both the beginning of a new decade and the end of the 70's which have



Comrade Alfred Nzo, Secretary General of the ANC

proved truly momentous in the history of mankind.

Today no continent remains immune to the confident march of mankind towards a world free of racism, colonialism, exploitation and war.

The victories in Vietnam, Nicaragua, Grenada, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Zimbabwe are successes which belong to all the progressive and democratic forces of the world. They contribute to our collective advance in one inter-dependent world-wide battle fought on many fronts.

Based on this understanding of the essential unity of our struggles the ANC has forged a fighting alliance with genuine liberation movements in Southern Africa and with anti-imperialist and democratic forces throughout the world. We see this conference as a further consolidation and strengthening of this alliance and are confident that from this conference will emerge concrete proposals for the increased solidarity with the genuine liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia and the total isolation of the South African regime.

This is essential because the racist regime and its allies have launched a concerted

counter offensive to protect the last strongholds of race domination and exploitation and to reverse the gains already achieved on the African continent.

Holocaust - "too ghastly to contemplate"

In this respect it is with grave concern that we view the continuing political, economic and military muscle being used by the South African regime to subvert and if possible overthrow the governments of newly independent African states. It is alarming that South Africa's continuing military excursions into neighbouring territories, its massacre of hundreds of innocent people, its systematic destruction of the socio-economic structures has not met with the necessary responses from the international community and seems to have become one of those events which people have become resigned to and pass them over in silence. Only recently South Africa again invaded Angola. South Africa's military mobilisation was its biggest since the second world war. It is estimated that over 300 people were killed, many kidnapped and extensive economic damage caused. South African troops still occupy towns and cities in 3

Southern Angola.

For the front-line states such military barbarism has become a common feature of their lives; the basic purpose being to force them into submission and compel them to adopt more acceptable forms of government and systems and to isolate the genuine liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia.

Increasingly South Africa is becoming a threat to international peace and security and appropriate action must be taken immediately to curtail its aggressive expansionist policies.

Another feature of the present situation is the campaign to rehabilitate and legitimise the racist regime in world politics. Soon after the victory in Zimbabwe that "great apostle of peace and justice" Margaret Thatcher, in a major policy speech said that it was now time to get South Africa out of the cold and that concrete steps should be taken to ensure this.

Last month Dr. Chuba, President for the Centre for International Security in Washington and tipped to be Reagan's key security adviser, speaking in South Africa, said that the US should freely supply arms and military technology to South Africa and that South Africa should be supported even if it meant jeopardising US relations with third world countries. It is being argued that Botha is a reasonable man and that he needs time to deal with his "right wing" and that we must work for moderate and peaceful change. We are told that to help this process it is necessary to have political, economic and other co-operation with South Africa. This "constructive engagement" is supposed to facilitate the so-called liberalising process.

We fail to appreciate such cynicism and hypocrisy at a time when only 4 years after the brutal massacres of 1976 our people are once again being butchered in the ghettos of South Africa.

All this poses a grave challenge to the ANC, to SWAPO, to the Front Line States and all peoples and governments committed to genuine national and social emancipation in Southern Africa. If we fail to respond to this challenge and if we fail to clearly identify who our friends and who our enemies are, we will stand condemned by

future generations because the holocaust that the racist regime will unleash is "too ghastly to contemplate".

Southern Africa

It is with these broad perspectives that we must review recent developments and determine our tasks.

The Zimbabwean victory dealt another blow to the racist and reactionary powers in Southern Africa and has opened up new possibilities for further advances in the struggle against the last remaining bastion of racism and fascism.

The Namibian people under the leadership of SWAPO are resisting the occupying South African forces at all levels. Manoeuvres are continuing to subvert the revolutionary processes and South Africa remains as intransigent as ever. However SWAPO has made it clear that it is not interested in token changes, which leave the South African power structures intact and that under the auspices of the UN, conditions must be created for the transfer of genuine power to the people. We pledge full and unequivocal support for SWAPO.

In South Africa itself we can confidently proclaim that today the decisive feature of the political life is that strategically the initiative has shifted into the hands of the oppressed people of South Africa. Despite the fact that our organisation is illegal and that we have to work under conditions of fascist repression and terror and that in the course of our struggle we have suffered setbacks, the ANC has consistently carried out its historically determined tasks of strengthening and consolidating our legal, semi-legal and "illegal" presence in the country. Our objective is the mobilisation and organisation of the masses, the general raising of the political consciousness and the intensification of political activities through strikes, protests, demonstrations and all other forms of mass activity.

Armed with this correct strategy and tactics our people's resistance continues to grow, involving ever growing numbers of people throughout the country. The fascist terror has failed to curb the youth, the super-exploited black workers, the rural and urban masses, the revolutionary

intellectuals and other democratic forces.

Our Reality

Let us look at this more closely.

The regime is facing a sustained attack on its most vulnerable point, viz, its economy. In the last two years there has been repeated waves of industrial action and strikes, by the black working class, the leading force of the South African revolution. This has affected every area of the country: Strikes at Fords, Volkswagen, Goodyear, Fattis and Monis, Coca-Cola Red Meat, Sea Harvest, and the Goldmines are just some of the many examples. Police harrassment, victimisation, arrests, torture, loss of work, banishment and even shootings and killings have failed to curb the workers' militancy.

The strikes are showing a high degree of organisation and unity in action of all black workers. A worker summed up the situation when he said:

"Our strike was only successful because we were united. We were only united once we were organised and you can only be organised if you belong to a union. The strike has taught us that if you stand alone you are helpless".

In several cases the striking workers have been supported by a successful nationwide boycott of products of the firms concerned.

In many cases the workers demands go far beyond "pure" trade union demands. After the strikes in 1973 the Minister of Labour stated:

"The strikes in Natal are following the pattern which indicates that they are not purely connected with higher wages.... they are planned actions and the strikers are being used to achieve more than just an increase in wages... the conduct of the workers shows that the agitation for trade union rights offers no solution and is only a smokescreen behind which are other motives..."

We congratulate him on having made such a profound discovery and are certain that events since then have been of greater concern to him and to the multinationals. The black workers are defiantly demonstrating that they will not tolerate their super-

exploitation and they are finding the organisational means to resist.

Foreign Investments

The strikes have effectively answered all those apologists who have been campaigning for a realistic attitude and call for "constructive engagement" with the regime. The so-called Codes of Conduct the Sullivan Codes etc. must be reduced to the dustbins of history. They are nothing but attempts to counteract our demands for the complete severing of all economic links with the racist regime, and in particular the demand for comprehensive mandatory economic sanctions. It is no coincidence that such subterfuges are being introduced at a time when our people's mass resistance is reaching new heights and we are threatening the very nerve centre of the exploitative system in South Africa.

We cannot accept the argument that by investing directly in our oppression, overseas investors will somehow be able to release us from the tyranny of apartheid. Economic and other collaboration does not "liberalise" but strengthen the apartheid economy and its military power. Therefore the main guilt for the crimes committed against our people must be placed squarely on the western powers and the multinational corporations which have placed profit above human life, and which value their selfish interests above human aspirations.

Investments pour into South Africa because of apartheid and not in spite of it. The various apartheid laws ensure that the average rate of return on capital is the highest in the world. It is estimated to be 50% higher than the world average.

The multinationals' record also belies the pious and hypocritical "change through involvement" arguments. For instance of the 600 British companies in South Africa only 8 recognise trade unions. A recent British Parliamentary report revealed that major British companies are paying their workers starvation wages. The conservative Government is refusing to release the companies' names. The records of the USA, France, West Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and other multinationals are no better.

In many instances the multi-nationals 5

have not hesitated to deal ruthlessly with striking workers. The recent wave of strikes in the motor industry in Port Elizabeth and East London once again exposed this. African and Coloured workers at Ford, General Motors, Volkswagen and Goodyear downed tools in support of their demand for higher wages. Over 15,000 workers were involved and the action lasted several days. The police were called and several clashes took place. The police opened fire killing workers and injuring hundreds. Thousands of workers have been dismissed and many arrested. These are the "liberalising" effects of multinationals.

Our Youth and Students

Our youth and students throughout the country continue to resist the system and new organisational forms are being developed to meet the demands of the situation. In the last year we have witnessed the emergence of various youth and student organisations, such as Azapo, Azaso and Cosas. The mass bannings of 19 legal organisations in 1977 has clearly not had the desired effects intended by the regime.

The current boycott actions by our youth and students are a bold reflection of the uncompromising and militant mood of our people. Hundreds of thousands of school and university students representing all sections of our community — Africans, Coloureds, Indians and even some whites — are demonstrating their rejection of the whole apartheid system. From the Cape Province, from the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, from the so-called homelands of Kwazulu, Transkei and Qwa-Qwa the message defiantly proclaimed is Apartheid No! Freedom Yes!

Hundreds of schools throughout the country have been affected and many institutions closed down. Thousands have been expelled or arrested.

The police using dogs and batons have viciously attacked students and hundreds have been injured. The trigger-happy police unleashed by the "Shoot to kill" order indulged in an orgy of violence and callously opened fire on unarmed demonstrators. The affected areas were declared "operational" areas

and consequently no press or other so-called unauthorised persons were able to investigate and report on this new act of genocide. It is conservatively estimated that well over 60 people have been killed and hundreds injured. Once again we have witnessed the indiscriminate use of shotguns, automatic rifles, tear gas, sneeze machines and dogs. The youngest victim of the current barbarism of the Apartheid regime is a 17 month old baby who was hit in the head as the bullet ploughed through the walls of her home. She is Belisda Moore.

Even this is considered to be too restrained and Botha recently warned that it was now time that the state and police finally put their foot down and that if they are forced to do so people will be hurt very much more. He went on to say that the state will have to use all its might and would ruthlessly crush further racial violence. We don't want to be alarmists but the international community must be alerted to the serious implications of this statement and it must intensify its activities so that the carnage that Botha is contemplating does not take place. The streets of our ghettos are already stained by the blood of our finest sons and daughters, how many more must be sacrificed in the pursuit of greed and profit.

We wonder why as the apartheid murderers pursue their criminal acts, their allies who piously proclaim themselves as defenders of democracy, peace and non-violence and who are themselves responsible for the economic and military might of South Africa, are so conspicuously silent.

Mandela's Message

However no amount of killings and repression can stop our people's march to freedom. In fact this desperation on the part of the regime is the fascist reply to what they realise to be a "total onslaught" against the apartheid system. They have been forced to recognise the extent of the people's resistance spearheaded by the ANC. One example of the growing stature and strength of our movement is the

nation-wide FREE MANDELA CAMPAIGN which has been launched in the country. For our people Mandela's name is synonymous with their aspirations for a non-racial, democratic society based on the Freedom Charter.

The campaign has involved the broadest spectrum of organisations and individuals. Political, religious, cultural, sporting, youth and students and community organisations have become actively involved.

Free Mandela committees have been established in many areas of the country and mass meetings involving thousands of people are taking place in various parts of the country. The police have adopted many tactics to smash the campaign. Activists involved in the campaign have been arrested and intimidation is widespread. However the campaign continues to grow in scope and momentum.

Mandela has already served 18 years imprisonment but his spirit of "no surrender" even from within the prison walls serves as a beacon of inspiration to our people. In a message recently smuggled out of prison, Mandela said:

"The first condition for victory is Black unity. Every effort to divide the Blacks, to woo and put one Black group against another, must be vigorously repulsed. Our people — African, Coloured, Indian and democratic whites — must be united into a single massive and solid wall of resistance..."

He went on to say "we face the future with confidence, for the guns that serve apartheid cannot render it unconquerable. Those who live by the gun shall perish by the gun".

The spirit of this message that comes from within the dungeons of Botha's prisons must inspire us to raise our activities to newer and higher levels.

Umkhonto we Sizwe strikes

Another important aspect of the resistance in South Africa is the fact that the organisational and combat capacity of the ANC and our people's army Umkhonto we Sizwe, is steadily being consolidated and strengthened. Today we are not only

able to withstand the enemies onslaught but we are able to hit back politically and militarily. In January 1977, Kruger, the then Minister of Police waving a kalashnikov, elatedly told Parliament that "urban terrorism is totally finished" Within 5 months he was forced to admit that "today our enemies are no longer far away but on our doorstep". He concluded: "It would be the utmost of self delusion to maintain all is well and that there is no reason to warn our people that difficult times lie ahead..."

We do not often agree with the enemy but on this occasion we are compelled to do so. In various parts of our country underground units of our organisation are carrying out an increasing number of activities, both armed and non-armed. The majority of these have not been reported.

However the extent of this is reflected by the enemy's admission that they have not been able to destroy the ANC and that they are working "around the clock" to uncover underground units that are carrying out attacks against enemy installations and personnel.

Recently in Soweto two police stations were attacked and casualties inflicted on the enemy forces. The enemy has also been forced to disclose that there have been several clashes between the racist forces and ANC guerrillas inside South Africa's borders and that an increasing number of trained and equipped ANC cadres were returning to South Africa. The rocket attack on the Booyens police station in a white suburb of Johannesburg was largely acclaimed as opening a new chapter of ANC's armed onslaught on enemy installations. This was further developed by the daring attack carried out by ANC guerrillas on two of South Africa's major oil from coal plants (SASOL I and II). This operation once again demonstrated the growing skill and sophistication of our cadres and dramatically shattered any illusions of invincibility that our oppressors still harboured. On the other hand it injected a new sense of confidence and inspiration to the oppressed people. In future no military-industrial complex is immune

from such attacks. Let this serve as a warning to all those who are reaping huge profits from the super-exploitation of the Blacks and who are helping to bolster the apartheid system....

Our underground activities

Despite the fact that our cadres involved in propaganda and other political work are receiving harsh sentences of 10-12 years and that possession of our material is illegal, our underground political and propaganda units continue to develop and grow, and our pamphlets, leaflets, badges, posters and other literature are increasingly being distributed.

The extent of our activities is further reflected by the increasing number of political trials involving members of our organisation. In 1977 there were 95 major political trials. These involved 1,232 people of whom 73 patriots were sentenced to a total of 878 years. In 1978 there were over 70 major trials. This trend has continued in 1979 and 1980. While it saddens us to learn of these trials we are encouraged by the fact that they reflect the extent of the all-round and nationwide activities of our movement. Throughout the history of our struggle it has largely been our cadres who filled the court rooms and jails of the regime. Our leadership role has been achieved not by proclamation but by actions. Our detainees, trialists and prisoners are concrete expression of this.

Solomon Mahlangu and James Mange

As freedom fighter Solomon Mahlangu walked to the gallows he defiantly said: "Do not worry about me. But worry about those who are suffering. My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them and they must continue the struggle. A luta continua!"

This militant and fighting spirit even in the face of death is a magnificent testimony to the calibre of our people.

Today another young freedom fighter James Mange is awaiting execution. It is clear that the regime and its judicial appara-

tus are committed to executing many of our patriots. We must not let this happen. We call on the international community to exert maximum pressure to save the life of Mange. We must also intensify the campaign to ensure that our comrades, members of our people's army are accorded prisoner of war status under the relevant Geneva conventions.

From the brief report that I have been able to give it is clear that our cadres are operating throughout the country and we can't help agreeing with the then Minister of Police who in exasperation said "the ANC is everywhere". In addition the Minister of Police, le Grange recently told Parliament that the government believes that Soweto's leading black consciousness organisations are either totally or partly controlled by the ANC. We are not in a position to verify or deny this but we can quite categorically state that today nobody can challenge the fact that the stature and influence of the ANC inside South Africa is higher than at any time since the 50s. In all deliberations and assessments of the political situation in South Africa some reference is always made to the ANC.

The Freedom Charter

It is significant that in 1980 the 25th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, increasing numbers of organisations and people inside South Africa are accepting the Freedom Charter as their programme. Thousands of copies of the Charter are being distributed internally and the future South Africa is being discussed within the context of the Charter.

Comrades, today we are seeing the fruition of our efforts to build a unity in action of all patriotic forces and to encourage all forms of resistance. Today more than at any other time Africans, Coloureds, Indians and democratic whites are finding common ground in action.

We continuously encourage our people to organise themselves into all manner of formations to continue the struggle and raise the level of confrontation. The strategic outlook we project and encourage is one which focuses on mass struggle against the

regime. There can be no question of agreements with anybody outside this framework. Our activists whether functioning in the legal or illegal level have the task of drawing the masses of people into conscious, organised and united action. It is our task to win into one common front of united action all organisations that are fighting for genuine national and social emancipation.

However in pursuit of this goal we are vigilant against the danger of so-called leaders and organisations whose primary task is to subvert our revolution or to bring about changes that do not accord with the aspirations of the masses.

Shifting Sands of Illusion

In 1953 Mandela warned of this when he said:

“Talk of democratic and constitutional means (of struggle) can only have a basis in reality for those people who enjoy democratic and constitutional rights. We must accept the fact that in our country we cannot win one single victory of political freedom without overcoming a desperate resistance on the part of the government, and that victory will not come of itself but only as a result of a bitter struggle by the oppressed people for the overthrow of racial discrimination... No organisation whose interests are identical with those of the toiling masses will advocate conciliation to win its demands... The only sure road to (the) goal (of freedom) leads through the uncompromising and determined mass struggle for the overthrow of fascism and the establishment of democratic forms of government”.

“The time has come that those who wish to be counted among the forces of national liberation in our country should extricate themselves from the shifting sands of illusion that we will win our demands by dialogue and conciliation with the fascist regime”.

Thus it is clear that it is only through the application of all forms of mass militant struggle -- legal, semi-legal and “illegal”, armed and non-armed that we can achieve our liberation. All talk of “constructive engagement”, “moderation” “non-violence”

and “negotiations” has the single purpose of disarming our people and diverting us from our real objectives.

At periods such as the one through which our struggle is going, when the enemy begins to sense his impending demise, it has often been the strategy of reactionary forces to find spokesmen from among the oppressed people to intercede between the oppressed and the oppressor in favour of the latter. We are now seeing the implementation of this strategy in South Africa, also.

The African National Congress was born as an instrument in the hands of our people to unite them and all the democratic forces of our country into one force of struggle for a democratic South Africa. To this day this remains a principal objective that we pursue.

Those who place themselves in the path of the struggling masses shall inevitably be swept away together with their racist master whom they serve. We have Gatsha Buthelezi in mind. In our region that is a lesson which has been confirmed in the recent past by the victories of Frelimo, the MPLA and the Patriotic Front Alliance, in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe respectively. South Africa will be no exception! Indeed the very same lesson is being confirmed in Namibia today.

Lutuli's appeal

We have outlined our role in the struggle not to extol our contribution at the expense of others, but to clarify more sharply the forces of liberation and social change in our country. This is crucial not only for our own political perspectives but also for the perspectives of any meaningful solidarity activities. We have already shown that imperialism, having launched a world-wide offensive to regain its “spheres of influence” on the continent of Africa, the racist South African regime is a very important element in this strategy.

We can expect a concerted effort to bring South Africa out of the cold and to prevent any effective sanctions to be imposed on the regime.

This conference will, we hope, reflect the extreme urgency of the situation. 9

There is no time to lose. The situation calls for the tight relentless operation of effective mandatory economic sanctions. This must be related to an increase in all round support for the genuine liberation movements in Namibia and South Africa. We are well armed with declarations of principles and resolutions, in short there is no shortage of guidelines. Our hope is that this conference will formulate, not fresh resolutions but proposals for concrete actions.

There are those who argue that effective sanctions will only cause greater hardship to the Blacks. We are touched by this sudden concern for our sufferings. However once again let us unequivocally restate our position on this. In 1964 when launching the appeal for the international boycott of South Africa, Chief Lutuli decreed:

"We are committed to the suffering that will lead us to freedom — as it has been the lot of all oppressed people before us from time immemorial. What we are determined not to do, cost what it may, is to acquiesce in a status quo that makes us semi-slaves in our own country". He went on to call on peoples and governments not to be "deterred by the excuse often advanced by our oppressors — that sanctions and boycotts will bring to us, Blacks, more suffering... We have been victims of suffering before our boycott and sanctions call to the world".

We have no illusions that our struggle is going to be hard and bitter but we believe that if we are able to intensify our activities and bring about the effective isolation of South Africa as well as increase the all round political, diplomatic, and material assistance to those fighting the regime, this day will be sooner than later.

Our struggle is your struggle. We are united in one great family fighting against racism, colonialism and imperialism wherever its ugly head rears itself.

Our people are showing in action that they are willing to sacrifice and if need be die for their liberation. We urge you to take up this challenge of the 80s which has brought the centre of gravity of Africa's liberation struggle to our land.

In Mandela's smuggled out message he concluded:

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

Let us, through our united action, work to ensure that this becomes a reality.

Amandla!

Power to the People!



WORKERS ON THE MARCH

Throughout South Africa, the workers have taken on the racist regime, the multi-nationals and the bosses demanding higher wages, the right to organise free trade unions, ending job reservations and restrictions, a share in the wealth of our country, scrapping of the pass laws, the migrant labour system and the struggle for political, social and economic liberation.

The workers are striking and they are striking hard at a very sensitive area — the economy. As the heroic and determined Motor Industry workers continued to press their demands for higher salaries, the "Post" of 17 July noted: "... To the bewilderment of the South African employers, black workers are rapidly discovering the strength of their bargaining power. A wave of illegal strikes over the past weeks in the Eastern Cape in Uitenhage has ended... The psychological impact of the Motor workers pending success on workers in other parts of the country is likely to be enormous. South African employers, and especially the local subsidiaries of multi-nationals, will probably be confronted in the coming months by increasingly frequent and well-organised industrial action aimed at raising black living standards and ending race discrimination on the shop floor ..."

The final battle between the workers and the racist regime and bosses is in the closing stages. At Fords, Volkswagen and General Motors, the bosses stubbornly maintain that "workers have no role to play in the decision-making processes of the company because they are not shareholders". One worker replied: "We want to start determining our own conditions of employment". Black workers are in no mood to be intimidated. At the Sasol 3

Plant at Secunda, Black construction workers housed in ghetto hostels and compounds went on strike in protest at the harsh security measures imposed on them as a result of the bombing of the Sasol 2 and Natref Plants. According to the workers, some of their colleagues had been killed by the police and security people at the plant. They had therefore downed tools until the deaths of Mr Alfred Mtetwa and Mr Robert Kambule had been explained to them. The workers also had other grievances such as the 6.30 pm curfew imposed on them which confined them to the hostels and compounds for males only. It was as the result of the police harassment and provocations that the workers burnt down some of the buildings and vehicles causing an estimated damage of R240,000. The workers were sent home by the thousands, leaving the Sasol 3 plant and the ghetto hostels deserted. Many of the sacked workers were employed by the American Construction Firm, Fluor, and the management called them "trouble makers who had been sacked for obvious reasons". Later, the public relations officer of Sasol 3 said that 25% of the 18,000 black workforce had returned.

In the Cape, the Table Bay Cold Storage and National Meat Suppliers black workforce of 800 were still on strike for higher wages and better working conditions. The management of both firms sacked the workers for undertaking "irresponsible and illegal strike action", whilst the managing director of Table Bay Cold Storage said that he had replaced the entire workforce with workers from Crossroads. Throughout the strike, the black community has been steadfast in their support for the Meat workers who are simply asking the manage-

ment to recognise the democratically elected Workers Committee of 6 instead of the management appointed Liaison Committee. The black community has collected over R61,000 to assist the families of the striking workers. According to one worker, "there is just enough money to keep us alive. We eat only the cheapest food like mealie rice and we eat much less. I know that if I have breakfast I cannot have lunch but I just keep tightening my belt, If you are fighting for something, you have got to sacrifice".

During another strike, 10 female flat cleaners employed by Gradwells, a flat accomodation company were fired when they demanded more wages and complained that:

† they worked from 7.30 am to 4pm without breakfast or lunch;

† they had to clean 15 rooms of 4 cubicles each which meant that they cleaned 60 cubicles per day;

† they had to climb stepladders as high as 13 floors at the Federated Place Flats;

† they worked overtime without pay;

† they were paid only R71 per month;

† they received cuts and bruises whilst hanging from windows trying to clean them;

† some of the women became ill because of the strenuous work. 45 year old Mrs Vina Radebe died whilst scrubbing the floor;

† the management told the workers: "go you bloody black kaffirs because there were a lot more of you kaffirs waiting for jobs".

As a result of the strike action, the women were given back their jobs whilst higher wages and better working conditions were being negotiated.

In another demonstration of workers' unity and workers' power, a massive strike of over 10,000 black municipal workers in Johannesburg and Roodepoort threatened to paralyse the whole of Johannesburg. In determined and totally justifiable demands for higher wages, over two-thirds of the city's workers were affected when:

† the City Engineer's Department with over 8,500 workers went on strike;

† the Transport Department — 400 drivers on strike;

† the Library — 90 on strike;

† the City Health Department — 70 on strike;

† Civic Centre — all the 100 messengers and cleaning staff on strike;

† City Treasurer's Department — over 300 on strike;

† Electricity Department — over 300 on strike;

† Traffic Department — over 200 on strike;

† other smaller departments also on strike.

The Council's "no surrender", tough speaking stance led to more black workers coming out in sympathy with their sacked colleagues. Daily, hundreds of workers joined the strike only to be abused and threatened. The Mayor of Johannesburg's response was: "We are all concerned. It has become a political issue now". Racist Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, S.W. van der Merwe said that strikes in Natal, Eastern Cape, Cape Town were all deliberately being orchestrated by South Africa's enemies to secure a reduction in the overall standard of living. He went on to say: "Our enemies want economic chaos."

Mr Joseph Mavi, the President of the BMWU commented: "We are striking for equal pay for comparable work. We were promised this. Council officials must speak to us. If there is any law that forbids them from speaking to us, let them say so". By the time the workers were being forcefully sent back to the Bantustans over two-thirds of the entire workforce had come out on strike. Police, heavily armed with shotguns, machine guns, batons and police dogs scrutinised the passbooks of workers as they were herded into buses, trucks, police vans and other transport laid on by the council to take them back to the bantustans. Many workers reiterated their demands as they were pushed and shoved into waiting trucks and buses that "we were intimidated by the armed police, we had no choice but to get into the trucks. We are determined not to go to work, and many of us who were forced into it again will do our best not to go until the matter

has been settled”.

Meanwhile, Security Police have ordered the Editor of the Rand Daily Mail to appear before a magistrate and to hand over any book, paper, document or tape recording relating to Mr Mavi and the BMWU, including articles which had been used in the Rand Daily Mail. Whilst the Editor was subpoenaed, the President of the BMWU, Mr Joseph Mavi was arrested and charged “for the supposed offence of sabotage or the contravention of the Riotous Assemblies Act”.

At the “Post” and “Sunday Post” newspapers, 53 members of the editorial staff, reporters, sub-editors, photographers and telex operators downed tools demanding higher salaries and better working conditions and they refused to negotiate with the management until the minimum wage was increased and agreed upon. Since the stoppage, the management has conceded to the demands of the staff and the “Post” and “Sunday Post” have once more appeared.

In spite of many successes, black workers are still experiencing daily hardships, unemployment, police harassment, ghetto male hostels, family deprivation and a host of other hardships which are caused by apartheid. Since the outdated “divide and rule” machine of the regime and the bosses has broken down, the new tactic of “shoot to kill”, “hire and fire”, “arrest and deport” have all exposed the fascist nature of the regime. “The Star” of the 31st July put its view:

“... The arrest of strike leaders is hardly likely to improve an already tense situation. Nor are ultimatums or mass dismissals.. It must be settled quickly, for strikes are dangerous things in South Africa today. They tend to touch off boycotts, sympathy strikes, confrontations with the police... Black labour is going to flex its muscles increasingly in the boom years to come. The withholding of labour is a principal weapon of blacks denied other real political power. Representative black unions, recognised and upgraded, are the best means to channel this potentially explosive force. Employers must assist and not hinder

their development”.

The unending numbers of strikes are sending shivers up the spines of the white press and they are warning the racist regime and the bosses that the future is bleak. But the regime’s response has been to reduce the number of contract workers from 40,000 to 18,000 over the last 3 years in Cape Town and they have centralised the labour bureau system which imposes a R500 fine on employers of unregistered workers. In this way the regime has greater control over black workers. In another attempt to put an end to all resistance, certain areas have been declared “operational areas” such as sensitive military installations, the vital Motor Industrial complexes, the Sasol oil-from-coal plants, the Western Cape and other areas which according to the new security laws such as the 2nd Police Amendment Bill and others cannot be made public. What is clear is that the regime regards itself so insecure and under attack that it operated under total military secrecy and martial law. The regime is already preparing itself for the final onslaught.

But in the Year of the Mobilisation of the Workers, SACTU has declared: “The future of the people of South Africa is in the hands of the workers. Only the working class in alliance with other progressive minded sections of the community can build a happy life for all South Africans, a life free from unemployment, free from racial hatred and oppression, a life of vast opportunities for all people”.

In the ANC’s Strategy and Tactics, the ANC declares: “Our people are deprived of their due in the country’s wealth; their skills have been suppressed and poverty and starvation has been their life experience. The correction of these centuries-old economic injustices lies at the very core of our national aspirations”. It is exactly for these demands that we are fighting sparing neither strength nor courage until we have established a truly democratic South Africa based on the will of all the people.

RUSTENBURG MINES: HELL ON EARTH

Rustenburg Platinum Mines is the world's largest platinum producer and therefore controls the world platinum market which sets the world price. Anglo American, Johannesburg Consolidated Investment, and General Mining all have an interest, but management is by JCI and control in the hands of Anglo American. Its primary concern is with a consistent market demand so that it sells the bulk of its production on contract.

Until 1966 when other South African producers came on stream, sales were between Rustenburg and the two major refiners, Johnson Matthey in Britain and Engelhard Metals in Germany. The other SA producers all sell the bulk of their production on contract following Rustenburg's producer price.

Platinum is traded on the small clublike markets of New York and London and it is these market prices which indicate whether the consumers need additional supplies or not and Rustenburg buys or sells on the market to bring the price more into line with the producer price. Rustenburg has consistently tried to persuade consumers to use platinum more extensively by guaranteeing supplies and maintaining a constant price even in the face of rising demand.

In 1963 there was a shortage of platinum because the petrol companies needed more platinum catalyst to make high octane petrol. Rustenburg kept the producer price steady and responded by instituting a massive expansion programme increasing its output for eight consecutive years up to 1971.

Throughout the 1960s, Rustenburg made an enormous investment in research promotion and productive capacity to win new industrial markets for platinum. The main aim was to get platinum used in the automobile emission control units. As research

intensified, Rustenburg emphasised the unique properties of platinum and the stability of both supplies and prices. To convince the motor manufacturers that the industry could meet the demand if a platinum catalyst was chosen, Rustenburg and the New Impala mine expanded production and stockpiled large quantities of platinum. In 1971 however, declining sales due partly to a recession in the USA sales on the free market, and the expanded capacity in SA, led to falling prices more serious crisis. The producers' stockpile reached 1.5 million ounces; more than one year's output in South Africa. Rustenburg was forced to cut back production. Large numbers of African mineworkers, and a smaller number of white miners, were dismissed at short notice. Excess management transferred to other mines and the shafts were kept in service by a skeleton workforce. Out of a workforce of 35,000, only 14,000 remained.

In June 1971, Ford announced that they would use a platinum-base emission control unit developed by Engelhard Minerals. But the breakthrough came in 1973: General Motors, Chrysler and Toyota all announced contracts with South African producers for large quantities of platinum, thus a vast new market worth 250 million dollars a year had been won. Rustenburg assumed full production capacity and launched into long-term development of new mine shafts to develop the deeper platinum deposits.

With the platinum deposits are allied minerals; gold, silver, copper, nickel. The revenue gained from these metals are believed to pay for the workings of the mine alone. The nickel is sold under contract direct to the International Nickel Company (which monopolises the Nickel market) at well below the world market price. In return INCO, which produces platinum

as a by-product, ensures that its sales do not disrupt Rustenburg's marketing of platinum.

Rustenburg produces 1.2 million ounces of platinum and palladium a year, the matte of which is sent to Johnson Matthey in Britain for refining. Matthey Rustenburg does part of the refining in SA where they also have a nickel/copper refinery with production capacity for 19,000 tons of nickel and 9,500 tons of copper. Production from the Colbalt/sulphate plant is 60 tons a year which makes SA self sufficient. All the revenue gained from platinum production and its by-products provided Rustenburg with an after tax profit of R78 million in 1979.

Above we have looked at Rustenburg's manipulation of the world market and its emphasis on stable production, supplies and prices. In order to achieve this aim, it exploits its large African workforce to the fullest extent as the legislation of apartheid facilitates. One has to look at the structures of the production mechanics to see how repressive and exploitative the system is.

As a White worker doing a protected labour job of "onsetter" which required 3 weeks training in signals and shaft procedure and entitled me to a basic salary of R530 per month basic rate but with bonuses and overtime it could exceed R1,000 per month. My experience on RPM was gained in the so-called "independent" bantustan of Bophuthatswana, where I worked on two different mine shafts one which is about to cease production and the other which is in the process of being sunk.

Rustenburg Platinum consists of three sections one of which is situated near Rustenburg and therefore called the Rustenburg Section, which consists of six vertical shafts and a number of ancillary incline shafts which are all interconnected underground by haulages (tunnels), which serve for transporting ore from the stopes to the tips and equipment to the stopes. The mine is 40 km across underground making it the largest underground workings in the world.

The boundaries of Bophuthatswana were

drawn to exclude all the high production areas, shafts, smelters and refiners. The parts which it included were Bleskop mine shaft, two large compounds, a white mining settlement and the Klipfontein smelter. Since "independence" in 1977, Bleskop being the oldest mine shaft will cease production at the end of 1980 and the Klipfontein smelter ceased production in 1978 and is now scrapped. All the ore mined in Bophuthatswana is transported to the SA smelters.

Because of increased production demand JCI was forced to develop new shafts to mine ore at a deeper level.

A year before "independence" a new shaft Turfontein was started in Bophuthatswana. It was negotiated with the bantustan government that JCI would manage the mine shaft for twenty years at full production, by which time it must have trained Africans from Bophuthatswana to take over management and mining from the whites. There is however no intention of honouring this agreement as the management are hoping that the mine will be exhausted by that stage. No attempt has been made to train African management let alone miners, which is still the protected reserve of the racist whites.

At Bleskop shaft there has been absolutely no change to the structure and system of management and labour control, and no attempt has been made to incorporate Africans at any level. The only concession has been that they are now training African surveyors and assistants. There were six African surveyors in 1979 who are considered to be officials. They are however as surveyors paid less than white miners surveyors, R160 as to R280 pm. White surveyors are paid over R450 pm. They also encounter problems with white miners who often refuse or make it extremely difficult to have their working places examined by Africans. There is also evidence that these surveyors have been assigned some of the most dangerous and distant areas of the mine to survey. As officials they demanded to have access to the shaft change houses and showers preserved for whites, as they had to do office work 15

after working underground. The white managers took the point but had separate change houses built.

White Miners and Workers

The white workers of Rustenburg are some of the most reactionary and conservative elements in the country. A large section of them subscribe openly to the policies of the arch-fascist Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) or support the right wing of the ruling National Party. The Mine Workers Union (MWU) leader Arrie Paulus is himself a member.

The white miners feel insecure about their future in the newly proclaimed "independent" bantustans and have no plans to forsake their protected economic status at the expense of the African advancement. The puppet leader of Bophuthatswana, Lucas Mangope, has made urgent pleas to the Mine Workers Union to allow Africans to be trained as miners. The MWU has ignored all his pleas and has stated that it will never concede.

The idea is to train Africans as what has been called "black mining assistants" to do the mining with a white miner promoted to a sort of co-ordinator with three BMA's under him. Although this co-ordinator will be paid more, the industry

will require far fewer of them and will pay the BMA's half or a third of the wage that white miners receive. This is not in the interests of the MWU as a whole, because the role of co-ordinator is filled presently by a white shift boss, which is the lowest rung of the management hierarchy and it is seen as a ploy to phase out and make redundant all white skilled and protected labour, which is an institution upon which apartheid is built and structured. It is also in the interest of capitalism and greater profit to phase out the white workers and employ Africans at minimum wage.

The white skilled trade workers; electricians, riggers, fitters, boilermakers, mechanics etc. all have African "aides" who are equally skilled in their specific trade but have no official recognition or qualification, so that it is impossible for them to change work as they will never be re-employed in that role or at the same wage. The white tradesmen are equally intransigent about advancement of black workers and refuse to let black workers be recognized as skilled. One has only to look at the way they work to see the reason. The white worker's role is to analyse the problem and then delegate the work to his "aides". It was a common occurrence and practice that when an electrician or



fitter was called out on standby to fix a fault underground, particularly on night shift when no bosses were around, they would send their "aides" down underground and would remain on surface in the comfort of the changehouse awaiting the return of their "aides" to report what had been done. They would then book the overtime. The riggers I met were the worst, as they had large "gangs" of skilled Africans working for them and all they would do, if they were forced by some misfortune to be on the spot, is stand around and scream insults and confuse the workers. When they were not in the vicinity the job would go smoothly. For self-preservation Africans often have to adopt a pretended obsequious and ignorant attitude when dealing with racist whites otherwise they risk getting beaten up for being too "clever". This whole act however often reinforces white superiority.

Miners Strike

During 1978 the MWU under leadership of Arrie Paulus attempted to unite all the white trade unions in an attempt to stall the so-called "liberal" tendencies of the fascist National Government and to protect entrenched white workers' interest in what he saw as a gradual "sell out" to Africans whom he publicly refers to as being baboons. He failed as it was opposed by the state sector unions particularly the SA Iron and Steel Union and SA Firemans, Engine Drivers and Operators Union, who are in effect government employees. These unions opted for the Wiehahn Commission recommendations so Arrie Paulus launched a recruitment war encouraging whites from other unions to join the MWU which he claimed supported the true interests of white workers. The MWU leaders were attempting to build up a broad militant hostility to Government policy amongst the white workers, and were particularly successful in the Rustenburg area with the miners.

In February 1979 an official dispute was declared at the O'Kiep copper mine in the Northern Cape, where three Coloured workers had been employed to do skilled work as shaft timberman as there

was insufficient white labour. This domain is exclusive to whites although Coloureds are technically listed as "scheduled persons" and entitled to do the job, but there are however unwritten laws which have since the 1920s been honoured by the mine management in order to evade conflict with the white workers. The management at O'Kiep refused to budge and give in to the white workers' demands.

On the 8th of March 1979, the MWU decided to show its muscle and called an illegal national one day strike by all MWU members in sympathy with the white miners at O'Kiep Rustenburg managed to get almost all of the MWU workers out on strike with a bit of persuasion. In other parts of the country they were less successful with smaller numbers responding, all together 9,000 responded to show the strength of the union. The Chamber of Mines responded by technically firing all the workers who came out on strike. Thus when returning to work they would have to sign a new employment contract and would lose all their accumulated leave and their monthly bonuses which amounted to a lot of money. After a week they could be evicted from their mine owned houses.

The strike originally planned for one day was extended, now with a grievance with the Chamber of Mines and a demand for unconditional return to work. The strike lasted a week, by which time the majority of strikers had returned to work on the Chamber's conditions. When the MWU called off the strike the Chamber decided not to withdraw accumulated leave, but otherwise new employment contracts had to be signed and all monthly bonuses and pay during the strike was lost.

The strike was seen as a defeat for the MWU and a lot of the miners were embittered with the leadership. Arrie Paulus however was not thwarted and held a public rally in Rustenburg shortly after the strike where he urged and insinuated that the miners would take up arms as in 1922 and force the government to recognize their demands. The meeting ended in a brawl when a previous president of the MWU challenged Paulus' tactics. Paulus responded by climbing off the stage and attacking him.



African mineworkers line up for the night shift

The effect of the strike

The Chamber of Mines claimed a massive victory over the MWU who have since 1922 held an extremely strong position regarding the protection of white workers interests. The Chamber representing Mining Company interest seized the opportunity to show its muscle when dealing with the MWU and laid the foundations for future undermining of union power particularly in relation to black advancement which it sees in terms of its own interest, namely to increase Company profit.

After the strike the Chamber officially claimed that production was up during the week of the strike. At the shaft I was working on that was true. The majority of white miners just serve as an on the site slave driver and supervisor and are not indispensable to the method of production. When the strike occurred, all the white miners were removed leaving the shift bosses to supervise up to five miners work-

ing places and workers, which is a physical impossibility, as the working areas are often far apart and on different levels, and would require hours of travelling between the areas. They therefore worked directly with the African Leading Hand (LH) or "Boss Boy" as the miners refer to them. The LH just continued working exactly as they had before but without the miners obstructing. Most of the African workers responded to the chance to prove themselves and in a lot of cases where a particularly racist miner had been in charge and could get very little out of his work force, suddenly the "gang" was breaking records for that face and thus the production went up.

The miners while on strike claimed that what the management were doing was illegal as it was breaking a host of regulations which require whites to do or supervise specific jobs. Some of the strikers secretly conceded that the Africans had been doing their work for years and that the strike would demonstrate the superfluous nature

of their role and work.

The Chamber put the increased production down to good management techniques and praised the management excessively by paying handsome bonuses and sponsoring a full page advertisement in the leading newspapers to thank the loyal management for responding to the crisis. There was no praise and no benefits for the people who did the work, the African workers.

“non-commissioned officers”

The white miners in effect carry out a role of labour management, but are not seen as part of permanent management structure. The miners are given contracts by the management according to their past record of efficiency and the amount of centares of rock they can break and clear per month. In order to do this the miner has to organise his African labour force to maximise exploitation.

The contract requires the miner to work a designated working area and is required to break a set amount of rock per month. To do this he is given on average five drilling machines and a “gang” of 30 African labourers. The leader of the “gang” is the Leading Hand who is effectively in control of the mining procedure at the face and does all the organising and supervising which involves hard and dangerous work. The LH often has far more experience and knowledge of mining than the white miner who is in charge. It is common for a young white miner with a year's experience of mining being in charge of a LH and “gang” with more than 20 years experience, and arrogantly making decisions against the better judgement of the African workers and numerous accidents often fatal can be attributed to this.

The white miners receive an average basic salary of R722 pm compared to the LH's salary of between R100 and R150 pm. There is also a production bonus for centares broken above the contracted amount. If it is a good break, over the month the LH could earn between R50 and R100 bonus on top of the basic, the white miner will earn proportionately between R350 and R700 on top of his basic. But the share of good contracts are few and

they go to the most experienced miners and LH's.

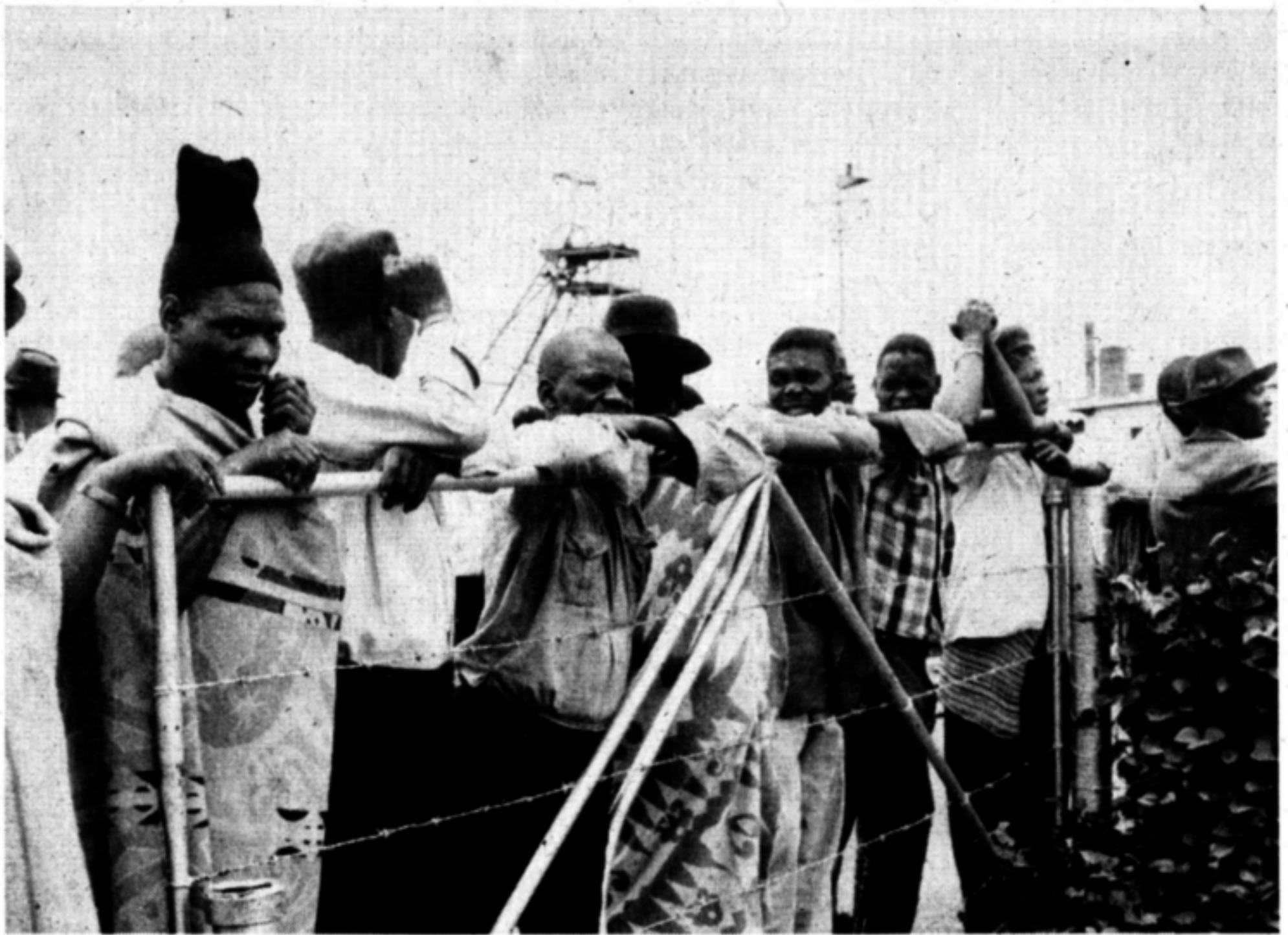
The top white contractor at Rustenburg was earning R2,200 pm which is more than the manager gets paid. He had a “gang” of 120 and 3 Leading Hands who sometimes earned a maximum of R400 pm plus the odd token of a gold watch thrown in for good measure. To achieve that sort of salary one can be assured that they worked extremely hard and is exceptional as most LH's receive only the standard wage.

The LH's are usually the first to go down underground with the morning shift which starts at 3.30am. They go straight to the working face and organize the final clearing and cleaning of the broken ore by the night shift. They make the working area safe, barring dangerous hanging rock and putting in props. They prepare the machines, put in water and air pipes and anything destroyed by the blast, and generally prepare for drilling. They then mark the face, giving the machine operators the direction for drilling and will determine how the face will break with the next blast. This job is supposed to be a skill for white only but in order to save time the miners don't mind Africans doing this job.

The white miners go underground at 7.00 am and get to the working area at 7.30 to 8.00 am where they will find the work in full progress. They meet the LH at a conveniently comfortable place a distance from the working face where they issue the orders of the day and enquire as to the progress and problems of the work, and in 9 cases out of 10 never investigate the face themselves.

The miners then retire to their explosive boxes, which are rest areas often rigged with hammocks and comforts, where they sign the African workers' daily wage tickets. After that they either read, sleep, play cards or talk to other miners until the shift boss arrives at 10.00 am when they then discuss problems and equipment required, all this information being passed on by the LH.

When the holes are completed the LH goes to the miners box and collects the necessary explosive required for the charge. 19



Workers at the gate of the compound

The miner is supposed to supervise the charging up and is supposed to check all the charges, which they never do. There was a case at Bleskop shaft where 3 African miners were killed while charging up when the detonator exploded while being inserted in the hole. In the enquiry it turned out that the white miner was "visiting" another miner on his "box" a distance from the accident and was not aware of what had taken place. It was found that he had also issued the wrong type of detonator which caused the accident. He was fined R50 for negligence.

From 1.00 pm onwards the miners often congregate at the cage station where it is cool awaiting the arrival of the LH with the news that they have blasted safely and they can catch the next cage to surface. Officially their surface time is 3.00 pm, thus an 8 hour shift, but for most it is a very easy 7 hour shift. For the African workers it is normally a 10 hour shift, although it is 8 hours. The white miners have the power to credit overtime for the African

workers which they rarely do.

When a computer punch card machine was installed at one of the shafts it was found that the average time spent underground by African workers was 10 hours and a large number were working up to 13 hours all without remuneration for overtime.

The African Workers

The workers who do the mining are the machine operators, spanner operators, and lashers. The machine operators do the drilling and are paid R80 pm basic, but there are also small cash incentives paid per hole drilled above the set rate. This is an incredibly arduous and dangerous job requiring immense strength and stamina. Most machine operators and spanner operators become deaf within a short space of time as the machines make an incredible noise in the confined space that they are required to work in.

At Rustenburg where the stope height

varies from 18 inches to 2 feet, which requires extensive crawling and working on one's back or stomach on the sharp foot wall without protective clothing being issued to miners, lacerations are common. The spanner operator holds and guides the drilling steel while the hole is being drilled, this is also a very strenuous job and the most dangerous as they are positioned closest to the face. Spanner operators are paid between R60 and R80 a month. The lashers are human earthmovers as they do the lashing of the rock that can't be moved by mechanical means, which accounts for a very large proportion as there are places where no machine can operate. The lashers serve as general labourers and some are employed as winch operators and "one-one" (log) installers who build the packs that support the roof wall. This is an important task as the roof has to be evenly supported as it slowly sinks (after a couple of years the stopes close up) otherwise it breaks or bumps, causing damage or accidents. The lashers are paid an average of R60 pm.

The management use a tribal division of labour in order to divide and rule more easily, and to exploit maximum efficiency the miner has the power to have any worker fired.

All working on the face endure atrocious working conditions. The high dust content of the atmosphere ensures lung diseases like silicosis and pneumococcosis after a length of time. The whites are paid R12,000 compensation for silicosis, the Africans nothing.

The face is extremely dangerous where falling rock can kill or amputate limbs. Insufficient time is dedicated to making the working place safe in an attempt to save time and to proceed with maximum production. Accidents occur frequently, often because white miners have refused to take African miners' advice who often have far more experience. They also endure insult and often physical beatings when whites assert their authority.

The white miner is relatively safe from the exposed conditions at the face and feels very little for the personal safety of his workers. If his "gang" has an accident or fatality, he will lose his safety bonus which is normally R30 pm which he

considers nothing when he receives a massive salary. There is an extreme callousness towards the death of African workers. I have heard miners commenting, on an accident which killed two workers and seriously injured several others, "That's two less of the bastards".

In 1979, in one month there were 33 fatalities, all of them Africans, however, nothing was published, as it was an accumulated total, not a single disaster. Although that was a particularly high figure for one month, Rustenburg still has a very bad accident record.

As migrant labourers the African workers are not only subjected to atrocious working conditions, but living conditions as well. The compounds which they live in are designed to facilitate maximum control over the large numbers of workers. The emphasis is on riot control, the whole compound is surrounded by 12 foot fences and the area is floodlit at night. All people entering and leaving are searched. The mine security staff patrol 24 hours a day and have weapons and armoured vehicles available to suppress any "riots".

All the African workers at Bleskop shaft numbering 3,000 are migrant labourers, working 1 year contracts and live in Bleskop compound which houses 6,000 men who are crammed into large dormitories. Bleskop compound serves Terfontein shaft as well.

The age old method of divide and rule is fully utilized by the management to control the workers. The living quarters are divided according to tribe, and rivalry between tribes encouraged to keep them informed about workers' attitudes. There is also an imposed hierarchy of "headmen" and "indunas" who maintain "discipline" but who are self-interested and care little for the plight of the workers.

So while the mine owners are making massive profits, the African workers are being subjected to what amounts to super-exploitation. This is the plight of the mine-workers; the slave system of apartheid and cause of the many problems that face Africans in the mines. Let us organise them!

H.L.

THE LAND QUESTION-

PART 2

The issue of land, or to be more precise, lack of land for the African majority in South Africa has been at the heart of the struggle for national liberation. The formation of the African National Congress in January, 1912 was intimately bound up with the land question, as it was for political rights for the African people. The Act of Union of 1910 deprived the black majority of any political power to influence, let alone determine, the decision and policy-making process of the country. The 1913 Land Act deprived them of access to more than 87% of the land reserving it for the exclusive ownership and occupation of the white minority, who formed less than one fifth of the total population. Both these acts, and the means to mobilise the African people in determined resistance to them, was uppermost in the minds of the founders of the ANC. Land and political power to the landless and rightless remain among the burning issues of the drive for national and social emancipation today. Among the most important demands contained in the revolutionary program of the ANC, the Freedom Charter, is the one dealing with the restoration of the land to the people:

"The land shall be shared among those who work it". To understand the implications of this demand requires us to examine and understand what the 1913 Act meant for the vast majority of the African people and the situation as it exists today.

From Peasants to Workers

In our last article we examined the process of land conquest by Boer and British and the consequent dispossession of the African people dating from the time of Dutch colonialism in 1652 to the turn of the twentieth century. The Land Act of 1913, whilst legitimising the dispossession, served also as one of the main legal instruments

for creating a black working class in sufficient numbers and in regular supply for the growing mines, farms, factories and commercial institutions of "white South Africa".

The transformation of the independent African producers on land to wage-labourers after the discovery of diamonds and gold was by comparison a swift and ruthless process.

In a pamphlet entitled "The condition of the Venda people", issued by "Inkululeko", the organ of the Communist Party of South Africa, Alpheus Maliba made an incisive analysis of this process. The process had begun much earlier in other parts of South Africa such as the Transkei where migrant labour already reached 100,000 annually by the early 1920s. But the Venda experience has been repeated in countless other areas, some later, others earlier. Discussing the "native policy" of the white minority regime, Maliba writes:

"Firstly, the government attempts to satisfy the constant demands from the mines, farms and factories for cheap native labour.

Secondly, it tries to prevent any competition of African agricultural products with the products of European farmers on our markets.

Thirdly, they have destroyed the old system where the chief was responsible to the people and helped those in want. Nowadays, those who are in want must go to work for wages.

Fourthly, they have retained the tribal ownership of land and gradually turned the chiefs into agents of the government.

Fifthly, they have taxed and impoverished the people in order to supply cheap labour for the capitalists.

This is the programme and policy of the government, the representatives of the rich, the servants of the Chamber of Mines,



Treaty Mopeli, wife of Chief Mopeli who died in banishment

a policy which they have been carrying out so that the people have become poor”.

Prior to 1908 Maliba, quoting from a study carried out by a certain R. Wessman, demonstrates that:

“The people had no employers to work for, but were able to satisfy their requirements by working on their own lands”.

Gradually thereafter:

“... when the government made the first attempts to get the Africans to work for wages it found that they were able to obtain a living on their own lands So the government introduced the Poll Tax... As the people do not use money in the reserves, they had to leave the reserves to work for wages with which to pay the tax.”

And when the Poll Tax proved insufficient to fuel the capitalist economy with labour:

“Not only have they to pay the Poll Tax of £1 a year, but those who live on crown land (a very large number) have to pay £1/10 per year rent, 5/- grazing fee for their cattle, dipping fees, dog licences, licences for chopping trees... and so on..”

Analysing the reason for the introduction of cattle culling as a means of limiting the number of livestock per household in 1937:

“The real reason for the killing of the cattle was that the people should become poor, so that they would be forced to go to work on the mines... The people ask: IF OUR CATTLE ARE SHORT OF GRASS, WHY ARE WE NOT GIVEN THE LAND BELONGING TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MINES — FOR IT IS NOT BEING USED? There is a great deal of Crown Lands, which once belonged to the Venda, and much land belongs to the Consolidated Land and Investment Company, a very rich mining company”.

We felt it necessary to quote at some length from this pamphlet since it outlined the main direction of state policy and to highlight the political, social and economic pressures acting together to coerce the African independent producers into the service of the capitalist economy. Land hunger, the increasing restrictions placed

on cattle ownership, measures like cattle culling, state imposed taxes, pressure on the traditional leaders of the people to become instruments of government policy — all these and more are a continuous thread in the forcible expulsion of vast numbers of the people from the land into the capitalist economy.

To these must be added the increasingly low yield of product in the economy of the reserves due to overcrowding, poor soil, increasing soil erosion, lack of capital and credit facilities to the numerous smallholders who tenaciously clung onto their plots of land, and the incidence of natural disasters. By the time of the passing of the Act the reserves were already showing growing signs of agrarian degeneration. By the early 1920s the reserves had become unable to feed the growing population and had become critically dependent on food imports to ensure the survival of the people.

Squatters and Labour tenants

The 1913 Act also struck a deathblow to the substantial number of subsistence producers outside the reserves.

In our last article we pointed out that although vast tracts of land were taken over by white settlers, land companies and the state (Crown lands) no coercive power existed in sufficient force or throughout the territories conquered to prevent the occupation of such lands by African peasants. Indeed, rent tenants (squatters), hiring land from mainly the monopoly land companies; sharecroppers, who worked the land and shared the product with white farmer-owners in return for land, seeds and implements; and labour tenants, who worked on white-owned farms in return for a plot of land for their own use, abounded. Many of the more better-off African peasants were already purchasing land outside the reserves either as individuals, syndicates or communities. This process was encouraged to provide a sufficient agricultural product to the growing urban complexes after the mining revolution.

All these peasant farmers became affected by the Act, whose main aim was to transform them into permanent wage labourers as agricultural workers. It has been estimated that at the time of the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936 (see previous article) there were still over a million such peasants falling into one or other of the categories outside the reserves and engaged in subsistence farming. By 1964 this number had been drastically reduced to about 163,000, and a decade later the regime's spokesmen could boast that the figure had fallen to less than 16,000.

By the time of the 1970 census estimates indicate that nearly 2,260,000 Africans were engaged in the agricultural sector of the economy as wage labourers — fully one-third of the economically active African population.

The wages, working conditions and terms of service of these workers are by far the worst in the country as a whole. Once contracted to work as a farm labourer the worker has no right to seek alternative employment in another industry, location, or for that matter, on another farm, without the consent of the farmer. Wages fall far below that of the national average for Blacks, the vast majority of whom earn wages below the poverty datum line. Anything from R12-R15 per month with no hope of negotiating better wages or working conditions as trade unions is strictly forbidden for these workers. Like mine-workers they are completely sealed off from any contacts from trade union organisers and become literally the property of the white farmer, like his land or cattle. As the Deputy Minister of Bantu Development made clear as far back as 1968:

“... As far as the interests of agriculture are concerned, it has been the policy, since the inception of labour bureaus in 1952, to identify Bantu farm labour, and to divorce it from urban labour which is inclined towards the industrial and commercial sectors”.

What this meant in practice, is an indication of the strict regimentation of the agricultural labour force:

“A record of every registered Bantu

farm labourer is kept in a central register in Pretoria, and the position is that the labourer cannot be employed in the urban areas, because as soon as his service contract must be registered, it will be established that he is a farm labourer and then he cannot be legally taken into service.”

The liberation of this class of workers from the tyranny and feudal bondage to which they are subject is one of the urgent tasks of our struggle. Their organisation and mobilisation calls for the greatest attention.

The Bantustans

The major issues which successive white supremacist regimes had to face in regard to the reserves created during and after dispossession revolved around the questions:

1. how to ensure a constant supply of cheap labour to the white-owned industries, particularly the mines and farms, and
2. related to the super-exploitation of the black workers, to ensure that migrant labour from the reserves had some means of subsistence in the reserves to supplement the wholly inadequate wages earned on farms and mines, especially for the upkeep of dependents, the aged, disabled and discarded who had to remain;
3. forms of legal and administrative control necessary for the regulation and martialling of labour from the reserves, and responsible for the allocation of the ever diminishing resources of the reserve economy, especially land.

The history of “Native Policy” has generally hinged around these issues, and as Alpheus Maliba pointed out, has a long and chequered history — from resident white Commissioners to Tribal Authorities as means of political control.

Political control of the reserve population finally found expression in the Bantustan policy of the Nationalist Party. The run-down, economically depleted and dependent reserves were miraculously transformed into “independent states” that none, except a handful of opportunists, careerists and self-seeking individuals wanted.

Tribal authorities, appointees of the Apartheid regime, became "ministers of State" and the legal instrument for the pursuance of Apartheid policies became vested in "parliaments" replete with executive and legislative powers and Homeland police and army. No one has better analysed this miracle of "modern" South Africa than Govan Mbeki in his book "The Peasants' Revolt".

And what of the crisis afflicting the reserve economy and the plight of the millions of "homeland citizens"?

We mentioned earlier that already by the 1920s the reserves had become, for the most part, rural slums where agrarian degeneration had become so pronounced that there was little hope of land reforms being sufficient in themselves to solve the acute crisis of overcrowding, low fertility and falling yields, soil erosion, food shortage and lack of capital and manpower resources as able-bodied workers were forced to leave to earn a wage as migrant labourers.

In the decades since then the crisis became more advanced and underdevelopment and dependence accelerated. It has been estimated that less than 6% of the families in all the reserves were able to support themselves by engaging in cash crop production. Generally, these owned their plots of land, purchased in the period between the mining revolution and the 1913 Land Act. The rest are dependent on cash earnings as migrant labourers. A measure of the absolute plight faced by them can be gauged by the high rate of infant mortality, malnutrition, disease, and physical afflictions and debilities among them. Landlessness for them means grinding poverty, indebtedness, destitution and broken family lives as migrants leave for periods of up to a year, and more. For them the "miracle" of the Bantustans remains a profound mystery as they eke out an existence on barren plots of land or in the Bantustan slums like Dimbaza, Stinkwater, Morogat, Limehill and other such places.

In the Apartheid scheme they are the legions making up the reserve army of labour. Regimented, martialled, moved from

labour bureau to jobs, when these are available for wages hardly sufficient to keep body and soul together.

The Bantustans have not and cannot alter these things. As Govan Mbeki so clearly saw: "The more things change, the more they stay the same".

The Tomlinson Report

The Tomlinson Commission was in part an attempt by the Nationalist Party to examine how best the three conditions enumerated above for the reserves could best be met and to halt the decline of the reserve economy. The Commission's conclusion, published in 1955 after 5 years of investigation, was a startling one, at least for the Nationalist regime: — there was no way in which the land available to the reserve population could meet their economic requirements at the time, let alone in the future. Accordingly, the Commission recommended that, to save a part of the reserve economy at least, the policy of one-man-one-plot be abandoned among those who still had access to land, and that the land so available be parcelled out to a smaller peasant population with larger and more economic units. This would require that at least half the reserve population throughout the country be made landless and a massive injection of capital to aid the future landholders.

In short, what the Commission recommended was the creation of a capitalist class of farmers in the reserves and the further creation of a class of landless workers.

The Commission's recommendations were shelved at the time, mainly because of the heavy capital outlay required to rejuvenate the land and the politically explosive requirement of further landlessness.

There is evidence to suggest however that the Matanzima administration in the Transkei is forging ahead on just such lines aiming to reduce approximately 500,000 families with plots to something like 50,000.

"White South Africa"

For white South Africans land is available

in abundance for residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial or investment purposes. "White South Africa" disposes of more than 87% of the land for a population comprising approximately one-fifth of the total. Landholding is privately owned by individuals, companies and monopoly land companies together with the state. Land companies prior to the 1913 Act, for example, hired out an estimated 4½ million acres of land to African peasants and the big mining corporations and finance institutions are reported to be among the largest landowners in the country.

Substantial landownership and the monopoly of certain agricultural produce by companies is a feature, though not the dominant one, in the agricultural sector of the economy. White farms cover an area of almost 5 million hectares for a rural white population of about one-half million. This compares with approximately 300,000 to 500,000 hectares for the African rural population of some 7,000,000 in the "Homelands" according to the 1972 census. Compared to the regulation maximum of 4 acres per African family (where land is available, of course) nearly 82% of white-owned farms are on average about 800 hectares in size.

The balance of the farms is by and large taken up by the monopoly companies such as those who own between them the massive sugar cane estates in Natal covering an area of almost 200,000 hectares, and the Cape vineyards and maizeland, the Vaal valley, the Orange Free State and southern Transvaal.

Large scale mechanisation is only a feature of the giant land companies. For the bulk of the commercial farmers farming is labour intensive, and hence the constant cry for cheap African labour. Nor are the farming methods efficient by comparison to other developed capitalist economies. In fact, the share of agricultural produce has declined from a high in the 1911 of 21% to 12.1% in 1960 and less than 10% in the 1970s. Traditionally, the white farmers have formed the backbone of the Nationalist Party and for both economic and political reasons the Party is committed

to aid white farmers as far as is possible through massive subsidies, estimated at nearly R300 million a year, and government-sponsored marketing Boards which guarantee fixed prices and deals with storage and distribution. Most important of all the state organises the regular supply of labour for white farmers.

The Peasant Revolts

The complex interplay of social, political and economic pressures to which the rural population was subject for decades exploded into open confrontation against white supremacy rule and its agents in the countryside in the late 1950s.

Although many of the issues were local and specific to each area, the revolt of the rural masses was not localised. Resistance and confrontation flared up in the Transvaal, Eastern Cape and Natal often taking armed forms and ending with armed uprisings in Pondoland in 1960.

In one way or another the link between the various uprisings was the question of land and the policies being imposed around this issue by the white supremacist state and its local agents. The issues which Alpeus Maliba had so long ago written about were very much those which agitated the peasant and worker population in the countryside from 1956 to 1960. These included the imposition of unpopular headmen and chiefs sympathetic to the regime's schemes; the harassment, banishment and imprisonment of those who stood up for the people; land reclamation and betterment schemes in order to reduce the number occupying land; cattle culling and dipping; state taxes; forced removals of entire peasant communities under the Group Areas Act, and passes for African women in the countryside — all of these aggravated an already crisis-ridden situation.

Resistance and confrontation flared up in Witzieshoek in the Orange Free State, in Marico in the Transvaal in 1957, in Sekhukuniland in the northern Transvaal in 1958, in Zululand in 1959, culminating in the Pondoland uprising in the Eastern Cape in 1960.

The details of the uprisings were brilliantly dealt with by Govan Mbeki in his book "The Peasant's Revolt", but more important were the conclusions and lessons Govan drew from a study of the scope and nature of the uprisings.

What Govan took great pains to underline was that the movement had for too long neglected the organisation and mobilisation of the peasants and agricultural workers. Very little of the movement's resources in cadres and organisers had been devoted to a specific understanding and analysis of the particular problems facing the rural masses daily. In short, very little attention was paid in practice to the revolutionary potential of the countryside. Peasants, agricultural workers and migrants, the main social forces of the rural areas had demonstrated to the movement in practice what it had always known in theory. What Govan had in mind was not only the fierce resistance and heroism displayed by the people, their steadfastness in the face of the massive repression of the racist regime who moved police, regular troops, armoured saracens and helicopters into these areas, but most important, the ability of the leadership and the people to sustain the struggle over such a length of time. What this called for, in the first instance, was a level of political organisation and mobilisation which sheer heroism could not be an adequate substitute of.

In none of the instances, powerful though they were as a measure of people's resistance, was the "revolutionary potential of the countryside" more sharply demonstrated than in the Pondoland uprising. Whatever the immediate issues were that sparked off the revolt, by the time of its brutal suppression the leadership and people had virtually come to embrace the whole of the programme of the ANC — the Freedom Charter. This was powerfully expressed by one of the leaders when he declared to a massive demonstration of some 50,000 people in Bizana that the movement will stop at nothing short of entering parliament.

Organisation was based on a hut-by-hut, district-by-district basis. Unpopular

headmen and chiefs suspected of being sympathisers or outright government agents were isolated from the people or forcibly driven out. The link between the people and the leadership which came to be known as the Mountain Committee — Intaba — was constantly strengthened. Entire districts came to be administered by the Committee through a sophisticated network of activists. So as not to invite concentration of the enemy forces and to prevent the conflict from being localised emissaries were sent to establish links with other areas as well as known leaders of the ANC. Taxes were collected to assist families who had become victims of white tyranny, to pay the fines of those arrested or for legal fees for those facing trial.

There were many limitations to the movement, but the example of sustained action and organisation in facing the enemy was unmatched since the days of armed resistance to Boer and British in the 17th and 18th centuries.

No revolutionary movement, Govan concluded, can fail to mobilise totally — in the cities and townships as well as the countryside. Govan's book was set in the early sixties. Conditions of the rural people have become much more acute, and it is patently clear that for the mass of landless and unemployed entrapped in the Bantustan nightmare, as for the urban blacks, there is only one way out of the misery, degradation, want and poverty imposed by white domination — the revolutionary way out.

The Freedom Charter

"The land shall be shared among those who work it", declares the Freedom Charter, whose twenty-fifth anniversary the people of our country are celebrating this year. It is clear, given the conditions of present day South Africa as it has been constituted for the mass of the people, that the demand is a revolutionary one which can only be fulfilled with the total destruction of white supremacy rule and the seizure of state political power. This is the precondition necessary for establishing the rights of the people over every inch of South Africa. And this entails in the first instance breaking

the virtual monopoly over the land exercised by the white minority, and ending the restrictions of land ownership and occupation on racial lines.

Freedom for the people, Nelson Mandela declared when referring to the demand for the nationalisation of the mineral wealth, banks and monopoly industries, would be meaningless if the power of the monopolists is left untouched by a people's government. In the agricultural sector of the economy no less, a future government formed by the ANC will undoubtedly have to take over the monopoly agricultural industries and enterprises for the benefit of the people. In the same measure, land owned by land barons, absentee landowners, the state and land companies will be taken over and made available for usage by those desiring land, having none or inadequate access to land usage for farming. So as to prevent land grabbing and the concentration of land in private ownership for the purpose of profiteering and speculation measures will have to be considered to control the amount of land in the hands of individuals or groups. Without such restrictions the possibilities of a future monopoly bourgeoisie on the land becomes a strong possibility. If we must avoid the experience, negative and counter-productive in relation to the needs of the mass of the people and the country, of other countries emerging out of colonialism, even through armed struggle, we must of necessity aim at preventing the land from being used as a means to personal wealth through the exploitation of the labour of others. The class of the counter-revolution has its material basis in precisely such a process.

As far as is possible, and with the approval of "those who work the land" we will encourage the establishment and the running of farms on a collective basis. Certainly, the logical beginnings of the collective farms will be the state controlled farms taken over from the monopolies. Experience in this form of production and production relations has demonstrated the economic efficiency of the collectives as well as the meaningful participation of the toilers in such enterprises and the just distribution of the social

product.

Given the condition of landholding and the dire economic position of the vast majority of the rural people, a future ANC government will need to assist them with seeds, farming implements, improvement grants and machines. In addition, agricultural training will have to be provided on a large scale to improve land utilisation, to introduce modern farming methods and technology so as to increase productivity. Equally, it would be incumbent on the state to provide the necessary infrastructure for the agricultural industry by the building of dams, granaries and storage and distribution points together with the necessary transport network in rail, road and other forms of carriage.

Prison farms, forced labour and instruments of control such as the Pass laws will be abolished forthwith and the free movement of those engaged in agricultural pursuits will be guaranteed. Special attention will be devoted to the educational facilities and opportunities and the health and medical needs of the rural population.

Finally, the white farming class, who for so long has been among the staunchest supporters of the racist regimes and has been part and parcel of the entire oppressive and exploitative system as capitalist farmers will have to be re-educated in the spirit of the Freedom Charter.

This is in essence what is happening in Zimbabwe. In South Africa this is surely going to happen, perhaps in a more pronounced and sharper form. But before we reach that stage we are and shall be faced with the immense task of mobilising organising and guiding these "rootless", displaced, landless people with no place of their own.

As Sechaba (3rd Quarter 78') declared before:

"This is all the more important because the future of our revolution and movement does not depend on some abstract hopes and wishes: our ideals and aspirations will become a reality as a result of our actions and thinking today and here."

JOHN OSMERS SPEAKS

Sometime last year a parcel arrived in Maseru, the capital of the Kingdom of Lesotho and addressed to Rev. John Osmers care of St. Barnabas Rectory. When Rev. Osmers opened the parcel it exploded injuring him and his companions who were present at the time. Osmers received injuries resulting in part of his right arm having to be amputated. The others received varying degrees of injuries which are still being attended to.

There is no doubt whatsoever that this parcel which had to pass Jan Smuts Airport in Johannesburg, Lesotho being a country completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa, was tampered with by the racist South African regime.

Who is this man Osmers and why this desperate attempt by Pretoria to get rid of him? Osmers born in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1935, had this to say:

"My first contact with the problem of racism was in my own country where I saw to what extent the Indians from Fiji Islands, who came to study or work, were discriminated against. They were completely ostracised by the local population. They were denied accommodation and were always in some sort of trouble with the New Zealand authorities. That is how my attention was drawn to racism — New Zealand style. But I must admit I was still very ignorant of the racism practised against the Maori who are the original inhabitants of the country because there are none of them in Christchurch. So there was no contact".

Questioned as to the reasons for becoming involved in the South African struggle Osmers replied, "Whilst overseas I happened to read Trevor Huddleston's book 'Naught for your Comfort' and this aroused my interest in South Africa and I began to read more on the problems

pertaining there. In 1958 I decided to visit the country itself and spent six weeks there. I had the good fortune to meet Earnest Gallo (a young ANC militant and the first President of the African Students Association, a body supporting the policies of the ANC and catering for the needs of African students. He was forced to flee the country by the oppressors and died not long thereafter ED.) who explained the policies of the African National Congress to me and I was so overwhelmed that I vowed there and then that some-day I would return to Southern Africa and make my contribution to the struggle for liberation against white oppression. I do not regret that decision".

Father Osmers then returned to London and after studying at various institutions trained as a priest, in the belief that this would give him ample opportunity to get into direct contact with large numbers of people and his first experience in this respect was in a Yorkshire parish in a mining area in one of the poorest communities of that place.

He came back to Africa in 1965 and settled in Lesotho from where, in his own words, "to help change the situation by trying to work with the normal healthy people than with the sick. By that I mean to cleanse the peoples of racism to one of tolerance".

Osmers became very active in the University Christian Movement and because of this was declared a "prohibited immigrant" in South Africa. That was in 1971.

John Osmers comments: "In the first place the policy of the African National Congress was not always one of violence. This is a decision arrived at after many years of fruitless endeavours to achieve freedom through peaceful means. It was not an easy decision for a great movement

like the ANC to arrive at. I respect that decision and am convinced, after having lived and studied the conditions of the black people for many years that the ANC had no alternative. In my own humble way I am making my contribution."

"I mentioned previously that I had made a trip to South Africa after having read about the conditions existing there. This was an eye-opener to me. The first 'eye-opener' was undoubtedly Earnest Gallo. Here was a young man like myself. A man with a university degree. Anybody with that type of education has got it made. He has no problem. But Earnest was living under very appalling conditions for a university graduate. He had completely dedicated his life to the struggle without or very little pay. To me this was an abject lesson in humility. Earnest spent hours lecturing to me on the policies of the ANC and I had the opportunity to see for myself with what effect the ANC had rallied the people around it. I became convinced that this was indeed an organisation that represented its people. With people like Earnest being its members and dedicating their lives to the ideals envisaged by this great organisation impelled me to return someday and serve this organisation."

"I gave the matter of going to Lesotho

very serious thought and consulted many people and it was on their advice that I chose Lesotho. The reason being that being a foreigner would enable the regime to throw me out of the country in a matter of months as happened to a number of outspoken priests. I wanted to avoid this and I am happy, as events proved later, that I made this choice. This is what has worried the Pretoria regime and their efforts to get rid of me. But I am glad they failed, for each day that we live, for that day we can give of our ability to bring down that obnoxious regime and I am certain they will try again. But my work goes on".

Prime Minister Leboa Jonathan, who was in London at the time of the explosion on his way to the OAU Summit Conference in Monrovia phoned the hospital enquiring about their condition and on his return from the conference paid them a call with words of encouragement.

There is no doubt that the fascist regime in Pretoria will make further attempts to get rid of its opponents by such dastardly acts but no matter what happens they know that their days are numbered and it is only a question of time before the victorious army of the people will march into the citadel of apartheid itself.

THE QUAIL REPORT

Report of the Ciskei Commission (The Quail Report), Silverton, South Africa, 1980.

When the administrators of the Ciskei were offered "Independence" by Pretoria, they did what any discerning person would be well-advised to do to gifts from Pretoria,

they looked the gift-horse in the mouth. An account of what they saw is contained in the Report of the Ciskei Commission, also known as The Quail Report of February 8 1980. Actually all the administrators need have done when they were shown the gift was what everyone in South Africa did, including the gentlemen in

Pretoria, which was to count the ribs of the horse since they were clearly visible from a distance of 100 metres. Still, no one was prepared to stop them, and in any case Africans love debate, which was how they conducted their affairs before they got lumbered with administrators.

So seven very wise men — from as far afield as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, U.S.A.; London; as well as a fair crop of the home grown — were appointed in August 1978 and given orders to:

“Enquire into and report and make recommendations to the government of the Ciskei on the practical feasibility, considering all political, economic, and social aspects, of independence for the Ciskei”.

The commissioners were under strict orders to leave no stone unturned. They were to enquire, “into all facts and matters which they may consider relevant and material”, especially the thorny subject of who should or should not be a citizen of an independent Ciskei. The citizenship issue had dogged negotiations between the Transkei administrators, before they became a Government, and Pretoria. As it happened Pretoria closed negotiations with the Transkei by declaring unilaterally that anyone whom Pretoria thought was a Transkei citizen, was one. This is not quite academic as it may sound for the simple reason that neither the Transkei nor the Ciskei, nor, for that matter any other rural area of South Africa can support its population. The Quail Report found that of the 2 million or so people who could trace their ancestors to the Ciskei, only a third of them actually lived in the Ciskei. To say they lived in the Ciskei is in point of fact to put the case too strongly since malnutrition is, to use the commissioners’ word, endemic. The commissioners estimated that Ciskeians had, in 1976, a per capita income of R212 — “clearly an independent Ciskei would be, in absolute terms, a very poor country,” they added — however most of that income was earned outside the Ciskei, in East London and King William’s Town and beyond in the rest of South Africa.

So what of the offer of independence?

commission concluded in paragraph 347:

“We consider independence as at present understood to be an unattractive option at this time. The following are the main reasons.

1. The terms on which separation is currently available (e.g. as in the case of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda) are not favourable.
2. In terms of size and economic viability, the Ciskei would rank among the world’s least endowed states.
3. An independent Ciskei would not be accorded recognition as a bone fide member of the international community.
4. According to our attitude survey two out of three Ciskeians oppose separation on present terms.
5. Finally, ... South Africa is changing: this is not the time to risk cutting itself off from the prospect of gaining its rightful share of political and economic benefits within South Africa”.

The commission’s findings are of course neither revealing nor profound. Anyone could have told them that “independence for the Ciskei” would be rejected by the people and is in any case a non-starter.

Producing the report was not however a futile exercise. All studies of conditions in rural areas of South Africa are always welcome particularly as the regime is at pains to hide the appalling conditions in which the population in these areas live. The commission, for example reprimands South Africa for not building enough houses so that up to 15 people have to live in a 45 square metres house.

The appendices of the Report are well worth reading. Appendix 3, History of the Ciskei People by C.H.T. Lalendle, the only African member of the commission is particularly noteworthy. In four pages Lalendle brings to life the dramatic history of that part of South Africa. One can only hope Lalendle will devote less time to advising the Ciskei administrators which is, when all is said and done, a dead end project.

Moeletsi Mbeki

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