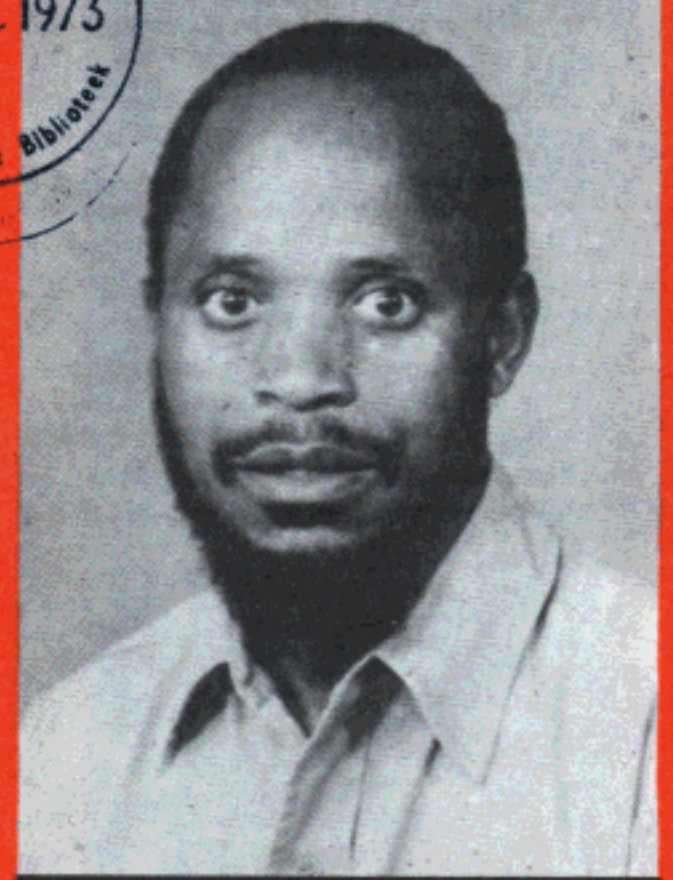


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official organ of the african national congress south africa

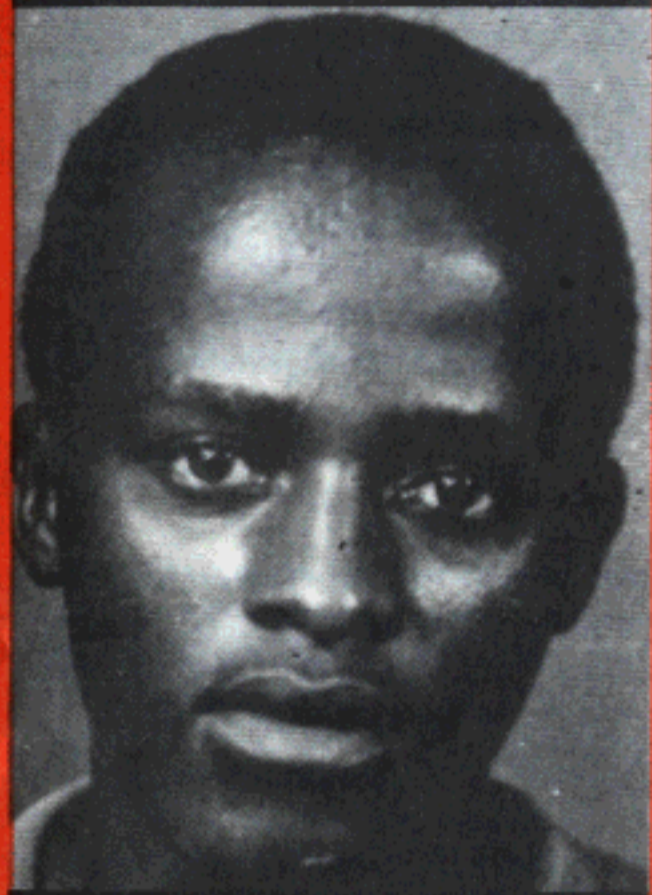


15 YEARS



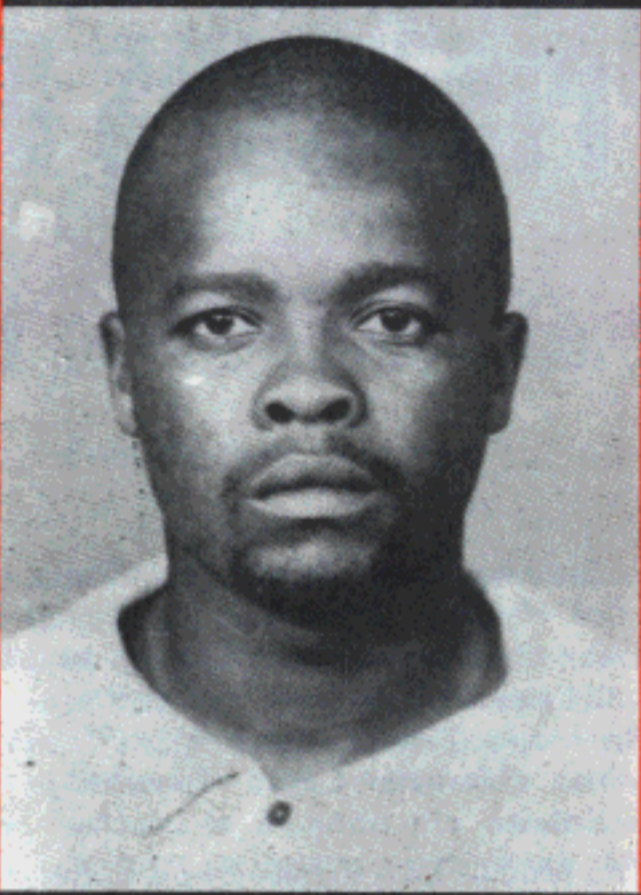
CHOLO

15 YEARS



SIJAKA

15 YEARS



MTEMBU

12 YEARS



MOUMBARIS

5 YEARS



HOSEY

15 YEARS



MPANZA

## RELEASE ALL SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

### THE PRETORIA SIX SENTENCED

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## CONTENTS

	Page
THE PRETORIA SIX - Prisoners of Apartheid	2
PRISONERS OF APARTHEID by Oliver Tambo, Acting President-General of the ANC	4
TEN YEARS OF AFRICAN UNITY	7
180 Million Organised Workers Call to ...	
BOYCOTT SOUTH AFRICA	9
BLACK WORKERS' MIGHTY MOVEMENT	
The Strike Wave in Retrospect- October '72 to April '73.	11
RADIO FREEDOM The Voice of the African National Congress of South Africa	18
SOUTHERN AFRICA IN STRUGGLE by Oliver Tambo, Acting President-General of the ANC	19
OBITUARY Women's Leader and Freedom Fighter MARY NGALO	23
PEACE IS EVERYONE'S CONCERN	24

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# THE PRETORIA SIX

## Prisoners of Apartheid

The Pretoria Six - Theophilus Cholo, Justice Mpanza, Aron Mtembu, Sandi Sijaka, Alexandre Moumbaris and John Hosey were all convicted and sentenced after a three-month trial in the Pretoria Supreme Court. The Judge found that:

- The four African accused had undergone military training under the auspices

of the African National Congress.

- Moumbaris was concerned in a conspiracy with the ANC and committed acts to further the conspiracy.

- The four African accused and Moumbaris were concerned in an ANC plan to stage a sea-borne landing on the South African coast.

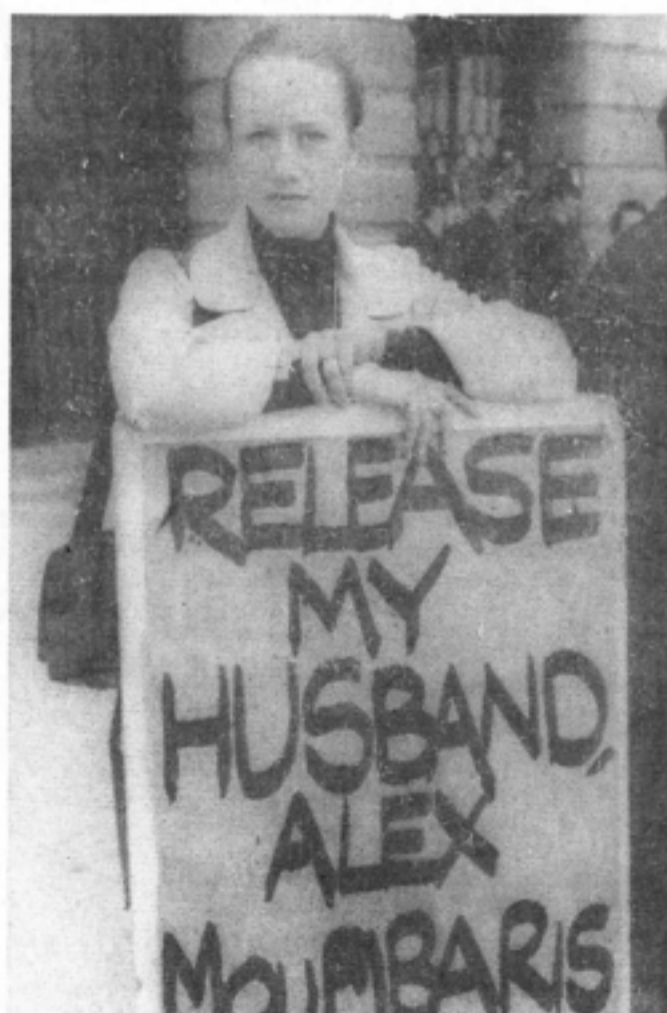
- Though it had not been proved, Hosey had played a part in bucket bomb distribution of ANC pamphlets in Cape Town and had brought falsified Pass books into the country.

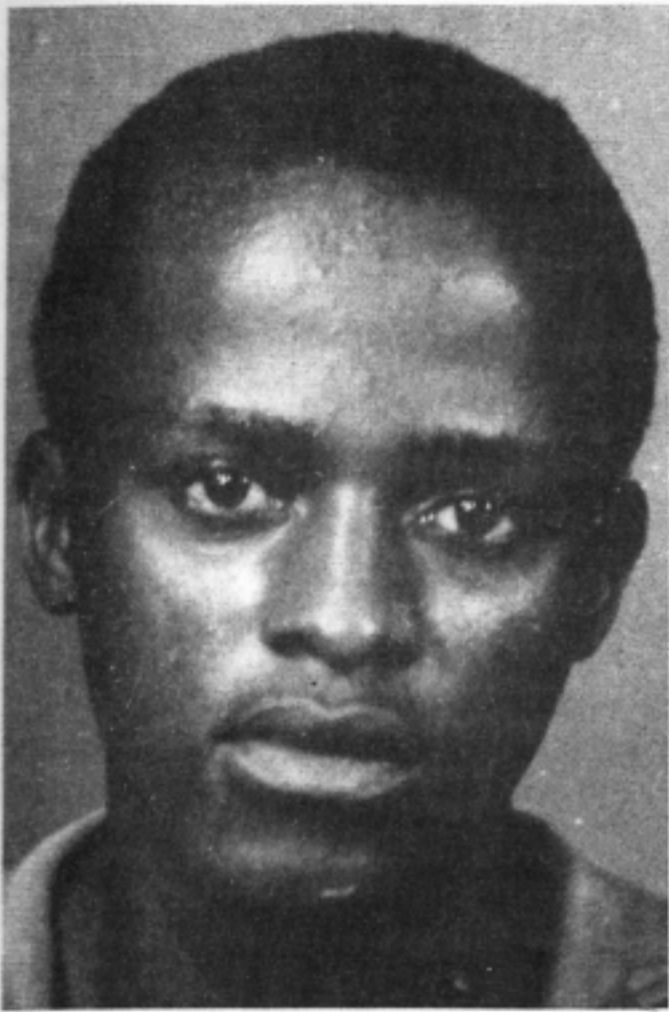
Cholo, Mtembu, Mpanza and Sijaka were each sentenced to 15 years imprisonment; Moumbaris was sentenced to 12 years and Hosey was given a 5 year sentence.

Statements by the Six that they were tortured during the long period they were held in solitary confinement prior to the trial were rejected by the Court. Following on this report we publish a call by our acting President General, to the world at large to intensify the campaign for the release of all South African political prisoners.

We sincerely hope that world public opinion will be shocked into responding to this call, by the savagery of the sentences imposed on the Pretoria Six. Immediately the sentences were known, the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on Apartheid, H. E. Edwin O. Ogbu, in a statement said that the

Marie-Jose Moumbaris - demonstrating outside South Africa House in London

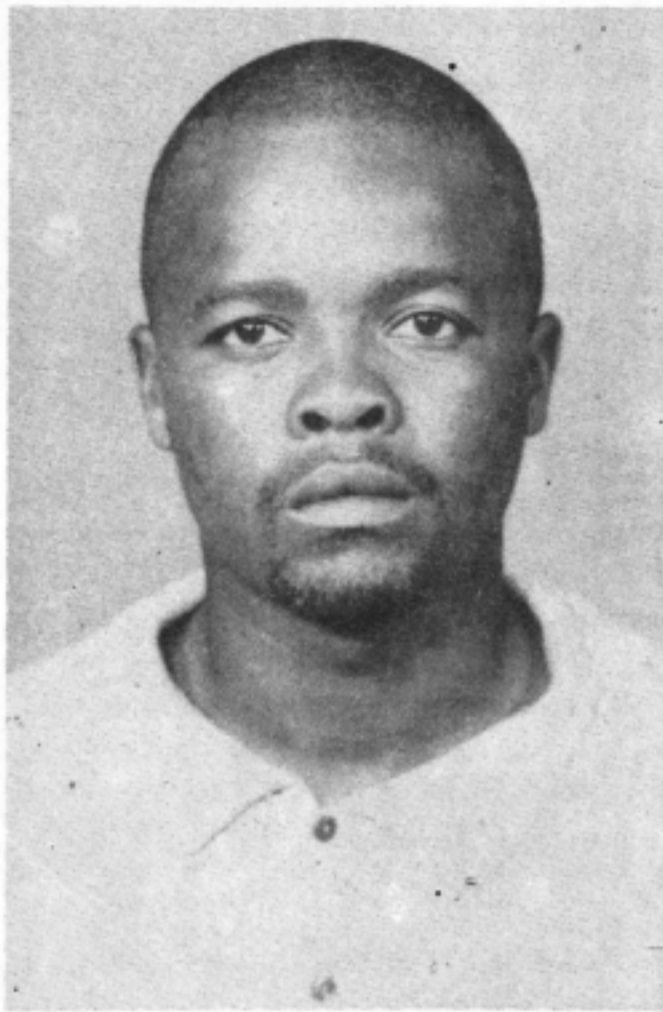




**Sandi Sijaka**

criminals and terrorists are not those who are fighting for freedom and justice in South Africa but the South African regime itself.

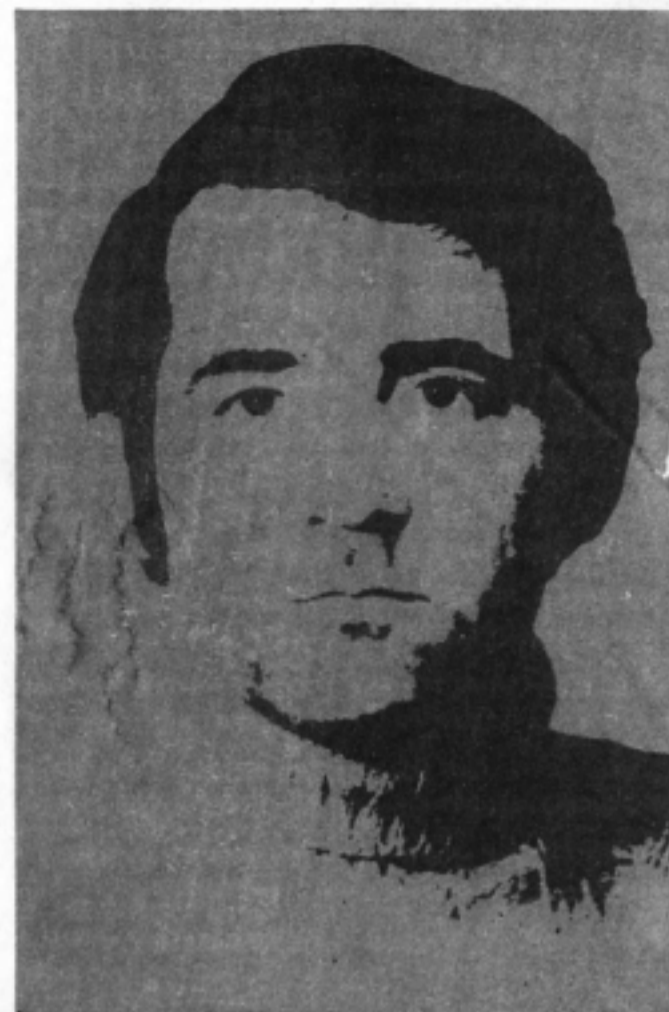
"The Special Committee on Apartheid calls on all organisations and peoples to do all in their power to secure the release of these and other prisoners in South Africa and hasten the eradi-



**Aron Mtembu**

cation of the crime of apartheid", he said.

In a lengthy statement condemning the sentences, the World Peace Council called for the intensification of the campaign for world-wide solidarity actions to demand the release of all political prisoners from South African jails.



**Alexandre Moumbaris**

Stating that Apartheid has long been recognised as an abomination and a crime against humanity, endangering the independence of African States and world peace, the statement concludes, "the international community is therefore, duty-bound to act vigorously for the eradication of the South African Nazi dictatorship."

**John Hosey**

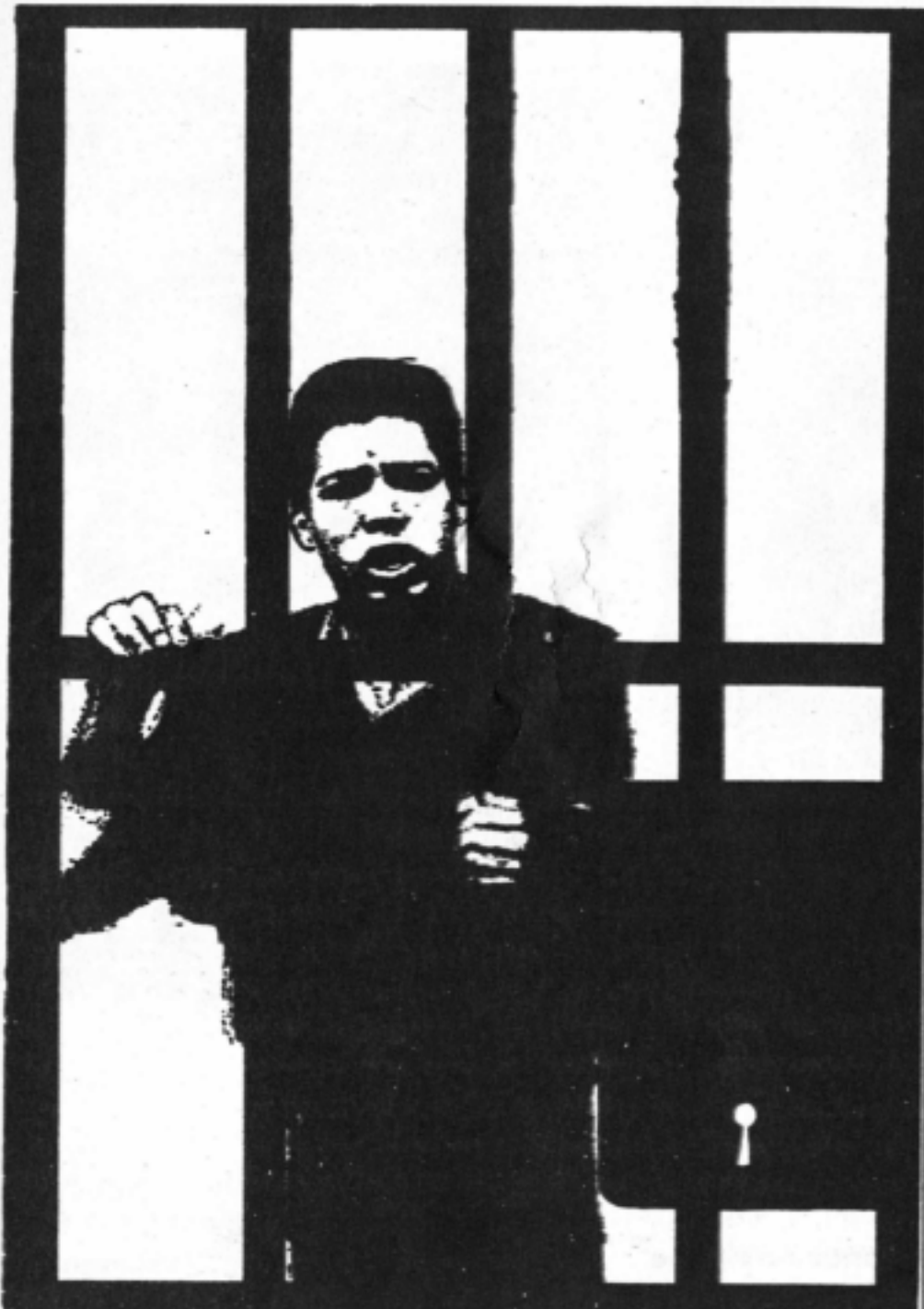


**Theophilus Cholo**



**Justice Mpanza**





Oliver Tambo, Acting President-General of the African National Congress, addressing a Press Conference organised by the OAU in Addis Ababa, called for the release of all . . .

# PRISONERS OF APARTHEID

July 11th, 1973 marked the passage of 10 years since the leadership of the South African Liberation Movement was arrested at Rivonia. Three months later the United Nations General Assembly by 106 votes to 1 (South Africa only voted against) requested the South African government to abandon the arbitrary trial of this leadership and to "grant unconditional release to all political prisoners and to all persons imprisoned, interned or subjected to other restrictions for having opposed the policy of apartheid".

Despite numerous resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly, the Pretoria regime continues to imprison, restrict and detain thousands of South Africans of every race. These political prisoners represent in the words of our late President General Chief Lutuli "the highest in morality and ethics in the South African political struggle; . . . (men whose) policies are in accordance with the deepest international principles of brotherhood and humanity; without their leadership, brotherhood and humanity may be blasted out of existence and reason; when they are locked away, justice and reason will have departed from the South African scene".

Brotherhood, humanity, justice and reason have indeed departed from apartheid South Africa. The pursuit of these ideals has been made a crime and those who seek justice search in vain. Men of the calibre of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada who, as the true representatives of their people, should be engaged in helping to create a new world order, are instead sentenced to life imprisonment and spend their days breaking stones in the bleakness of Robben Island.

Many others, trade unionists like Billy Nair, Raymond Mhlaba, Queen's Councillor of the renown of Bram Fischer, writers, professors, housewives, miners, artisans have been victimised for their unreserved opposition to apartheid. They have been penalised in so many ways and under so many

laws that an accurate assessment of their numbers is impossible, but that they number many thousands is undeniable.

Cases of torture, assault and death in South African prisons are well documented as are the inhuman conditions in which detainees are held. Those who have been sentenced are not even accorded the internationally accepted status of political prisoners and are branded criminals and classified in the lowest category D together with "the type of prisoner with a previous record and/or conviction of serious crime of a daring or aggressive nature or other aggravating circumstances such as convictions for rape, robbery or violating in one form or another or participating during any period of imprisonment in a daring escape, or other gang activities involving knife assaults or incitement thereto". Unlike all other prisoners they receive no remission or reconsideration of sentences and life sentence can only end with death.

Those who are released after completion of sentence are frequently placed under house arrest, or banished to remote areas and/or banned.

Indris Naidoo, Shirish Nanabhai and Reg Vandayer who completed a 10 year sentence on Robben Island last month were immediately placed under house arrest and banned. Within the last few months, various student leaders have also been banned and restricted without charge or trial.

## World-Wide Campaign

FOR ALL THESE PRISONERS OF APARTHEID THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS A SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY for they have been victimised for upholding the very principles, aspirations and rights embodied in the United Nations Charter and Declaration of Human Rights. Not only have Vorster's policemen no authority to imprison and re-

strict these people but by so doing the Pretoria regime manifests its contempt for the international community and its ideals.

The contempt is aggravated and the illegality compounded by the detention of Namibians in South Africa and Namibia and by the imprisonment of South African freedom fighters in Zimbabwe.

The ANC therefore calls for a world-wide campaign to bring about the release of all the prisoners of apartheid, at the same time as greater efforts are made to continue the isolation of the Vorster regime and the enforcement of United Nations resolutions.

This call must not be understood to mean that the ANC will not continue to pursue relentlessly the struggle to liberate all of South Africa. This battle will be fought to ultimate victory.

The African National Congress accepts that our struggle must continue and will entail hardship, imprisonment and death. As our leader Nelson Mandela stated in open court this is the price we are prepared to pay.

But that is not to say that when it concerns the prisoners of apartheid the world community needs stand by and like an impartial auditor make tally and write off the price of freedom in South Africa. For it is in large measure because of the failure of the world community to take decisive and meaningful action that South Africa is able to continue to exact this price from those who seek freedom. If the world is to make any claim to have moved forward from anarchy and barbarity towards a world order based on justice and equality then it can no longer afford the Pretoria regime the protection of international legality. Rather that regime must be branded the outcast that it is.

IT IS TO THOSE WHO SEEK TO BRING ABOUT BROTHERHOOD, JUSTICE AND FREEDOM IN SOUTH AFRICA, THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST AFFORD PROTECTION AND EXTEND LEGALITY.

## The Status of the South African Regime

**A challenge to the validity of the claim by the South African racist regime that it represents the people of South Africa**

Today, 25 years after the installation of the apartheid regime and 54 years after the African people first appealed to the international community at Versailles, the African National Congress calls upon members of the United Nations to reassess the status of the regime in Pretoria:

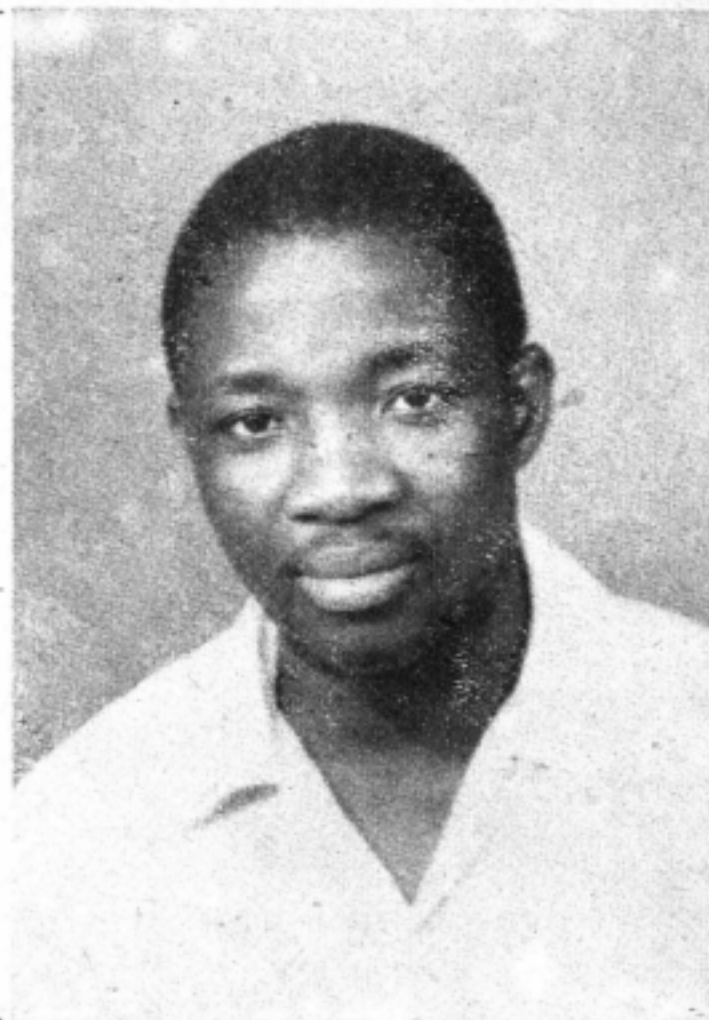
To consider whether it may validly claim to represent the people of South Africa;

To examine whether by its failure to live up to the principles for which the United Nations was founded by its continued defiance of the very basic aspirations of humankind, it has the right to be granted legality under international law;

To judge whether its failure to comply with specific resolutions of the U.N. Security Council and General Assembly, its flouting of rulings of the International Court of Justice, its aggression across its borders do not now require that this regime be refused the protection of the international community and be declared an outcast.

1. Over the centuries many documents have testified to the fact that no government based on tyranny can claim to be recognised by its own people or by humankind (the United States Declaration of Independence). The major constitutional document purporting to legitimise the present regime, namely the Republic of South Africa Act 1961 expressly entrusts all sovereign power in South Africa to a Legislature constituted by law of persons of European descent only. The vestigial rights of black South Africans to participate in elections to Parliament have been entirely eliminated. It has been a matter of pride to the authorities that the latest rounds of election to Parliament have invol-

Sentenced  
to 15 years  
in  
November 1972  
on similar  
charges  
as the  
PRETORIA SIX



CLETUS  
MZIMELA

ved white voters only. The Vorster regime is accordingly responsible both in theory and practice **only** to the white parliament and represents only this small segment of South Africa.

By treating the majority of South Africans not as citizens but as rightless aliens in the country of their birth the Vorster regime is denying itself any lawful authority to act in the name of the majority. It may demand obedience on the basis of naked force, but cannot claim allegiance on the basis of lawful authority.

2. The policies of the Vorster regime as explicitly expressed in its laws and openly enforced in its courts are avowedly racist and involve clear and systematic breaches of the United Nations Charter. As long ago as 1952 the General Assembly adopted a resolution referring to South Africa – which declared that in a multi-racial society, harmony and respect for human rights and freedoms and the peaceful development of a unified community were best assured when patterns of legislation and practice were directed to ensuring equality before the law of all persons regardless of race, creed or colour; economic, social, cultural and political participation of all racial groups should be on a basis of equality. The resolution (616BV11) affirmed that the governmental policies of a member state, namely South Africa, which were not directed towards these goals but were designed to perpetuate or increase discrimination, were inconsistent with the pledges of Members under Article 56 of the Charter.

In the years that have followed every single organ of the United Nations has found it necessary to reiterate that apartheid was inconsistent with the provisions of the United Nations Charter and international legal obligations. Moreover the practice of racial discrimination and apartheid has been expressly outlawed by a number of almost universally accepted legal documents setting out standards of conduct and establishing new and binding international legal rules. The minority regime in South Africa has in fact through its legislation contravened every single article in the Declaration of Human Rights, and the State Parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination expressly stated that they "particularly condemn racial segregation and apartheid" (Article 3).

### Vicious Racism

3. South Africa has systematically flouted every resolution of the United Nations stemming from its policies of Apart-



Walter Sisulu (left) and Nelson Mandela



ANC leaders both serving life imprisonment on Robben Island

heid. What is more, far from desisting she has aggressively pursued her policies and increased her repression of the African people.

Further in defiance of the international community

- South Africa today illegally occupies and administers Namibia.
- South Africa is the major instrument in the evasion of United Nations sanctions against the illegal Smith regime and the main support of its economy.
- South Africa provides support and sustenance to the Portuguese government in its continued defiance of United Nations resolutions on decolonisation and the right to self determination of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau.

4. South Africa is in violation of the United Nations Convention on Genocide: which defines genocide as the "committing of certain acts with intent to destroy wholly or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such".

The entire policy of apartheid is by its own definition aimed at destroying the South African nation by denying its national multi-racial and essentially African identity and weakening its character and its people by deliberate regressive fragmentation.

The vicious racism preached and practised by the ruling minority, the indoctrination of children in schools, the youth and grown men and women in every walk of life is breeding hatred, suspicion and fear. The massive and relentless dispossession of peoples coupled with the denial of elementary rights on the grounds of race have established all the pre-conditions of genocide.

The applications of apartheid have created the pre-conditions, and its ideology and manifestations establish the intent to commit genocide. The right of the African people to live together as family units is denied by the apartheid regime - wives are separated from husbands, whilst children may not live with their mothers. Even the taxation system does not recognise wives or children as dependents of African workers.

Nearly 9 10ths of the surface area of South Africa has been appropriated by law for whites only, as has 70 % of the wealth of the country, with not unexpected consequences for the health and well being of our people. Is it genocide only when one starts to put children in gas ovens? Is it not equally extermination if you deliberately create conditions

in which more than 50 % of African children in one reserve in South Africa die before reaching the age of 5?

### Call For Urgent Action

5. Over the years in attempting to defend its posture of defiance of universally held concepts of equality and justice, South Africa has not hesitated to commit aggression, and is now a threat to the peace of Africa and the world. The threat arises not merely from the fact that apartheid is a crime against humanity - the deliberate glorification of racism and fanatic maintenance of white domination is a serious provocation to all the peoples of the world who have suffered or been witness to the practices of herrenvolkism and colonialism. The threat arises because the imperatives of the South African economy impel South Africa along the path of expansion. South Africa is an intrinsic part of the imperialist world but it now needs to expand in its own right. Its economy based on the cheap labour pool created by the apartheid system, now requires the export of capital and needs new expanding markets outside its borders. If it is to survive as it is, South Africa needs to expand, and unless stopped will do so, either by extending its sphere of influence through neo-colonial trade and aid agreements or by direct aggression.

The continued South African presence in Namibia, the extension of her military "frontier" to the Zambesi, her military advice and assistance to the Portuguese armies in Angola and Mozambique, the political and military threats and aggression against Zambia and Tanzania, as well as the attempts to woo African states and break out of its isolation all bear witness to the imperative need to expand.

South Africa can no longer be considered just as a problem of racism or apartheid. It now has the need, the intent and the military potential to commit aggression, and indeed has done so. South Africa is unquestionably a threat to the peace and security of a very wide area in the southern hemisphere and must be recognised as such at the international and diplomatic conference tables. Urgent action by the Security Council under Chapter VII Article 39 is called for.

An examination of these matters which we have raised here only in outline places upon the international community a responsibility to act, from such a recognition and branding of the South African regime definite action must follow.



# TEN YEARS OF AFRICAN UNITY

The founding of the Organisation of African Unity 10 years ago was a significant achievement and an historic landmark in the life of the continent which had been ravaged and plundered by colonial powers for centuries.

1963, marked the beginning of a new epoch for Africa as thirty newly-independent Heads of States met to chalk out the destiny of the continent; pledge solidarity and friendship with each other; safeguard their independence from the forces of colonialism and neo-colonialism and, undertake the task of total African liberation from all forms of subjugation.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the OAU which now unites 41 independent states we need to ask whether the basic hopes and aspirations of its founding fathers have been realised or not.

Has Africa preserved its peace and stability, made significant social, economic and political advancement and to what extent has the objective of total emancipation been accomplished? A dispassionate appraisal of the African scene shows beyond doubt that although there have been many problems facing the continent, overall, significant and in some cases revolutionary changes have indeed taken place.

Firstly, the myth that Africa would be plunged into darkness and chaos when their "masters" leave has been shattered. The development and peaceful transformation of Africa has been relatively free from the bloody wars, chaos and dictatorships that characterised Western societies during the past and first half of this century.

Secondly, African countries have, to the best of their abilities, solved a number of explosive border conflicts – a legacy of colonialism – and most have concentrated their

efforts to the serious tasks of social, economic and political achievements of their societies.

Thirdly, Africa has not resorted to, and we trust never shall, the level of barbarism where millions of people were herded into concentration camps and ghettos and exterminated.

Finally, the OAU is playing a vital and ever-increasing role, at the United Nations and elsewhere in support of the struggles being waged in racist Southern Africa and the Portuguese colonies. Its wholehearted support for the liberation movements in these areas is well known and details of its aid to these movements need not be repeated here.

## Plundered

It is well to recall that the nations accusing the "Third World" of its so-called backwardness and underdevelopment are themselves responsible for this state of affairs. Besides having looted and plundered our countries in the past, leaving a legacy of hatred and animosity, they are now shamelessly aiding and abetting racist regimes in Africa and elsewhere. And they have the temerity to speak of Africa's enormous difficulties with disdain while at the same time supporting these racist societies which in the words of the United Nations: "are a threat not only to peace in Africa but to the whole world."

In the Portuguese colonies, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, the peoples are not accepting oppression submissively. Resistance movements have been developed and national wars of liberation are being conducted.

Let the West withdraw its support for white South Africa and Rhodesia; not arm Portugal with NATO weapons and



give her massive financial aid to continue her colonial wars – and the story of Africa would be very different; implement UN decisions and desist from using the veto at Security Council sessions to bolster and strengthen these racist and colonial regimes and we will demonstrate in unmistakable language how relatively easier it is to topple these decadent societies.

In South Africa the Liberation Movement, spearheaded by the underground African National Congress is increasing the momentum of the struggle against white domination. Despite the ruthless repressive machinery of a naked Police State, the country has been shaken by a massive wave of strikes in the recent past. Over 250 000 black workers downed tools and demanded the right to organise, the right to strike and for higher wages and better working conditions. Thousands of black students have participated in an unprecedented national strike affecting every single black campus in the country, in support of their demands to free, compulsory and better education, the de-tribalisation of their tribal colleges and the right to have their own organisations in their universities.

The demand for full political and economic rights, and the abolition of all measures designed to humiliate and perpetuate the system of oppression and white domination has assumed new dimensions.

There is a growing realisation by an increasing number of whites in the country (as yet not significant) that South Africa is heading towards a bloody racial conflict unless meaningful changes are effected soon.

In the meantime the clandestine mobilisation of the masses to confront the enemy at every point of encounter is under way and the time is approaching when the staccato of gun fire is heard in all corners of our Motherland!

Mayibuye iAfrika!  
Amandla NgoWethu!  
Maatla keArona!

**The Organisation of African Unity was created May 26 1963**

**Emperor Haile Selassie (Ethiopia)**  
Chairman of first conference

**Secretary General: Nzo Ekangaki (Cameroon)**

**In November 1966 the Six Specialised Commissions were regrouped into three commissions**

1. Economic and Social
2. Educational, Cultural, Scientific and Health
3. Defence

**41 Member States**

Heads of Government meet once a year in different capitals  
Foreign Ministers twice a year.

Map locations and dates:  
Rabat 1972, Algiers 1968, Cairo 1964, Abidjan (Seat of the African Development Bank), Accra 1965, Addis Ababa 1963, Kinshasa 1967, Dar es Salaam (HQ of Coordinating Committee for Liberation Movement in Africa), Ababa 1966, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1973.



180 Million Organised Workers Call to ...

# BOYCOTT SOUTH AFRICA



A unique and unprecedented international Trade Union Conference, representing 180 million organised workers from all over the world was held in Geneva, Switzerland, in the middle of June this year. It was unique because it brought together for the first time since the end of the

last war, the three international trade union federations – The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, The World Federation of Trade Unions and The World Confederation of Labour and several national trade union federations.

This was possible only because all of them were unanimous on their attitude to apartheid and racism, and decided that their ideological differences should not stand in the way of expres-

sing their abhorrence against this fascist concept.

The Conference which was initiated by the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid, was held under the aus-

pices of the Workers Group of the International Labour Organisation. Attended by 380 delegates representing over 200 trade union organisations from Africa, Asia, Latin America,

Canada, the U.S.A. and Europe – from the capitalist, socialist and newly independent countries – the Conference unanimously called for the boycott of apartheid South Africa.

Delegate after delegate, from as far afield as India and Cuba; Tanzania and Toronto; New York and Moscow; from Namibia, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka; New Zealand and Holland; all condemned apartheid as a crime against humanity.

**The Chairman of the U.N. Special Committee on Apartheid, His Excellency Edwin Ogbu of Nigeria**, officially opening the Conference said that the Trade Unions of the world cannot in any way be a party to the crime of apartheid which is based on efforts to perpetuate the system of slave labour of the Black people in South Africa.

In a message read to the Conference, **the U.N. Secretary-General, Dr. Kurt Waldheim**, described the Conference as, "a major event in the world-wide struggle against apartheid."

"Discrimination based on race is inhuman and cannot be tolerated by the international community. Furthermore, the bitterness which it engenders imperils peace in Africa", he said.

**Moses Mabhida, Vice-President of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)**, in welcoming the support of the delegates, said that the fight was not only for free trade union rights and the right to all jobs for Blacks in South Africa, but for full political rights on every level; for political power.

**Mark Shope, Secretary-General of SACTU**, called on delegates not only to support the draft resolution but called for full commitment by all trade unionists to act against white South Africa.

## Resolution

The Conference in its final resolution called for:

- an ending of all political links, cultural, trade and diplomatic relations with South Africa;
- an end to all private and public investment there;
- an end to arms supplies or any other forms of military assistance;
- the closing of all ports and airports to South African ships and planes;
- the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations and all its agencies.

The delegates called on trade unionists throughout the world to ensure that their governments held to these demands.

**They also called on the national trade union movements to:**

- boycott all loading and unloading of goods to or from South Africa and Namibia;
- Organise a boycott of all goods imported from South Africa;
- boycott all sporting or cultural activities in which South African representatives take part;
- support the struggles of the oppressed workers of South Africa and their right to strike and right to organise, and campaign for freedom for all political prisoners.

The only discordant note was contained in a document issued at the end of the Conference by Lucy Mvubelo, Secretary of the No. 3 Branch of the National Clothing Workers Union of South Africa, who was not allowed to



address the meeting. She, together with other members of the Trade Union Council of South Africa, were denied any status at the Conference because "they were working within the framework of apartheid." She called for greater foreign investment in South Africa. To quote her: "Don't isolate us, don't break off contact with us and don't advocate dis-engagement and withdrawal of foreign investments.

"The situation in South Africa will not have changed in another 10 years to any degree", she desperately and pessimistically pleaded.

## Firm Rebuff

It is now universally accepted that the SACTU and African National Congress policy of total isolation of apartheid South Africa is correct because any investments or recognition of the pre-

sent regime in South Africa will only serve to underwrite apartheid.

At a press conference held in Geneva, SACTU representatives gave a firm rebuff to Mvubelo's point of view. In answer to a claim by the representative of the RAND DAILY MAIL that Mrs. Mvubelo represented 18 000 African workers and should therefore be allowed to speak at the Conference, SACTU representatives replied:

**First**, that Mrs. Mvubelo belonged to a Union which was divided racially into three separate unions. The No. 1 Branch which took all major decisions and concluded all wage agreements comprises of whites only, No. 2 Branch representing Coloured workers and the No. 3 Branch representing African workers.

**Second**, that Mrs. Mvubelo did not represent her members in the true sense of the word as her union enjoyed a privilege which no other African union enjoyed; that of the closed shop, which means that any African worker who wishes to work in the garment industry must first obtain a Union Card signed by Mrs. Mvubelo and, therefore, workers are forced to become members of her union if they wish to work in a garment factory.

SACTU went on to point out that Mrs. Mvubelo was part of a delegation at the Conference with four leaders of TUCSA which does not have African unions, including Mrs. Mvubelo's No. 3 Branch, as members.

**Moses Mabhida, SACTU's Vice-President**, said:

"We abhor white oppression as much as we abhor Black sellouts, even more so."

We may not see the results of this Conference soon, but there is no doubt that the effects will be ultimately far-reaching. Trade unionists interviewed by SECHABA were extremely militant and their sincerity is hard to fault.

We can look forward to the day when many dock workers are going to ban the loading and unloading of cargo destined to and from South Africa.

We can look forward to the day when workers in factories are going to refuse to handle goods to and from South Africa.

In fact, apartheid South Africa is going to feel the effects of international trade union actions were it will hurt them most – their pockets!

(Owing to lack of space in this issue, speeches by SACTU Representatives and the opening address by His Excellency, Edwin Ogbu, Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid, will be published in our next issue.)

# BLACK WORKERS' MIGHTY MOVEMENT

**The Strike Wave in Retrospect – October 72 to April '73.**

The recent strike wave began in the last 3 months of 1972. It accelerated through January, reaching a tremendous climax in mid-February, with over 30 000 workers a day out on strike on some days. It continued into March, and only began to fade away in mid-April.

This was the largest, most militant and most dramatic mass action South Africa has seen since the early '60's – in fact, since the May 1961 stay-at-home. Much has happened since then: the armed struggle has commenced, legal and semi-legal resistance has re-emerged after a decade of severe repression, new movements have sprung up, their actions and perspectives in varying degrees reflecting the interests and hopes of the black majority and the influence of the ANC's policy and strategy. But this strike action was the first sustained episode of political struggle since 1961 involving really wide masses of our people. This gives it a unique importance, and calls for a careful analysis of the scope, character and significance of this mighty movement. **Sechaba**, has in previous issues dealt with some of the dramatic confrontations that formed part of this historic chapter in the history of our movement. The following article looks at the strike movement overall. It is early days to tell the whole story, much of which remains to be discovered. But it is not too early to probe the cause and course of these stirring events, and to draw some conclusions for the future.

The keynote to the whole story is militance. The African and other Black workers who struck braved not only sacking, but also imprisonment, fines, police batons and bullets, and banishment to the poverty-stricken 'homelands'. Yet they were not intimidated. Their boldness alarmed and temporarily paralysed even Vorster's police thugs. They often took to the streets, and sometimes took over the streets, turning their strike action into a festival of the oppressed. The whole world knows by now how one group of Durban workers marched through the city stopping the traffic and waving their sticks, with a red flag at their head. But there were many other less publicised incidents which demonstrate the militant mood of the workers. For example, the workers striking at Richards Bay aluminium smelter, denied food by the management, boldly stormed into the cold-storage, removed two large carcasses, took them off into the veld and had themselves a huge braaivleis (i.e. barbecue): The management were helpless . . .

More significant was an incident in Johannesburg which indicates the way in which black workers have stepped forward to demand what they want – however hostile the circumstances. A Wage Board hearing was to take place in the city. For years these have been obscure proceedings taking place in musty offices, with the employers, the government and the white trade unions conniving in conclave to hold down the wages of the black workers. This time it was different. Two hundred Africans, including scrap metal workers and cleaners, downed tools at the the Buffalo Salt

Company and marched into the Wage Board hearing to voice their demands and refute the claims of the directors. (Cape Times 10 April). A few years ago such action would have been unthought of; today it doesn't even attract a headline in the papers!

The following article probes the strike movement in depth. Part I estimates the numbers involved, the regions and the industries most affected. Part II looks at the economic and political factors that gave rise to the strikes, and poses a number of concrete questions. Part III suggests some lessons of the strikes for the whole liberation movement, and analyses their significance for the strategy and tactics of the ANC.

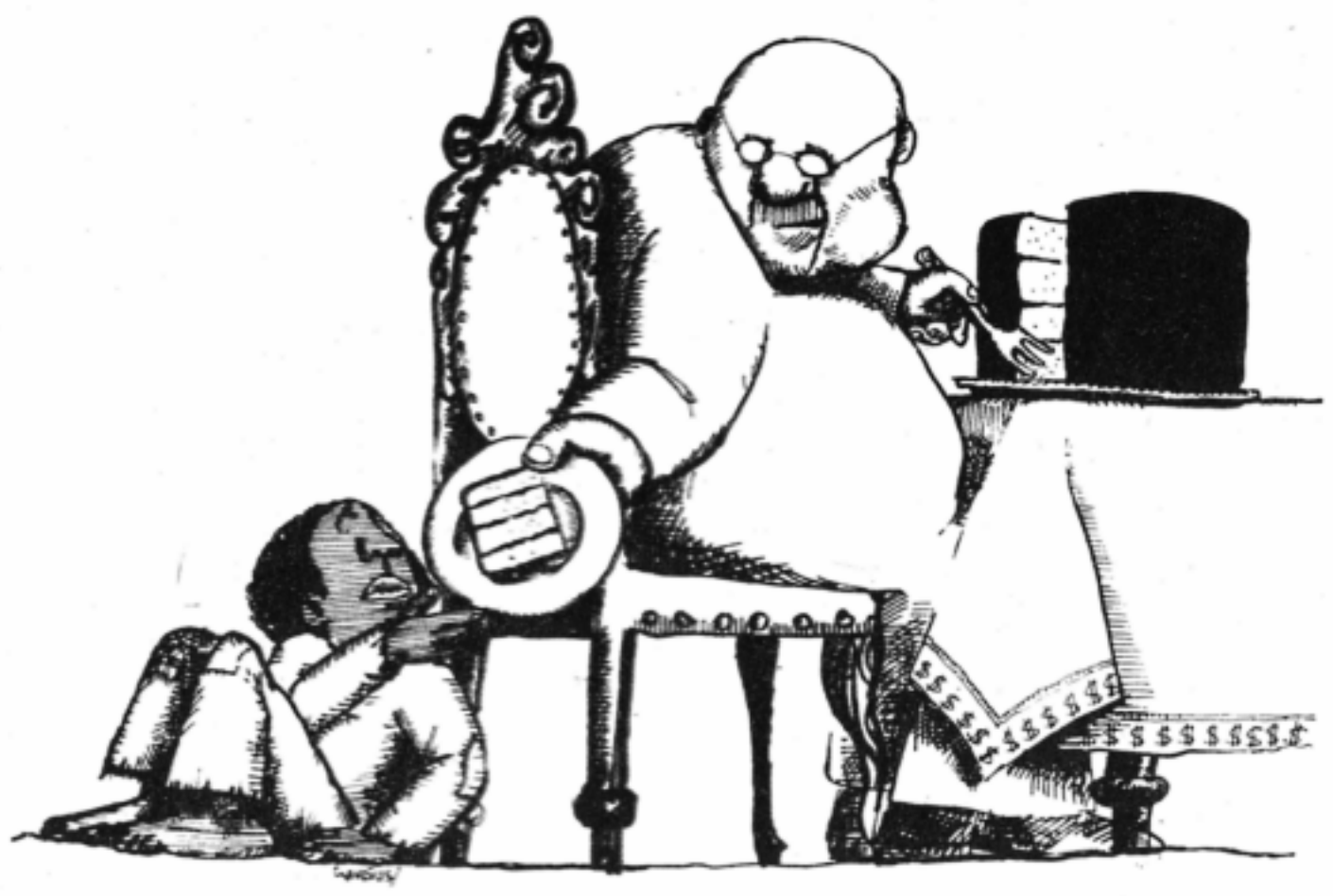
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## PART I The Strikers

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First, an estimate of the huge scale of the strike wave. Official figures have always under-stated the extent of strike action in South Africa. But even they are bound to disclose something of the reality. According to the Government, for the years 1959 to 1969, the annual average of strikes and stoppages by Africans was about 70 a year. In 1971 the number rose to 86. (1) In 1972 there were more strikes and stoppages, and in the first three months alone of 1973, the Government admits to 160 strikes and stoppages involving 61,410 workers. (2) In fact, the numbers involved were much greater. Employers frequently avoid informing the Department of Labour about disputes so as not to inflame labour relations with heavy-handed official interventions. This is especially true in the manufacturing industry where employers have difficulty in replacing blacks in skilled and semi-skilled jobs. At its height, the strike wave was hitting so many plants and factories, especially in Durban, that it was impossible for the police, the Dept. of Labour or the press to keep up with the action.

On 23rd March, the **Financial Mail** estimated that already more than 120 firms in Durban alone had been affected by strikes since the beginning of the year. An incomplete tabulation of reported strikes by a research officer of the SA Institute of Race Relations showed that between the middle of January and the end of February over 50,000 workers were involved in some kind of industrial action, affecting at least 84 concerns. (3) Taking into account the fact that the press failed to report some strikes, employers chose not to report others, and some stoppages produced such quick results in terms of hastily-granted rises that they were over within a few hours, it will probably never be possible to work out exactly how many thousands were involved. But it seems



likely that between the beginning of October last year and the end of April this year, at least 200,000 workers and more likely nearer to 250,000 workers were involved in strikes and stoppages in South Africa.

Some of the main strikes were:

<b>October</b>	
African stevedores in Durban	2,000
African factory workers in Benoni (textiles)	150
African miners at Windsorton (N. Cape)	142
<b>November</b>	
African stevedores sustained a 31-day overtime ban at Cape Town docks	2,000
<b>December</b>	
African bus drivers in Pretoria	200
<b>January</b>	
Coronation Brick & Tile Co. Durban	1,500
Frame Group Textiles, New Germany (Natal)	7,000
Consolidated Textile Mills, Jacobs	2,600
Dunlops - Durban	1,300
Ropes & Mattings - Durban	2,800
<b>February</b>	
Union Flour Mills - Durban	700
Consolidated Textile Mills, East London	2,000
Metal Box Company (SA) - Mobeni	1,000
Johannesburg City Council's bus drivers	145
Durban Corp. - black municipal workers	16,000
Hammarisdale 'Border industries' complex	7,000
Fruit and veg. canning workers, Empangeni	250
<b>March</b>	
Sappi Tugela paper Mill, Mandini (Natal)	2,000
Milk delivery men - Johannesburg	500
Newspaper delivery men - Johannesburg	100
Milling company - Klerksdorp	300
Aluminium smelting plant, Richards Bay (Natal)	700
Veka Clothing Factory (Natal)	2,000
<b>April</b>	
Alberton metal factory	250
Acme Timber Industries (near Richards Bay)	350
Brockfield Knitwear (African & Coloured workers) - near Johannesburg	300
Tongaat - the sugar town in Natal. Municipal employees (200) and sugar refining workers	700
Richards Bay - employees of a foreign consortium building the harbour	130

**Which Industries?**

This list gives some impression of the size and distribution of the strike action. Particularly hard hit was the textile industry. Indeed according to one report, still in April up to 4 strikes or stoppages a day were occurring in the textile

industry on the Rand. (4) Hardest hit, according to the Minister of Labour, was the iron, steel and engineering industry, which accounted for 22 of the 160 officially recorded strikes and stoppages, or two more than textiles (20). Municipalities, transport, construction, the distributive trades, and other sections of manufacturing industry, were all affected in varying degrees. It was only in mining and agriculture, (two of the four biggest sectors employment-wise, together with construction and manufacturing industry), that there appeared to be little or no strike action. It is not irrelevant that these are the sectors relying most heavily on (a) unskilled; (b) non-South African; (c) migrant labour. Nor is it irrelevant that these are the most difficult sectors in which to organise industrially, and the sectors in which partly because of dictatorial prison-like controls and because of the dispersion of the labour force over large areas (in farming), the rapid spread and mutual influence of strikes which was so conspicuous a feature of the wave had least opportunity to take effect.

The above list does not adequately reflect the impact of the strike wave in the engineering industry. This is because the largest strikes have been selected for the list; whereas the engineering industry is characterised to an unusual degree in South Africa by the relative smallness of the plants and enterprises. Being fewer in numbers, the strikers in these plants seldom made as much news as those in the big factories.

**Which Cities, Which Regions?**

Geographically, Durban and its adjacent industrial complexes (Pinetown, New Germany, Pietermaritzburg), together with Northern Natal (Tongaat, Richards Bay, Empangeni) accounted for much - at least half - of the action. The reasons for this will be discussed below. Johannesburg and most of the Reef industrial towns were hit, as were the other main industrial centres - Cape Town, East London, and (to a lesser extent) Port Elizabeth and Pretoria. It is not too much to speak of a localised 'General Strike' in Natal, accompanied by similar if not so widespread action on the Rand and in parts of the Cape.

About the role of workers other than Africans relatively little has been reported so far. It is clear that the overwhelming majority of those who struck were Africans. At some plants in the textile industry where Indians and Coloureds work side by side with Africans, all the black workers downed tools together. The case of the Sappi paper mill, Mandini, where some Indian workers carried on working while some 2,000 Africans struck, appears to have been exceptional. No case is known of white workers showing solidarity. In several instances (e. g. the Sappi paper mill,

and newspaper delivery-van drivers in Johannesburg) whites either did additional work or different work in an attempt to keep production going. (5) The most notorious scabbing occurred at the Alusaf aluminium plant at Richards Bay where the government sent in one hundred army trainees under regular officers to keep the expensive, 24-hours-a-day furnaces working in this smelter, described by the Minister of Economic Affairs as "an import-replacement (enterprise) of national importance." For the Nationalist Government it is more important to 'save' a relatively small amount of foreign exchange than to keep a large black labour force above starvation levels!

## PART II What Lay Behind the Strikes?

When the strike wave was at its height, the whole structure of white supremacy tottered briefly on its foundations. From the government, through the ranks of the stale and purblind politicians in Parliament, to the business community and the white trade unions, the shock blasted its way like a vast series of explosions. When the editor of the **Financial Mail** had remarked last November, speaking for the interests of finance capital and industry generally, that "We are playing with fire if we don't introduce machinery now to deal with the situation," he could hardly have guessed how prophetic his words would turn out to be. At little late in the day, the president of the conservative Railway Artisan Staff Association warned: "We have to realise that we have an awakening giant in our midst." (March 1973)

In April, the head of the Ackermann supermarket chain, looking back over the crisis that had just passed, said very truly: "We were on a razor edge then, and I wonder just how many people knew that. I and probably every other businessman were very worried men." (6)

These actions are symptomatic of the revival of the underground activities of the banned African National Congress. It must be remembered that the ANC suffered a severe setback resulting from the arrests of Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the movement at Rivonia in 1963 and to reconstruct the underground apparatus was no mean task but it has been done.

Another important factor in connection with these strikes is the re-emergence of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. Even though SACTU was never banned (to hoodwink world opinion) by the fascists, the harrassment of its leaders and cadres, who have either been jailed (e. g. Billy Nair and Cernick Ndlovu, both SACTU leaders, are serving 20 years imprisonment on Robben Island), hanged (Vuyisile Mini) banned, banished or forced into exile, it was forced to work in underground conditions.

Other factors which are very important in the South African arena at the moment are the militant activities of SASO and the Black Peoples Convention who have done remarkable work both among the students and workers. These then are the progressive developments within the Black community with which the fascist government is confronted.

### Poverty – The Bitter Fruit of Apartheid

The gap between white earnings and black earnings has long been enormous in South Africa. One might say that insofar as anything is permanent, the wage gap is a permanent feature of our colonialist society. Not being new, the wage gap *per se* cannot be regarded as a cause of the strike wave. But a new feature of the wage gap is the way in which it has been widening in recent years, and this undoubtedly contributed to black resentment and anger.

The following figures indicate the trend for the two sectors of employment in which the wage gap is widest and narrowest:

#### Ratio of White to African wages

	1966	1971
Mining	17.6:1	20.3 :1
Manufacturing	5.1:1	5.85:1

The disproportion of white wages to African wages is now so gross, so dangerous to the racists themselves because of its explosive potential, that there is today a universal chorus from the Prime Minister, down to the English-medium university liberals; from the Chamber of Mines to the smallest entrepreneur – all chanting the need to close the wage gap. When elements as disparate as these combine to sing the same tune, one can be sure that there are the makings of a real national crisis for the apartheid state underneath it all. One can be sure, too, that none of these elements – now, especially since the strikes, clamouring for closing the wage gap even more stridently than before – none of them is raising the demand for equality. That, of course, would be revolutionary, and it is left to the liberation movement to articulate the only demand which meets the true interests of the oppressed and exploited working people.

But there is a paradox here. Where the wage gap is widest – in mining – strikes were fewest. Where it is narrowest – in manufacturing – the strikes were greatest. Some of the reasons for the apparent quiescence of black miners have been mentioned. But to understand the other part of this apparent paradox, we must look at recent developments in industry. A new and significant trend in the South African economy has been the recent upward shift in the industrial colour-bar. Time was when there was a very broad correlation between skills and race: most skilled jobs were done by whites; most unskilled jobs were done by Africans. It is in the manufacturing industry particularly that – through rapid growth, much of it triggered by foreign investment – the number of skilled jobs available has rapidly outstripped the number of white workers qualified to do them. Nor is it simply a matter of skills; the racial composition of the work force in manufacturing industry is changing overall:

	Whites	Blacks
1961	30 %	70 %
1967	25 %	75 %
1971	23 %	77 %

The figures for specific sectors of manufacturing illustrate this trend:

	Whites (Decrease from 1962 3 to 1971)	African (Increase from 1962 3 to 1971)
Food	18.2 % to 14.9 %	58.9 % to 64.2 %
Textiles	11.3 % to 9.4 %	61.0 % to 65.4 %
Furniture	21.9 % to 16.0 %	45.6 % to 55.0 %
Machinery	47.0 % to 42.0 %	50.7 % to 51.9 %

(These and other details of the composition of the labour force were published in the **Rand Daily Mail**, 18 August 1972)





An African mineworker - safety measures are almost non-existent

These processes, namely the shrinking of the white labour force as compared with the growing dependence of production on black labour, and the entry of more and more blacks (especially Africans) into semi-skilled and skilled jobs, are general features of the economic scene in South Africa today, but they have progressed furthest and most rapidly in manufacturing, and it is here that, in consequence, black productivity has been rising fastest. The importance of this we shall return to.

According to Tom Murray, the reactionary vice-president of TUCSA, in the steel and engineering industry thirty years ago the racial composition of the labour force was 70 " white, 30 " black; today it is 10 " white, 90 " black. Because of these and other changes, the old limitation of Africans to unskilled jobs has begun to disappear. It has a long way to go before it does disappear, but the process has begun, and it is a distinctive feature of the post-Sharpeville years:

	1960	1970
<b>Proportion of economically active Africans in unskilled jobs:</b>	84 "	68 "

The shocking reality is, however, that this upward movement in productivity and responsibility has not been matched by rising wages. By re-defining jobs that used to be done by white workers and putting them into lower categories, by splitting skilled jobs into various semi- and or unskilled component jobs, and by various other exploitative tricks and stratagems, employers have been getting skilled rates of productivity out of black workers, while paying them unskilled rates of pay. The government, anxious for political reasons to attract foreign capital, has actively connived in this super-exploitation in a number of important ways:

- By setting extremely low Minimum Wage levels;
- By ruthlessly persecuting and suppressing the African trade union movement;
- By encouraging capital to move to border areas, where even lower wages can be paid than in the cities;
- By itself, as a major employer of labour, paying amongst the lowest rates in the country.

Thus in a new and very tangible way, the wage gap has become more visible, more diabolically oppressive to black workers in recent years. Different pay for different types of work may be tolerable in the short-term; but discriminatory wage rates for work of the same type is intolerable, and African workers have begun to show that this scandal will not be suffered in silence. The situation at the Veka clothing factory in Charlestown (Natal) illustrates this new situation aptly: most of the 2,000-plus black workers who struck there in March were machinists and cutters, doing work which is demanding, and which nobody could call unskilled. Yet they were getting on average a miserable R12 a week for 47½ hours' work - a wage well below the poverty datum line, however you choose to calculate it! (7)

### Inflation vs. Low Fixed Wages

Sechaba has frequently exposed the low wages in various sectors of the economy, not to mention the decline in real wages of many black workers, and the widening of the wage gap. In 1971-72 a new factor began to aggravate these problems: inflation. For the past couple of years, South Africa has been in the grip of a mad inflationary spiral, the worst in the whole capitalist world, and the inevitable consequence of the Nationalist Government's policies. From a base line of 100 in April 1970, the official Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all items has leaped up as follows:-

	1971	1972	1973
January	102.7	109.6	118.7
April	105.2	110.0	
July	107.1	113.2	
October	108.7	116.6	

(Note: Later figures for 1973 not yet available at the time of writing)

This was the hectic, and for the poor, disastrous culmination of a decade (1963-1972) in which the cost of living rose by 74 ". The rate of increase in the C.O.L. was even faster in

the last quarter of 1972 and in January and February 1973 because of big bus and rail fare rises, and the effects on food prices of the severe winter, followed by a summer drought. In 1972 alone, the price of meat rose 17% and that of vegetables 24%.

Even these figures do not tell the whole story. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is calculated on the basis of the 'white' standard of living. It therefore takes account of a whole range of commodities including clothing, furniture and entertainment which according to the logic of racism are necessities for whites but luxuries for blacks. A calculation of the CPI on the basis of the typical family budget for an African family living in a city, with food, rent and transport comprising a far higher proportion of total expenditure, would show that for the lowest paid, (i. e. for the Black majority), the cost of living has risen at least 50% more than the official figures disclose.

This runaway inflation was the sharp cutting edge of the overall mounting economic pressure upon the fixed low wages of the working masses. It helped to turn a chronic crisis into an acute crisis. For its consequences were becoming so serious that they were beginning to jeopardise the very functioning of the capitalist system itself in South Africa. All the elements of this crisis have been described and exposed repeatedly by SECHABA: malnutrition and its toll of the young, its effects on those doing hard and heavy toil daily; kwashiorkor, rickets, pellagra, tuberculosis, dysentery; starvation. In short, premature death, disease, physical and mental emaciation – these have become the lot not just of a few unfortunate groups in remote or backward rural areas, but the plight of the overwhelming mass of the African people, in town as well as countryside. These cruel and avoidable consequences of starvation wage rates have become the most outstanding characteristic of our people's situation during the past decade, and this is directly connected with the Government's ruthless destruction of the democratic trade-union movement headed by SACTU, and of the broad liberation movement headed by the ANC.

The very physical existence of the cheap labour which is the economic basis of apartheid was being undermined by the success of this inhuman system of super-exploitation. The capitalists had been getting away with it too long: the cheapness of cheap labour was reaching a point where its actual survival was in jeopardy. For the workers, what was the point in working, if working had the same result as not working – starvation? The reproduction of cheap labour is essential to South Africa's colonial-style economy; yet it was becoming impossible because of government policy, employers' greed, the physical weakening and destruction of the workers themselves, and the futility of working for wages which could not keep one man alive, leave alone his family.

### Unemployment

The most striking and revealing symptom of this whole crisis has been the huge pool of unemployed blacks, mostly Africans. The Government's figures once again tell but a small part of the story. Normally, African unemployment figures are not kept at all – which is only to be expected from a regime so racist that it does not even bother to keep full birth and death figures of its African subjects. But in the 1970 census, the number of Africans unemployed at that time was noted, and it represented almost 5% of economically active Africans. Closer to the mark must be the estimate of the Afrikaans economist Professor Sadie. Two years ago he calculated that there were about 1 1/4 million unemployed Africans – or an incredible 25-30% of the African labour force. And this in a country with no unemployment insurance for blacks, no net to catch the families falling out of the grinding system into a bottomless pit of hunger, starvation, and ultimate, death.

This vast pool of unemployed may have misled some of the bosses into believing that they could get away with low wages for ever – because of the ease of replacing workers who stood up for their rights. If so, they miscalculated badly. For the African worker's family, one or two out-of-work relatives was only an extra burden on the already strained purse, an extra reason for demanding higher wages – rather than



a cause of timidity and passivity in the face of monstrous oppression.

Above all, the pool of unemployed Africans by its sheer size represented what even the bulk of bosses could dimly recognise as the ultimate expression of failure, of impending catastrophe for the apartheid cheap-labour system. If a government with such total and ruthless control of the labour force as the Nationalists possess, could not succeed in both supplying that labour to the companies and doing so at the wage rates which provide fat profits – (it was doing the latter well enough, but not the former) – then the continuation of the cheap labour system itself was endangered.

### The PDL Debate

It was tendencies and contradictions of this sort which already – long before the strike wave – had generated an intense debate throughout business, commercial and academic circles in South Africa about the notorious P.D.L. – Poverty Datum Line. In reality, the PDL represents an attempt to define the lowest level of income which will allow for the reproduction of the labour power of the African worker. There is nothing scientific about all the masses of figures and calculations, regional and racial and seasonal adjustments that go into the PDL calculation game. It is a matter of experience. Pay a bit less, and you may get away with it. Pay still less, and your worker is off sick for too long, weak with exhaustion too early in the day, or maybe just absent because he's dying or dead. So finding the bare survival level is a matter of hit or miss for the boss. The truth of the matter is that by the end of 1972, well over half of all South African employers were paying, and at least two-thirds of the African labour force were receiving, less than the minimum for survival. The controversy over the PDL reflected the potential threat to the system of labour which this posed. The reluctance of employers to do anything about it – which was as starkly obvious and well publicised as the PDL controversy – reflected the other horn of the dilemma on which the apartheid system found itself impaled – namely, the vested interests of all employers in screwing the maximum profits out of the black workers' sweat and toil.

### Why Durban and Natal?

Thus far we have considered the general characteristics of the socio-economic crisis that was building up to a head last year in South Africa. Now we must ask why these general trends erupted with such intensity in Durban and Natal? No answer emerges from the purely economic sphere. The following figures give the proportion of the work force earning under R10 per week in various urban areas in 1972 (i.e. the percentage of workers earning less than half the Poverty Datum Line!):

	%
Pietermaritzburg	24
Cape Town	20
Durban Pinetown	20
Witwatersrand Central	20
West Rand	18

Durban, far from paying unusually low wages, was paying – by South African standards – typically low wages.

It is true that transport costs went up particularly sharply in Durban shortly before the strikes. But that fact by no means explains the intensity of the struggle in that part of the country. Indeed, anybody seeking to explain this phenomenon solely by reference to economic factors will miss the key political element in the whole strike wave, which gave it an importance far greater, and an impact much deeper, than any purely economic struggle for better wages and conditions. In reality, there have been 3 decisive political developments common to the urban areas as a whole in South Africa, and additional elements peculiar to Natal.

### The Political Background

First has been the re-emergence since 1968 of the underground apparatus of the ANC in all the main cities. This living proof of the indestructibility of the people's movement – despite all efforts of the enemy in 1963 64 and since – has played a vital role in reviving the militance and activity of the African and other oppressed peoples. Second, the upsurge of 'Black Consciousness' which began in Durban and spread later, in recent years, manifested in a variety of forms of unity of all the oppressed, and expressed in action by legal and semi-legal struggle on a number of burning issues of the day – this has enabled wide numbers of Blacks especially in the cities to re-discover their latent power. If this movement was most evident and influential amongst the more educated and socially more advantaged elements amongst the African people, it took only the third factor – the magnificent mass strike of the Namibian workers (Dec.

Black miner's living conditions



'72 to April '73) to remind the African working people of the inherent strength of the working class and the availability to it of its traditional weapon – the strike.

The cumulative effect of these various political developments brought the underlying economic crisis to boiling point in the sphere of political action. It took the peculiar situation of Natal to focus and ignite these forces with concentrated effect. What is peculiar to Natal is that it is intimately connected – by economic, ethnic and geographical ties – to the only Bantu 'homeland' (Kwazulu) whose leaders, and of course Chief Gatsha Buthelezi in particular, have consistently endorsed most of the fundamental demands of the African people – for freedom, equality, land and social justice. The fact that these leaders have sometimes failed to represent the interests of their people inasmuch as they have condemned the armed struggle and endorsed the exploitative role of foreign investment in South Africa, qualifies, but does not eliminate the deep significance of this reality. Not since the days when the beloved Chief Luthuli was still able to move around the country rallying the oppressed and addressing, on their behalf, the racist minority, has any African leader's utterances evoked so much interest in the newspapers and amongst ordinary people as Buthelezi's. (Whether Buthelezi, squeezed as he is by the Government's vice, will measure up to the stature and integrity of the great ANC leader whom he so much admired, remains to be seen).

### The Luthuli Memorial

Mention of Chief Luthuli in this context is doubly appropriate insofar as the major political event in Natal in 1972 was the unveiling of the memorial tombstone to 'Chief' at Groutville last August. It was an event both solemn and exciting, by reason of the thousands who attended and their open, proud demonstration of loyalty and dedication not only to the memory and ideals of 'Chief', but also to the African National Congress and all that it stands for. The holding of such a large and effective demonstration (for such it was) only a few months earlier, both reflected and helped to develop the growing militance of the people in that part of the country, and was an important element in the background to the strikes.

For Zulus, perhaps more than for any other section of the African people, the Bantustan game has been a particularly bitter and fruitless one to play. The reserves of Natal are smaller, more fragmented, less capable of being patched together into some territorial entity which even begins to look plausible. The main asset which, according to the Government's own weird logic, ought to fall into 'their' so-called 'homeland', namely the coast-line of Zululand and the harbour at Richards Bay, was finally and blatantly denied them when the Government announced its intentions for the 'consolidation' of Kwazulu towards the end of last year. If Zulus formed the majority of those African workers who took strike action, (as Press reports tended to suggest) it owed nothing to any tribal peculiarity that racists or ignorant outsiders might imagine to exist, but a great deal to their particularly humiliating experience of the fraudulence of the Bantustan policy, and their success in compelling their leaders to stand up for them, to voice the urge of all Black people for unity, and to denounce the insufferable actions of the Nationalist Government.

This inter-connection of the political struggle in one sphere and subsequent strike action in the apparently economic sphere, serves to remind us how, under the apartheid system, there can be no non-political struggle of workers, no narrowly economic demands and action. The political system of repression, and the administrative controls over the African people which weigh so heavily upon them, serve directly, and are the essential condition for the very existence of the cheap labour, migratory labour system which is so profitable to capitalists both domestic and foreign. The system is so rigid, so complete, that a challenge to any part of it rapidly turns into a challenge to the whole. Both the people, and the Government, recognise this. This is why the regime fears



Striking workers in a defiant mood



so deeply the power of the black working class, which, more than any other class, can hit simultaneously at the political super-structure and its productive, economic base when it swings into action. From this fear and recognition of the vanguard role of the black working class in the struggle for national liberation stems the government's policy of literally un-settling the urban workers. This is why the ANC's slogan in the fifties was and still is: "Your Congress card and your trade union card are your spear and shield!"

### Migratory Labour

In a sense, this is nothing new. Successive South African governments have long denied permanence and security to the African worker in the towns – as a fundamental tenet of policy. What is new is (a) the extent to which this policy is, as we have already seen, being undermined by the growing importance of the African worker in industry; and following from this, (b) the frantic efforts of the racists to remedy this situation by a variety of extreme and brutal 'solutions'. Space allows us only to list the main ones:

- The resettlement of millions of surplus Africans in barren parts of the 'homelands';
- The refinement of labour controls in order to turn more and more African workers into migrants ( a recent study shows that at least one in four, and more likely one in three African workers is a migrant, perpetually on the move);
- The promotion of tribalism in the urban areas, and the fostering of ethnic rivalries and hostilities.

All this must be seen as part of the Government's war on the solidarity and class consciousness of the African workers, and its war against the growing unity of all Blacks in the common struggle for freedom. This is the situation that gives the strike action of African workers such profound political significance.

Finally, it may be noted that the growing numbers of African workers in skilled and semi-skilled jobs is making it increasingly difficult for the authorities to react to strikes in their traditional way – by deporting the strikers and replacing them from the pool of unskilled migrants. This new-limitation upon the government's choice of repressive weapons was amply demonstrated in the ensuing action.

## PART III Lessons of the Strikes for the Liberation Movement

(1) The strikes proved that mass illegal action short of armed struggle is not only possible, but effective – despite the might of the enemy. The **Financial Mail** said, "It is clear that the law prohibiting African strikes is a dead letter." (23. 3. 1973). That it is a dead letter is not because the government, the employers and the police are any less keen than they were to suppress the black workers' movement, and stop it taking action, but because they have been shown to be unable to enforce the law if and when large numbers of workers defy it resolutely and simultaneously. This ingenious demonstration of the power of the masses and the limitations of the enemy does far more to explain the apparent mildness of the police reaction than any nonsense about police "restraint". This is a lesson that the liberation movement must learn from the masses, and apply in its tactics of combining armed struggle and other forms of mass struggle.

(2) The strikes, mostly, though not entirely lacking in overt organisation, demonstrate the strengths and limitations of spontaneity. The strikers in general presented no head to cut off, no leaders to ban, no spokesmen to be victimised. This made reprisals more difficult, and contributed to the appearance of the so-called police "restraint". But the lack of organisation made the strikes impossible to sustain for long periods. Few lasted for more than ten days; some lasted only a few hours. This underlines the need for more organisation in the factories – for open trade unions and an accelerated reconstruction of SACTU.

(3) The strike weapon as a method of struggle has been shown to be immensely effective in bringing the economy to

a halt, and mobilising tens of thousands of our people. Yet by itself it lacks the potentiality of either smashing the state machine, or defending the people from the brutality of the enemy. This serves to remind us that the emphasis which the ANC since 1961 has placed on armed struggle as the decisive form of struggle, has been absolutely correct. Strikes will be a vital, indeed an essential weapon in the hands of the masses in future confrontations, but they will never be sufficient to effect the final break-through and transfer of state power. This must be asserted clearly in opposition to those who, for whatever reason, offer the success of the strike movement as evidence for the "irrelevance" of the armed struggle, or who pose the strike weapon as an alternative to armed struggle.

(4) Finally we must ask: What, concretely, did the strikes achieve? First, in the purely economic sphere. According to the **Financial Gazette** (13. 4. 1973), that putrid organ of Afrikaner big capital, the 2.7 million blacks in industry, mining, commerce and public employment will earn R400 million more this year than before. The great majority of strikers won increases of from five to fifty per cent, and many thousands of black workers won increases without having to strike at all. These gains must be set against the sub-human starting point of pre-strike wage levels. Hundreds of thousands of African workers, especially on white farms and in domestic service, are still below the poverty datum line, and for most, the continuing spiral of inflation is fast wiping out their gains, if it has not already done so.

Worse, employers are using the pretext of rising labour costs to make large retrenchments. For example, Dr. Etienne Rousseau, Sasol's chairman, has been quoted as saying that most of the companies of which he is a director are adopting a policy of cutting labour. The **Financial Gazette** (13. 4. 1973) gave the following shocking, but not untypical case:-

"One Reef company, faced with heavy demands by its small Black labour force of 12, told the workers they had a choice: no rise and all would keep their jobs, or the rise they asked, and six would be sacked. They chose the rise. And half were dismissed."

Already by the middle of May, 11 per cent of the total black labour force at Hammarsdale had been sacked. These were all workers in the textile factories which comprise the main, if not the sole source of employment in this industrial township near Durban. One report (8) suggests that there may even be an informal arrangement amongst the employers whereby 20% pay increases will be balanced by 20% dismissals.

(5) On the broader issue of workers' rights and conditions, the strikes have given powerful impetus to a long-standing demand of African workers - the right to have legally recognised trade unions. Far-sighted employers and white trade unionists are backing this demand in growing numbers, both interest groups sharing the aim of controlling and thereby emasculating a powerful force which they fear will overwhelm them if not channelled well in advance. The government has set its face utterly against African trade unions, and shows no sign of budging from what is still one of its most fundamental policies. But it has made a small concession of sorts, within its own terms, to the principle of African worker participation in negotiations.

Draft amendments to the Bantu Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act, published early in April, included provisions for Africans to attend Industrial Council meetings. In the past, Africans have been "represented" at such meetings by white officials of the Department of Labour. Admittedly, in future, those attending will be appointed by the Minister of Labour. But this does represent a slight retreat from previous intransigence. In addition, the statutory works committees (a piece of machinery which African workers have scorned to use hitherto) will be enlarged to allow a maximum of twenty workers to take part, compared with five previously; such workers will be elected. And liaison committees, with half the members appointed by the employers and half by black workers, will also be allowed. Whether the latter avail themselves of these new structures (still at the "proposal" stage) will be a tactical issue that the future will decide.

## Postscript

Most of the above was written some weeks ago. Since then, further consequences of the strike wave have appeared. Probably the most important stems from the way in which the strikes buried the long-standing law against the use of strike action by African workers. This victory has been partially, grudgingly but unmistakably conceded by the Government. Part of its new labour code is to permit the possibility of strike action by Africans in certain spheres of employment - not including mines, farms and essential services. Now, in manufacturing industry in particular, strikes by Africans will not be automatically illegal - though the Minister of Labour reserves the right to declare them so in specific instances. This is a far cry from the right to strike which the press has chorussed about so glibly. But it does represent, in South Africa's racist and anti-labour climate, a great victory for the African people.

Meanwhile, in Britain, the strike wave has triggered off a great deal of soul-searching about the morality of British investment in South Africa. This and all other foreign investment had long been under fire by the ANC and its allies in the anti-apartheid movement and other solidarity movements. But it took the direct challenge of the workers themselves to the cheap labour system to jolt liberal consciences into realising the scandalous exploitation of the Black workers in South Africa, and to force foreign capital on to the defensive for the first time ever in the long history of imperialism's role in our country. This is an important new development in the world-wide anti-apartheid struggle.

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# RADIO FREEDOM

The Voice  
of the African  
National Congress  
of South Africa

The African National Congress is pleased to announce that it has been given an hour each day to broadcast to South Africa on the External Service of Radio Zambia, Lusaka.

The station broadcasts daily, from 21.30 to 22.30 hours South African time (20.30 to 21.30 European Standard time) on the 31 and 60 meter bands.

The programmes are in English and one other African language. Some pro-

grammes are also translated into Afrikaans.

We have been informed that a listener in Sweden has picked up one broadcast by chance. We hope that others who get to hear our broadcasts will let us have their comments.

Early reports from South Africa indicate that the news that the ANC is on the air every day of the week is spreading among the people in the townships.

# SOUTHERN AFRICA IN STRUGGLE

Oliver Tambo - Acting President General of the ANC



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Speech by Oliver Tambo, Acting President-General of the African National Congress of South Africa, delivered at a meeting held in London to commemorate June 26, South Africa Freedom Day and to condemn the 600-year alliance between Britain and Portugal

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We meet in the wake of great international gatherings concerned with the building of a future of peace, progress and friendship among the peoples comprising the world community. Within the course of the last two months, there has taken place the historic Oslo Conference (See last issue of *Sechaba* -Ed) concerned with world support for the national liberation struggle against colonialism and apartheid in Africa, the 10th Summit of the Organisation of African Unity, a new and growing force for progressive change in the world; and more recently, the epoch-making International Trade Union Conference on Apartheid, held in Geneva, (a report of which is published elsewhere in this issue - Ed) which brought into the united struggle against injustice the organised might of the working peoples of the world.

These great meetings are part of a trend which is increasingly focusing the international conflict between oppressed and oppressor on the situation in Southern Africa and Guinea Bissau. This region of the world, this part of Africa is assuming new dimensions as the battleground in the bitter struggle between justice and injustice. This is firstly because of the new dynamism and movement which marks the present stage of liberation struggles in Africa, and secondly, because of the escalation of international concern at the persistence in Africa of the twin evils of colonialism and white minority rule.

In South Africa, the long stalemate since Rivonia is undeniably over. Everywhere in Southern Africa our struggles are gathering a new momentum and our peoples are striking out in several directions against the apartheid and colonialist regimes. There is no peace anywhere for the enemy. They live in a state of apprehension, doubt and fear. They no longer strut about with arrogant confidence in the permanence of their power. Instead, they are now frantically directing their energies into repairing the floodgates which menacingly threaten to burst open in revolution throughout the Southern African region. They are a minority subjected to increasing isolation by the formidable and growing world progressive forces supporting the cause of liberation and independence. Their diminishing circle of friends consists of a small coterie of western governments with their big international corporations who have so far succeeded in maintaining the yoke of Portuguese colonialism and racist minority rule on the people of Africa.

## June 26: South African Freedom Day

This meeting has been called to commemorate two significant events in the history of the peoples of Great Britain, Portugal and Africa.

On 26 June 1950 the opponents of colonialism and racism in South Africa rose in united action against a regime installed in their country by British governments claiming to act on the authority of the British people. We lay at the door of successive British governments the responsibility for the perpetration of racist crimes against the peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

26 June has become a rallying call for determined struggle until freedom is won – freedom from all the cruel consequences of British colonial and current policy, and from the naked inhumanity of apartheid rule. When that day comes, there will also have come, for Africa, the end of colonialism and white minority rule, and a new relationship will have been struck between the British people and the African people.

In June 1373, the governments of England and Portugal entered into an alliance for the pursuit of a common cause. Nothing illustrates the enduring character of this alliance more truly than the 500 odd years of Portuguese domination of the peoples of Guinea Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, and the 300 odd years of white domination of the peoples of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

The alliance persists. The determination of Portugal to meet the demands of the African people with military force, has its counterpart in the determination of the British government to feed economic strength to the Vorster regime, thereby enabling the latter to meet the demands of the people of South Africa and Namibia with force.

In the light of this record alone, Britain's intimate and apparently irrevocable commitment to colonialist, racist and illegal regimes, which have as much contempt for change as they have for human life, is impossible to explain in terms of a residual concept that continues to see the African as being basically an object of European domination and exploitation who must be forcibly subjugated and then exploited.

## Vietnam

But in the profound changes characterising the alignment of forces today there is an important lesson for all those involved in shaping the destiny of mankind. The resounding victories of the peoples of Indochina have buried for all time the myth, so assiduously cultivated by imperialism, that superior military power is a decisive force in the making of history even when confronted by a determined people fighting for a just cause. Vietnam has demonstrated that the old imperialist policy of force can no longer ensure continued enslavement of peoples. The world forces fighting for national liberation, independence and against exploitation of man by man have proved their supremacy in the field of armed conflict. This has set in motion the great changes in the world scene which further confirm the inevitability of defeat for the forces of reaction.

Special significance was given to South African Freedom Day when, in 1955, the South African liberation movement held a mass conference in Johannesburg to adopt what came to be known as the Freedom Charter – the first major programmatic statement of aims and policies which has since guided the African National Congress and its allies in their united struggle for the liberation of the African and other oppressed people, and the construction of a new and free South Africa for all the people who live in it.

In the course of this long struggle, we have come to know that our enemy resides not only in South Africa, but also in London, in Paris, in Washington and elsewhere; that our right to self-determination and independence, no less than that of our brothers elsewhere in Africa, is usurped not merely by the small white minority class who hold the reins of

power over us, but also by the powerful boards of company directors based in the capitals of certain western countries, who, encouraged and protected by their respective governments, have managed to foster and serve a particularly brutal form of colonialism in our country.

## Southern Africa: The Focus of the Conflict

I have suggested that Southern Africa is becoming the new battleground in the conflict between the oppressed and the oppressor, and that all our enemies are joined together in an international colonialist conspiracy whose aim is to maintain the status quo in our region. For this reason alone, we of the liberation movements are objectively required to recognise the mutual inter-dependence of our struggles in South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, Guinea Bissau and other parts of Africa. This mutual inter-dependence equally derives from our historic responsibilities to complete, in collaboration with independent Africa and our friends in the world, the liberation of the African continent. The OAU Summit recognised this responsibility when it stated, in its Solemn Declaration of Policy:

**"The struggle to eradicate the last vestiges of colonialism and racism – those scourges which are a constant threat to world peace and security – this is the greatest contribution by the peoples of Africa to the efforts being made by the peoples of the world to establish justice, freedom and peace."**

The OAU went on to declare its "conviction that for this struggle to be effective, the liberation movements (of Southern Africa) must present a united front against the common enemy".

The spread of the struggle as simultaneous actions erupt in different parts of the region serves to generate pressures for increased operational unity between the liberation movements. Every action in one part of Southern Africa creates a new consciousness among the people in other parts of the region. The sense of unity deepens as it finds expression in joint struggle against the common enemy for the common cause. The objective necessity for united struggle compels coordination of activities and mutual support in various forms. All our movements hold to the strategic perspective of armed struggle and this in itself is a strong force which unites all of us.

For these reasons I welcome this opportunity to share the platform with my brother Marcelino dos Santos of FRELIMO, and to reaffirm our fundamental unity of purpose and our common determination to meet our responsibilities to our peoples, to Africa and to the cause of world freedom and justice.

In asserting our unity and our common cause we do not of course ignore the diversities and historical and other factors peculiar to our respective countries, which not only determine the conditions and tactics of struggle, but also influence the pace of progress in each sector of conflict. One of the peculiar features of the South African situation is the advanced level of production relations in an economy which is part colonialist in character. This has inevitably given considerable importance to industrial action in the struggle for national liberation.

But the essence of our position is that whatever the disparities in our objective conditions, all our peoples and movements throughout the region must as a matter of policy confront the common enemy in continuous struggle everywhere. Unless the enemy is so engaged, he will succeed in concentrating his forces to liquidate our national liberation movements one by one. Hence, if our movements are to counter

and destroy the strategic policy of apartheid South Africa, which construes Southern Africa as a military unit and whose defence line is the frontier zone stretching along the Zambezi to the Indian Ocean, then we must give battle everywhere, undertake struggles of many forms and force the Southern Africa regimes to disperse and so weaken their ability to rule over our peoples. **The need to do this is recognised by all our liberation movements and they do not accept the notion that the liberation of Southern Africa is only feasible through a piecemeal process of step-by-step advance from the north to the south.**

## The South African Struggle

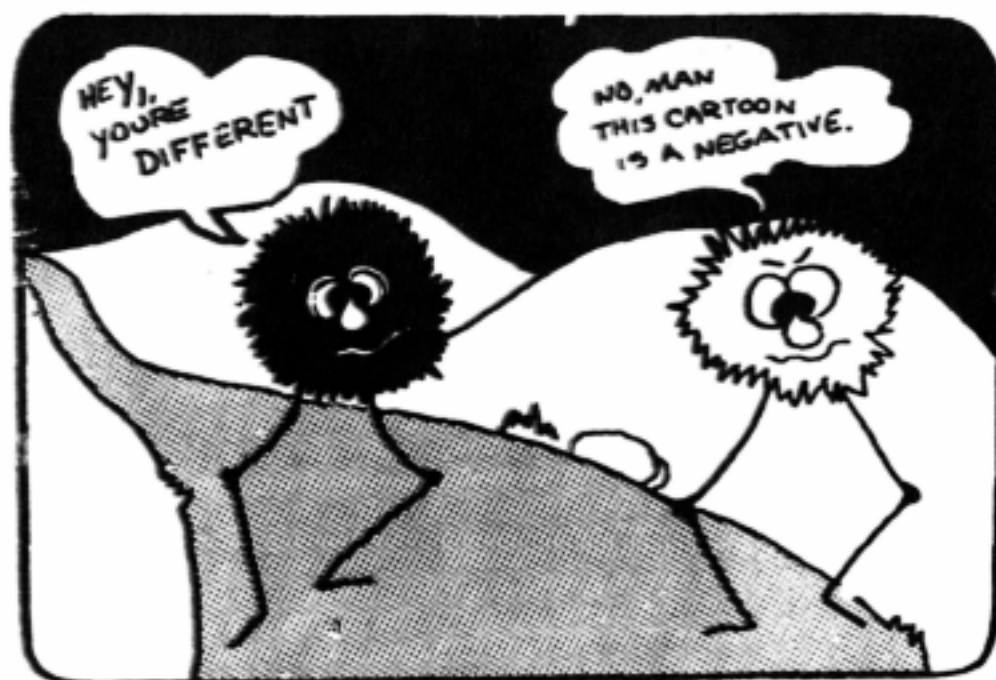
The march to the summits of political and economic power in South Africa is no easy walk, as Nelson Mandela so aptly observed. The arrest of ANC leaders in Rivonia on 11 July 1963 was the signal for a decade of the most violent and the most intense repression known in the history of the national liberation struggle in South Africa. And yet it was precisely during this offensive that our people continued in struggle and faced up to savage torture and tyranny. In the historic armed clashes of 1967 and 1968 large quantities of arms, ammunition and military equipment of various types were captured from Rhodesian and South African troops and in the fullness of time will adorn Africa's museums as a monument to the supreme cause for which the people of South Africa and Zimbabwe fought together. To be sure, we have sustained severe setbacks in this period. But what is important is that the ANC fought back and the masses never lost heart.

For ten long years, year after year, trial has followed trial as our militants were captured by the enemy, tortured viciously and then dragged to jail via the farcical formality of court judgements. Today, only three weeks before the 10th anniversary of the Rivonia arrests of our leaders, six avowed enemies of the criminal and wholly inhuman system known as apartheid have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment of up to 15 years. (See Report elsewhere in this issue - Ed.)

**A South African judge, himself a hopeless captive of the same system, and guided solely by laws whose basis is itself criminal and inhuman, has found the Pretoria Six guilty of the so-called crime of going to Africa and Europe to study and acquire knowledge not available to Africans in South Africa, guilty also of another so-called crime of attempting to bring about an end to a crime against humanity and secure the emancipation of the people of South Africa from the racism which enslaves the Whites no less than the Blacks.** This trial, like all its predecessors, was no more than an exercise in wanton persecution. The only appropriate reaction to this type of kidnapping of our people is for the world to demand the release of Theophilus Cholo and his five colleagues forthwith, as well as the release of all other men and women of our country who have been captured in this manner. For its part, the ANC notes this latest kidnapping act, and warns the South African regime that the act will not deter our people in any way.

The fascist violence of the 60's has only helped to assert the invincibility of the liberation forces and the absolute certainty of ultimate victory for the oppressed. They have now recaptured the initiative and the struggle moves to the offensive.

**The recent workers' strikes in South Africa are not an accident of time, they are an organic part of a process. They reflect a stage in the progress of the struggle. Ten years ago, the fascist regime would have opened fire on the strikers. Today to do so would be playing with fire. In desperation the South African regime might yet do so. But that will not be**



This cartoon by Trace Noel, is taken from the excellent handbook *Target: development action* - produced by the American FFH Foundation

**the end of the struggle. It is much more likely to be the beginning of the end of apartheid rule.**

The strikes occurred in the context of militant political activity directed against the white supremacist structure in South Africa, and embracing not only the workers, but also the peasants, the middle strata, the churches and the youth and students. The aggressive mood of the masses manifested itself in the resuscitation of the powerful South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), the Natal Indian Congress, the establishment of the Coloured Labour Party, the Black Peoples' Convention and SASO (the South African Students Organisation). For the first time in the long history of apartheid repression, students in the white English-speaking universities became the victims of brutal police attacks in the course of actions taken in support of demands against discriminatory educational policies and apartheid generally.

It is common knowledge that the Bantustan plan imposed on our people for the perpetuation of white supremacy in South Africa and lately in Namibia, is meeting vigorous opposition from the overwhelming majority of the African people. It is facing mounting opposition from the masses who are being herded into the congested reserves and who demand political power and land with growing impatience.

The African National Congress rejects the partition of our country, the fragmentation of our people into tribal groups, and will recognise no "territorial boundaries" within the country presently known as the Republic of South Africa. The ANC rejects the right of a self-appointed white minority to claim 87% of our country as its "homeland" and designate a tattered patchwork of barren land comprising a ludicrous 13% of South African territory as "homelands" for the African people. South Africa belongs to all the people of South Africa as their common homeland. The resources of the country are the common wealth of all its people.

The challenge that faces the liberation movement in South Africa is to galvanise the people into a more united force and lead them into more effective forms of struggle for power and for freedom. We have no doubt that we shall meet this challenge. On this anniversary of South African Freedom Day, and as our contribution to the general struggle against colonialism and imperialism, we pledge ourselves and our people to fulfil this lofty task.

## Some Urgent International Issues

The new sense of movement in the South African situation which I have attempted to describe is matched by a sharpening of the international alignment between those who wish to maintain the South African status quo and those who are our friends. This at least was made clear in the International Conference on Colonialism and Apartheid convened by the United Nations in Oslo recently. The Conference was an important event; its proposals have been transmitted to the UN Secretary General and will be discussed at the 28th Session of the UN General Assembly later this year. These proposals are certain to form the basis of a new UN programme of concerted international action to eradicate colonialism and apartheid. The conference was attended by participants from over 50 states, the Southern African liberation movements, the Organisation of African Unity, from specialised UN organs and by specially invited experts. It was undeniably the most authoritative conference ever held on the Southern African question. I commend the proposals of the Oslo conference to you because I believe they represent a real turning point for international policy on this question. They deal not only with the legitimacy of national liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism and apartheid, but also with the necessity to support that struggle both materially and by the mobilisation of national and international pressures against those countries and governments which support their regimes. Significantly, neither Britain, France nor the USA attended the conference.

However, it is to the current debate in Britain and elsewhere about the poverty levels of African wages and the role of foreign capital investment in South Africa's apartheid economy that I would like to devote some attention here. This debate, now the subject of an investigation by a committee of the House of Commons and which has elicited statements from the British and the American governments, is long overdue if only because it concerns what I see as the heart of the economics of South African colonialism.

The ANC has long called for the ending of all foreign capital investment in South Africa. This call arose from our analysis and understanding of the nature of the South African economic system. We see the economy as essentially structured by a colonial-type relationship between the white minority and foreign capital interests on the one hand, and the African people on the other.

South Africa is an attractive centre for profitable foreign investment, precisely because migrant cheap labour in abundance is organised and made easily available to business by the regime as a conscious act of policy. We know that British companies operating in South Africa are not motivated by any desire to bring employment to the African people or to improve the economic condition of African workers. They are moved largely by considerations of profit, their share of the market and the sources of the raw material supplies they require. South Africa provides British capital with a higher rate of returns on investment than the rate earned either in Britain itself or anywhere else where British capital investment has taken place. Thus, those who argue that increased foreign investment in South Africa could become an engine for the reform of the apartheid labour system are not addressing themselves to the central issue in the South African situation. If they are, their clear intention is to protect South Africa for continued exploitation by British capital in collaboration with apartheid. The fact is that:

"The conditions under which the Africans live today as outcasts in the land of their birth are the direct result of the pyramidal structure of capitalist exploitation, which step by step, with diabolical ingenuity, has evolved with

one purpose – to enslave the African peoples of South Africa for easy exploitation."

It is in this context that we should question the prevailing view that British companies could and should prove to be "good employers" and attempt to increase wage levels to what is called the Poverty Datum Line or the Effective Minimum Level. This indeed appears to be the line of the enquiry taken by the House of Commons Select Committee. And several of the suddenly conscience-stricken companies whose exploitative policies have been exposed by the strikes in South Africa and reports in the British press also appear eager to increase wages to within the range of the notional PDL.

What is the Poverty Datum Line? It is in fact no more than the theoretical minimum income regarded as necessary for an African worker and his family to avoid death through starvation. It is to this minimum level which British companies are now being urged to increase wages. The PDL and other similar concepts to standardise wage rates should be seen for what they are. They are derived from the concept that African wages should not move outside the minimum level necessary for the worker to reproduce his labour and to survive – a concept which ruled in nineteenth century England before the rise of trade unions. As Basil Davidson wrote in 1962:

"Nowhere in the world today, perhaps, does there exist a greater contrast between reputation and reality than between the towering legend of the white man's civilisation and the grim truth of it for the African worker. But nowhere in the world, no less, does there survive a greater contrast between master and servant than survives between the mining company and the African miner."

## Concluding Remarks

In concluding my remarks, I must express my warmest thanks to the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea for having organised this meeting and brought my brother Marcelino dos Santos and myself together on this platform to convey to you our determination to persist in struggle until our final victory, and to thank you for your support for our cause. The Anti-Apartheid Movement has worked well to build up a strong movement of solidarity among the British people. Through this work we of Southern Africa have won important allies and friends in Britain. We consider the future direction of British policy to be of considerable importance to our people and our struggle and I therefore trust that the dynamic Anti-Apartheid Movement will continue its great work in this country and decisively influence the policy of Britain in favour of our cause.

We approach the problems of revolution and struggle in our country with both optimism and realism. We do not underestimate the power of our enemies. At the same time we will never be mesmerised by them nor will we cringe before their strength. On the contrary, we face the colonial and apartheid structures on our continent with the firm conviction, reinforced by history, that, armed with a just cause, flanked and backed by the ever-rising might of the world forces for freedom, peace and justice, nothing but victory shall be the reward for our endeavours. We know that this glorious end will not come without prolonged and bitter opposition by the few who thrive on the misery of the many. But the course of history is unalterable. The victorious end is a matter of determined and united effort. The year 1973 has ushered in a vigorous and determined movement in pursuit of victory. In this historical context, the struggle continues.

# **OBITUARY**

## **Women's Leader and Freedom Fighter**

# **MARY NGALO**

On Friday, March 16, 1973 Mrs. Mary Margaret Ngalo died suddenly in Cairo, Egypt. Her death marks another of those sad losses which the African National Congress of South Africa has suffered.

Mary Margaret Ngalo (nee Plaatjie) is the daughter of the late Tom and Leah Plaatjie. She was born in Cradock where she met and married Zenzile Ngalo. Her mother, Leah Plaatjie, still lives in Cradock, South Africa.

Mary Ngalo entered politics at an early age. She took part in the activities of the ANC Youth League. She is the niece of the Reverend Canon James A. Calata, of the Anglican Church of the Province of South Africa in Cradock. Canon Calata was himself a Secretary-General of the ANC for many years. He relinquished that post in 1948 when younger leaders from the youth wing of the ANC took over. Some of those leaders such as Walter Sisulu who became the new Secretary-General gained the undivided support of the youth. Others such as Nelson Mandela are a household word in the ranks of the South African struggle. Mary Ngalo joined the ANC Women's League at an early age. She soon found herself a leader of the women in the Cradock area where

she was elected Branch Secretary of the ANC Women's League. She held that post until she escaped from South Africa with her three children in 1961.

In South Africa, Mary took an active part in the affairs of women. She organised other women to join the Federation of South African Women, a non-racial body which united women from all walks of life irrespective of political belief or affiliation to struggle against the apartheid system. She attended the 1961 Conference of the Federation of South African Women which was the last such Conference held by the Federation in S.A. in Port Elizabeth.

Mary Ngalo had been arrested in 1957 in the Beerhall Boycott which the ANC Women's League had launched. She and her eldest son who was just a little baby then, spent one month in jail. During the State of Emergency in 1960 she eluded the police and went into hiding in Port Elizabeth.

Her husband, Zenzile Ngalo and other ANC militants from Cradock such as the late Eric Vara, Lennon Melane, The Reverend Canon J. A. Calata were all imprisoned in Port Elizabeth in the 1960 State of Emergency.

Many freedom-fighters were instructed by the ANC to leave South Africa in order to acquire skills needed in the new phase of confrontation with the White racist regime.

When the Emergency ended and the ANC went underground in 1960, Zenzile Ngalo and other ANC militants escaped from S.A. to prepare for the next stage of the struggle. Mary Ngalo was persecuted by the secret police of the Verwoerd regime until she too had to leave her motherland to join her husband. Her escape was made more difficult by the fact that she had to take her three children with her.

After her arrival in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania where her husband was one of the ANC officials, she again resumed her political activities. She and other women formed the Women's Section of the ANC in Tanzania. She was elected Secretary.

In Egypt she was appointed to the Women's Bureau of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organisation and played an active part. She attended the 5th Conference of AAPSO in Cairo, January 1972 and the 10th anniversary of the All Africa Women's Conference held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in July 1972. This was her last participation in a ma-

ajor event in the women's struggle for a better world; a world free of discrimination against women; free of apartheid and racism; free of colonialism, imperialism and all forms of oppression.

In Cairo Mary was carried to her last resting place on Sunday, March 18, 1973. Among the prominent people who paid homage to Mary were Comrade Edward Ndlovu, Secretary-General of ZAPU, who spoke on behalf of all the liberation movements in Cairo. Miss Bahia Karam, Secretary of the AAPSO Women's Bureau, also paid tribute to Mary.

On behalf of the African section of the diplomatic corps in Egypt spoke H. E. Mr. Matiya Ngalande (Zambian Ambassador to Egypt). The Egyptian Government and foreign Ministry were also well-represented. Many Egyptian public organisations, students and friends attended Mary's funeral to pay their last respects to her memory. Florence Mophosho represented the ANC Women's Section and the ANC Headquarters. She made a fine address at the funeral in which she recalled the dedicated service that Mary rendered to the Women's contingent in the struggle.

A tomb stone will be erected on Mary Ngalo's grave. It is painful to bid her farewell. She was a wonderful mother, a dedicated and staunch ANC member who spared no effort to make her contribution to our struggle. We salute her with the resolve that the fascist Government of South Africa, which causes the death of many South African patriots inside our motherland and abroad, will be overthrown by our people one day. All revolutionaries who want to pay homage to Mary must redouble their efforts to intensify the struggle to liberate South Africa from White domination.

By her fine example and sacrifice, the name of Mary Margaret Ngalo will be enshrined in the Golden Book of Honour of all martyrs and patriots who have died to liberate South Africa.

In the words of the revolutionary song: IGAMA LAMA KHOSIKAZI MALI BONGWE.' we say HAMBAMBA KAHLE, MARY.

### **EDITORS NOTE**

This obituary was not published earlier as news of Mary's death had first to be conveyed to her family at home.

The Congress of World Peace Forces will be held in Moscow in October. The International Consultative Meeting which met in March to discuss preparations for the World Congress stated:

# PEACE IS EVERYONE'S CONCERN

The World Congress will be both an expression of the powerful movement which today is awakening the peoples and is bringing them together and at the same time, will be a starting point for a new and more powerful upsurge in the face of the grave dangers which continue to threaten peace in the world.

Genuine successes have already been won by the peace forces. The victory of the heroic Vietnamese people over imperialist aggression is also to the credit of the untiring efforts of the peoples who cherish justice and peace. The struggle for national liberation and economic independence is growing. Certain dangerous hotbeds of war have been eliminated. A number of states with different social systems have come to practice peaceful co-existence.

However, are these positive developments adequate for securing a lasting peace?

No, the danger of conflict persists, as well as hotbeds of war, particularly in the Middle East, where the Israeli occupation of Arab territories continues in

violation of UN resolutions; the final settlement on the basis of the Paris Agreement has not yet been reached in Indochina, and the armaments race continues, while the consequences of colonialism, racial discrimination and neo-colonialism remain a sad reality.

For this reason, the participants were in favour of convening on the broadest and most representative basis a **WORLD CONGRESS OF PEACE FORCES** for International Security and Disarmament, National Independence, Co-operation and Peace, in Moscow, October 2-7th, 1973.

To achieve its aims, the World Congress of Peace Forces will be open to all political, religious and social movements (especially trade-unions, co-operatives and workers' and peasants' movements) to all national, international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, to local community groups and to individuals engaged in political action or the development of science, culture and economics toward a peaceful future for the world.

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**Design 1:** is a picture of a sculpture of a Black miner's widow. The artist made it to commemorate the disaster at the Coalbrook Colliery, Clydesdale, South Africa, in 1960 when 435 miners were killed, 429 of them Africans. White miners' widows got pensions for life; and Black widows got only a lump sum, worth about 3 years' wages, then - nothing.

**Design 2:** Black Mothers

**Design 3:** Worker

**Design 4:** Miners' Strike. An artist's impression of the great Black miners' strike of 1946.

**Design 5:** (right) The Last of Cato Manor. Cato Manor was the area where African and Indian workers in Durban lived until January 1960 when the government declared it to be for "whites" only. Thus 100,000 Africans and 26,000 Indians were forced to quit their homes. No alternative accommodation was provided for the people involved.

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