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ERRATUM: In the March issue, the year of the Rivonia Trial should be 1964, not 1984 as stated on the centre spread.

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The picture on the front cover shows Bambatha
in the foreground.

EDITORIAL

The Regime Pinned Against the Wall

People's war in South Africa is the people's fierce resistance to the regime, their assault on the power of the state. It had already reached a new stage when the state of emergency was declared in July 1985. The emergency was an effort to intimidate; it was what the regime hoped was a trump card, desperately played, in an attempt to win in a situation it knew it could no longer control.

The emergency was no trump card. Resistance went on growing, and the offensive spread. Recently, the people of Alexandra have demonstrated for an end to police repression, and the whole town became a no-go zone in March, for the funeral of those shot by the police. There have been more demands for satisfactory inquests into the deaths of police victims. Consumer boycotts have been lifted for negotiation, and re-imposed when the demands of the people were not met. Among our people, and at the centre of our people's war, are the cadres of Umkhonto We Sizwe and there have recently been more MK actions. The bombing of police headquarters in Johannesburg can be compared with the bombing of those other closely-guarded installations, Sasol and Koeberg, and has proclaimed yet again that MK is everywhere.

Albertina Sisulu said at the funeral in Alexandra:

"The government is pinned against the wall, as the struggle intensifies."

It is true that the regime has nowhere to go from here. It has lifted the state of emergency, but what does that mean? Botha's statement on the lifting of the emergency was on a par with his other non-statements, like the one about 'power sharing' (which seems to refer to some new version of the tricameral parliament) and the one about 'citizenship for all South Africans' (by which he appears to mean no voting rights for Blacks).

Lifting the emergency meant as little as imposing it. Those detainees who were being held under the emergency regulations have been released, but some have been rearrested, for there are still no less than three clauses in the Internal Security Act providing for detention without trial, and people have been held under this law all along, and tortured in secret. The police and army are still in the townships, and the shooting hasn't stopped. The police have lost some of the powers the emergency gave them, but when were they ever restricted by the law? — they have long behaved as if they were above it. The vast Black majority of South Africans are still living in inferior housing or in cardboard shacks or in the open; are still living on starvation wages, or no wages at all if they are unemployed; are still being deported to die of hunger in bantustans with governments paid by Pretoria and as repressive and brutal as the Pretoria regime itself.

Who is Botha trying to deceive with his empty statements? He is hardly likely to deceive our supporters outside the country — those thousands of people throughout the world, who work and fight for democracy and whose campaigning threatens South Africa's trade, bank loans and supplies of fuel. He certainly hasn't deceived the people of South Africa, who are themselves suffering the shootings and the starvation.

He certainly hasn't deceived the African National Congress. We have pledged that this year will be one when the war is intensified further, and the attack on the regime will spread like fire. We have said we will fight until the aims of the Freedom Charter have become reality. In the words of another speaker at the Alexandra funeral:

"We shall defeat the system. We shall govern the country."

DEATH OF COMRADE MOSES MABHIDA

At the time of our going to press, the sad news reached us of the death of a great freedom fighter and an outstanding leader. Comrade Moses Mabhida, member of the national executives of the ANC and SACTU, and General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, died on the 8th March, at the age of 62

A full obituary will appear in the May issue of *Sechaba*.

"I WILL NOT BE BOUGHT"

Steve Tshwete Speaks to Cassius Mandla

Steve Tshwete

At the head of the valiant popular offensive that has reduced the apartheid regime's ability to misgovern our country for the second year running, marches the United Democratic Front (UDF). It is an organisation that marshals against the regime the most pre-eminent fighters for freedom. Steve Tshwete hails from its regional leadership in a region that decisively etched itself on the map of the fearsome confrontations that have been an ever-present feature of urban and peri-urban life since September 1984. This is the Border region. Included in this region are such areas as East London, Fort Beaufort, Queenstown, King William's Town, Adelaide and others. He led the UDF in this region as its president. Its strength was upwards of 200 affiliated organisations ranging from trade unions to students, civic and woman's organisations.

Graduate of the Isle

Tshwete's political apprenticeship was served in the ranks of the ANC. While studying at secondary school at King William's Town in 1958, he was introduced into the ANC by one of his teachers. He completed his matric after the ANC was banned but got involved in clandestine political activity. It was this activity that ultimately landed him on Robben Island. The charges laid against him when he was arrested in 1963 were split into three: advancing the cause of the ANC, soliciting funds for it and belonging to it. Each of these counts was worth five years in prison. In all he has served fifteen years on Robben Island since 1964.

He recounts his experience on the Isle rather stolidly. The depth of emotion that one expects is not perceptibly manifest. A few incidents are related, even then, casually, though the adjectives used are strong. Some incidents are now well known, after such publications as Albie Sachs' and Indres Naidoo's *Island in Chains*. In Tshwete's words:



"The position, generally, on Robben Island was very, very terrible, particularly from the period 1963-1972. We went through a very bitter period; because, as you will remember, at that time the morale of the fascist clique in our country was very high. They had routed our movement, our underground structures throughout the country. They had dumped a huge number of our people into prison, and they were believing that they were deep-freezing us by giving us long terms of imprisonment; that the people would ultimately forget about us, and that the freedom struggle in the country would ultimately come to an end. They never entertained any idea that the struggle for liberation is the product of the objective situation in our country; it's not something that is directed by certain individuals, by certain leaders, but that is born of the objective situation of brutal oppression and ruthless exploitation of our people inside the country. That is why their morale was so high in that period.

"Secondly, it was high because as you can remember, the nearest African state that was free, the nearest African state to South Africa at that

time was Tanzania. Zambia was still under colonial rule. Similarly with Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. So they were quite convinced that we would never be in a position at all to shake them, particularly from a military angle. That was their point of view. That was why they were so brutal in prison against us, particularly people associated with the ANC."

Death On Robben Island

"I remember, for instance, how one of our dearest comrades, Speedo Ncaphayi from Port Elizabeth, died as a result of deliberate exposure to cold on the Island; a very young comrade. The memory of his death still haunts me right up to the present moment. He was a friend of mine, and I was personally disturbed to see a young comrade being left to die without any medical treatment offered him at all. That was one example of brutal torture that we had to go through whilst serving our sentences on Robben Island.

"The conditions improved in the early seventies not out of change of heart on the part of the prison warders, but because of our own struggle inside the prison itself. We had to mount a number of hunger strikes we had to stage a number of court appearances, challenging the atrocities of the prison authorities. So even right inside prison itself the struggle had to continue. There was no time of resting, and saying okay we have just to allow them to do whatever they would do to us. We would never allow that sort of thing, we were prepared to fight even to death for that matter inside prison itself, for our own rights."

Offered An Olive Branch

It was not until the 22nd of March 1979 that he was released. On release he was presented with a banning order restricting him for two years. The banning order expired on 31 March 1981. He then returned full force to political activism.

After landing outside from the Island, Tshwete had Lennox Sebe, the leader of the Ciskei Bantustan, read the riot act to him. It was not done forthrightly. Sebe made it appear as a brotherly act of sympathy with one who had sacrificed for the cause of freedom. He offered the olive branch of a high-salaried ministerial post in the bantustan authority. His appeal was that Steve renounce the struggle and reconcile himself to the treachery

of bantustan politics.

"Sebe pointed out to me that he would never turn his back on any person who has been to Robben Island, and that he was urging me to accept a post, a cabinet post, in his so-called government, in recognition of the services that I had done towards the Black man, as he put it. This as he explained further, was a gesture of sympathy on his part, because I had come to find myself being left behind by my colleagues and contemporaries. I was not married, I had no decent house, my mother had passed away whilst I was in prison in 1971, there was absolutely nobody at home except for my ageing and ailing father. He was promising me the moon, that if I accept the position, then I would be provided with a decent house, I would get, as he put it, a White man's salary and would have even to go overseas and sell Ciskei's independence to such countries as Japan and the like.

I Will Never Falter

I had taken a vow, even before I left prison, that no matter how difficult my situation might be, I would never see myself compromising the position of the Congress movement, and the position of my people who have been waging a heroic struggle against the fragmentation of their country into bantustans right up to even that moment in time.

"So I was going to be part and parcel of the entire general mass struggle in our country. I was not going to be bought into positions of relative comfort for purposes of advancing the interests of a clique that has been bought by Pretoria at the expense of our revolution. So I declined the offer outright."

Thus was snubbed a hireling of the Pretoria regime. Out of his over-obsequiousness to his masters, he burnt his fingers. It was a triumph of the revolutionary politics of the Congress Movement over both the junk of the regime's own politics and that of its puppets. He was in all probability acting on behalf of his masters impelled by the belief that the venality characteristic of the hotchpotch of Botha's minions is shared by other Black people.

Standing In The Breach

The conflict of interest between Tshwete and Sebe did not end there. Double-barrelled assaults from both Sebe and his masters were to dog

Tshwete up to the moment he left the country in October 1985.

He was rejected by the Boers as a Ciskei citizen. Since he wanted to have no truck with Sebe, the bantustan leader sent his Security Police to hound him. As he was in an area known in the mumbo-jumbo of apartheid politics as a White corridor, sometimes Pretoria's Security Police would come after him, at others Sebe's. He was given no respite. Neither did he ask for quarter.

At one instance when the Ciskei lackeys were clamping down on the UDF in the border region they came for him but:

"I told them that: 'You have no right to come and arrest me because in terms of your own constitution this part of Peelton does not fall within your jurisdiction. This is South Africa; you are not policemen here. You are just a bunch of robbers and thugs. You have no right at all to come and detain me here.'

"I showed them a copy of the Supreme Court ruling to the effect that that section of Peelton was indeed South African territory. So I told them, 'You have no jurisdiction. Forget about me. If you want to arrest me, wait for me the other side of the railway line, which is Ciskei.'

"All members of the UDF in the region were being persecuted, but Steve stood in the breach with both the South African and Ciskei administrators trying every trick in the book to make life unbearable for him. Persecuting him on the part of the apartheid regime was not only the Department of Law and Order but that of Justice as well. At its most desperate, the regime used its Department of Home Affairs to get its own from an implacable adversary. In 1984 the Director-General of this department served notices on Steve in terms of the Aliens Act. He was thenceforth not to enter South Africa without a valid visa, for he was regarded as a Ciskian foreigner. He relates:

"...the White Security Police in King Williams Town, apparently on a tip-off from their hirelings in the Ciskei, came and visited me. They put the question to me: 'What is your attitude towards obtaining a visa? — because you are not supposed to be here; you are supposed to be outside this particular area; this is South African territory. What is your personal attitude towards obtaining a visa? — because in terms of the banishment order you must be in possession of a visa

to be here and a temporary resident's permit."

"I told them point blank that I am not going to apply for a visa. I am not going to apply for even a resident's permit, for that matter. This is my country. I am not going to be told by any other person that I must be carrying documents to be in the country of my birth".

At this point the discussion comes to centre on the UDF region he was leading, its strength and its activities. Its a subject on which he is very forthcoming, more enthusiastic than when narrating his experiences on the Island.

"In East London alone for instance there are over twenty affiliates of the United Democratic Front the biggest of them being the South African Allied Workers' Union, which carries membership of between 40 000 and 50 000 workers. In addition to SAAWU we have a variety of other equally big organisations, like civic organisations, students' organisations, church organisations, women's organisations youth organisations. And then you go to Queenstown: we have a similar assortment of organisations that belong to us there; from trade union organisations, students' organisations, church organisations. You go to Fort Beaufort, to Adelaide, to Bedford, to Alice, to the rural areas of the border region, the so-called Ciskei Republic. You find that organisations are mushrooming every single day there. Teachers' organisations, students' organisations, inside so-called Ciskei in open defiance of puppet Sebe."

UDF — AZAPO Clashes

How does he see the internecine clashes?

"Azapo wants to assert itself. I remember for instance during the burial of the victims of the (March 21, 1985) unrest at Uitenhage where Azapo came out to claim that United Democratic Front in their region had hijacked, that's the term they used, the funeral at Uitenhage and even gone to the extent of driving away people wearing Azapo T-shirts at the entrance to the stadium. That's the type of propaganda they were selling. "That was agent-provocateuring, certainly, because whatever differences they might have had with the United Democratic Front whatever insults they had felt they had suffered at the hands of the United Democratic Front in that region... they ought to have conducted discussions with the fraternal organisation, the UDF. When they came out openly in the press, attacking the United

Democratic Front certainly they were inviting a similar response from the UDF.

"This, of course, had to express itself in terms of first verbal clashes in Port Elizabeth, and then subsequently physical clashes. And then Azapo came out ultimately to be a factor that was used by the enemy to destabilise the United Democratic Front in that particular area. To destabilise an organisation which alone was engaging the enemy in stirring battles on a number of issues, civic, trade union, church and whatnot.

"Even if initially they had acted of their own free will, in due course the enemy seized the opportunity and used Azapo to mount sorties against the popular leadership of the United Democratic Front, in Port Elizabeth in particular. There are instances, no doubt about that, where Azapo people had to run to the Casspirs of the SADF when chased by our people, in broad daylight. And there are instances in which Azapo people were seen to be in the company of the SADF to launch attacks on properties and houses of our people in the region."

Mass Revolutionary Upsurge

He links the onset of the Azapo sorties against the UDF to the intensity of the mass revolutionary upsurge and the apartheid regime's counter offensive against the masses. The resistance itself he discusses with vehemence. It is of a character such as our country has never seen. Particularly striking, he asserts, is the emergence of what he terms "popular structures" that were not seen during the 1976-1977 bout of resistance.

"It is not the first time for instance, that we have an uprising of this nature. But I personally believe, and this is the view of quite a number of people inside the country, that there is a qualitative change in the present upsurge from what we saw in 1976.

"You take the type of language our people are using today. They talk in terms of liberated zones, which is an important new phenomenon, and which is an indication at the same time of the heavy presence of the influence of the spearhead of our revolution in South Africa, that is the African National Congress and its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. You are left with no doubt in your mind when you listen to them singing, when you listen to them speak in buses, in

trains about their engagement with the enemy, that to a very large extent they have been inspired by the leadership of the African National Congress. You hear them talking about the leaders of the ANC, about Umkhonto we Sizwe; you hear them sing about the South Africa of their dreams, and quoting extensively from the Freedom Charter.

"As I have said to you that (there are) talks like — 'liberated zones' where the police, Community Councillors have been flushed out and people have instituted their own power structures, like for instance Peoples Courts which we never saw earlier; but today there are People's Courts and today there are *amabutho*. *Amabutho* are completely a new phenomenon, which originated in Port Elizabeth as organs which were meant to protect the leadership of the United Democratic Front against assaults by Azapo and the police and which ultimately spread to other areas of the country to such places like East London, Fort Beaufort, Adelaide, and Queenstown, Cape Town and even Natal and the Reef.

"Now this is a new phenomenon, which is very important. And even more important is the fact that these *amabutho* are not only attuned to protecting the leadership of the UDF inside the country, but they are propagating the politics of the Front. They are popularising whatever campaigns the Front is mounting like for instance, the consumer boycott. It is the responsibility of the *amabutho* to see to it that the consumer boycott becomes a success in the areas in which it is still operating.

"There are new features which are an indication of People's Power, an expression of People's Power, for instance, in such places like Uitenhage, where people actually have power in their own hands even if the enemy in future might come and reassert itself, but the crux of the issue is that up to the time of my departure from the country (that is in November 1985) there were those areas which were under the full control of our people, where our people had established their own area committees, their own street committees, their own People's Courts (and) they had their own cells. That's why I say that is an indication of the of the qualitative change from 1976 to 1985.



Funeral, Eastern Cape

It was at a funeral like this that Steve Tshwete came out of hiding and urged people to take the struggle into the White areas.

Motive Forces Of The Resistance

"This mass upsurge is born of the objective situation in the country is born of mass unemployment of the rising cost of living, of retrenchments, of repression and exploitation in general. It is not something that is superimposed. It's not something that is wished upon our people by a few agitators, so-called. But it's springing from the incubator of apartheid itself, it's apartheid that has hatched it, and as long as apartheid is still there, that is going to continue, no doubt about that.

"They might succeed perhaps in certain areas to 'quell' it, in their own words, but that is certainly temporary, in a situation where people have actually gone to the extent of erecting organs of popular power, as I've just enumerated.

"When young people, old people, when workers and students and church people, when the people decide to unite in the manner they are, it is because of the intensity of exploitation and oppression; it is because they feel the pangs, they feel the scourge of apartheid on their shoulders. Right enough, that, on its own, is not a condition for the type of resistance that we are witnessing inside the country.

"The people have to be organised, have to be directed; they have to be led. And in order for them to achieve these perspectives, there must

certainly be an organisation which is going to bring them together, which is going to set their immediate goals and their long term goals.

"The coming into being of the United Democratic Front in 1983 was a very important phenomenon. It was the UDF which was able to harness this mass anger, to give it direction, to point to certain targets, immediate targets and ultimate targets. That was the primary responsibility of the Front. So, to a very large extent, the United Democratic Front has played a very important role in giving direction to the present mass upsurge in the country and at the same time the African National Congress and its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, together with its allies of course has always played a very important role as the spearhead of our revolution in the country. Because...even with the UDF being there, but without...the certainty that there is the organisation that is the only one that has been able to challenge the fascists in our country today, politically and militarily, quite effectively at that, the people of South Africa today would not be having all the courage they have to challenge the South African government as they are doing. They are doing what they are doing today because they know that they are being led by a politically powerful organisation the ANC and by a mighty military organisation in the MK"

THE CONSUMER BOYCOTT A PEOPLE'S WEAPON

By Jean Middleton

The consumer boycott movement, which has now lasted since before the middle of 1985, has attracted attention and comment in the press both inside and outside South Africa. It has been remarkable for the inspired simplicity of the idea, for the highly politicised mass action that went into it, and for the response it has evoked from organised White business. Its results were dramatic (in spite of failure in a few regions) but it didn't require ordinary people to make themselves physically conspicuous, or even to go out in the streets more than they otherwise would. It became part of the huge national upsurge now taking place in South Africa, a fight for freedom in which different forms of struggle feed each other and are complementary to each other.

Consumer boycotts are not a new form of protest in South Africa; the tradition has its roots in the potato boycott of the late 1950s (a protest against conditions in the farm gaols of the potato-growing area of Bethel in the Transvaal), and even further back, in the Indian Congress practice of keeping *hartal*, when people made their protest by staying at home and not going to the shops. There have been the Black Christmases of recent years, when people refrained from celebrating and kept their buying to a minimum. Most of the earlier boycotts, though, have been directed against a certain industry — like the red meat boycott of 1979 — or against a certain manufacturer — like the boycott of Fatti's products of about the same period. The great movement of 1985-86 has been directed at shops belonging to people who are perceived as collaborators with the regime.

Pressure on White Voters

The vast majority of boycotted shops were owned by Whites. White businessmen were seen as a

voting constituency, which would be influenced by the drop in trade and would bring pressure to bear on the regime. Murphy Morobe, the UDF publicity secretary, supported the call as "a means of forcing the Botha government to heed our demands," and Jethro Dlalisa of the Transport and General Workers' Union in Johannesburg said, "We want them to feel the pain and do something." *The Sowetan* saw the ensuing negotiations as a way of talking directly to Whites, "not only through their own media."

Black shopkeepers who had collaborated with the regime were boycotted, while Whites who had opposed it were exempted. The Watson brothers of the Eastern Cape, for instance, were exempt because, some years before, they had registered their protest against the unequal facilities in apartheid sport by leaving their Whites-only rugby club and going to play for a Black team in Port Elizabeth. During the boycott their shops did a good trade.

Some Coloured, Indian and African shopkeepers who were community councillors, or who had taken part in the tricameral elections of 1984, were boycotted, and the campaign acted as another deterrent to these businessmen not to participate in the plans of the regime. Some believed that bringing this pressure to bear on them was a way of promoting unity, of drawing them into the struggle on the side of all the oppressed. At the beginning of the boycott, prices in the Black-owned township shops were generally higher than those in the White-owned shops in the cities, and some Black shop owners took advantage of the situation by marking their goods up even further: 40% mark-ups were reported in the Transvaal, and 50% in Port Elizabeth. The organisers of the boycott came to an arrangement with these traders in most areas.

Local and National Demands

In all regions, it was very clear what conditions had to be met before the boycott was to be called off.

Early on, and in country districts, the demands concerned local matters that could be put right by local action, like school buildings, toilets, taps, tarred roads, the right to graze cattle on the commonage. Later, after the declaration of the state of emergency, as police violence continued in the townships and activists were detained or murdered, the demands widened to include those that were becoming general throughout the country — that the state of emergency should be lifted, that the army and police should be withdrawn from the townships and that all political prisoners and detainees should be released. These were still accompanied by local demands in different areas — in East London, that the city council should end the harassment of Black hawkers, that Duncan Village should not be incorporated into the Ciskei, that local amenities should be made available to all sections of the community, and, in Colesburg, for satisfactory inquests into the deaths of those shot by the police.

The first organised boycott seems to have taken place in May, in Adelaide in the Eastern Cape, and it was supported by the Adelaide Youth Congress, COSAS, the Women's Association and the Residents' Association.

The campaign was taken up in other regions, and local consumer boycott committees were set up to organise and publicise it. Local democratic community organisations were represented on these committees — the UDF was in the forefront here — and trade unions. As a result, representatives already elected by the people became leaders of the boycott, and the boycott movement was linked even more firmly with other campaigns. Thousands of leaflets and pamphlets were distributed, and the boycotts were launched at public meetings. The campaign was supported by the ANC in a statement from Radio Freedom.

Drop in Sales

The success of the boycott became apparent in August, when it began to get a good deal of attention in the press. It was said that an estimated R2.2 billion was "at stake."

In Port Elizabeth, the sales of some shops dropped from 30% to 100%; some retailers started offering discounts of up to 50% on clothing.

Some small firms went under. The mayor of the town appealed for help from the State President, to save businessmen from financial ruin. In East London, where White shops had virtually no Black customers after July 29th, badly hit firms spoke of seeking drought aid: "We are suffering from financial drought," said the secretary of the East London Chamber of Commerce at the end of August. By October, sales in some East London shops had dropped by almost 100%.

The boycott was already spreading to the Western Cape, where it took the form of a boycott of major chain stores and large local shops. There it was supported by Allan Boesak; at a meeting in Worcester, just before the state of emergency was declared, he said:

"We can bring Worcester to a standstill within a few days if we refuse to buy from people who cannot treat you decently. Why should we make Worcester rich when these people vote for the National Party and keep P W Botha in power?"

It spread to the Transvaal — a headline in the *Weekly Mail* read, "Boycott Politics Sweep North". However, though it was effective in Pretoria (where, in August, some stores were reported to have suffered a drop of 40%), it did not reach its full effectiveness on the Reef till the end of the year.

Buthlezi Does the Work of the Regime

It spread to Natal. In the Pietermaritzburg area in August it had some success, having become linked with the boycott of BTR Sarmcol products, a protest against the sacking of 1 000 workers from the BTR Sarmcol plant in Howick. It was also successful in Mooi River, Hammarsdale and Pinetown. Nearer the coast, it was sabotaged. Gumede, President of the Inanda branch of National African Chambers of Commerce (NAFCOC), stated that his organisation could not support the boycott, which he said would hurt the South African economy and displease Gatscha Buthelezi. He called on citizens of KwaZulu to co-operate in crushing the boycott, and threatened with expulsion any local NAFCOC branch that entered into negotiations as a result of it. He claimed there had been "intimidation," and offered what he called "protection" to those who wanted to ignore the boycott call. Early in October, the local organisers of the boycott called the action off,

saying:

"We now believe that the continuation of the boycott threatens to divide rather than unify, due to the particular situation that exists in Natal. The Inanda Chamber of Commerce has openly and publicly threatened violence."

There are no prizes for guessing from what quarter violence was threatened; enough has been made public about the attacks made by the hit squads of Inkatha on the UDF, the community organisations and the unions in Natal. It seems clear that, in this act (which was against their financial interests, after all), NAFCOC was acting as Buthelezi's agent.

Police Persecution

All over the country, and in vain, the regime used intimidation against the campaign, and this became merged in its whole policy of intimidation against the people. Shops were closed and their owners detained under the emergency regulations; in Tembisa, in August, seven shops were closed, and in the Eastern Cape, one shopkeeper was detained for four months. In Pretoria, police urged the public to ignore the call to boycott and to ignore pamphlets distributed by "spineless and nameless people." In the Eastern Cape, trade union spokesmen said police were forcing people to buy at White-owned shops. 'Cheeky' Watson claimed that they were coming into his shop and standing around and had questioned him as to why his shop was not boycotted. Later, the Watson brothers' house was destroyed by fire. In December and January, as the boycott began to bite on the Reef, shoppers at a supermarket in Krugersdorp reported being harassed; members of the General Workers' Union in Krugersdorp reported having been assaulted outside a shop by men arriving in a van.

At the beginning, chambers of commerce used subtler pressures. 40 000 pamphlets were dropped over Duncan Village, appealing to the "proud Xhosa nation" not to allow itself to be "bullied by a radical minority." Some shops that had been hit laid off Black workers, or put them on short time; Emma Mashinini of the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union saw this as intimidation, and an effort to "set Black against Black."

In Colesburg (where one of the demands was

for satisfactory inquests into the deaths of those killed by the police) the local retailers used strong-arm tactics. When they decided on the boycott, the people of the township chose to use two White-owned shops nearby, whose owners, they said, were "sympathetic to our cause." One of these shops was burgled, the other forced to close, and then the White shops in the town refused to serve Blacks. Worst of all, the residents of the township found their water supply was being cut off for five hours each day. When interviewed, the chairman of the local Sakekamer (an organisation of Chambers of Commerce dominated by Afrikaans-speaking businessmen) denied responsibility for the cutting off of water, but admitted that it was "not entirely incorrect" to say that pressure had been brought on the emptied stores to close; he also telephoned the police to come and remove the journalist who was interviewing him. Colesburg is a small, isolated country town and the boycott was crushed there, but the story in other towns was different.

Local Grievances Redressed

Most local chambers of commerce expressed themselves as anxious to redress the grievances of the people and put an end to the boycott.

They began negotiations with the boycott committees. In doing so they were forced to give recognition to the real leaders of the people, and seek them out. Here they found themselves in conflict with the regime, because many organisers active in the UDF were either in gaol or in hiding. The Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce said that the declaration of the state of emergency had "wrecked" its negotiations. When it petitioned Pretoria for an end to the state of emergency and safe conduct for those in hiding, so that negotiations could take place, it met — in the words of a spokesman — a "flat refusal."

This was the general pattern. At a local level the chambers of commerce found it possible to redress grievances, like basic services in townships, recreational facilities and so on; and some notable successes were achieved, as when the plan to give Duncan Village over to the Ciskei was shelved. When, however, they tried to take political action at a higher level, they found themselves frustrated by the regime.

The anxiety felt by White retailers in most regions was demonstrated when they began to

act as a country-wide organisation. As early as August, 80 representatives of chambers of commerce and White retailers from all over South Africa met in Johannesburg, with the president of Assocom (the national organisation of chambers of commerce) in the chair. They

discussed the implications of the emergency, especially boycotts and stayaways, and, according to press reports, "the importance of negotiation and communication." Raymond Ackerman, chairman of a supermarket chain, said he was setting up a committee of 10 businessmen to "use



Lingelihle residents at the Zenzele general store in the township. The boycott of shops in Cradock was launched immediately after the murders of Matthew Goniwe, Sparrow Mkhonto, Fort Calata and Sicelo Mhlawuli.

financial muscle" to "press for reform and to promote dialogue." A spokesman for Assocom said it was imperative for the government to start "meaningful negotiations with effective Black leaders across a broad political spectrum." John Malcomess, a Progressive Federal Party MP, said he had received more telephone calls about this issue than about any other in his political career. All this must have played a very large part in the pressure that finally took representatives of White business to Lusaka to hold 'talks' with the ANC.

Unity in Action

The action did, indeed, promote unity among the oppressed. A high degree of organisation was shown in the negotiations and in the response to them, and so was the enthusiasm, the political consciousness and political discipline of the people. Just as the action had been decided on at public meetings, so public meetings were again held for the negotiators to report back, and at these meetings decisions were usually taken to suspend the boycott and await results. In Lingelihle, the magistrate gave special permission for such a meeting to be held in a hall. The boycott in Port Elizabeth was finally suspended in early December, at a rally attended by 50 000 people; but only after the boycott leaders, released from detention in November, had conducted negotiations.

When results have not been forthcoming, boycotts have been reimposed after a certain period; in the course of such negotiations there have been three periods of boycott in Grahamstown, while the boycott in Pretoria was called off in January 1986, and imposed again in February.

The state of emergency has recently been lifted and those still imprisoned under the emergency regulations have been released, but the people of South Africa are still fighting for the police and army to be pulled out of the townships, and for the release of all political prisoners and detainees.

The White retailers were able to change the policies of local town and city councils, of which many of them are members, but the "flat refusal" they got from Pretoria when they suggested changes in national policy shows the limits of

their influence. It also shows the limitations of a boycott that is directed against retail outlets only. To be sure, this sector includes a number of large concerns, like supermarket chains (and some of them were badly hit), but it is a sector that is largely composed of small businesses. A boycott of this kind does not touch the wholesaler who supplies both township and city and who can increase the supply he sells to the township, if it suits his pocket to do so; nor the manufacturer of those goods, like food and other essentials, which people have been buying in the township shops. We should remember that it doesn't even touch all retailers, for those shops that do not normally depend on the custom of Blacks were left unaffected.

The boycott of retailers inevitably involved a drop in sales of certain commodities — those not generally sold in township stores, such as clothing and liquor. In the Eastern Cape, Coloureds and Africans account for 80% of the cheap wine trade, which dropped sharply as a result of the boycott of White-owned shops. In this way, the campaign moved to another level, in which it affected bigger interests, and it must have gained strength from this. Boycotts of selected commodities are a potentially powerful lever, and this is something we should, perhaps, bear in mind for the future.

Some commentators have seen the boycott of shops as having taken the struggle into the White areas. It has, indeed, taken the struggle on to White doorsteps; it has not yet taken it into the inner corridors of power. And yet, even within these limitations, the results of the boycott have been remarkable.

The buying power of four-fifths of the population — even if it is the poorest four-fifths — is a significant factor in the economy of any country, and to divert it or withdraw it must have significant effects. At a time when the whole country is boiling with protest, when the forces of the regime are using fire power, imprisonment, torture and all forms of intimidation against the people, the boycott is one of the weapons in the people's hands, and one that is all the more powerful because of its flexibility. There is no doubt that we have not seen the end of this present phase of boycott; neither is there any doubt that the boycott weapon will be used again.

UYADELA WENA OSULAPHO!

By Sello Moeti

"Uyadela wena Usolapho!" was a war cry of Zulu warriors during battles. The words literally mean, "happy are you, who are already there!" This article is dedicated to the 80th anniversary of what has come to be known as Bambatha Rebellion of 1906.

The months from April to July in 1906 were to see young African men take spears and rifles again. Old men with grey hair were picking up their old spears and marching hundreds of kilometres again in another battle of the old war, 250 years old it was at the time. This was the war of resistance to foreign, racist, colonial domination. A war many of whose battles we had won and many more had lost. But 1906 was to see the war which sometimes was silent, while one of the sides licked its wounds, break out into open warfare again. This time it was to be fought in Inkandla forest and Mapumulo. The battles in Inkandla and Mapumulo, closed a chapter, burying once and for all the ability of intelezi and the spear against the guns of the Whites. It opened the chapter of the warfare when the majority fight as the minority and the minority as the majority. The Inkandla and Mapumulo battles brought in these times when we, the majority, break into small groups chipping at the enemy's sides, slowly encircling him with our majority, they brought in this face of the war that is now becoming a genuine People's War.

If wars teach anyone anything, these battles showed clearly that without unity we are weak and without action, military action, we remain oppressed. As a befitting tribute to the warriors who 80 years ago stood up to be counted, we need to learn from their effort, make a thoroughgoing post mortem, to assess the damage done by our enemy and our own mistakes. We need to study carefully their experience not because we have any penchant for studying history. The reason is that war is still on. Indeed, now is escalating, deliberately started by us to take the things which were grabbed from us those 80 years ago and before then. So the best tribute to Bambatha, Cakijana, Mehlokazulu, Mtele Siganda and thousands of other warriors is to escalate this war taking their mistakes to heart, vowing never to repeat them.



NATAL AT THE TIME OF BAMBATHA

The Issues of the War

The main issue, the cause of the war of 1906, was the same issue as in the wars fought for more than 250 years before, the same issue that is at the heart of the conflict which has resulted in the Soweto, Uitenhage, Mamelodi massacres. The source of the problem was, as it still is, national oppression. Alien racist colonial domination. True, colonialism has changed in form from what it was in 1906. Today Britain, the original thief, has moved back, leaving kith and kin to pass on the stolen goods. Yet this is still essentially the same armed national struggle against foreign, racist colonial domination. The wars of resistance in the east coast had seen Isandlwana and other epic battles. But also there were the defeats of Income, Ulundi and others. The huge British colonial imperial army had merely won the battles. It wanted now to settle the war in its favour. The high point of colonial achievement is not just the looting of the defeated, the plunder of their economic and human resources, the rape of their culture and dehumanisation, but is above everything, to keep the defeated as loot themselves to generate even more wealth. It was in an attempt to develop us as fully fledged colonial vassals, hopelessly poor, barely managing to survive but able to generate wealth for Britain and its local kith and kin, that the British undertook the measures that provoked the war. This was the second major cause of the war of 1906.

Our Country Under Colonial Rule

The immediate political reality was that half of the world was under British rule. We too; after Ulundi in the East coast, the defeat of Sekhukhune in the North, the annexation of Lesotho, our whole country was finally under colonial rule. The phony Anglo-Boer War, the war of the falling out of the thieves, had just ended. Some Blacks, like Mahatma Gandhi had been loyal to the British empire. Others had helped the Afrikaners. The majority treated that war as the White man's war that it really was.

The White colonists in Natal fell into two categories. They were farmers and townspeople. The townspeople were few, engaged in an embryonic manufacturing industry and the professions. The farmers formed the majority, including the Afrikaner, and dominated the political life, asking for a responsible government

from Britain in 1874. They were given it in 1893. Africans in Natal were governed from Britain until 1897 when we were put under the colony. This was done after the whole country was divided into little chiefdoms, the only criterion for leading them being loyalty to Whites. Even Dinuzulu was declared a chief in charge of a few homesteads under the watchful eye of White magistrates. The leaders of the people to these magistrates were mere children, spies to control their people on behalf of the Whites. The sheer arrogance of the magistrates, the crude political control by the colonial regime, was another reason for the war.

The White population in Natal by the turn of the century was about 100 000 strong. 76% were British, (40% of whom being direct British born), 13% Afrikaner and 11% others with 101 000 strong Indians. With the rising population, the crop farmers among the Whites were taking the land with an amazing speed; in 1875 they cultivated 191 808 acres, in 1893 this had gone up to 519 744 acres and by the turn of the century this had reached about one million acres. In fact the area of White settlement was stretched to the border of Mozambique. While distributing the land at this pace, colonists demanded that not only those areas, which they had taken and announced as their own land, areas which have been populated even during the Difaqane but they wanted the two-thirds of the fertile land declared as Zululand by the colonial office, Inkandla and Nqutu area in particular as it was fertile and a good cattle country. The colonists had clearly not changed from the ways of the Cape Colony of riding a horse half a day and calling the area they had covered as their land. The people who fell under this type of land division were declared tenants and expected to comply with stiff rules of tenancy not to mention working for the farmers free of charge. Land therefore was one of the major issues at the root of the war.

Increasing The Yoke

It was however the stock farmers who were the most hostile to the Blacks whose land they were farming on. Firstly, they hated the existence of the stock farming African with his own herd of cattle. This African would not leave his fields to farm those of the Whites. He would not leave his stock to look after those of the Whites. In no way was he going to agree to control and use of

water, movement of cattle and other restrictions imposed by the newcomers. Besides ordinary competition, the stock farmers, like the tea and sugar growers, depended 100% on African labour. British colonial police records show that their most persistent complaint was that the Africans were not looking after their cattle and tilling the land for them. At first they resolved that Africans can only have a stipulated number of cattle and shot those that were supposedly in excess. Thus at the heart of the causes of the war was an attempt by the colonial regime of Britain through its local colonists to turn the African population into paupers who would work for the farmers and mine owners in the Transvaal.

To compound the already untenable relations of master and servant, colonised and coloniser which were crystallising, when a series of live stock and crop diseases broke out in Natal, they blamed it on the African. Rinderpest, lung-sickness, East Coast fever, scab and mange broke out and were said to be caused by African ownership of cattle and land on which they were farming. The White farmers not only called for heavy taxes on the Africans to increase their poverty so that they must work for them, but they used the outbreak of the diseases to kill many African cattle and to spread the diseases by mixing healthy cattle with sick ones and wholesale shooting of healthy cattle ostensibly as a quarantine measure.

"...Every Farmers' Conference that has taken place for the last ten or twelve years have agitated for an increased Hut Tax, and why? To increase the natives' wants and so bring about a better state of labour" so wrote a minister of Native Affairs of the colony in 1905. The Hut Tax was £2 when the annual income of Africans employed all year round by Whites was estimated at £3. The Master's and Servant's Law was "stiffened" and in 1905 the clamouring from the colonists finally produced the Poll Tax of £1 a year on all African males. It was to be a combination, this taxation and the way it was implemented, that was to light the war in Inkandla and Mapumulo.

The Warriors And Their War

The colonial administration and the local colonists in particular had long been expressing a wish to 'lick the natives into shape' and to 'knock

the hell out of them' as they had become 'insolent' and were 'getting out of hand.' All talk by the Africans of their rights was 'dangerous sedition mongering.' While imposing the heavy taxes on the Africans, openly stating that their aim was to make Africans poor so that they must work for them, on the other hand the Whites were at the same time preparing for war. They organised what was called Militia Reserve, started cadet training, had all men as members of a so-called Rifle Association and formed a Natal Volunteer Force. A Norwegian colonel, a certain Bru-de-Wold, was appointed the commander of their forces. He had written extensively on the "growing insolence of young natives and (their) disrespect for the White man". Not only did he speed up the militia reserve training, but he increased the acquisition of expanding bullets. The Mark V and VI bullets were acquired as "...the importance of dum-dum bullets with their greater stopping power when fighting 'members of savage races (who) it must be remembered are not creatures of nerves' was stressed." It was however another colonist called Duncan McKenzie who was to carry out the most atrocious crimes of that war. He gave Faku, whose people were supposed to be refusing to surrender their spears, the following order:

"I want fifteen head of cattle and all the assegais at Highflats. This is the last chance. (Faku had just brought in eleven assegais in response to a previous demand) He need not come to me with a few assegais; I will go and collect them if he does not bring them all and I will take every beast he has got and burn his kraals if the cattle and assegais are not there. He has to come to the store at Highflats tomorrow at this time"

The great Zulu War had ended to our disadvantage. The White colonial administration was extracting its pound of flesh. They demanded total submission. They were demanding all spears and guns. They had declared the land we stay on as their land. They were shooting and infecting the cattle with diseases. Young men had to be conscripted to do forced labour for the colony free and pay the other taxes and as from January 1906 the Poll Tax. The crops had to be sold to pay rent. Money had to be used to pay for permits to travel out of Natal. All of what remained of economic life was now going to be used for paying taxes to run an economy they open-

ly stated was for Whites only. Now they were demanding that Africans not only wear certain types of clothes but virtually tearing their backs for not showing 'proper respect for the White man.' All Africans resisted the taxes and when the Poll Tax was announced the pressures reached breaking point.

All Africans without exception resisted the Poll Tax. Even those Blacks who had listened to the missionaries telling them that they are sinners by living under their own rulers and 'loyal natives' found the taxes too much. In the beginning the resistance took the form of not paying covered with lots of excuses. But as time went on some communities started throwing away all things of European origin and killing animals with white colour. This would not do. The magistrates were demanding the tax. A state of emergency was declared. Colonial troops started haunting the land. Drumhead court martial was shooting people at random.

Bambatha was from the Zondi. He had been one of the leaders who were resisting the burden of taxes and had had a few brushes with the White man's law. At the end he resolved to fight. He first went to Dinuzulu to raise the necessary support. Failing this he went to the people themselves. Young men joined in their hundreds. They came from as far as the Rand mines to join in the war that was unfolding. The Whites were anxious and wanted to know why they were coming home in such numbers. "We have come to see our women," the men answered. Old men like Sigananda, in his nineties, joined him. Leading men like Ndube, Mpumela, Makubalo, sent many men to join the army.

On April 3rd they ambushed a group of White policemen at Mpanza valley, killing four. It was clear the army of the people was strong enough now. The colonists mobilised detachments of the Natal Police, the Greytown Reserve, the Natal Field Artillery and the Durban Light Infantry and in an elaborate plan encircled Mpanza valley. Bambatha and the African army was by then at Mome Gorge, 40 to 50 miles away. On the way they passed Hlangabeza and Gayede where they were joined by Mangati ka Godide. Mangati had not only been Cetshwayo's induna, but brought with him many men from the Ntulis. He was also the grandson of Ndlela, a warrior who became a legend in his own lifetime, serving under Shaka and Dingane after him.



Sigananda
A warrior in his nineties.

The second major encounter between the Warriors' Army and the more than 5 000 Whites mobilised from as far as London, Johannesburg, Cape Town and other places, paid for by the rich farmers and mine owners, was to be in Bobe Ridge. The White army was reinforced with about 3 000 of what is called "African levies". In all the several hundred strong Warriors' Army was faced with 8 000 well armed troops in 17 columns who converged on Bobe Ridge and Mome Gorge. 60 warriors were killed in this engagement. After this battle Bambatha separated with Sigananda. He, Cakijana, and Mangati headed to Macala Hills. Sigananda with part of the army went to Mome. After clashing with the warriors under Sigananda, forcing them to leave their bases, the White troops under Duncan McKenzie burnt down the grave of Cetshwayo which was in Mome Gorge as they looted the surrounding area, driving away cattle and burning down grain.

With the main forces of the Warriors' Army divided and overwhelmed by superior armed forces, the colonial troops moved down to the south of the Tugela river. Tula, a chief appointed



Pupils proclaim the new name of Clermont

CHILDREN IN THE

*Children in the townships use scrap metal a
Soldiers of Umkhonto we Sizwe tomorrow?*

11-year-old Fanie Kuduka spent 57 days in solitary detention despite two court hearings to secure his release. He was subsequently acquitted of a charge of public violence.



He is now in hiding. The police who assaulted him during detention still constantly hound him.



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