

LESSONS OF ISANDHLWANA

This year, on the 22nd January, we celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Isandhlwana. This battle is considered one of the most humiliating defeats suffered by the British Army in the annals of that country's blood-stained colonial history.

The British lost 858 men at Isandhlwana and an equal number of Africans who fought alongside the invading army. Mighty Britain, the world's leading industrial and colonial power whose army was then, the best trained and equipped in history, had launched a sudden war against the Zulu Kingdom. Yet the fearless African warriors of that Zulu Kingdom were able to overrun the invading army who was armed with rifles, cannons, rocket-tubes and machine guns. Our people were armed only with spears and shields but they were able to defeat this well-equipped British army.

At this time when the racists are trying to write distortions about this glorious victory, we must ask ourselves what are the important lessons to be learnt from this notable moment in our history

Firstly let us examine the cause of the war which so-called historians write about as the 'Zulu War'. During that period of the 1870s and 1880s the British had launched one war after another on our people who were organised into small and separate national entities and chiefdoms. For example, wars were launched against Hlubi in 1873, the Gcaleka and Pedi in 1887, the AmaNqika, Thembu, Pondo, Griqua and Barolong in 1878, the Sotho in 1880 and the Ndbhele in 1893. This clearly shows that during this period the Boers and British were beginning the process of forcibly dispossessing our people of their land. Therefore, this battle at Isandhlwana must be seen as one of the battles fought by all our people against the invaders. The Victory of Isandhlwana should be seen as a victory for all our people who fought in defence of our land.

After defeating our people - AmaNqika under Chief Sandile and the Gcaleka under Chief Kreli - the British turned their attention to Cetshwayo whom they regarded as an obstacle towards their plans of conquest. Indeed, by January 11th, after Chelmsford failed to order King Cetshwayo to disband the regiments, and lay down arms, a British army of 18,000 troops with hundreds of wagon trains loaded with food, weapons and equipment, crossed the Tugela river and invaded Zululand. The troops and officers involved in this bloody war of repression were fresh from recent wars against the Gcalekas and other people in our country; they also included others who



had just fought in Gold Coast (Ghana) and Ethiopia, India and Afghanistan. The British were aggressors and they were waging an unjust war just like Smith in Zimbabwe, South Africa in Namibia, and right here at home.

How did the Cetshwayo warriors manage to defeat the British Army at Isandhlwana? The necessity of any successful army is high morale, superior tactics and excellent weapons. Though the Zulus did not have excellent weapons, they made up for this deficiency through many superb qualities bred into every warrior from the time of Shaka. These were superb physical fitness, high mobility and speed, iron discipline and, above all, a fighting determination and fearlessness. Fighting for a just war in defence of their country against foreign invasion made for the high morale displayed by the warriors. The Zulu intelligence system - based on watchful couriers and scouting parties - was extremely efficient and the position and strength of the British invading forces were well-known. That is why the Zulu army was able to launch a surprise attack by encircling the enemy. That is why a surprise attack is so advantageous for the attacker. This is the military tradition of our people that should inspire us even today.

The significance of Isandhlwana is that it epitomises the fearless and determined fighting spirit of that whole era of resistance wars. The battle serves as a clarion call to all our freedom loving people, inspiring them to spare no effort in the continuing war to liberate every inch of our beloved country. Just as the victory of the Vietnamese people over U.S. Imperialism and of late China, inspires all oppressed people everywhere in the knowledge that it is possible to defeat a mighty power; so the victory of Isandhlwana reminds us of our heritage and our people's ability to fearlessly face the enemy and overcome a military giant.

Today we fight with different methods and under different conditions when the tide of history is running against Imperialism, Apartheid and Reaction. We have learnt from our brothers and sisters in Mozambique and Angola that it is not enough to have a well-organised and well-armed guerrilla army, but that all the people must join in the struggle - the old, the very young, mothers, workers and the people on the land - all must organise to resist the oppressor and to support the unfolding armed struggle.

With the <sup>unity</sup> ~~protection~~ of our people, with the determination of our ancestors; with the correct theory and leadership of the ANC; with international support and with Umkhonto we Sizwe spearheading a People's War, we will win many victories as astonishing as



Isandhlwana, until the nation is free.

LONG LIVE THE SPIRIT OF ISANDHLWANA!

ORGANISE RESISTANCE TO THE OPPRESSOR EVERYWHERE!

SUPPORT AND PROTECT THE UNITS OF UNKHONTO WE SIZWE!

FORWARD TO A FREE AND UNITED SOUTH AFRICA!

LONG LIVE THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS!



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The British lost 858 men at Isandhlwana and an equal number of Africans who fought alongside the invading army. Mighty Britain, the world's <sup>leading</sup> industrial and colonial power, whose army was then the best trained and equipped in history, had launched a sudden war against the Zulu Kingdom. Yet the fearless African warriors of that Zulu Kingdom were able to overrun the invading army armed with rifles, cannons, rocket-tubes and machine guns. ~~The~~ Our people were armed only with spears and shields but they were able to defeat this well-equipped British Army.

At this time when the vaunts are trying and have written about this glorious victory, we must ask ourselves what are the important lessons to be learnt from this notable victory.

To start with let us examine the cause of the war, which so-called historians write about it as the Zulu War. During that period of the 1870 & 1880's the British had launched one war after another on our people who were organised into small and separate national entities and chiefdoms. For example wars were launched against Hlubi in 1873, the Gcaleka and Pedi in 1887, the Amathonga, Gumbi, Pondos, Inkwa and Barolong in 1878, the Sotho in 1880 and the Ndebele in 1893. This clearly shows that during this period the Boers and British were bad by degrees started dispossessing our people of their land. Therefore this battle must be seen as one of the battles fought by all our people against the invaders. The victory of Isandhlwana should be seen as a victory for all our people who fought in defence of our land.

After defeating our people, Amathonga, under <sup>Chief</sup> Sandile and the Gcaleka under chief Keli, the British turned their attention to Cetshwayo, whom they regarded as an obstacle towards their plans of conquest. Indeed, by January 11<sup>th</sup>, after Chelmsford, failed to order King Cetshwayo to disband the regiments,



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and lay down arms; a British Army of 18,000 troops, with hundreds of wagon trains loaded with food, weapons and equipment, crossed the Tugela river and invaded Zululand. The troops and officers involved in this bloody war of repression were just from recent wars against the Gcaleka's and other people in our country, they also included others from Gold Coast (Ghana) and Ethiopia, India and Afghanistan. ~~It was not the first time~~ It is clear therefore that the British were the aggressors and that they were waging an unjust war as is Smith in Jimbabwe, South Africa in Namibia and right here at home.

How did the Cetshwayo's warriors manage to defeat the British Army at Rorodhwana? The necessity of any successful army is high morale, superior tactics and excellent weapons. Though the Zulus did not have excellent weapons, they complimented this through many superb qualities bred into every warrior from the time of Shaka. These were superb physical fitness, high mobility and speed, iron discipline and above all a fighting determination and fearlessness. Fighting for a just war in defence of King and Country against foreign invasion made for the high morale displayed by the Warriors. The Zulu intelligence system - based on spies and scouting parties, was extremely efficient and the position and strength of the British invading army was well-known. That is why the Zulu Army was able to launch a surprise attack by encircling the enemy. That is why a surprise attack is so advantageous for the attacker. ~~through the Zulus were~~ <sup>this is the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>military</sup> tradition of our people that should inspire us even today.

The significance of Rorodhwana is that it epitomises the fearless and determined fighting spirit of that whole era of resistance wars. The battle serves as a clarion call to all our freedom loving people, inspiring them to spare no effort in the continuing war to liberate every inch of our beloved country. Just as the victory of the Vietnamese people over U.S. Imperialism and of late China, inspires all oppressed people everywhere, in the knowledge that it is possible to defeat a mighty power. So the victory of Rorodhwana reminds us of our heritage and our people's ability to ~~fight~~ fearlessly face the enemy and overcome an military giant.



Today we fight with different methods and under different conditions when the tide of history is running against Imperialism, Apartheid and Reaction. With the unity of our people, with the determination of our ancestors; with the correct theory and leadership of the A.N.C.; with international support support and with Umkhonto We Sizwe, spearheading a People's war. We will win many victories as astonishing as Sandhwana until the nation is free.



## Requests for Literature:

### 1. From S.U.:

In addition to asking for large quantities of Marxist-Leninist literature to be sent to Angola, we suggest the following:

That enough copies of basic works are provided so that each cadre can ~~xxx~~ have a copy i.e. up to 1,000 copies each of:

FUNDAMENTALS OF MARXISM-LENINISM  
MARXIST PHILOSOPHY  
POLITICAL ECONOMY  
HISTORY OF THE CPSU.

We also request regularly:

200	copies of	MOSCOW NEWS
200	"	NEW TIMES
50	"	INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
50	" "	SPUTNIK
50	"	MILITARY REVIEW
50	"	SOVIET WOMEN
50	"	SOVIET YOUTH
50	"	SOCIAL SCIENCES series

We suggest that included in the literature sent are quantities of the classic works of Soviet writers like Fadeyev, Ostrovsky, Pushkin, Chekov, Gorky, Makarenko, Polevoi etc. (published in the Progress Soviet Authors Library series).

*2 books for 11/11*

X 2. We feel also that YD should approach the GDR for literature to be sent to Angola.

3. Cuba : We have asked Meli to raise the need for Granma and Tricontinental to be sent in large quantities to Angola; as well as about 50 copies of each to Botswana.

Sonia has been asked to send the office copy of Granma to Phoenix.

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Request for the International Department, CPGB, for large quantities (between 50 and 200 copies each) or financial help toward buying, the following books:

- 1) 3 volumes on Materialist Philosophy by Maurice Cornforth
- 2) 'Money and Inflation' by Emile Burns
- 3) 'Political Economy' by John Eaton
- 4) 'Marx's Capital' by Ben Fine
- 5) 'Economic Growth and Underdeveloped Countries' by Maurice Dobb
- 6) 'Capitalism Yesterday and Today' by Maurice Dobb
- 7) 'Socialist Planning' by Maurice Dobb