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THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AFTER 70 YEARS



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THE DAKAR GET-TOGETHER

Last July a 17-person ANC delegation held a three-day colloquium in Dakar, Senegal, with a 61-person delegation from South Africa comprising mainly Afrikaners drawn from the academic, professional, cultural, religious and business fields. The purpose of the conference, which was organised by Van Zyl Slabbert's Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA), was mainly to discuss strategies for bringing about fundamental change in South Africa and the building of national unity.

By all accounts the conference was pervaded by an atmosphere of extraordinary cordiality. To some extent the two parties were meeting one another for the first time. The ANC's contact with Afrikanerdom, outside the ranks of policemen, gaolers and government officials, has not in the past been as extensive as it would have wished, bearing in mind that Afrikaners constitute over 60% of the white population and, through the National Party, exercise effective power. On the other hand Afrikanerdom knows practically nothing about the ANC apart from the lies and distortions peddled in the media and hostile treatises.

In this context the mere act of meeting and talking together was a positive achievement leading to greater understanding of one another's perspectives. But the Dakar conference went further than that and the final declaration registered important areas of agreement between the two sides.

All the participants declared their "commitment towards the removal of the apartheid system and the building of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa". Further, the "participants agreed that they had an obligation to act for the achievement of this objective" and pledged to take part in "the building of a nation of all South Africans — black and white".

To this extent the IDASA delegation was openly declaring its acceptance of the goal of national liberation. There was still disagreement about methods, with the IDASA delegates expressing their concern over the ANC's resolve to maintain and intensify armed struggle. Nevertheless "the group accepted the historical reality of the armed struggle" and "all participants recognised that the source of violence in South Africa derives from the fact that the use of force is fundamental to the existence and practice of racial domination.....conference unanimously expressed—preference for a negotiated resolution of the South African question. Participants recognised that the attitude of those in power is the principal obstacle to progress in this regard. It was further accepted that the unconditional release of all political

leaders in prison or detention and the unbanning of all organisations are fundamental prerequisites for such negotiations to take place".

It has been asked in some quarters what the ANC gains by taking part in such discussions and whether the energies of the ANC participants would not be better spent in prosecuting the armed struggle. The answer is that the ANC fights on many fronts and this is one of them. No achievement of the liberation movement has been more important than the splitting of Afrikanerdom, hitherto the mainstay of white domination in South Africa. It is likely that almost all the participants from South Africa were responsive to the leadership of the National Party at some stage in the past. Now all have openly rejected it; more, have indicated that they share many of the main planks in the ANC platform.

Defending the ANC's initiatives on the diplomatic front, ANC executive member Pallo Jordan, in an article in the *Johannesburg Weekly Mail* (17.7.87) wrote:

"From the ANC's point of view, the meetings themselves were an operation in sweeping away layer after layer of cobwebs of misconceptions and mystification about both the character of the ANC and the struggle for liberation.... The overwhelming majority left behind much of the baggage of Afrikaner orthodoxy; some shed their remaining illusions that change could be effected through the white parliament. Some parted with us a little more optimistic about the future. We had been struck by a profound pessimism afflicting many of our counterparts from the very first day".

One of the main aims of the ANC is, not to destroy the whites or drive them into the sea, but to win them round to support for the principle of majority rule. The greater the contact the ANC has with all sections of the South African population, the greater will be the extent of its influence, because nobody who has real contact with the membership of the ANC can fail to be impressed by their patriotism, their idealism, their dedication to the principles of democracy, their political tolerance and maturity. The ANC is not a fly-by-night organisation with a collection of half-baked theories about revolution which change with the wind, but a national liberation movement whose structures, policies and tactics are the product of decades of struggle and experience, and in whose leadership all sections of our population apart from racists and fascists can have complete confidence.

There is no way in which the Dakar talks can be likened to Lancaster House. The IDASA delegation came as individuals, with a mandate from nobody. They have differing points of view. There was nothing to negotiate. All the participants at the conference talked together about the future of

South Africa and discovered a large area of agreement.

The isolation of the racist apartheid regime was carried a stage further. The ANC has succeeded brilliantly in winning friends and influencing people. Isn't that what diplomacy is all about?

BUTHELEZI IS PART OF THE SYSTEM

The Oxford dictionary definition of "police" reads: "Any body of men officially employed to keep order, enforce regulations or maintain a political or ecclesiastical system". On June 1 all police stations in greater Durban were taken over by the KwaZulu administration which is controlled by Mangosuthu Buthelezi and his Inkatha organisation. Since June 1, therefore, Buthelezi has been part of the state apparatus of the Botha regime, charged with the "maintenance of the political system" of apartheid and the administration of the apartheid laws.

In fact as Chief Minister of the KwaZulu Bantustan, Buthelezi has been part of the state apparatus ever since he was installed in the 1950s. He has always tried to turn aside criticism of his role by claiming that his position is hereditary. An official blurb circulated on his behalf earlier this year stated:

"He traces his ancestry back to the founding fathers of the Zulu nation and through his mother is descended from a long line of illustrious Zulu kings. The male line of succession in the Buthelezi clan traditionally provided successive Zulu kings with Advisers, Generals and Prime Ministers. When therefore the South African Government imposed so-called homeland administrative machinery on the Zulu people, they turned to Chief Buthelezi to lead them into opposition to it".

Buthelezi's hereditary claims are not undisputed, but that aside, the Zulu people might well ask what Buthelezi has ever done to oppose the homeland administrative machinery. True, he has not moved for so-called "independence" and this has helped to reduce the credibility of the TVBC sell-outs. To have done otherwise would have totally ruined his own credibility. But for the rest he has sat there in the KwaZulu seat of power like a fat cat licking up the cream and has done precisely nothing to lead his people in opposition to apartheid except make endless speeches and decline one lunch invitation from President Botha. There was another Zulu leader in the 1950s who faced the same challenge as Buthelezi — Chief Albert Lutuli; but he resigned his chieftainship rather than compromise with apartheid. At the time of the Defiance Campaign Chief Lutuli was presented with an

ultimatum by Native Affairs secretary Dr Eiselen: resign from the ANC or from your chieftainship. Lutuli refused to do either, and was promptly sacked by the government. In a public statement explaining his decision, Chief Lutuli said:

"Laws and conditions that tend to debase human personality ...must be relentlessly opposed in the spirit of defiance shown by St Peter when he said to the rulers of his day: 'Shall we obey God or man?' No one can deny that in so far as Non-Whites are concerned in the Union of South Africa, laws and conditions that debase human personality abound. Any Chief worthy of his position must fight fearlessly against such debasing conditions and laws."

Chief Lutuli fought against the apartheid laws not merely by speaking but by leading his people in action against them. He was elevated to the Presidency of the African National Congress and ultimately became a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, honoured by progressive humanity the world over. At the outset of his career Buthelezi had the potential to be a part of the mass democratic movement. Instead he chose the path of compromise which has led step by step towards the position he now occupies of voluntary collaboration with the apartheid regime.

Opposition to ANC

In his speeches at home and abroad Buthelezi directs most of his venom against what he describes as "the ANC Mission in Exile", which he accuses of following a policy of confrontation and violence which will lead only to pointless bloodshed and chaos. A briefing paper issued by Inkatha last April declared that the organisation preferred the path of negotiation.

"It (Inkatha) does not reject participatory opposition to apartheid and it believes that as an institutionalised force it will better be able to mobilise people to utilise their consumer power and their power as workers than it would be if it adopted a non-participatory protest confrontationist position".

So Buthelezi thinks, he can oppose apartheid better from within the Bantustan structures. Well, what has he done in practice? What non-violent passive resistance campaign has he ever sponsored? What strike has he called to bring about an improvement in workers' pay and conditions, or to protest against any aspect of apartheid?

Buthelezi claims to be against violence, and to be a supporter of the strategy and tactics of passive resistance. In a speech in France on April 28 he said: "I insist that non-violent tactics and strategies and the politics of negotiation will win the day".

What has he won? What single concession has he been able to extract from the apartheid regime? In what way have the Zulu people, apart from the

handful of place-seekers who surround him, benefitted from his operations? Why was it that in the Defiance Campaign — the biggest non-violent campaign of resistance against the apartheid laws ever staged in South Africa — Buthelezi was nowhere to be found?

Buthelezi claims that Inkatha has 1.5 million card-carrying members and is "the largest political organisation ever to have been formed in South Africa". He describes the Inkatha-dominated KwaZulu Legislative Assembly as a "militant instrument of liberation". But again, what are the facts?

Compulsion and Coercion

Africans living in KwaZulu are driven to take out Inkatha membership as a form of insurance. A report published in the *Guardian* newspaper in London on September 19 last year stated:

"Chief Mangosuthu's organisation, Inkatha, does not represent even a majority of Zulus and relies heavily on violence to maintain its power... Candidates wishing to stand for election to either central or local government in KwaZulu must be members of Inkatha whose members staff the bureaucracy of KwaZulu which controls the rural areas of Natal as well as the vast urban townships of Umlazi, Kwamashu, and parts of Inanda.

"Traders find it almost impossible to get licences without an Inkatha membership card; pensioners say the card is needed to collect their allowance; migrant workers say it is difficult to get a job without a card; teachers and school inspectors all have to be members of Inkatha, as are schoolchildren by virtue of paying school fees."

The power of Inkatha has never been used to mobilise the people in any campaign of opposition to apartheid, but has been directed again and again against the ANC, South African Congress of Trade Unions, the United Democratic Front and any other organisation which has tried to challenge the apartheid regime through direct action. The *Guardian* article continued:

"Inkatha intervened to pre-empt the development of mass organised action against apartheid. In trying to assert its control in the townships and in Natal as a whole, Inkatha was prepared to unleash its vast repressive machinery against those who stood in its way. Between August 8 and 11, hundreds of stick-wielding amabutho (warriors) poured into the Durban townships and marched up and down the streets 'weeding out trouble-makers'. Those who refused to take part in an Inkatha-organised march were beaten up".

The church also came under attack, and an Inkatha Central Committee member was quoted as threatening: "The next move is to close down those churches which are nests of rival organisations".

The ferocious methods used by the amabutho vigilantes, which have resulted in death and injury to scores of UDF activists and their families, have

not won popularity for Inkatha. Public opinion surveys carried out in Natal have shown that support for the leadership of the ANC far exceeds that for Inkatha.

Police Forces

Buthelezi has evidently come to believe that his credibility as a leader depends on the elimination of his rivals from the political scene and he has long been calling for the KwaZulu police to be given power in the Natal African townships. Last year three police stations at Nongoma, Hlabisa and Ntambanana were handed over to the KwaZulu police. And now the huge Durban townships have been placed in Buthelezi's hands as KwaZulu minister of police.

Buthelezi has justified his co-operation with the regime by claiming that the maintenance of "law and order" is essential if the politics of negotiation is to succeed. Using the terminology of the regime, he accuses the ANC of engaging in "black on black" violence, and calls for black unity as an essential precondition for peaceful negotiation with the government.

Buthelezi has been conducting his politics of negotiation since the 1950s and he himself admits he has nothing to show for it. In a recent letter to a number of white political, commercial and industrial leaders in South Africa, he asks them to use their influence to help him vindicate his choice of the strategy of negotiation, warning that *he could not stand before his people empty-handed much longer*.

He has been prepared to make many concessions in the hope of winning concessions from the regime, so far without success. While claiming that Inkatha "is founded on the widely accepted Black political perceptions and principles first enunciated by the founding fathers of the African National Congress in 1912 and as they have been updated by Black political experience since then", he has abandoned one after the other the basic policies of the ANC.

He is no longer prepared to fight for universal suffrage. In an address to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly in May 1985, he said:

"If violent confrontation is to be avoided, we must recognise that we will fail to do so if we insist on one-man-one-vote in a unitary state. No matter how deeply I cherish this ideal, I know that at this point in our history whites will be driven to grave acts of desperation if we tried to ram this solution down their throats".

Likewise Buthelezi has stated that while a unitary state with a one-man-one-vote franchise system is the ideal, Inkatha

"recognises that if violence of tragic levels is to be avoided, Blacks must be prepared to negotiate the future around acceptable compromises. Inkatha is therefore

prepared to look at federal solutions, amongst others". (Inkatha Briefing Notes 1987.)

Having abandoned the two key principles which have been the basis of ANC and liberation politics throughout this century, universal suffrage in a unitary state, Buthelezi has had little difficulty abandoning others. He rejects armed struggle. He rejects economic sanctions. And he attacks all those who have stood firm by traditional ANC policies and tries to drive them off the Natal political stage.

Praise For Capitalism

While the Freedom Charter calls for the national wealth of the country to be restored to the people and monopoly industry to be transferred to the ownership of the people, Buthelezi woos the bosses by proclaiming the virtues of capitalism and trying to cripple COSATU. In a speech in France last April Buthelezi appealed for support from the Western countries, proclaiming himself their obedient servant.

"Western governments must now begin to stand up to be counted as Governments which are prepared to put their names to supporting the organisations in South Africa which work through non-violent democratic means to bring about a final outcome which the West would applaud".

And for good measure he went in for a modicum of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism to persuade his audience of his bona fides.

"They (Western governments) must move to counteract the Soviet Union and its Allies who put their names very boldly and publicly to the support of the ANC's Mission in Exile and those organisations in South Africa who work for their supremacy".

No wonder President Botha considers Buthelezi a fit and proper person to be entrusted with the administration of the apartheid laws in Durban's townships. For it will be Buthelezi's job now to see that the rents are collected, bus boycotts broken, strikes smashed, agitators rounded up and carted off to jail. Buthelezi is now pledged to work side by side with Botha's military and police in "maintaining law and order" and eradicating "violence and the politics of intimidation". Already in July it was reported that South African and KwaZulu police had joined forces in a "massive airborne crime prevention operation in the Umbumbulu area outside Durban". (*Citizen* 7.7.87) No doubt there have been other joint operations since then.

But the people know the source of violence in South Africa. It comes from the regime, which deprives the black majority of the franchise and places one discriminatory law after the other on the statute book. And now Buthelezi is helping the regime in the administration of those laws. He says it is merely a

matter of "law and order". Yes, apartheid law and apartheid order, with Buthelezi part of the system, one of the subordinates of Law and Order Minister Vlok.

We hope we will hear no more of Buthelezi's claims to be leading the struggle for national liberation in South Africa. In the eyes of the people he is nothing more than a collaborator.

A 70th birthday tribute to President Tambo
from one of the Soweto generation

HOW THE ANC WAS REVIVED BY THE YOUTH LEAGUE

By Comrade Mzala

"Eppur si muove." This naive and almost childish phrase nearly cost Galileo his head during the Dark Ages. How could he dare say that the earth moved around the sun when everyone in the world, including the Church, maintained that it was a four-cornered object stationed in a fixed position? The tendency to resist new ideas and change does not belong only to ancient times. Even today, those with a disposition to challenge established views in any sphere of human endeavour have to stand up against the resistance of the forces of conservatism, stagnation and routinism. And there seems to be nothing as difficult as changing an old establishment which prides itself on the fact that it is old. Yet there are moments when history demands 'glasnost' or openness — bringing everything into the open, hiding nothing, no matter how painful, so as to overcome inertia and stimulate the extraordinary potential of the people to renovate their organisation and life. From Galileo to

Gorbachov, every victory of human reason, even the most inoffensive one, has been achieved by the bold assertion of progressive ideas, whether or not the innovators' heads may be chopped. Precisely when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

It was in this spirit that a young generation of Africans came to the fore in the mid-1940s and demanded the transformation of the African National Congress. By introducing a critical dimension, they provided the movement not only with new political insights but also set unprecedented strategic perspectives for that period. Like their predecessors, they considered the ANC to be the principal vehicle for all liberation efforts; but unlike them, they were impatient with the ritual employment of tactics such as deputations, passing of endless resolutions and the holding of annual conferences. They insisted that it was time for a change, that the ANC should rely on mass political action as the prime arena for the promotion of its strategic and tactical initiatives. Without the establishment of such new channels for political expression, relying on the masses of the people as the true makers of history, the ANC would mark time and, perhaps, only continue to bask in the glory of its fame but without taking a single practical step towards the achievement of majority rule.

As they expected, the immediate attitude of the old leadership in the ANC was to regard them as a product of youthful inexperience and brashness. One such leader, for example, was A.W.G. Champion, who adopted a very negative attitude to the youth, seeing them as undermining the leadership of the ANC. At one ANC conference, he publicly warned Dr Alfred Bitini Xuma that his association with the youth would bring about his downfall from the ANC presidency.

The experience of the youth in the 1940s seems to confirm the view that fear of youth is the beginning of conservatism. On the other hand, it also shows that only that part of the youth which has cast away all timidity, broken out of the egg-shell, and is ready to assert itself independently as part and parcel of the ANC is destined for an immortal place in the history of the liberation struggle.

Formation Of The Youth League

It was with this understanding that Oliver Tambo and a small group of extraordinarily dedicated young men in their mid-twenties and early thirties resolved to constitute themselves as a pressure group within the ANC and press for changes in the direction that was needed. Early in 1942 they began caucusing with some ANC leaders who were receptive to their ideas calling

for the broadening of the organisation's structures to accommodate a Youth League. These took the issue up in the ANC meetings and indeed a decision was taken that "this Annual Conference of the African National Congress authorises the Executive to institute a Youth League of the African National Congress to include students at Fort Hare" (Resolution 29 of the 1942 Annual Conference). Like most resolutions of the ANC in those days, however, this one also remained only on paper and there was no follow up.

The following year, 1943, Oliver Tambo and Congress Mbatha, both teachers at St. Peter's (Episcopal) Secondary School in Rosettenville, Johannesburg, mobilised support among the youth for the candidacy of Self Mampuru for the presidency of the ANC in the Transvaal. The two first held discussions with Mampuru and afterwards brought together a group of about eight or ten where the idea of establishing an ANC Youth League was discussed and endorsed. The second meeting was convened in October 1943 at the Domestic and Cultural Workers' Club in Diagonal Street, Johannesburg, where the Congress Youth League Manifesto was first drafted. This meeting also discussed the idea in view of the oncoming ANC annual conference in Bloemfontein, and agreed that every opportunity be utilised to get the senior ANC to implement the decision of the previous conference.

A deputation of the nascent youth organisation visited Dr Xuma at his home in Sophiatown. In the delegation were Oliver Tambo, Anton Lembede, Walter Sisulu, A.P. (Ashby Peter) Mda and Congress Mbatha. They reviewed with him their draft manifesto and constitution. Although Dr Xuma expressed his concern about their criticism of the ANC leadership, he was broadminded enough to appreciate that this was not destructive criticism coming from enemies of the movement, but rather positive proposals from young people who were sincerely concerned about giving new life and vigour to the organisation. The founders of the Youth League never considered themselves as a splinter group, and neither were their critical concerns and outspokenness about conservatism in the ANC motivated by vanity and petty opportunism. They wanted to provide a reinforcing layer to the movement so that it could realise its full potential.

After the Youth Leaguers had mobilised sufficient numbers of young people to make the formation of a national organisation constitutionally meaningful, the inaugural meeting was convened on the Easter Sunday of April 1944 at the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Eloff Street Extension, Johannesburg. Almost all of its prominent leaders, with the exception of Walter Sisulu (who left school at Standard IV and started working, first as a

dairy labourer and later as a gold miner), had either completed matric or had been to university. The majority of them were former students of St. Peter's, Lovedale, Healdtown or Adams (Amanzimtoti).

Some of those who had been to Fort Hare had been expelled for their political activities. One of them was Oliver Tambo who was expelled from Fort Hare in 1942. A brilliant student, Tambo had completed his matric with a first class pass in 1938, setting an academic record by obtaining the best results in the whole of the Transvaal, black and white students considered together. This distinction earned him a scholarship to Fort Hare from the Transkei Bunga. He graduated in 1941 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and Physics and remained at the university to do a diploma in Education, but hardly a year later was expelled. Tambo was elected by the Youth League to be its first national secretary. He and Anton Muziwakhe Lembede, who became the first President of the Youth League, were entrusted with the most senior posts in the new organisation.

Lembede, considered by many to be the most daring thinker and dynamic personality of that generation of young leaders, died in 1947 at the age of 33 after obtaining B.A., LL.B., and M.A. degrees. At the time of his death he was working for a doctorate in law and was able to speak seven languages fluently, including German and Dutch. By 1946 he had been elected to the National Executive Committee of the ANC. He and Tambo formed a dynamic partnership, guiding the youth of the time as organised within the Congress movement.

Adventurists Or Visionaries?

To fully understand the historical context in which the demands of the Youth League were made, one must understand both the political situation in South Africa (and the world) at the time as well as the state of organisation within the ANC.

On the 4 September 1939, the South African white Parliament voted 80 to 67 to enter the Second World War on the side of the Allied Forces. General Smuts ousted Hertzog to become Prime Minister, with the "liberal" Jan H. Hofmeyr as his deputy. The government recruited Africans for service with the promise that a new deal for them was forthcoming. Quoting from the Atlantic Charter, a document produced by Churchill and Roosevelt in 1941, General Smuts told the South African Institute of Race Relations in that same year that "isolation has gone and I am afraid segregation has fallen on evil days too." He went further to declare that for South Africa the Atlantic

Charter should mean "for all, improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security." By this rhetoric, he left open a door of expectation that the conditions of the black people might change in South Africa. Inspired by this mood, Dr Xuma also called on the Africans to draw up their own Atlantic Charter. "The world should know our hopes and our despairs directly from us," he said.

Because of the huge demand for cheap labour in the industries brought about by war conditions, tens of thousands of African people flocked to the cities seeking employment, particularly in Johannesburg. Overcrowding and congestion forced thousands of people in areas like Pimville and Alexandra to squat on vacant space in the townships. Poverty and distress increased, and wages were far below the breadline. Meanwhile the police increased their harassment of pass law offenders, raiding slums and townships in the early hours of the morning during which they arrested hundreds of people each day. With frustrations building up among the people, a series of strikes took place on the Reef and in Natal, and there were many clashes between Africans and the police.

The ANC of those days was a loosely bound political organisation in a nearly moribund state. The Youth League referred to it as "an organisation of the privileged few . . . professionals, small traders, a sprinkling of intellectuals and conservatives of all grades." (Youth League Manifesto). Such a movement was bound to be out of touch with the needs of the masses of the people who were already responding, independently of their organisation, to the combustible situation. In December 1940, when Dr Xuma was elected ANC president, only 41 delegates had turned up at the annual conference; 21 of them voted for Dr Xuma and the remaining 20 for Rev. Z.R. Mahabane. When he became president, Dr Xuma found the organisation without a treasury. In an attempt to revive the ANC he appealed mostly to intellectuals and "graduates" but gradually a tightly functioning and centralised national organisation emerged. He built its treasury on the basis of a strict membership fee. Branches and provinces which misconducted their affairs, whether organisationally or financially, soon found themselves having to reckon with presidential authority hitherto unknown. This strict administration greatly improved the standard of financial accounting.

New Constitution

Gone were the days of annual conferences with no organisational activity between them; Dr Xuma initiated the drafting of a new constitution for the

ANC which made provision for a year-round organisation, with a working committee composed of "persons living within fifty miles of national headquarters" meeting almost weekly. Membership increased. Whereas in 1939 there only 4,000 members of the ANC, by 1945 the Orange Free State alone had 4,176 registered and dues-paying members.

Also playing a leading role in this build-up of the ANC were leading members of the Communist Party, who sat side by side with non-Communists in the Special Committee that drafted the main policy document of the ANC at that time, the African Claims (which was the African version of the Atlantic Charter in the South African context). Members of this committee included Moses Kotane, Gana Makabeni, Rev. Z.R. Mahabane, R.G. Baloyi, Z.K. Matthews, Dr J.S. Moroka, Govan Mbeki, Edwin Mofutsanyana, Dr Pixley Seme, Rev. James Calata and others. The drafting of the constitution also received the assistance of Bram Fischer, an advocate and leading member of the Communist Party.

However, in spite of these and many other achievements of the Xuma period, the ANC was not yet a mass organisation; the weaknesses in its organisation made it unable to advance the national cause in a manner commensurate with the demands of the times. Moreover, Dr Xuma himself was temperamentally averse to mass activity and street demonstrations, preferring to resolve all political questions in committee meetings.

The first clear-cut change of direction, in terms of organisational and leadership quality, that was to be made in that period was given by the 1946 mine workers' strike. More than 70,000 mine workers went on strike in response to the call of the African Mine Workers' Union, which was led by John B. Marks, a long-standing leader of the Communist Party and also of the ANC. The 1946 strike, perhaps more than any other political event during that decade, marked the transition in the liberation movement from old to new tactics of struggle, from old to new style of leadership. While the debates raged within the ANC and the Youth League, the working class showed the way with practical action. This development also triggered the government's systematic campaign to harass the leaders of the Communist Party, a harassment that culminated in the outlawing of the Party by the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950.

Oliver Tambo was among the first in the Youth League to be elected to the provincial executive committee of the ANC during that year. Greatly inspired by the mine workers' strike and the possibility of historic mass action, he moved the first motion at the ANC annual conference in 1947 calling for the total boycott of all government structures, particularly the

Native Representative Council. Speaking to his motion, he made reference to the impotence of the NRC which he said was clearly unable to make a meaningful intervention during the 1946 mine workers' strike. The government had ignored all the recommendations of the NRC with regard to this strike, and this had led to its indefinite adjournment. Tambo's motion was defeated by 57 votes to 7, the conference deciding that ANC members should continue to be active in the NRC. It is possible that some people in the old generation still clung to the hope expressed by General Smuts that the NRC might eventually develop to be an African parliament. If such hopes did actually exist, they were dashed the following year by the victory in the May elections of Dr Daniel F. Malan's National Party.

For the Youth League, the policies of the National Party, which denied that the African people were a single national group with national spokespersons, served as a further challenge to advance their ideological creed of African Nationalism. Were not these Nationalists, they asked, the same fascists who in Germany and Italy had attacked independent nations during World War II, including an independent African nation of Ethiopians, in order to impose colonial domination? Was South Africa not suddenly under the political direction of the very same forces which, during this War, had openly supported Hitler through such organisations as the Ossewabrandwag and the so-called New Order under Pirow? Was the new Minister of Native Affairs not the same Verwoerd whom the judgement of the Transvaal Supreme Court of the 13 July, 1943, had branded as editor of a newspaper which was a "tool of pro-Hitler activities"? If so, then the new situation needed new initiatives embodied in militant action of the people whose spirit of assertiveness would be channeled in the ideology of African nationalism.

Ideological Standpoint

Karl Marx once wrote in *The Contribution to the Critique Of Political Economy* that mankind inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation.

The Manifesto of the Youth League, issued in March 1944, said that the contact of the white race with the blacks had resulted in the emergence of conflicting living conditions and outlooks on life which seriously hampered South Africa's progress to single nationhood. The whites, possessing superior military strength, had arrogated to themselves the ownership of the

land and invested themselves with authority and the right to regard South Africa as a white person's country. They regarded as their destiny the task of "civilising" the Africans, thus making themselves trustees of the African people. Yet the effects of this Trusteeship alone had made the African people realise what Trusteeship actually meant, namely, the consolidation of the whites as rulers of the country who enjoy all the wealth of South Africa. This meant that the Africans, who owned the land before the advent of the whites, had been deprived of all security which could guarantee them an independent pursuit of their destiny to ensure their leading a free life. Although Africans had been defeated in the field of battle, this did not mean that they had to be oppressed. The Africans therefore demanded the right to be free citizens in the South African democracy. Civilisation was a common heritage of all mankind, and Africans claimed a full and legitimate right to make their contribution to its advancement so that they could live freely as white South Africans did.

The Youth League saw itself as "the brains-trust and power station of the spirit of African nationalism; the spirit of self-determination." It believed that the national liberation of Africans would be achieved by Africans themselves. For this reason, it was suspicious of any co-operation with other racial groups, be it white or Indian. In a letter to Ruth First (who was then secretary of the Progressive Youth Council) on 16 March 1945, Anton Lembede declined her invitation to the Youth League to affiliate to her Council because "co-operation at the present juncture or stage is premature. It can only result in chaos, ineffective action and mutual jealousies, rivalry and suspicion." In an article contributed to *Inkundla Ya Bantu* of May 1946, in which he elaborated on the policy of the Youth League, Lembede argued that

"no foreigner can ever be a true and genuine leader of the African people because no foreigner can ever truly and genuinely interpret the African spirit which is unique and peculiar to Africans only. Some foreigners Asiatic or European who pose as African leaders must be categorically denounced and rejected. An African must lead Africans . . . Non-European unity is a fantastic dream which has no foundation in reality."

Lembede's declarations, however, were ignoring the very reality of 1946, when for the first time in the history of South Africa since the time of Gandhi, the Indian Congresses in both Natal and the Transvaal, under a new militant leadership, embarked on a passive resistance campaign. As history was later to teach the members of the Youth League, these were the militant tactics they were demanding should be adopted by the ANC itself. Was the correct political position to join or dismiss this mass Indian movement? The senior

ANC was the first to recognise the Indian efforts when in March 1947, Dr Xuma signed a "Joint Declaration of Co-operation" with the Indian leaders, Dr Yusuf Dadoo and Dr G.M. Naicker, the so-called "Dadoo-Naicker-Xuma Pact". This declaration expressed its sincere conviction that for the future progress, goodwill, good relations, and for the building of a united and free South Africa, "full franchise rights must be extended to all sections of the South African people, and to this end we pledge the fullest co-operation between the African and Indian peoples in the struggle for liberation . . . it is urgently necessary that a vigorous campaign be immediately launched and that every effort be made to compel the Union government to implement the United Nations decisions and to treat the Non-White peoples in South Africa in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter."

Looking To The Past

Lembede's shortcomings at that time (and to a certain extent they can be attributed to the whole Youth League since he was one of its leading spokespersons) were inevitable in so far as his political philosophy was based on the belief that the African future should be sought in the past. That is how he phrased his article published by *Inyaniso* in February 1945, in which he argued that "we must retain and preserve the belief in the immortality of our ancestors." According to him, since the ethical system of our forefathers was based on ancestor worship and people refrained from doing certain things for fear of punishment by the spirits of dead ancestors, no wonder the "decline and decay of morals were brought about by the decay and decline of society . . . It is only African Nationalism or Africanism that can save the African people."

While there is nothing wrong with the assertion of the nationalism of the oppressed as long as it does not exclude unity and even organisational co-operation and integration with other racial groups, to argue for the inclusion of the spirits of dead ancestors in a serious political programme cannot be regarded as forward looking. Fortunately the members of the Youth League did not remain static in their ideological position, but through experience of struggle came to recognise that in the two streams of nationalism, the narrow version of exclusivism is reactionary, and the broader version that accommodates and builds up on the basis of all the nationalities for the creation of a single South African nation, is progressive.

By 1949, Oliver Tambo, already a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC as well as the vice-president of the Youth League, had moved away from the narrow version of nationalism, and was in an ANC

delegation that met with, and signed a joint declaration of co-operation with, the Indian Congress after the tragic events in Durban when Africans and Indians fought each other and many were killed.

Nelson Mandela was able to say in his evidence during the Treason Trial of 1956-1960 that the Youth League found much inspiration in co-operation with the Indian Congress which helped generate, like the mine workers' strike in 1946, the ideas which were incorporated in the Programme of Action adopted by the ANC in 1949. The Programme of Action was originally drafted by Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, James Njongwe, David Bopape and A.P. Mda. Four people were commissioned to prepare its final draft, namely, Prof. Z.K. Matthews, Moses Kotane, Oliver Tambo and Selby Msimang, and on 17 October 1949 it was adopted as the basic policy document of the ANC.

Attitude to the Communists

At the beginning the Youth League failed to appreciate the role of the Communists in the South African liberation struggle. Anton Lembede in 1945, with the support of Tambo and Mandela, once attempted to move a resolution in an ANC conference to have the communists expelled as members. Much to their surprise, the whole conference defended the Communists and insisted on their right to be ANC members as well as be in the leadership. This was an eye-opener to all of them. Later they came to experience through working with the Communists that their relationship with the ANC was not an opportunistic one. They were not out to capture the leadership of the ANC, but to contribute everything, including if necessary their lives, to the cause of national liberation. It is on this solid historical rock that the relationship of the ANC and the Communist Party is founded.

Oliver Tambo was among the first group of Youth Leaguers to develop respect for and recognition of the role of the Communists in the South African liberation struggle. This did not necessarily come about through the reading of Marxist classics or Communist literature — it was the product of experience and an honest disposition, which enabled him to broaden his outlook and grasp the significance of all the major streams that have contributed to the present greatness of the ANC. With Tambo this ability can also be traced to his own character. Unlike many of his colleagues in the Youth League who fell by the wayside, Tambo never regarded his entry into politics lightly. To him the struggle for liberation was a cause worth a life's commitment. He has been re-elected into the National Executive Committee of the ANC uninterruptedly ever since 1949. Even at the height of

the youth 'rebellion' he was trusted by the old and young generation alike for his level-headedness and principled approach to life.

Early Childhood and Upbringing

A leader's personality is formed not only during meetings and conferences but also in early childhood and upbringing.

Oliver Reginald Tambo was born at Enkantswini village in the Bizana district of eastern Pondoland on 27 October, 1917. His parents were Frederick and Julia Tambo, peasant farmers who later became Christians. His father had three wives, and his mother was the second. His mother had two children — Oliver himself and his sister Lydia. The first wife of his father gave birth to two brothers, Willie and Allen, and the last wife had two girls, Getty and Constance. Another seventh child in the family who grew up with the other children, Isaac (popularly called Japan in the family), was Oliver's cousin.

To inculcate a sense of responsibility among his children, Frederick Tambo allotted to each, boys and girls alike, plots in his orchard, where they were each responsible for the management and maintenance of their individual plots. The same was done with the fowl-run: each child had to see to the feeding, provision of water, cleanliness and the general health of his or her allocation of fowls. This method of organisation in the family not only developed a sense of self-reliance but also taught them administration and management at a very young age. In addition, Oliver was a shepherd like the other boys in the village. He also enjoyed riding horses so much that when the village chief went on his administrative trips among the villagers, he would take Oliver along as part of his entourage on horseback.

Every day Oliver walked a long distance to school at Ludeke, where he completed his primary education with a first class pass in Standard VI.

When he finished his primary school, his father announced that he no longer had the money to give him further secondary education. For this reason, he repeated Standard VI merely to keep busy. At the end of the year he passed again, but the following year his father's financial condition had not improved and this meant doing standard VI for the third time, which he did. However during his third term, he found the exercise so boring, because there was nothing he did not know in the syllabus, that he started to play truant. He would leave home normally, taking his lunch along, but would go off to join the shepherds and herdboys in the hills and share his prepared lunch with them.

This went on until one local villager, Thomas Mabude, who was a worker at the Holy Cross Mission near Flagstaff, came to Tambo's home and said that the missionaries at his place of work were looking for children whose parents had no money to pay for them, and they would take them for schooling at Holy Cross. His father promised to take Oliver there at once, but seemingly delayed, with Oliver continually asking him about the actual day when they would leave. The old man told him not to hurry as they would go the following week.

At that time Oliver Tambo's world was only within the boundaries of Enkantswini-Bizana-Ludeke and no further. The only time he had intimated any desire to leave this environment was when his father one day beat him unfairly for something he had not done. Oliver was so hurt that he vowed that if his father ever again beat him, whatever the cause might be, he would leave for Natal and join the other men from his village who worked in the sugar-cane plantations, or else get employment as a kitchen labourer in Durban. This occasion never arose, however, because his father eventually took him and his brother Allen to Holy Cross.

To their amazement, the priests at the Mission said they were unaware of any intention to take children whose parents had no money. Determined not to go back to Enkantswini but to find a place for studying, Oliver and Allen busied themselves by being helpful in whatever manual work was done on the premises. Impressed by their industriousness, the teachers admitted them as students.

Like other newcomers, Tambo was challenged to a stick fight by one of the older boys at the school. The fellow was so huge and fit that Tambo could not imagine himself fighting a duel with him; besides, he detested violence with his whole heart. But since the fight had been provoked, he fought him for hours on end, from morning until almost noon by which time their sticks had been broken into fine twigs. Neither of them would give up. As a result of that fight, this student developed such respect for Oliver Tambo that thirty years later when he learnt from the newspapers that Tambo had left the country to represent the ANC abroad, he appeared at Tambo's home and told his wife, Adelaide: "I know your husband. I was with him at Holy Cross about thirty years ago when we had a stick fight. Since that day I have admired your husband's determination and will-power; and when I read in the press that he had left the country, I decided to come to you and give you money for his children. Every end of the month I shall bring money for Tambo's children." Indeed, every month-end this man brought money until the whole family went into exile.

Oliver Tambo is fascinated by difficult tasks because for him an easy route is not challenging and, after all, it might be a wrong route. That was the reason he decided to do mathematics and physics at university, because everyone else seemed to go for a B.A. When he became a teacher at St. Peter's, he was attracted to music, which he studied and mastered, becoming a composer and conductor of the school choir. His love of music has stayed with him throughout his life. During the Treason Trial after the adoption of the Freedom Charter, it was Oliver Tambo and Vuyisile Mini in prison who organised a choir among the prisoners. Such is his optimism about life and the struggle; even under prison conditions there must be time for a song.

Tambo's desire was to be a medical doctor, but after his expulsion from Fort Hare, his keen interest in the natural sciences was overshadowed by a growing concern with the liberation of the black people in South Africa.

I have met Oliver Tambo on many occasions mostly in a formal way as president of the ANC. There have been occasions, however, when I met him informally, as Tambo the man, like on Sunday, 12 July, 1985 when we came back from the Second National Consultative Conference. That was one of the happiest moments in his life. We sat for hours discussing the Conference and other related issues. He was not in his suit and tie on that day, but in his gym attire, for he insists on doing his exercises. As a member of the Soweto generation, I draw confidence from the fact that the Tambo of the Youth League still maintains constant touch with the youth of today, gauging his own standpoint against theirs.

BICENTENARY OF SHAKA'S BIRTH

'BAYETE NKALAKATA! uSHAKA KA SENZANGAKHONA'¹

By Thando Zuma

The mere mention of uShaka scares many people. Why should this be so? In a country such as ours, where the propaganda of the ruling class reduces African history to insignificance and ridicule, where African warriors and heroes/heroines have been equated to savages, where to be 'civilised' may mean rejection of one's history, it is not surprising that in the history books of apartheid education Shaka is equated with horror.

At the same time, romantic/bourgeois historians² have also distorted our past for the sake of publishing sensational books and making commercial films. Historians like "naval officer" Donald Morris (1966) cannot possibly conceive of an African political philosopher such as Dingiswayo without giving credit to some 'Dr' Robert Cowan who is supposed to have influenced Dingiswayo along the lines of European civilisation so that "his rule was liberal, enlightened and altruistic". (Morris, 1966, p42.) According to the ruling class South African history is the history of the "civilising mission" of colonialism. Thus South African history only begins "in earnest" in 1952 with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck. All other developments prior to the imperialist occupation of our country are dismissed as the fumbling of 'barbarians who would have exterminated themselves' had the civilizing agents not come.

South African history is standing on its head. It must be made to stand on its feet by all democratic and revolutionary forces.

Last year (1986) marked the bicentenary of the birth of that remarkable warrior and diplomat, Moshweshwe, who was born in 1786. This year marks the bicentenary of the birth of King Shaka, the fearless, original, creative and great warrior-general who was born in 1787 to Nandi of eLangeni. He was the son of Senzangakhona, one of the chiefs of the clans which lived in and around the 'white Umfolozi' river outside the domain of the larger Mthethwa clan.

Legend has it that one of the Nguni chiefs, Malandela, was succeeded as chief by his son Zulu³ after whom the clan acquired the name of Amazulu (Zulus). Senzangakhona was the fifth chief in the lineage to become chief of the Zulus after Chief Zulu. It was this Senzangakhona who, during the ritual of 'ukuhlobonga'⁴, made Nandi of the eLangeni neighbouring clan pregnant. In traditional cultural terms of the time, pregnancy should not occur during 'ukuhlobonga'. In the event, the eLangeni brought Nandi to Senzangakhona and demanded that he marry her. But the elders of the Zulu clan are alleged to have rejected the pregnancy charge. Mudli, who was an uncle of Senzangakhona, told them that it was "impossible... [and to] go back home and inform them the girl is harbouring iShaka". (Ritter, 1955, p16.) When Nandi eventually gave birth to a son, it was difficult for Senzangakhona to refuse responsibility and he eventually agreed to let Nandi become one of his three wives.

Almost Refugees

Senzangakhona was never committed to Nandi and Shaka. A quarrel in Senzangakhona's family involving Shaka led to Nandi and son being sent back to eLangeni. Their return coincided with the 1802 famine which in turn forced Nandi and her children to leave eLangeni again. This time they eventually settled in Kwa-Mthethwa. The Mthethwa clan was situated in and around the area where the tributaries of the Umfolozi met (i.e. the so-called black and white Umfolozi) and extending to the coast where the Umfolozi joins the Indian Ocean. The chief of the Mthethwa was Jobe the father of Tana and Godongwana (later to change his name to Dingiswayo).

After Jobe's death, Dingiswayo returned from his exile⁵ amongst the AmaHlubi and became chief of the Mthethwa around 1809. By this time Shaka was twenty-two years old and had already proven himself a brave young man. At thirteen years of age he had "...attacked and killed a mamba which had bitten and killed the prize bull of the cattle that he was herding".

(Ritter, p18.) At nineteen he had done the unthinkable: alone he attacked and killed a leopard with a spear, shield and club. For this brave act, Shaka was given a cow. (Ritter, pp22-23.) Dingiswayo incorporated Shaka into the Izicwe regiment. It was while in this regiment that Shaka proved himself a great up-and-coming young warrior.

Dingiswayo was an interesting chief: kind hearted, brave, political thinker, organiser. Soon after becoming chief to the Mthethwa, he set out to bring into his political domain all the neighbouring small clans. Firstly he built a very strong army and used it to conquer and incorporate defeated clans into the Mthethwa domain. Secondly Dingiswayo used his power and diplomacy to persuade neighbouring clans to fall under his authority for their own political security and economic interests. Thus war and persuasion were used to exact a *Pax Mthethwa*. (Ritter, p25.)

According to the historian Leonard Thompson, though Dingiswayo's battles were bloody, depending on the enemy's resistance, he "...did not annihilate the enemy. He spared women and children, and he often allowed the ruling family to remain in power, provided he could find a member who was loyal". (Thompson and Wilson, 1982 ed, p341.) Dingiswayo's political influence had so grown that by the time he died in 1818, the area under his domain "...extended... from the Umfolozi in the North to the Tugela in the South. In the North there had been little expansion, because Zwide, the Ndwandwe chief, had been building up a confederacy along similar lines across the Umfolozi". (Thompson and Wilson, p342.)

Fearless, swift and deadly Shaka distinguished himself as a dominant warrior amongst his Izicwe. He was a military genius and innovator, "...abandoning traditional fighting methods, Shaka used a throwing spear as a stabbing weapon, closing in with the enemy instead of standing off from him. Finding that his sandals hampered him, he discarded them which gave him superior speed. Parrying his opponent's thrown (spear) with his shield, he would charge forward, hook the enemy's shield aside with his own, and stab to death with the...warcry of *Nqadla!*"⁶ (Ritter, p25.)

Shaka went further. He developed the "...massive bladed (spear) with a stout, short handle. This would mean fighting at close quarters, with deadly physical and psychological effects." (Ritter, p25.) It was this combination of Mthethwa/Zulu bravery and the ferocity of their new weapon that made Shaka's warriors the most feared of their time. The bravery, wit and military talent that Shaka possessed did not go unnoticed by Dingiswayo. Shaka was promoted to the head of his regiment.

Dingiswayo and Shaka never had any serious squabble. Shaka was very loyal to Dingiswayo but he saw Dingiswayo's kindheartedness as a weakness. He once argued that the practice of conquering a clan, subjugating it only to the political domain of the Mthethwa and leaving the defeated chief ruling was a mistake. He argued that "one must strike an enemy once and for all. Let him cease to exist as a tribe or he will live to fly at your throat again". (Ritter, p49.) Accordingly he advocated *impi embovu*⁷ as the best strategy to conquer and bring under complete political rule all neighbouring clans who had dared to put up a fight against the Mthethwa. He followed this strategy of total war later when he became King of the Zulus.

Senzangakhona died in 1816 and one of his sons Segujana succeeded him. But it was to be a temporary affair. Assisted by Dingiswayo, Shaka became chief of the Zulus the same year after Segujana was killed by Ngwadi, Shaka's younger brother. Apparently Dingane tried to put up some protest when Shaka moved into his father's kraal, but was overwhelmed by the sheer stature of Shaka. On assuming power Shaka immediately concentrated on building the Zulu army in accordance with what he had come to accept as the best military training, arming and tactics of war.

Military Strategy

Shaka trained and drilled his warriors in the use of a new military formation which was "...a method of attack by which one regiment fought in the centre, supported by a reserve regiment, and the others formed flanks or horns which advanced and enveloped the enemy". (Thompson and Wilson, p343.) He took away the traditional sandals from his warriors so that they could increase their speed and mobility. To boost the morale of his warriors, Shaka made sure that they were well looked after when they went into battle, "he conscripted young boys as baggage carriers, and doctors to treat their wounded... captured cattle were divided between the regiments according to their colour".

Meanwhile in 1818 Dingiswayo's longstanding enemy Zwide was again at war with him. By this time, Zwide had come to learn some of the best fighting skills of the Mthethwa warriors and was prepared for a long and sustained battle. Dingiswayo on the other hand had taken the resumption of hostilities lightly. One day he fell into an ambush laid by Zwide's elite warriors who captured him and took him to Zwide's kraal. After a few days Dingiswayo was executed by Zwide. So came the end of one of Africa's remarkable political philosophers and nation builders.

Following the assassination of Dingiswayo by Zwide of the Ndwandwe, the Mthethwa were more than happy to let Shaka become their new king. He then incorporated the Mthethwa into his Zulu kingdom. Gradually Shaka's political influence was expanding; surrounding clans which had not become part of either the Mthethwa, Zulu or Ndwandwe were defeated and incorporated into the growing Zulu kingdom. Shaka introduced a new mode of political organisation which was slightly different from that of Dingiswayo. Using his theory of total war, Shaka would destroy "...absolutely the capacity of an enemy to resist, by eliminating the ruling family and even, when it seemed expedient, by massacring the women and children as well as the men. Once he had conquered an enemy, he incorporated the survivors into his own system, allotting the men to regiments appropriate for their age". (*Thompson and Wilson*, p343.)

Clan Incorporation

The recalcitrant Zwide of the Ndwandwe was eventually defeated by Shaka in a bitter and bloody battle at Mhlatuzi in 1819 after the first attempt failed. The Ndwandwe were brought into the Zulu political system after this defeat. Zwide escaped into the now North Eastern Transvaal and tried to settle near Ha Mojaji which was ruled by a formidable and feared Queen Mojaji of the Lobedu (Pedi). He died soon thereafter.

With Zwide defeated, the Mthethwa, Zulu and Ndwandwe chiefdoms, including all other small clans, came under the political domain of Shaka. The Zulu kingdom was huge and expanding, stretching from the Pongola in the North to the Tugela in the South. By this time Shaka was about thirty-two years old.

Attempts to expand westwards across the Drakensberg mountains were frustrated by the growth and development of the Basotho nation under Moshweshwe, who had been building a nation mainly based on the Bakwena and other people who were victims of the Difaqane. He had eventually been forced to settle his few thousand Basotho at Thabo Bosiu in order to protect them against all sorts of invaders. Thabo Bosiu was an impenetrable flat-topped mountain fortress which was defended by Moshweshwe's warriors, and from there grew the Basotho nation. Shaka tried to attack Moshweshwe but failed dismally and his warriors were forced to retreat shame-facedly. But on their way home Moshweshwe sent them gifts of cattle, saying to them: go well, hunger brought you here, take these herds of cattle to your king.

It was this experience that was to be the beginning of friendly diplomatic relations between Shaka and Moshweshwe. Shaka never attacked Moshweshwe again and in fact once when Moshweshwe was attacked by the Batlokwa, Shaka sent his warriors to attack the Batlokwa, thereby relieving pressure on the Basotho. So strong was their relationship that Moshweshwe used to bring Shaka the beautiful plumes which he used to decorate his warrior-generals. One Makoanyane of the Basotho used to be the main roving ambassador for Moshweshwe, and it was this Makoanyane who used to run errands between KwaBulawayo and Thabo Bosiu.

A number of Shaka's generals escaped⁸ from his political domain, Mzilikazi and Soshangane being two of the well-known. Mzilikazi eventually settled in present day Zimbabwe, establishing his headquarters at KwaBulawayo. Soshangane "carved out his Gaza Kingdom in the lowlands between Delagoa Bay and the lower Zambezi, subjecting the Tsonga inhabitants and destroying the Portuguese settlements at Delagoa Bay, Inhambane, and Sena". (*Thompson and Wilson*, p346.)

Death of Mother

It was at the height of Shaka's empire building campaign that his mother Nandi fell sick and died in 1827. Shaka was devastated. He loved his mother very dearly because of what she had done to bring him up in trying times. Rejected by his father, he had found support and guidance from his mother. He does not seem to have recovered from this blow. He relaxed his political control over his generals whilst allowing an element of ruthlessness to overshadow many other considerations. For example, immediately after his mother's death he ordered a prolonged period of mourning which implied that there would be no cultivation of the land, no bearing of children, and so on. Many people died and this was a source of discontent among the closest warrior-generals including the two co-conspirators, Dingane and Mhlangana. True, Shaka was loved and feared by his people, but he had also instilled in them pride and bravery and they were not prepared to be silent as Shaka destroyed their kingdom. Leading *Indunas* confronted Shaka, demanding that this prolonged mourning and senseless executions of people suspected of breaking the order should stop since Nandi was not the first person to die. (*Ritter*, p280.)

Amidst all this confusion, Shaka ordered his warriors to attack Soshangane, who had earlier deserted him. He did not allow the military preparation to include the customary support system of the baggage carrying boys. This was something alien to his own military strategy of boosting the morale of his warriors going to battle. Something was definitely wrong with

Shaka by this time. The warriors had to use a very difficult route because they had to avoid Sobuza of the Ndwane across the Pongola river and the Pedi. At the same time Soshangane was waiting for them since he had been warned by a Zulu traitor. Dingane, Mhlangana and Mbopa turned back on the way with a plan to assassinate Shaka. Meanwhile Soshangane gave the Zulu warriors a convincing defeat and they were driven back in disorder, "... hungry, fever-ridden and exhausted." (See *Thompson and Wilson*, p350.)

Dingane and his co-conspirators succeeded in assassinating Shaka on 24th September 1828. Thus on that day, Shaka lay dead, killed by his own half-brothers Dingane and Mhlangane, together with Mbopa. There lay a remarkable warrior-general, a political leader of his time, military genius and a marshal of the Zulu forces, *uShaka ka Senzangakhona*. Dingane became king. Well, for a while ...

The Land Question

What then were the factors that moulded the growth and development of the Zulu Kingdom? This question becomes even more important given the insistence by some bourgeois historians that the development of the Zulu kingdom can be explained in terms of 'European' influence on Dingiswayo and Shaka's alleged disturbed psychosexuality.

People make history, says Marx, but in conditions not chosen by them. In order to make history people must *live* and that in itself presupposes the constant struggle to acquire the means of *livelihood*: people must eat, drink and find shelter.

In his study of ecological factors in relation to the Zulu kingdom, the South African historian Jeff Guy (1980) says that "... the key to understanding the rise of the Zulu Kingdom and the events associated with it would seem to lie in the first instance in a study of the productive potentialities of the physical environment and the way in which it was exploited and changed" by the people living there. (In *Marks and Atmore*, 1980, p118.)¹³

The area in which the Zulu kingdom subsequently developed was suited for stock grazing. The clans in and around the Umfolozi were mainly characterised by stock-farming. For them, ownership of herds of cattle and other animals and control over the land were crucial factors in their mode of existence. Those who controlled good pasturelands and owned stock were in an advantageous position to sustain themselves. Thus one of the major sources of conflict in those social formations was ownership of stock and control over grazing land. Membership of a royal family or hierarchy meant easy access to these means of livelihood. It was not surprising therefore that

most clans around Dingiswayo brought themselves under his domain for protection and also to gain access to grazing land under him.

Rewards of Battle

As Shaka built his kingdom, brave warriors who had proven themselves in battle were allocated herds of cattle; generals were allocated homesteads "... in districts which were particularly favourable on account of their proximity to a variety of pastures". (*Jeff Guy*, p109.) This could have been one of the reasons why Shaka's warriors performed so well in battle, because of the knowledge that victory meant access to increased sources of livelihood in the form of cattle and land allocation.

This specific geographic area is characterised by a variety of grazing types; summer, spring and winter grazing. This meant that the ability of the chief to control the whole region would result in his herdsmen being "able to move their stock freely ... to take advantage of the (region's) grazing potential: to higher areas of sourveld in the spring, to mixed grazing in the summer ... and to the low-lying sweetveld in the winter." (*Guy*, p109.) Clearly most of the wars that occurred around that area before and during Shaka's period could be attributed to this conflict over control and ownership of land and stock. In the process a centralised political system was developing under the Zulu king.

The result of this struggle for control over the means of livelihood during Shaka's period was "... political control over a larger area of land and an increased number of people ... moreover an extension of territory would give numbers of the (Zulu kingdom) access to a greater range of grazing and arable land. But beyond this the kingdom he founded was sufficiently large to redistribute cattle over a much greater area than was previously possible. This enabled the Zulu to avoid local concentrations of stock, and to utilize more effectively seasonal variations in quality of pasturage". (*Guy*, p112.)

If availability of land and ownership of stock were the major driving forces towards the consolidation of the Zulu kingdom, no one could doubt the secondary role that could have been played by other factors such as pride in conquest and political control by some chiefs. But these factors are definitely secondary. In an era characterised by primitive forces of production, in which people struggled to make nature satisfy their needs, the control over land and stock was fundamental. In the specificity of our case "this only became possible after the power of the small localised social units (clans) had been broken and the peoples of the region brought under centralised control." (*Guy*, p112.)

In this year of the bicentenary of Shaka's birth, we need to celebrate this great African leader: military genius, political organiser and nation builder. His achievements and those of his people must be celebrated as part of Africa's contribution to human history. The slogans are still relevant today: Mayihlome, Victory or Death. The place of the new warriors is in Umkhonto we Sizwe!

NOTES:

1. This means that we salute you great one, Shaka son of Senzangakhona.
2. One faces a problem in studying South African history in that the dominance of bourgeois historians means that one has to carefully separate some historical facts from racism, sensationalism and inaccuracies.
3. Zulu literally means heaven. Note that not all the clans were called Zulus before Shaka incorporated them into the Zulu Kingdom. The major chiefdoms were the Ndwandwe, Mthethwa and the Zulu.
4. Ukuhlobonga was a Nguni traditional ritual performed for the release of sexual tension among young, unmarried people without conception resulting. (Ritter, p11.)
5. Tana and Godongwana connived to assassinate their father Jobe and take over the throne, but Jobe learned about this plot and sent a few of his warriors to destroy the conspirators. Tana was killed, Godongwana escaped but was badly wounded. He sought refuge amongst the Amahlubi having changed his name to Dingiswayo.
6. Ngadla is a warrior cry, literally meaning "I have eaten", which was shouted in triumph when a warrior had killed his opponent.
7. This literally means "red war", meaning total war.
8. Shaka's warrior-generals who had become jealous of Shaka's power, and who were greedy as well, assembled a few warriors and escaped. Mzilikazi for example had been accumulating some of the heads of cattle captured from defeated clans; when this was discovered, he fled.

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GREAT ADVANCES ON THE TRADE UNION FRONT

By R.E. Nyameko

The mere existence of large masses of workers does not ensure their ability to mount the pressure necessary to bring about revolutionary change. This proposition relates to Marx's distinction between workers who constitute a force in themselves on the one hand, and on the other hand a force for themselves. Workers who are organised in trade unions fall in the first category, i.e. a force in themselves; when they become politically conscious and organise for meaningful change they constitute a force for themselves.

Though there is no clear-cut boundary between these two conditions, generally however it can be said that when a body of workers are organised in trade unions and identify with a struggle for political change such as the sharing of power or the overthrow of a reactionary regime, they are a force for themselves.

COSATU's July Conference attended by over 1,000 delegates took a momentous step by adopting the Freedom Charter as its programme of action. A further manifestation of their positive stand came with the adoption of the resolutions on sanctions and full consultation with workers on disinvestment.

The progress made in the growth of political understanding and militant action has predictably provoked a counter-attack. The Pretoria regime with the connivance of the capitalist class has dropped the mask of tolerance towards African labour unions that it adopted in 1979 and 1981 when it removed the statutory colour bar in the labour laws.

For the first time African workers were given the same formal recognition as that extended to White, Coloured and Indian workers under the notorious Industrial Conciliation Act of 1942 and 1956 which excluded African workers from the definition of "employee", membership of registered trade unions and collective bargaining procedures.

It is now generally recognised that the Labour Relations Act of 1981 was and remains the only significant change introduced by the regime in its much advertised promises of doing away with apartheid. Given this measure of recognition and the ability to operate legally, African trade unions made a tremendous leap forward.

The antagonistic contradictions prevailing in our society resulting in the fight of our exploited and oppressed workers for democratic rights on the one hand and the increasing repression of the racist regime on the other, have brought COSATU centre stage in the liberation struggle.

Workers' Unity

In this critical stage of our revolution, workers' unity is under attack on two fronts. The one is a combined offensive by the state and employers. It is multi-pronged and includes physical assault, infiltration and the promotion of fragmentation, as well as cooption. The other arises from the different tendencies within the working class itself. It has its roots in political and ideological differences and radical divisions within the working class.

There is a long-established history of close cooperation between the state and employers on the means of exploitation and oppression of the black majority and specifically of the working class.

Under the current state offensive to assert continued white domination in the face of all-round opposition from the political and oppressed majority, the capitalist class has supported, used, profited and been part of the assault.

The pre-election campaign, and then the election results, show the generalised support or acquiescence of the bosses for the climate of repression. The capitalist class chose to take a very low profile during the election campaign. For some this was a response to the explicit intimidation of individual employers who had spoken out against the assault on democratic forces, or who had acted in a way which could be construed by the state not to be hostile to them. The prime aim of the Chris Ball fiasco was to intimidate any such tendencies within the capitalist class.

The complacency generated by the illusion of greater state control was reinforced by a relative upturn in the company, thanks to a sympathetic hearing given to the SA Reserve Bank by international financiers and especially as a result of the increase in the price of gold. Every dollar added to the price of

gold per ounce brings in an annual amount of R20 million! And for most, their response in the pre-election period and in the election stemmed from the advantages they have reaped over the years from National Party rule and that they are continuing to reap in the prevailing repressive climate.

The bosses' response in the white election confirms a general trend in their behaviour which has been observed about the response to the state of emergency and the resultant attack on the workers' and the trade union movement, specifically. With a few notable exceptions, the response to most employers to the state of emergency imposed on June 12, 1986, was an uncanny silence. Only Premier (Bloom), AECI (Saunders) and the FCI (Waddell) made unsolicited condemnations. Several employers sent messages or telexes after being pressurised to do so by workers taking action on the shop floor. Most, however, did not oppose the state of emergency. Assocom and the FCI appealed to trade union leaders and their members to resist COSATU's call for industrial action.

The White Ants

The infiltration of the trade union movement by agents of the bosses and the state is as old as the trade union movement itself. It is part of the strategy of both cooption and disruption employed by the enemies of the working class. The extent of this activity and of the success on the part of the employers and the state cannot be accurately assessed, since it is only when such agents are exposed that this type of activity comes to light. The most recent exposure of infiltration and subversion comes from South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) organisers working in Pietersburg. In February this year they revealed that they had uncovered a concerted campaign by local police and employers to destroy their union by offering individuals up to R500 a month to become police informers. (*New Nation* 19.2.1987)

Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA)

The decline and final dissolution of TUCSA on 2 December 1986 is of importance to the evaluation of the present situation in the trade union movement. In the 32 years of TUCSA's existence it played games with African unions. It deprived them of the right to affiliate by adopting a constitution restricting membership of TUCSA to registered unions.

To destabilise and break the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) it established the Federation of Free Trade Unions of South Africa (FOFATUSA), carrying out the policy of the International Confederation of 'Free' Trade Unions (ICFTU). The international labour movement rejected TUCSA. TUCSA started a department for African unions in line with the

regime's Native Affairs Department. This was acceptable neither to African workers at home nor to the international labour movement.

In 1968 TUCSA amended its constitution and invited African unions to affiliate. Some white, racist-led unions then disaffiliated from TUCSA because TUCSA had African unions as affiliates. Once again TUCSA amended its constitution to exclude African unions. Thereafter the TUCSA leadership appealed to affiliates to establish parallel African unions under the tutelage of white unions — a white baasskap, white domination on the pattern of the regime.

Right through the years of terror against freedom fighters TUCSA did not protest against the detentions, torture and murders committed by the regime; on the contrary it hobnobbed with the regime. TUCSA's 22nd annual conference held in East London in September 1976 (the year of the mass murders committed against our children, and mass detentions and torture) Chris Heunis, the then Minister of Economic Affairs, was the guest speaker.

TUCSA in its evidence to the Riekert Commission stated: "An underestimated flow of people to the cities would have a number of harmful effects, among which would be the depression of wages in the cities. This would be prevented by the application of vagrancy laws." (*Sunday Tribune*, 24.9.1987) Thus TUCSA suggested another oppressive law.

Many African workers began to resign from TUCSA unions to join unions of their own choice. For example Nampak workers resigned from the SA Typographical Union and joined the Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union (PWAU).

Swan Song

In the last days of its demise, Robbie Botha, TUCSA's president, criticised unions which "insist that employers give them what they could not, like demands for the release of detainees or that blacks be given votes." He said: "We oppose sanctions and disinvestment because they do not promote the interests of labour — sanctions and disinvestment will not create employment." On the call for recognition of May Day, TUCSA issued a statement rejecting this because of "connotations attached to that day." "There should be a labour day but it need not be on 1 May."

In all parts of South Africa 1.5 million workers demonstrated and struck to commemorate the 100th anniversary of May Day and demanded that 1 May be declared a workers' holiday. All over the world workers commemorated this day — TUCSA was out of step with our working people and the international labour movement — but in step with the regime. In response to our workers'

demand for May Day, which received support even from employers' organisations, Botha has announced that the regime will introduce a labour day — but not on 1 May. This is what Hitler did in Nazi Germany in 1934.

TUCSA ex-affiliates who are homeless must be worked on to affiliate to COSATU. In September 1986 TUCSA-affiliated unions in the clothing, textile and leather industries and the National Union of Textile Workers, a COSATU affiliate, met to decide to merge together all the unions in this sector comprising about 200,000 members. This new sectoral federation accepts COSATU's principal of one union for one industry and COSATU supporters must work actively with members in these unions to win them over for affiliation to COSATU.

NACTU — A Divisive Force

The Council of Unions of South Africa — Azanian Congress of Trade Unions (CUSA-AZACTU), now named National Confederation of Trade Unions (NACTU), talks left but acts right. Their newspaper *Izwilethu* of November/December 1986 set out their principles as workers' control, national liberation struggle, etc, and one wonders why they are a separate federation. In fact they are a divisive force. Their empty slogans must be exposed. For example, as soon as COSATU established a Farm Workers' Union in April, NACTU announced the formation of a Farm Workers' Union a few days later. When the State of Emergency was declared COSATU issued a list of demands and guidelines to employers for the State of Emergency conditions. At a meeting with the FCI at which COSATU and CUSA were present, CUSA opposed COSATU's demand for national action and stated that "national action could exacerbate the situation rather than obtain the release of workers and trade unionists" and on 10 July 1986 CUSA issued a joint statement with the FCI and ASSOCOM stating that "they believed conflicts could be resolved through negotiation, discussion and compromise." So much for NACTU's empty sloganising.

Inkatha and UWUSA

The support and active creation of forcers to fragment workers' unity by both the state and employers are equally as insidious. The most explicit example of this in contemporary trade union politics in South Africa is the creation and promotion of UWUSA.

UWUSA (the United Workers Union of South Africa) was launched in a blaze of publicity on May 1, 1986, at an Inkatha Rally at Kings Park Stadium in Durban. Formed as a deliberate and calculated response by sections of the state

(Buthelezi and Inkatha) and capital — both local and international — it is the only union formed in and operating from a bantustan.

By the time of its official launch only 3 small unions had affiliated — the African Domestic Workers' Union, the Black Staff Association of SATS and the National Union of Brick and Allied Workers. The Natal Sugar Refinery and Allied Industrial Employees' Union which is recognised by the Tongaat Hulett's Sugar Refinery in the industrial complex, although closely associated with Inkatha, had no Uwusa presence by the end of 1986.

In fact, over the year the "union" had made next to no real progress amongst workers in the region of Northern Natal, despite the widespread presence of Inkatha, support from employers and substantial assistance from the state.

State collusion with the operation of UWUSA is most explicitly visible in the extent of repression of COSATU in the Northern Natal Region. It is not incidental that of all COSATU regions, the Northern Natal region, which covers some 10,000 workers and is the smallest region, has also been the hardest hit by the State of Emergency. Unionists were very surprised by the widespread detentions in the area which saw 6 main officials — Vilane, Mchunu, Ntombela, Mkhonsa, Mkhwanazi and Oliphant — picked up just before the emergency was declared; and 3 days after the SOE was imposed, the entire COSATU regional executive. Not a single COSATU affiliate in the region was left untouched and at least 22 were detained. As Oliphant stated, none of those detained represented unions with recognition agreements in the area. Rather they were all actively involved in organising, for example at ISCOR and Defy. "This made us reach a conclusion that . . . the state must have been helping UWUSA to organise".

Indeed, UWUSA did approach companies for recognition while COSATU members were locked up. CCAWUSA reported that it was having some difficulties in securing a strong base in smaller shops. MAWU too found management actively discouraging workers from becoming members. At one factory they were threatened with retrenchment if they did not join UWUSA (10 of 12 were MAWU members). At another scrap metal plant they were told that management did not like COSATU and preferred UWUSA and at a third where 267 of the 325 workers are MAWU, management delayed signing a recognition agreement because it was wanting "to see whether workers would like to join UWUSA".

Confidence

The workers themselves have little confidence in UWUSA. This is because of the steady and carefully built relations that have been nurtured with the non-

racial, democratic trade union movement. It is also because of the self-exposure of Inkatha and UWUSA betrayal of workers' interests in the area, beginning with the 1985 Empangeni Bus Boycott, followed by their blocking of workers' proposals to stage a boycott of white shops when the first state of emergency was declared and brought to a head by the physical attack on Jeffrey Vilane (MAWU) and the burning of his home and car in April 1986.

The negative feelings towards UWUSA have been compounded by the fact that in this region COSATU meetings in the region are banned. Workers don't understand why they cannot hold union meetings in their communities. In Mandeni they have managed to negotiate for venues, but at Sikhaweni — the largest concentration of workers in the whole industrial complex — all COSATU affiliate meetings are banned.

But while UWUSA has made little headway in organising as a legitimate union, its primary role is that of a union-bashing vigilante-like outfit. In June 1986 at Hlobane Colliery Inkatha thugs were brought in under the cover of UWUSA by mine security to break a peaceful strike. In the resulting skirmish the union organiser was hounded from the premises, 11 miners were killed and 115 injured.

In the FAWU dispute with Clover Dairies in Pietermaritzburg, UWUSA threatened FAWU members and management dismissed the chairman of the shop stewards' committee alleging that he had instigated workers to attack UWUSA! In March this year miners at the Zincor plant accused senior security members employed by the company of encouraging UWUSA members to attack NUM members and then standing by while the workers were stabbed and bludgeoned to death. At least 3 NUM members were killed.

We must expose UWUSA's outrageous campaign of sabotage and intimidation against the observance of June 16 and June 26. They issued leaflets and placed a whole-page advertisement in the capitalist press which read: "UWUSA MEMBERS AND OTHER WORKERS — READ THIS WELL!! IGNORE CALLS TO STAY AWAY. GO TO WORK DURING THE PERIOD JUNE 12 TO 26." (*Star*, 11.6.87). In brief, UWUSA adopted the same line as the regime and its armed forces.

The enemy, confronted by the mass of oppressed and exploited people, has created the A-Team, vigilantes, Kitskonstabels, Witdoeke and UWUSA. This danger must be tackled now by the entire liberation movement including our Party cadres to thwart these enemies. The townships' street committees, civic, youth and women's organisations and trade unions must carry out an energetic campaign of exposure and education.

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