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OF SOUTH AF 1CA; ret MARCH 21ST. 1970. DAY

ELIUIINATION OF RACIAL DISCivir.IINATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The declaration by the United Nations General Assembly three years ago that March 21st each year be observed as international Day of elimination of racial discrimination in commemoration of the massacre of 69 Africans and hundreds others left wounded by thd South African fascist regime on March 21st 1960 at Sharpeville, will always be welcomed by the ncn-./hite people Â\$ of South Africa struggling against the most vicious foxm of oppression and slavery practised by the South African authorities in the seco* d half of our century.

The people shot and killed in cold blood in Sharpeville and Langa were demonstrating against the oppressive pass laws, which for years have been the cox-nerstone of the racist regime. The pass laws have been for a very long time a thorn in the flesh of the African people. It was in 1919 when the anti-pass campaign was launched. Since then, the African people, have regarded the pass laws as the badge of slavery and humiliation to their dignity. The African people used all resources within their power to fight against the pass laws. The forms of struggle against the pass laws from the beginning were in the ngture of demonstrations and burning of pas es. Our national, provincial and local campaigns took a militant and positive outlookldLn 1952, when the African National Congress adopted a new foxm of struggle when the defiance campaign was launched against the pass laws and other discriminatory legislation.

As the struggle &f the oppressed led by the African National Congress mounted and more and more to challenge the basis

of White supremacy, the apartheid regi.e was compelledtto pass increasingly repressive legislation in an attempt to destroy the African National Congress, and bfcheÂ±ngpÂ\$:edition. The banning and banishment of the people1s leaders became the order of the day; police action became more vicious, the activities of the security police more blatantly fascist. But these measures could not halt the tide of struggle. In 1956 the fascists were compelled by the sheer tigkfc of the mass struggle to arrest Congress leaders on ch rges of treason. Thus began the protracted treasons trial which lasted more than 4 years and resulted in otal exposure of the White minority regime's fears ofthe coming svolution.

In late 1959 the ANC decided that the situation was ripe for a major onslaught on the pass laws, the most hated piece of legislation on the statute book. 1960 was designated Anti-Pass Year and a major campaign of organisation was launched, designed to culminate in mass action on 31st March, 1960.

But the Pan Africanist Congress decided to start its campaign ten days earlier. It was in Sharpeville in the Transvaal and in Langa in Cape Town, that the people, angered and bitter against the pass laws, turned out in their hundreds of thousands in response to this call, on March 21st. The demonstrations were peaceful and women had come out to express their indignation at these abominable laws. They went to the Police Station to give themselves up for arrest and refusing to carry the hated passes.

In Sharpeville the White authorities became panicky and the police jittery the silent might of the Africans outside the police gates. Without provocation the armed police fired countless bullets into the crowd which left 69 dead and hundreds others seriously wounded.

It should be borne in mind that the massacre of our people at

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Sharpeville on 21st March was not the only instance in which our people had been butchered for their resistance against White minority oppression, there were others before.

However, the significance of Sharpeville lies in the fact that it took place at a time when the whole African continent was locked in a bitter struggle for liberation from colonial rule and hence it drew more public attention to the horrors of the crimes committed by the racist minority regime against our people. It is because of this horror and brutality perpetrated against our people by the White minority regime that the world body has seen fit to observe this day.

1970 is the tenth anniversary of the inhuman massacre of the people of Sharpeville seeking fundamental human rights. This day is observed by the United Nations when the people of South Africa have rededicated to gain and seize political power through armed struggle.

Since the 21st of March 1960, the fascist regime of South Africa, realising the growing might and influence which was being wielded by the A.N.C. daily among the people thus undermining its

authority, the government of the Republic of South Africa steadily increased its inhuman and draconic laws and repression*

It resorted to further passing of most vicious racist laws; arresting and sentencing of those who uncompromisingly continued to resist its racist programme. The past ten years have seen the South African authorities step-by-step and unashamedly moving towards a full-fledged fascist state.

Today, over 10,000 political leaders and militants are serving long prison terms in the country; hundreds are in detention, including Mrs. Winnie Mandela - wife of Mr. Nelson Mandela, leader of the oppressed people of South Africa now serving a life sentence. Between 1961 and 1965, South Africa's fascist regime accounted for half the total number of people hanged in the whole world.

As is well-known, beginning with the 90-Day-No-Trial law in 1963 - in the history of that

- gave a free hand to the Security police to detain at will and torture any one suspected of continuing resistance against racism and slavery. Today, the "BOSS" law, - which gives formidable power to the security police to detain any one suspected of continuing resistance against racial discrimination and the inhuman oppression of the majority of South African people.

People detained under these laws are refused all contacts with any body including their relatives and lawyers. No court of law can pronounce on the validity of their detention. And those who happen to be brought to a court of law, should they be found not guilty, are subject to re-arrest and re-detention, as was proved with the case of the 22 Africans brought to court on December 1st, 1969* Having failed to get a conviction against the 22, the government decided to imprison them once again without trial, under the Terrorism Act.

On this day March 21st, 1970, day for the elimination of racial discrimination, the African National Congress, the spearhead of the oppressed non-White people of our country, fighting for human dignity, national freedom, democratic liberties and peace, calls on progressive mankind and their organisations and all governments to press for an immediate and unconditional release of the 22 re-detained people and all political prisoners now in jail. -^support by every possible means the struggle of the non-White people of South Africa.