

FREEDOM CHARTER

The people's demands



This month marks the 32nd anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter. Even after more than three decades of that historic event, the Charter continues to remain the most fundamental and relevant political statement in the history of the oppressed people's struggle for Freedom in SA.

This is so because the Charter has always and continues to enshrine, the legitimate hopes and aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the people of this country for a just, democratic and non-racial society in SA.

None of the demands so clearly outlined in the Charter has been met by a minority that is determined to hang on to power and to its privileges. The recent whites-only elections have negated the first clause of the Charter — that "The People Shall Govern".

This election has now clearly drawn the battle-lines — for the white minority has opted for a head-on collision with the Black majority. By doing so, it has consciously slammed the door on the final clause of the Charter — that "There Shall Be Peace and Friendship".

In spite of such setbacks, and in spite of the current wave of intensified repression, all freedom-loving people in this

country have been left with no option but to determinedly pursue their heroic struggle for peace, justice and freedom in the country as envisaged in the Freedom Charter.

This determination has permeated all sectors of the oppressed majority — from the dynamic youth movement onwards to the powerful and growing trade union movement in the country.

In this connection, developments in the trade union movement are both important and inspiring. The fact that the Charter satisfies the aspirations of the working people explains why important and powerful trade unions like the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the National Union of Metal Workers of SA (Numsa) have adopted the Freedom Charter.

with the contemplated adoption of the Charter by the UDF, is of special significance to the struggle for Freedom in this country. Just as the whites-only election signifies the consolidation of the forces of the right and of a minority, so do these developments signify the consolidation of the forces of the democratic majority, on the basis of a single political programme.

Such a consolidation further strengthens and unifies the democratic movement in the country.

Moreover, greater and greater number of trade unions are likely to follow this important lead in the future.

Their adoption of the Freedom Charter also places the important question of the equitable distribution of the country's wealth firmly on the political agenda.

Finally, these developments are clear evidence of the growing popularity of the Freedom Charter, and re-inforces the oft-repeated claim that the society as envisaged in the Charter is the **only viable alternative** to the one which a privileged minority wants to impose upon all the people of South Africa by force.

Significant as all this undoubtedly is, what is equally important is to consciously strive towards the **establishment** of the society as envisaged in the Charter.

To this end the Transvaal Indian Congress, which has adopted the Charter as long ago as 1956, once again calls upon all its members, readers and supporters to add their weight in greater numbers and to a far degree than hitherto to the just and noble cause of Freedom in South Africa.

● **Pull out the Freedom Charter on the next page and paste onto your wall.**

AHMED KATHRADA - PEOPLE'S HERO

24 years in prison and still courageous

In Pollsmoor Prison near Cape Town, languishes a man who stands tall in our community. Ahmed 'Kathy' Kathrada, a courageous and dedicated political activist, an outstanding leader and a **PEOPLE'S HERO**.

In 1963 Kathy was arrested and put on trial along with Nelson Mandela and other great leaders of the liberation movement. They were sentenced to life imprisonment and have spent their days in Robben Island and Pollsmoor Prison ever since.

From an early age, Kathrada was deeply opposed to the injustice and

oppression of the apartheid system. In 1946, he helped to establish the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress and became its chairman for several years.

He was to play a prominent role in all the main struggles and campaigns of the post-war period — in the Passive Resistance Movement of 1946, the Defiance Campaign against unjust laws in 1952, the Congress of the People in 1955.

He was arrested in 1956 along with 155 other Congress leaders and activists, and charged with High Treason. Whilst on trial he was detained during the State of Emergency declared after

the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960. Soon after his acquittal on treason charges, he was later that year placed under house arrest.

Today after 22 years of imprisonment, this courageous leader remains unflinching in his commitment to a non-racial, democratic South Africa - having rejected P.W. Botha's offer of a conditional release.

In the hearts of the oppressed people he will truly remain a **PEOPLE'S HERO**.

● Ahmed Kathrada's co-prisoner and comrade, Walter Sisulu, recently celebrated his 75th birthday in Pollsmoor Prison. To Walter we say **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**.