



Matla Coal Gumboot dance group are very popular

Singing and stamping our feet to freedom

COWBOY hats and shirts are the style of the Matla Coal Gumboot dance group from Witbank.

One of the most popular cultural groups in the union, the Matla group has eight members. They told *NUM News* that the group came together in January 1979 as a mine group.

When the union was formed, the group signed up. The Matla group practises their routine of song and dance on Saturdays and Sundays.

They said by expressing their daily lives and struggle through dancing, they hoped to encourage other workers to participate in cultural activities and join the union.

Cultural groups such as Matla are taking part in building a culture of resistance to apartheid. What they are doing by performing at worker events such as the recent Witbank congress is building a culture of liberation out of the culture of repression.

Mine workers have a long history of cultural resistance to the mine bosses and the government. Mine songs speak of the hardships underground, while dances express the struggle and hard work of daily life.

At first the mine bosses did not allow mine dancing. Later they encouraged it because they were not prepared to build other forms

of entertainment on the mines. They thought it would provide an outlet for the militancy of workers.

They also encouraged it because often tribal rivalries broke out which suited them.

In South Africa the largest body of cultural resistance lies not in books but in songs and dance.

Freedom songs are wherever resistance lives, from funerals to union meetings. The songs we sing often use the musical structures of work chants.

Union songs and dance are not just entertainment, but a weapon in our struggle.

In rural African societies music was not merely for entertainment but linked with life and the community. All the different stages one went through with life had related songs: cradle songs, praise songs, songs when a boy reached puberty and war songs.

Music, in modern society, is a commodity like bread or clothes.

It is bought and sold in the form of radios, records and instruments.

Most musicians are not well paid, and the profits go to the record companies. The audience no longer participates actively in the making of the music like in traditional times, but is a passive consumer who has no say in the finished product.

Book exposes Anglo empire secrets

SECRETS of the Oppenheimer empire, Anglo and De Beers are exposed in a book, *South Africa Inc.*

Anglo, South Africa's largest and most influential corporation, has done more than any other business to contribute to the wealth and power of the white minority.

At the same time Anglo has built up a powerful overseas empire on six continents. It has a web of secret companies that transfer money and goods.

Siamese twins

Anglo and De Beers, both owned by the Oppenheimer family, operate like Siamese twins in the world of business.

Roughly they control more than 40 per cent of South Africa's gold, 80 per cent of the world's diamonds, a sixth of the world's copper and are the country's largest producer of coal.

Altogether the Anglo group employs some 800,000 workers "most of them earning miserable wages at the very heart of apartheid, producing the minerals, goods and services that are essential to keep white South Africa rich."

Anglo employs about 305 000 people in the gold mines alone, 25 000 in the diamond mines, about 100 000 in coal and platinum mines, about 150 000 in manufacturing, 140 000 in the food and drink industries and about 50 000 in other enterprises.

Outside South Africa South American mineworkers work in equally bad conditions.

De Beers owned AECI (African Explosives and Chemicals Industries) helped set up the arms industry, which was taken

over by the government in 1970. But the connection did not stop there.

The book alleges that after the Soweto uprising it was revealed that AECI had developed the teargas used by the police at that time.

Helps state survive

At every critical point, say the authors of *South Africa Inc.*, the Oppenheimers and the South African state have co-operated in each other's survival. "Like distracted lovers, they may not have always enjoyed each others company but they were bonded by inseparable interests"

Gold brings in around half of all foreign exchange for South Africa. In 1986 the government's share of profit and taxes from the gold mines was 3.4 billion rand out of a total working profit for the industry of 7.7 billion rand.

The book quotes from a history of South African trade unionism and says that this was the situation on South African mines forty years ago. Nothing has changed.

"Chamber of Mine's policy was to get rid of anyone trying to organise African workers. Spies were planted in the Union... (Government laws prohibited) the gathering of more than twenty persons on mine property. This made the holding of meetings virtually impossible, and it also meant a great reduction in the finances of the Union as dues could not be easily collected and new members could not be recruited."

Harry Oppenheimer, the patriarch of the family has showed his true colours on numerous occasions and is not the liberal people overseas believe him to

be. As he said in parliament: "We do not need to go in for some kind of head counting democracy which in the long run, will turn the government of the country to blacks".

On another occasion he said: "I think people would also agree that it is very desirable to have residential segregation. I think everyone in this House is agreed that it is most undesirable to put political power in the hands of uncivilised, uneducated people, as far as we can help it."

The policy that Oppenheimer and his friends have chosen is the long road of deflecting black liberation by trying to co-opt an elite black middle class.

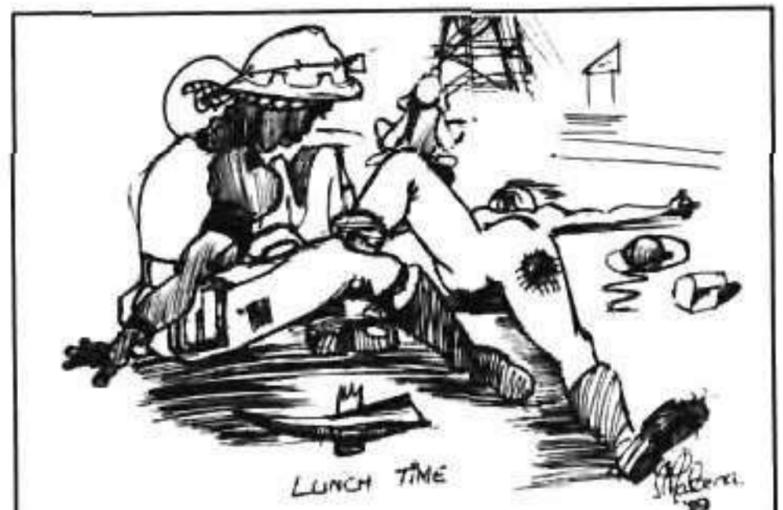
The book argues that Anglo will come to the rescue of the government when sanctions begin to bite, "just as it has done in time of crises before."

Sanctions-busting

"Anglo has a well tried and tested sanctions-busting operation in place with its concealed Swiss metal trading agencies, its freight network and the secretive companies that De Beers and the CSO use to channel the diamond trade."

The book concludes of the future relationship between Anglo and the government "while Anglo clings to the remnants of its liberal image, it continues to be pivotal for the survival of the white state, a role whose importance will only be enhanced by nationalistic economic strategies and privatisation".

South Africa Inc is by David Pallister, Sarah Steward and Lan Lepper. It is published by Corgi Books and costs R19.95 at the CNA.



One of the first entries in the NUM cartoon and drawing competition was "Lunchtime" by Peter Mabena.

Competition for all NUM artists

The closing date for the NUM cartoon and drawing competition has been extended to the end of April. The subject is "Daily life on the mines".

Send your entries with full names and addresses to NUM News, PO Box 2424, Johannesburg 2000. Prizes are books and drawing materials.