

**"We are our own liberators"**

# African leader tells of Zimbabwean war

By MARY MARRONE

"We shall hold guns in order to fight, the enemy. We are our own liberators", said a representative of the Zimbabwean (Rhodesia) revolutionary group, ZANU describing the principles of his organization and its activities to a crowd of 75 listeners in the York faculty lounge last Thursday.

A.M. Chidoda is now touring Canada to present ZANU's (Zimbabwean African National Union) position on the nature of the current struggle in Zimbabwe. Besides being a member of ZANU, Chidoda has also worked with many Zimbabwean nationalist leaders including some now involved in the current Geneva peace talks.

Chidoda denied that ZANU and other Black liberation forces are the terrorist groups that the Western press portrays them as. "The Smith regime is the terrorist," he said, "they are the ones killing innocent people. The regime knows only one tool, the repressive tool."

He described the success of the nationalists, and denied the reports of Smith's troops alleged victories. "The enemy said they have destroyed seven of our camps, but we only have five."

Chidoda explained the "false reports", saying, "They make their claims to justify their barbaric efforts and to reassure the confidence of white Rhodesians".

Discouraging anyone who had hopes of becoming a mercenary for the Smith forces, Chidoda suggested they stay home. "If your friends want to join, tell them to jump off the ninth floor of the Ross building and die, rather than going all the way to Zimbabwe; you can die a peaceful death and get buried in your own homeland."

Chidoda was insistent on ZANU's independence from super-powers, saying they didn't want another situation like Angola. ZANU gets its arms from African sources only, though they may be Soviet-made he

said.

Chidoda explained ZANU's opposition to superpower involvement in Zimbabwe saying, "If someone gives you independence, he has some interest in that independence."

Chidoda said that to be able to fight effectively, ZANU united with ZAPU (Zimbabwean African People's Union), another guerilla group, forming the Patriotic Front. Explaining the move he said, "We have one enemy, the Smith regime and other forces of reaction."

In response to a question concerning the numbers of guerilla groups fighting in Zimbabwe, and how one could decide whom to support, Chidoda replied "we leave people to their own judgements", comparing it to a choice of churches.

Most of the questions from the audience after the talk were related to ZANU's programme and the type of society they envisioned for Zimbabwe. The programme included redistribution of land, universal education; a society with "the productive forces in the hands of the people".

Chidoda explained the goals of the nationalist struggle, "We want to change a system which exploits us to one which serves us."



Zimbabwean (Rhodesia) nationalist A.M. Chidoda tells a York audience of the armed struggle in his country. Chairperson Marsha Forrest looks on.

Answering whether it would any similarity to our form.

Chidoda said the new Zimbabwean government would be different than Canada's, "We do not see in Zimbabwe a democratic system like that of the west; voting is a luxury of those who have lived it. Democracy in the western world is a sham anyway. We will evolve

out of revolutionary struggle".

He described ZANU's goals as setting up a non-racial system of government for the self-determination of Zimbabwe. As to who would suffer in this transition, he said it would be "those who live off the labour of others."

In answer to questions about the exact nature of the proposed ad-

ministration, he was hesitant to speculate. Chidoda said, "My own opinion is that it will be up to the masses of Zimbabwe to decide."

The meeting was sponsored by the York Third World Students Union, the Jamaica Study Group and the ad hoc committee to Support the Struggle of the Zimbabwe People.

## S. African uprising was inevitable: student

NEW YORK (LNS-CUP) — "We had enough of it all," a 19-year-old leader of the mass black uprisings in Soweto, South Africa told a group of New Yorkers gathered to hear his story in early December. "It could have come over any number of things, but it would have come."

Until he fled into exile, Tsietshi Mashinini was president of the Student Representative Council which exercises a strong influence over the black township of over one million outside Johannesburg. The

Council led the original June 16 protest against a government order that classes in black schools be taught in Afrikaans, a Dutch-derived language most blacks do not know.

Police responded by killing, wounding and arresting hundreds of students — many of them young school children. This touched off further student demonstrations and work stoppages throughout the summer.

### TIGHT CONTROL

The South African police said they would pay 500 rand (\$575) for information leading to Mashinini's arrest — an amount equal to an average black worker's annual income. But the young militant escaped to Botswana in August with the help of an underground network of friends. While in Botswana, the South African security police tried unsuccessfully to kidnap Mashinini. He now lives in London, but came to the United States in late November for a three week visit.

Mashinini is a young man who seems much older than his 19 years might suggest. His father is a chauffeur and his mother works in a clothing factory.

Describing the reaction of Soweto parents to the student demonstrations, Mashinini said that at first they were frightened. "When we mobilized the students, we mobilized all of them. Very young kids were involved and when parents came home from work they found their kids shot."

"This touched everybody. Then the parents were with us all the way. In August they stayed out of work for three days after we called for a work stoppage. On the fourth day they had to face their bosses. They would be fired, they told us, if they said they had stayed out because they wanted to. So we told them to tell their bosses that they would have been beaten up by us if they hadn't stayed out."

"It is their children who die," Mashinini said, "and they want what the students want. If it comes to fighting the white men, they are ready to join. In the past when someone was detained people became afraid. Now when someone was detained, people get angry."

Since escaping from South Africa, Mashinini says he has learned a lot.

"I have just learned recently about things like capitalism and Marxism and communism and I still don't know much about them. I was quite a reader back home, but I had never seen anything about Marxism — all those books are banned."

Newspapers too, he explained, are tightly controlled. "There are two editions of the Rand Daily Mail — a white edition and a black extra. Most of the white edition covers news for whites and the black extra reports on events in black townships."

"People in Soweto are completely blank on what's happening outside of the country. Vorster said that the June 16 demonstration was organized to embarrass him before his meeting with Kissinger. I didn't even know he was going to meet with Kissinger until several days after June 16."

Mashinini was also president of the Johannesburg region of the South African Student Movement, a black high school organization. "One of the biggest projects of SASM was developing black con-

sciousness," he explained.

"I used to teach my little brothers black poems. We tried to break through the indoctrination." Mashinini added that the relationship between the high school movement and the university movement, led by the South African Student Organization, is very strong.

Looking to the future, Mashinini foresees many people going underground and the eventual beginning of armed struggle.

"Most young people don't want to go into the streets any more — it gets South Africa in the news, but people are killed and the effect is not clear."

Throughout his visit to the US, Mashinini has told people that "one of the biggest problems we have in South Africa is the big powers that support the regime for economic and military interests." He urges Americans to put pressure on the US to get out of South Africa, and also stresses the importance of isolating South Africa in any international events.

## "So many fathers have lost their children"

Excerpts from a London interview with Tsietshi Mashinini, exiled student leader from South Africa.

Soweto is the biggest Black township in South Africa. It has about 80,000 houses, which are inhabited by more than one million people.

I come from a family of twelve kids. And my parents make it fourteen. We stayed in a four-room house, and the rooms are about eight by ten. Very few houses have electricity. Of those with electricity, most of them belong to the bourgeoisie in Soweto. It is ghetto life all the way. Very few gas stoves around. There are lots of basic needs people cannot afford because of very low wages. In fact, when a survey was done in 1974 it was found that 60 per cent of the people in Soweto had wages just to keep them alive, and not have any other needs a human being has.

You tend to like everything the white regime hates. They don't like anything to do with Frelimo (Mozambique Liberation Front); then you are for Frelimo. When they were fighting Cubans and Angolans in Angola, then we were for those people they don't like. The fact that they don't like communism makes you think what communism is, and "no, I think I want this." They are not aware that they are creating this type of thing.

The system more or less made me what I am now because of their constant oppression. My character was built by the environment that I lived in. That is why I claim that I am not the only Tsietshi Mashinini — there are lots of other students who will become active because of what the system is doing to them.

The system itself has created so many enemies. There were people who sympathized with the BCM (Black Consciousness Movement), but did not want to have anything to do with politics for fear of detention. The system was raiding almost 50 homes a night after June 16, looking for that person or this person.

So many people were killed or detained. So many people have grudges against the system that they are prepared to do anything against the system anytime. So many mothers have lost their children. So many fathers have lost their children. So many husbands have lost their wives.

That is because of the system.

They cannot crush the movement. If they want to stop Black power they have to put every Black person in detention. Because as long as there are Black people outside, the struggle will go on.

