

South African Freedom Songs

FOLKWAYS RECORDS EPC-601 (45 rpm)

Tina Sizwe (We, The Brown Nation)
Nkosi Waqine (God Save the Volunteers)
Asikatali (We Do Not Care If We Go To Prison)
Liyashizwa (Pass-Burning Song)

(The American Committee on Africa receives
royalties from the sale of this record.)

sung by PETE SEEGER, ROBERT HARTER, GARRETT MORRIS,
GUY CARAWAN, NED WRIGHT

Sharpsville, Union of South Africa, March 21, 1960



SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM SONGS

AFRICAN RALLIES MARKED BY SONG

Hymns and Chants Provide
Rhythm and Morale for
Nationalist Meetings

By MILTON BRACKER

Special to The New York Times

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa, April 17—Songs, hymns and chants give both rhythm and morale to African nationalist meetings throughout east, central and south Africa.

In a country like South Africa, the music is a characteristic and particularly important part of the meetings. That is because they are held under restricted conditions and police scrutiny, and often in dilapidated premises.

Massed voices joining in Zulu, Xosa or Sotho parodies of familiar melodies are sure to play a big part in the gathering at Alexandria Township which will wind up Africa Week Sunday.

As slow processions of Negroes from small meetings converge on a large one, they invariably move to the swelling beat of a vernacular chant.

A tour of native meetings in three areas Wednesday night, when Africa Week officially started, was a revealing experience.

Basement Used as Hall

The first site was a baseball hall in downtown Johannesburg, where several hundred men and women met under the scrutiny of a half dozen white members of the security branch of the South African police.

A white speaker of the multi-racial Liberal party spoke in English; an African translated into Sotho. It was a rather painful process. On the real wall, a picture of Lana Turner lent an incongruous touch while the cluster of security men near the doorway provided an unmistakable damper.

Yet somehow the entire mood of the meeting lifted when the group stood and began singing to the tune of "Clementine." Instead of "Oh, My Darling," the four-syllable beginning was "Mayibuye."

'Come Back' Is Theme

This is the Zulu equivalent of "Come Back."

The song went:
Mayibuye, Mayibuye,
Mayibuye Afrika
Makaphele Amapasi
Mayibuye Afrika.

Thus the crowd was singing, in effect, "come back Africa. come back to your original heritage and let the pass laws for identity cards carried by Africans come to an end."

It was not necessary to understand a single word to feel the impact of the voices. Throughout, the security men looked on in alert silence.

Out in Sophiatown five miles from the city, there was no overt scrutiny, although in African locations African agents are often used. Sophiatown was one of the few places where Negroes could own homes. It was an easy-going good-natured community that outside natives called "Soft Town." It had a more-or-less famous illicit bar, or "shebeen," called "The Thirty-nine Steps."

Area Being Demolished

In 1953 demolition of Sophiatown began. The area had been assigned to whites, and of 58,000 Negroes only 15,000 remain. The others have been moved to places called Meadowlands and Diep Kloof. Sophiatown is now two-thirds rubble.

The Wednesday meeting in Sophiatown was held on Gold Street, in a place called Diggers Hall. The place was lighted by two bulbs. Every time a person moved, the hulking shadows crept across the dark green walls.

In the rear, one whole corner of the wall was a raw concrete patch. The windows were studied with missing panes.

Robert Resha, a leader of the African National Congress and a defendant in the protracted treason trial that is to resume in Pretoria Monday, spoke articulately in English. At his side a youth translated the address into Sotho.

Several hundred persons were present. The men and women sat apart on plain benches divided by a center aisle. Most of the women were handanas and many carried infants.

Another speaker, an old, bearded Zulu, made a strong attack on the past laws as applied to women. Then the crowd started for a larger meeting in near-by African Township.

Their close shuffling gait was to a chant which the name of the South African Prime Minister, Dr. Hendrik F. Verwoerd, was readily identifiable: Doctor Verwoerd, open the jails!

The volunteers are coming. On the way across dusty roads to the township, they also sang: "The Pess is the Enemy of the People" and "God save Africa."

Arrivals Join in Song

The township hall was of solid brick with better lighting. As the last residents of Sophiatown filed in, their voices joined in "Somlandela." This is a particularly old nondenominational hymn, with the theme line: "I will follow Jesus."

But as the Negroes sang it: Somlandela somlandela
Luthuli
Somlandela somlandela izikhathi zomke.

Roughly it is "We will follow Luthuli forever." Albert Luthuli is president of the African National Congress.

A speaker said:

"In places like Ghana the flags are flying high. In places like Egypt the flags are flying high."

"He paused, breathed deeply and resumed:

"In places like South Africa, where people are oppressed, the flags are rising..."

SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM SONGS

There are literally thousands of songs being composed and sung in Africa today which treat of contemporary subjects, the most important of which is the current struggle to attain first class citizenship in the world. The songs vary tremendously. Some are satirical, some are fervent anthems. Some use ancient forms of African folkmusic, others sound more like Christian hymns or American jazz, or calypso.


The four songs on this record were taught us by Mrs. Mary Louise Hooper, when she returned from Africa in 1959. Mrs. Hooper, a native of San Francisco, spent several years in South Africa and became closely acquainted with some of the leaders of the African National Congress. When she left that country (at the insistence of the government) her friends gave her a small going away party, and made a tape recording of their favorite songs. The harmonies and rhythms for these songs have been learned directly from that tape. Additional assistance in pronunciation of the words has been given us by Prof. Absolom Vilikazi, now at Trinity College, Hartford, Conn.

It is difficult or impossible for a solo voice to demonstrate the songs, but they are ideal for an amateur chorus. The bass line is in some ways as important as the melody. Also needed is a soprano or tenor part a few notes above the melody. The songs may be sung unaccompanied, which is most common in South Africa, or some simple rhythm on guitar, piano, or banjo is appropriate.

Drums are rarely used to accompany such songs as these. (West Africa, far to the north, is the area where drumming reigns supreme).

The composers of the songs are unknown, and efforts to trace them have met so far with no success. All royalties from this record, therefore, are being given to the American Committee on Africa, to aid in the defense of the thousands of South Africans who this year are being

thrown in jail, not for any crime of violence, but for struggling to bring democracy to their land and people.

Peter Seeger 

Beacon, N.Y.

May 1960

General Pronunciation guide

Spelling of the Zulu words in these four songs has been somewhat simplified already. Most of the vowels and consonants will be easy for American's to sing, a few of them, such as the clicking sound, mentioned below, are more difficult.

Vowels

a - ah
i - ee
e - ay
o - as in obey, (not as in "alone")
u - as in lute - ou - halfway between now and low.

Consonants

b, d, f, k, l, m, n, p, s, t, v, y, w, z, sh,
eh, as in English g is hard, as in gate.

r (in Frestata) as in German or Dutch, somewhat rolled.

h (in Kumhlaba, and abamhlop'he) is guttural, like the German ch in Bach

p'h - a soft p
t'h - a soft t
zh - like the s in treasure
qc (in Wagqine) a click, sounded by pulling the tongue back from the roof of the mouth, at the same.

TINA SIZWE

This song, one of the favorites of Chief Albert Luthuli, President of the African National Congress, is destined to be known around the world, we feel. The tune is taken from a hymn, and should be sung with rich harmony.

The rhythm is carried with a slow steady pulse. Curiously enough, we first transcribed it in 4/4 time, and then later found that 3/4 time made some of the phrases easier to learn. In any case, the overlapping of parts is very important.

SS

1. Ti-na si-zwe, ti-na si-zwe, e-sin-sun, si-ka-le-la, si-ka-le-
2. A-ban-twa-na, a-ban-twa-na, beh A-frik, Ba-ka-le-la, ba-ka-le-

Ti-na si-zwe, e-sin-sun-du si-Ka-le
A-ban-twa-na, beh A-fri-ka ba-Ka-le

-la, i-zwe le-tu E-la-ta-twa, a-bam-hlo-p'he -ke ma-bou-ye, Kum-
-la, i-A-fri-ka E-la-ta-twa, a-bam-hlo-p'he -ke ma-bou-ye, Kum-

-la, i-zwe le, E-la-ta-twa, e-la-ta-twa, a-bam-hlo, Ma-bou-ye-ke, ma-bou-ye, Kum-
-la, i-A-frik, E-la-ta-twa, e-la-ta-twa, a-bam-hlo, Ma-bou-ye-ke, ma-bou-ye, Kum-

-la, i-zwe-le tu E-la-ta-twa, a-bam-hlo-p'he ma-bou-ye, Kum-
-la, i-A-frik-a E-la-ta-twa, a-bam-hlo-p'he

D.S.

- hla-ba we-tu — ke ma-bou-ye, kum-hla-ba we-tu —

- hla-ba we, Ma-bou-ye-ke, ma-bou-ye, kum-hla-ba we, A-ban-twa-na

- hla-ba we-tu — ma-bou-ye, kum-hla-ba we-tu —

2. *sortly*

3. Ti-na-si-zwe Ti-na-si-zwe, e-sin-sun (du) si-ka-le-la, si-ka-le-la, I-zwe le-
P

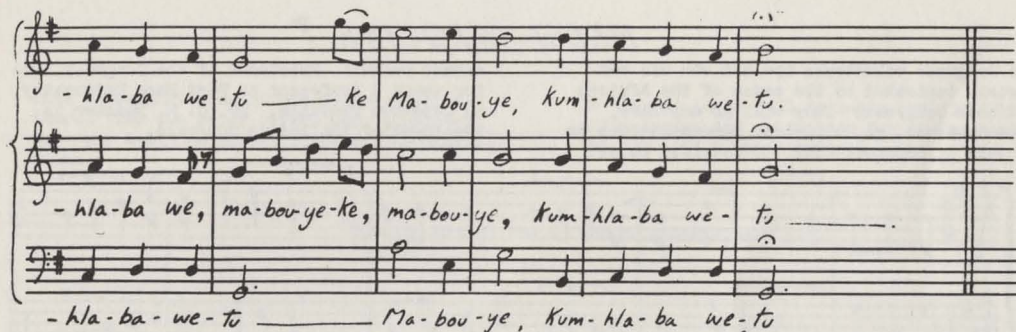
3. Ti-na si-zwe, e-sin-sun, si-ka-le-la i-zwe le,

- tu. 3. Ti-na-si-zwe e-sin-sun-du si-ka-le-la, i-zwe le-

(tu) E-la-ta-twa E-la-ta-twa, a-bam-hlo p'he Ma-bou-ye, kum-
P

E-la-ta-twa a-bam-hlo Ma-bou-ye-ke, ma-bou-ye, kum-
P

- tu E-la-ta-twa a-bam-hlo-p'he Ma-bou-ye, kum-



Lead voice

Bases and tenors

Literal translation

1. Tina sizwe, tina sizwe,
Esinsun -
Sikalela, sikalela,
Izwe le -
Elatatwa, elatatwa,
Abamhlo -

Mabouyeke, mabouye,
Kumhlaba we -
Mabouyeke, mabouye,
Kumhlaba we -

Tina sizwe,
Esinsundu...
Sikalela,
Izwe letu...
Elatatwa,
Abamhlop'he...
Mabouye,
Kumhlaba wetu...
Mabouye
Kumhlaba wetu...

1. We, the brown nation
We cry for our country
That was taken by the
white people

They must leave our
land alone!
They must leave our
land alone!

2. Abantwana, abantwana,
Beh Afrik -
Bakalela, bakalela,
I Afrik -
Elatatwa, elatatwa,
Abamhlo -

Mabouyeke, mabouye,
Kumhlaba we -
Mabouyeke, mabouye,
Kumhlaba we

Abantwana,
Beh Afrika...
Bakalela,
I Afrika...
Elatatwa,
Abamhlop'he...
Mabouye,
Kumhlaba wetu...
Mabouye,
Kumhlaba wetu...

2. We, the children of Africa
Are crying for Africa

That was taken by the white
people
They must leave our
land alone!
They must leave our
land alone!

3. Tina sizwe
Esinsun -
Sikalela
Izwe le -
Elatatwa
Abamhlo -

Mabouyeke, mabouye,
Kumhlaba we -
Mabouyeke, mabouye,
Kumhlaba wetu.

Tina sizwe
Esinsundu...
Sikalela,
Izwe letu...
Elatatwa,
Abamhlop'he...
Mabouye,
Kumhlaba wetu...
Mabouye,
Kumhlaba wetu.

3. (repeat of first verse)

The "hl" in abamhlop'he and
kumhlaba is guttural, as in
the German "ch" (Bach).
More like "abamchlop'he,
and kumchlababa. All other
consonants are pronounced
as in English.

NKOSI WAQCINE *

The Congress volunteers are men who are completely dedicated to the cause of the African National Congress. They will go anywhere, make speeches, go on protest demonstrations or to jail if necessary for the Congress cause.

Albert Luthuli, President of the Congress, was for years a professor at Fort Hare University, in Capetown Province. Dr. G. M. Naicker is President of the Indian Congress.

LEAD NKosi wa-qcine a-ma-voluntiya, NKosi wa-qcin-e a-ma Afrika.

S.S. Se-si-t'hi ye-bo, yebo Chief Lut'huli, na-we Doctor Naicker si-ke-le-ja, la, Daliga chek! D.S.

Nkosi waqcine ama voluntiya } 2x
Nkosi waqcine ama Afrika }

We say yes, yes, Chief Lut'huli } 2x
And you, Doctor Naicker, liberate us. }

Sesit'hi yebo, yebo Chief Lut'huli } 2x
Nawe Doctor Naicker, sikelela!
(Bass voices: Daliga chek!)

Literal translation

God save the volunteers } 2x
God save Africans }

*Pronunciation of the "qc" in Waqcine is like "ts" when the tongue is drawn back, thus sucking air in. The hard trick is to do this at the same time as breathing out on the singing of the rest of the word. Clicking noises are characteristic of several South African languages.

This is another song of the Congress volunteers. The two brief verses were sung over and over again on picket lines and demonstrations.

If they do go to jail it means real hardship, often hunger and starvation for their families, who are left without support.

Pronunciation: "bozh" should sound almost like "bawzh".

Handwritten musical score for the first verse. The score is written on three staves (treble, guitar, and bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4 with a 6/8 feel indicated in parentheses. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Vocal line: A-si-ka-ta-li, no-ma-siya bozh', si-zi-mi-se-li nku-lu-le-ko

Guitar line: LEAD: A-si-Ka-tal' no-ma-siya bozh, si-zi-mi-se-li nku-lu-le-ko

Bass line: A-si-ka-ta-li no-ma-siya bozhwa si-zi-mi-se-li nku-lu-le-ko

Handwritten musical score for the second verse. The score is written on three staves (treble, guitar, and bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4 with a 6/8 feel indicated in parentheses. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Vocal line: Un-zi-ma lom-twa-lo U-fu-na ma-do-da —

Guitar line: Un-zi-ma lom-twa lo — u-fu-na — ma-do-da

Bass line: Un-zi-ma lom-twa-lo — u-fu-na madoda —

ASIKATALI

1. Asikatal' nomasiya bozh'
(Basses: Asikatali no masiya bozhwa)
Sizimiseli ukululeko

Asikatal' nomasiya bozh'
Sizimiseli nkululeko

Unzima lomtwalo
Ufuna madoda

Unzima lomtwalo
Ufuna madoda

2. Tina bantwan baseh Afrik' (Basses: Afrika)
Sizimiseli nkululeko

(Repeat)

Unzima lomtwalo
Ufuna madoda

Unzima lomtwalo
Ufuna madoda

Literal translation

1. We do not care if we go to prison

We are determined to get freedom

(same words...nkululeko means freedom)

This load is heavy
It needs real men

This load is heavy
It needs real men

2. We the children of Africa
Are determined to get freedom

(Repeat)

This load is heavy
It needs real men

This load is heavy
It needs real men

Singable English translation by Peter Seeger

Oh, we don't care if we go to jail
It's for freedom that we gladly go
(repeat)
A heavy load, a heavy load!
And it will need some real men
(repeat)



Sharpville Forecourt after shooting
March 21, 1960.



Policemen walk amid the bodies of African demonstrators after quelling a native demonstration by opening fire with machine guns.

LIYASHIZWA

This is a song of the women's anti-pass campaign. For years all African men had been forced to carry pass cards wherever they went.

In 1956 the government of the Orange Free State said women must carry them too. When

the women realized that these were the same hated permits that their men were forced to carry, they brought their passes back and burned them. Of course, they were arrested for this.

Pronunciation: the "sh" Liyashiswa is, more like "tsh" - with a very soft "t."

Lead: 1. & 2. Li-ya-shiz-wa, Li-ya-shiz-wa. Li-ya-shiz-wa, Li-ya-shiz-wa.

The first system of the musical score is written for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The middle staff is also in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The melody is simple and repetitive, consisting of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics 'Li-ya-shiz-wa' are written below the middle staff, repeated four times across the system.

Kwa-na Frestata i-pa-sa li-ya-shiz-wa! Kwa-na Fre-sta-ta i-pa-sa li-ya-shiz-wa

The second system of the musical score continues the melody from the first system. It is written for three staves in the same key signature and time signature. The melody is more complex, featuring sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The lyrics 'Kwa-na Frestata i-pa-sa li-ya-shiz-wa! Kwa-na Fre-sta-ta i-pa-sa li-ya-shiz-wa' are written below the middle staff, repeated twice across the system.

SS

3. U teng Lu-ke-le, u teng Lu-ke-le, Teng Lu-ke-le, u-teng Lu-ke-le, Man-
 4. Ma-li-bong-we, Ma-li-bong' (Ma-li-bong-we) Ma-li-bong-we, Ma-li-bong-we, I-

D.S.

-de-la, li Tam-bo ne No-kwe, Ba-ten-gi. Man-de-la, li Tam-bo ne Nokwe, Bateng' (malibongwe)
 -qa-ma la-ma vo-lun-ti-ya Ma-li-bong-we, I-qa-ma la-ma voluntya Ma-li-bong' (malibongwe)

1. Liyashizwa, Liyashizwa
 Liyashizwa, Liyashizwa
 Kwana Frestata i pasa liyashizwa
 Kwana Frestata i pasa liyashizwa
2. Liyashizwa, Liyashizwa
 Liyashizwa, Liyashizwa
 Kwana Frestata i pasa liyashizwa
 Kwana Frestata, i pasa liyashizwa
3. Uteng lukele, Uteng Lukele
 Uteng Lukele, Uteng Lukele
 Mandela, li Tambo, ne Nokwe Batengi
 Mandela, li Tambo, ne Nokwe Batengi

4. Malibongwe, malibongwe!
 Malibongwe, malibongwe!
 Lgama lama Kosikazi malibongwe
 Lgama lama Kosikazi malibongwe
5. Malibongwe, malibongwe
 Malibongwe, malibongwe
 Lgama lama voluntya malibongwe
 Lgama lama voluntya malibongwe
 (repeat once more, with ritard at end)
 Lgama lame Kosi Kazi malibongwe.

LIYASHIZWA

Literal translation

1. It is burned, it is burned
It is burnt, it is burnt
The pass in the Orange Free State is burned
(repeat)
2. (same as first verse)
3. Lukele* is there, Lukele is there (repeat)
So are Mandela,* Nokwe,* Batengi*
(*The names of lawyers for the African
National Congress)
4. Let it be praised, let it praised (repeat)
The name of women should be praised (repeat)
5. Let it be praised, let it be praised (repeat)
The name of volunteers should be praised
(repeat)

(tenors: "Nokwe, Batengi Malibongwe")
(tenors: "Malibong-malibongwe!")



The shooting March 21, 1960