

# Sharpeville 21 March 1960

In 1960 the ANC and PAC started new campaigns against the hated pass system. On the morning of 21 March 5 000 people gathered at the Sharpeville police station near Johannesburg to start the PAC campaign. They had come to hand in their passes to the police and asked to be arrested. The people were angry, but peaceful and quiet.

Suddenly the police opened fire without warning. The first hail of bullets struck home. Everybody scattered, running from the police. More bullets were pumped into people. 69 people lay dead. 180 were wounded.

In Langa the police also shot at a peaceful crowd and killed two people.

All over the country people were angry about these killings. There were mass stayaways and protests. In Cape Town over 30 000 people marched from Langa to Parliament. 60 000 workers from Langa and

Nyanga went on strike for nearly 3 weeks.

But on 30 March the government struck back. A state of emergency was declared. 11 000 people were detained and 18 000 were arrested for defying the pass laws.

On 8 April 1960 the ANC and PAC were banned. The government was determined to stop all peaceful protest by the ANC.

The ANC decided that it can never listen to the government and give up the struggle for freedom. Their only choice was to go underground and continue the fight. In 1961 Umkhonto we Sizwe (the Spear of the Nation) was formed to take up armed struggle.

Today it is clear that the government cannot ban the ANC from the hearts of the people. The ANC is still recognized as the most popular political organisation in our country.



## SHARPEVILLE DAY IS OURS