

The African Communist

NO 63 FOURTH QUARTER 1975

**Vorster's Imperialist
Strategy in Africa**

**TWENTY YEARS
OF THE
FREEDOM CHARTER**

**National Unity or
Secession in
African States?**

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EDITORIAL NOTES



A Mighty Step on the Road to Peace

The Helsinki agreement reached last July between all the European countries (except Albania) plus the United States and Canada represents an important advance on the road to peace and security of all mankind. Indeed, if the scope of nations to destroy the whole world by unleashing atomic war is taken into consideration, it is perhaps the most important international agreement ever reached anytime, anywhere. A world which has been living for decades in the midst of cold war threatening at any time to erupt into irreversible global conflict can breathe more freely.

The Helsinki summit has codified a number of important principles which should govern the conduct of international relations — the sovereign equality of states, the renunciation of the use of force or the

threat of force, the inviolability of frontiers and respect for the territorial integrity of states, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs, respect for human rights and basic freedoms and equal rights for all peoples etc.

There are not lacking those – including many leaders and especially leader-writers in the West, together with the Chinese and Albanians, Maoists and ultra-rightists and leftists of various breeds who have already dismissed the Helsinki summit as just another “scrap of paper”. Let us note straight away that this cynicism has not emanated from any of the socialist countries who participated in the Helsinki conference, who worked so hard for so long to bring it about, and who openly rejoiced at its consummation. For them, and particularly for the Soviet Union, the Helsinki conference was a milestone on the road to enduring peace, the safeguarding of the gains to humanity first initiated by the Russian revolution of 1917.

It is only when placed in its historical context that the full significance of the Helsinki conference begins to emerge. For in a sense the Helsinki agreement represents the first acceptance by the nations of the capitalist and imperialist world that the Russian revolution is irreversible and that it is no longer possible to contemplate the elimination by force of the socialist system in those countries where it has been established. It is now agreed by all parties that peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems is possible and, indeed, desirable.

Peaceful coexistence has been a foundation stone of the policy of the Soviet Union ever since it came into existence, and indeed it was insistence on this point by the Bolshevik Party which led to the break in the 1920s with the Trotskyites with their theory of “permanent revolution”. For more than 50 years the Soviet Government has stood by its affirmation that revolution is not exportable, that socialism could be successfully built in one country even though surrounded by capitalist and imperialist enemies. By contrast, world capitalism and imperialism has not until this year of the Helsinki agreement been willing to abandon, even in words alone, its basic policy of exporting counter-revolution, of attempting to destroy by force the bastions of socialism wherever they had been established.

The first manifestation of imperialist hostility was the open intervention by 14 nations immediately after the 1917 revolution and their support of the white guards in the four-year civil war designed,

in the words of Winston Churchill, to “strangle the Bolshevik baby in its cradle”. The Red Army, backed by the Russian workers and peasants, crushed the intervention and placed Soviet power on a firm foundation, opening the way to the establishment and development of the world’s first socialist system. But imperialism never ceased to encourage counter-revolution, clearly recognising that the longer the Soviet Union survived and proved itself successful in building socialism and improving the lot of the formerly oppressed and brutalised peoples of the old Tsarist empire, the more the peoples of other countries would tend to follow their example and throw off the yoke of the oppressors and exploiters who profited from their labours.

The counter-revolution took many forms, from the encouragement of anti-Communist elements inside the Soviet Union itself, to the building up of the Axis powers as a buffer against the spread of Communism and, it was hoped, an instrument which could be wielded to bring about the physical destruction of the socialist heartland. The Munich agreement which betrayed Czechoslovakia into the hands of the Hitlerites was perhaps the most blatant example of imperialist chicanery, inspired solely by anti-Soviet hostility. And even during the ensuing war itself, it was evident that the long delay on the part of the Western powers in opening a second front was inspired largely by the desire to ensure that as much Soviet blood as possible was shed before the war came to an end, thus ensuring the best possible advantage for the Western powers in the post-war period. The figures of casualties speak for themselves: of about 30 million lives lost in the war, as many as 20 million were Soviet citizens, nearly 10 times as many as British and United States casualties combined. Whereas the western lands of the Soviet Union were devastated by the occupying Nazi forces, the United States was completely untouched.

The strength and resilience of the socialist system which inspired the Soviet peoples brought not only victory in the war but also a recovery from its wounds so rapid as to alarm the imperialist powers and set in motion once again the machinery of counter-revolution. The iron curtain and the cold war were inventions not of the Soviet Union but of the imperialist powers, determined to prevent the “contagion” of communism from spreading. In the wake of the cold war came imperialist intervention in the affairs of countries whose peoples were struggling to bring about social change, the worst examples being the

wars in Vietnam and Korea, in which troops of the capitalist countries openly participated. Did nobody notice that in all the wars which have broken out since the end of world war 2, not a single Soviet soldier has been involved, whereas the armies of the United States and her allies have been thrown into one action after another to stop, not Soviet expansionism, but social revolution?

Patiently and steadily the Soviet Government continued to pursue, the policy of peaceful coexistence which it has followed with remarkable and unswerving consistency. The first document adopted by the Soviet Government on its establishment was the Decree on Peace which called for the protection of peoples from the horrors of imperialist wars. One Soviet Government after another, one leader after another, backed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people, has pursued this peace policy despite every discouragement and act of treachery from the other side. Slowly and steadily world support for peaceful coexistence has grown stronger. Slowly and steadily the forces of world socialism themselves have grown stronger. The Soviet Union has been joined by allies in neighbouring countries, Soviet sputniks have penetrated space, the socialist ideology has penetrated into every corner of the world. At last at Helsinki the dream of the 1917 interventionists and counter-revolutionaries has been dissipated and the whole world has had to acknowledge: *socialism has come to stay and that has to be accepted as an axiom of contemporary politics*. The threat of all-out nuclear conflict which would have destroyed the world and all who live in it — a threat which has dominated the minds of men for a generation has been diminished, at least for the foreseeable future.

The Helsinki agreement, however, will remain a paper agreement unless and until it is fully implemented in practice, and to ensure this the progressive forces throughout the world must remain vigilant and on guard. And here it is necessary to indicate, if only to expose those who are already trying to distort it, what the Helsinki agreement is *not*. It is *not*, as the Chinese allege, an agreement between rival imperialisms for the demarcation of spheres of interest. The Soviet Union and the other socialist signatories have no holdings in other countries, no colonies; they draw no dividends from foreign investment; they make no profits from the exploitation of under-paid foreign labourers. The whole significance of the Helsinki agreement is precisely that it is an

agreement for peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the Helsinki agreement is of course no contract for the elimination of the class struggle or points of conflict in international affairs. When British Premier Harold Wilson proclaims that he regards the outcome of events in Portugal as a test of Soviet sincerity in implementing the Helsinki agreement, he shows himself guilty of ignorance or bad faith or both. Where is the evidence of Soviet involvement in Portugal? Is Wilson trying to revive the old canard that the independent Communist Parties of various countries are merely agencies of the Soviet Government? Is he trying to argue that the Helsinki agreements are a pact for the suppression of social change, or the abortion of social revolution? Will Wilson and his fellow social-democrats who held a special conference to decide what to do about Portugal only be satisfied with the Helsinki agreement if Portugal (or Chile, South Africa or Rhodesia) remains within the capitalist orbit?

The truth of the matter is that in Portugal at the time of writing it is anti-communism, not communism which is on the offensive, and it is under the banners of the socialists that the fascist and reactionary elements in Portugal have been able to rally and take part in the most brutal and vicious attacks on Communist Party offices and members. Furthermore, it is not the Soviet Union, but the anti-Soviet powers, including Wilson and his allies, who are intervening aggressively in the internal development of Portugal, denying economic assistance to the government of Portugal while giving every material and moral support to its adversaries.

If the imperialist powers hope to use the Helsinki agreements as a weapon to freeze the world-wide struggle for socialism and national liberation, they are in for a big disappointment. The potential victims of Chile's fascist government, the oppressed black millions of South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, are not going to relax their struggle for freedom one whit because of Helsinki. Nor are the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries going to abate one whit of their support for the oppressed peoples of the world fighting for their liberation. Peaceful coexistence and detente do *not* mean world-wide acceptance of the status-quo, or the abandonment of the class or national liberation struggle. On the contrary, peaceful coexistence and detente mean, as has been shown by the events in Vietnam, Mozambique, Portugal,

Greece and elsewhere, that the freedom struggle can be pursued with the utmost vigour without leading to atomic world war. Detente does not mean the disarming of the forces of social revolution but their strengthening.

VORSTER'S IMPERIALISM

The very concept of detente has so captured the imagination of mankind too long living under the shadow of war that even South African premier Vorster has tried to cash in on it. But it is a mark of his contempt for the principles of commonsense and the intelligence of his opponents that he should dare to talk of his foreign policy in Africa in terms of "detente". Doubtless Vorster would like to prevent the peoples of southern Africa resorting to violence to achieve their liberation, for the end of that road is clear for all to see – the ultimate destruction of white supremacy and the establishment of non-exploitative democracy in the whole sub-continent – perhaps on the lines laid down in the Freedom Charter, or possibly after the model of the constitution just proclaimed in Mozambique. (See "African Commentary" by Sentinel in this issue.)

But what Vorster understands by "detente" is not what has been inscribed in the Helsinki agreements. Where in southern Africa have the white racists acknowledged the sovereign equality of peoples and respect for their sovereign rights? How can a man who rules by violence and terror and the refusal of the franchise to all blacks demand the abandonment of violence from others? How can the Nationalist Government, which for decades has rejected the demand for a national convention of all peoples to draw up a new democratic constitution for South Africa, declare that it favours the peaceful settlement of all disputes? Where and how does the Nationalist Government proclaim its respect for human rights and equal rights and self-determination for all peoples? The illegal regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia do not conform in a single aspect with any of the basic principles laid down in the Helsinki agreement, and cannot in any way shelter under the protection of the concept of "detente".

What Vorster understands by "detente" is the preservation of the status quo in southern Africa, the acceptance of white domination by

the peoples of Africa and the world. Last November Vorster said "Give me six months" and the situation in southern Africa would be transformed. When, on the expiry of the six months, the world was unable to see any change in the situation, least of all in South Africa itself, Vorster hastened to declare that his remarks were never intended to apply to the internal affairs of his own country. Alarmed by indications that he had lost some ground to right-wing elements both in the HNP and in his own party, he reassured his followers that the Government was as committed as ever to white domination in "white" South Africa.

Even the South African Government's announcement that it intends to withdraw its police force from Rhodesia in order to facilitate a settlement there is a fraud. Vorster is removing his police (if he is — and that remains to be seen) not to strengthen democracy in Rhodesia but to shorten his own lines of defence and strengthen the bastions of white power in South Africa itself. In his own mind, it has been suggested, Vorster has written off Rhodesia as a lost cause — by no means morally indefensible but physically incapable of being defended. No doubt he will still do what he can to help Smith and maintain white supremacy in Rhodesia, but in his view, white interests in South Africa would be jeopardised more by the extension of armed conflict in Rhodesia than by the granting of concessions, even if these were to lead eventually to the installation of black majority rule there. His predecessor, Verwoerd, was of the same opinion, and opposed UDI from the start.

Of course Vorster may not get what he wants, and may still be forced or induced to intervene more actively in Rhodesia. Certainly there are many indications that Rhodesian Premier Smith, despite his agreement to start talks about talks in a railway carriage at the Victoria Falls, is unwilling to come to any more meaningful agreement, and is determined to maintain white rule, even at the risk of wider conflict, because he is convinced that once the chips are down, not only South Africa but also her Western backers will be forced willy-nilly to take sides and come to his aid.

Neither Smith in Rhodesia nor Vorster in South Africa has made a single meaningful concession to their respective black majorities. In South Africa the removal of a few apartheid notice boards and the admission of blacks to a formerly all-white theatre do not in any way compensate for the continued raids, arrests and trials under the

notorious security laws of opponents of the apartheid laws; the promised independence of the Bantustans is effectively negated by the announcement that the Government plans to open in the "homelands" concentration camps for the "reorientation" and "rehabilitation" of persistent offenders, "idlers" and "vagabonds" who refuse to accept that apartheid is designed for their own good. In the words of *Government Gazette* Notice R133 published earlier this year, inmates of rehabilitation centres (three are already nearing completion) "shall be detained for the purpose of improving their physical, mental and moral condition" by "training them in habits of industry and work" and "re-orientating them to the traditions, culture, custom and system of government of the national unit to which they belong" and "fostering an awareness in regard to the observance of, and the necessity for, the laws of the country". Detainees – who in terms of the law may include ordinary pass law offenders as well as politicals – may be detained for up to three years, and forced to work for up to 56 hours a week without pay.

So long as laws and regulations like these continue to be applied in South Africa, there is no possibility of detente, in the Vorsterian or any other sense. On August 1 the *Financial Mail* commented in a remarkable editorial:

"Ultimately whether there will be war or peace in South Africa must therefore depend on whether the Nationalists can win and maintain the confidence of the local population".

But, continued the paper, this raises the second question: "Will South Africa achieve a more equitable distribution of its national income, without which such support is simply not on?" The journal pointed out that in 1973 the ratio of white to black (African, Coloured and Asian) per capita income was 14: 1 while the absolute gap in annual income per head was R2,050 (whites R2,207, blacks R157). Reducing this ratio to 4: 1 by the end of the century would mean white income per head could rise by no more than 1% per annum, while the economy as a whole would have to grow on average by 5.5% per annum.

"Reducing the ratio to 4: 1 would mean a widening of the absolute income gap to R2,150 however. To achieve a meaningful cut in this absolute gap would mean that the economy would have to grow by more than 5.5% per annum and/or that there could be no increase at all

in white living standards over the next 25 years”.

So much for the argument that economic development will automatically bring about a more equitable distribution of the national income in South Africa!

The *Financial Mail* has the wit to perceive, though, that even “full bellies are not enough . . . they will have to be accompanied by advances on the non-material front as well”. Opening up non-racial theatres here and there or establishing “international” hotels are not the answer. “To be meaningful to the majority of blacks, it must mean doing away with such racially discriminatory practices as the pass laws, influx control, Group Areas removals, resettlement, rehabilitation centres etc.

“And in the final analysis it also means facing the challenge: How best to move away from a racially discriminatory political power structure?

“The central aim of present policy is pretty clear. It is to set up independent Bantustans which, whether they like it or not, would make the majority of Africans, who happen to live in the common area, aliens in their own land. Because theoretically they would have full political rights in the Bantustans, it would be ‘fair’ – so the argument runs – to continue to deny them rights in South Africa.....

“The trouble with so transparent a ploy is that it is hardly likely to fool even a minority of Blacks. It therefore has not the remotest hope of solving the racial conflict which besets our land. Eventually, the truth – which is that the whole of South Africa belongs as much to the blacks as it does to the whites – will have to be faced. And a deal will have to be struck”.

It remains only to add to this impeccable logic that the *Financial Mail*, organ of big business, says nothing about whether the economic wealth of South Africa also belongs to black as well as white. It’s not just higher wages that blacks are demanding, but people’s control over the economic resources of the country, an end to the monopoly ownership of mining and industry, redistribution of the land etc. It’s all spelt out in the Freedom Charter, and the Programme of the South African Communist Party. Carry the argument of the *Financial Mail* to its logical conclusion and you end up with a people’s democracy and, ultimately, a truly socialist South Africa, with equal rights and opportunities for all.

That is the only true detente which will bring peace to South Africa.

THE QUESTION OF POWER

A tremendous campaign is being waged in both Portugal and Angola against the forces of the left, and there can be little doubt that international reaction, working through the CIA and similar agencies, is cooperating with local reactionary elements in both countries in an attempt to isolate, in the one case the Portuguese Communist Party and, in the other, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Nor is it an accident that the crisis in Portugal and Angola is accompanied by coups and attempted coups in the Azores, Timor and other Portuguese areas. The campaign is being internationally orchestrated. The white South African establishment, both public and private, is also intervening actively in Angola.

Banded about in the course of this bitter conflict has been the phrase "pluralist democracy", whatever that may mean. The question is: democracy for whom? In Portugal the issue is whether the old order of the monopolists and latifundists based on private ownership and control of the means of production is to be restored, even in modified form, or whether working-class power, in alliance with the peasantry and the Armed Forces Movement is to be established on a firm foundation, paving the way for socialism. The very bitterness with which the struggle is being waged is a measure of its crucial significance, not only for Portugal, but for the whole of Western Europe and the world.

In Angola the battle-lines are drawn equally clearly: is Angola to remain within the orbit of imperialism and neo-colonialism or are the Angolan people to be allowed to express clearly and unmistakably their right to self-determination and true independence? (For a fuller discussion of the developments in Angola, we refer our readers once again to "African Commentary" by Sentinel in this issue.)

Neither Portugal nor Angola today can be judged by the criteria of normalcy, whether bourgeois or socialist. Both countries are in the throes of revolution, and the essential question which has to be settled before anything else is: which class rules? And in whose interests? This is a life and death matter beside which the theoretical right to vote, or the desirability of allowing more than one political party to function is of secondary importance. If the alliance between the Armed Forces Movement and the organised working-class movement in Portugal is broken up, we may well see the establishment of a Chile-type dictator-

ship of the right, butchering its enemies in the name of “pluralist democracy” and the safeguarding of the “freedom of the press” which of course will be merely a cover for the restoration of capitalism. The defeat of MPLA in Angola will preserve for the imperialists and their allies in Africa the power to continue the ruthless exploitation of the people and the resources of the territory.

We are all for democracy – but not at the expense of the interests of the working people of town and country, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population. Democracy is not separable from its class content, and we should never forget that Hitler was brought to office through the normal channels of democracy, which of course he destroyed as soon as he was able to use the power which had been placed in his hands by those proclaiming their undying devotion to freedom and fair play. Nor can we overlook the fact that once again the leaders of the social democrats and socialists are playing their usual divisive role, breaking up the unity of the working class in their hatred of communism, paving the way for the bourgeois and fascist elements who, as ever, find them a convenient stalking horse. If social-democratic governments anywhere had succeeded in establishing socialism, they might have some evidence to present which departs from the pattern of repeated sell-outs and betrayal which their majorities have given rise to in Britain, France, Italy etc. etc. All we have seen so far is the leaders of the social democrats willingly acting as the tools of the bourgeoisie and helping to preserve the bastions of capitalism and imperialism.

In these critical days when Portugal and Angola are in the throes of revolution, it is the duty of all sincere progressives and democrats to give their unreserved support to the forces of revolution and social change, and to help defeat the forces of counter-revolution which are trying desperately to turn the clock back. To the Communist Party of Portugal and to MPLA we pledge our wholehearted support for their fight to reject the brutal past and to place their countries firmly on the path of progress and people’s democracy.

THE POLITICS OF NON-COLLABORATION

In the last issue of *The African Communist*, our contributor C. Domingo

discussed the victory of the Coloured Labour Party in March 1975 elections for the Coloured Representative Council. "The victory of the Labour Party", he said, "is a sure sign of the resurgence of militancy among the Coloured people and a reflection of the mass upsurge amongst the black oppressed in general".

To some extent the Government showed it was prepared to recognise that circumstances had changed. Unwilling to provoke a damaging confrontation, and perhaps hoping that the lures of office would tame the Labour Party leadership, it appointed the leader of the Labour Party, Mr Sonny Leon, as chairman of the CRC, and included 4 Labour Party members amongst the 20 it was allowed to nominate to join the 40 elected members of the Council. This gave the Labour Party a majority of 35 out of the total 60 members of the Council. One Social Democrat was nominated and the other 15 nominees were either members of the discredited and defeated Federal Party or "independents".

In accepting office, Mr Leon of course had to abandon his election promise to boycott the CRC. But the Government had given him little option, having previously by legislation given itself the power to carry on the functions of the CRC or to cause them to be carried on; this meant that if the Labour Party boycotted the CRC, the Federal Party minority would be installed in power and allowed to carry on. The Labour Party either had to take office or go into the political wilderness.

Justifying his action, Mr Leon said the Labour Party would continue to use the CRC as a platform until the hopes and aspirations of the oppressed people had been achieved. The Party had not departed from its original aim, which was the eventual destruction of the CRC. The institution would never represent the hopes and aspirations of the oppressed people, he said.

The South African Communist Party has consistently maintained that the issue of a boycott of institutions like the CRC is a tactical one to be decided in the light of the circumstances governing each case, and not an immutable question of principle. A boycott is justified if the exercise of the boycott weakens the forces of the enemy and strengthens those of the oppressed people. On the other hand, a boycott which is not backed by the mass action of the people may turn out to be a futile

exercise in verbal gymnastics which leaves the boycotters isolated and the masses disillusioned and leaderless.

It may well be that Mr Leon had no alternative but to accept the leadership of the CRC, if only to frustrate the formation of a working partnership between the defeated and discredited Federal Party and the Government which would continue to operate the CRC and administer the funds placed at its disposal by the Government – amounting to R140 million for the year ending March 31, 1975.

But the question remains: where does the Labour Party go from here? However pure its intentions, the longer the Labour Party continues to operate the machinery of the CRC, the more legitimacy it gives to the segregated institutions established by the Government to implement the segregatory policies of the Vorster regime. The CRC may well provide a platform for the Labour Party to proclaim its opposition, but it does not provide the machinery for destroying apartheid. This can only come from the organised strength of the Coloured people themselves, working in collaboration with other sections of the oppressed black peoples of South Africa.

We note that the CRC executive, led by Mr Leon, has held talks with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and the KwaZulu “cabinet” and with the Indian Council executive committee in Durban to discuss unification of the black people and the construction of a black alliance. But this is not the way an effective black alliance can be created. For one thing, neither the KwaZulu “cabinet” nor the Indian Council are elective bodies. But, above all, an effective black alliance in South Africa will never emerge from agreement among the leaders of Government-sponsored segregated institutions, but must in the long-run be based on the organised strength and unity in action of the black masses who alone have the strength to defeat apartheid.

A legal, institutionalised struggle against apartheid, conducted on lines largely laid down by the Government itself, can never succeed. Mr Leon and his colleagues should be using the CRC to strengthen the organisation of the Labour Party amongst the Coloured people, and to win the co-operation of the Coloured people in the mass struggle which is and has been organised by the existing liberation organisations of the black people, both legal and illegal. Unless the Labour Party can develop a perspective and strategy of struggle which transcends the bounds of what is conceded to them by the Government, they can only, in the long

run, discredit themselves in the eyes of their supporters.

BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM – WEAPON OF REACTION

In a statement drawn up for discussion by the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party and printed in *The African Communist* No. 56 First Quarter 1974, our national chairman Dr Y.M.Dadoo, commenting on the Party's attitude towards Bantustans and Black Consciousness, wrote:

“The main aim of the present stage of our struggle is the winning of majority rule over the whole of South Africa. This means nothing less than the total liberation of the African people and with them the other oppressed groups.

“Our Party is a Marxist-Leninist Party which upholds the principle of the unity of the working class throughout the world, without regard to race or colour. We reject the narrow ideology of bourgeois nationalism which divides the workers and can lead to harmful concepts of chauvinism and racialism

“There is no conflict between this, our outlook, and our unqualified support for the progressive elements present in the nationalism of an oppressed people struggling for its national freedom. We have consistently upheld the efforts of the ANC to build up and assert the rights of the African nation in our country; we have worked hard and long to achieve the fighting unity of the African, Coloured and Indian people against white domination”.

In the course of our history we have time and again come across so-called “national-minded” elements in the liberation movement who have objected to co-operation with people of other races and especially with the Communist Party on the grounds that such co-operation amounted to “interference” by foreign elements with the internal affairs of their organisation, and a dilution of the “purity” of their national struggle. Many of these elements have in time come to accept the broad-based and progressive outlook of the African National Congress, realising that only through united action of all groups willing to co-operate on the basis of the principles outlined in the Freedom Charter could the strength to overthrow apartheid be generated. Others, however, have persisted with their wrong policies and worked to divide the ranks of

the national movement with their various brands of chauvinism. Some broke away from the ANC to form the PAC, and then continued with their divisive policies inside the PAC, producing one split after another. Some “national-minded” elements within the ANC are still trying to split the united front of liberation which has been built up so painfully over the years.

Warning against the activities of these people, Dr Dadoo warned: “We must especially be on our guard against those inside and outside our movement who jump on the bandwagon of Black Consciousness for their own ulterior purposes, whether it be for their business advancement or as a cover for political careerism”.

Two such national-minded gentlemen have recently exposed the true character of their patriotism. One is Mr Tsepo Letlaka, a PAC leader who left South Africa after the Sharpeville shootings in 1960 and was in the leadership of one of the PAC factions abroad. Last July it was announced that Mr Letlaka had been allowed by the Vorster Government to return to South Africa, where he placed himself at the service of the Matanzima regime in the Transkei. According to the *Rand Daily Mail* of July 23, Mr Letlaka “summed up his decision in one word – freedom. He came back because he felt the Transkei would embody the freedom which he cherished and fought for when it becomes independent next year. Mr Letlaka is in Pretoria where he is undergoing training as a diplomat by officials of the South African Government for service in the Transkei diplomatic corps”.

Just imagine, Mr Letlaka is being trained by the freedom-loving Vorster regime to serve the freedom-loving Matanzima regime, both of whom survive solely because they have at their disposal weapons of terrorism and violence which enable them to crush all opposition to their rule. The police forces of Vorster and Matanzima regularly detain and torture their enemies, deport them to distant parts of the country, sometimes murder them, and in the Transkei, even burn down their houses – all in the name of that freedom which Mr Letlaka is so anxious to promote. Once trained, tamed and installed as a diplomat, Mr Letlaka will have a sort of freedom, one supposes – the freedom of the eunuch to guard the harem, having lost his manhood and his ideals somewhere along the road.

Recently we learnt of the fate of another of Matanzima’s “freedom fighters”, treason trialist and one-time “national-minded” ANC member

T.E. ka-Tshunungwa. This gentleman many years ago left the ANC to climb on to the Matanzima bandwagon and eventually rose to the position of deputy chairman of the Transkei Legislative Assembly. Last July this purified black nationalist was sentenced in the Regional Court in Cofimvaba to two years' imprisonment for theft. He had been found guilty of the theft of R8,370 from a Natal maize company for which he had been acting as agent. He was also convicted under the Insolvency Act of operating without the consent of his trustees and given three months suspended for three years.

Business advancement or political careerism! Dr Dadoo certainly hit the nail on the head. Marxists draw a clear distinction between bourgeois and revolutionary nationalism, and time and again history has proved them right.

SOUTH AFRICAN CASUALTIES

At a press conference last August, Mr Moses Garoeb, administrative secretary of the South West Africa People's Organisation, reported that 200 members of the South African security forces had been killed in action by SWAPO freedom fighters in a series of engagements in Namibia in the period April to July 1975.

The claim was dismissed by the South African Government as "poppycock".

But there is plenty of evidence that the South African military have been concealing the extent of their losses at the hands of freedom fighters in Namibia and Rhodesia. The whole northern zone of Namibia is out of bounds to the press, and nobody is allowed to know what goes on there.

In Rhodesia, however, South African and Rhodesian Government figures about the casualties have been contradictory. Here are a few examples:

"Salisbury – Four more terrorists have been killed in the past few days, bringing their death toll to 593 against 75 Security Force casualties" – *Rand Daily Mail* June 26, 1975. The paper also reported "the 900th casualty of the two-year border war".

"Salisbury – Four more terrorists died in the engagement and in other contacts over the past five days. Their death toll is now 604 since

December, 1972, against 79 men lost by Rhodesian security forces". – *Rand Daily Mail* July 21, 1975.

"Salisbury – Since December 1972, the war claimed the lives of 18 South African policemen, both black and white". – *Star* August 4, 1975.

Following the announcement at the beginning of August that South African police units were to be withdrawn from Rhodesia, "a senior police officer said in Pretoria last night that during the more than four years the police contingent was in Rhodesia total casualties amounted to about 67 killed and 145 wounded. This is nearly a quarter of the total Rhodesian security force killed in action". – *Rand Daily Mail* August 2, 1975.

This would bring the total of Rhodesian security forces *killed* in action during the period to at least 270. Thus both Rhodesian and South African casualties during the four-year period have been far heavier than ever previously admitted in the press.

But in addition, everyone knows that guerilla action in Rhodesia began in 1967, and that South African police and/or military units have been on active service in Rhodesia ever since then. Thus total South African and Rhodesia casualties are higher even than the latest admissions.

Obviously guerrilla action against the forces of white domination in Southern Africa has delivered heavy blows – so heavy that the beleaguered racists have resorted to wholesale lying and deception in order to bolster the morale of their frightened followers.

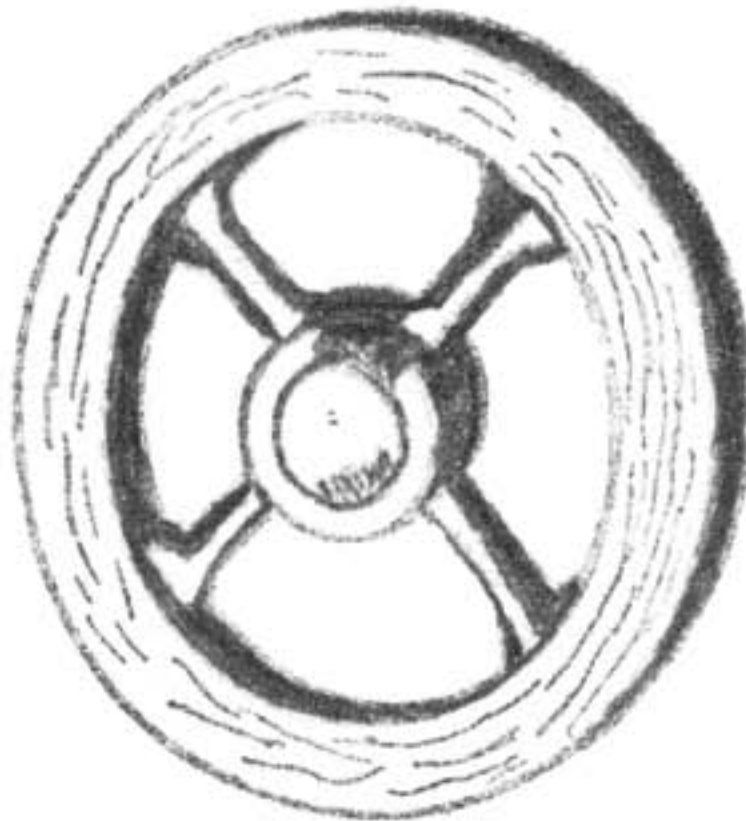
Twenty Years of the Freedom Charter

The revolutionary programme of the African National Congress and its contemporary significance - A Communist analysis by R.P. NGCOBO

Twenty years ago, on 26 June 1955, nearly 3,000 South Africans, assembled in the Congress of the People, at Kliptown near Johannesburg, adopted with acclaim - under the Sten guns of the police - a document called the Freedom Charter. In a message to the Congress from Natal, where he was confined by a banning order and by ill-health, the President General of the African National Congress Chief A.J. Lutuli anticipated correctly the momentous importance of what happened on that occasion:

“Why will this assembly be significant and unique? Its size, I hope, will make it unique. But above all its multi-racial nature and its noble objectives will make it unique, because it will be the first time in the history of our multi-racial nation that its people from all walks of life will meet as equals, irrespective of race, colour and creed, to formulate a freedom charter for all people in the country.”

In the event, the Congress of the People was attended by 2,844 elected delegates from a wide variety of groups and organisations. They reflected the racial composition of the South African nation, at least two-thirds of those present being Africans. And they reflected the many social strata and cultural diversities which are united in the democratic movement: workers and trade unionists, peasants and traders, teachers and students, taxi-drivers and clerks, Christians, Moslems and Hindus, Communists and non-Communists, men and women. It was truly a *National* Convention. and the document it adopted became the basis of the subsequent Treason Trial in which Verwoerd's regime sought to indict not only 156 leaders and activists in the liberation movement, but also to brand as treason the ideas which they held in common - which are nowhere more clearly set out than in the Freedom Charter. What were these ideas, and what is their significance today?



The Wheel of Unity - symbol of the Congress of the People

PART I: THE FREEDOM CHARTER IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

To answer these questions we must see the Freedom Charter in its historical context, seeing what led up to it, and what followed it. From

the outset it must be borne in mind that the Charter is a statement of aims. About how these aims are to be achieved, i.e. about strategy and tactics and methods of struggle, it says not a word. But, as we shall see later in more detail, what we are fighting for is bound to determine who we are fighting with, who are our brothers in the struggle. Thus the definition of aims is vitally important for the definition of strategy. So the Freedom Charter inevitably *implies* a definite conception of the strategy for a democratic revolution in South Africa whose main content will be the national liberation of the oppressed African people. But it does not itself contain that strategy, and anybody looking in the Freedom Charter for a worked out view of the forces of change, the means by which they may be mobilised, necessary forms and combinations of struggle etc. will be disappointed. The rich experience of our liberation movement and its collective and considered view on all these questions is to be found elsewhere, most notably in the *Strategy and Tactics of the African National Congress* and the resolutions of the Morogoro conference of 1969, and the programme of the South African Communist Party. These complement and supplement the Charter, and none can be taken in isolation from the others.

The Freedom Charter is, in short, a definition of the goals of our liberation movement. As Chief Lutuli wrote in his autobiography, it attempts "to give a flesh and blood meaning, *in the South African setting*, to such words as *democracy, freedom, liberty*. If the Charter is examined it will be seen that *freedom* means the opening up of the opportunity to all South Africans to live full and abundant lives in terms of country, community and individual." Now, in the stage of the struggle that has been going on for nearly fifteen years, of armed struggle and the preparation for armed insurrection, the Freedom Charter has not been rendered irrelevant by the present approach of the liberation movement. On the contrary, the movement's current strategy and tactics can only be properly understood in the light of its aims as set out in the Freedom Charter - aims which call for the tactics and forms of strategy developed in the past fifteen years. With these preliminaries in mind, nobody should approach the Charter with false expectations as to what it contains.

The adoption of the Freedom Charter was in a way the culmination

of several distinct but inter-related processes in the development of the national liberation movement. In the first place the ANC itself had changed very considerably over the previous 10-12 years. From being a very loose-knit movement in the early forties, with annual conferences at provincial and national level but very little in the way of a branch or regional structure, uncertain membership, and little mobilising capacity, the ANC had become by 1955 an energetic organisation leading a mass movement. By 1955 the ANC was mounting a series of campaigns and constantly drawing into united action ever-widening circles of people in both the urban areas and the countryside. The character of the leadership had changed somewhat, from the predominance of the rather elitist, middle class and 'respectable' figures of an earlier period, to men who were closer in spirit or social background to the working masses who were the backbone of the ANC. This change at leadership levels was part of a wider change which Nelson Mandela analysed in his presidential address to the Transvaal ANC in 1953, in the wake of the Defiance Campaign:

“The general political level of the people has been considerably raised and they are now more conscious of their strength. Action has become the language of the day. The ties between the working people and the Congress have been greatly strengthened. This is a development of the highest importance because in a country such as ours a political organisation that does not receive the support of the workers is in fact paralysed on the very ground on which it has chosen to wage battle.”

This strengthening of the links between the working people and the ANC stemmed from two main developments, one within and the other outside the ANC itself. As far as Congress itself was concerned, the basis for the transformation of the ANC into a radical mass organisation had been provided by the *Programme of Action* adopted by the ANC's annual conference in 1949. This set out the main political aims of the organisation and outlined a programme of propaganda and agitation to achieve them. The boycott of apartheid institutions, so much discussed in the preceding years in relation to the Natives' Representative Council and the Advisory Boards, was agreed in principle, and other weapons were listed: “immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience,

non-cooperation” etc. For the first time, the ANC committed itself to a political strike:

“preparations and making of plans for a national stoppage of work for one day as a mark of protest against the reactionary policy of the Government.”

This was a new fighting mood, a new emphasis on *mass* struggle, a new level of rejection of the policies and practices of the oppressor. The *Programme of Action* is a historic document. It opened the door for the 1952 Defiance Campaign and a whole series of subsequent campaigns which carried the liberation movement to new heights right up to 1960.

“Up to 1949 the leaders of the ANC had always acted in the hope that by merely pleading their cause, placing it before the authorities, they - the authorities - would change their hearts and extend to them all the rights that they were demanding. But the forms of political action which are set out in the Programme of Action meant that the ANC was not going to rely on a change of heart. It was going to exert pressure to compel the authorities to grant its demands.”

(Nelson Mandela, giving evidence during the Treason Trial)

Reading the Programme of Action today, with the advantage of hindsight, one can see that viewed as a statement of aims, which in part it is, it had certain limitations which are not to be found in the Freedom Charter. First, it dealt largely with forms and methods of struggle, and only briefly with aims. Secondly, in defining aims it was at some points ambiguous. For example, having stated that the aim of the ANC is to achieve “National freedom”, the Programme continues:

“By National freedom we mean freedom from White domination and the attainment of political independence.”

Today we would regard the term ‘independence’ as inaccurate, implying the possibility of some secession and/or separation of those claiming it from those who are in power. It hardly needs pointing out

that secession was definitely not in the minds of the leaders of the ANC when they drew up and adopted the Programme of Action. Today, with the spurious and dangerous 'independence' of the Bantustans looming up on the horizon, the liberation movement cannot afford any inaccuracies of that sort in stating its goals.

Thirdly, the Programme of Action is purely an expression of African nationalism. It does not address itself to the question of the liberation of the other oppressed groups in South Africa. It therefore provides the basic core of the programme of revolutionary-democratic nationalism in the South African liberation movement, but by itself is insufficient as a comprehensive expression of the aims of revolutionary-democratic nationalism. It did not, (and perhaps could not, at that stage) represent what Chief Lutuli called the "broad South Africanism of the ANC."

The other development contributing to the strengthening of the links between the ANC and the working masses at that time was the reformation nationally, on an underground basis, of the Communist Party. After the party's dissolution in 1950, and some consequent disorganisation and confusion, by 1953 the vanguard of the working class was back in action, contributing in an organised way the consistent revolutionism of the proletariat to the broader front of democratic forces. This was a most significant factor in the growth of the ANC from the 1950s onwards.

These developments in the field of the ANC's programme, strategy and tactics created the conditions in which it was possible in 1952 to mount the Defiance Campaign - a sustained, disciplined and widely supported campaign of defiance of unjust laws which, both in scale and militance, was unprecedented in the earlier history of the liberation struggle. The campaign, amongst other achievements, attracted new democratic forces to the side of the oppressed African people, and the following year (1953) saw the formation of the S.A. Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) and the S.A. Congress of Democrats (COD) - respectively to become the Coloured and white wings of the Congress Alliance. The nucleus of this alliance already existed in the close partnership forged in the forties between the ANC and the SA Indian

Congress - a partnership which survived many stresses and strains, including the 1949 Durban riots. This partnership, like the wider alliance which was forged around it (including, a year or two later, the SA Congress of Trade Unions), was called into existence by the African National Congress itself, reflecting its maturing view of the forces of change in the South African situation. The alliance of the five congresses represented a new level of unity in the liberation movement and provided a breadth of mobilising power which carried the movement rapidly forward in growing strength through the late 1950s, and laid the basis for the subsequent transition to armed struggle and the preparation for a final and decisive confrontation with the enemy.

A programmatic basis was felt to be necessary to bind all these forces together and consolidate the Congress Alliance's unity. Accordingly, Professor Z.K. Matthews encountered no opposition when at the ANC's annual conference at the end of 1953 he moved a resolution calling for a national convention to define the features of the democratic South Africa which would replace the apartheid society being constructed by the racist fanatics of the ruling Nationalist Party. In March 1954 a joint meeting of the Executives of all the four congresses was held (ANC, SAIC, SACPO and COD) in the Lower Tugela to enable Chief Lutuli to attend. It is salutary to remind ourselves of the breadth of support which the ANC leaders aimed at in those days, when a violent conflict with the oppressors still seemed avoidable.

“The (newly-formed) Liberal Party sent observers to this meeting. They grumbled rather that we had got things going and only then invited them in. We found their complaint odd, since all we had done was to define what we, the sponsors, were inviting them to join us in. We pointed out that they had done nothing to respond to the initial invitation sent out to all - we had, in fact, even invited Nationalist organisations.

“The Liberals withdrew, entirely washing their hands of the Congress of the People. The rest of us approved certain broad proposals. A date was fixed, when it was clear that the idea had widespread support, and Johannesburg was chosen as the place. An *ad hoc* National Action Committee, already in existence, was

approved as a sort of liaison sub-committee of the joint Executives. This Action Committee was to circularise branches of the various organisations, and to contact communities in which there were no branches, in order to ask them to submit contributions to a comprehensive Charter for the South Africa we visualise, to co-ordinate these contributions and to draw up the (draft) Charter.”

(Chief Albert J. Lutuli: *“Let My People Go”* Ch. 15)

In May 1954 Lutuli’s close colleague Moses Kotane, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, wrote an inspiring pamphlet, *South Africa’s Way Forward*, which showed clearly why the time was ripe for the widest possible collective act of policy-making by all democratic forces, in order to consolidate the unity forged in active struggle and to prepare for future battles. In the ensuing months groups throughout the length and breadth of the country met to formulate their demands, to state their complaints and needs, to raise money and to choose their delegates for the big event. The big ANC campaigns in early 1955 against first the Western Areas removals scheme, and then the introduction on 1st April of the now-notorious system of Bantu Education, underlined the need for the movement to formulate a democratic alternative to the policies of the oppressors, and ensured that the Congress of the People took place in an atmosphere of militant struggle and mass resistance to racism.

The Charter adopted at the Congress of the People (C.O.P.) had then to be put to the participating organisations, including the ANC. For although the ANC had inspired and led the whole campaign building up to the C.O.P., that gathering was an *ad hoc* assembly which could not take decisions for the ANC as such. Accordingly the Charter was put to the four provincial conferences of the ANC, and all welcomed it. And it was put to the ANC’s annual conference in December 1955. Here, however, opposition to the Charter from a small but vocal group of self-styled Africanists prevented its immediate endorsement by the ANC nationally. Accordingly a special conference was held the following April, where full vent could be given to those who claimed that the COP’s “multi-racialism” was a dilution of the militance of African nationalism, or that the Charter reflected the undue influence of the ‘foreign ideology’ of socialism. This was a necessary conference inas-

much as some of the principles embodied in the Charter were, in the form they appeared, new to the ANC as such, and their endorsement had to be discussed and decided openly.

It is appropriate to describe one aspect of what happened at that special conference in the words of the most important man who wasn't there - Chief Lutuli, restricted by government ban to Groutville. It has sometimes been misleadingly suggested that Chief Lutuli was utterly opposed to the 'economic clauses' of the Freedom Charter, and therefore their adoption in his absence was somehow a departure from the policies for which the ANC under his leadership had always stood. He later wrote:

"I sent a note to the conference which ratified the Charter urging delegates to discuss very fully such things as, for instance, the principle of nationalisation. I am myself in favour of limited nationalisation - I think it is the only answer to some of the economic problems we face."

In the end, the special conference of the ANC endorsed the Freedom Charter by a large majority. United around the Charter, and fully backed up by the Communist Party, the Congress Alliance headed by the ANC went from strength to strength, each successive campaign, general political strike or other activity drawing in more adherents to the Congress cause and shaking the system of white supremacy to its very foundations. The Charter was a great unifying force, and its ideas have stood the severe tests of both time and factional opposition.

Espousing the cause of revolutionary-democratic nationalism so clearly and uncompromisingly, the ANC by its adoption of the Freedom Charter forced the 'Africanists' to bring their long-standing disruptive activities within Congress to some sort of finality. The Freedom Charter did not create ideological differences within the ANC - they existed already. What the Charter did was to crystallise decisively the major trend in the ANC, and so to compel those who would not accept the historical destiny of the ANC as the leader of a broad revolutionary alliance of democratic forces to make a break with it. This the Africanists did two years later when they formed the P.A.C. The reason why the

revolutionary-democratic nationalism of the ANC is ultimately incompatible with the bourgeois-democratic nationalism of the Africanists will become apparent in the course of our examination of the ideas embodied in the Freedom Charter.

An important milestone in the subsequent history of the Freedom Charter came in 1962 with the publication of the "Road to South African Freedom", the programme of the S.A. Communist Party. This historic document mapped out fully, from a scientific class analysis, the perspectives of the national democratic revolution and its relation to the socialist revolution. In particular, the Communist Party's programme specifically endorsed the Freedom Charter and thus set the seal on a reality that had become firmly established over many years of struggle, namely the independent participation in the liberation movement of the revolutionary party of the working class, and its crucial contribution to the ideological maturity and organisational strength of the liberation movement as a whole.

PART II: THE PREAMBLE TO THE FREEDOM CHARTER

What then does the Freedom Charter say? It opens with a firm and clear statement of principles:

"We, the people of South Africa declare for all our country and the world to know:

That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people; that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality; that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood enjoying equal rights and opportunities; that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief; and therefore, we the people of South Africa, black and white together - equals, countrymen and brothers - adopt the Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to

strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes set out here have been won.”

This preamble contains the most fundamental and essential tenets for the building of a revolutionary united front of all democratic anti-racist forces in South Africa. It is the corner-stone of the movement for the national liberation of the African, Coloured and Indian people, and for the creation of a non-racial state. Conceived and set out as an integrated and unified set of ideas, it must be understood and defended as such, otherwise it is liable to be distorted by those who wish for different objectives.

“South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.” This is the point of departure, based on the historical realities of our country and on the irreversible fact of the presence in it of a large white minority of settler origins. By making it clear at the outset that nobody is excluded by reason of race from the definition of a South African, that nobody is excluded by reason of race from the united front of democratic forces, the Charter rejects totally all racist ideas, and therefore offers the only principled alternative to the reactionary philosophy which has shaped the South African state from its very inception. No other starting point can be revolutionary as this is, because any definition of the South African people based on race is a compromise with the very racist ideas which it is the liberation movement’s task to defeat. Any approach to this fundamental question which defines the oppressor and the oppressed on the basis of race is inevitably a compromise with the racist ideas of the enemy - however militant a posture it assumes, and however sincere the convictions of those whose philosophy is based on such definitions.

This point was clearly made by a recent reviewer (*African Communist No. 60*), discussing a book called “Black Theology”. P.M. wrote that the fundamental idea of those seeking to construct an ideology of ‘black consciousness’ is

“to restore dignity and pride to African people by teaching them to see themselves in terms of their own awareness, not in terms of ideas imported from Europe. They also wish, quite rightly, to promote

the unity of the oppressed. Therefore, they define black as 'people of all shades of colour who are not considered by the laws and the people of this country to be white' (the words are Adam Small's, but the idea is familiar in SASO writings). But this definition offends against the fundamental idea, which is *not* to see blacks in categories imposed upon them by whites. If 'black' is to be merely a euphemism for the oppressor's contemptuous lumping-together term of 'non-white', it is not likely to be a promising foundation for the rebuilding of pride and self-confidence."

The other fatal weakness of a race-based approach to the definition of the South African people is that it provides no foundation for unity in the struggle against the enemy. If South Africa belongs not to all who live in it, black and white, but to some of its original inhabitants, the African people, and if other racial minorities are allowed to live in it only to the extent that they accept this claim, the Indian and Coloured communities - which are also subjected to white domination - cannot be expected to join with enthusiasm in the liberation struggle as equal and trusted partners with the oppressed African majority.

It is important here to clarify that when one speaks of the oppressed Coloured and Indian minorities as being equal partners of the African people one is describing the *moral basis* of their participation in the liberation movement, which stems from the historical reality of their status as oppressed groups. But to recognise the equal rights of the oppressed is not to seek to impose an artificial numerical equality on the liberation movement. Such an artificial equality between various national groups could only dilute the central core - African nationalism - of the revolutionary-democratic forces which combine to form the South African liberation movement.

Because this question of who the people are is so important it is worthwhile to go fully into it, moving further from the level of aims into the strategy of liberation, and seeing how closely interconnected are these two aspects. *The Strategy and Tactics of the ANC* (one of the documents of the Morogoro Conference) deals precisely with this issue:

"The main content of the present stage of the South African re-

volution is the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group - the African people. This strategic aim must govern every aspect of the conduct of our struggle whether it be the formulation of policy or the creation of structures. Amongst other things, it demands the maximum mobilisation of the African people as a dispossessed and racially oppressed nation. This is the mainspring and it must not be weakened. It involves a stimulation and a deepening of national confidence, national pride and national assertiveness. Properly channelled and properly led, these qualities do not stand in conflict with the principles of internationalism. Indeed, they become the basis for more lasting and more meaningful cooperation - a cooperation which is self-imposed, equal and one which is neither based on dependence nor gives the appearance of being so."

After dealing with the oppression of the Coloured and Indian people and their historical contribution to the struggle against white supremacy, the document then expounds the basic principles governing the relationship of the different national groups in the broad front:

"Whatever instruments are created to give expression to the unity of the liberation drive, they must accommodate two fundamental propositions:

Firstly, they must not be ambiguous on the question of the primary role of the most oppressed African mass, and

Secondly, those belonging to the other oppressed groups and those few white revolutionaries who show themselves ready to make common cause with our aspirations must be fully integrated on the basis of individual equality. Approached in the right spirit these two propositions do not stand in conflict but reinforce one another. Equality of participation in our national front does not mean a mechanical parity between the various national groups. Not only would this in practice amount to inequality (again at the expense of the majority), but it would lend flavour to the slander which our enemies are ever ready to spread of a multiracial alliance dominated by minority groups. This has never been so and will never be so".

The final point to make in this context is that the incorrect definition of who the people are makes it impossible to win to the side of the oppressed those whites who turn their back on white supremacy and adhere to democratic principles. It is worth remembering that it was the ANC itself, together with the SA Indian Congress, which called the Congress of Democrats into existence.

Just as the incorrect definition of the people hinders us from correctly identifying our friends, so does it lead to an incorrect identification of the enemy. If all whites are, by reason of their race alone, the enemy, and all blacks are, by similar definition, the revolutionaries, the struggle for national liberation is nothing less than a race war aimed not at the seizure of state power by the oppressed, but apparently at the physical elimination of the oppressing race group. In such a war the presence of some black stooges on the side of the oppressor (be they Matanzimas, or Special Branch thugs, or informers) can only be explained as an accident or an anomaly, of no significance, and a similar explanation must be given of the presence on the side of the revolutionaries of great patriots like Helen Joseph or the late Bram Fischer.

Incorrect definition of the enemy as “the whites”, rather than as the system of white domination, leads the movement to direct its attacks to the wrong target and makes it impossible to pose clearly and answer correctly the basic question of any revolution - the question of state power. The objective effect of directing attacks to the wrong target is to waste the blood and sacrifice of honest patriots (as happened with Poqo in 1963) in costly adventures which at best can only pressure the existing exploiting classes to *share* economic and political power instead of wresting power from them and taking it into the hands of the people. Just as incorrect definition of the people represents a compromise with the enemy’s reactionary ideas, so the incorrect definition of the enemy - under cover of extreme revolutionary militance - makes it impossible to conceive a sound strategy of how to capture power, and may even mask the objective tendency of seeking to share power with the oppressors. We are here showing the inherent logic of certain mistaken ideas about the basic questions of the South African revolution, and where that logic leads - its objective consequences. The *motivation* of activists is something different altogether: in the case of honest sons of the

people the need is to recognise mistaken ideas and discard them. But there are those also whose attachment to such ideas serves definite class aims which are ultimately irreconcilable with the class interests represented by a revolutionary-democratic approach to the liberation struggle, as we shall see in the next section.

The approach taken by the Freedom Charter and by the ANC in general is not something peculiar to South Africa. It is the application in South African conditions of certain fundamental scientific ideas about the revolutionary principles of the national liberation movement. These ideas have been proved in practice elsewhere - most recently and relevantly for us in Mocambique. In January 1975 Samora Machel, President of Frelimo, sent a message to the 24th session of the Liberation Committee of the OAU which was a brilliant exposition of the lessons of the Mocambican revolution. Pointing out that the people are the moving force, the creators of history, and that only a correct political line can unite them, he went on to say:

“The political orientation, reflecting the masses’ aspirations, also reveals to us the true nature of the enemy, thus enabling us to detect him at all times, even when he is disguised among us. It precludes the possibility of ever mistaking friend for foe - an important factor in the historical setting of colonialism and imperialism, where it is easy to identify the enemy as a race or people.”

In practice, Frelimo identified the enemy of the Mocambican people as Portuguese colonialism - not the Portuguese as such (since not all Portuguese were colonialists or supported Portuguese colonialism), nor the whites as such (for similar reasons). Cadres who sought to mislead the masses on this key issue were severely reprimanded.

Later in the same speech, President Samora Machel again returned to this theme:

“In Mocambique the correct political line won over to the cause of national independence all races and social strata. We believe that no nation, no people can be defined on the basis of false and reactionary criteria such as the colour of the skin, tribal or regional origin.”

Critics of the Freedom Charter's first principle hold that by saying that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, the Charter equates, or puts on the same footing, oppressor and oppressed. This distortion is immediately rebutted by the next phrase in the Charter. After pointing out that 'no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people', it proceeds to make the distinction between oppressor and oppressed: "Our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality." Here it is important to observe that 'our people' are not said to have been dispossessed by the whites as such (i.e. by a racial group) but by a *form of government* which bestows on the white minority a monopoly of political power. Thus the Freedom Charter directs the attention of the people to the source of their oppression, and by focussing accurately on the question of state power presents a profoundly revolutionary challenge to the existing order.

One can see today what an advance this was on the thinking of the Programme of Action which, as we have seen, set out a strategy for compelling the authorities to grant the demands of the people. The Freedom Charter by implication goes deeper (this will become clearer from the examination of its main clauses), its demands incapable of being accommodated within the existing order or being satisfied by a power-sharing compromise, but requiring the *seizure* of state power and a revolution in the scientific sense of the word, i.e. the transfer of political and economic power from the exploiting class(es) to the oppressed and exploited social classes whose interests thereby become predominant. It is a tribute to the political maturity and class consciousness of the masses who in a real sense drew up the Charter that their statement of aims should not merely survive with undiminished relevance into a new phase of struggle (armed struggle and the preparation for insurrection) but that it should strike so deeply as to logically *require* the transition to this new phase and only gain its fullest significance in the context of the ultimate struggle to win power for the people. (Once again, we are not here dealing with the conscious thinking of the movement's leaders twenty years ago, but with the inevitable direction of the logic of their understanding. There can be little doubt that taken in its overall context the Freedom Charter has a different, deeper sig-

nificance for the liberation movement today than it did twenty years ago. This is because, far from being *just* a notable piece of history - which of course it is - the Charter is *also* a living guide to the people, and its richness and meaningfulness grow with the maturing of the liberation movement and the masses from whom comes the movement's strength.)

THE STAGES IN THE GROWTH OF UNITY

In asserting the fundamental *unity* of the South African people, and thereby rejecting the divide-and-rule philosophy and policy of the racists, the Freedom Charter laid down a clear principle which has served the liberation movement well, because it provides the programmatic basis of unity. But unity in struggle requires more than agreement of aims; it has to be expressed in appropriate organisational forms, and these develop through definite stages.

The organisational form of the Congress Alliance as it developed in the 1950s was entirely appropriate to the circumstances of the time. Historically, as the leader of the African people, the ANC had to be and undoubtedly was the king-pin of the whole machine. As we have seen, it steadily built up the fighting partnership of the African people with the oppressed Coloured and Indian minorities, with white democrats, with the anti-racist trade union movement. Each of these elements in the united front of democratic forces has its own specific history and character. In the first stage of the movement's growth it was essential for the *specificity* of each element in the front to be reflected distinctly, alongside of the *unity* of their common goals. This was achieved by linking together, on a consultative basis, at the top, the separate congresses comprising the Congress Alliance, while at the same time preserving their essential independence and autonomy. United action was achieved by consensus, by voluntary agreement, not by counting numbers or votes.

When the launching of a higher form of struggle, armed struggle, became necessary in 1961, opening a definite new stage in the movement's development, it was appropriate to strengthen the unity of the democ-

ratic forces in order to meet the greatly increased demands which the new form of struggle was bound to make upon the discipline, morale and political consciousness of activists. This was done, and done successfully (as is testified by the glorious roll-call of heroes who gave their lives on the field of battle, and by the high degree of unity and solidarity displayed in prison by early casualties of the new phase). It was done by opening the ranks of the people's army Umkhonto we Sizwe to revolutionaries of all races. The spirit of the Freedom Charter has both united the members of MK, and been triumphantly vindicated by them.

A further strengthening of the movement's unity has been necessitated in a different sphere. Because of the apartheid regime's position as an imperialist power dominating the entire region of Southern Africa, our liberation forces have been compelled to base themselves temporarily in independent Africa while rebuilding underground structures capable of re-establishing links with the masses, guiding and leading them while at the same time outwitting the Security Police within South Africa.

Thus for well over a decade it has been necessary to conduct a sustained and complicated diplomatic and political struggle to strengthen the movement's base in independent Africa, this base being the indispensable condition of the movement's survival and future growth at this stage. This struggle has proved exceptionally difficult, frustrating, and protracted, and it is far from over. Initially the responsibility for this task fell mainly on the shoulders of the ANC's external mission - and indeed it still does - representing in this sphere the vital interests of the movement as a whole. But by the late 1960's it was clear that the external mission, to meet this challenge, had to fully integrate and unite within itself all cadres working outside of South Africa to realise the aims of the Freedom Charter. The decision to re-organise the external mission of the ANC accordingly was one of the historic achievements of the Morogoro conference of 1969.

This decision of the Morogoro conference, far from diluting the historically determined character of the ANC as the expression, the organiser and leader of revolutionary African nationalism in South Africa, actually underlines and confirms the central and dominant role

of the ANC in the broad front of democratic forces. For the ANC has a dual role to play: on the one hand it is the direct and authentic descendant of the South African Native National Congress that was founded in 1912 and as such is the trusted repository of the African nationalist cause. At the same time - and this is the product of the past quarter century of maturing growth - the ANC is the spearhead of the entire movement for the liberation of *all* oppressed people in our country. These two distinct but closely inter-related dimensions of the ANC's existence correspond to the historical, cultural and socio-economic realities that exist in South Africa and which will exist for a long-time to come. To seek to blur this distinction, to by-pass obligatory stages in the development of the unity of our liberation movement, is to lose touch with the social and political realities of everyday life, and to ignore the principles of the Freedom Charter which, in the section dealing with the equal rights of all national groups, recognises the historically determined distinctness - in this democratic stage of the South African revolution - of the various elements that comprise the nation as a whole.

Conversely, and more pertinently today, to oppose the decisions of the Morogoro conference as somehow rushing the ANC into unwanted and therefore divisive wedlock with its allies is to fail to recognise the objective trend towards unity and the stages whereby unity is being forged - stages through which, for twenty years now, the Freedom Charter has reliably guided not only the ANC but also the wider mass movement which follows the ANC's lead. To reject Morogoro is therefore, in a very real sense, to reject the Freedom Charter, and in effect to seek a return to the 1949 Programme of Action. But the clock of history cannot thus be turned back.

UNITY AND 'BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS'

History marches forward, it cannot stand still. It may repeat itself, but at a higher level. In the 1970's the struggle for unity has gone on, most visibly within and through the Black Consciousness movement. As in the 1950's, the contest between bourgeois-democratic tendencies and revolutionary-democratic tendencies has been sharp and persistent. But

unlike the earlier period, and despite some racial overtones to the criticism (a few years ago, but possibly also today) in SASO/BPC circles of some of the legal organisations seeking to defend the interests of the Coloured and Indian communities, in the 1970's there has been little open hostility to the idea that the oppressed national minorities are necessary partners in the struggle with the African people. On the contrary, the essential unity of the oppressed blacks has been a predominant theme of the Black Consciousness movement, one that it largely inherited from the Congress movement. Indeed, the Black Consciousness trend has contributed very significantly to the realisation of unity in active struggle. Yet the ideological essence of the conflict between the 'Africanists' and the ANC in the 1950s and 1960s has unmistakably reappeared within the Black Consciousness movement of the 1970's, though of course in different forms. To call the bourgeois-democratic trend 'Africanist' is to deliberately emphasise the common ideological essence of the phenomenon, and this we do at the expense of blurring differences in mode of expression, style etc. in order to contrast the revolutionary-democratic political line of the ANC, as expressed in the Freedom Charter, with the views (past and present) of those who take a different path.

We saw earlier that the Africanist line, by failing to define correctly either the people or their enemy, necessarily failed to pose clearly the question of state power. Early in its development the Black Consciousness movement encountered a similar difficulty. For example, the draft programme of the Black People's Convention (of July 1972), setting itself the objective of creating a political movement to "articulate and aggregate the needs of Black People in South Africa" and to "represent the Black People nationally and internationally", defined the BPC's aims as follows:

1. To unite and solidify the Black People of South Africa with a view to liberating and emancipating them from both psychological and physical oppression.
2. To preach, popularise and implement the philosophy of Black Consciousness and Black Solidarity.

3. To formulate and implement an educational policy of Blacks, by Blacks and for Blacks.
4. To create and maintain an egalitarian society where justice is meted equally to all.
5. To formulate, apply and implement the principles and philosophy of Black Communalism.
6. To create and maintain an equitable economic system based on the principles and philosophy of Black Communalism.
7. To co-operate with existing agencies to re-orientate the theological system with a view to making religion relevant to the needs aspirations, ideals and goals of the Black People.

It would be an exceptionally interesting exercise to subject these 7 clauses to a detailed scrutiny, but that would require another article, which is probably unnecessary in view of the fact that, if the draft BPC programme reflected the level of political consciousness of the Black Consciousness movement in 1972, it certainly does not reflect it today. For that movement has matured rapidly, as will be shown shortly. So we may pose such questions as these:

What *is* the philosophy of Black Communalism?

What light, if any, does it shed on the question of 'an equitable economic system; instead of looking at capitalism and socialism and recognising that the modern world offers no third alternative?'

What place is there, in a programme for a democratic revolution, for the 'reorientation of the theological system with a view to making religion relevant to the needs of the Black People'?

Nowhere does this statement of aims deal clearly with the need for the *political* liberation of the black people, nor does it define the characteristics of a democratic state such as will give effect to the black people's aspirations for freedom and emancipation. In short, the programme does not point clearly to the question of state power.



ANC delegates from Natal on their way to the Congress of the People

How far the Black Consciousness movement has travelled in a short time can be seen by looking at the Declaration and Resolutions of the Black Renaissance Convention, held at Hammanskraal last December. The 300-odd delegates paid a just and fitting, if oblique, tribute to the liberation movement, and, besides repudiating completely the Bantustan policy and all other aspects of separate development, reaffirmed the central principle of the Freedom Charter:

“We, the Black people of South Africa,.....declare that:

- i) We condemn and so reject the policy of separate development and all its institutions.
- ii) We reject all forms of racism and discrimination.

We dedicate ourselves towards striving for:

- i) A totally united and democratic South Africa, free from all forms of oppression and exploitation.
- ii) A society in which all people participate fully in the Government of the country through the medium of one man, one vote.
- iii) A society in which there is an equitable distribution of wealth.
- iv) An anti-racist society.”

The Convention also declared that it “acknowledges that it is not the first to convene a meeting of Black people and states firmly that it wishes to continue in the efforts that have taken place in the past.”

Finally, the first principle of the Freedom Charter, that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, provides the only principled and viable alternative to the enemy’s Bantustan programme of balkanizing the country, which seeks both to undermine the unity which is the basis of the struggle for national liberation and to divert the attention of the masses from the struggle to seize state power over South Africa as a whole. There can be no concessions to this insidious programme. Not only does it not even pretend to offer a solution to the problems of the Coloured and Indian minorities, but it threatens to revive the very tribalism which was a key element in the subjugation of the African peoples in the colonial period.

PART III: THE MAIN SECTIONS OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER —

“THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN”

Under this heading the Charter proceeds to spell out the basic democratic rights which the people claim for themselves:

**“Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;
All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;
The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;
All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.”**

To the extent that the second and the fourth clauses in this section foreshadow the substitution of new, popular forms of government for the old anti-democratic forms which exist today, it applies to the experience of other revolutions elsewhere; (for the revolutionary working class, the first experience of this problem was the short-lived but glorious Paris Commune). The point is that a democratic revolution cannot merely take over the existing organs of state power and modify them for its own purposes. The reactionary state apparatus has to be completely replaced by a democratic state structure of a new and qualitatively different kind. This applies to the security apparatus, to the courts and legal systems, to the legislative bodies, to the whole system of governmental administration. The creation of such a new structure is a huge task which cannot be carried out overnight - as the democratic forces in Portugal, to take a topical example, are discovering for themselves. Above all, this idea of a democratic transformation has nothing in common with the substitution of a few black faces in positions of political power for the white ones which presently monopolise the state.

“There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts, and

in the schools for all national groups and races;

All people shall have equal right to use their own language, and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination shall be a punishable crime; all apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside."

In this section the Charter recognises that a broad statement of general democratic principles, such as is made in the preceding section, is not sufficient for South African conditions. The long destructive period of organised racism which the democratic revolution will bring to an end will leave behind a terrible legacy of racial fears, suspicions, distrust, and tensions - a minefield of political and social problems which the people's revolutionary government will have to pick its way through with great care. The just demand for the liberation of the various oppressed national groups has to be met within the framework of a common society. The inalienable rights of all groups are shown by this section of the Charter to entail both necessary positive features - equality in the organs of state, including courts and schools, equality of languages and culture - and certain essential safeguards which appear as negative conditions: no racial intolerance, no fomenting of racial discord, making apartheid a crime (a step which, incidentally, has already been adopted by several members of the United Nations and which has begun to lay the basis internationally for completely outlawing apartheid as a crime against humanity). This section makes it clear that freedom does not embrace any so-called freedom for racists to expound their poisonous ideas. But at the same time it guarantees all national groups and races their equal rights, and thus confirms more amply the basic principles set out in the preamble.

"THE PEOPLE SHALL SHARE IN THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH"

"The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly in-

**dustry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;
All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;
All people shall have equal rights to trade where they chose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.”**

With these ‘economic clauses’ (taken together with the next section on land) we come to the heart of the Freedom Charter, to the vital elements which more than anything else, raise it from an orthodox statement of bourgeois-democratic principles (‘human rights’) to the plane of a revolutionary-democratic anti-monopoly programme - one which is well calculated to make the Oppenheimers and Ruperts, the Ackermans and the Luyts, fear for their future as a class. In these clauses the Charter recognises that the underlying and central purpose of the racist system in South Africa is the super-exploitation of the labour power of the oppressed black majority. Indeed, a programme of democratic revolution which failed to confront the monopolies principally responsible for operating and sustaining the horrors of the apartheid economy would be a gun loaded with blank ammunition: noisy and powerful-looking, but ineffective.

Writing in *Liberation* in 1956 Nelson Mandela explained the significance of these clauses:

“It is true that in demanding the nationalisation of the banks the gold mines and the land the Charter strikes a fatal blow at the financial and gold-mining monopolies and farming interests that have for centuries plundered the country But such a step is absolutely imperative and necessary because the realisation of the Charter is inconceivable, in fact impossible, unless and until these monopolies are first smashed up and the national wealth of the country turned over to the people.”

The ‘economic clauses’ of the freedom Charter express fully the deep-going anti-imperialist content of the democratic revolution. They point the way not to the complete elimination of the exploitation of man by man (which can only be achieved under socialism) but to a revolutionary transfer of political and economic power to the oppressed

masses, to the people as a whole. This *may* give scope for the emergence on a wider scale than is possible under the apartheid system of a black petit-bourgeoisie, but that is altogether different from the ascent into the ranks of the bourgeois class proper of a handful of ambitious power-seekers whose function would be to put a black face on the operation of the state-monopoly capitalist system in South Africa. With this latter perspective the Freedom Charter is totally in conflict.

At the same time it is important for socialists and others to realise that this is not a socialist programme. To take into the hands of the organs of popular power the mines, banks and monopoly industry, and to seek to regulate the conditions in which all other industry and commerce will operate, is indeed an ambitious and far-reaching aim; but it will not eliminate private ownership, not the operation of the profit motive, nor all sources and accumulations of private wealth. To quote Mandela once again:

“Under socialism the workers hold state power. They and the peasants own the means of production, the land, the factories, and the mills. All production is for use and not for profit. The Charter does not contemplate such profound economic and political changes. Its declaration ‘The People Shall Govern’ visualises the transfer of power not to any single social class but to all the people of this country, be they workers, peasants, professional men, or petty-bourgeoisie.”

Bearing all this in mind, we move on to the next part of the Charter, that dealing with the land.

“THE LAND SHALL BE SHARED AMONG THOSE WHO WORK IT”

“Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger;

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the

land;

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.”

Here the Freedom Charter challenges all the obnoxious features of the apartheid system relating to land: the ‘native reserves’ (now called ‘homelands’), and Group Areas Act, the restrictions on Indians and Coloureds in relation to land; the impoverishment of African agriculture and the enrichment of heavily subsidised white landlord farmers who are often absent from the farms and only remotely control the serf-like labourers who produce their wealth. Perhaps because it is mainly concerned to negate the main features of the existing system, this section of the Charter succeeds less well than the rest in presenting a detailed programme of how the land problem must be tackled in order to give effect to the democratic aspirations of the people. The redivision of all the land among those who work it could be done on the basis of individual small-holdings (as in Kenya after independence), or of co-operative production schemes on a village basis (as is being attempted in Tanzania in the ‘Ujamaa’ village programme), or of large-scale mechanised farming run by collectives (similar to the collective farms of the Soviet Union), or it could entail a combination of all these. Nationalisation of the land is not directly referred to as such, and it is unclear to what extent capitalist market forces would be allowed to operate in relation to land ownership. It may be that the emergence of liberated areas in the course of a protracted armed struggle will give the South African liberation movement the opportunity - indeed compel it, as similar developments did for the Mocambican and Angolan liberation movements - to put more flesh on the outline bones of its programme for dealing with the land question, which is so fundamental an aspect of the South African revolution. The *directions* have been clearly indicated, but the stages and methods will have to be worked out in detail by the people themselves, under the leadership of the liberation movement.

The next five sections of the Freedom Charter spell out various political, constitutional and social objectives under the following headings:

All shall be equal before the law:

All shall enjoy equal human rights: (this refers to the right to speak, meet together, organise, preach and worship, and calls specifically for the abolition of the pass laws and all similar restrictions on the people's freedom of movement).

There shall be work and security:

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened:

There shall be houses, security and comfort:

It is impossible for reasons of space adequately to summarise all the points made in the Charter under these various headings, but they flow vividly and directly from the life and needs of the people, and together with the other sections comprise a clear set of guidelines for a people's democratic government of the future.

"THERE SHALL BE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP!"

In the final section the internationalist obligations of a democratic South Africa are spelled out:

"South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the rights and sovereignty of nations;

South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation - not war;

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all."

The Charter ends with a solemn pledge:

"These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives until we have won our liberty."

PART IV: THE OPPONENTS OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER

The Freedom Charter, as we have seen, crystallised all the main ele-

ments of the programme for a deep-going democratic revolution, brought them together in a single document (which happens to be an exceptionally eloquent and lucid statement), and thereby compelled all those elements who had different objectives for the national liberation movement to separate themselves off from the African National Congress and the Congress Alliance as a whole. Hence the formation of the Pan-Africanist Congress in 1958. The PAC still exists, a thorn in the flesh of the ANC, its demagogic spokesmen displaying their political infantilism in the forums of the world e.g. by criticising detente (the genuine peace-seeking policy of the Soviet Union and a wide range of anti-imperialist forces, not to be confused with the phoney and utterly reactionary policy of Mr Vorster and his gang, for which the term 'detente' is a complete misnomer). Even while this article was being written, PAC representatives were performing at a UN Special Committee on Apartheid seminar in Paris. To demonstrate their revolutionariness (always a problem for any faction that splits away from the mainstream of the Congress movement) they *opposed* a proposal that the seminar demand of the French government that it stop supplying arms to the Pretoria racists!

But as we have seen, the long-standing conflict between the self-styled Africanists and the ANC, whether one takes it back to the PAC's formation, or several years before that, when the 'Africanists' were so disruptive in certain Transvaal branches of the ANC, by no means fully encompasses the conflict between bourgeois-democratic and revolutionary-democratic trends of African nationalism. This conflict has been going on within the Black Consciousness movement in recent years often without direct references to the ideological issues that concerned earlier generations in the liberation movement. Indeed, the Black Consciousness movement has drawn more heavily, for its style and rhetoric, and more importantly for much of its philosophy, on the Black Power movement in the United States, and on radical trends in the youth movement in Western countries - not always recognising that both these external models have themselves undergone considerable transformations within a relatively short period of time. And to revert once again to the ANC itself one may refer to the reluctance of some adherents to fully accept the decisions of the Morogoro conference.

It is apparent from all this that we are dealing with a persistent feature of the liberation struggle in South Africa; it is now necessary to give a general characterisation of the bourgeois-democratic trend, that is to say, to indicate its common features underlying the different manifestations of it in different periods, and to demonstrate their class basis.

Bourgeois-democratic nationalism always claims to be the real, authentic, pure African nationalism - in contradistinction to the so-called multi-racialism of the African National Congress. (There is a double slander here: first, reducing the broad South Africanism, the revolutionary-democratic nationalism of the ANC to a meaningless, politically nebulous 'multi-racialism'; secondly, making this caricature of the ANC a target for unprincipled attack.) Posing as more militant than the trend to which it opposes itself, bourgeois-democratic nationalism

- (1) defines the enemy as the white race, not as the political system of white domination; and
- (2) defines the people on the basis of race, allotting to the African majority not just a central role in South African history (nobody but a reactionary could quarrel with that) but a *morally superior claim to membership of the South African nation* based on the historical circumstances of their being amongst the aboriginal inhabitants of the land. The stock formula of the Africanists displays exactly these features and lands them with a circular definition of who is an African:

“Politically we stand for Government of the Africans for the Africans by the Africans, with *everybody who owes his loyalty only to Africa and accepts the democratic rule of an African majority, being regarded as an African.*”

‘Africanist News and Views’ issued by the PAC office in Cairo, Dec. 1972. (Our emphasis). The same formulation is to be found in Sobukwe’s speeches of 10-15 years previously.

An African, it appears, is an African is an African.....

These basic misconceptions are invariably linked to a third element - anti-Communism. Whether this takes the form of rejection of Marxist ideas as being a 'foreign ideology', or of resistance to the full and active participation of the Communist Party and individual Communists in the national liberation movement, or of anti-Sovietism, its character is the same. And the fact that anti-Communism is always closely linked with narrow African nationalism gives a clue to the class essence of this trend and helps to explain its recurrence and persistence. Whatever form it takes at any given time, *anti-communism is in South African conditions actually opposition to the leading role of the working class in the struggle for national liberation.* Anybody who seeks to circumscribe or weaken the role of the Communist Party in the national liberation movement - by opposing the vanguard party of the working class and the revolutionary ideology of the working class - objectively performs the function of assisting bourgeois trends within the liberation movement.

Since the national liberation movement is a broad front, not only of different racial groups, but also of different class forces, the question arises, which class force is to be the leading force in the movement? In South Africa, it is not only the oppressed workers who comprise the movement for national liberation, but also the oppressed peasants who are mostly landless rural proletarians or small landowners (i.e. petit-bourgeois, because they own the means of production, albeit on a small scale.) And there are also the oppressed middle strata - small traders, the intelligentsia and professional groups, clerical workers and similar social groups which can in general also be regarded as petit-bourgeois in character and which may in some instances tend, possibly to a greater extent than the small landholding peasantry, to *aspire to ascend to the bourgeoisie proper.* Such elements may see in the democratic revolution in South Africa a means to do this. This is the social basis of narrow African nationalism, but to recognise this is not to postulate an automatic conflict between all petit-bourgeois and all proletarian elements in the national liberation movement. Ideas transcend social classes, although they are always rooted in them and ultimately derive their character from them. Petit-bourgeois ideas influence the working class, and the scientific ideology of the revolutionary working class penetrates the middle strata. Experience of other revol-

utions elsewhere teaches the vanguard party of the working class that it must constantly engage in the most energetic and consistent ideological and political struggle to win to its side not only all the mass of the working people of town and country but also the bulk of the middle strata who so often - because they are the ones with education and higher social standing - exercise an influence over the movement for national liberation out of all proportion to their numbers.

All the class forces we have mentioned have an interest in the ending of the apartheid system. But how far do they wish to go? It was not accidental that one of the elements of the Freedom Charter which compelled the breakaway of the self-styled Africanists in the late fifties, was the 'economic clauses'. They are an essential part of the Charter because they fully express the class aims of the oppressed and exploited workers in the democratic revolution. But the petit-bourgeois strata do not necessarily have the same deep interest in smashing the power of finance capital, nationalising the mines and monopoly industry, and generally taking into the hands of the people as a whole the main economic levers of society. Particular sections of the petit-bourgeoisie may be assisted by such a programme; others may find more advantage from a *partnership* (political and economic) with the big bourgeoisie. (These are matters for careful concrete analysis, and cannot detain us here).

The point is that there will always be, in the national liberation movement in our country, for as long as the present stage lasts, i.e. until the fulfilment of the tasks of the democratic revolution, a minority petit-bourgeois trend which has the class aim of sharing political and economic power with the bourgeoisie, not of wresting state power from the racists and economic power from the dominant financial circles. This trend is obliged by its class character to seek to restrict the sweep of the revolutionary process, and to resist the leading role of the proletariat in the democratic revolution. Hence its anti-communism.

Lenin showed very clearly that the proletariat is the most consistent fighter for democracy, and that if the revolutionary working class does not come forward, assert itself, and lead the democratic forces to the

complete fulfilment of their common programme, then the bourgeoisie in the shape of the liberals, reformers and reformists, will seize the helm, seek a compromise with the old order, betray the interests of the working masses and strangle the democratic revolution. And it is characteristic of such reformist elements that they cloak their aims in militant-sounding phrases, present their tactical inflexibility as determined defence of revolutionary principles, and in general disguise themselves as the most extreme revolutionaries.

Lenin's warning must be taken with the utmost seriousness. (It was made not with reference to the socialist revolution of October 1917 but to the first (democratic) revolution in Russia in 1905, and retained its significance throughout the stormy 12 years that followed). He wrote:

“There is nothing more naive and futile than attempts to set forth conditions which, if satisfied, would enable us to consider that the bourgeois democrat is a sincere friend to the people. Only the proletariat can be a consistent fighter for democracy. It can become a victorious fighter for democracy only if the present masses join its revolutionary struggle. If the proletariat is not strong enough for this the bourgeoisie will be at the head of the democratic revolution and will impart an inconsistent and self-seeking nature to it.”

The ideas contained in this passage must not be mechanically transferred to South African conditions, without regard to the fact that they were put forward when the bourgeoisie in Russia was seeking to supplant the Tsarist autocracy and smash the old feudal order to enable the wider development of capitalism, i.e. when the bourgeois class still had a progressive role to play. Bearing that in mind, we can see three important ideas here which are relevant to the South African revolution. First, the warning against the self-seeking and inconsistent character of the bourgeois democrats. Secondly, the imperative need for the proletariat to assert itself to the full in the struggle for democracy, in order to give the democratic revolution a deep-going impact. Thirdly the no less imperative need for the proletariat to build a revolutionary alliance with petit-bourgeois forces (in Russia it was the peasantry, in South Africa it is both the peasantry and the oppressed middle strata).

This last is precisely why the Freedom Charter is so important. It fully serves the interests not only of the proletariat, but also of the revolutionary-democratic petit-bourgeoisie. To defend the Charter is therefore to defend the broad class interest of the main social forces of the South African revolution in this, its democratic stage. This is why the Freedom Charter is the cornerstone of the whole movement for national liberation - the foundation of the unity between revolutionary-democrats and communists.

Thus we see two trends, ultimately incompatible with each other, in the liberation struggle. There is the African nationalism of the revolutionary-democratic variety, strongly influenced by the working class, consistently internationalist in its approach, drawing to its side the oppressed minorities and all genuine democratic elements, and seeking to break up the existing political, social and economic order and to transfer power into the hands of the people as a whole. This is the majority trend, expressed by the African National Congress, and providing the only possible basis for unity in the liberation movement. Against this, and always in opposition to it, stands the minority bourgeois-democratic Africanist trend, narrow and chauvinist where the other is internationalist, implacably hostile to the role of the revolutionary working class both in South Africa and on the world stage, objectively seeking a compromise with the existing order, while camouflaging its quintessentially reformist character with inflammatory demagoguery and an eclectic clutter of pseudo-revolutionary ideas, variously derived from unscientific schools of thought such as Maoism, 'negritude', and the 'Black Power' movement of a few years ago in the USA.

Precisely because the Freedom Charter is fully consistent with the former trend, adherents of the narrow nationalist trend cannot accept it, and will always seek to amend, discard or by-pass the Charter. But through twenty tough years of liberation struggle the Freedom Charter has amply demonstrated that it cannot be watered-down or side-stepped. It is still, as Nelson Mandela wrote so many years ago,

“a beacon to the Congress movement and an inspiration to the people of South Africa.”

That is why we loudly proclaim today: **LONG LIVE THE FREEDOM CHARTER! POWER TO THE PEOPLE!**

No programme, no constitution, is immutable for all time. Conditions and attitudes change. Policies should be held constantly under review, endorsed if found still to be correct, altered or scrapped if found to be out of date.

R.P. Ngcobo's article has been published, not as an expression of the view of the African Communist, but to stimulate thought and discussion in the ranks of the South African liberation movement. We would welcome contributions from our readers on the subject. —



Moses Kotane Honoured on 70th Birthday

The African National Congress award of Isitwalandwe-Seaparankoe and the Soviet Order of the Friendship of the Peoples were presented to Moses Kotane, general secretary of the South African Communist Party, at a ceremony in Moscow on the occasion of his 70th birthday on August 9.

The ceremony, which was attended by members of the executive of the African National Congress and the Central Committee of the SACP, as well as representatives of the Central Committee of the CPSU, took place in the hospital where comrade Kotane has been receiving treatment for the illness which struck him down in 1968.

The **ANC CITATION**, signed and presented in person by **ACTING PRESIDENT GENERAL OLIVER TAMBO**, stated:

“By decision of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress taken at Lusaka, Zambia, in July, 1975, it is decreed that the title of Isitwalandwe-Seaparankoe be and is hereby conferred on Comrade Moses Mauane Kotane in recognition of his outstanding contribution and role in the South African revolution, the struggle against imperialism and the struggle for democracy and peace.



Moses Kotane, wearing his Soviet order, is congratulated by Yusuf Dadoo and Oliver Tambo

“More particularly, this honour, the highest traditionally bestowed by our people, is conferred on Comrade Moses Kotane for:

(a) his long, tireless, consistent and principled record as a fighter for the birthright of our people;

(b) his endurance and determination in the face of persecution and torment by the racist and fascist oppressors in our country;

(c) his wise and patriotic leadership and statesmanship in the protracted and complex struggle of our people for full national and social liberation;

(d) his role as a unifying force in a situation which demands the broadest alliance of all patriotic forces who stand on the side of true national liberation;

(e) his combination of national patriotism with a true sense of internationalism which has won him honour beyond the borders of our country.

“And we proclaim that from this day onwards, Comrade Moses Mauane Kotane will be known and honoured throughout our land as bearing the title of Isitwalandwe-Seaparankoe”.

The **SA COMMUNIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE** statement conveying “our warmest revolutionary greetings on the occasion of your 70th birthday”, was read by National Chairman **DR YUSUF DADOO** who said:

“In celebrating this landmark in your life, we recognise the outstanding contribution you have made to the cause of our Party and the whole national liberation movement. It was under your leadership as General Secretary for the last 36 years that our Party matured into a revolutionary vanguard which won the respect of our working masses and which played, and continues to play, such a vital role in the struggle for national and social emancipation of our oppressed and exploited people . . .

“Your whole life has been an example of dedication and single-minded devotion to the overthrow of the vicious system of race and class exploitation in South Africa as part of the world-wide struggle against racism, imperialism and fascism and for the triumph of world socialism. In dedicating yourself to this cause, regardless of the cost, you have won the admiration of the whole international communist movement”.



Members of the ANC Executive Committee and the SA Communist Party Central Committee attended the ceremony

A message from **UMKHONTO WE SIZWE**, the military wing of the African National Congress, said:

“We of MK attach a special significance to this occasion, the 70th birthday of one of MK’s founder leaders and member of the Revolutionary Council, Moses Kotane, a beloved determined leader of our people.

“We recall with pride the achievements of our organisation, and those of the entire liberation movement of our country, to which your selfless devotion and dedication to the cause of our struggling people has so greatly contributed”.

ANC SECRETARY GENERAL ALFRED NZO said:

“In the ANC Comrade Kotane saw the redemption of our people and their land from the conquest of invaders who succeeded because of tribal divisions. Recognising this important fact, the ANC made the question of national unity and the elimination of tribal divisions and suspicions, its cardinal principle and political objective. Comrade Kotane has throughout his long revolutionary career been one of the staunchest champions of this principle”.

Comrade Kotane’s birthday was widely covered by the Soviet press. *Pravda* said the Soviet Order of the Friendship of the Peoples had been bestowed on Moses Kotane for his services in the struggle against racism and for national liberation, democracy and socialism. It marked his great contribution to strengthening friendship between the peoples of the USSR and South Africa.

Kotane’s “whole life is an example of selfless service to the ideals of communism”, said *Pravda*.

In a brief speech at his birthday celebration, **COMRADE KOTANE** said: “I will carry on the fight for ever”.

New Tactics of White Domination

by John Brown

Observing the politics of South Africa's white establishment in recent months has been a little like spending an evening in a casino or an afternoon in the Hollard Street Stock Exchange. There has been the the same atmosphere of febrile excitement. Hopes rise and fall with hectic irregularity. Complex "systems" are tried out. Strange rumours circulate. And underneath it all one senses a half-suppressed foreboding that the gamblers cannot escape their destiny for all the subtlety of their stratagems and will end by going broke.

The spirits of the guardians of apartheid and white privilege soar with each reported "success" of Vorster's "detente" exercise. There is unstinted praise from the so-called opposition factions for his attempts to influence a settlement in Rhodesia and near ecstasy over the visits by this former supporter of the Third Reich to Liberia and the Ivory Coast. But the mood plummets again when, for instance, the Organisation of African Unity reaffirms its support for the liberation movements in Southern Africa. There is ill-concealed anxiety over Frelimo's triumph in Mozambique and something ap-

proaching terror at the clear signs that the underground movement within the country itself is growing with an implacable, disciplined purpose.

There are important lessons to be learned, however, from the white establishment at this juncture in the history of our country's struggle for national liberation. Perhaps the first thing to note is that this feverish anxiety, these desperate attempts by the Nationalists and their allies to disguise the racist essence of their political and economic practices and to "relax tensions" on the sub-continent are themselves clear signs that the contradictions of the South African situation are sharpening and becoming what some Marxist philosophers call "over-ripe".

There was a period, especially after the setbacks which the national liberation movement suffered in the sixties, when the white establishment felt self-assured enough to scoff at the prospect of revolution. That time is past. The minority clique who govern South Africa and their allies inside and outside of the White Parliament, although they lack a scientific theory of history to enable them to really understand the world in which they live, are told by their own sheer instincts of self-preservation that their position has become perilous as never before. Even Nationalist newspapers now openly express fears of a "Vietnam" in Southern Africa and Vorster mutters nervously about alternatives "too ghastly to contemplate".

DETENTE BLUFF

Vorster's response to the dangers his party and its allies now face from the revolutionary masses has, of course, been the massive and carefully planned bluff he calls "detente". It is very important to notice who his helpers in this endeavour are. The huge Anglo-American mining empire of Harry Oppenheimer has clearly played a large role in aiding Vorster with his secret diplomacy. It is not without significance that the Progressive Party leadership, closely linked with mining-house finance in South Africa, was making trips to Zambia and Nigeria well before Vorster announced his "detente" plans last year. One of Anglo American's favourite poodles, Zac De Beer, a former Progressive Party MP, who is still on the party's national executive, was in Lusaka during a critical phase of negotiations on the Rhodesian issue. What Marxist can fail to note the importance of reports that leading

figures in the Association of Chambers of Commerce and the Federated Chamber of Industries are also involved in the detente operation.

The lesson these facts teach is a simple one to learn. The leading lights and front organisations of South African capitalism are being forced by sharpening contradictions in the Society to show themselves as the allies of racism they really are.

Now although this alliance between the Vorster gang and the giants of white South African capitalism seems natural and simple enough in itself, it is nonetheless a phenomenon which will demand close attention and constant analysis and re-analysis as the various new phases of the liberation struggle unfold. It is important to recall Lenin's lucid analysis of the relationship between imperialism and monopoly capital which he made in his "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism":

" In its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This in itself determines its place in history, for monopoly that grows out of the soil of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher socio-economic order."

The real intentions behind the detente bluff emerge more clearly in the light of these words. Long ago the South African Communist Party defined the situation in our country as "colonialism of a special type", as a situation in which the white colonists actually had their roots in the country they were colonising. "Free competition" has almost become a religion in this colony and it is now becoming very apparent that the colony is moving towards its imperialist stage.

This would explain the real meaning behind Vorster's frequent statements that "we are part of Africa" that "South Africa has a role to play in Africa" etc. This is why South African forces were in Rhodesia, why the Nationalists have once again ignored a United Nations ultimatum to quit Namibia and why Vorster refuses recognition to the South West Africa People's Organisation. Seen in this light, the "detente" strategy emerges as an aggressive rather than a defensive counter to the advances of the cause of national liberation. The Nationalists and their allies in the world of big-money capital are taking as their slogan the old adage that attack is the best method of defence, which is why the recent sessions of Parliament saw an increase in the Defence Budget of a massive 36 per cent.

In this context it is necessary to look at the activities of the so-called “opposition” parties represented in the white establishment’s Parliament. The Progressive and Reform parties agreed last July to merge into a new party, which they hope will supplant the United Party as the “official” opposition to the Nationalists. This new grouping, representing the political intentions of an important section of the White bourgeoisie, holds 11 seats in the House of Assembly and one seat in the Senate. It also has considerable political influence in local government in the Transvaal – South Africa’s richest province – through its representation in the provincial council and the Johannesburg municipality. What is the real purpose behind this merging of interests? Why are these erstwhile political enemies proposing a marriage of convenience?

The reasons are twofold. In the sphere of international relations, the plan is to persuade other countries, particularly African countries and the forces of American imperialism that a credible alternative to Nationalist rule is taking shape and that therefore a climate of “change” is brewing among the country’s white elite. On the home front, the purpose of the merger is to blunt the revolutionary fervour of the masses by tempting them with opportunist doctrines and by encouraging the establishment of a “stable” black bourgeoisie, who the racists hope will serve as some kind of a buffer between themselves and the masses – particularly the urban African proletariat.

To ascertain the real motives of the leadership of this proposed new political force, let us consider the following points: Harry Schwarz, the Reform Party leader, is a director of some 30 companies and former managing director of the banking giant, Wesbank. The Progressive Party MP, Gordon Waddell is a former son-in-law of Harry Oppenheimer and an Anglo-American tycoon in his own right. James Ramsay, one of the Reform Party members of the Transvaal provincial council, was a leading figure in rightist opposition to the National Union of South African Students in his student days.

In the context of these manoeuvres by the “liberal opposition” in the white establishment it is worth recalling Lenin’s concluding sentence in his analysis of imperialism. He says:

“The most dangerous of all in this respect are those who do not wish to understand that the fight against imperialism is a sham and

humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism.”

At this stage in their struggle to preserve racism and capitalism, the Progressives and their Reformist allies will leave no stone unturned to win blacks over to opportunistic doctrines and styles of political action. This is the real motive behind their constant invitations to “homeland” leaders and prominent members of Urban Bantu Councils to address their meetings and congresses. Although such platforms do provide blacks with an opportunity for denouncing apartheid, they should obviously be viewed with the greatest circumspection and only used to denounce all forms of the white establishment’s policies.

COALITION TALK

A similar tendency towards greater unity is observable on the rightist flank in the white Parliament. There are reports that a section of the United Party is preparing the ground for a coalition with the Nationalists. At the time of writing there have already been two interesting speeches by United Party MPs indicating this trend. At a meeting in Middleburg, W. Vause Raw, MP for Durban Point, emphasised the area of agreement between his party and the Government on major issues. In Parliament, the MP for Mooi River, Bill Sutton, made a speech defending his party’s role on the Le Grange Commission, which recently recommended action against the Christian Institute. With Vorster nodding agreement, Sutton spoke of the infiltration of “black thought” into white organisations forcing them to move in a radical direction.

There is, in addition, talk that another member of the Government’s secret parliamentary tribunal, S.J. Marais Steyn, Minister of Indian Affairs, and a former member of the UP is helping to lay the ground for a blending of forces. The test of his efforts will come next year when the United Party has to decide whether or not to co-operate with the Nationalists on a proposed “internal security commission”.

If it is achieved, the result of a Nationalist–United Party coalition would be to give the forces of reaction an even more powerful dominance over the white Parliament than they at present possess. It is estimated that up to 26 of the “official” opposition’s MPs and Senators would join the alliance. This would mean that the arch-

reactionaries would hold complete sway over Parliament in a fashion which not even the most far-seeing of them could have foreseen 10 years ago. Even if this rapprochement between the forces of reaction does not result in an outright coalition, it seems very likely that it will lead to a level of co-operation between the United Party and the Government which would be more intimate than ever and which would amount to a coalition in spirit if not in the letter.

Given that this takes place, and assuming that the Progressive Reformist merger holds together, it is not difficult to envisage how the white establishment's parliament will perform. The reformist faction will occupy their green-cushioned benches, safe in the knowledge that their "multi-racial" policies will never be applied through any initiative by the white electorate. They will thus be in a position to pretend to oppose the Nats, while in reality helping to maintain the status quo by trying to seduce less-advanced elements among the masses into opportunism and trying to "win friends and influence people" in Africa and overseas for the cause of the status quo. The Government, on the other hand, will be in a stronger position than ever to apply the bone-crushing measures of repression it uses to keep itself in power, to oppress the masses and to protect the interests of capitalism.

OPPRESSION CONTINUES

Let it not be forgotten that not far beneath the surface of the sunny illusions of "change", "detente" and "dialogue" the realities of oppression go on unabated. At the time of writing 15 blacks are being held under the infamous Terrorism Act. A group of young blacks are being put through the motions of a show trial because of their opposition to racism. The Fordsburg pass courts continue their work of harassment and injustice. The pass laws remain in force and children starve in cities and in the country areas. The price of milk and maize has gone up again, guaranteeing more infant deaths from malnutrition and disease.

In summary, then, the white establishment's response to the new situation threatening its power has been fourfold:

- It has embarked on an intensive and complex diplomatic strategy it calls detente in an attempt to neutralise the international forces opposed to apartheid.

- It has stepped up its efforts to seduce the masses within the country into opportunism in the hope of blunting their revolutionary thrust.
- It is busy uniting its various elements and trying to resolve the contradictions between them in order to be better able to resist the forces ranged against it.
- It is continuing to use the old methods of repression like detention without trial but is also planning to build more sophisticated repressive mechanisms like the proposed internal security commission.

Nevertheless, although it is easy enough to see through the manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie trying to retain its power, it may prove more difficult to combat it. The new strategy of the establishment should not be underestimated. Our “colonialists of a special type” will draw on all the forces at the disposal of the capitalist hierarchy to continue their profitable system of repression and exploitation and to find new fields in which to practise it. We will certainly see our oppressors adopting new forms of resistance which may deceive some in the ranks of those opposed to them – offers of highly paid jobs in separate development outfits, illusory promises of “independence”, so-called relaxations of apartheid, attempts to buy off a privileged few at the expense of the continued oppression of the unprivileged majority. The coming period will require the sharpest theoretical analysis to identify, counter and overcome the wiles of our enemy.

The struggles of other peoples against imperialism which have proved successful in the recent period – Vietnam, Cuba, Mozambique etc. – will continue to provide many lessons for the masses and their organisations in South Africa, but the most important lessons will be learned in the course of actual struggle by our liberatory organisations in conditions which are peculiar to South Africa alone.

To discuss or sketch a strategy for the national liberation movement in the new phase which confronts it is beyond the scope of this article. It hardly needs to be said that this new challenge by the establishment must be answered by raising the theoretical understanding and practical organisation of the masses, their cadres and their leadership to a higher level than ever before. Above all, it must be appreciated now, more than ever, that theoretical clarity is acquired not merely from books but from struggle in all its forms and at all levels. As Marx wrote in the Theses on Feuerbach the words which are inscribed on his

tomb in Highgate: "The philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however is to change it". If theory does not lead to action, it is sterile.

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Women's Role in S.A. Freedom Fight

by Naomi Richards

International Women's Year provides an opportunity for a brief survey of the rich contribution South African women have made to the freedom struggle in South Africa. South African women, both black and white, suffer the disabilities of women throughout the capitalist world. But black women suffer a double disability, due to the racist structure of society in our country. No study of the position of women in South Africa can ignore the inter-relationship of class and race factors as social determinants. With a population of approximately 4 million whites and a servant labour force of three quarters of a million black women, there is at least one servant for almost every white family. This servant cares for the children, cooks and cleans so that her employer can take a job, enter a profession, attend summer school and make use of her leisure in whatever way she chooses. This results in the reality that most white women have a vested interest in maintaining their privileged position based on cheap female labour – the natural by-product of the economic structure of the whole country.

Recently, when African mothers in the West Rand area had to sign statements that their work permits would be cancelled if they introduced any of their children into the area, there was no outcry from their employers. In fact only one white woman, a doctor, was

convicted because she said she would go to jail rather than send away her maid's little son. When passes, the badge of slavery, were extended to African women, it was the white housewives who encouraged their servants to the Bantu Labour Bureaus to be issued with these documents.

FEDERATION OF S.A. WOMEN

It is this background which prevents most white women from standing with their black sisters in the fight for liberation.

Of course there are exceptions. In the 1950's, at the very time when most white housewives were ferrying their servants to take out passes, the Federation of South African women, a non-racial organisation formed by the liberation movement, including members of the Congress of Democrats, the white wing of the Congress Alliance, organised mass protest of thousands of women against the pass laws. Among the leaders of the Federation of South African Women were Ray Alexander and Helen Joseph, both members of the Congress of Democrats, and this organisation fought alongside and jointly with the African National Congress Women's League against the pass laws, the eviction of women from the urban townships, the increase in rents; together they opposed the Bantu Education Act, the Nursing Act, the imposition of taxes on African women, and all other legislation that introduced new refinements in the apartheid-ridden society.

These campaigns proved that the only way in which white women can effectively play their part in helping to liberate black women and improve the status of women as a whole, is through the liberation movement.

Here and there are to be found white women not associated with the liberation movement — Black Sash members, National Council of Women, Members of Parliament — who have supported proposals for the removal of disabilities of African women. It is no disparagement of their efforts to say that their stand is for the most part passive, their resolutions academic. They do not see that freedom is indivisible and that African women will not be free until all are free, until there is a complete and fundamental change in South African society which can only be brought about by the liberation movement headed by the African National Congress. No all-white Parliament will ever legislate

African women – or all black men and women – into equality.

There is not one among the 171 members of the all-white Parliament who supports a policy of majority rule based on one man one vote. However, the leader of the Progressive Party's group of seven MPs is a woman, Mrs Helen Suzman, and she recently took advantage of the opportunity provided by International Women's Year to move a motion on women's disabilities. She divided her motion into two parts. In the first she asked the government to remove the remaining mainly legal disabilities on all women, the limitations of a wife's contractual capacity, guardianship of minor children, marriage without an ante-nuptial contract etc. The Minister replied that the Law Commission had been instructed to look into these matters.

In the second part she moved that a commission be appointed to investigate the special disabilities of African women with a view to removing them. She enumerated the whole range of disabilities – those imposed by the archaic Natal Code under which the African woman is always a minor, the conflicts between common law and 'Bantu law', the restrictions on her movements, the limitations on her taking up employment, the refusal to allow widows to occupy houses in urban areas, the denial of the right to live with her lawful husband and children etc., and the hardships caused by the pass laws. The Minister replied that urban African women were 'merely a projection of Bantu women in the Homelands', who brought with them to the urban areas their customs, ancestral traditions and superstitions. As he had a high regard for these beliefs he would do nothing to change them.

THE FREEDOM CHARTER

The African women's main struggle is to free themselves from the repressive legislation of the racist regime rather than from the domination of their menfolk.

However, the Freedom Charter does mention equality of sex specifically on two occasions. The people shall govern – 'every man and woman shall have the right to vote'. In other words universal adult franchise. And again: 'Men and women shall receive equal pay for equal work'. For the rest equality is implicit. All shall be equal before the law, all shall enjoy human rights. The emphasis of the Freedom

Charter is on equality of national groups, on the abolition of racial and colour discrimination. In a truly democratic state, which the Charter aims at, there will be equality of men and women. But only with a complete change of the society will all women, black women included, be free and equal.

In the liberation movement we find both men and women fighting together against discrimination. Both are oppressed, both are exploited and both fight to change the system. As Frelimo President Samora Machel pointed out:

“Men and women are products and victims of exploitative society which has created them and formed them. It is essentially against this society that men and women should fight united. Our practical experience has proved that the progress achieved in the liberation of women is the result of the successes gained in our common struggle against colonialism and imperialism, against the exploitation of man by man, and to build a new society.”

(“Mozambique: Sowing the Seeds of Revolution”)

Coloured, Asian, African, and a minority of white women have fought alongside men in the struggle against exploitation, oppression and discrimination.

Let us look at the history of the liberation movement.

For half a century African women fought alone, or with their men, against the pass laws, the very foundation of their enslavement. African women in Winburg and Bloemfontein, O.F.S. were sentenced in 1913 for refusing passes. The struggle continued into the 1950s and 1960s when thousands were prosecuted for refusing to accept passes. When the National Liberation League was formed in 1935 its President was a woman, Cissie Gool. Women took part in 1948 in the passive resistance campaign against the segregation of Asians, the ‘Ghetto’ Bill. Women such as Drs Goonam and Asvat, Mesdames Christopher, Pahad, Cachalia and Naidoo led groups of women resisters and were prosecuted and jailed for it. African women and women of all races took part in the Defiance against Unjust Laws campaign of 1952 and scores went to prison for deliberately breaking apartheid regulations. In all the many bus boycotts, women walked the same as men. Women formed local committees to take up local issues – the Payneville Women’s Committee of 1940 to aid the victims of police shootings

and the Women's Food Committee which helped distribute scarce foodstuffs just after the war, to name but two.

TRADE UNIONS

Women of all races played a very active role in the trade union movement from the time the Communists and other patriots organised African workers on the Rand in the late 1920s, to the present day when they are active in SACTU.

In 1946 the first two women were elected to the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress. They were Mrs M. Xuma and Mrs M. Jacobs. Five years later the Women's League of the ANC was formed and up to the time of its banning in 1960 it fought consistently as part of the ANC on every issue – the anti-pass campaigns, evictions, Bantu Education (during the campaign against the Bantu Education Act scores of African women were prosecuted for running 'illegal' schools), bus boycotts, defiance campaigns, etc.

From its inception in 1921, women were in the leadership of the Communist Party. In fact, a look at the accused in almost every political trial shows that women have been in the forefront of the struggle for freedom. In the Treason Trial there were 20 women and during the next 20 years, women have figured in almost every political trial. They were among the first detainees under the 90-day law, the 180-day; they are included in the list of banned persons; the first person to be house-arrested was a woman.

One has only to mention names like Lilian Ngoyi, Winnie Mandela, Josie Mpama, Albertina Sisulu, Dora Tamana, Kate Molale, Florence Mophosho, Frances Baard, Mary Moodley, Florence Matomela, Ruth Slovo, Asa Dawood, Blanche La Guma – and there are many, many more – to realise the strength women have added to the fight. And don't let us forget Dorothy Nyembe, serving a 15-year prison sentence for assisting freedom fighters. Nor the many women who have taken their place at the side of their menfolk in the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

But it is not only by political or military struggle that women will free themselves. Their struggle is also economic, cultural, educational, legal. Every time an African woman fights for the right to enter an urban

area to get a job in a factory, to become a producer instead of staying in the kraal, she is fighting to be free. When she struggles, taking perhaps years, to become a teacher, or a doctor, she is becoming emancipated, blazing a trail for her sisters. When she serves on the local urban or school board, powerless though they may be, she is taking part in decision-making the same as men.

The statistics show that 25 per cent of African women are economically active, even if their jobs are lowly ones. And this in spite of the government's policy to keep them in the reserves. Only 30 per cent of white women, with all the job opportunities available to them, are economically active.

If African women are on the bottom rung of the ladder leading to full emancipation, to complete equality, to liberation, let them look at the position of Soviet women, who have climbed a long way towards the top. What women in socialist countries have achieved we can achieve through the realisation of socialism.

On the economic front, Soviet women receive equal pay with men for the same work; 925 out of every 1,000 are in jobs, 7 out of every 10 doctors are women, and 2 out of every 5 scientists are women. In politics, one third of the members of parliament are women, and 28 are Cabinet Ministers. In education, 1 in 3 children are in nursery schools and all children of school-going age get free education. In law, there is absolute equality. Half the judges are women.

“Sisters, don't say you can't do anything.
No more lack of confidence,
No more hesitation.
Let us ask ourselves clearly this question.
What do we want?
We want total and complete liberation.”

*(Quoted by Sheila Rowbotham in
“Women, Resistance and Revolution.”)*

Socialist Humanism vs. Racist Inhumanity

by A. Bakaya

An African was hit by a car travelling at 60 miles per hour and was flung into a wall. The man got up and walked away. The wall was damaged.

The above is a South African 'joke'. If it can be construed as humour then the least that can be said is that it reflects the general illness of our society. This so-called joke has at its root the inhumanity of South Africa's racist philosophy which permeates every aspect of the lives of the South African people and most brutally that of the lives of the African people. *The man is not human.*

Professor Christiaan Barnard of Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town, South Africa, performed the world's first heart transplant on a human being. The donor was black. The donor's beating heart had to be removed for the purpose of the transplant. Two beating hearts – two lives – were staked without guarantee of success.

The South African breakthrough in heart transplantation was rapidly followed by other institutes in the world which carried out transplants with greater or lesser 'success'. The writer has no medical or physio-

logical expertise and there is no intent to evaluate physiological problems. However, it is unlikely that the South African experiment was suddenly replicated on the basis of technical knowledge gleaned from that transplant. What the South Africans were the first to do with impunity was to take a beating heart and pronounce death at this stage and proceed with the experimental transplant.

HUMAN GUINEA PIGS

During the 1960 State of Emergency political prisoners were interned in Pretoria Central Prison and kept in a section of the prison away from and out of communication with the other prisoners. In this section of the prison, physically separated from the rest of the prison buildings, there was one cell in which between 10 and 20 African prisoners were kept. We learnt that these people were treated differently because they had a pathological heart condition. They were not in the prison hospital but were subjects of some kind of study being conducted from the medical school in Pretoria. What the experimental manipulations were is not known but the conditions were no different from those that one might employ in animal experimentation, caged and controlled, so that certain factors are held constant while the hypothesis under test can be studied by manipulating variables. This experiment was being done on African men and not on animals. Their offences might have ranged from pass law convictions to other minor crimes. Whether they had a choice to 'volunteer' for the experiment is irrelevant. Their lives were being staked for medical research.

The paradox is that medicine's primary task is the preservation of life.

The morality of choice and socialist morality is the point I wish to take up in relation to current reports which suggest that in South Africa brain surgery is being performed on African prisoners. Brain stimulation and brain surgical procedures have been reported as having been done on USA prisoners. In some other capitalist countries brain surgery is done on certain psychiatric patients.

The use of human subjects for surgical and other research into human functioning is not exclusive to South Africa. It is quite extensive in the USA and other capitalist countries. There the debate is whether the

offer of remission of sentence gives the subject 'a real choice' to volunteer to be a human guinea pig. Cynically, one might comment that bourgeois freedom of choice is always a choice between the degree of insult to his life that the human individual has to tolerate.

There is nothing secretive about any of this work, and the experimental findings are published in scientific journals. Capitalism shouts loudly about the integrity of the human being, but in practice humanitarianism takes second place to the philosophy of competition and the philosophy to win the rat race overflows into medical science. The advances of man's scientific and technological progress are distorted in use and become of secondary significance for the benefit of mankind.

Animal studies do show brain centres as being related to specific functional activities such as attack behaviour, fear related to responses etc. Studies also clearly demonstrate operationally defined pleasure zones, such that if certain brain areas are stimulated when an experimenter gets an animal to perform an action, this action will persist in order to obtain the stimulation of the 'pleasure centres' even at the expense of other biologically necessary actions like eating or drinking.

Analysis of brain function in experiments like the above is of immense scientific importance and they are made possible by the technological advances of medical and neurological science. But life is a complex inter-relationship of discrete functional entities since the organism functions as a synthesis of specialised functions. To illustrate this even at an animal level is not beyond the logic of a layman since a rat presented with food and a cat simultaneously will respond to the situation by fighting the cat for the food or by running away, depending on what will be more beneficial for its survival. The dialectical relationship between the organism and its environment is non-static and never absolute.

How much more complex is the behaviour of man with his highly developed brain that makes it possible for him to think symbolically about situations and hence to be able to plan his activity. This is possible only because of man's highly developed cerebral cortex which supersedes basic lower brain functions.

The leucotomy operation is primarily a brain surgical procedure which severs links between upper and lower functions. More sophisticated variations of this operation aim at cauterising certain areas of the brain connected with man's emotional behaviour. By use of a

technologically highly advanced instrument the lower centres of the brain can be probed and part of the brain tissue frozen. One might thus aim to destroy brain tissue associated with 'aggressiveness'. The way that such an operation, if successful, interferes with the more general function of the brain is only crudely known. The stereotactic procedure is 'safe' only because haemorrhage is reduced to levels that do not constitute a risk to life, but this in itself cannot be a justification for human experimentation.

The technical advance is undoubtedly of immense value to mankind since such procedures allow for the treatment of conditions such as epilepsy and brain tumours that cannot be treated without surgery at present. Human suffering therefore can be greatly alleviated. The use of stereotoxic instruments for brain surgery of aggressive criminals cannot be construed as being used for this purpose. It is a procedure for experimental purposes to understand the functioning of man's brain, in a way that makes man appear a mechanical being of parts without thought.

MAN IS BORN FREE . . .

In a capitalist society this pessimistic and negative view of man holds whether the man is white or black. The use of such procedures on convicted men also carries within it the theoretical implication that criminality is inborn. Its simplistic view that crimes of violence are the result of brain disfunction evades the issue of why violence should be so commonplace in Johannesburg, New York or Chicago, whilst being relatively absent in Moscow, Ulan Bator or Havana.

Socialism is not only a method of economic planning. Underlying socialism is an attitude that accords respect to man. This is what is understood by socialist morality that directs Soviet medical science to research the problems of making an artificial heart and to tackle the problems of generating energy for artificial hearts rather than transplant beating hearts and getting into the metaphysical debate as to when death occurs. It is this morality that directs socialist society to creating the material conditions so that sport and culture may exist to enrich man's life and prevent human distress. Heart transplants as performed in the West today would be an infringement of Soviet law since death

is understood as having occurred only when both consciousness and the heart have completely stopped functioning. Leucotomy is illegal because, with our present knowledge of brain function, it constitutes brain experimentation on human beings, the outcome of which is not understood on the exquisite interrelationship between the cerebral cortex and lower brain functions in man.

That brain surgery is being performed on African prisoners in our country is part of the gross callousness of the racism which permeates all of our society. Racist inhumanity is most evident in the callous and criminal treatment of the black man. Yet it is within the capitalist ideology of which, in South Africa, racism is an integral facet, that the experiments on human beings described above are occurring.

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of South Africa**

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African Commentary

By Sentinel

A new feature highlighting recent developments in Africa and the theoretical issues to which they give rise. Readers are invited to send contributions, criticism and suggestions for inclusion in this column in future issues of the African Communist.

ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA – REFLECTIONS ON SEPARATISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION.

Lenin was not undervaluing the relevance of classical Marxist theory and practice when he warned the newly emergent communist organisations of the peoples of the East that, “there are problems whose solution you will not find in any communist book .” (Collected Works Vol. 30 p. 162). He was emphasising the need for Marxists to enlarge and enrich the storehouse of revolutionary theory in the special conditions which were emerging in the colonial and semi-colonial world. And it is perhaps in the area of certain aspects of the National question in the developing world, that this kind of application is especially called for.

I refer to the vexing problem of tendencies towards separatism and regionalism which have plagued numerous countries which have recently emerged, or are still emerging, from the shackles of control by the major imperialist powers. In some cases the post-liberation borders were later altered by peaceful agreement; the Mali Federation became Mali and Senegal, the Cameroons seceded from Nigeria, Togo seceded from Ghana. In other cases both successful and unsuccessful bitter and bloody internecine conflicts have been fought in pursuit of separatism — the Biafra war, the Pakistan-Bangladesh conflict, the Southern Sudan. In yet other cases competing claims to border regions continue to sour the relationships of a number of independent states within the anti-imperialist bloc and lead, from time to time, to border incidents.

There is no all-purpose formula to guide committed Marxists through all these disparate situations. We often find protagonists on both sides of the conflict claiming inspiration from one or other revolutionary truism in support of “their” side. The undoubted right which all nations have to self-determination (including secession) is posed against the equally important principle of discouraging fragmentation and maintaining unity in the face of continuing attempts by imperialism and local reaction to use regionalism and separatism to put the clock back. And, transcending the narrow local situation, the key issue for the Marxist revolutionary is whether a given policy will advance or retard the development of the world proletarian revolution.

These principles are all interconnected and are rarely, if ever, found in harmonious juxtaposition. Take the case of the Cabinda region of Angola. It is territorially separated from Angola, and even if a case could be made out that its inhabitants share a distinctive language and culture there can be little doubt that the separatist noises being made at present can only serve both internal and external reaction. On the other hand the cry in Namibia for immediate independence is absolutely correct even though it is territorially, economically and administratively (pretences apart) as much a part of South Africa as, say, the Transkei. Yet when Matanzima talks of “independence” based on ethnic and territorial identity, he is talking the language of white supremacy.

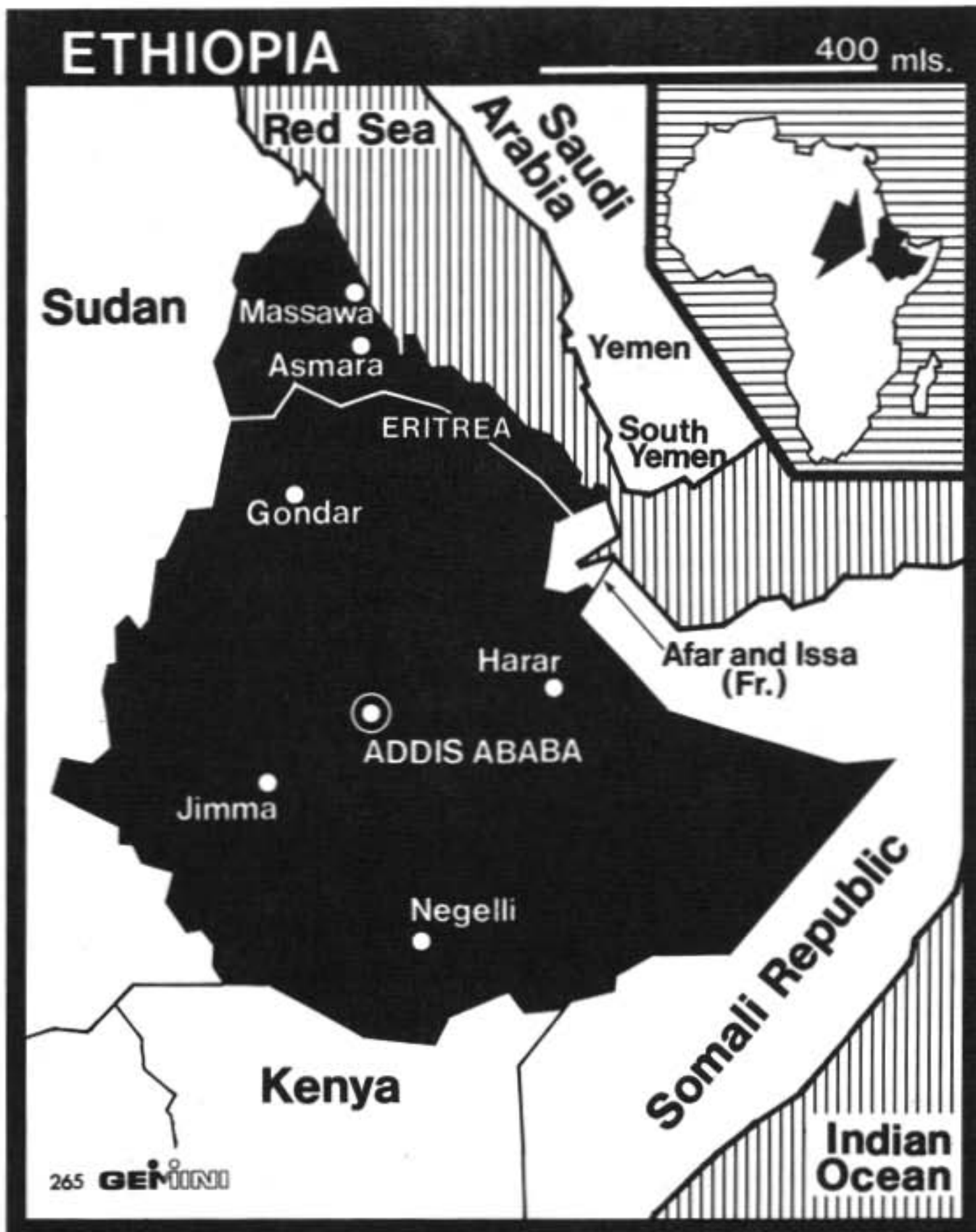
Certainly in the developing world the link between the right of

nations to self-determination and Stalin's well known definition of a "nation" has less (if any) application than it might have had in central Europe at the beginning of the century. The historically formed community which occupies a common territory and has a common economy, culture and traditions, seldom corresponds to the forces which have been ranged in given regions against imperialism and feudalism in the struggle for national liberation. The theoretical dogmatist might well be able to make out a case showing that the Makonde of Northern Mocambique have more in common with the Makonde of Southern Tanzania than with the Shangaan-speaking group of Southern Mocambique whose traditional ethnic brothers also have their homes in the Eastern Transvaal. Yet it would be patent nonsense to use Stalin's definition to question the newly won Mocambique people's state. Marcelino dos Santos had this to say about FRELIMO's approach to the national question.

"On the general point of whether we have already moulded a nation in the true sense of the word, I want to say that a nation is based on concrete realities. And the most important reality in the present (1973) stage in Mocambique is the fight against Portuguese Colonialism. It is our common fight against our common oppressor which plays an outstanding role in creating a national bond between all the diverse groups and cultures; secondly the common action to begin building a new society in the liberated areas also plays an important role in stimulating a national consciousness . . . Of course a nation is a product of history and its formation goes through different phases. In this sense the work of the final achievement of complete nationhood will continue even after independence although the fundamental elements of nationhood are already in existence and in the process of being further developed in Mocambique." (Interview with Joe Slovo, AFRICAN COMMUNIST No. 55 4th Quarter 1973).

The unending exhortation in Zambia of the slogan "One Zambia—One Nation", is a further example of the process of consolidating and safeguarding the unity of the newly independent states in Africa which rarely (if ever) conform to the classical definition of a nation at the moment of political independence.

We should also warn ourselves against the cynical exploitation by bourgeois nationalists and other reactionaries of emotive slogans ostensibly based on radical ideology. How often do we hear the cry from gentlemen who have other axes to grind that this or that group has a natural right to secession and to self-determination because, after all, it was the old imperialist tyrant which drew arbitrary lines



on the map of our ravaged continent. But, as often as not, this cry is designed to create power bases for sectional groups or to advance neo-colonial conspiracies. Who drew the national boundaries in Europe? Was it the working class? Of course not. In Europe it was the bourgeoisie just as in China it was, in the first place, the feudal war-lords. In the case of Africa its frontiers "were drawn by the imperialists. For the most part they record past conflicts and settlements among the colonialists. They do not . . . demarcate natural geographical, linguistic or other divisions." (SACP Programme)

The OAU, to avoid unhealthy disputes and conflict between its constituents has legitimised the colonially-formed boundaries.

The test for a revolutionary and for an anti-imperialist must surely be whether the historically accomplished fact has created a new reality and whether the defence of that reality now favours the cause of anti-imperialism and socialism. There may well be cases which justify a change in the national status quo; but we must be on our guard lest those who shout demagogically about unequal treaties with Czars and Imperialists are not really concealing their other reactionary designs.

Each situation of border dispute or in which the question of separatism arises, requires an all-round political assessment in which not only local, regional or historical factors are considered but also those which have a bearing on the present on-going struggle against imperialism and for social progress. Looked at in this way the ethnic or cultural cohesiveness of any single group is an extremely important factor but by no means the only one in our judgement of the pros and cons of any specific conflict.

THE FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Eritrean Liberation Front claims that Eritrea (which through its two ports of Assab and Massawa is Ethiopia's only outlet to the sea) is not part of Ethiopia and has never been so, certainly for the past four or five centuries. After a few centuries of control by the Ottoman Empire, Italian colonisation of Eritrea began in 1869. Numerous attempts were then made by the Italian imperialists to use Eritrea as a base for conquests further South. This process was temporarily halted by Emperor Menelik who decisively defeated the Italian forces at the famous battle of Adowa in 1896. Abyssinia (Ethiopia's former name) continued to exist as one of the few uncolonised African states until Mussolini's Fascist armies occupied it in 1935.

The whole area was liberated in 1941. Haile Sellassie returned to his country and Eritrea remained under British Military administration until 1952. Eritrea's future was then charted by the United Nations whose General Assembly resolved that it "shall constitute an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia". The principles which were to govern the establishment of this federation included

a. Full control by Addis Ababa over defence, foreign affairs, and port administration.

b. Full autonomy for the Eritrean government in all domestic affairs.

c. Safeguards and guarantees for the existence of a democratic regime in Eritrea.

This agreement was to last 10 years after which Eritrea would have the free choice either to continue its association with Ethiopia or to become independent. Throughout the period when this agreement operated internal politics in Eritrea was marked by a greater degree of internal democracy than was permitted in Ethiopia itself and domestic political life was dominated by over half a dozen political parties.

At the end of the 10 year period the Eritrean Assembly opted for the complete integration of Eritrea into Ethiopia, as its 14th Province. What followed this decision was the imposition on Eritrea of all the backward feudal methods of domination and exploitation which were the general practice in Haile Sellassie's Ethiopia. The political parties were dissolved, their press banned, trade unions were outlawed and the prisons were filled with the opponents of the regime.

The decision by the Eritrean Assembly was immediately disputed by many Eritreans but mainly by the Muslim Arab speaking section (which constitutes a majority in Eritrea) which alleged that there had been coercion and bribery on a large scale and that the "colonisation" of Eritrea was designed to bring about Christian Amharic domination. Hence the formation in 1962 of the Eritrean Liberation Front with predominantly Muslim backing both inside and outside Eritrea. The ELF set up its headquarters in Syria and dedicated itself to struggling for the complete independence of Eritrea by all means including armed struggle. It had the support and encouragement of most countries in the Arab world particularly since Sellassie had transformed Eritrea into an armed base for US imperialism and had become a staunch ally of Zionism. Writing before the overthrow of Haile Sellassie a correspondent said in the AFRICAN COMMUNIST (No. 60 first quarter 1975 p. 90):

"The UN resolution setting up the Eritrean-Ethiopian Federation was a compromise formula cooked up by the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie and the USA. On the one hand Haile Selassie gained possession of the territory of Eritrea; on the other hand the United States was able to establish one of its most important military bases outside the USA.

The strategically important position of Eritrea on the east coast of

Africa and its islands in the waterway of the Red Sea linking the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean has long attracted the attention of imperialism, and the United States and its allies have taken it into consideration in framing their colonialist policy. That is why the United States is siting bases at Asmara and in Israel, in an area near the Sudanese border and at Fatima and Halib Island. The US also manages in the area a base for training anti-guerrilla forces. . . .

Thousands of Eritreans have identified themselves with and fully understand the aims and achievements of the Eritrean revolution. The revolution has started to organise the masses under its banner to achieve its central objective i.e. the liberation of the Eritrean people from the **reactionary, colonial Ethiopian Empire.**" (my emphasis)

Before the dramatic changes which took place in Ethiopia in 1974, when Sellassie's ancient feudal regime was toppled, there seemed little to question the justness and progressive character of the armed people's struggle by the Eritrean Liberation movement. Indeed, despite some of its narrow religious beginnings the struggle was slowly embracing more revolutionary objectives and many of its participants including the Popular Liberation Front (which now stands in alliance with the ELF) claim to be committed to the ideology of Marxism. In addition it seems clear from the brief historical outline of Eritrea's past that the majority of its inhabitants do have a more common identity with one another than with the other groups which make up the Ethiopian nation.

THE NEW SITUATION

How then should we judge the effect of the changes that have taken place in Ethiopia itself on a struggle which seemed in most respects to warrant the sympathy and support of progressive forces everywhere? If the right to secession, based on some sort of national identity, is the absolute and only consideration then, of course, nothing has changed. But, there is little value in this type of unhistorical and mechanical approach. In the present case, what has now become clearly relevant is the effect of the continuing civil war not only on revolutionary aspirations within Eritrea but on the completion of the anti-feudal revolution within Ethiopia itself. Already manoeuvres are in evidence of US imperialist attempts to regain its place in Ethiopia by the supply of weapons to enable the new regime to prosecute its war in Eritrea. No doubt social reaction in the Arab World will use its influence with the Eritrean forces to fragment

Ethiopia still further (already a new "liberation front" has emerged in Tigre province adjacent to Eritrea) and to attempt to prevent the revolutionary elements in both Eritrea and Ethiopia from gaining ascendancy.

The policy of "Ethiopia Tikdem" meaning "Ethiopian Socialism" is largely in its incipient stage and it is still unclear whether it will lead to a real socialist orientation or provide the rhetoric for a new exploitative class based on a military-bureaucratic bourgeoisie. Ultimately the answer will depend upon whether the other pillar of the Ethiopian revolution – the working masses and the militant youth – wins its rightful place in the new body politic. But the Declaration on Economic policy followed by the far-reaching edict of March 4 on agrarian reform indicates a revolutionary purpose of a most hopeful kind. These policies constitute a radical attempt to smash the economic base of feudalism. Land has been nationalised without compensation. Only persons who themselves till the land may have plots in private ownership. The hiring of farm hands is prohibited and all old debts and commitments to former landowners have been annulled. In the other sectors the Dergue (ruling military administration) has declared that ". . . the extreme poverty of the mass of the people . . . is a result of the low level of development of the productive resources and the exploitation resulting from the private ownership of the means of production by a small minority of the population . . . the elimination of poverty . . . and the prevention of exploitation of the Ethiopian people . . . can be achieved only when the government, as the representative of the people and in the interest of the mass of Ethiopian workers and peasants, directly owns and controls the natural resources and key industrial, commercial and financial sectors of the economy." (Declaration On Economic Policy of Socialist Ethiopia – February 7, 1975). Already all banks, financial intermediaries and insurance companies have been nationalised.

The consolidation and deepening of this process is obviously not only in the interests of the Ethiopian people but is also in the best interests of the Eritrean masses and all forces in the world's anti-imperialist camp. The fight "to the death" in the Eritrean conflict can in the long run benefit only the most reactionary circles in both Ethiopia and Eritrea and their external supporters. Whatever justice

there may be in the continuing Eritrean claim to self-determination it would be folly for revolutionaries not to give thought to the changed character of the Ethiopian ruling class. Equally, the passionate belief in the need to prevent the fragmentation of the new Ethiopia ought not to blind revolutionaries to what is undoubtedly a mass-based feeling in Eritrea that its peoples must have a decisive say in any future constitutional arrangement.

The task of all revolutionaries in both areas is to work for a negotiated settlement of the war. This obviously cannot be achieved if the precondition for negotiation is, on the one side, an absolute refusal to recognise the specially historically-rooted claim by the Eritrean resistance for self-determination and, on the other side, an insistence that, come what may, Eritrea must secede and create a completely separate sovereign state. Such postures leave no room whatsoever for meaningful negotiation. It is difficult to conclude that the common aspirations of true revolutionaries in both Ethiopia and Eritrea can find no meeting point which would serve the interests of the working masses of both areas and the general struggle against imperialism. The alternative is to pursue and intensify the conflict and jeopardise the future of both the Ethiopian and Eritrean revolution.

ENEMY CONSPIRACIES IN ANGOLA

The conspiracies to snatch from the Angolan people the fruits of decades of sacrifice and struggle continue. With formal independence only a few weeks away (November 11th) the cabal of forces ranged against the true representatives of the Angolan people are intensifying their efforts to create chaos, anarchy and confusion in the hope that a Congo type situation will eventually lead to the establishment of a Mobutu-type regime in Angola. The disreputable alliance against the MPLA has now been openly joined by China which earlier in the year showed where it stood by feting Mobutu and FNLA leader, Holden Roberto, in Peking. It is also a notorious fact that the FNLA forces are being trained by Chinese instructors and that its arsenal of American supplied weaponry is now being generously supplemented by the Chinese government.

The French magazine *France Nouvelle* correctly describes FNLA as a "reactionary organisation set up with the assistance of the multi-national corporations and designed to preserve their control over the vast mineral resources in Angola". And the Senegalese newspaper *Le Soleil* said that despite "its flirtations with Peking FNLA is, without question, a puppet of US policy in Africa", and "China helps the forces which have no popular support in Angola". At the time of writing Roberto's mercenary army is reported to be marching on the capital Luanda in an attempt to destroy by force of arms the popular ascendancy of the MPLA. Peking must have a real contempt for the political sophistication of the people of Africa if it expects them to swallow the latest absurdity of its Soviet-hating propaganda machine that the "Russians" are behind the fighting.

Latest reports also suggest that Chipenda, a renegade from MPLA who joined up with Roberto in Zaire, is amongst those leading the mercenary column in its march on Luanda. Mr Chipenda, earlier this year, went to South Africa and there can be no doubt whatsoever that his officially announced stay in Windhoek was not merely as reported in the *Cape Times* (30th May 1975) for "medical treatment" but to parley with another natural ally of the FNLA, the white regime in Pretoria. Lest we be accused of being unduly suspicious about this "patriot" and new-found convert to Mao Tse Tung, let us remind ourselves what Vice-Admiral Coutinho (a leading member of the Armed Forces Movement and Portugal's High Commissioner in Angola soon after Caetano's downfall.) told the magazine *l'Afrique et l'Asie* (May 19) about Mr Daniel Chipenda.

I have the proofs that Chipenda was an agent of the PIDE here in Portugal, when he was a student at Coimbra and played football. He personally gave information to the political police about his friends in the MPLA. And I can prove this. Later, I believe, though this is only a personal opinion, Chipenda was sent into the MPLA so as to divide it . . . The danger for them (the Portuguese fascists) was the MPLA. With Mobutu, that is, with Holden, they saw the chance of a deal, a sort of gentlemen's agreement. But in their eyes the real danger was the MPLA. It had to be broken up. So they sent in Chipenda. And Chipenda did the job . . .

One wonders what the newly captured PIDE files will eventually tell us about another dubious character in the Angolan drama, Mr Jonas Savimbi. In the Western and South African press Savimbi is presented as the real white hope of Angolan moderation. Savimbi's politics and



the politics of the organisation he leads – UNITA – have emerged from a number of interviews Savimbi has given to the white press in South Africa. He told the *Financial Mail* (May 9, 1975) that the problem of apartheid is “a South African problem. People do not understand the situation when they say that Vorster is cheating them . . . I hope that future leaders of Angola will cooperate with South Africa. . . We support completely the atmosphere of detente . . .” On the question of Angola’s economic policies he stated that he considered that “Nationalisation is a disease. The foreign companies are manned by experts who have the know-how to develop our petroleum, diamond and copper industries . . . State participation, yes. Nationalisation,

no.” It is easy to understand why, according to the present Portuguese High Commissioner, General Silva Cardoso, Savimbi and UNITA are the most popular group amongst the remaining white settlers.

MOZAMBIQUE – **A CONSTITUTION BORN IN STRUGGLE**

One of FRELIMO’s outstanding qualities has been its unbroken emphasis on the importance of correct ideology. For this reason it has always succeeded in defeating the manoeuvres within its ranks of the careerists, opportunists and bourgeois nationalists who are ever poised to exploit tribalism, racialism and red-baiting. The victory of the correct line is now enshrined in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of Mozambique. It is not just a lawyer’s document and every article bristles with the politics of the people’s revolution.

There is no ambiguity about the character of the power which has been established. Article 2 proclaims that power belongs to the workers and peasants united and led by FRELIMO and exercised by organs of people’s power. The fundamental aim of this power is to construct a new society “free from exploitation of man by man”. The leading role of the political vanguard is unambiguously asserted. Article 3 makes clear that the orientation of the new state is defined by the political line of FRELIMO which is the “leading force in the state and society”. The action of all state organs will be supervised by the Party to ensure the conformity of state policy with the interests of the people.

One of the fundamental objectives of the new state is the elimination of the colonial and traditional structures of backwardness, oppression and exploitation and “the mentality which is attached to this condition”. The document recognises that to achieve this requires the defence and consolidation of national unity and the building of an independent national economy. It also correctly emphasises the link between internal progress and the pursuit of the struggle against colonialism and imperialism.

In the economic sphere the Constitution concentrates on the need to liquidate underdevelopment and to raise the level of life of the working people. In the process of building an advanced economic

base the emphasis will be on the eventual "elimination of the system of exploitation of man by man". The state is declared to be the owner of all land and natural resources situated in the soil and the subsoil of Mozambique. The state is also charged with the task of promoting the planning of the economy and it will encourage the workers and peasants to organise themselves into collective forms of production.

The constitution illegalises all discrimination based on colour, sex, race, ethnic origin, place of birth, religion, level of education, and social or professional position.

The new Republic's foreign policy is also clearly influenced by its revolutionary ideology. Special mention is made in the constitution of the need to consolidate and to develop its solidarity with the socialist countries of the world who are described as "natural allies" of the Mozambiquan people — a relationship forged during the struggle for national emancipation. The indivisibility of the freedom struggle in the world is given recognition in Article 21 which proclaims that the People's Republic of Mozambique supports and stands in solidarity with the struggles of all peoples for their national liberation.

Even the new flag (described in Article 68) has been designed to symbolise the main foundations of the revolution in Mozambique and its ideological inspiration. Green represents the riches of the soil of Mozambique; red, the centuries-old resistance to colonialism, the armed struggle for national liberation and the revolution; black, the African continent; yellow, the riches beneath the soil; white, the justice of the struggle of the Mozambiquan people and the peace this struggle is aiming to establish. In the top left hand corner is an emblem constituted by a cog-wheel, "symbol of the working class"; a book, symbol of education and knowledge; a hoe, symbol of the peasantry; a weapon, symbol of continuing defence and vigilance. The red star symbolises the internationalist spirit of the Mozambiquan people.

I have quoted from an incomplete unofficial translation I have seen and I look forward to the full and official translation. It seems to be a document which every political activist, especially in Africa, should study and discuss.

GOOD NEWS FROM KENYA

Africa will not easily forget the type of bible-toting evangelist who, more often than not, prepared the ground for the trader and imperialist conquest. It is therefore all the more gratifying that last July the Kenya government decided to send the President of the International Council of Christian Churches packing. Dr Carl McIntyre was deported during the 9th Congress of the ICCC for, amongst other things, "making irresponsible statements in support of racist regimes". It was the height of arrogance for the ICCC to put out a statement (whilst its conference was being hosted by an African government) which praised Ian Smith and his government for "upholding Christianity in the face of Black African Hostility".

As usual this type of "Christianity" is combined with anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. In his opening address Dr McIntyre accused the World Council of Churches of "changing social structures and encouraging revolutionaries". It was apparently the Russians working through the Metropolitan Nikodim of Moscow who inspired the WCC's programme to combat racism "which has been used as a cover for the support of the guerrillas with their violence and the bringing in of communism". *The Times of Zambia* also has no illusions about Dr McIntyre and his ICCC. It said that this organisation was "neo-facist" and its leader gave the appearance of being "cut from vintage Klu Klux Klan cloth".

An attempt by the ICCC to bring Solzhenitsyn to join the ICCC platform in Nairobi was also rightly frustrated by the Kenya government. This soul-mate of the neo-fascist McIntyre also has no place on our continent. Whether it be on the question of Chile, Vietnam or Southern Africa, Solzhenitsyn has confirmed his unconditional endorsement of capitalism, imperialism and racial oppression. The decision to ban him from Kenya was welcomed by *The Times of Zambia* which described him as "undoubtedly the darling of the right wing lunatic fringe of the Western World apart from being currently the most over-rated writer in the world".

I can only express the hope that the rest of Africa will follow the Kenyan lead and refuse to allow western-dominated racist organisations like the ICC to spread their pernicious ideology on our continent.

COLLABORATION CORNER

MALAWI

Lilongwe, the prestigious new capital of Malawi, will be constructed with money provided by Vorster. A loan of R8m. has already been advanced for this purpose and the *Financial Mail* (May 30, 1975) claims that the rest of the R22m. needed also comes from South Africa although "after the publicity given to the first loan SA and Malawi have become coy over admitting the rest . . ." The close association between the two countries is evidenced further by the fact that in 1974 South Africa moved into first place as Malawi's trade supplier. The increase has been largely the result of aid projects from South Africa which are tied to the use of South African materials.

LIBERIA

We do not yet know what exchanges took place between Vorster and Liberian President William Tolbert on improved trade relations between South Africa and Liberia. But whatever arrangements have been made, President Tolbert will be interested not only as the country's chief executive but as a member of a family which controls the biggest Liberian owned company, the Mesurado group. This company not only has a virtual monopoly of Liberia's fishing industry but is one of the biggest distributors of manufactured and imported goods.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Despite the injunction in the Dar es Salaam declaration on Southern Africa that economic and political pressures against South Africa should be increased, the CAR is reported to have joined Malawi in receiving loans from the white regime. The loan of S250m was apparently negotiated by CAR ministers who visited Pretoria in March 1975 – itself a breach of the OAU decisions. Consistent with this anti-liberation policy President Bokassa rationalised his country's commercial dealings with Vorster by proclaiming support for the "strategy of dialogue". This statement was made in a communique during a visit to Senegal – a country which also often puts business before liberation. It is also reported (*Africa*, July 1975) that special efforts are to be made to attract tourists from South Africa and South African businessmen have been invited to invest R4m. in the construction of a 500 bedroom hotel in Bangui.

Tributes to Bram Fischer

Messages of condolence on the death of Bram Fischer on May 8, 1975, have been received by his family in South Africa and Rhodesia and by the South African Communist Party from fraternal parties, liberation movements and progressive organisations and individuals in all parts of the world.

The Communist Party expresses its appreciation to all who have written to us on this sad occasion. We reproduce below a selection from some of the messages received:

MOSES KOTANE, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY:

In the untimely death of Bram Fischer our party has suffered a great blow by losing a staunch and dedicated Communist. Bram Fischer was a living example to the unbelievers that a Communist can be both a good Afrikaner and a true South African and that black and white can live together in harmony in South Africa.

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, Dar es Salaam:

Deeply regret untimely death prominent revolutionary Bram Fischer. Convey our condolences to family of deceased and all South African revolutionaries.

**LIBERATION COMMITTEE OF THE ORGANISATION OF
AFRICAN UNITY, Dar es Salaam, in a message to the
Acting President of the ANC:**

Have learnt with deepest sorrow untimely death of comrade Abram Fischer a revolutionary and dedicated leader of ANC. Comrade Fischer has died fighting gallantly for the cause of liberty. Kindly convey condolence and sympathy of the standing committee of the OAU Liberation Committee currently meeting in Dar es Salaam to the ANC and the bereaved family of comrade Fischer. Liberation Committee reaffirms total support and solidarity with liberation forces of South Africa.

(The standing committee of the Liberation Committee was in session when the news of Bram Fischer's death was received. The executive secretary Col. Mbitha read the telex message to the meeting and asked all the delegates to stand in honour of a "great African revolutionary".)

***VUKANI*, the South African underground journal "dedicated to the
liberation of South Africa and all her peoples":**

We join with revolutionary forces in the country, throughout the continent and the world in mourning the death of Bram Fischer. We pledge ourselves to work with increasing intensity for a free South Africa – the society towards whose creation Fischer gave everything. Long live the name of Bram Fischer! Long live the South African liberation movement!

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION:

Bram Fischer was known to Soviet Communists and to all Soviet people as a courageous fighter against the racist regime in the Republic of South Africa, and as one who struggled for the national and social emancipation of the oppressed peoples of his country. He was a true friend of the Soviet Union.

The Central Committee of the CPSU expresses its firm belief in the victory of the just cause to which Bram Fischer devoted his life. We will remember his bright name in our hearts forever.

MR. EDWIN OGBU, Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid:

His courageous identification with the liberation movement and his steadfast resistance to all pressures from the racists were testimony to the nobility of the struggle of the South African people for freedom and human dignity, irrespective of race, colour or creed.

FROM N. BLOCHIN, Chairman of the Committee of the International Lenin Prizes:

By his noble activity for the shining ideals of mankind comrade Fischer won the love and respect of all progressive people of the world. In our hearts we will always keep his memory bright.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF LESOTHO:

It was with a sense of shock that we received the news of the death of comrade Michael Harmel, and a feeling of deep loss at the death of comrade Abram Fischer, both leading members of your party. These two always personally followed the problem of national liberation in Lesotho so closely that they were personally known to many of our leading figures. On behalf of our party, please pass our condolences to our fraternal South African Party, the South African liberation movement and the bereaved families.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SUDAN, Khartoum:

The death of comrade Fischer is a heinous crime that lies at the door of the imperialist racists of South Africa. The time is sure to come when they shall have to pay for this and all their other crimes. His courage and determination provide us with added enthusiasm in our fight against our own bloody counter-revolutionary regime.

WORLD PEACE COUNCIL, Helsinki:

His devotion to the noble cause of freedom and world peace deservedly earned him the distinctive international Lenin Peace Prize.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE VIETNAM WORKERS' PARTY:

We are extremely moved in learning that comrade Abram Fischer has passed away following penitentiary regime and savage torture meted out by South African authorities.

SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS:

His enemies never succeeded in suppressing Bram's ideas and beliefs despite all the fascist methods they have in their power to use, and his aims for freedom, peace and unity for all mankind will go forward.

Messages were also received from the People's Progressive Party of Guyana and a group of PPP students at Lumumba University, Moscow; the Iraqi Communist Party; The Communist Party of France; the Communist Party of Israel; the Communist Party of Canada; the Communist Party of Brazil; the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party; the Socialist Unity Party of Germany; the Bulgarian Communist Party; the Communist Party of Great Britain; the editor of *World Marxist Review*; the Communist Party of Greece; the Pan-Africanist Congress; and a number of other organisations and individuals. Memorial meetings were held in many centres both in South Africa and abroad.

A large multi-racial crowd attended Bram Fischer's funeral in Bloemfontein, and addresses were read by Adv. A. Chaskelson SC on behalf of Bram's comrades and friends including Mrs. Govan Mbeki, Fikile Bam, students of the University of Durban-Westville, Hugh Lewin and Afrikaans writer Andre Brink.

A message from Lilian Ngoyi said:

"BRAM FISCHER:

"We the blacks of South Africa mourn the death of a statesman, a hero of the liberation struggle.

"As one of the treason trialists, I recall how we were saved by your skill when we were faced with the possibility of the death penalty.

"With the change that will come in the years ahead, our children will know that South Africa bore a son like you.

"Blacks everywhere dedicate themselves to carry on where you have left off.

"We bear in mind today the men on Robben Island and all political prisoners.

"Bram, we will always remember you".

Detente - A Tactical Offensive by Vorster

By Mava Lobengula

The balance of forces in Southern Africa is gradually tipping in favour of the revolutionary forces in this region – that is in favour of national liberation, democracy and peace. This has been sharply emphasised by the downfall of the fascist dictatorship of Caetano in Portugal and the heroic gains scored by the armed forces of the National Liberation Movements in the so-called Portuguese overseas territories. As a result of these developments, Vorster's ruling clique has experienced unprecedented international isolation, pressures, exposure and growing resistance inside South Africa from practically all sections of the population.

At the height of these mounting pressures, Vorster tried to break out of the ring through the unexpected tactic of 'detente', dialogue or 'contact' with Black Africa. All of a sudden he was speaking the language of 'peace', reconciliation and 'non-confrontation'. The end-result of Vorster's pronouncements and promises of 'change' was that Vorster got the breathing space he wanted and has now regrouped and is still regrouping to launch fresh counter-offensives against the National Liberation Movement inside the African Continent.

President Samora Machel of FRELIMO, now President of

Mozambique, drew the only correct conclusion on the situation when he declared – “The changed balance of forces in Southern Africa compelled the Pretoria regime to relinquish its traditional policy of threats, provocations and aggression against adjacent countries and to seek contact with neighbouring states. This retreat is a tactical one and is part of the global imperialist intention to seek to maintain domination in new forms. However, once the enemy are forced to retreat as a result of our struggle, it is our duty to exploit the situation, transform the tactical retreat into a definite advance for our forces, and pursue the retreating enemy to annihilate them. This principle is valid, whether it be a matter of armed struggle or of political and diplomatic struggle”. (*Africa* No. 45 May 1975, P.20).

TO DESTROY THE ANC

What is this detente? The natural and automatic reaction of our people inside the country is outright rejection. Our people know Vorster to be what he is – a racist, an oppressor, a fascist, and the head of a government which is responsible for the murder of many innocent black souls in the Republic.

Outside South Africa, however, many people have been confused. This underlines one important point, that is, Vorster’s machinations and intrigues to destroy our revolutionary forces and dismantle international solidarity work and support for the ANC in South Africa must be thoroughly exposed. The African National Congress, the authentic spokesman, the shield and spear of the long-suffering and downtrodden black masses of our country, rejects this manoeuvre and is not engaged in any dialogue with Vorster. The true and undisputed leaders of our people are rotting on Robben Island or in exile or banishment. Any talk of detente or dialogue above the heads of these men or behind their backs defies all sense of reason and logic in those who purport to champion the cause of the oppressed people in South Africa.

It has now become abundantly clear to us all that the main strategic aim of the racist rulers, in conjunction with international imperialism, is to destroy the African National Congress that leads the struggle for national liberation in the country. Over the past sixty years, the African National Congress has emerged as a true leader of the oppressed African masses. It has launched many heroic campaigns to mobilise and galvanise

the masses in the struggle for the overthrow of the racist-colonial regime. In the process the ANC has employed and exploited every possible means and channel of peaceful and legal struggle – deputations, protests, demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, stays-at-home etc. But all these were met with increasing and planned violence and repression on the part of the ruling circles.

Despite all these repressive measures, the authority and influence of the ANC had so grown among the broad masses that the government was compelled to declare the ANC and its allies, and all progressive papers and publications, illegal. It arrested and detained all top leaders and militants. Nevertheless, as under all oppressive and fascist regimes, the struggle for national liberation and democratic rights never dies; instead it goes underground and continues its work there. The ANC, too, chose to go underground, instead of yielding to repression and oppression.

Yet even under these conditions of illegality and rule of violence, the political presence of the ANC is felt throughout the country. Our people are learning through bitter practical experience to improve their methods of operating underground. Now that the revolutionary forces are working underground, Vorster is more scared than ever. The events of Portugal and the 'Portuguese territories' have rudely reminded Vorster of the inevitability of armed struggle and his own struggle. Vorster is no longer sure of the perpetuity of white supremacy and the invincibility of his white oppressor army. Other methods of crushing the revolutionary struggle, and the ANC in particular, have to be employed. Detente is one of them.

TO DESTROY THE ARMED STRUGGLE

Here we should immediately state that detente is a collective strategy by the whole imperialist bloc to crush the ANC, the liberation army and the South African Communist Party in South Africa. It all springs from the notorious Kissinger document Memorandum 39. Among other things, the memorandum calls for "broader association with both black and white states in an effort to encourage moderation in white states, to enlist cooperation of the black states in reducing tensions and the likelihood of increasing cross border violence, and to encourage improved relations among the states in area."

What emerges from the memorandum is that detente is not intended to and cannot solve the irreconcilable contradictions between the white oppressor group and the oppressed masses of the country. It looks for 'solutions' outside the system of apartheid in black Africa. But our people have not been deceived. To us it is clear that the path to lasting solutions lies through revolutionary armed struggle.

The ANC and its allies have correctly decided that revolutionary violence is the only answer to Vorster's increasing and planned violence. Any talk of peace or reconciliation at this stage is tantamount to disarming our people and betraying the cause of the revolution. Whilst Vorster 'talks detente', he is building his military might in preparation for plunging our people in a bloodbath. Facts speak louder than what he says. According to the *Zambia Daily Mail* – "the combined defence expenditure of Zaire, Zambia, and Tanzania, for instance, fell well short of South Africa's last year. Now South Africa has announced it will pump a further R246,000,000 into defence, making this year's allocation R948,000,000" (25 April, 1975).

The article goes on: "Why such a big increase, and why at this time, just when Prime Minister Vorster has startled the world with his drive for good relations with the rest of Africa?"

The quotation is self-explanatory. It becomes more obvious when one notes that the apartheid system has not changed. Vorster himself has openly said so. A major portion of this military budget is earmarked for suppressing the National Liberation Movement inside the country, and the rest to counter revolutionary operations outside South Africa's borders.

It is against this background that the ANC took the resolution to make long-term preparations for the armed overthrow of the regime. Whilst Vorster is arming himself to the full, his supporters of 'detente' are working to disband our armed units and disarm the oppressed. According to the authors of Memorandum 39, "We must make it clear to the black states that while we sympathise with their objectives to oppose the racial and colonial policies of the white regimes, we cannot support them in an unrealistic struggle or become involved in a racial conflict. Violence is not in their long-term interest and can only heighten the dangers of communist involvement."

Outside the Republic of South Africa, willing African states are playing the role of preachers against armed struggle. From inside the

Republic of South Africa, the Bantustan leaders are doing their level best to defend the apartheid policies and are preaching against armed struggle and the National Liberation Movement. These Bantustan leaders are not only actively defending the fascist regime, but are also campaigning against the all-round isolation of the regime, actively inviting foreign companies to invest in the Bantustans, above all, undermining international solidarity and support for the ANC in Africa and the rest of the world. Addressing a huge gathering outside Johannesburg on 22 January, 1975, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of the KwaZulu Bantustan, proudly declared: "I have not deviated from my path of non-violence in spite of all the violence arrayed against us, as the powerless and voiceless people of this land. Since our people can never meet violence with violence, even if one assumed some wanted this, I do believe that there are other non-violent methods, which will come to hand automatically, if nothing meaningful emerges for them in terms of sharing real decision-making, political power and of sharing the wealth of South Africa which we have also worked to produce, over decades of years. These are no threats at all but responsible warnings of what is logical if detente leaves us cold . . ."

All the speeches of Buthelezi convey the same message – that taking up arms against Vorster is futile and suicidal. Whilst admitting that Vorster oppresses and uses violence and terror against our people, he appeals for patience and passiveness and 'detente'. The 'non-violent methods' he appeals for were employed by the ANC for a period of over 50 years. They were met with increasing oppression and violence on the part of the white racists of the country. The myth of the invincibility of the white oppressor armies has been blasted just across the borders of South Africa in Mozambique and Angola. Our people have exhausted all these non-violent methods and are now psychologically prepared to meet Vorster's violence with revolutionary violence. The revolutionary movement should spare no efforts in exposing and crushing the dangerous and reactionary role played by the Bantustan 'leaders'.

The main danger in Buthelezi's stance is the double role he thinks he can play all the time. Whilst posing as a leader of the oppressed black masses, he in actual fact serves the interests of Vorster and his gang. In the process he is confusing and misleading some people with his 'revolutionary catchphrases'. Whilst the true leaders of the people are languishing on Robben Island, he has opportunistically seized the role

of being the spokesman of the people. Speaking on detente — he says: “I have told the Prime Minister that President Tolbert (of Liberia) had expressed the view that they (the black states) would be guided by us (Bantustan leaders), their black brothers, as to what stance they should adopt towards South Africa.”

These words clearly show how far the Buthelezi have gone in undermining the cause of national liberation on the continent of Africa. The most unfortunate part of the whole exercise is that some African states are beginning to recognise the Bantustan leaders as the leaders of the black people of South Africa and the Bantustan scheme as the correct answer to the demands of the masses.

COLONIALISM OF A SPECIAL TYPE

In a number of statements and speeches made by some leaders of the African states, it clearly emerges that they no longer regard our struggle as a truly national one. The whole question of national oppression under the apartheid system is contemptuously and conveniently reduced to a ‘domestic racial problem’ and not a colonial one. According to this ‘argument’, in Namibia and Zimbabwe the indigenous people suffer colonial and national oppression, but in South Africa it is a matter of removing the apartheid signboards and the question will be solved. In the Programme of the South African Communist Party, under the chapter “Colonialism of a Special Type” it is clearly stated — “South Africa is not a colony but an independent state. Yet masses of our people enjoy neither independence nor freedom. The conceding of independence to South Africa by Britain, in 1910, was not a victory over the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It was designed in the interests of imperialism. Power was transferred not into the hands of the masses of the people of South Africa but into the hands of the white minority alone. The evils of colonialism; insofar as the non-white majority was concerned, were perpetuated and reinforced. A new type of colonialism was developed, in which the oppressing white nation occupied the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lived side by side with them.”

This answer is still valid and has become very relevant during this crucial stage in the development of our struggle.

We have repeatedly warned that international imperialism plans to use South Africa as a springboard for neo-colonial penetration into black Africa. South Africa herself has developed the features of a classical imperialist state. The people of Namibia are today groaning under the colonial yoke of the Pretoria regime. South Africa's neo-colonial penetration into Africa has started in the form of loans, grants, export of manufactured goods and capital etc. Naturally Vorster's external policies cannot be different from his internal ones – i.e. oppression and exploitation. In actual fact they are the continuation of the internal policies – they are like two sides of the same coin. Now and again Vorster arrogantly and openly declares that racist South Africa has a god-given mission of leading not only Southern Africa, but the whole continent of Africa. The black people of South Africa and Namibia know from practical experience what Vorster's 'leadership' means.

Change in South Africa can only mean one thing – revolution – and not 'dialogue' or 'detente' with Africa. Emphasising this point during the OAU Council of Ministers held in Dar es Salaam in April 1975, the Acting President of the ANC (SA), Oliver Tambo, declared – "Africa must reaffirm its adherence to the diplomatic, political, military, economic and cultural isolation of white South Africa and call upon all member states to refrain from establishing any such contacts: . . . Finally, and above all, the OAU must call upon all the member states and the world to spare no effort in helping increase the striking power of our liberation movement in the struggle for the seizure of political power in South Africa. . ."

Our people are prepared to fulfil their historic mission of ridding their country and Africa of the scourge of racism, colonialism, fascism and neo-colonialism. We have crossed the rubicon. Our goal is national liberation and a free and democratic South Africa as enshrined in the Freedom Charter adopted by our people in 1955. If our resolution is to have any real meaning for the broad masses of our country, it must ensure the transfer of political power and the riches of our country to the rightful owners of the land. Half solutions or half measures are not going to solve our fundamental problems. This is the time to intensify the struggle against the racist-fascist regime. What we need from all progressive and democracy-loving forces on the continent of Africa and in the rest of the world is to isolate the white ruling clique in South

Africa and to have their increased solidarity and support for the just cause of national liberation in South Africa.

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BOOK REVIEWS

KWAME NKRUMAH AND THE CONVENTION PEOPLE'S PARTY

Basil Davidson, *Black Star - a View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah*, London, 1973.

Panaf Great Lives, *Kwame Nkrumah*, London 1974.

Ghana gained her political independence in 1957. The significance of this event went far beyond the borders of Ghana and the personality of Nkrumah. The political and economic changes which have since taken place in Ghana have had far-reaching repercussions, giving a deeper socio-economic content to the African Revolution. New social forces have emerged and they influence the ideological trends of development in Africa. Africa and the world have become much more aware of the fact that though the forces of reaction are losing ground, the battle is not over - it is not yet uhuru. This struggle continues, takes various forms, entails and encompasses every aspect of social, political, economic and academic life in our continent. One of the forms in which this battle is being waged is the interpretation of the ideals, ideas, political philosophies and beliefs of African statesmen and political figures.

Two full biographies of Ghana's first Prime Minister have been published since his death on April 27, 1972, in Rumania. One is written by the British historian Basil Davidson and the other (according to a jacket blurb) is a publication belonging to a series of *Panaf Great Lives* whose purpose is to assess the life and work of African and other revolutionaries.

ROOTS OF SOCIALISM IN GHANA

In the late 20's the Comintern made concrete attempts to contact revolutionary forces in the then British colony of Gold Coast. This proved to be extremely difficult, partly because of colonial tyranny. There were contacts between the 'Provisional Committee' for the preparation of the Congress of the League against Imperialism which was to be held in 1927 and the Gold Coast Farmers' Association of Nsewam. Awonoor-Renner participated in Comintern activities during his stay in Moscow in the late 20's¹ and two delegates from Gold Coast attended the International Congress of Negro Workers organised by the Comintern in Hamburg in 1930.

In a stimulating article Samuel Rohdie gives us a clear picture of the problems and difficulties that confronted the Comintern in its attempts to contact Gold Coast radicals in the thirties. While we agree with his contention that "there was not yet the social or economic basis in the Gold Coast for the nationalist movement which Padmore, Bridgeman and Ward looked for", it is difficult to accept his subjectivism when he accuses the Profintern of basing its policy and strategy on Asian conditions - where the nationalist movements were strong and mature - rather than on African reality.² The difficulties and problems that faced the Comintern had an objective and subjective character which reflected the stark reality of the Gold Coast.

It is against this background and within this context that we should understand and appreciate Nkrumah's difficulties and problems in the 60's, especially the problem of "building socialism without socialists" (Davidson).

The birth of the Convention People's Party was a reflection (on a national scale) of the revolutionary ferment and changes which took place during the period of the *second general crisis of capitalism* brought about as a result of the Second World War. The colonial and imperialist system was weakened; the forces of socialism and progress were (and continue to be) on the march; the masses in the colonial world intensified their struggles demanding not only a change of the system but also of strategies, tactics etc. This resulted in a radicalisation of ideologies and leadership of the liberation movements.

When the young radicals broke with the conservative United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) to form the Convention People's Party (CPP) on June 12, 1949, they were reacting to and answering this need. The masses were jubilant on this occasion and celebrated the formation of the "party of no compromise" which demanded "full self-government now, for the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast."* These new radicals had found a leadership, says Davidson, that would try to lead them forward and it "was Nkrumah's great contribution that he knew how to meet this need in time of doubt and confusion" (p.68). There followed a period of militant mass action; revolutionary rhetoric; propaganda and agitation; mass rallies and strikes - events that "soon passed beyond his (Nkrumah's) control" (p. 75)

The British colonialists retaliated: they sent warnings; employed strike breakers; declared a state of emergency; raided, arrested and imprisoned the people and their leaders. In 1950-51 there were in the Gold Coast two forces opposing each other: British colonialism and the CPP.

Seeing the growing popularity and militancy of the CPP, the British decided to change their tactics. Nkrumah was released from prison and thus became what in the CPP language was called a "P.G." - Prison Graduate. He could now lead the government in the process of "internal self-rule"; the slogan of "self-government now" became "self-government soon". In 1957 Gold Coast became Ghana. Such was the

* According to Ch. Mahrdeh, the GDR political scientist, the CPP's demand was more of an exception than a rule, because all political parties in Tropical Africa had a 'target-date' of 10-15 years' time.³

situation when Nkrumah and the CPP took over. It soon became clear that the enemy was not only British colonialism but also the remnants of the precolonial past.

CPP IN POWER

The ten year “struggle for power” which Nkrumah and his comrades waged was to be followed by nine years of “use of power”, a period in which the CPP as a “ruling party” was faced with immense and what later proved to be insurmountable problems of an economic, political, ideological and organisational nature. We shall select a few examples.

Ghana’s main source of income was “traditionally” cocoa and since 1949 the prices were rising promisingly: in 1949-50 the country received £178 per ton and in 1953-54 £358. Of course, the level of real wages, that is what money could actually buy, was lower in 1966 than in 1951! The international monopolies manipulated “world prices” at will and the young state of Ghana found itself face to face with the politics of *neocolonialism*.

The imperialists worked hard to subvert the progressive trend of development in Ghana. In this plot they found willing allies in the “upper strata” of the Ghanaian society, the urban bourgeoisie, the Asantehene and chiefs, “party businessmen” etc. For these elements independence had a different meaning. The gap in living standards between these elements and the majority of the CPP members widened and the incomes of the cocoa farmers did not correspond with the rising cost of living. Nothing was done about this:

“Yet all Nkrumah felt able to say about this was that party members should own no more than two houses totalling a value of £20,000, no more than two motor cars, or plots of land worth more than £50.” (Davidson p. 176).

This was followed by what Davidson calls a “sudden and savage budget” which was brought in with the approval of Nkrumah to meet the deficit of the country. This budget stipulated that all wage earners were

to contribute 5% of their wages and this was to be deducted at the source. The port and railway workers in Takoradi went on strike - an illegal strike because the TUC "had become so closely identified with the CPP that a single membership card was used for both; the budget was CPP and therefore TUC policy" (Ibid).

Nkrumah condemned the workers, threatened them, police were sent to arrest them and the Preventive Detention Act was applied to nineteen trade unionists. It should be remembered that the general level of urban wages at that time was probably lower, in real terms, even than in 1939!

Nkrumah drew many lessons from this event - the most useful being that only socialist orientation could save Ghana from chaos and bankruptcy. But this was not before the internal consolidation of the CPP had been shaken.

EMERGENCE OF A VANGUARD

At the beginning of this century, working-class leaders and revolutionaries worked out the concept of a vanguard. Lenin, after a thorough study of the question, came to the conclusion that such a party can only be a Bolshevik party - a communist party. Such a party, he maintained, needs the "most rigorous and truly iron discipline" which can be maintained, tested and reinforced:

"First, by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism. Second, by its ability to link up, maintain the closest contact, and - if you wish - merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people - primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the non-proletarian masses* of the working people. Third, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided the broad masses have seen, *from their own experience* that they are correct." 4

In Africa experience shows that "vanguard parties" - with the ob-

vious exception of existing CP's - are in the process of formation and hence the term should be understood to express a *trend towards* rather than a complete process. This is due to the yet incomplete process of class formation and national consolidation.*

There are specifics to be taken into consideration - the most glaring being the existence of the tribal element, a fact which though not unique, needs serious attention. We need also to take into consideration the concrete conditions of each country, the different social and traditional factors, the relationship of social and political forces and last but not least, such factors as have been caused by colonisation. The solution of the national question will depend on a correct strategy towards these specifics. These problems, on the other hand, will be solved through a correct theory on the national question. This includes, among other factors, the *preservation* of the cultural heritage of different national and ethnic groups; the harmonious development of *all* national and ethnic groups and *respect* for the culture and *peculiarities* of other people that make up a "nation". In other words the social (and class) questions which are interlinked with the national question can be solved only by a revolutionary vanguard.

These are some of the questions that confronted the CPP. Some of them are still unsolved. For instance, is it possible for an organisation whose mass base is not proletarian and therefore cannot depend on a strong working-class and whose leadership is not or, to put it positively, is only partly working class, to lay the *basis* (that is objective and subjective conditions) for a transition to socialism? How can a mass movement which embraces and "represents the interests of all classes" and social strata undergo such a transformation - the first stage towards becoming a working-class party - that it becomes a party of the "most advanced elements"? There are neither easy answers nor mathematical formulae to these questions. The experience of Cheddi Jagan's Guyana in the 50's, Nkrumah's Ghana or Sukarno's Indonesia in the 60's show that the pre-imperialist elements in these countries have betrayed not only the national interests, but also the very principles for which the

* Klaus Hutschereuter, the GDR social scientist, prefers the term ethno-national to designate the ethnic processes which take place in the course of the emergence of nations.⁵

African masses sacrificed their lives - anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and anti-racism. This phenomenon is now taking place in Southern Africa. Let us take Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA for example. In an interview with the South African *Financial Mail* (May 9, 1975) this Angolan right-winger had this to say about the relations between future independent Angola and South Africa:

“I hope the future leaders of Angola will co-operate with South Africa I hope that any leader here will be realistic and accept political and economic co-operation with any country, despite differences in political systems South Africa is an independent country. All the African States agree on that. I have never heard anyone talk in terms of liberating South Africa - not even at the OAU. We are condemning apartheid - that is a different thing.”

On the other hand the progressive movements in Africa e.g. TANU, do on the whole, though not consistently, follow Lenin's advice, namely: that the revolutionaries from developing countries “as distinct from the RSFSR” can and must “effect a slower, more cautious and more systematic transition to socialism. That is what you must understand, and what you must be able to carry out, as distinct from our tactics.”⁶

NKRUMAH'S LEGACY AND PERSONALITY

If this review tends to concentrate on Davidson's book, it is because his is a more serious attempt at evaluation of the life and times of Francis Nwia Kofie (Kwame) Nkrumah than the Panaf publication which tends to be “popular” and propagandistic. The blank 16 pages of the latter book make it difficult for us to know what was supposed to be in them.

What about Davidson's book? Peter Milne, a co-editor of Panaf Books has expressed his “disappointment” with Davidson's *Black Star*,⁷ a fact which demonstrates clearly the differences of opinion and also indicates that this topic is far from being “exhausted”. Davidson could have, in the opinion of this reviewer, made a more systematic

socio-economic analysis of the class-forces in Ghanaian society and a more differential assessment of their ideologies e.g. African Nationalism, and a bolder demonstration of an alternative way out of the cul de sac Nkrumah found himself in.

The publication of the two books is relevant and timeous. At a time when "detente" and "peaceful coexistence" with Vorster is being advocated by even what we thought were revolutionary circles Nkrumah's message has to be spread all over the continent. His consistent anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and anti-racist policy won him many friends as well as enemies. Some called him an "African Tsar", others an "African Lenin" and Ali Mazrui called him a "Leninist czar".⁸ Ali Mazrui's remarks on Nkrumah angered his fellow Ugandans so much that they called him "Noni Jabavu with sex reversed"⁹ * The reactionary forces in Ghana "elevated" Nkrumah to an "osagyefo" - a messiah - and called his philosophy "Nkrumahism."**

Davidson on the other hand sees a parallel between Nkrumah and Thomas Muntzer, the German leader described by Engels in his book *The Peasant War in Germany*. Of course, there are differences between 16th century "peasant Germany" and 20th century "peasant Africa". What Davidson drives home is that the actions of a *radical leader* do not depend on himself but upon the socio-economic stage of development in which he finds himself and Nkrumah's significance is that he "put the world to school about the reality of Africa and the humanity of the black people." (p.218).

* The reference here is to Noni Jabavu's anti-Ugandan and tribal-chauvinistic book *Drawn in Colour - African Contrasts*. In her attempt to view Ugandan reality from the point of view of a "Westernised African" Noni Jabavu became even more reactionary than the British anthropologists and historians who have written on the Ugandan people. Indeed she became an apologist for British colonialism in Uganda.

** Even some Marxist publicists have used this term and tried to give it a dynamic content. Cf. I. Cox, *Socialist Ideas in Africa*, London 1966. p. 83. This is not necessary because in Africa there has never been an ideology known as "Nkrumahism".

Footnotes

1. Bankole Awonoor-Renner, *This Africa*, London 1943.
2. Samuel Rohdie, "The Gold Coast Aborigines Abroad", in *Journal of African History*, VI. 3 (1965).
3. Ch. Mahrdeh, "Political Organisations and anticolonial struggle in Tropical Africa: A Survey" in *African Studies - Afrika Studien*, Berlin (GDR) 1973, p. 104.
4. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Moscow 1966, p.24.
5. K. Hutscheureuter, "The state and ethno-national processes in sub-saharan Africa", in: *African Studies*, op. cit. p. 163 Footnote 1.
6. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, Moscow 1965, p. 317.
7. *Monthly Review*, November, 1974, p. 41.
8. Ali Mazrui, *On Heros and Uhuru Worship*, London 1967, p. 113. This article first appeared in *Transition*, Vol. VI, No. 26, 1966.
9. *Africa and the World*, June 1967, p. 30.

Francis Meli

THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM IN AFRICA

R. Ulyanovsky *Socialism and the Newly Independent Nations*, Progress Publishers, 1974. Price £1.50; and V. Solodovnikov, V. Bogolovsky *Non-Capitalist Development, An Historical Outline*, Progress Publishers, 1975. Price 90p.

The developing countries which are a part of the capitalist international division of labour and therefore dependent on the laws of the world capitalist system, bear the greatest burden of the general crises of the world capitalist system. The developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, with about two-thirds of the world's population, account for a negligible amount of the capitalist world's production of manufactured goods, steel, machine tools and equipment. The terms of trade are grossly in favour of the developed capitalist world and imperialist exploitation continues unabated. Imperialism takes from the national incomes of the developing countries about 15,000 million to 20,000 million dollars a year. It is therefore clear that the developing countries *must* make a decisive shift from dependence on the world capitalist system if they are to make a meaningful attempt at improving the material and cultural standards of their people. For progressive forces in Africa this raises fundamental questions about how this is to be achieved. As Joe Slovo points out, "For Africa there is perhaps no area of Marxist study in greater need of theoretical

elaboration and analysis than the one surrounding the choice of a road for development.” (*Marxism Today*, June, 1974, p 175).

The two books under review attempt to answer this need and start off from the basic premise that the non-capitalist path of development for a number of newly independent Afro-Asian countries is “the logical outcome of the present stage of the national liberation movement and the transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale.” (Ulyanovsky, p 38).

Ulyanovsky and Solodovnikov are Soviet political scientists who have written extensively on problems of Africa and Asia. They are dedicated communists deeply committed to the anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly, anti-feudal, anti-colonial struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In their books they combine in the best possible way the Marxist partisan yet objective approach to the study of any phenomena or process - unlike the bourgeois academics who, under the pretext of objectivity in the final analysis defend the hated, exploitative system of capitalism.

Ulyanovsky deals in greater detail and depth with the theoretical and political aspects of the further development of the national liberation struggle. As a test case he contributes an entire chapter on the *Agrarian Question and the Peasantry in the Newly Liberated Countries*, with special emphasis on the complex and at times contradictory development of this crucial problem in India. On the other hand, readers in Africa may find Solodovnikov's book easier to relate to, since it is written in a more popular form and deals in concrete terms with some African countries, especially Algeria, Egypt and Tanzania. In this book there is a chapter entitled *The Experience in Non-Capitalist Development of the Soviet Central Asian Republics and Mongolia*, which is presumably designed to show concrete examples in practice of the success of the non-capitalist path of development. However, although the chapter is interesting and there are certainly lessons which we can draw, it seems to the reviewer that the differences between these examples and the African countries are so wide as to preclude a meaningful comparison. Instead one wished that a similar analysis would have been made on one of the socialist-oriented countries in Africa.

The two books deal with a wide variety of problems relating to the non-capitalist path of development. They range from the theoretical aspects to the question of ideology, culture, agriculture, industrialisation and the different roles of the world capitalist system and the world socialist system. Readers would find that all these problems are dealt with seriously and are a great help in extending our knowledge of the theoretical and practical problems arising from the non-capitalist way of development. In this review two important and inter-related questions will be discussed. These are 1) The National Democratic State and 2) The Class Struggle in countries taking the non-capitalist path. In assessing how these problems are dealt with, attention will also be paid to the views of Joe Slovo (*Marxism Today* op cit), a critic of this concept.

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC STATE

Slovo argues that there is an important distinction between by-passing capitalism and the building of a progressive national democratic state. After arguing that the state of national democracy “can indeed become the framework within which capitalism flowers”, Slovo asserts that the social measures taken in the national democratic states are a further advance of the anti-colonial, anti-feudal revolution - a historic advance no doubt but not a step towards socialism as it lacks the ingredient of “workers’ power”. There is thus for Slovo “no reason founded either in theory or experience for us to conclude that the national democratic state is itself a tool or instrument for the avoidance of capitalism, whatever other historically retrogressive formations it may serve to undermine.” (p.182).

Both Ulyanovsky and Solodovnikov would refute that claim. They would argue that in scope and social depth the national democratic states in some countries do go beyond the limits of an anti-colonial, anti-feudal revolution; that certain fundamental steps are being taken towards the political and economic liberation of these countries from the stranglehold of world imperialism. They would argue that it is not essential, nor is it a pre-condition in national democratic states, that there should exist the ingredient of “workers’ power”; that the class composition in these states is broader and more varied and would con-

tain proletarians, semi-proletarians, petty-bourgeois and even certain sections of the middle national bourgeoisie "that support progressive social development from an anti-imperialist standpoint." Nor do they see a sharp distinction between the non-capitalist path and the state of national democracy. As Ulyanovsky points out: "The non-capitalist path of development could be interpreted as such a phase of development when the bloc of anti-imperialist, progressive social forces that, from a numerical point of view, is dominated by non-proletarian working masses, represented in political affairs first and foremost by intermediate strata, the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, implements general-democratic transformations using non-capitalist methods, thus laying the foundation to a socialist path." (p 88).

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN COUNTRIES TAKING THE NON-CAPITALIST PATH

Slovo argues that perhaps the class struggle has become minimised "by an undifferentiated encouragement of the sort of 'alliance' in which independent workers' participation is either swamped or eliminated altogether." (p 183). He points out that in almost every country in Africa, Communist Parties are proscribed; and even in some socialist-oriented countries "the tendency towards blurring the borderline between party and state has the effect of severely limiting independent participation by the working people." (p 184).

The shortcomings and pitfalls shown by Slovo are real enough. Certainly no Marxist, least of all Ulyanovsky and Solodovnikov, would dispute the reservations and criticisms made by Slovo. But they would take issue with Slovo's conclusions that the non-capitalist path in its present form in some countries in Africa and Asia is neither theoretically nor politically feasible for Africa.

Both Ulyanovsky and Solodovnikov begin with the fundamental Marxist proposition that the "motive force of social revolution is the class struggle". The forms in which the class struggle between exploiter and exploited will express itself will, of course, depend on the concrete time, place and conditions. In places where the industrial

working class is not only numerically very small, but also scattered around numerous small enterprises with close ties with the countryside under the influence of tribal and religious dogmas, the independent role of the working class is an exceedingly complex and contradictory process.

In some of the socialist oriented countries, the ruling parties still fear the power of the masses, do not trust the workers and at times succumb to the dangerous and harmful effects of anti-communism. However, the non-capitalist path is a dynamic process and in the course of development the most advanced elements in the ruling parties, through their own experience, begin to realise the inevitability of the class struggle against the exploiting classes and the indispensable role of the toiling masses. Ulyanovsky and Solodovnikov point out that if the revolutionary vanguard party does not have close links with the toiling masses in all aspects of socio-political life, then vacillation and retreats are inevitable. It is, therefore possible that at the present stage of development the bourgeois trend in some socialist-oriented countries can become victorious. As Solodovnikov points out: "The process of non-capitalist development cannot take place without an aggravation of the class struggle, temporary zig-zags and retreats. The main reasons for the instability and inconsistency that we see in the implementation of anti-capitalist measures in some of the countries with a socialist orientation, the ARE (Egypt) for one, are to be found in the petty-bourgeois and peasant nature of these countries and their ruling parties, the low level of the working class's political and ideological awareness, the inability of many revolutionary democrats to abandon their nationalistic sentiments, and the stubborn resistance to the socialist orientation put up by imperialist and reactionary circles." (pp 107-8).

Unlike Slovo, Ulyanovsky and Solodovnikov come to the conclusion that the non-capitalist path is an objective way of development for some countries in Africa; that even though some of these countries do not fulfil all the requirements set out in the 1960 Document of the International Communist Movement, they are nevertheless qualitatively different from those countries which follow an open road of capitalist development tied to the apron strings of imperialism. How can one put on the same footing the People's Republic of the Congo,

Somalia, Tanzania, Algeria and Guinea on the one hand; and on the other the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Nigeria and Kenya? They are qualitatively different, since the former group of countries, notwithstanding their limitations and weaknesses, follow a non-capitalist path designed to bring about profound socio-economic transformations, whilst the latter group is at the present time firmly within the world capitalist system.

The books under review do show that the non-capitalist path can be a valuable theoretical and practical guide for revolutionaries in Africa; that the main task of this transition stage is to create the necessary economic, political, ideological, cultural and social pre-requisites for the creation and building of a socialist society. In this transition stage the links and ties between these countries and the socialist world, especially the Soviet Union, must be greatly increased and strengthened.

However, the limitations and weaknesses of this concept must not be minimised. It is not a universal law applicable to all the countries in Africa. Moreover, the form and content through which it expresses itself will differ from country to country, depending on the correlation of class forces, level of political consciousness and participation of the toiling masses, especially the industrial proletariat, maturity of the leadership of the vanguard parties and links with the socialist world. We should therefore apply this concept with due care and caution and not fling it around as the panacea to all the problems besetting our continent. To be sure, there will be many zig-zags and retreats. In some cases the conservative and reactionary forces may get the upper-hand, but in the long run, for a number of countries in Africa, the non-capitalist path is a more progressive, humane and revolutionary road than the discredited hated exploitative system of capitalism. No one can disagree with the view that in Africa there is an imperative need for the legalisation of the proscribed Communist Parties and for the further creation and growth of genuine Marxist-Leninist parties forming a component part of the International Communist Movement, As *The African Communist* said in its inaugurating issue, "Africa needs Communist thought as dry and thirsty soil needs rain."

Following the authors, the reviewer has also used the concepts non-

capitalist path and socialist orientation as interchangeable. However, the concept non-capitalist path is negative, whilst socialist orientation is more positive and richer in content. Hopefully, therefore, in the future Marxists will utilise the latter concept. In both books the term *Third World* is also constantly used. This term is unscientific and devoid of any real class content. If one needs a shorthand term to describe most of the countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, then surely the term developing or less developed countries is more suitable, since in the present epoch these are only two worlds - Socialism and Capitalism, and the basic contradiction of our time is the struggle between Capitalism and Socialism.

The two books under review should be read by all progressives in Africa. They are a valuable theoretical and practical guide and it is to be hoped they will inspire some indigenous Marxists to pursue a concrete study of their particular country. There is a crying need for concrete Marxist-Leninist analysis which in turn would greatly contribute to our general theoretical and practical knowledge of the problems and solutions facing the socialist oriented countries.

A. Azad.

THE XHOSA HERITAGE

TOWARDS AN AFRICAN LITERATURE: THE EMERGENCE OF LITERARY FORM IN XHOSA, by A.C.Jordan, University of California Press.

TALES FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA, Translated and retold by A.C. Jordan, University of California Press.

A.C.Jordan chose exile from South Africa in 1961 after the South African government had refused him a passport to travel to the USA to take up a Carnegie Fellowship. By the time of his death in 1968 he had become Professor of African language and literature at the University of Wisconsin. He was also established as the outstanding Xhosa literary critic and linguist, whose considerable contribution in recording, analysing and revealing the role and development of African

literary traditions in South Africa will become fully apparent once opportunities have been created within a free South Africa for making our people aware of the extent and richness of their cultural heritage.

Until then Jordan's work, as embodied in these two invaluable books, can serve the struggle for national liberation by making our militants and sympathisers more acutely conscious, and proud, of their cultural antecedents.

TOWARDS AN AFRICAN LITERATURE is an unfinished work comprising twelve inter-related essays tracing in historical perspective the growth of Xhosa literature against its socio-political background. Highlighted throughout the text are Xhosa writers "who sounded the clarion call to resistance" concluding, appropriately, with an appendix on S.E.K. Mqhayi, perhaps the greatest of Xhosa writers whose prose and poetry, Jordan believed, encapsulates all that is best in Xhosa literature. "Mqhayi was the soul of the people," Jordan writes, and "to understand him is to understand their hopes and aspirations." It was of course Mqhayi who so successfully employed the style and technique of the Izibongi in dealing with modern themes. In an essay devoted to "Traditional Poetry" Jordan quotes Mqhayi's praise poem to the Prince of Wales in which he parodies British imperialism:

Ah, Britain! Great Britain!
Great Britain of the endless sunshine!
She hath conquered the oceans and laid them low;
She hath drained the little rivers and tapped them dry;
She hath swept the little nations and wiped them away;
But now she is making for the open skies.

In TALES FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA Jordan has collated, translated and also re-formed (an exceedingly complex and creative task) 13 traditional oral narratives. In an excellent foreword, Jordan's son, Z.Pallo Jordan, explains his father's involvement with the oral literary tradition in terms of his wish to redefine African cultural achievements in the light of modern conditions, in order to "reassert a community with pride in itself and its past". Passed on from generation to generation and enriched in the process the oral tale expressed

in allegorical form the condition and struggles of the collective community thereby helping to sustain national identity and dignity. The destruction of traditional economy and patterns of social life by European conquest and industrialization brought Jordan to view the folk tale both "as the medium through which to express his protest against the existing order" and as "a great collective symbol around which the African people could be mobilised for social and political change"

For all those engaged in the struggle to liberate South Africa and especially for those whose commitment extends into the arts, Jordan's books are essential reading. The folk tales have been illustrated by Feni Dumile with a set of intuitively apposite drawings.

FELIX BARTO

COMRADE CANADA

TIM BUCK - A CONSCIENCE FOR CANADA by Oscar Ryan. Published by Progress Books, 487 Adelaide St. West, Toronto. Paperback 4.95 dollars.

There is a surprising uniformity, a homogeneity about the acknowledged leaders of western Communist Parties in the formative years between the first world war and the defeat of facism. Almost to a man they were born from the industrial working class, and became themselves skilled workers in heavy industry; their formal education was generally fairly rudimentary, giving way at an early age to practical experience of life on the workshop floor; but their intellectual achievements as political theorists and writers, founded both on experience and on concentrated and serious self-education outside of school, are formidable. In this mould were cast Ernst Thaelmann of Germany and Maurice Thorez of France; William Gallagher of Britain, William Z. Foster of the U.S.A. and our own W.H. 'Bill' Andrews of South Africa. So too Tim Buck, the grand old man of Canadian Communism, who died only in 1973, after a life lived at the very heart of the Canadian class struggle for over fifty years.

Buck's life story is, above all else, the story of Canadian communism.

He was in at the founding of the party at the end of World War 1; he was in on its building, its illegalisation and persecution, and its resurrection and resurgence into our own times. Throughout the years, until age finally forced him from the forefront in the 1960's, Buck did it all - organiser, propagandist, educator and administrator, writer, speaker, leader; in fair weather and foul - openly and publicly, or when needs be clandestinely and illegally, as civilian and as convict. Yet only now, for the first time, has there been published a biography of this remarkable man.

Its writing is a considerable feat. For like many of his genre Buck always made the cause more important than the man, the policy more vital than the personality espousing it; so that the history of the period is all, and to the outsider the man tends to become faceless, lost in the story of his time. Oscar Ryan in *Tim Buck - A Conscience for Canada* has managed to portray the man himself in his full human quality and stature. Because Buck, in his lifetime, never sought personal acclaim and left little of personal record, the contribution of the man to his times has to be filled in from recollections of his friends and colleagues, flashed with a vivid graphic - almost cinematic technique, against the background screen of history. It is a remarkable literary feat, and from it has emerged an eminently lively and readable portrait of one of the great Communists of the era, set into a really intelligible and acute account of Canada's class struggles from 1917 to 1970.

T.

Europe had a deep significance. It must be remembered that the African experience of German colonialism had been an extremely disastrous and painful one. In Namibia the German colonists carried out a policy of genocide against the Herero and other indigenous peoples; a policy which was without parallel even in the bloody history of colonialism in Southern Africa. In the former German colony of Tanganyika, and in a few other parts of Africa, the historically brief but bloody impact of German colonialism left an unforgettable mark.

The redivision of Africa among the colonial powers after the First World War put an end to the German colonial presence but solved none of the basic problems facing the African peoples. Africa watched with growing alarm the march of the fascist jackboots to power in Europe, not only because this threatened yet another world-wide conflict and yet another attempt to redistribute the colonies once again, but also because its ideological and spiritual programme was openly and unashamedly racist. The barbaric ideas of racism have always been anathema to the peoples of Africa, who have suffered under the implementation of these fascist ideas – and are still suffering today in Southern Africa – perhaps more than any other peoples in the former colonial and semi-colonial world.

When fascist Italy marched into Ethiopia in 1935, African opinion was outraged by such a blatant act of colonial plunder and lawlessness. The failure of other Western powers to take effective measures to compel a return to the previous situation – an experience which has been repeated in the past decade in relation to sanctions against the illegal rebellion of the white minority settler regime in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia); the C.I.A.-initiated fascist coup in Chile, and US military intervention in Indo-China – disgusted the freedom-loving peoples of Africa and alerted them to the dangers of appeasing fascism.

Thus it was that the Nazi onslaught in Europe found in Africa a mass consciousness of the dangers posed to all mankind by the mad ambitions of Hitler's Germany. It was only a small and uninfluential minority which held in some cases that the war in Europe was a white man's war of no interest or concern to the peoples of Africa. Nor did the erroneous view hold sway which briefly infected some national liberation movements in Asia, that the defeat of the British and French colonialists could only be an advantage to the peoples struggling against the colonial might of these metropolitan powers. This view proved

short-sighted, for it took no account of the rival colonialist ambitions of the Axis powers. On the whole, the peoples of Africa rallied to the fight against fascism, and volunteered in their tens and thousands, coming from all parts of the continent to fight in all the main arenas of the second world war. They were often denied arms by their colonial rulers, and made to serve in non-combatant roles or to face the enemy unarmed. But nobody can deny that Africa made a contribution to the defeat of fascism, and that the contribution could have been much greater had the reactionary circles in the West allowed it to be so.

But the reactionary circles in the West could not escape from the fundamental contradiction of their position. They could not defeat Nazism and its imperialist aims, and at the same time preserve intact and unscathed their own imperialist positions throughout the continents of Africa and Asia.

Fascism in Europe and Japanese imperialism in Asia could only be defeated by the mobilisation of wide democratic forces in these continents, as well as in Africa and the world over. This ensured that the defeat of fascism on a world scale also entailed a mortal weakening of the entire colonial system. Indeed, the defeat of fascism in Europe dealt a fatal blow to colonialism and ushered in the whole period of decolonisation which has been one of the great historic advances of mankind in the past 30 years and which has greatly augmented the forces of the world revolutionary movement.

The Fundamental Unity of the Struggle Against Fascism and the Struggle Against Colonialism

For the peoples of Africa there was no contradiction between the struggle against fascism and the struggle against colonialism. On the contrary, these struggles were closely interlinked. The Western powers claimed to be fighting the Axis powers in the name of freedom and democracy. It was this very freedom and democracy which Africa was demanding. If the nations of Europe were entitled to their self-determination and independence, were not also the nations of Africa and Asia?

Nowhere was the fundamental unity of the anti-fascist and anti-colonial struggle more clearly demonstrated than in South Africa. The

African National Congress, spearhead of the African liberation struggle, the Communist Party and other progressive organisations in South Africa, called for equal rights for all South Africans, and in particular demanded that the African and other Black soldiers whom Field Marshal Smuts, "elder" statesman of the British Empire at the time, sent to the battlefields of North Africa should be armed just like the whites. But in war-time, as in peace-time, the racists were not prepared to grant equality in any field to the black majority. The Smuts government prided itself on supplying much needed foodstuffs and munitions to the Allied armies, but for the black workers whose labour actually produced these things, and on whose backs the whole economy of South Africa is built, there were to be no trade union rights, no permanent status or rights in the cities which the racists arrogantly claim to be part of so-called "white" South Africa.

Thus it was that despite a rapid growth in the national working class movements of the African and other oppressed peoples in the war years; despite the growing unity of the African movement with the oppressed Indian and Coloured minorities; despite the upsurge in the same period of the trade union movement, the Smuts government, by adhering to its racist and reactionary policies at home while joining in the struggle to defeat fascism abroad laid the basis for its own demise and opened the door to the coming to power of the Nazi-orientated Nationalist Party in 1948 which has tyrannised South Africa ever since.

The Nationalist Party was and is the agent of Afrikaner nationalism. Its electoral platform in 1948 can be summed up as: apartheid (then a new word), anti-communism, so-called national socialism and the 'protection of Christian civilisation'. These remain today its fundamental programme. The architects of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s, its advocates in the 1940s, are today the rulers of South Africa. These men, many of whom studied in pre-war Germany, deliberately sought and created links with the ideology of the Nazi movement in Germany, taking over from it all its anti-communist, anti-working class elements, all its racist notions, and even some of its pseudo anti-capitalist demagoguery, and applied these ideas in the colonial conditions of South Africa where the white minority had already for centuries ruled and exploited the African and other oppressed peoples. Constantly whipping up anti-black hysteria, taking advantage of the economic consequences of the Great Depression upon

working whites, and assiduously building up Afrikaner capital as a rival of British mining and finance capital, until at a later stage the junior partner, through control of the state, became the senior partner, the Afrikaner nationalists proceeded steadily to develop their insidious plans. They hoped to lead South Africa into the Second World War on the side of fascism, but their plans were narrowly defeated in the all-white parliament by the greater strength of British imperialism's position in South Africa at that time. Undeterred by this set-back the fascists sought to sabotage the economic contribution of the country to the Allied war effort, and to force a position of neutrality upon the South African government. In the forefront of such actions, conducted clandestinely and with direct assistance from Hitler's Germany, were the present rulers of South Africa, including Prime Minister Vorster and his right hand man General van den Bergh, head of the notorious state security apparatus BOSS (Bureau of State Security), both of whom were interned during the war on account of their disruptive, treacherous pro-Nazi activities. These are the men who today are seeking, and in a few shameful but isolated instances, gaining entry into the capitals of independent African states, wearing the mask of peace and seeking to 'normalise' South Africa's relations with free Africa, i.e. to gain acceptance of apartheid.

Thus it was that although fascism was routed in Europe in 1945, in South Africa fascism came to power only three years later. The wider underlying reason for this apparent paradox lies in the fact that in South Africa only the minority white population enjoy the franchise and fascism is essentially a form taken by imperialism in certain circumstances, and while imperialism suffered a resounding rebuff as a consequence of the defeat of fascism in 1945, it was far from being eliminated from the world stage. So long as imperialism exists, so long as monopoly capital holds sway, in some parts of the globe, so long will the danger persist of fascism taking power and establishing the most brutal, ruthless and open dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinist and imperialist circles of finance capital. Gravely weakened by the popular democratic and revolutionary struggles of the war years and immediate post-war period, and by the extension and consolidation of the world socialist system led by the Soviet Union, imperialism's hold was nonetheless still intact in South Africa, and to maintain itself moved into an undeniably fascist stage.

Anti-Fascism and Anti-Colonialism: Portugal and Africa

Before looking more closely at fascism in the South African context we should consider the close inter-connection and underlying unity of the anti-fascist and anti-colonial struggles as borne out by the recent developments in Portugal and its former African possessions – now either independent or on the threshold of independence. There can be few people now who do not realise that it was the determined struggle of the peoples of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau, under the leadership of their respective liberation movements, which led directly to the crisis in which Portuguese fascism was finally overthrown. The democratic revolution in Portugal in turn opened up a solution to the crisis of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, and created conditions for the possibility of a rapid transition to independence in all three territories. Whereas before, fascist terror in Portugal and colonialist terror in Africa marched hand in hand, today the progressive forces in Portugal are reaching out the hand of friendship to the peoples of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau and new relations of mutual respect and cooperation are being forged. The racists in Zimbabwe and South Africa were panic-stricken at this historic turn of events. They can see the march of history and they know their turn is next. This is why they are so busy deepening their military, political and economic links with the West, most notably with Britain, the United States, France and West Germany. And this is why Vorster, the butcher of the African people, has put on the mask of peace and sought to ‘normalise’ South Africa’s relations with the rest of Africa.

Fascism in the South African Context: The Struggle against Racism and Colonialism

The South African regime is not only fascist, but it is also racist and colonialist. It perpetuates the colonial-type domination by the white minority and maintains the extreme national oppression of the black people. It preserves the super-exploitation of the black working-people and the concentration of the country’s wealth in the hands of the white minority; it seeks to suppress at all costs and by all means the movement

for national liberation; and it aims to establish its neo-colonialist hegemony not only in the adjacent countries of Southern Africa, but also throughout the African continent, using the methods of neo-colonialism and working in partnership with the major imperialist powers. These are the essential features and distinguishing characteristics of fascism in its present-day South African form.

The ANC denounces the fascist apartheid regime as a threat not only to the peace, security and integrity of independent Africa, but also as a danger to world peace. Never has this threat, this danger been so acute as it is today. World imperialism, led by reactionary circles in the USA, has seen its reactionary plans shattered by the triumphant onward march of the peoples of Indo-China. In the Middle East US schemes for partial solutions of the crisis there have been roundly defeated by the unity of the Arab peoples, the growing political strength of the Palestinian people and the wider international recognition of the justice of their cause. So it is no accident that the imperialists, facing defeats on all these fronts, launched a vicious and bloody counter-offensive to wipe out the democratic gains of the popular unity government of Salvador Allende in Chile, and are today seeking to make a last-ditch stand in Southern Africa.

In the face of these manoeuvres, and the committed support US imperialism is giving the racists in South Africa, the utmost vigilance of all anti-imperialist and progressive forces is called for, to preserve the unity of the African peoples, to isolate and rebuff the apartheid regime in all spheres, political, diplomatic, military, economic, and cultural, and to greatly intensify the moral and material support given to the oppressed people of South Africa in their struggle against apartheid. There can be no doubt that the struggle against apartheid is today one of the vital fronts in the struggle against latter day racism, and that the destruction of apartheid will wipe out one of the mainsprings of racial conflict in the world, opening the path to the rapid development of Southern Africa and Africa in conditions of racial harmony, democracy, peace and social and economic progress.

Western Support for Apartheid Endangers World Peace

The destruction of apartheid and colonialism in South Africa is the

historic mission of our people. They have never flinched from shouldering this burden. Its weight is doubled by the support the racists get from the international monopolies, and from the ruling circles in the major western countries. The very same ruling circles in Britain and France that appeased Nazism in Germany 40 years ago, that connived at the defeat of the democratic revolution in Spain, and which thereby helped to create a monster which nearly destroyed them – these are the same people who today are pouring capital into South Africa, stepping up their arms supplies and joint military collaboration with Pretoria, increasing their trade links with South Africa and relying more and more on its gold in the deepening monetary and economic crisis in which the world capitalist system is finding itself. This is the sort of backing, coming not only from Britain and France, but also from the United States, West Germany and Japan, which has encouraged and enabled the Vorster regime to more than double its military budget within the past 18 months, and which is fully supporting and assisting Vorster's so-called 'detente' offensive in Africa.

This collaboration of the Western powers with the South African fascists has reached dangerously new levels since the collapse of Portuguese fascism and colonialism. This collaboration represents a formidable challenge to all anti-facist and progressive forces in these countries to halt and reverse the growing involvement of the West in support of apartheid. Unless this is achieved, unless the anti-apartheid and solidarity movements in the major imperialist countries develop into a powerful force capable of blocking the reactionaries' moves, the imperialists will become directly involved militarily in the crisis in South Africa and in the genocide against the African people which the Pretoria racists are ready and willing to unleash should their power be threatened. In this situation lies the element of an international conflict no less dangerous, no less bloody than the recent situation in Indo-China and the present situation in the Middle East – with the additional explosive element of race which the enemy invokes constantly to develop a war psychosis in the white minority. We must therefore issue a very sober and grave warning to the reactionary circles in the West – to get out of our way before it is too late. And to our friends in the West, we appeal once again to double and treble their efforts to bring about the complete isolation of apartheid South Africa in all spheres, and similarly to step up their support for the liberation struggle.

Conclusion

The lesson of history is clear. To appease fascism and racism, to encourage such primitive, anti-human and terroristic ideas and forces is to play with fire and to endanger not only the lives of millions of peace-loving people, but to endanger world peace itself. The deepening economic crisis of the capitalist world, the sharpening class struggles not only in the West but throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, the rising tide of revolution on a world scale which is rolling back the sphere of influence of imperialism, these developments are creating the conditions in which the reactionary circles are more tempted than before to seek a way out of their crisis by resorting to ruthless repression, suspension of democratic rights; and to full-scale fascist terror. So while the danger of fascism is growing today in many parts of the world, at the same time the democratic and peace-loving forces are growing stronger. They have greater opportunities and more resources for defeating fascism than they had in the 1920s and 1930s. The world socialist system, led by the Soviet Union, has grown in strength and stature. Most of the countries of Free Africa, Asia and Latin America are firmly opposed to fascism, racism and war. There is an evergrowing awareness among the peoples in the imperialist and other western countries of the dangers inherent in the growth of fascism.

All these forces recognise that the militant struggles for national liberation and the struggle for world peace are inextricably linked and are part of a single struggle against the forces that perpetuate and profit from war.

We are, therefore, living at a time in history that is both dangerous and exciting. Imperialism's lease is running out and in its death throes one can expect it to gamble, as it tried to do in Indo-China, to embroil the world in yet another holocaust. In this situation we must, all together, meet the situation, with the utmost coolness, objectivity and thoroughness, seek out and develop the ways and means of blocking the roads to fascism today, of routing the fascists who are in power, and of hastening the demise of the imperialist system which spawns fascism like some grotesque monster. This is why the African National Congress is participating in this important meeting, and why we attach significance to its outcome in terms of plans and activity for the future.

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