

# THE WORKING CLASS - THE HORSE AND CARRIAGE

-Herman Buti

"THERE CAN BE NO WORKING CLASS VICTORY WITHOUT BLACK LIBERATION AND NO BLACK LIBERATION WITHOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF CAPITALISM IN ALL ITS FORMS".

- COMRADE MOSES KOTANE -

The working class and the struggle for a democratic South Africa which is led by the African National Congress, goes together like a horse and carriage. One cannot do without the other. These two are like husband and wife; to stick together through thick and thin until they have overcome all hardships, and they see the fruits of their labour before them.

The economic and political tasks of national liberation revolutions and the class forces that carry them out are determined both by objective conditions in the given country and by the nature of the epoch in which they take place. Consequently the class content of national liberation changes from one epoch to another and so do the accompanying tasks.

## EPOCH

In the epoch of pre-monopoly capitalism, an element of anti-feudal and bourgeois-democratic transformation of social life characterised national liberation revolutions. Their main social content was the fulfilment of bourgeois and bourgeois-democratic tasks though they have essential distinctions when compared with 'conventional' bourgeois revolutions.

National liberation in our day is not confined to the winning of political independence and the establishment of national states. In our day the very problem of national liberation has been importantly modified to cover a much more extensive range of tasks, including the economic emancipation of the former colonies and semi-colonies. In our contemporary epoch national liberation is part of the world social process of transition from exploitative societies to non-exploitative ones and this is facilitated by the active participation of the working-class in this movement.



## RACISM

In South Africa where racism is the mode of operation of capitalism, national liberation is inconceivable without the smashing of capitalism whose downfall can only come through the maximum mobilisation of the working-class.

This set-up reflects itself in the indissoluble bond between the working class party, trade union and the national liberation movement which developed in struggle. And it is precisely this objective set-up that immediately show up those who are opposed to the genuine liberation of the exploited masses.

Opening its historic document "Strategy and Tactics", the fruit of collectivism and long-drawn experience adopted at Morogoro in 1969, the African National Congress projects its consistency on this approach in the following words:

"The struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the Socialist system, of the breakdown of the colonial system as a result of national liberation and socialist revolutions, and the fight for social and economic progress by the people of the whole world".

## PROLETARIAT

And under the sub-topic dealing with the working class this document furthers this argument:

"This perspective of a speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness".

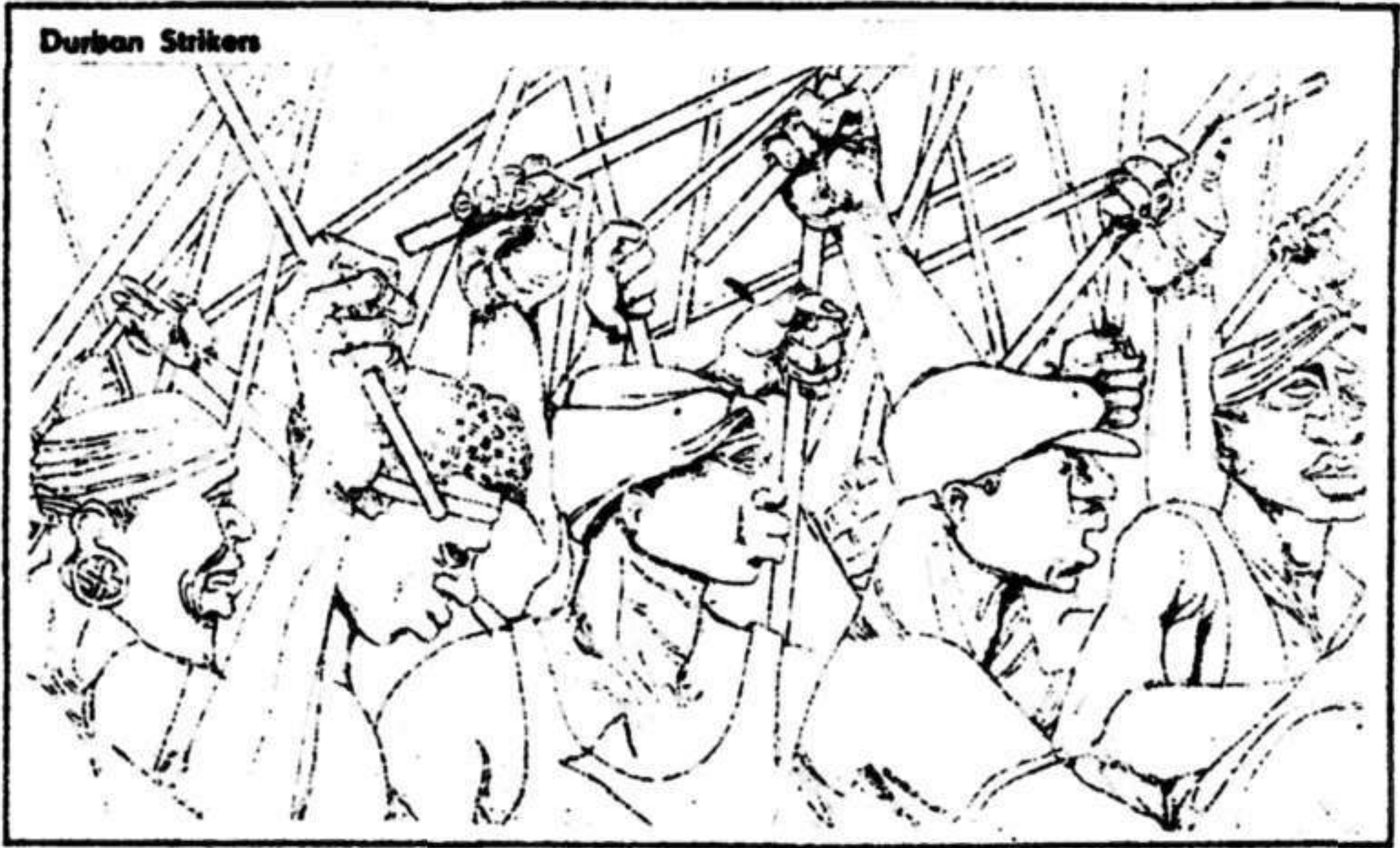
The proletariat, a class whose aspirations are totally alien to any oppression or exploitation, is capable of consistently giving expression to national goals and of acting as the most steadfast and indomitable fighter against colonialism. Its aims in the national liberation struggle are not self-seeking like in the case of the bourgeoisie but are incompatible with any partial victory over the colonialists or with any substitution of capitalist forms of oppression for colonial and feudal forms. On this score the ANC in the "Strategy and Tactics" has this to say:



"To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even a shadow of liberation.

"Our drive towards national emancipation is therefore in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation".

**Durban Strikers**



Naturally, the bourgeoisie or other bourgeois aspiring elements which in most cases lead national movements, strive from the outset to make use of the upsurge of national sentiments to further its own class interests. It feeds people with the tranquillising drug of national chauvanism and thus prevent the growth of class awareness among the proletariat and sows discord among working people of different nationalities. Logically this bourgeois nationalism conflicts with proletarian internationalism. Nationalism must of course be judged on its merits in each particular case. The nationalism of an oppressed nation fighting against imperialism has a democratic, progressive meaning. In this case nationalistic ideas and sentiments are a form of protest against imperialism. But these progressive features can only be promoted if the interests of the working-class and other sections of the working people, the majority of a nation, are consistently taken into account.



And it is only through the preponderance of the working people that the reactionary intentions of the bourgeoisie can be frustrated and revolutionary nationalism consolidated which is not opposed to the principle of proletarian internationalism.

History testifies that where the proletariat has become an influential factor of national importance and has played a great part in overthrowing the colonial and semi-colonial regimes, in the course of major political action and initiatives, it has decisively shown in practice the potential to secure leadership in the liberation struggle. And it has also taken powerful action, exerting a great influence on their development.

## TESTIMONIES

Among other testimonies, the following examples are widely known:-

- the proletariat action in Congo, Brazzaville in August 1963, put an end to the pro-colonialist government of Fulbert Youlou;
- the strike by the Algerian proletariat in March 1963 blocked the way of the counter-revolutionary forces;
- the National Confederation of the working people of Guinea did much to beat back imperialist aggression against the republic in 1970;
- action by the workers of Madagascar had an outstanding role to play in the events which in 1972 led to the overthrow of the reactionary and pro-colonialist Tsiranana regime;
- the struggle of the Sudanese working-class, under the leadership of the Communist Party, was of great significance in eliminating General Abboud's reactionary dictatorship in the autumn of 1964.

These and other similar examples show very well the social potential of the working-class in Africa and its ability to cope with the tasks which arise at the present phase of the liberation struggle.

In our country the black industrial army is once more flexing its muscle which won it the wage victories of the early

seventies. Notably, this wave of strikes comes in the wake of the cosmetic labour reforms introduced after the Wiehahn report which was conceived as a big confidence t r i c k by those who hatched it, the most 'flexible' Broederbond diehards. Included in this racists' 'calculation' was an attempt to draw the black trade union movement into the draft of their system. However, in this Year of the South African Worker, the workers of our country are asserting to make this year a real success, out-witting the tentacles of the National Manpower Commission (NMC) and rising to the majestic heights, to the solid rock of class-brotherhood.

Of no less importance is that this snowballing workers' actions should reach their logical climax, the demands of the Freedom Charter. This can only come through intensified mobilisation of our working class.

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# THE ANATOMY OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

- Gladstone Moroka

NAIROBI - A meeting of the South African Black Consciousness movement planned to be held in Nairobi had to be cancelled because of the Kenya government's refusal to grant entry visas.

An official of the Christian Council of Kenya revealed here today that the meeting was to have begun on December 28 and more than 100 participants had been expected from South Africa, Britain and other countries.

- "The Star". January 3, 1980 -

The Black Consciousness Movement in our country has passed under the scrutiny of several microscopes of doubtful repute which made attempts to secure a place for its naive overtures under the sun of our revolution as an ideology; without a proper look into its pitfalls which would jeopardise our struggle for a democratic South Africa. These critics are aware of this.

With that I am particularly referring to i t s struggle