

## South African Communist Party

## SACP DELEGATION ATTENDS THE 14th CONGRESS OF THE ROMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

The South African Communist Party was invited to send a delegate to the 14th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party which was held in Bucharest from November 20 to 24, 1989

Centrepiece of the Congress was the opening speech of the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, Nicolae Ceausescu, which lasted from 9.00 a.m. to 4 p.m. on November 20, with two short coffee breaks, lunch being served after 4.00 p.m. The duration of the speech could have been much shorter were it not for the more than 100 standing ovations with which its delivery was interrupted by the more than 3,000 delegates who applauded its sentiments with unison handclapping and the shouting of slogans containing his name

The astonishing cult of the individual was highlighted in each speech of the delegates themselves selected to present contributions to what can only be described as a celebration rather than a debate. Typical was the contribution of one delegate who said he had been mandated to secure the re-election of Ceausescu as general secretary, describing him to his face as "the most beloved and most brilliant son of the working class of the Romanian people, a Communist hero and burning patriot, founder of a new homeland and a new life, prominent personality of the international Communist and trade union movement, genius-like strategist of the huge revolutionary changes in our homeland". Each such encomium was greeted by another standing ovation and the shouting of slogans. The delegates found it necessary also to praise Ceausescu's wife, Elena, who followed him into the hall and as No.2 was seated by his side throughout the conference, though she seemed to generate less enthusiasm from the audience than her husband. For good measure one of the delegates who was chosen to address the conference was a son of Ceausescu, making dutiful obeisance to his parents.

Many of the delegates from fraternal parties grew tired of jumping up and down every few minutes and remained seated during the standing ovations, not wishing to be disrespectful but concluding that the duty imposed on members of the Romanian Party did not necessarily extend to their guests.

The atmosphere surrounding the propagation of the cult of the individual diverted attention from what was a meaty speech by the general secretary, who paid special attention to the necessity to fight for peace and nuclear disarmament, and to remain steadfast in the struggle for socialism. He called for the strengthening of the solidarity, collaboration and unity of all communist and workers' parties.

"It is well known that we were and are firmly for a new unity, which exclude interference in domestic affairs, the commandist stance of certain parties and be based on the unfaltering observance of each party's independence and right to set its own political line and strategy in keeping with the realities of its country".

Other points made were:

1. Prior to the 9th Romanian Party Congress in 1965 there had been abuses and illegal acts recorded and the basic principles of socialism were violated, but since 1965 the Party had put an end to dogmatism and conservatism, had introduced self-management and self-financing in the economy and secured the full participation of the workers and peasants in management.

- It was at the 9th Congress that Ceausescu was elected general secretary of the Party.

2. Under socialism the lifespan of the Romanian people had been increased from 42 years to 72 years.

3. The country's foreign debt (widely estimated to have been about 25 million dollars) was fully paid off in March 1989.

4. Some socialist countries were thinking of bringing about a measure of unemployment and bigger differentials in wages in order to solve their economic problems. These measures did not belong to socialism. "We cannot admit in our society an increase in rich people and poor people". At the same time, "there shall never be work without bread or bread without work".

5. "We want no tinkering with the methods of capitalism. We are working for the success of socialism and communism".

6. The Romanian Party does not believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat, but prefers the notion of revolutionary worker democracy, securing "the broad, democratic participation of the masses in the management of the entire social activity."

7. There are 3,831,000 members of the Romanian Communist Party, of whom 36 per cent are women. 40 per cent of the delegates to the Congress were women.

8. "Party members do not enjoy, nor could they enjoy, special privileges; they only have bigger duties - those of revolutionaries".

9. No one should be unjustly punished, but at the same time no one must be allowed to break the law or betray the interests of the Party.

At the end of the Congress Ceausescu was re elected general secretary of the Party - a fact which had already been announced on the opening day by a big banner over the door of the conference hall.

#### SACP DELEGATION TO THE CONGRESSES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN (CPB) AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN (CPGB)

The Communist Party of Britain (CPB) and the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) held their Congresses in London in London in November 1989.

The CPB is a breakaway group from the CPGB. It is still a small party with a membership of about 1,500 to 2,000. However, it has a strong influence on the daily "Morning Star". The CPB claims to be the genuine Communist Party and therefore called its Congress the 40st Congress.

The debates and discussions at Congress were typical of many Communist Parties in terms of clear class ideological and political positions. Congress passed a resolution calling for a wide-ranging discussion in the party ranks on developments in the socialist countries. It also passed a resolution on seeking unity talks with the CPGB and another small breakaway group, the New Communist Party, against the wishes of the executive committee.

The SACP sent a message of greetings which was warmly received and the ANC guest speaker was given a standing ovation.

The CPGB has fraternal relations with the SACP since we were formed in 1921. It has about 7,000 members. Membership of the CPGB has been declining steadily over the last two decades. Twenty years ago its membership was about 25,000. Moreover, over the past few years it has lost a great deal of its influence within the British Trade Union movement.

At its 41st Congress the debates were lively and controversial. These centred around the document "New Times"

which claims that the situation in the western capitalist countries has changed so dramatically and fundamentally that the previous programme, "The British Road to Socialism", was now basically obsolete. In essence it is a call to move away from class defined and ideologically clear principles and positions. Even the many amendments that were proposed did not make the document any clearer.

An interesting debate also took place on the need to change the name of the Party. The delegates, however, voted to retain the old name. But this issue will come up again.

International guests other than the ANC and the SACP were representatives from the Communist Party of Ireland, the Communist Party of India, Palestinian Communist Party, Communist Party of Chile, Communist Party of Turkey and AKEL of Cyprus.

Both the CPB and the CPGB are involved in giving support and mobilising solidarity for the South African struggle. But without Communist unity the fortunes and influence of the communist movement in Britain will continue to decline.

#### SACP PARTICIPATION IN THE LONDON MEETING OF COMMUNIST PARTIES MARKING THE 72nd ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The South African Communist Party joined with a number of other Communist and Workers' Parties to stage a public meeting in London last November in celebration of the 72nd anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution. About 150 people attended.

The other participating parties were the Communist Party of Chile, AKEL of Cyprus, Communist Party of Greece, PPP of Guyana, Iraqi Communist Party, Tudeh Party of Iran, Iranian People's Fedaiian (Majority), Communist Party of Pakistan, Palestinian Communist Party, Communist Party of the Philippines, Communist party of Turkey, and supporters of the Communist Party of India.

The two main speakers were Brian Bunting, speaking on behalf of all the organising parties, and Vladimir Ulasevitch, first secretary of the USSR Embassy.

In his speech Comrade Bunting stressed that no matter what the setbacks and disappointment experienced in the socialist countries, our Marxist philosophical outlook and interpretation of history remained unaltered. An analysis of political, economic and social trends in all societies still leads to the conclusion that capitalism has been unable to solve the problems of production and distribution in such a way as to end class and national conflict. We still believe

that socialism holds out the only hope of eliminating the major contradictions and sources of conflict and war in the modern world.

The October Revolution was the most earth-shaking event of the 20th century, breaking the capitalist curtain and opening the road to socialism.

Today the programme of perestroika and glasnost amounts to a revolutionary process of reform adopted and guided by the CPSU in response to intensive mass pressure from the rank and file who are no longer content to be ruled in the old way. There are obvious dangers in this programme, but there can be no return to the commandist methods of the past. Socialist plurality of opinions and democratisation are essential for the further development of Soviet society.

All the parties represented at the gathering wished to pay tribute to the staunchness of the Soviet Union as an ally of the national liberation movements and to reject as baseless slander the attempts of our enemies to suggest that the Soviet Union was selling us down the river.

#### THE ELECTIONS IN INDIA

The elections in India which resulted in the defeat of the government of Rajiv Gandhi last November also saw a significant improvement in the position of the left parties, which increased their representation in parliament from 32 seats to 51.

The Communist Party of India doubled its strength from 6 seats to 12, while the CPI (M) rose from 22 seats to 32.