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## **THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST**

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**Cover Pictures: Left, Moses Mabhida, general secretary of the South African Communist Party. Right, Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress.**

## EDITORIAL NOTES



# **BOTHA'S PROGRAMME OF MURDER AND WAR**

The brutal murder of ANC leader Joe Gqabi in Salisbury at the end of July was no isolated incident but part of South Africa's co-ordinated campaign to maintain white domination not only over South Africa but also over the whole of southern and central Africa by every possible means. An attempt earlier in the year to blow him up in his motor car had been foiled. This time the racist assassins succeeded in removing one of the bravest of their enemies, and a man holding a key position in the front line against them.

Suggestions have been made in sections of the venal South African press that Joe Gqabi was the victim of some sort of internecine quarrel inside the

ANC, itself. This is utter balderdash. There is no such quarrel inside the ANC, and even if there were, this is not the way the ANC or any of its members would seek to settle it. The ANC is a mature political organisation which solves its internal problems by political means, not through terrorism. The South African racists, on the other hand, who rule by terrorism and refuse to admit blacks of any shade to "their" political arena, know only one answer to protest and that is force and repression. They have killed over 50 of our political prisoners in their solitary confinement cells, they daily ban, banish and detain our political and trade union leaders without trial, they have shot down thousands of our young people, women and children in the streets of Soweto and other townships. At the beginning of the first session of Parliament after his April 29 election victory, the "reformer" Premier Botha once again reaffirmed that he stood for white domination, that Africans, Coloureds and Indians would never be given political rights on the basis of one man one vote, that the offensive against the ANC and its allies would be stepped up.

Nor is Joe Gqabi the only victim of this racist terrorism. We call to mind the victims of the Matola massacre in January, the murder of Abraham Tiro in Botswana, the attempts to assassinate ANC leaders in Swaziland and Lesotho, the plots which have been uncovered to capture or liquidate the ANC leadership wherever it is to be found, in Lusaka, Dar es Salaam or Maputo. In the words of the statement issued by the ANC National Executive Committee after Joe Gqabi's murder:

"Never before have the South African racist rulers been confronted by such a powerful and united force from the oppressed. This savage act, in part, explains the reaction of the enemy to this rising revolutionary tide and the vanguard role played by the African National Congress and its allies in struggle. It is the key element in the criminal apartheid regime's strategy of destroying the ANC politically, eliminating its leaders and militants physically, at home and abroad. An important ingredient of this strategy consists in the intimidation of the front line states through open and unprovoked acts of aggression, as we are witnessing in Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland".

In Washington at the beginning of August Mr Randall Robinson, director of the lobby organisation TransAfrica, which earlier had released confidential State Department documents on US-South African relations, said the United States shared complicity in the murder of Joe Gqabi. A

classified US Defence Department document showed that the US knew South Africa was assembling an assassination squad to hit ANC leaders in the frontline states and had done nothing to intervene. The US was under an obligation either to put pressure on South Africa not to act, or to warn the intended victims, he said.

The US knows about more than the Botha regime's hit squad. As revealed in the earlier documents leaked by TransAfrica relating to the discussions held between U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Crocker and the South Africans last April and May, the US also knows of South Africa's determination to stop SWAPO from coming to power in an independent Namibia, and has heard Defence Minister Malan's declaration that South Africa is ready to invade Namibia and neighbouring countries in order to prevent this coming about.

The US, which is so free with its accusations that the Soviet Union is the source of world aggression and terrorism, has no word to say about the murder of Joe Gqabi, the massacre of Matola, and the escalating aggression by South Africa against neighbouring countries – the South African aid to rebel bandit groups in Mozambique, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Angola, and direct South African attacks on the frontline states. As the documents leaked by TransAfrica reveal, the US and South Africa have a shared objective in Southern Africa – to maintain and extend South African and western influence in the area in the name of anti-Sovietism. In the eyes of the Reagan administration, South Africa is the Israel of Southern Africa, a reliable if sometimes embarrassing ally, to be supported at all costs as a bastion of the "free world". Haig, Crocker, Reagan and Thatcher piously condemn apartheid in words, but when it comes to arms, oil, components for nuclear weapons and vetoes at the UN, South Africa gets whatever she wants, however devious the channels.

The leaked papers on the US-South African discussions reveal also that South Africa is being encouraged, not only to destabilise neighbouring independent states, but also to embark once again on an all-out invasion of Angola in the hope of overthrowing the MPLA government and installing an alternative with UNITA as the dominant element. A communique issued by the Angolan Ministry of Defence in July 29 stated that "since the end of June there has been an increase in acts of war by the racist South African troops against the territory of the People's Republic of Angola. . . . In the first two weeks of July, troop movements which had already begun in the last half of June began to take on the form of an invasion". The South African forces had occupied a number of towns and attacked civilian and

military vehicles. At the time the South Africans claimed they were merely engaged in "hot pursuit" of SWAPO forces, but in August South Africa's military commander in Namibia, the overweight and underbrainpowered General Lloyd blurted out: "We are preparing ourselves mentally and physically for a more serious war". His threat came after South African military intelligence claims that Angolan and Cuban forces were deploying ground-to-air missiles to protect the country against South African air attacks – the identical tactics and excuse employed by the Israelis in relation to the deployment of Syrian anti-aircraft missiles in the Lebanon. (And why should Angola not have the right to protect itself against South African air raids and ground attacks?)

Lloyd's statement was described by an embarrassed Defence Minister Malan as having "no special significance", but it was not repudiated. In fact, two days later it was given "special significance" when Finance Minister Horwood increased the defence budget for the coming year by a staggering 30% to a total of R2,465 million. This clearly indicates preparations for an all-out war against Africa in which Reagan and Botha will be allies. What we are witnessing is the unfolding of a deliberate strategy by the western powers, spearheaded by the United States, to enlarge areas of conflict in Southern Africa, South-East Asia (Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam), the Middle East, Latin America (El Salvador and Nicaragua) and elsewhere with the aim of undermining the independence of states which have opted for socialism, crushing liberation movements which threaten to dislodge reactionary feudal or capitalist regimes, and culminating in open confrontation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries which might come to their aid. The US aim is to escalate conflict on all fronts and to bring about a situation where the power of the socialist world will be stretched to the limit and the Soviet Union, in particular, will be unable to match the concentration of weaponry which the imperialist powers are assembling against her.

This is the logic behind the US decision to manufacture and stockpile the neutron bomb, to deploy hundreds of more deadly nuclear weapons in Europe, to train and arm the gangsters who are disrupting the peace in Afghanistan, Angola, Kampuchea and elsewhere. There are those amongst America's friends (never mind enemies) who regard the Reagan-Haig "global" policy as madness. It is certainly a sign of desperation – the desperation of a capitalist class unable to solve the problems of overproduction, unemployment and inflation, fearful of the spread of socialism throughout the world, resorting to rearmament and the threat of



war as the only way out of their economic crisis.

The assassination of Joe Gqabi and the Matola 12, the murderous aggression against Angola, the rape of Namibia, the increased repression at home, the heartless evictions at Langa, Nyanga, Alexandra and elsewhere – all this is justified by Botha and accepted if not instigated by the US administration in the name of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. In a keynote foreign policy speech last August, Secretary of State Haig said America wanted three undertakings from the Soviet Union – greater Soviet restraint on the use of force, greater Soviet respect of independence of others and Soviet implementation of its international obligations such as those undertaken under the 1975 Helsinki agreement. Coming from the murderers of Vietnam, the assassins of Allende and Gqabi, the organisers of the Bay of Pigs invasion and the would-be assassins of Fidel Castro, the repudiators of the Salt 2 agreement on the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons, the bandits who without provocation shoot down planes in Libyan air space, this is hypocrisy of the first order – nauseating, deceitful and dangerous.

The victims of apartheid and imperialism everywhere are resolved to defeat this international conspiracy. As our general secretary Moses Mabhida said in his speech to the 60th anniversary meeting of the SACP in London on July 30:

“The United States should know that it is collaborating with enemy number one of African progress. The Reagan administration should know that independent African states will take and are capable of taking measures against this conspiracy. Like communists everywhere, my Party condemns the attempts by aggressive imperialism to escalate the arms race under the pretext of seeking military superiority over the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Our determination to overthrow the racist, fascist oppressive regime in South Africa is a contribution we are prepared to make towards the forces of peace and social progress the world over”.

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## **HOW OUR ANNIVERSARY WAS CELEBRATED**

The 60th anniversary of the foundation of the South African Communist Party was celebrated on July 30 inside South Africa, in all the main centres under the very noses of the security police, in Africa, Europe, Asia and America. Leaflet bombs which were exploded in Cape Town, scattering thousands of leaflets in the city centre and at the Nyanga bus terminus, were reported in the press to have "shocked city commuters". Reactionary racist commuters may have been "shocked", but all South Africans who long for an end to apartheid repression must have been greatly heartened by this demonstration. Nor were the leaflet bombs the only signs of activity. Thousands of copies of the Central Committee statement on the anniversary which we printed in the last issue of *The African Communist* were circulated in pamphlet form together with portraits of Communist Party leaders who had borne the burden of the Party's development over the decades. A variety of other forms of propaganda were employed to distribute the Party's message to every corner of the country. Commemoration meetings were held in many private homes. In one way or another millions of South Africans were made aware of the significance of our birthday.

Outside our borders the National Working Committee of the African National Congress, carrying out a decision of the National Executive Committee at its session in May, instructed all centres to "organise meetings, rallies, discussion groups, at which the significance of the revolutionary alliance of the ANC and the SACP is emphasised". In his circular letter to all ANC offices and units, the Secretary-General, Alfred Nzo, said:

"We must demonstrate with particular force that no amount of political and ideological subversion on the part of our enemies and their apologists will ever weaken the revolutionary alliance of the ANC and SACP".

Freedom fighters in the camps, activists of the liberation movement everywhere took part in these celebrations — in Maputo, Luanda, Dar es Salaam, Lusaka and elsewhere in Africa; in America, Europe and Asia. Particular attention was given to the occasion in the socialist countries, with well-attended meetings in Moscow, Berlin (GDR) and Prague addressed by S.A. Communist Party spokesmen and Africanists of the host country. A special seminar was organised in Moscow by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and the Africa Institute.

In New Delhi a meeting to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the SACP was convened by the Communist Party of India and addressed by N.K. Krishnan, secretary of the national council of the CPI central executive committee, and S. Molifi, chief representative of the ANC in Asia. The meeting passed a resolution calling for the release of Nelson Mandela and the three MK members who are under sentence of death.

The main celebration meeting took place in London, where an enthusiastic gathering of over 500 people packed the Conway Hall to hear fighting speeches from our chairman and general secretary, comrades Yusuf Dadoo and Moses Mabhida, the President General of the ANC Oliver Tambo, the general secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland, Michael O'Riordan, and the general secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Gordon McLennan. Messages of congratulation were sent to the Party from the socialist countries, fraternal parties and organisations all over the world.

To all those who contributed to the success of our anniversary celebrations, and especially to our comrades of the ANC, we express our heartfelt thanks. In this, our 60th year, the warmth of support we have received from our allies and friends has been a great encouragement and has given fresh impetus to the struggle for liberation, peace and social justice in which we are all engaged.

We reprint in this issue extracts from the speeches delivered at the Conway Hall on July 30 by our general secretary Moses Mabhida and ANC President General Oliver Tambo. These extracts concern the relationship between the ANC and SACP in the struggle against racism and imperialism and are of great significance to all who are involved in that struggle.

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## **CASUALTIES IN THE STRUGGLE**

During the South African Communist Party's 60-year history, its members at both leadership and rank-and-file level have displayed a dedication and commitment to the cause of liberation and socialism which have won for the party the love and respect of the oppressed people and all who cherish freedom. From the days of Johannes Nkosi onwards, many Communists have given their lives for the movement. In this issue of *The African Communist* we publish an article "Four Who Where Communists" containing brief profiles of four Communists who were killed in action by the enemy in the recent period. Many other members of the Communist Party are serving in the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the liberation movement, fighting with guns in their hands, daily facing danger and the possibility of death or injury, but determined to play their part until victory is won.

Not all Communists, of course, are in the ranks of Umkhonto, but it is a condition of Party membership that all members must be ready at any time to carry out any assignment anywhere, inside or outside the country, whenever called upon to do so by the leadership. Many of our comrades are in the underground, building up the apparatus which is essential if the work and influence of the Party are to spread amongst the masses inside the country. Others serve the Party and the liberation movement in various capacities in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

It is our sad task to record the death from a heart attack of one of our outstanding comrades, Eli Weinberg, in Dar es Salaam on July 18. Eli was born in Latvia in 1908 and was involved in the working class movement there before coming to South Africa in 1929. He joined the Communist Party of South Africa in 1932 and from 1933 was active in the trade union movement in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg until banned under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1953. He joined the Communist Party of South Africa in 1932 and from 1933 was active in the trade union movement in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg until banned under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1953. He was detained during the 1960 state of emergency and was arrested together with Bram Fischer in 1964 and sentenced to five years imprisonment for belonging to and promoting the aims of the illegal Communist Party. On the instructions of the ANC he left South Africa during the Soweto disturbances of 1976 and spent the last years of his life in Dar es Salaam in the service of the ANC, SACTU and the Communist Party. After he had

been prohibited from doing trade union work, Eli worked as a professional photographer, and a collection of his work was recently published in London under the title "Portrait of a People" (reviewed in *The African Communist* No. 86 Third Quarter 1981).

This brief account of his life does little to personalise Eli the man, energetic, warm-hearted, indefatigable in his support for the Party and the international Communist movement. Throughout his long political life he never wavered in his commitment and dedication to the cause. We print in this issue an article he had sent for publication in our series "Why I Joined the Communist Party". It will revive many memories and bring a lump to many throats.

In this the 60th anniversary year of the Communist Party, we dip our red banner in a last salute to Eli Weinberg, to "The Four Who Were Communists", to the many other Communists who have died — some unknown and unsung — to the many martyrs to our cause over the decades of our existence. We are a fighting party, and casualties are inevitable in any freedom struggle. We call on our comrades to draw closer together and bind up the wounds the party has suffered and will still suffer in the years to come. To the families of our bereaved comrades we offer our heartfelt condolences, together with the assurance that the sacrifices of their loved ones have not been in vain and will never be forgotten.

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## **APARTHEID RUGBY IS NOT CRICKET**

The presence of the South African rugby team in New Zealand sparked off the most massive public demonstrations of protest against apartheid ever seen in that country. People from all walks of life demonstrated in their thousands, not only in the main cities but in every part of the country. The protest movement proved capable of mounting simultaneous demonstrations in many different centres, this effectively giving the lie to Premier Muldoon's attempts to smear them as a band of itinerant "agitators" and "agents of Moscow". The steadily mounting pressure of the demonstrators stretched the resources of the New Zealand police to the

utmost and vividly illustrated the depth of the repugnance and indignation which the apartheid regime now inspires in ordinary working people throughout the world.

The tour shook the New Zealand government to its foundations, threatening not only its internal stability but also its relations on the world political and sporting scene, with protests and reprisals being recorded at every level including governmental, both inside and outside the Commonwealth. Muldoon was no doubt telling the truth when he said that he deliberately inserted some ambiguities in the wording of the Gleneagles agreement on the sports boycott of South Africa in order to leave himself a loophole for just the sort of evasion which he displayed over the whole tour. But this trickery misfired. What emerged was Muldoon's own racism as reflected in his sneering remarks about the "new" members of the Commonwealth i.e. the black states which, in his opinion, don't understand how to play the democratic game, and his threats to leave the Commonwealth if it is to be dominated by the values of the "new" members.

The strength of world reaction against apartheid, however, was too great to enable the "older" (i.e. white) members of the Commonwealth to come to his support, even if they had wanted to. The Commonwealth Finance Ministers moved their planned meeting from New Zealand to the Bahamas, and the participation of New Zealand in future sporting exchanges and political meetings at government level has been jeopardised for years to come.

The principled and determined action of the New Zealand people, backed by the pressure of world opinion, ensured that the Springbok tour of New Zealand, which was supposed to reopen the doors of international sport to South Africa, turned out to be an overwhelming defeat for racialism and apartheid. While the tour was still on, a proposed New Zealand cricket tour of the West Indies was scrapped, and South Africa's application to re-enter international cricket was rejected. Sportsmen and entertainers are becoming increasingly nervous of having any sort of contact with South Africa.

Yet it is necessary to remember that the Springbok tour of New Zealand would never have taken place at all if the South African racists did not have friends in many parts of the world. Amongst them can be numbered the likes of Reagan, Thatcher and Muldoon — men and women of no little power and influence in the world today. In fact, support for apartheid South Africa has become a rallying cry for the reactionaries and fascists of

the world, just as solidarity with the South African people's struggle for liberation has become the common cause of progressives everywhere. The sports battle is now clearly seen to be part of the world-wide battle against racism and reaction. No place is too remote to feel the shock waves.

The success of the fight against the Springbok tour of New Zealand must not lull the world campaign against apartheid into complacency. The fight must be intensified until the South African racists are totally isolated and the apartheid regime overthrown. Not until then will non-racial sport or non-racial anything be possible in South Africa and the way cleared for the implementation of the principles of the Freedom Charter.

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# **MUTUAL TRUST AND COMRADESHIP IN BATTLE**

**Extracts from the speeches of Moses  
Mabhida and Oliver Tambo at the  
60th anniversary meeting of the SACP  
in London on July 30, 1981**

## **MOSES MABHIDA**

Our Party's stand as far as national liberation goes in South Africa is quite clear. It fully supports the same programme of liberation as the African National Congress, for the seizure of power and black majority rule. The National Liberation Movement, to quote Lenin, "is a necessary ally of the proletarian revolution". We say this despite the fact that in some independent African countries neo-colonialism persists, thus constraining national development. In these countries the international monopolies, finance capital and their corporations attempt to entrench themselves and perpetuate exploitation in these countries, thus denying them genuine independence. The role played by the leadership in the independent African states thus becomes very important in shaping the development of the said countries. We have examples of this quite recently when the MPLA in Angola and FRELIMO in Mozambique decided on transforming these movements into Marxist-Leninist parties. This happened in countries which were previously victims of centuries of colonial plunder.



In South Africa colonialism was actually entrenched by industrial Britain. It was colonial Britain which decisively assisted the Boers in the wars of dispossession against the African kingdoms. It was British colonialism, and not the Boers, who actually conquered our people and expropriated land, seized cattle and forced Africans to work in the mining industry and farms. The total colonisation of South Africa by Britain was fundamental in the creation of the racist South African regime, and, in fact, if it were not for Britain the colonial, racist situation in our country would not be there.

After British colonialism, South Africa was never decolonised. Britain actually handed over power to the white racist settlers, and not to the indigenous colonised black South Africans. Today the uniqueness of South African racist colonialism lies in the fact that the colonisers and the colonised African people occupy the same territory and are integrated into the same economy. In all other aspects it conforms to the typical characteristics of classical colonialism: the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of colour and race, racial separation in all spheres of life, the wide gap of living standards between blacks and whites; suppression of national and proletarian organisations among the oppressed, and a ruthless police state employing fascist methods against its political opponents. The people's organisation the African National Congress, the main liberation force, founded 70 years ago, was organised to fight against this and since that time it has undergone many changes which resulted in the realisation that we were forced to resort to armed struggle against the oppressive white racist regime.

Our Party's relationship with the ANC is based on mutual trust, reciprocity, comradeship in battle and a common strategy for national liberation. Our unity of aims and methods of struggle are a rare instance of positive alignment between the forces of class struggle and national liberation.

### **Formation of the Communist Party**

The sixty years of fighting and struggle of our Party rest on the clear determination of our people to free themselves from racism, colonialism, oppression and exploitation. Our roots go back to the early days of industrialisation in South Africa. From then onwards, and especially after the Anglo-Boer War, the Party established itself from such groups as the social democrats and the South African Labour Party, which was formed

to contest elections in 1910, the year of the formation of the Union of South Africa. The true socialists from the Labour Party of that time broke away and formed the anti-War League of 1914, which later resulted in the formation of our Party on the 30th of July, sixty years ago.

We would like to place on record our admiration of the revolutionary stand taken by these pioneers of scientific socialism, who also joined hands with the revolutionaries in other countries against the imperialist war. This history of our pioneers is well reflected in the International Socialist League and other International Socialist Organisations. Ours was the first Marxist-Leninist Party in Africa. At that time and now the Party has had to grapple with the complexities of the national liberation struggle in our country. Our role in the present phase of national liberation in our country is to identify ourselves with the struggle waged by our people led by the African National Congress, for a National Democratic Revolution. On these questions, our Party has always taken a clear stand.

Comrades, our policy is based on a long association with the ANC, which reflects our Party's attitude towards national liberation. We are clear about the priorities of our struggle, first National Democratic Revolution and then an advance towards socialism.

The Freedom Charter, our people's document and programme of the ANC, sets out a scheme for the desired democratic liberated South Africa. We know full well that the racist regime in 1956 shouted "Treason" when this programme was declared and it imprisoned 156 leaders of the liberation movement. This document is now widely accepted as the people's vision of a free South African society. As you know the Charter emphasises People's Power, it is against all forms of discrimination, it guarantees equal rights, freedom of movement, residence, occupation and religious affiliation.

Because our people, the ANC and our Party are intensifying the struggle, the enemy and certain circles in the imperialist camp are deliberately spreading distortions about the goals of our liberation movement.

Our Party, faithful to proletarian internationalism, appreciates and welcomes the support given to our fighting people by the socialist community and progressive forces the world over.

We express our full solidarity with the Afghanistan People's Democratic Party and the people of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in their determined and all-out efforts to defend the gains of the April 1978 Revolution. We condemn the imperialists who have refused to leave the

Afghan people to settle their own affairs and have strained every nerve to turn the clock back. We fully understand and support the timely assistance of the Soviet Union, and call upon progressive forces throughout the world to consolidate the ranks of the anti-imperialist forces.

We condemn the imperialist manoeuvres to reverse the gains of socialism in Poland by propping up counter-revolutionaries. Our Party fully supports the fight of the Polish Workers' Party to defend socialism.

We also condemn the Israeli aggression, backed by the USA, against Lebanon and the destabilisation of peace in the Middle East. We fully support the struggle of the Palestinian people, led by the PLO, against Zionism.

### **U.S. Conspiracy**

We condemn in absolute terms the conspiracy between the Reagan administration and racist, fascist South Africa. This conspiracy is aimed against the struggling people of South Africa, the oppressed people of Namibia, the front-line states and indeed, the whole independent African Continent. The Reagan administration policy towards South Africa is aimed at securing and protecting imperialism, capitalist interests in Southern Africa, and further exploiting and plundering the human and material resources of this region.

The struggle of our people is thus a struggle against racism, colonialism, imperialist exploitation and oppression, for liberation, human dignity and peace.

Sixty fighting years of our Party have meant dedication to the national goals of liberation as reflected in the Freedom Charter, the document of the people of South Africa. It has meant the intensification of the liberation struggle on all fronts. It has meant the consistent struggle for the unity of the international communist movement.

Dear Comrades,

In the course of this long struggle covering the sixty years of our lives, the struggle has been bitter. It has resulted in the enemy capturing some of our courageous revolutionaries. The names of comrades Johnson Lubisi, Naphtali Manana, Petrus Mashigo are on the enemy's hangman's list; they are awaiting execution. In the course of the raid on our houses earlier this year the enemy killed and captured some of our leading cadres in Matola; from this rostrum, our Party and our people call upon all the working peoples of the world to demand the release and return of our people. As we

are here commemorating, some of the leading members of our Party, like Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada and others are languishing in the enemy's prisons. We therefore call for their immediate release and the release of all political prisoners.

We can all rest assured that the South African Communist Party will never fail in its contribution towards the total liberation of our oppressed people,

**LONG LIVE THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY!  
LONG LIVE THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS!  
LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!  
LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM, PEACE AND  
SOCIALISM!  
FORWARD TO A PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT!**

## **OLIVER TAMBO**

Let me commence by thanking you, Comrade Chairman, and the South African Communist Party for inviting the African National Congress to be a party to this occasion and in particular, for the opportunity of sharing a platform with the Communist Party of Great Britain, represented here by the General Secretary Gordon McLennan and with the Communist Party of Ireland, represented by Comrade Michael O'Riordan.

These are our allies: they are part of the international movement of solidarity which gives us strength and confidence in the certainty of our victory. These parties, together with other communist and workers' parties around the world, are parties which we can always appeal to for solidarity in the conviction that they will respond.

It is a great pleasure for us, a great honour to participate with them on an occasion of great significance in our struggle in South Africa.

You Comrade Chairman and Comrade General Secretary of the SACP have shared hundreds of platforms together in our lifetime in South Africa and in many parts of the world outside our country. Today, we share a platform on an occasion which takes our reflections back across a span of

60 years, in which we can recall great names that have ensured that our struggle shall continue and is continuing today. . . names that shall always be honoured in our history.

We share this platform in another significant context, for me in particular. I have the great pleasure today of repeating on behalf of the African National Congress and our people in general, our congratulations to Comrade Moses Mabhida on his election some while ago to the position of General Secretary of the SACP.

We utter these congratulations with a sense of confidence, knowing his background, knowing his role in our struggle especially in the discharge of his tasks in the ANC, his absolute loyalty and his understanding — profound understanding — of the character of the South African situation and its problems. Confidence, because he succeeds one of the great giants of our struggle in the position of General Secretary of the SACP — Moses Kotane: whose contribution alone to the building up of the forces that can resist fascist onslaught on any scale is acknowledged by all who have worked with him, as I have, — by all who have read about him.

We are confident that you Comrade Moses, will prove yourself a worthy successor, and perhaps in the fullness of time we shall likewise name you among the giants of our struggle.

Comrade Chairman, I should like to pay a special tribute to you today. It is 60 years since the SACP was formed. It is several decades since you have been involved in the front ranks of our struggle, inspiring everyone around you, inspiring younger generations : first among the volunteers in situations that threaten arrest, torture, imprisonment; never missing where there is struggle to be waged. You were awarded the title Isitwalandwe by our nation not as a formality but in recognition of your services. This was more than 25 years ago. Your presence here, and chairmanship of this particular meeting enables us to recall with great clarity the various revolutionaries with whom you associated in your period of service to our people and our country.

### **Greetings and Good Wishes**

On this the 60th anniversary of the founding of the South African Communist Party, I bring the greetings and felicitations of the NEC of the African National Congress, and the good wishes of all those engaged in the liberation struggle and all the oppressed in South Africa.

This year also marks the 25th Anniversary of the women's great march to Pretoria — the march of our gallant women. It is the year that carries

with it the 20th Anniversary of the founding of Umkhonto we Sizwe. It is the Year of the Youth of our country. We hail the SACP in the name of these contingents of our army of liberation which together with the SACP comprise a fighting alliance that represents the power of the South African revolution in the making.

We salute the SACP, particularly in the name of the combatants who have fallen in the course of our struggle as well as on behalf of the national leaders and militants presently held in the enemy's prisons.

We congratulate the SACP on this occasion particularly for the dedication and commitment of its leaders and cadres that has ensured its survival these 60 years, despite intensive repression and desperate attempts to destroy it.

We applaud your achievements, for the SACP has not only survived, but is today stronger, and increasingly makes more significant contributions to the liberation struggle of our people.

The ANC speaks here today, not so much as a guest invited to address a foreign organisation. Rather we speak *of* and *to* our own. For it is a matter of record that for much of its history, the SACP has been an integral part of the struggle of the African people against oppression and exploitation in South Africa. We can all bear witness that in the context of the struggle against colonial structures, racism, and the struggle for power by the people, the SACP has been fighting with the oppressed and exploited.

Notwithstanding that it has had to concentrate on thwarting the efforts to destroy it, cadres of the SACP have always been ready to face the enemy in the field. Because they have stood and fought in the front ranks, they have been amongst those who have suffered the worst brutalities of the enemy, and some of the best cadres have sacrificed their lives.

And so, your achievements are the achievements of the liberation struggle. Your heroes are ours. Your victories, those of all the oppressed.

The relationship between the ANC and the SACP is not an accident of history, nor is it a natural and inevitable development. For, as we can see, similar relationships have not emerged in the course of liberation struggles in other parts of Africa.

To be true to history, we must concede that there have been difficulties as well as triumphs along our path, as, traversing many decades, our two organisations have converged towards a shared strategy of struggle. Ours is not merely a paper alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement by leaders. Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle.

**We have built it out of our separate and common experiences. It has been nurtured by our endeavours to counter the total offensive mounted by the National Party in particular against all opposition and against the very concept of democracy. It has been strengthened through resistance to the vicious onslaught against both the ANC and the SACP by the Pretoria regime; it has been fertilised by the blood of countless heroes, many of them unnamed and unsung. It has been reinforced by a common determination to destroy the enemy and by our shared belief in the certainty of victory.**

**This process of building the unity of all progressive and democratic forces in South Africa through united and unified action received a particularly powerful impetus from the outstanding leadership of Isitwalandwe Chief Albert J. Luthuli as President General of the ANC. The process was assisted and supported by the tried and tested leadership of such stalwart revolutionaries as Isitwalandwe Yusuf Dadoo and Isitwalandwe the late Moses Kotane, revolutionaries of the stature of J.B. Marks and Bram Fischer.**

### **Common Objectives**

**Today the ANC and SACP have common objectives in the eradication of the oppressive and exploitative system that prevails in our country: the seizure of power and the exercise of their right of self-determination by all the people of South Africa. We share a strategic perspective of the task that lies ahead.**

**Our organisations have been able to agree on fundamental strategies and tactical positions, whilst retaining our separate identities. For though we are united in struggle, as you have already pointed out Comrade Chairman, we are not the same. Our history has shown that we are a powerful force because our organisations are mutually reinforcing.**

**It is often claimed by our detractors that the ANC's association with the SACP means that the ANC is being influenced by the SACP. That is not our experience. Our experience is that the two influence each other. The ANC is quite capable of influencing, and is liable to be influenced by others. There has been the evolution of strategy which reflects this two-way process.**

**In fact the ANC was quite within its right to tell the SACP that we are sorry we cannot release Comrade Moses Mabhida from his tasks in the ANC – find another comrade to be General Secerary. Yet we agreed he would make a good General Secretary for the SACP. He was not grabbed.**

This kind of relationship constitutes a feature of the South African liberation movement, a revolutionary movement, a feature of the SACP which helps to reinforce the alliance and to make it work as it is working. It is a tribute to the leadership of the SACP.

We are therefore talking of an alliance from which, in the final analysis, the struggle of the people of South Africa for a new society and a new social system has benefitted greatly.

Within our revolutionary alliance each organisation has a distinct and vital role to play. A correct understanding of these roles, and respect for their boundaries has ensured the survival and consolidation of our cooperation and unity.

As stated in its programme, the SACP unreservedly supports and participates in the struggle for national liberation led by the ANC, in alliance with the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of Trade Unions, the Coloured People's Congress and other patriotic groups of democrats, women, peasants and youth.

The strategy of the African National Congress sees the main content of the South African revolution as the liberation of the largest and most oppressed group: namely the Black population.

And by Black I do not mean what our enemies have elected to designate as Black — namely just the Africans. By Black, we mean all the oppressed, those who were formerly called Non-whites and whom we prefer to call Black.

Of course it does not suit the enemy to club all the oppressed and exploited together. It is better for the enemy that this vast majority be split up into what they call Blacks and then Indians and Coloureds. That fits their strategy — serves the interests of their strategy best. But I am talking about the oppressed population as the Blacks.

Whilst concerned to draw in, and unify, all progressive and democratic forces in the country, including those amongst the whites, our priority remains the maximum mobilisation of those who are the dispossessed, the exploited and the racially oppressed.

That is only a priority, for we recognise that victory requires that we build up maximum unity of the forces for progress. Indeed we need to break up this white racist clique, win friends from among the ruling class and isolate the fascists. Then a united people of South Africa can deliver the final blow, crush the colonialist structures and move to a new South Africa. . .



## **International Solidarity**

The ANC has received and continues to receive international support and solidarity from a variety of sources. We must today acknowledge especially, with appreciation, the very significant support we receive from the socialist countries. You have mentioned many of these countries — all of them without exception have given freely by way of supporting our struggle and meeting our demands.

We appreciate in particular that they and some African countries have not hesitated to deliver weapons to peoples fighting for their liberation. The enemy likes to squeal that we have been fighting with either Soviet made weapons, or communist made weapons. It does not matter what weapons they are. But we are glad to have them, and shall continue to use them if they are effective — and they are.

This support has been given during the liberation struggles in southern Africa and the rest of Africa, and has been extended to the independent states that have been forced to defend their own victories.

On an occasion when we are observing the 60th. anniversary of the SACP, we are bound to give some thought to struggles, many of which have arisen since the SACP was established. Today, in the anti-imperialist struggle, we have won new allies like the struggling people of Palestine. We have thrown up new enemies of peoples, like those who murder civilians in Beirut. We have seen the unutterable brutalities of the junta in El Salvador — the ruling fascists in Guatemala.

We have seen how the US has sought its allies among these enemies of freedom and democracy and progress. And we send out on this South African day, our greetings, our solidarity and our support to those whose struggles place them in the same trench that we occupy.

We greet Polisario and Fretelin.

But finally, let us once again greet our South African Communist Party.

**LONG LIVE THE SACP!**

**LONG LIVE THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE ANC AND SACP!**

**LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF ALL PROGRESSIVE AND  
DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN OUR COUNTRY AND IN THE REST OF  
THE WORLD!**

# **THE TWO PILLARS OF OUR STRUGGLE**

## **Reflections on the Relationship between the ANC and SACP**

**by Sol Dubula**

Sixty years have now passed since the pioneers of South African communism met in Cape Town on July 30th 1921, and made their inaugural appeal "to all South African workers, organised and unorganised, white and black, to join in promoting the overthrow of the capitalist system, the outlawry of the capitalist class, and the establishment of a commonwealth of workers throughout the world".

This first Manifesto of the Communist Party of South Africa rang out with the language of militancy and revolt. It pledged that the newly-formed Party would henceforth act as the "revolutionary vanguard of the Labour Army of South Africa" and spread the "communist gospel" amongst the workers. It called for an end to "futile reformism" and for a "great push" by the industrial masses of all races in alliance with the rural toilers, to deliver a "knockout blow" to the system.

No other political organisation in our country, or indeed in the whole continent, had yet spoken with such uncompromising revolutionary zeal. It was here, in our land, that the first seed of Marxism-Leninism was sown in Africa.

Yet, looking back on this document with the benefit of hindsight there are some puzzling silences. Nothing is said of the foreign conquest, the theft of land, the racist monopoly of the major means of production, state power, and political rights, which provide and protect the varying degrees of social and economic privilege which accrue to all with a white skin, to whatever class they belong. In short, the heavy weight of national oppression which every black, be he worker or not, carries like a millstone around his neck, seems to be missing from the scale of struggle.

But it would be ahistorical to explain these omissions by the simplistic charge that these early communists were completely blind to the reality around them, or that, being aware of this reality, they were influenced solely by their class origins in the relatively privileged aristocracy of white labour.

Judged by the level of the political forces of the day, the manifesto soars to unprecedented heights, it constitutes an unconditional break with the reformist and opportunistic politics of the white labour movement. The manifesto calls for mobilisation against "the accepted skiet-skiet Native policy" and pledges support for "any genuine revolt of the masses against tyranny". It looks forward to a South Africa in which "none shall be master and none servant." Above all, it gives top priority to raising the consciousness of "cheap docile labour" (black) and regards its entry into the working class movement as "the most deadly blow South Africa can deal to world capitalism". This was certainly not the language of the sell-out labour leaders of the time; it was already clearly the language of the communist revolutionary. But it was the language of the communist revolutionary situated in a very specific moment of time.

### **The Historical Background**

We must remember that South African communists were not alone in believing that, in the wake of October 1917, the world socialist revolution was imminent. In South Africa, the white worker, comparatively well organised and making up the bulk of the "industrial masses", had not yet won his seat at the ruler's table and still expressed a degree of class hostility towards capitalism. The newly-emerging black proletariat was small in number and lacked effective industrial organisation. Faced with what turned out to be a utopian perspective of a socialist breakthrough in South Africa (a breakthrough which Marxism told them could only be based on the industrial working class), these pioneers of South African communism nourished the forlorn hope that there still remained sufficient

revolutionary potential in the white working class to deliver a "knockout blow" to the capitalist system.'

How then did they bridge the gap between the two fundamental realities of the South African social structure — class exploitation and national oppression? Inspired by the Bolshevik example and by the hopes of a spreading world socialist revolution, they believed that the solution of the national question in South Africa would follow the seizure of worker's power which would provide the base from which to proceed to free South Africa's oppressed national groups. After all, was it not true that the Bolshevik victory was already on the way to transforming the Tsarist "prison-house of nations" into a community of free peoples?

To complete the picture as it presented itself to a 1921 Marxist revolutionary, we must also recall the character and level of the national movement of the period. The formation of the African National Congress nine years earlier — the first national movement of Africans on our continent — was an event of great revolutionary significance. But, as with the early communists, the new national movement remained, for some time, a hostage of other objective limitations.

By the early 20's, the ANC's leadership was still dominated by a small group of black intellectuals and traditional tribal leaders. The aim it had set itself of creating a single African (as opposed to tribal) consciousness, was yet some distance from being fulfilled. Examined in the light of the present-day revolutionary militancy of the ANC, its early approach to struggle had many of the qualities of a cap-in-hand nationalism. It stood for the encouragement of "a spirit of loyalty to the British crown and all lawful authority" and pledged "to bring about better understanding between the white and black inhabitants". Some of its leaders went as far as to acknowledge "the superiority of the white race". Even as late as 1923 the ANC continued to endorse the Rhodes white-supremacist formula of "equal rights for all civilised men". In 1928, its House of Chiefs resolved against cooperation with the Communist Party, swayed by the argument that "the Tsar was a great man in his country, of royal blood like us chiefs, and where is he now!"

It is against this background that the communists were tempted to dismiss the ANC as a "bourgeois Congress". The formative limitations of the national movement were thus an additional factor which helped to blind socialist thinkers to the revolutionary potential of black nationalism and stood in the way of the correct elaboration of the key question of the South African revolution — the relationship

between class and national struggle.

These then were the imperfect beginnings of the Communist Party and the ANC; bodies which were fathered by the two most important determinants in South Africa's socio-economic structure — class exploitation and national oppression — and which reflected the two complementary streams of revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary organisation.

It is necessary to study the early period, not as a mere historical exercise but because the history of the struggle in the last sixty years and, indeed, the coming struggle for people's power, revolves around the very questions which posed themselves from the first day in the life of the Party. It is these questions which, throughout the whole period, continued to surface in one form or another; they had, and continue to have, a most direct bearing on the movement's ideological formation and, even more importantly, on its revolutionary practice.

### **Ideological Advance**

The Party began to swing away from its exclusive "class against class" position within a short time of its formation. The early shift of emphasis towards African liberation rapidly reflected itself in the changed composition of the membership. By 1928 it was no longer an all-white affair and its African membership made up 90% of the total. Influenced by its own experience and by Comintern discussions and directives, the Party was, in 1928, decades ahead of any other organisation on the continent of Africa in advancing the concept of black majority rule under the slogan of an "independent Native Republic" as a stage towards the overthrow of capitalism. But it was to take many more years before the strategic implications of the relationship between class and national struggle were to be more adequately synthesised in the form of the 1962 Programme of the South African Communist Party (The Road to South African Freedom) adopted at the Party's sixth underground Conference in Johannesburg.

The ANC also travelled a long road of internal debate and contradiction before it reached its present level of revolutionary nationalism. One of the major catalysts of the ideological leap forward was the 1948 crop of militants in the ANC Youth League led by men like Tambo, Sisulu and Mandela, and supported by leading communists in the ANC leadership like Kotane, Marks and Mofutsanyana. In the Indian Congress too the old moderate leadership was ousted and men like Dadoo not only succeeded in

radicalising the politics of resistance amongst the Indian community, but also helped set the scene for the growing all-black unity which characterised the rousing mass struggles from the early 50's onwards.

In programmatic form, all these advances had the fullest expression at the 1969 Morogoro Conference which adopted the ANC's Strategy and Tactics — a document which goes further than any other mass national movement has gone in the linking of social and national liberation and in highlighting the dominant role of the black working people in the struggle for national liberation.

It was natural that, despite earlier contradictions and confrontations, the maturing of the ideological content of both the national and working class movements (a process which has its basic roots in changing socio-economic conditions which cannot be elaborated here) should have resulted in a growing collaboration between them; a collaboration which, amongst other things, led to the 1961 joint decision by the Party and the ANC to create Umkhonto We Sizwe, the armed wing of the liberation movement. Today the ANC and the SACP are embraced in the common front of liberation. In the words of the ANC spokesman at the 1969 joint meeting of representatives of the two leaderships, these organisations constitute "the two leading pillars of our struggle"

### **Unity Grows**

The evolution of this collaboration has a history of its own which cannot be dealt with in any detail here. But a few general observations are in order. As was emphasised in the 1970 report to the augmented meeting of our Central Committee, the relationship could not be described in the form of any rigid constitutional formula or structure. Externally, until 1969, it did not even express itself in joint meetings and formal agreements. What made this collaboration of the special type possible, especially in the post-Rivonia period?

In the first place, by then no significant differences existed between the two organisations on the immediate content, strategy and tactics of the South African revolution. This was in a large measure the result of the loyal devotion and hard work of so many communists who were also members of the national organisations. None of them hid their identities either as communists or as ANC cadres. Those who functioned at both levels were not doing so to "capture" either organisation for the other, but to achieve a maximum political impact for our common immediate aims. The views, mood and argument of ANC leaders influenced the form-

ulation of Party policy, and the process also worked the other way about.

At the 1969 Joint Meeting the main Party spokesman, referring to the 1961 decision of both leaderships at home to chart the new way of armed struggle, said:

"In this historic step — as in many others — we have worked together as intimates, as brothers and as equals. This is not surprising for nothing separates us from the immediate and foremost tasks — the destruction of white domination and the winning of the national democratic revolution whose main content is the liberation of the African people. . .

"Only the vulgar or those who wish to make mischief see in our collaboration a white-anting process. They cannot understand how two political parties can work so closely together without stabbing each other in the back. Above all they cannot grasp — as I think we all do — that if either organisation were to disappear or be weakened, the struggle would be all the poorer for it.

"Why so? It is because the national struggle in our conditions cries out for the organised participation of the working class and its class political organ — the Party. And equally, the struggle for socialism cries out for a vigorous and strong national movement of the African people which heads the liberation front. . .

"Experience has proved over and over again that in our revolution, collaboration between our two bodies has raised the level of the struggle and has been a mutually reinforcing influence. Both organisations are necessary and both serve the struggle otherwise neither should be perpetuated for the sake of mere tradition or emotion".

These sentiments remain as valid today as they have ever been. Yet, the very fact that our country can boast of "two leading pillars of our struggle" which have so little which separates them in relation to the immediate strategy and tactics of the South African Revolution, continues to arouse discussion on their respective roles both as independent organs and as part of the liberation alliance.

Amongst the questions which merit discussion are: How does the Party exercise its role as the vanguard of the working class in a situation in which it has accepted the leading role of the ANC in the liberation front? Given that every revolution has its own strategic and tactical stages, how do we view the present connection between the struggle for liberation and for socialism? What, in other words, is the relationship between the national and class struggle in present conditions? What role can the Party play in safeguarding the ideology of our revolution and protecting it against petty-bourgeois and backward nationalist tendencies?

## **General Approach of SACP**

Before posing the questions in more detail, it is essential that they be situated in the Party's overall approach to the relationship between the present phase of our revolutionary process and the perspective of a socialist South Africa. This approach can be summarised as follows:

a) The *strategic aim* of our Party is to destroy the system of capitalist exploitation in South Africa and to replace it with a Socialist system in which the ownership of the means of production will be socialised and the whole economy organised to serve the interests of all the people. Such a society can only be achieved if political power is placed firmly in the hands of the working class in town and countryside in alliance with the poor peasantry.

b) The *immediate aim* of the Party is to win the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution, more particularly to win national liberation for all the black oppressed and to destroy the economic and political power of the existing ruling class. At the same time it is the duty of our Party to spread its ideology of Marxism-Leninism, to underline unceasingly the connection between true national liberation and the building of a socialist society, to organise the working class to play a leading role in the National Democratic Revolution, and to attract the most advanced elements, especially from the working class, to the ranks of the Party.

c) The achievement of the aims of the National Democratic Revolution demands a broad alliance of all classes and strata, especially amongst the racially oppressed, who can be mobilised in support of these aims. Although all classes amongst the black oppressed have an interest in ending national oppression, they do not share the same goals of the fundamental social transformation of a liberated South Africa. The inevitable victory of the national liberation movement can only be truly meaningful and guaranteed if the capitalist system of exploitation, which is the true foundation and purpose of racist oppression, is destroyed. For this reason the Party believes that within the broad alliance for national liberation the working class must be the leading revolutionary force. *This means that the Party, together with other forward looking forces, must ensure that the end result of the present phase of our struggle is the winning of People's Power and the creation of a state in which the working class in town and countryside in alliance with the poor peasants will be the leading force.*

d) In organisational terms the Liberation Alliance is expressed through the liberation front headed by the African National Congress. The ANC is



a broad mass national movement which attracts to its ranks all Africans and other revolutionaries, whatever their class origins, who accept the programme and are prepared to fight against the racist regime by all means, including armed struggle. The Strategy and Tactics of the ANC also assigns a special role to the working people in the national struggle. But the ANC correctly continues to retain its character as a broad national movement which has room in it for cadres with differing ideological beliefs.

The above is only a very general summary of the Party's ideological perspectives which are spelt out in greater detail in the Programme and many other basic documents, a selection of which is contained in the book "SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNISTS SPEAK 1915-1980" published on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary.

Against the background of these perspectives and the changing conditions of struggle, we can proceed to reflect on the questions raised above.

### **The Vanguard role of the Party**

Marxism-Leninism teaches that the Party of the working class has the leading role in the struggle for the elimination of the exploitation of man by man and the building of a socialist society which will eventually be transformed into a communist society. Of all classes in our society, it is the proletariat which has nothing to lose and everything to gain by the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation. In addition, the role which the proletariat plays in the relations of production makes it best suited politically and organisationally to carry out this historic mission. It can only carry out this mission if it is organised and guided by its political vanguard — the Communist Party.

But a party does not earn the title of vanguard of the working class merely by proclaiming it. Guided by a correct application of Marxism-Leninism it achieves this position by the degree to which it organises the class which it represents, the calibre of its day-to-day leadership, and its devotion to the revolutionary cause. The need to give correct guidance to the revolutionary cause does not imply that the party must insist on projecting itself as the public "leader" of every step in the unfolding of the conflict.

*We must not confuse form with substance. We must be on our guard not to mix up the role of the Party as the vanguard of the working class and its role as a representative of this class in specific alliances of class forces which*

*are required at various stages of the struggle.* The question of whether it is correct for the Party to strive to place itself exclusively at the head of the different stages of the revolutionary upsurge depends upon the conditions of a particular struggle at each of these stages and the precise role of the class which it represents. In specific conditions, to attempt to do so may not advance but rather retard the Party's true exercise of its role as a vanguard of the working class. This most advanced class of our epoch can rarely, if ever, bring about a revolutionary transformation on its own. It works at all times with social forces.

Both the Party's Programme and the ANC's Strategy and Tactics accept that, within the alliance of class forces which is demanded by the present stage of our revolution, the workers have a special place as the most consistently revolutionary force. But this is not the same as saying that the working class through its political vanguard must demand a monopoly of control of the revolutionary alliance or organisational supremacy in the decision-making bodies which make up the alliance.

In the case of our situation the problem can be posed in another way: Are we doing violence to the vanguard principle when we talk in our Programme of the ANC leading the liberation alliance? Is not this formulation inconsistent with the formulation in the very same Programme that "the central and immediate task of the Communist Party is to lead the fight for the national liberation of the non-white people and for the victory of the democratic revolution"?

Not at all! If correct leadership of the democratic revolution requires the strengthening of the national movement as the major mass organisational force, then this is precisely the way in which a party exercises its leading and vanguard role in the real (and not vulgar) sense of the term. This is the way in which Vietnamese Communists exercised their vanguard role in relation to the FLN during the liberation struggle, and it is also the way in which the early Cuban Communists related to Fidel Castro's July the 26th Movement. As long as the party does not lose its independence and its separate identity as a political vanguard of the working class, its projection of the ANC as the body leading the alliance of class forces in our struggle is in no way inconsistent with the Party's role as a vanguard organisation of the working class.

To maintain the Party's independence means that it must be seen, especially by the working people, to be acting as an effective advance guard which is visibly a part of them. Of course, one of its primary tasks is to spread the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and, more particularly, an

understanding of the relationship of the national struggle and the struggle for socialism. But we would cease to be a Party in the real meaning of the term if we restricted ourselves to general education about some future millenium. It is our duty to engage in public activities in the Party's name on issues affecting the people, and especially the working class, in their daily lives. This in no way undermines the ANC's role as the accepted public head and key spokesman on behalf of the liberation front. The Party's public interventions are not competitive but reinforce the common approach of the alliance.

In any case, the Party's mobilising propaganda will have a special content which the ANC's intervention should not and cannot have. There is no daily problem facing the working people, whether in town or countryside, which cannot be linked to the ravages of capitalism; and it is only our Party which can present this connection in an undiluted way. This is not to deny that there are certain areas of national campaigning which can more appropriately be initiated and pursued by the ANC as the head of the Liberation Alliance. But even here, supporting activity by the other independent sectors of the Alliance — whether it be the South African Congress of Trade Unions or the Party — is not out of place.

### **The Stages of our Revolution**

The 1962 Programme of the SACP states that "the *immediate* and imperative interests of all sections of the South African people demand the carrying out of a . . . National Democratic Revolution which will overthrow the colonialist state of white supremacy and establish an independent state of national democracy in South Africa. . . The main content of this revolution is the national liberation of the African people". The Party sees the achievement of these democratic aims as laying "the indispensable basis for the advance of our country. . . to a socialist and communist future".

*There are two ways of reading these formulations and the distinction between them has a crucial bearing on the role of a party of the working class and its relationship to the national movement.*

The one interpretation would argue that the South African revolution can be divided into two distinct and compartmentalised stages; the aims of the first stage are to create a kind of non-racist bourgeois democracy, and it is only when this is achieved that the movement will turn its thought to the struggle for a socialist order, i.e. to the second stage of the revolution. It is this dualistic approach which has been attributed to the Party by a

number of left-wing critics who allege that it has thereby abandoned its role as the working class vanguard and has moved away from the politics of class struggle in favour of a form of so-called bourgeois nationalism. If this interpretation is correct, it would indeed put in doubt the very need for a separate working class party at this *stage*; at best, such a party would have to maintain itself in a sort of cocoon ready to emerge when the struggle for socialism is on the agenda.

There may have been moments in the life of the Party and the occasional loose formulation which suggest a lack of precision in the understanding of the relationship between the struggle for national and social emancipation. But reading the Programme as a whole and examining the way it has been applied in the revolutionary practices of the Party, there can be no doubt that this portrayal of the Party's perspectives is a distortion of its true position.

As outlined earlier, the Party has, in the process of time, moved away from the approach contained in its first Manifesto in which the national factor is so completely underplayed that it resulted in a virtual dismissal of any significant role for a mass national movement in the unfolding of our revolution. But this extreme of a one-stage revolution based on the slogan of "class against class" has not been replaced by the opposite, equally mechanical, extreme of two distinct stages which are totally sealed off from one another.

### **What is meant by "Stages"?**

Our formulations do, of course, refer to "stages of the struggle", "stages of the revolution", etc. What do these phases signify? They signify what every revolutionary practitioner experiences, which is that every political struggle has specific phases and stages which determine the application of strategy and tactics at any given moment of time. But there is no Chinese Wall between these stages; they flow from and into one another, and the dominant ingredients of later stages must already have begun to mature within the womb of the earlier stage. This is what Marxist dialectics teach us.

Our revolution is one continuing process. Its immediate emphasis and the chief mobilising factor is black liberation. But this immediate objective has strategic relevance in the struggle for social as well as national emancipation. The ANC's Strategy and Tactics correctly states that the national character of the immediate struggle must dominate its approach. But it goes on to say that:

"It is a national struggle which is taking place in a different era and in a different context from those which characterised the early struggles against colonialism. . . in a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond mere formal political control and encompass the elements which make such control meaningful – economic emancipation. It is also happening in a new kind of South Africa; in which there is a large and well-developed working class whose consciousness and independent expressions of the working people – their political organs and trade unions – are very much part of the liberation front. Thus our nationalism must not be confused with the chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass. . ."

Some commentators have described the immediate emphasis on the black liberation in our revolution as a bourgeois-democratic deviation which encourages the working class party to drag at the tail of the national movement. In its classical meaning the term "bourgeois-democratic" suggests a struggle which is led by the bourgeoisie and is primarily in their class interest, but in which the working people also have a stake since it introduces a degree of political "freedom" and destroys feudal and other pre-capitalist modes of production. There is thus the tendency to indiscriminately characterise all struggles which concentrate on democracy and against national oppression as essentially bourgeois-democratic.

The term "bourgeois-democratic" in the context of our own struggle to achieve the aims of the national democratic revolution is misleading and there is good reason why it does not appear in the Party's Programme. But if we do choose to use it merely to describe the immediate concentration on the struggle for democratic aims, then we would do well to remember Lenin's words that, even in a bourgeois revolution, the bourgeoisie is not necessarily the "chief factor" (*Agrarian Programme of the R.S.D.P.*, page 125) and, even more in point in relation to our present discussion:

"We all counterpose bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution; we all insist on the absolute necessity of strictly distinguishing between them; however, can it be denied that in the course of history individual particular elements of the two revolutions become interwoven?"

(*Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, page 82)

## **The Continuing Revolution**

Lenin was describing a situation in pre-October Russia in which the liberal bourgeoisie constituted an important sector of the struggle against the Tsarist autocracy. In this day of our struggle in South Africa it would be wrong to attribute this role to our Oppenheimers and others who form a vital bastion of the very racist autocracy. But the relevance of Lenin's remarks to our discussion remains of great force in other respects. For, nowhere more than in South Africa is the struggle for political democracy and against national domination so interwoven with the struggle for eventual social emancipation. As stated by Zanzolo (*The African Communist* First Quarter 1963 page 22), "under South African conditions the national democratic revolution has great prospects of proceeding at once to socialist solutions". The reasons for this assertion are spelt out by Slovo (*South Africa — No Middle Road*, page 140):

"... No significant national demand can be successfully won without the destruction of the existing capitalist structure. It is precisely because in South Africa capitalist production relations are the foundation of national repression that the national struggle itself has an objective coincidence with the elimination of all forms of exploitation.

"The elimination of national inequality, if it is to be more than a mere gesture, involves a *complete* change of the way in which the country's wealth is appropriated. . . . If every racist statute were to be repealed tomorrow, leaving the economic status quo undisturbed, white domination in its most essential aspect would remain. National liberation, in its true sense, must therefore imply the expropriation of the owners of the means of production (monopolised by a bourgeoisie drawn from the white group) and the complete destruction of the state which serves them. There can be no halfway house unless the national struggle is stopped in its tracks and is satisfied with the cooption of a small black elite into the presently forbidden areas of economic and political power."

This assertion of what true liberation in our country means does not, of course, imply that the revolution will inevitably move in the direction indicated. It merely suggests that there is an objective basis for such an outcome. Whether or not it happens in practice depends on many other considerations, the most important of which is the role played by the working class in the alliance of class forces during the first stage of the continuing revolution.

The high level of capitalist development in South Africa has given birth to a distinctive form of class stratification not only in the enemy camp but also amongst the black oppressed. The economic foundations for the emergence of petty-bourgeois nationalism are already solid and are being made more so as the enemy proceeds with its deliberate policy of

stimulating the creation of the bigger black middle strata with a stake in the periphery of the capitalist system. The political representatives of such tendencies have, in the past, included such groups as the PAC, the "Group of 8", sections of the "Black Consciousness Movement", some Bantustan leaders, etc. And, as the national liberation struggle approaches its climax, we must expect a stronger urge from the non-working class black forces to stop the revolution in its tracks and to opt for a bourgeois solution.

The historically-evolved revolutionary nationalism of the ANC is, of course, a major obstacle to the ascendancy of such tendencies. Particularly in recent years the ANC has demonstrated its capacity to combat them within its ranks. The Party as an independent force, and individual Communists who also became leaders of the ANC, have undoubtedly contributed to this process. Today the ANC's Strategy and Tactics talks of "economic emancipation" as a key element in its understanding of what true national liberation means; of a "speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation"; of a perspective which "is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose militancy and political consciousness as a revolutionary class constitutes a distinct and reinforcing layer of our liberation".

It is this narrowing of the ideological gap between the ANC and the SACP in relation to the immediate perspective of our revolution which arouses discussion on the respective roles of both organisations in the area of public mobilisation. But the fact that the ANC has recognised the primary role of the working class in the coming social conflicts does not mean that it is, or should become, a vanguard party of the working class.

### **Distinct and Complementary Roles**

The ANC remains a mass national movement. It is not an organisation which is guided by, and propagates, the integrated ideology of Marxism-Leninism. It correctly welcomes within its ranks all liberation fighters, whatever their class affiliation, who support its revolutionary nationalism. Whilst its policy for the future, as set out in the Freedom Charter, is not inconsistent with an advance towards socialism in the post-liberation period, the ANC does not and should not demand a commitment to a socialist South Africa as a pre-condition of membership. It must clearly retain its character as the mass organisational instrument of all social

forces who can be won over to fight "the first battle".

Conversely, the Party is not a mass movement; it represents the aspirations of a single class — the proletariat. This class not only participates in the struggle as part of the alliance which is represented by the national movement, but also fights as an independent class contingent with aims which are not in conflict with the democratic revolution but go beyond it. As part of the alliance it cannot demand that all other classes amongst the black oppressed submit to its Marxist-Leninist ideology and its organisational hegemony.

At the same time the Party must guard its character as an independent vanguard of the proletariat and lead it in its class battles. *But we must remember a fact which is often overlooked by purely academic analysts: In South African conditions it is false to counterpose the national and class struggle as if they are two separate forms of struggle. In a situation in which the main immediate interests of the proletariat are served by an assault on racist autocracy, its participation in the fight for national liberation is precisely one of the key ways in which it engages in class struggle.*

There is thus, at one and the same time, a complementary and distinct role in our revolution for the two pillars of the contemporary struggle — the ANC and the SACP. This role, as we have tried to show, is rooted not only in our specific history, but also reflects the relatively advanced state of class stratification of both black and white.

What of the future? It is perhaps unwise to speculate about the emergence of a single organisation out of the various strands of the liberation front which will guide the continuing revolutionary process at a stage when the first objectives of the national liberation struggle have been achieved. However, it may be that, by then, the tasks of the continuing revolution will, as in Cuba, demand a unified political force which will consolidate the national liberation victory and create conditions for the building of socialism. Whether this happens or not will depend upon the role which is played by the working class in the immediate build-up towards such a victory; a victory in which we must ensure that the working class in alliance with the poor peasants emerges as the leading force.

*(The subject of this article is under continuous discussion in the South African liberation movement. Further contributions to the debate are invited from members of the ANC, SACP and other fraternal organisations. — Ed.)*



# FOUR WHO WERE COMMUNISTS

## A PERSONAL REFLECTION BY ALEXANDER SIBEKO

Ever since the formation of the first communist association by Marx and Engels, communists have been vilified, persecuted, imprisoned, murdered. As the truth becomes more evident that 'you can imprison a man but not his ideas' so the anti-communist propaganda war waged by the ruling class intensifies. The aim of this propaganda is to prevent the people knowing what communism stands for and who the communists are. 'An Attack on Communism is an Attack on You' was a slogan painted up in South Africa 31 years ago when our Party was banned. The enemy attempts to distort the true meaning of communism in order to hide from the working people the fact that communism stands for their best interests.

In its anti-communist crusade the enemy uses the Hitler technique of crude lies and horror stories reinforced by jack-boot and torture squad. The Party is held to be an 'alien threat'; a 'bogey man'; the 'Kremlin agent'. In a society permeated with racism the central propaganda ploy aims to project the Party as essentially an organisation of whites that in some sinister and mysterious fashion is able to lead the blacks by the nose.

This line of propaganda would actually have us believe that the mass of our people are incapable on their own of finding the path to communism. Of late, with a desperate battle taking place to perpetuate white domination, the racist politicians and police chiefs have actually arrived at the stage where they claim to be protecting 'black nationalism' from being tainted with a 'red brush'.

Our people have always rejected the anti-communist nonsense of the enemy. They have known the communists by their sacrifices and their deeds. They have known our party as an organisation of outstanding patriots and fighters such as Bill Andrews, Jimmy La Guma, Johannes Nkosi, Moses Kotane, JB Marks, Bram Fischer, Govan Mbeki, Yusuf 'Dadoo, Moses Mabhida, Joe Slovo and Ahmed Kathrada. Far from seeing our Party as being composed purely of whites, our people have seen that the Party ranks and leadership are composed of all sections of the community. Far from seeing the communists dominating the national liberation movement the people have witnessed how the Party, throughout its long history, has helped to strengthen the ANC and its allies.

The people see the communists not through the eyes of the racist rulers and the bosses but through the eyes of sweated and exploited labour. They listen attentively and with inexhaustible hope to those who champion their rights; to those who talk of an end to exploitation, oppression and for a socialist South Africa. Above all they see how the oppressor fears the communists and attacks them and that is the best recommendation for the workers. Little wonder that the communists enjoy such prestige amongst the exploited masses in South Africa. The enemy has long lost that ideological battle but struggles to make some headway amongst sections of the intellectual youth and black professional class, sensing in them a source of 'exclusive nationalism'. However, they are losing that ideological battle too, just as they fail in their efforts to inject that brand of counter-revolutionary poison into our liberation movement.

Our Party is growing. Into its ranks are flowing a young generation of workers, students and professionals. The great national and class conflicts shaking our country and the continent of Africa are arousing the consciousness of our people. Many patriots seek a class analysis and are attracted by the theory of Marxism-Leninism.

### **The Four:**

Four such members of our Party died recently. Three of them died in the Matola raid and the fourth in a Soweto gun-battle with police. Between them they were a representative cross-section of our people and of our

Party: one was a young worker; another a trade unionist; the third a student; the fourth a lawyer. They were all loyal and devoted members of the ANC and this was in no way contradicted by their membership of the Party. They are all heroes of our struggle and died for their beliefs. Within them can be found all the elements that make up the character of our people. Of course it is not only the communists who are the heroes. There are the Solomon Mahlangu's, the Silverton trio, the Joseph Mdluli's, Abraham Tiro's and scores of others. We write up for the record, however, these four who were members of our Party, because we owe them this right and because it is our historic duty, where we can, to let the people know who are the communists, especially in the light of the enemy campaign to distort the true character of our Party.

### **Petros Linda Jobane ('Gordon Dikebu')**

He died on the 21st November, 1980, in a shoot-out with the police in the Soweto suburb of Chiawelo. He died on active service for Umkhonto we Sizwe. The enemy besieged the house where he was hiding in the early hours of the morning and called on him to surrender. Gordon fought to his last bullet. Witnesses say that he put up stern resistance; that "he fought like a lion", that the police — and there was a huge force present — had to keep a respectful distance and that some were seen to be hit. He died in a 'grenade' explosion. He was determined not to be taken alive.

The story of the "lion of Chiawelo" has inspired our people at home as well as the comrades who trained and worked with him. To them his devotion and fighting spirit come as no surprise. Gordon was in his mid-twenties. He came from a background of real poverty. He was born in Soweto and was brought up by his mother, a washer-woman. His father died whilst he was very young. His mother could only afford to keep him in school until Standard Five. After that Gordon worked to help his mother keep the family going. He worked for various firms as a messenger. He worked hard and learnt from practical experience the meaning of class exploitation. He was a deep thinking, quiet young man, who seldom smiled.

In fact I cannot recollect ever seeing Gordon smile but this did not bother one. He was warm and compassionate and at ease with his fellow comrades and leaders alike. You felt that he did not smile because of his single-minded devotion to his training as a revolutionary and a combatant.

You saw this on the football field where it was a joy to watch him. He knew what to do with that ball; how to distribute it; how to shoot with telling effect. He never celebrated his goals; never celebrated his achievements; accepted the jubilant slaps on the back from his team mates and supporters with no sign of emotion. His was the stoicism of the worker to whom discipline comes naturally. A tough, nuggety revolutionary whom you would have chosen immediately to be on your side, be it for a game or on a dangerous mission.

His working class experience and the 1976 Soweto convulsions led Gordon on a single minded track into the revolutionary movement. It was natural that a man like Gordon found himself in the Party. From his class background he had been seeking a class answer. Somewhere he shared accommodation with an old worker and communist. There were many questions and long discussions. There was no sign of emotion when he joined the Party. Just that quiet, determined resolve. What emerged from his combat unit, after his death, was that they called him "ikommunis" because of his discipline and determination.

### **William Khanyile**

His whole life was devoted to the struggle. I remember him as a young worker just out of his 'teens' selling *New Age* in Pietermaritzburg twenty years ago. Come rain or sunshine he was out on the streets selling our newspaper and he used to walk great distances on his rounds. Already in those days he was keenly interested in Marxism and we participated in some discussions in a study circle. Many years later we found ourselves in a Party unit together. He still retained that very serious way of discussing problems affecting the working class. He strove with great deliberation and earnestness to apply Marxist principles to our situation.

His face had become very lined in the intervening years and expressed the suffering he had experienced but never complained about. That included eight years imprisonment on Robben Island for ANC activity; a banning order on release; further arrest without trial in 1975 when he was held for a year in solitary; a trial in 1977 which collapsed; and then exile. He was brought out of the country to work for SACTU externally. In that period of time he had married but he and his wife Eleanor, a fellow activist, had hardly any time to enjoy one another's company. In five years of married life the couple spent little more than a year together. They were bound to each other by their shared beliefs and their common devotion to the struggle.

In Maputo he worked hard at his SACTU tasks. May Day 1980 saw him and his close comrade, John Nkadimeng, leading a SACTU contingent, red flags flying, on the massive march of workers through the streets of Maputo. He was thrilled to be working in Mozambique and to experience at first hand the building of a socialist country on African soil so close to South Africa.

He died in a SACTU residence when racist killers from South Africa fired a rocket at point-blank range through the wall of the room in which he was sleeping. In his early forties he was a virtual father to the youth who worked with him. From his lips they learnt the lesson of internationalism. He never tired of pointing out the strength and superiority of the Soviet Union over the capitalist west, nor of what powerful allies we have in the socialist camp. He liked to discuss the war against Hitler and the story of how the Red Army had torn the guts out of the Nazi war machine. Ironically the killers who came to Matola, that fateful night of January 30th, had daubed swastikas on their helmets.

William knew from his own experience, however, and from the life of his mentor, Harry Gwala who went back to Robben Island for a second term of imprisonment – a life sentence – that the struggle required sacrifice. For this he was always prepared. He was simply interested in doing his duty. He was always anxious that the working class must lead the struggle. That is the reason he gave for joining the Party.

### **Motso Mokgabudi**

He was fondly known to one and all as "Obadi". A colourful character of 29, with a great zest for life and playful streak of humour, he had a deep, thoughtful intellect. He came from Orlando, where his mother, a matron in a hospital, worked hard to give him a good education. He studied law at Turfloop, dropped out as a result of student unrest, and turned his capable hands to many things from teaching to installing TV sets in white houses. He became involved in ANC activity with some of his friends and left the country six months before the 1976 'uprising'.

He learnt easily and quickly, but pondered deeply about political problems. He questioned incessantly. He liked to think things over; to gestate; and then come back for further discussion. He had qualities of leadership and commanded tremendous respect amongst his peers. He epitomised the Soweto generation and radiated their energy, confidence, wit, style, bravery.



**William Khanyile**



**Petros Jobane**



**Motso Mokgabudi**



**Mduduzi Guma**

He wrestled with the self-same inner contradictions as his fellows; together with them was finding the answers and the path ahead; was maturing and transforming as an individual. He continued to project that township image: the clever slang; the studied 'cool'; the attire of skipper, dungarees and tackies. Intellectually he had bounded way ahead but carried with him the challenging stance and optimism of youth.

The two aspects gave him an intriguing personality. His was the spirit that was formed in the schools and colleges; in the township streets and the heady days of 'black consciousness'; in the triumphal assaults on master race indoctrination. His was the intellect that Bantu Education could never warp. He was fascinated with the lumpen side of township life because he knew he could easily have escaped into it. Like his generation, however, he responded – perhaps exploded is a better term – with dynamic force to the call of the higher ideals of life. He studied, debated, fought – to clarify within his mind the distinctions and relationship between race and class oppression. It was no easy struggle but when he had climbed those lofty slopes he was confident and relaxed.

He was flushed with pride and joy when he was finally accepted into the party ranks. He was a serious and devoted member of his party unit; learning and developing all the time. His contribution to the ANC and the liberation struggle was consequently strengthened and reinforced. It is clear that his development had not been easy. It was not well known that his father had joined the PAC many years ago and had left home whilst Obadi was still very young.

The racist killers lined Obadi and his comrades up outside a house in Matola and machine gunned them down. Obadi staggered away with his guts ripped open. He died in hospital a week later. His mother and sister were at the funeral proud to discover how respected he was. He once said that if he died he would like it to be known that he was a communist.

### **Mduduzi Guma ("Nkululeko")**

Whilst the houses where Obadi and Khanyile slept were being surrounded, racist killers were levelling their weapons at a third Matola residence. Here six of our comrades were butchered including Mduduzi Guma, a former Durban attorney aged 34, who was widely respected at home and whose wife and two children lived in Swaziland. He died instantly in an upstairs bedroom which was hit by a rocket. Sleeping in the same room were his old friend from Durban, Lancelot Hadebe, who also died instantly, and Krishna Rabilal, who staggered from the blazing room badly wounded, to

be sprayed with bullets at point-blank range – Krish, with whom Mduduzi had coined the term 'Halal' for things that were 'super' or 'going great'.

Mduduzi had a close relationship with these two comrades. He was concerned about his comrades' problems and welfare. When morale was low he would buck them up with profound political analysis and with convincing talk about the inevitability of victory. He was extremely well liked and respected as a leader. He had a very good brain, was highly capable, sociable, persuasive, ironic in his sense of humour, well read, dedicated.

He came from a rather well off family. Had a strict, religious upbringing. He studied law at Ngoye and practised as an attorney in Durban. Educated, sophisticated, with a liking for good suits, he cut an elegant figure around town. He had a wide circle of contacts: professional, religious, student, worker. He made a good impression on all and was very influential. He enjoyed socialising. He was quietly spoken and interesting. He knew much about history and rural culture. He could speak a pure, deep Zulu.

He had joined the ANC and was steadily building up an underground network. No one suspected him even though by 1976 he was defending students caught up in protest and rebellion. He used his position well. He cultivated his image skilfully. He was a good underground worker. It was about this time that he was working with Lancelot Hadebe and another extraordinary figure, the Reverend Mandla Msibi ("Blackman"), with whom he shared many experiences and dangers. 'Blackman's' sudden death in Swaziland last year hit him deeply. They say you can judge a man by his best friends. Those two had a special quality and brilliance and were attuned to each other. The risks they took led to exposure, near arrest, flight.

"Nkululeko" settled in Swaziland – a political refugee. He was an avid reader of political tracts and paid much attention to the Marxist classics. He helped translate our Party programme into Zulu. He was an energetic crusader for *The African Communist* and did good work in distributing it. He wrote well too. Some of his articles can be seen in the MK journal Dawn under the name of "Conqueror Ntswana".

It was a great day for him when he was admitted into the ranks of the Party. Religious schooling, university, the legal profession: there have been many revolutionaries and communists who have entered the struggle from that avenue. "Nkululeko" was immersed in the idea and task of our



people's liberation. He chose the pseudonym "Conqueror" because of his implacable belief in victory. The Party for him represented the vanguard for the total liberation of our people and of mankind from all forms of exploitation.

### **Ships in the night**

The above profiles are offered by someone who had only slender knowledge of the backgrounds of the four, but who worked with them at one time or another. This is the way of our revolutionary struggle in these hard and often sad times. We are frequently like ships that pass in the night. We go to and fro throughout our embattled country; or on the continent of Africa; even the four corners of the world, scarcely getting to know each other. A long dusty journey on the back of a truck; a shared room in some out of the way place; brief intervals during some long, drawn out meeting; maybe on some rare occasion a few cold beers and jocular story-telling well into the night; more often than not illegal border crossings and close shaves. Such are the occasions of often chance meetings and moments of getting to know each other; of discussing childhood, families, sweethearts, music, poetry, philosophy and a hundred and one other things. Before you know it, someone in the movement you have only met a few times becomes dear to you. You look forward to seeing him again. Then the news of arrest, torture, death. All you have to offer are a few pencilled sketches when what is needed are oil paints and a huge canvas.

"The times are sad when it is necessary to be a hero" wrote Bertolt Brecht, "but these are the times in which we live". How many unknown and unsung heroes have died in the struggle to liberate mankind? Our centuries old struggle to liberate South Africa has had its fair share. In this way, then, we record some typical heroes of our time, devoted members of both Party and ANC, whose names we can fortunately set down even if some of their actions cannot yet be revealed. Unlike the passing ship, they and all the heroes of our liberation struggle, without exception, must not be forgotten. They were all ships on a common journey, moving to a common destination. When we reach that destination their names will be recalled and their outstanding deeds revealed. We dip the banner of the ANC and the red flag of the Party in proud salute.

## **PRAISE OF COMMUNISM**

It's sensible  
Anyone can understand it.  
It's easy.  
You're not an exploiter,  
So you can grasp it.  
It's a good thing for you,  
Find out more about it.  
The stupid call it stupid,  
And the squalid call it squalid.  
It is against squalor and  
Against stupidity.  
The exploiters call it a crime  
But we know  
It is the end of crime.  
It is not madness, but  
The end of madness.  
It is not the riddle  
But the solution.  
It is the simple thing  
So hard to achieve.

*Bertolt Brecht.*

# **WHY I AM A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY**

**By Eli Weinberg**

**When the First World War broke out, I was six years old. As many borders were overrun by hostile armies, I was torn from my parents and for four years they did not know where I was and I did not know where they were. Whole populations fled or were evacuated. There were bombings and shellings, murder and destruction, hunger and poverty. I remember one period of many weeks when the city in which I lived was blockaded and the only food available was potato peels and even that was strictly rationed.**

**This childhood experience of senseless inhuman waste, suffering, fear and insecurity undoubtedly contributed to my education as a socialist. I might add that, due to the war, I had no other education until I was able to rejoin my family at the end of the war and, at the age of ten, I sat down to learn to read and write. I also think that, although I was only nine years old at the time, the Great October Revolution with its ringing promise of human emancipation had a tremendous influence on me.**

When I started reading books I devoured the science fiction of Jules Verne and this, together with an early reading of Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* (I think the other title was *In the Year 2000*) convinced me that there were no limits to man's ingenuity and inventiveness, provided he was able to organise his own society rationally and scientifically.

So I became what one might call a "socialist" at the early age of 14. But my ideas of socialism were nebulous, tinged with a longing to go back to the simple life of nature; my inspiration came from Tolstoy and Rabindranath Tagore. I thought that a better human society would arise out of the universal ethics of the idealist philosophers who would convert mankind by the sheer power of their eloquence. It was only when I started work at the age of 16 and joined a trade union (the Metal Workers' Union) that a new and much clearer vision opened up for me.

I was induced to join a study class on Dialectical Materialism led by a metal worker by the name of N. Katlaps whose tall, sturdy figure clad in a simple black blouse was in full harmony with the classic simplicity of his teaching. Our textbook was an illegal edition of *Dialectical Materialism* by N. Bukharin. In later years I was told that Bukharin's approach was "mechanistic". However that may be, I can say that the book and the discussions in the class provided me with a clear and scientific perception of the processes of life. I owe this to the Communist Party for I have no doubt that Katlaps was a Communist.

When I came to South Africa in 1929 I went to work in the "bundu", first in Kroonstad in the Free State, which was then no more than a village, and then on the coal mines in Northern Natal, at Tendeka, Enyathi and Hlobane. On all sides and every minute of my life I was surrounded by the cruellest examples of inhumanity of man to man. Every act of discrimination, ill-treatment and humiliation of Africans made me react violently and I was often involved in physical clashes, because all my past upbringing had conditioned me against racism and injustice. However, individual rebellion against the powerful system of colonialism and exploitation may be heroic, but it leads nowhere.

### **Mass Action**

It was only later, when I found my way to the Communist Party of South Africa, that I began to see that the way to change lay in collective mass action, in organising and mobilising the working class, the creators of all wealth, and in teaching the workers through united struggle that they were not only masters of their own future, but also the emancipators of all

mankind. This, too, I learnt from the Communist Party.

In 1930 or 1931 I met W.G. Champion of the ICU Yase Natal, who gave me the address of the CPSA in Johannesburg, so that I was able to make contact, first by correspondence. I wrote several articles for *Umsebenzi*, then published in Johannesburg, depicting the conditions of life and labour of the coalminers in Natal. At the end of 1931 I went to Johannesburg and became a member of the Communist Party.

It was a period of great distress as one of the severest economic crises in capitalism began to hit South Africa. Hundreds of unemployed Africans were lining up every day at the pass office in Ferreirastown seeking in vain for jobs. The Party held regular meetings with these workers and in order to facilitate political education we started night classes in reading and writing. These were held in a corrugated iron church hall in Ferreirastown. It was infernally cold, there were no benches or tables and the students had to sit on the bare earth floor. Many of these students later played an active leading role in the Party, in the trade unions and in the African National Congress.

The Party not only conducted political educational work, but took practical steps to organise the unemployed workers. Huge meetings were held at the City Hall steps and the African and white unemployed organised a joint committee, whose headquarters was at the Trades Hall. This Committee organised processions through the streets of Johannesburg during which the unemployed received money, food and goods from the public and from the shopkeepers. All these contributions were then taken to the members, black and white.

But the main enemy of the working class in South Africa, white racism, soon raised its head. Ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church and officials of the Labour Department hurriedly convened meetings of the white unemployed and persuaded them to break the alliance with their black class brothers. The whites were given jobs under the "civilised labour policy" whilst the blacks were left to starve. However, the lesson of unity taught by the Communist Party left its mark and some Afrikaners not only joined the Party, but became active fighters against racism and white supremacy. One of them was Gideon Botha who often spoke at Party meetings on the City Hall steps.

## **Right to Vote**

The Communist Party has always made the demand for equal political rights its cardinal point, particularly the right to vote. In 1932 the Party used the occasion of a by-election in Germiston to put up a black man for election. The candidate was J.B. Marks. Of course, this was a purely demonstrative act, because only whites could stand for election and only whites could vote. However, the Party held regular "election" meetings in Germiston Location and called on the people to "vote for J.B. Marks". The meetings were so well attended that the Location Superintendent took fright and banned them. Thereafter the meetings took place on an open square outside the gates to the Location. The "blackjacks", the municipal Location police, often attacked the gatherings, but failed to discourage the people from attending.

The Party then attempted to take the "election" fight into the camp of the enemy. We hired a lorry and set it up in the market square in "white" Germiston and proceeded to hold an election meeting. We were soon surrounded by gangs of white hooligans who were shouting "Waar is die Kaffer Kandidaat?": They were obviously intent on murdering Comrade J.B. Marks for his unprecedented audacity in claiming political rights for Africans. We were not prepared to expose our candidate to this uncivilised mob. Eventually they stormed the platform, overturned the lorry and proceeded viciously to attack the speakers and members of the Party. One comrade, Eddie Roux, was stabbed in the face (he carried the scar to the end of his days), others were beaten up and chased with sjamboks. We barely managed to escape with our lives by jumping into a moving train which was just leaving for Johannesburg. But on election day we were back with ballot boxes outside the Germiston Location and I venture to say that J.B. Marks received many more votes than the two opposing white candidates together!

Such activities went on even whilst severe ideological disputes were going on within the Party around the slogan of the "Independent Native Republic". Essentially the slogan meant national liberation of the Africans and an end to white domination. But a great deal of hairsplitting was going on, until Moses Kotane put an end to sterile arguments by insisting that the national democratic revolution could not be carried out without an active African mass organisation. He gave the lead by throwing himself actively into the task of building up the African National Congress, travelling all over the country, revitalising dormant branches, establishing links with African leaders, addressing mass meetings. His example enabled

**Party members to make a contribution to the development of the national liberatory revolutionary process.**

### **Suppression Act**

**When the Nats came to power in 1948 one of their first acts was the Suppression of Communism Act. They thought that by banning the Communist Party, by restricting and imprisoning its membership, they would deprive the movement for freedom of its most active and most dedicated component. But the Party cannot be destroyed, it lives forever, for its roots are in the hearts of the working masses of South Africa. The Party went underground, and I believe, in the process came out stronger and more influential than ever before. Today the slogan of the "Independent Native Republic" has found its clear echo in the Freedom Charter, adopted by a representative Congress of the People in 1955. And even though the 1950 attack on the Party was followed ten years later by the ban on the African National Congress, the racists have failed completely to smash the national liberation movement. Today the struggle is supplemented by the heroic actions of Umkhonto We Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress, in which many members of the South African Communist Party were playing an active and heroic role.**

**So looking back over more than half a century of political developments I am proud to be a member of the Communist Party.**

# **FIGHT U.S. SUBVERSION OF TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN AFRICA!**

**by R.S. Nyameko**

The United States conspiracy against the labour movement in Africa and particularly in South Africa has been inspired by three US organisations – the anti-Communist trade union federation AFL-CIO, the African-American Labour Centre established by the AFL-CIO, and the CIA (the US Central Intelligence Agency). Much has been written about this unholy trinity since the first articles on them were published in *The African Communist* Nos. 72 and 73, 1st and 2nd Quarters of 1978. Much more has to be written about these cancerous organisations if they are to be prevented from destroying the existing African unions in the independent African countries and in the unliberated Southern Africa – South Africa and Namibia.

Throughout Africa labour organisations are infiltrated by CIA agents posing as private individuals or under non-official cover, as employees in private companies or as US Embassy staff in the Information Department or as Labour Attaches. This is how the US Embassy Information



Department and Labour Attache men succeeded in establishing the PAC in 1959 to disrupt our ANC. Every African patriot, every dedicated freedom fighter should become aware of the plotting by the AFL-CIO = AALC to disrupt, corrupt and ensnare African trade union leaders. The AALC, this CIA agency, has established itself all over Africa. At present there are only three African countries in which they are not operating – Angola, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

The *AALC Reporter* for 1979, 1980 and the last two issues of 1981 show the AALC bases in Africa. Why should they be permitted to establish bases? The AALC has been exposed by many researchers as an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency of the USA – CIA. “The Central Intelligence Agency of the USA was founded for one purpose only – to extend, perpetuate and preserve world monopoly capitalism, obstruct the independence of countries which are attempting to wrest themselves from the yoke of world imperialism, and to act against the socialist countries by covertly carrying out the policies of ‘containment’ and ‘roll back’”.<sup>1</sup>

This statement has been confirmed again and again, particularly in a recent book *The CIA in Africa Dirty Work 2* by Ellen Ray, William Schaap, Karl van Meter and Louis Wolf. The *New Nigerian*, in a section ‘In and Around Nigeria’, writes:

“The American Trade Union Centre is reported to intensify ‘psychological war’ in the Third World. In many Asian countries branches of the American-Asian Institute of Free Syndicalism (AAIFS), an organisation created and financed by AFL-CIO, serve as a cover for US intelligence. . . Similarly the CIA operates through the AFL-CIO also in Africa, where the Afro-American Labour Centre (AALC) was established in 1965. Branches of this centre, led by P.O. Farrell, a friend and backer of Jonas Savimbi, exist in almost forty countries of the continent. . .

“Trade Union leaders and CIA agents are striving to implant pro-Western leadership in the African trade union movement, to push it on to a reformist path, to disarm the working class ideologically and to make it obediently serve foreign capital. The CIA show at the recent NLC congress in Kano is just another example of their activities”.<sup>2</sup>

Nigeria has actually ordered the AALC out of the country, but Nigerian Labour leaders still attend all kinds of meetings convened by the AALC in Africa, and visited the AALC offices in the US in July 1980. In November 1980, seven members of the Nigeria Labour Congress came to the US to ‘observe’ the activities of various American unions.<sup>3</sup>

During 1979 and 1980 the AALC held study programmes, a women’s programme, conventions etc. in 26 African states. In addition the AALC

signed various agreements with unions in many African states including the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and an AALC representative attended the OATUU Congress in Somalia in November 1980.<sup>4</sup> Many African trade union leaders visited the US, invited and paid for by the AALC – CIA. The AFL-CIO have not organised the American workers, have not solved the problems of unemployment, poverty and slums in America, but they come to Africa to corrupt leaders and disrupt our unions. Their main interests are to preserve the investment profits for American companies. They function extensively in Zaire, Burundi, Egypt, Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Zambia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Togo, Niger, Gabon, Ivory Coast and Mali. Their work in Zaire particularly has been advertised as a success story. Indeed it is a success for the multinational companies and imperialism in the citadel of reaction on the African continent. Zaire is notorious as the CIA's most important base in Africa.

#### **Their target is our working class**

The Pretoria regime, determined to disrupt our trade union movement by racist oppressive laws, bannings and detentions, receives help from the AALC, which is making a concerted effort to 'win' the black trade unions to their and US state policy. The AALC has opened offices in Botswana, where its representative is Nathaniel Johnson, and has recruited the services of Nana Mahomo, now reinstated in the PAC. In 1971 Mahomo was on the reception committee when the AALC invited African, Asian and Latin American delegates attending the ILO Conference in Geneva to a luncheon and dinner. It is understood that he was given US \$2 million. He will be assisted by Jacob Nyaose, former secretary of the long defunct FOFATUSA and another ex-PAC man Mantghontgho, who is still studying in the US. In Zimbabwe the AALC has installed James L. Harris as their representative.

The AALC has been concentrating on South Africa's neighbouring states to disrupt their unions and to use them as their springboards and bases for corrupting and disrupting our trade unions. In the *AALC Reporter* 'Index to Articles' for 1978-1980, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland feature prominently.

The Reagan stand on South Africa has been stated quite explicitly. In a television interview on March 14 he stated: "The United States will not abandon South Africa, its wartime ally and producer of essential minerals". This Nationalist government was no wartime ally. On the contrary, during World War 2 the Nationalist Party leaders sabotaged the war effort and aided the Nazis. The OAU and African states have

condemned the American guarantee to the racist regime and the resumption of aid to Jonas Savimbi, that UNITA traitor to the Angolan Democratic Republic, to Namibian freedom fighters, and a shame and disgrace to the whole African continent for his collaboration with racist South Africa.

In April 1980 the AALC sent its Deputy Director, Lester Trachtman, and the veteran CIA agent Maida Springer to undertake a labour survey mission in South Africa in preparation for a training programme. They were assisted by a black American attached to the US embassy, Richard Baltimore, a skilled operator by virtue of his colour, who made contacts with anti-regime and radical circles like the Christian Institute. They met top leaders of the various union groups, government officials and university staff in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria and Durban and arranged for 7 African trade union leaders to attend a work-study programme.<sup>5</sup>

The AFL-CIO Executive Council, following the line of the Reagan administration and acting as its handmaiden, adopted at its annual meeting in Bal Harbor, Florida, February 16-22, 1981, a "Programme of Action in Support of Black Trade Unions in South Africa". The AALC, in addition to the funds supplied by the State Department through the CIA, also gets fat donations from the US multinational companies "and in tune with the State Department are above all interested to preserve the R1,56 billion American investment and its annual trade of R2,7 billion".<sup>6</sup>

Using the US and South African mass media the AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland announced this programme and stated that a "new central office on South Africa will coordinate programmes to provide training in leadership organising. . . the amount of funds to be put aside had not yet been determined".<sup>7</sup> The Programme claims to seek "non-violent solutions" to the problems of South Africa "and it will establish within the African-American Labour Centre a unit to ensure coordination with the other international labour bodies, e.g. the ICFTU, OATUU and the International Trade Secretariats. . . for organising unions, collective bargaining, leadership and cadre training which could include the following: work study programmes in the US; assignment of US trade unionists to short term programmes in special fields; assignment of an AALC representative to work in S.A."<sup>8</sup>

Through these training projects the AALC sows illusions that 'non-violent' solutions to the problems of South Africa are possible. This is the line that Lucy Mvubelo and some other AALC collaborators in S.A. are spreading, though Botha and Pretoria regime spokesmen have declared

time and again that full democratic rights on the basis of one man one vote are not for South Africa. These are the means used to frustrate the aims of the liberation movement headed by the ANC.

### **They Oppose our Policies**

In recent years Irving Brown, the AALC Director, and AFL-CIO representatives have opposed South Africa's expulsion from the UN as well as international boycotts and campaigns for the withdrawal of foreign investments from South Africa. They fear the rising African working class, the growing class consciousness, the development of independent trade unions under militant leadership. They fear that the work place, the factory floors, will be turned into the workers' political arena. They fear, workers' pressure for real change, for a better quality of life, for political rights and for a higher standard of living. They fear workers' unity and solidarity.

One of the seven participants in the study tour of the USA gave a report which stated:

"The tour was proposed by the AALC in Washington. There were 7 trade unionists: 3 from CUSA; 1 from TUCSA; 1 from General Allied Workers' Union; 1 from MWASA and 1 from FOSATU. In all, I would say it was just a waste of time for me. To me it seemed it was not a study tour but for the AALC to give the USA country the impression that they do care for trade unions in S. A. What I noticed is that they can entertain you but not give you exactly what you desire. They can make you visit all over the country telling different Unions about the situation in S.A. Unions: They are not well organised as I expected, only 30% of the labour force are organised. What I observed is that there is too much bureaucracy, no longer care for the members. They don't discuss workers' grievances any longer, but they are fond of sending grievances to arbitration. It seems they are now rushing for different issues instead of organising e.g. Alcoholism and Community Affairs. Few Unions are still concerned with their membership".<sup>9</sup>

This is a mature and intelligent evaluation and other trade unionists should take note of this.

### **The AALC — AFL-CIO — CIA are enemies of the independent African States**

Carrying out the State Department's wishes, Irving Brown in a 10-page interview with Jeremia Chitunda, Secretary of the External Coordination Activities of UNITA, encouraged Chitunda to destroy the MPLA Government and assured him that they will support his great leader Savimbi. Here are some of Brown's and Chitunda's statements:

**Brown:** This organisation is headed by Jonas Savimbi whom I have known for more than twenty years as a great fighter. . .

**Chitunda:** So many factors compelled South Africa to point its guns at the very same targets as ours during the 1975 civil war. South Africa came to Angola, invited by Western powers.

**Chitunda:** There was a brief period of covert aid from the United States. . . It is not a secret.

**Brown:** There is a growing awareness of the Soviet threat and therefore also a growing appreciation of what you people are doing. . . what is needed is a total positive policy, one which would include not only material assistance but an effort to arrive at a political solution. . . the West and the US should endorse a policy which involves not only economic and military assistance for your movement but also a political policy. . .

**Chitunda:** But a consistent political and diplomatic stand of leadership on the part of the US is desperately needed.

**Brown:** Is it possible for someone to come in from the AFL-CIO or other trade unions in the free countries to help you on the spot with your training programs?

**Chitunda:** Due to the war conditions, sending AFL-CIO instructors into the country would have to be postponed until some other time, but there is a great deal of cooperation that could be initiated right away. AFL-CIO observers could look into this issue, and should be able to visit the country.

Brown's interview with Chitunda must be examined against the background of the CIA hosting 5 of South Africa's military intelligence chiefs under Lieut-Gen v.d. Westhuizen, and the exposure by the Mozambique government of four US diplomats as CIA agents who were working with South Africa's military intelligence, as well as the support given by the Pretoria regime to the Mozambique National Resistance. Former members of the Mozambique National Resistance, fighting the legitimate government of Mozambique, have said that South Africa has provided arms and training to the organisation. Mozambique Information Minister Jose Luis Cabaco has said: "Clearly, any information passed on by the CIA to South Africa would be used to help operational units such as the RNM".<sup>10</sup>

Dr Crocker, Alexander Haig and Reagan have openly declared their aim to impede the course of liberation and self-determination, but what is of prime concern to the Africans is that this new attitude poses a threat to peace on the continent. The immediate outcome of this attitude is that the United States is moving rapidly to provide her "friends" in Africa with

"defensive arms". Although claiming to seek a solution on Namibia, the type of "independent" Namibia that the US would like to see can best be interpreted in the words of its ambassador to the UN Jean Kirkpatrick, when she told a Senate sub-committee on April 7:

"I would desire a democratic Namibia with some sort of stability, some sort of framework for autonomy, democratic government. . . This solution is one broadly accepted not only by Namibia, but its neighbours. In other words, an independent Namibia with a government acceptable to South Africa, and not a SWAPO government."

What kind of ideology, what kind of guidance or education can African trade union leaders derive from the AALC study programmes? The imperialist ideology and strategy is to undermine and destabilise the independent African states and make them dependent on the west. Some countries have learnt the lesson: Mozambique and Zambia, for example, have recently cleared the CIA agents out of their territory. Let us not forget that it was CIA agents who collaborated with BOSS agents in the Matola massacre, murdering 12 of our dedicated comrades.

The CIA's experts on subversion confirm their role. William Colby, CIA Director under President Nixon, and Stansfield Turner, CIA Director under President Carter, stated:

"Covert action ought to be increased. The more aggressive the country's foreign policy, the more likely you are to use covert action as a supplement to diplomacy and as a substitute for military force".<sup>11</sup>

The aggressive policy of the US is a threat to peace in Africa, Latin America, Asia and indeed the whole world. Some African trade union colleagues say: "Don't worry, we know what they are. We take their trips and money but we do not listen to their propaganda". Unfortunately, it remains a fact that imperialist propaganda and subversion makes its impact even on those who think they can resist it. ZCTU leaders, for example, sent a telegram to Walesa expressing sympathy with the organisation Solidarity in Poland. It is difficult to follow the reasons for ZCTU's action at a time when it was clear Solidarity was receiving aid from the imperialists, including a 200,000 dollar donation from AFL-CIO, as part of the CIA-State Department policy of destabilising socialist Poland. The ZCTU's action was of no assistance to the world-wide struggle against imperialism.

Mozambique Information Minister Jose Luis Cabaco, when asked about Mozambique's reaction to Washington's decision to cut off its aid programme, replied: "Our principles do not have a price tag".<sup>12</sup> These are

principles African trade union leaders and statesmen should embrace. We must never tire of exposing the AALC and its penetration of independent Africa's states, including its onslaught on Southern Africa. The AALC by corrupting and dividing trade unions is attempting to undermine the African governments and weaken Africa's determination to free Southern Africa from white racist domination.

We make a special appeal to our American friends. We know that most of the AFL-CIO membership are probably unaware of the activities fostered by their leadership in the international arena. We urge them to take notice of the dirty work being done in their name in Africa. We know how the American workers have suffered from company unions, company thugs and killers, corruption and red-baiting, much of it organised by the CIA and the bosses in an unholy alliance to preserve capitalism. We appeal to you to get together with your fellow workers and all progressive people and further the campaign to isolate the South African apartheid regime and impose economic and military sanctions against it. Let us join hands to clear the international blacklegs out of our ranks and build real international working-class solidarity.

#### **List of South African Trade Union Leaders who have attended AALC Study Courses in Washington**

Mrs Evelyn Seloro, Textile Workers' Union, Transvaal; Mr Michael Mohatlu, Transport Allied Workers' Union; Mr Michael Mtjali, Engineering and Allied Workers' Union; Mr Frank Mohlala, Building and Allied Workers' Union; Tom Mashinini, National Union of Clothing Workers; Erol Esau, Motor Industry Combined Workers' Union; Frank Hausa, Garment Workers' Industrial Union, Natal; Mrs Emily Hlatshwayo, Miss Sarah Chitja, Mrs Muriel Nongauza, all of the National Union of C.W.; Percy Qoboza, ex-editor; Longway Kwelemtini, President of Food, Beverage Workers' Union; Aaron M. Mothinya, National organiser, Building Construction (CUSA affiliate) Allied WU; Jacob Ngakane, ex-member Textile Workers' Union; Rita Ndzanga, organising treasurer, General Allied W.U. Transvaal (GAWU); Lebeho S. Lebeko, ex member of Chemical W.U. (CUSA); Maggie Magubane, general secretary, Sweet Food and Allied W.U. (FOSATU); Goba Ndlovu, Chairman Southern TVL Branch Writers' Assoc. of S.A.; Churchill Mhlanga, — President of FOSATU; Desmond Rose, Vice-President, National Union of Commercial Catering and Allied Workers SA.; Mary Ntseke, GAWU.

## Footnotes

- 1 John Gilman *New Perspectives* Vol. 7 6/1977.
- 2 *New Nigerian* 9/4/81
- 3 *AALC Reporter* Jan-Feb. 1981
- 4 *ibid*, Nov-Dec. 1981
- 5 *ibid*, Jan-Feb. 1981
- 6 The Rockefeller Foundation Report
- 7 *Cape Argus* 6/3/81.
- 8 AFL-CIO Programme of Action in Support of Black Trade Unions in S.A. Cyclostyled and distributed by the US Embassy and *AALC Reporter* March-April 1981.
- 9 Report On Study Tour In USA 15.10.80-19.12.80.
- 10 *The Scotsman* March 26th 1981.
- 11 ZDM 8/7/81
- 12 *The Scotsman* March 26 1981.





# **20th ANNIVERSARY OF** **UMKHONTO WE SIZWE**

## **THE ROAD OF STRUGGLE THAT LEADS TO FREEDOM**

by M.K. Mtungwa

**'The people's patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices — submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa'.**

On December 16th, 1961 units of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) carried out a series of bomb attacks against government installations in South Africa's main cities. The targets were connected with the policy of apartheid and racial oppression such as pass offices and government departments concerned with African, Indian and Coloured affairs.

In a manifesto distributed on the same day MK declared that it was a body formed by Africans, but included in its ranks South Africans of all races. MK made its political allegiance quite clear by stating that it 'fully supports the national liberation movement, and our members, jointly and individually, place themselves under the overall political guidance of the movement.'

These historic and dramatic acts of sabotage, over 150 of which were recorded over the next two years, were the first planned and organised acts of violent resistance to white minority rule since the Bambata Rebellion of 1906.

The oppressed people of our country had long experience of the violence and brutality of the racist state. White supremacy was imposed by force and is maintained by force. The question we therefore need to consider is 'Why in 1961 had that time now come?'

A decision to adopt revolutionary violence and armed struggle does not come out of the blue. Neither is it a decision that is lightly taken. In the Rivonia trial Nelson Mandela and our other leaders explained that the historic decision was arrived at after great deliberation. Such a decision has far reaching consequences. 'In the long run we felt certain we could succeed, but at what cost to ourselves and the country?' These were the issues that had to be weighed.

Armed struggle is the highest form of political struggle, requiring as it does greater demands and sacrifice from the vanguard organisation and the people. Any miscalculation can result in untold tragedy and disaster and can set a revolutionary movement decades back, if not cause its total collapse.

Serious revolutionaries therefore carefully weigh up all conditions before embarking on armed struggle. They particularly bear in mind their responsibility to the people. Our leaders do not regard the people as mere pawns in a game, who are simply to be used as a staircase to personal power. The people bear the brunt of ruling-class violence and leaders cannot gamble with their lives. Of course revolution entails suffering and loss of life, but the leadership must soberly assess what course of action best serves the interests of the people. The masses do not easily forgive so-called leaders who have misled them, and extracted sacrifices from them in the service of some half-baked adventure (e.g. PAC-POQO violence of the early 'sixties).

### **Repression and armed struggle**

What then are the conditions that must influence a decision to adopt armed struggle? What factors did our leaders have to take into account?

The manifesto of MK declares:

'We are striking out along a new road for the liberation of the people of this country. The government's policy of force, repression and violence will no longer be met with non-violent resistance only. The choice is not ours; it has been made

by the Nationalist Government which has rejected every peaceable demand by the people for rights and freedom and answered every such demand with force and yet more force.'

What MK's manifesto so eloquently expresses is a universal statement of all revolutionary movements: that in every case of revolutionary struggle the resort to armed struggle is a response to the use of violence by imperialism and its allies.

This process confirms one of Marxism's profound propositions that 'revolution progresses by giving rise to a strong and united counter-revolution, i.e. it compels the enemy to resort to more and more extreme measures of defence and in this way devises even more powerful means of attack.' (Lenin: *Lessons of the Moscow Uprising*).

In South Africa for example we see how the mass militancy of the 1950's was met by the extreme repression of the apartheid state climaxing in the Sharpeville massacre and the outlawing of the ANC. This act of counter-revolution gave rise to the formation of Umkhonto, as an 'even more powerful means of attack' when compared to our methods in the previous period.

We can see from events in Africa how the extreme violence resorted to by the racists and colonialists in order to ward off the challenge to their rule by the oppressed masses compelled those masses to take up arms:

- In Guinea-Bissau the shooting of fifty striking dock workers in August 1959 signalled the new phase in the struggle;
- In Mozambique it was the 16th June, 1960, Mueda massacre of 600 at a peaceful meeting;
- In Angola it was the 1961 killing of 30 and wounding of 200 at a meeting protesting at the arrest of Dr. Neto;
- Similar repression in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Algeria prompted the change from peaceful to armed struggle.

It is clearly as a result of such brutal outrages that the liberation forces declare, as MK did: 'The Government's policy of force will no longer be met with non-violent resistance only'.

An expert on revolutionary armed struggle, William Pomeroy, has written:

'Popular armed struggle has had its origin in the outlawing of trade unions and peasant unions that have sought to gain for workers and peasants a greater share of the super-profits that imperialists extract from their labour. It has resulted from the suppression of nationalist political parties that have advocated full independence and control over the natural resources of their own countries.

including the arrest, the torture or the killing of those who have protested peacefully against such denials and the use of force against the people and their legally constituted organisations.' (*Guerrilla Warfare* p14).

All the countries we have referred to, including our own, fit into this pattern. But armed struggle is not born of repression alone. There are other factors and conditions to consider.

### **Violence and Non-violence**

Prior to the creation of MK the forms of struggle used by the ANC and its allies were *non-violent*. After December 1961 we employed *violent forms* of struggle; namely sabotage and armed struggle. A question which is often raised is that since violence is often linked with revolution (in some people's minds at any rate) the ANC must have been a "moderate" organisation prior to 1961. Nothing could be more erroneous.

It is the oppressor who seeks to implant in people's minds the image of 'Revolution and Bloodshed'. Many revolutions have in fact been carried out with a minimum loss of life (e.g. the overthrow of fascism in Portugal). The eruption of violence and slaughter is generally caused by the attempts of counter-revolution to regain power. The ruling classes seek to project the image of 'Revolution and Bloodshed' in order to make the masses frightened of change.

In South Africa this takes two forms both aimed at maintaining the present set-up. On the one hand 'Africans will be cannon fodder in an armed struggle to overthrow white supremacy'; and on the other hand 'the whites will be driven into the sea'. The effect on the oppressed of the first is to disarm them; the effect on the whites of the second is to frighten them into supporting the system.

Furthermore it is a grotesque distortion to equate Revolution with armed struggle the way the Maoists, Red Brigades of Italy, Japan etc. do. This plays into the hands of the ruling classes. 'Violence' is a particular form of struggle and so is 'non-violence'. There are times when 'violence' can advance a struggle or retard it. The same applies to 'non-violence'. Genuine revolutionaries are never wedded to a particular form of struggle. They use their *revolutionary judgement* to assess the most appropriate time for the use of a particular form of struggle.

Forms of struggle are tactical methods and techniques which help us to advance our struggle and attain our goals, in our case a liberated South Africa based on the Freedom Charter. Therefore they are means to an end. If a particular method is useful in advancing the struggle we employ it

as part of our arsenal; if not we discard it.

Marxism-Leninism is categorically opposed to a mechanical and inflexible approach to this question. In a celebrated article on 'Guerrilla Warfare' Lenin asked: *What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle?* In his answer Lenin gave two theoretical propositions by which revolutionaries must be guided:

'In the first place Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognizes the most varied forms of struggle. . . In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of forms of struggle. To treat the question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. . .'

The Maoists and Red Brigade groups constantly display a wilful ignorance of the need to dialectically relate various forms of struggle to each other. They dogmatically counterpose violent methods to all other forms, and disregard the concrete historical situation. For example the attempt to enforce violent tactics (kidnapping, hijacking, bombing) in a situation where the mass movement is making advances through the use of 'peaceful' forms of struggle such as strikes and demonstrations and the electoral process.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels declared that the ends of communists 'can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions'. Force, in their view, involved the whole range of forms which working class struggle takes: mass demonstrations, general strikes, boycotts and armed uprisings. They particularly stressed the combination of all of these. Depending on the prevailing *objective* economic conditions (i.e. external to and independent of our will) there are periods of so-called 'peaceful' development or (where profound crises occur) periods of 'stormy' revolutionary development of the mass struggle. It is in the latter period where much more active and vigorous forms of struggle occur.

A people's struggle that is rich in historical experience will have progressed through various periods and phases — both peaceful and stormy. Ascribing the Bolshevik party's maturity to its experience in the 15 years prior to the revolution, Lenin wrote:

'No other country knew anything even approximating to that revolutionary experience, that rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement — legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, local circles and mass movements, and parliamentary and terrorist forms'. (*Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*)

If we relate the above quotation to our own struggle we see too that the wide range of methods our people have employed constitutes a rich store-house of experience in the possession of our liberation movement.

### **Exhausting Peaceful Means**

Whilst we have shown that 'non-violent' forms of struggle are a necessary part of the revolutionary arsenal of methods of struggle, we must make an important point in this regard. *In all revolutionary struggles it is imperative to exhaust all peaceful means of struggle before embarking on armed struggle.*

This was the case with Algeria, Angola, Cuba, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Vietnam, Zimbabwe etc. The reason for this is the plain and simple fact that the people are not inclined to support or resort to violence *unless they see that there is no other way out.*

The people must see the justification and necessity for violence. They must see that it is in their interests. This is particularly important because the masses must bear the brunt of the enemy's counter-violence by placing the blame on the so-called 'agitators'. The people must be able to see through this falsehood. They must see that the revolutionary movement has attempted to advance the struggle through all peaceful avenues, but has been forced to resort to arms because the oppressor has imposed a war situation.

Thus the selection of the form of struggle — peaceful or violent — is not dependent on the people, but rather on the oppressor. This is what gives revolutionary violence its moral justification. The people do not embark on violence because they wish to see people injured. They do so when they come to learn that the only possible way to overcome the violence of oppression is through revolutionary violence. Furthermore, because every liberation movement must base itself on the people's support, peaceful and legal means are preferred as the way of winning that support and building organisation, unity and strength.

This shows the tactical necessity of using non-violent means in order to build up organisation and develop consciousness, where the situation allows. The non-violent path can lead to a serious challenge for power by the people. It can lead to a revolutionary situation. Lenin consistently held that revolution could come about through armed uprising or the peaceful way. But the revolutionary movement must always be ready to seize power by arms for the seizure of state power can only take place when the balance of power swings in its favour.

## **Evolution of our Armed Struggle**

For almost fifty years the ANC followed a policy of non-violent struggle to achieve its aims. We have posed the question 'why had the time come' in December, 1961? In order to fully answer this question we must understand the *concrete historical situation* that faced our people and our leaders at the time. We must examine this situation in two parts:

- i) the historical background (which will show how peaceful forms of struggle were exhausted and how our methods of struggle had to change); and
- ii) the subjective and objective factors (which will weigh-up the internal and external balance of forces; the mood of the people; and the possibility of resorting to armed struggle in 1961).

Since 'forms of struggle' are related to our *strategy and tactics* we should make clear what we mean by these terms.

*Strategy* is a term derived from warfare and signifies an overall plan of battle; the art of directing the campaign. *Tactics* are the manoeuvres within that battle plan; devices for gaining the end. In politics strategy is also an art of planning and is linked to our goals. *Strategy* means to define those principal goals in such a way as to distinguish the main class or national enemy against whom revolutionary effort must be directed. The Freedom Charter defines the goals of a liberated South Africa in such a way as to isolate the main reactionary forces against whom our blows must be directed and creates the broadest possible unity of progressive forces.

*Tactics* in the political sense is the totality of forms, methods and means of attaining the main goal in concrete circumstances: eg. strike, demonstration, ambush, raid, sabotage etc.

The strategic goals of a movement will depend on the historical period; the nature of the oppressor regime; which class leads the struggle; whether the struggle is for national or class aims etc.

*The choice of methods of struggle will depend on the existing conditions: on the methods of rule of the oppressor classes; and on the readiness and organisation of the people.*

The strategy and tactics of our resistance struggle have changed over the centuries, growing more scientific and revolutionary.

## **Historical Background**

Our history of resistance falls into three periods:

- (i) The Wars of Resistance 1652-1906
- (ii) Non-violent struggle 1912-1960
- (iii) Violent struggle 1961-?

### **The Wars of Resistance 1652-1906**

In the first period the strategy of our people was to defend the ancestral lands and hold white invasion at bay. The struggle was over control of the land and the colonisers aimed to seize as much territory as possible by robbery and plunder. Our people used diplomatic means where possible and where these failed were always ready to resort to armed resistance. Co-ordinated resistance was difficult in 19th century South Africa. So brave and tenacious was the resistance, however, that it lasted for 250 years. Regular as well as guerrilla methods of warfare were made use of.

In the end it was Great Britain, the world's leading power at the time, that finally crushed resistance in a series of bloody wars in the 1870's and 1880's. This aggressive policy was spurred on by the discovery of diamonds and gold and the imperialist 'scramble for Africa'. The Boers had been defeated by our people on many occasions and could not have conquered the country on their own. Names such as Makana, Moshoeshoe, Dingane, Sekhukhuni, Mzilikazi and Cetshwayo stand out as landmarks in this period, as do epic battles such as Isandlwana.

The Bambatha Rebellion of 1906 represents the last brave attempt at armed resistance, and marks the close of an era. Apart from the fact that it was clear that the spear and shield were no match for the rifle and cannon the military institutions of the African chieftains no longer existed. Our people had no alternative but to search for new forms of struggle.

In passing we should note that the spirit of resistance of the past is of great importance to us and serves as a powerful rallying cry to mobilise our people behind the warriors of Umkhonto.

### **Non-Violent Struggle 1912-1960**

In this period of resistance the strategic aim of the ANC was the building of a national body as the means of mobilising and unifying the African people. The ANC realised from the outset that the problem of forging unity was the key to freedom.

Whilst the struggle to control the land had determined state policy in the previous period, with the mining and industrial revolution the struggle



for cheap African labour became the main determinant of state policy. In order to keep us disorganised and weak, the successive white capitalist governments applied vicious laws backed by coercion and force. It was no small achievement for the early pioneers of the ANC to build the first steps of national unity. If the early tactics they employed seem moderate to us we must bear in mind the conditions of the time. Uprooted from the land, in a stage of transition from peasants to workers, our people were initially in a state of disorganisation.

It is with the development of a stable African working class and the emergence of young revolutionary intellectuals during the Second World War, when national consciousness was fanned throughout Africa and Asia, that our methods of struggle became more militant and mass based, our general strategy was broadened to include both national and class dimensions, and the ANC and Communist Party grew much stronger.

With the advent to power of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party in 1948 the scene was set for the mass struggles of the 'fifties. These struggles, making use of such methods as strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience and militant demonstrations, turned the ANC into a mass movement; steeled and disciplined our people; raised their national consciousness to new heights; and forged powerful class and national alliances.

*In all these campaigns the emphasis was on non-violence; a policy which proved extremely successful in advancing the struggle.* It was essential to make full use of all legal channels as long as these remained. This was a tactical necessity in order to build organisational strength and raise the fighting mood of the people. Furthermore, as has been pointed out, the masses always prefer to make use of peaceful forms of struggle where these exist. As the challenge to white rule became more powerful so the government resorted to more violent repression. Bannings and restrictions, the imposition of severer penalties for defying unjust laws, baton charges and shootings became the order of the day. Rebellion and unrest amongst our people flared up in town and country; in New Brighton, Cato Manor, Alexandra, Zeerust, Sekhukhuniland, Pondoland, Northern Natal.

The Sharpeville massacre and the banning of the ANC illustrated that the government had declared total war on our people and was preparing to crush our liberation movement by all means.

This finally closed all channels to non-violent prospects for change. The violent crushing of the national protest strike against the declaration of the racist republic in May, 1961 was the final proof that armed forms of struggle were becoming necessary.

## **The Turn to Violence**

'How many more Sharpevilles would there be in the history of our country?' Nelson Mandela asked at the Rivonia trial, indicating the question our leaders faced when they decided to break with the policy of non-violence. 'And how many more Sharpevilles could the country stand without violence and terror becoming the order of the day?'

It had become clear to our leaders that where no democratic liberties existed, where all forms of protest were met by violence, the only way of going forward was by armed struggle. This was a decision the people would support for they had experienced the exhausting of peaceful means; had seen the government close down all legal and peaceful channels of resistance. What had happened elsewhere in the world (Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria) was happening in South Africa: *namely that the people's movements are compelled to use violent means in order to overcome the use of repressive violence by the state.* 'The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices – submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa' was the way this point was expressed in Umkhonto's manifesto. That the mood of the masses was in keeping with the thinking of our leaders (and strongly influencing the leadership's carefully considered judgement too) is illustrated by the fact that there were increasing numbers of violent clashes between our people and the police in numerous township incidents, as well as open rebellion in Zeerust, Sekhukhuniland, Natal and Pondoland. If there already existed a tendency towards armed struggle, then the outlawing of the ANC was the final necessary condition; for operating in an underground situation meant it was now free from legal constraints and could issue any call it saw fit.

The outlawing of an organisation, however, does not automatically lead to a decision to embark on armed struggle. Neither do massacres eg. Bulhoek and Bondelswarts. It must be possible to satisfy other necessary conditions, especially the possibility of arming and training the people. Just as leaders must take into account the historic situation so they must carefully weigh up the objective and subjective conditions before judging that the situation is ripe. What are these conditions?

*Objective conditions* exist independently of our will. They are the conditions which are beyond our immediate control and can be favourable or unfavourable. For example prior to the Great October Revolution when imperialism dominated the world it was difficult for the oppressed nations to struggle against colonialism. In the period after October 1917, when the

Soviet Union emerged to aid the oppressed peoples of all lands, conditions for struggle became much more favourable. Objective conditions relate to the internal and external situation; balance of forces between rulers and oppressed; and the material economic conditions in a country. These determine the people's mood; level of crisis and contradiction; whether the rulers are in control of the situation; whether a particular period is 'stormy' or 'peaceful'.

*Subjective conditions* relate to our will; to our preparedness and readiness to embark on a certain course of action. To fulfil the subjective conditions means that there must be in existence a party or movement with a political programme and clearly defined strategy and tactics. This vanguard movement must be closely linked to the masses; capable of mobilising and leading them; able to put its will into practice.

In 1906 Bambatha and his followers had the will to take up arms but the objective conditions were unfavourable. By 1961 the objective and subjective conditions were maturing. This realistically raised the possibility of armed struggle. What precisely were these conditions in the concrete South African situation?

### **Objective Factors**

(i) The international situation and world balance of forces was becoming more favourable to the national liberation struggle. Eg: defeat of Nazism; growth of socialist countries; collapse of colonialism. Imperialism was faced by the general crisis of capitalism and growing challenge to its rule (Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria etc.)

(ii) Africa's 'wind of change' was strengthening the forces of freedom and independence; threatening the racists in the south; raising the hopes of the people.

(iii) South Africa was becoming isolated whilst world support was swinging behind our struggle.

(iv) As a result of its growing isolation, and increasing socio-economic contradictions aggravated by the racist system, the crisis of the regime was mounting. This was expressed in the growing clashes between the rulers and oppressed, e.g. the Sharpeville massacre.

(v) Relying more and more on brutal force the regime left us with 'no choice but to hit back by all means within our power'. All peaceful means had been exhausted and the masses were showing their disillusionment with non-violent methods alone.

(vi) With the changing situation in Africa the possibility of receiving arms and training abroad was becoming real.

### **Subjective Factors**

(i) Our movement and cadres had become steeled and disciplined in the struggle. We had the necessary organisation, experience, links with the masses and programme of aims to enable us to meet the challenge of the new historic situation and embark on the rigorous road of armed struggle.

(ii) Despite the fact that our people had been totally deprived of the knowledge of guns and military training we had the ability and will to master all techniques as long as these became available to us.

Given these conditions our leaders decided that "the time had come" to embark on new forms of struggle in which popular armed force would become the key element. The 1962 Programme of the SACP summed up the situation:

"The Communist Party considers that the slogan of 'non-violence' is harmful to the cause of the democratic national revolution in the new phase of the struggle, disarming the people in the face of the savage assaults of the oppressor, dampening their militancy, undermining their confidence in their leaders. . . today they (the people) are left with no alternative but to defend themselves and hit back, to meet violence with violence. The Nationalists are forcing a solution upon South Africa in which patriots and democrats will take up arms to defend themselves, organise guerrilla armies and undertake various acts of resistance, culminating in mass insurrection against white domination".

From the outset the Party collaborated with the ANC in the formation of Umkhonto and Party members have played a role at all levels in conducting the operations of Umkhonto.

### **Victory or Death!**

It was recognised that the new path would not be an easy one and would require exceptional demands and sacrifices. The twenty years that have passed since those historic initial blows of Umkhonto have seen the struggle becoming more intense and violent. Those twenty years have witnessed 'calm' and 'stormy' phases; periods of mass activity and violent bloodshed such as during the Soweto uprising which in a flash illuminated for an entire younger generation the necessity to resort to arms.

Those years have seen the militarisation of the apartheid state and its unbridled aggression and war against our own people and our brothers and sisters in the neighbouring independent states. Those years have seen the dramatic swing in the balance of forces and the changing of the map of

southern Africa as a result of the victorious armed struggles in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe and the advances in Namibia.

Those years have inevitably seen set-backs and problems too, which at times have seriously slowed down the pace of our advance. For almost 18 of those years many of our key leaders, responsible for adopting this historic path, have been incarcerated on Robben Island. For a period we had to grapple with the problems of leading the revolution from exile.

After that momentous decision twenty years ago, however, nothing could ever be the same again in our embattled country or for that matter in the entire southern African region.

Thanks to that decision Umkhonto we Sizwe, the People's Army, is today, at a time when our situation so urgently requires armed force to reinforce and stimulate the mass actions of our people, a fighting force of experienced freedom fighters with a proud combat record. The actions of those first brave units, self-trained and making use of simple home-made devices, are linked by a glorious road that runs through the Zimbabwe battles of 1967-68 to the audacious and spectacular blows of today such as Sasol, Booyens, Fort Jackson etc. etc. which have inspired our people and shaken the enemy to his bootstraps. In this twentieth birthday year the struggles of MK are showing greater levels of success and potentiality.

At a time like this we pay tribute to the glorious combatants of Umkhonto and homage to our eternal heroes who have fallen in battle. We have in mind our unforgettable martyrs such as Vuyisile Mini and Solomon Mahlangu, Looksmart Ngudle and Babla Saloojee, the men of Zimbabwe such as Patrick Malao, Basil February and Johannes Sibanyoni, and the young MK fighters of today such as the Silverton heroes Thami Makhuba, Wilfred Madela and Fanie Mafoko, those who fell at Matola and those who have fought it out to the last bullet or hand grenade such as Linda Jabane, the lion of Chiawelo and Khuduga Molokwane, the Dobsonville schoolteacher.

Eternal honour to them! In the words of President Tambo, which ring like a clarion call to all MK combatants:

**"Our battle cry is and shall continue to be: Victory or Death! We shall win!"**

# **OF MAIDS AND MADAMS**

## **The Tragic Plight of Domestic Workers**

**by Anon**

Dynamite has literally been the regime's reply to Jacklyn Cock, Rhodes University sociology lecturer and author of *Maids and Madams* (Ravan Press), the recently acclaimed research study into the plight of domestic workers in the Eastern Cape. She herself has described the book as an indictment of white selfishness and greed. This has angered some racists to the extent of making an attempt on her life, but fortunately with no success.

Ms. Cock has pointed out in her study that domestics are deprived of critical rights as workers, especially the right to collective bargaining and legal protection. There are no laws stipulating the minimum wage, hours of work or other conditions of service. Lack of disability and unemployment insurance, pensions, maternity benefits and paid sick leave means that domestic workers can be exploited at the whim of their "Madams".

The value and richness of the book lies in a series of 225 interviews, 50 with employers and 175 with domestic workers carried out over a period of 3 years ending in 1979.

Shocking wages and extreme exploitation of domestics are revealed, with wages ranging from R4 to R60 a month for an 84 to 78 hour week. At least 75 percent of those interviewed earned less than R30 a month and most received irregular wage increases. In one case the worker had started at R3 a month and was now earning R30 a month after 27 years' service. In another the increase was from R5 to R22 after 20 years' service with the same employer; in a third from R8 to R35 after 25 years' service. Several of the workers said they were too afraid of losing their jobs to ask for an increase, while others said they had given up trying to ask for increased wages. "I always wait until she gives me an increase".

Payments in kind are frequently used as an excuse for the pittance domestics receive and which is often consciously construed as a 'wage'.

"In the Eastern Cape payments in kind vary considerably. All the workers in the sample received some food daily. The following items were most often mentioned: samp, beans, mealie meal, bread, jam and tea".

In many cases, 86 percent, the food was rationed. For example one employer said she gives her domestic worker one carrot, one tomato or onion, two slices of bread, one piece of "servant's meat", two tea bags and one spoonful of jam. "Each day this employer itemised the above proudly and reckons that her worker is the best fed in Port Alfred".

Some workers were given leftovers from their employer's table: "I am just a rubbish tin for them".

Forty of the workers were given an annual holiday. Overall 34% were given one week's holiday or less each year. The domestic workers and their families are frequently subject to the non-existence of family life. Ms. Cock declared that "These women are clearly victims of the disruption of family life that the system of migrant labour entails". Some workers complained that they had to neglect their husbands because they slept at their workplace. Together with the lack of any family existence and long hours of work there is a considerable level of deprivation of social life. "How can you have time to visit when you have two families to look after?"

### **Lack of Education**

The great majority of domestic workers in the Eastern Cape study had only a minimum amount of formal education. Three quarters had not progressed beyond standard V. Many expressed a deep sense of hopelessness and despondency about their own lives. Their hopes for the future focussed on their children, and many stressed the importance of education for their daughters so they could avoid having to be domestic workers.

When asked "What would you say is the worst thing about your job?", some answered "Cooking the dog's food and not eating it", "Not being allowed to sit in the kitchen. We have to eat outside next to the toilet and it smells worse than hell". In answer to "What would you say is the best thing about your job?" some workers said: "There is nothing good to say. My job is hell"; "Nothing, but at least I have a job"; "I am allowed to sleep at home".

The considered racist views of the white "Madam" are not surprising. Comments such as "She's very raw, just out of the kraal"; "She's all right so long as she doesn't drink out of my cups"; and "She doesn't have much to say, but I prefer them that way", epitomise the inhuman, vulgar, racist and arrogant attitudes of most white South Africans.

Only two other studies on domestic workers have been undertaken in other parts of South Africa, one by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg in 1971 and the other by Preston-Whyte on the African women migrants in domestic service in Durban. Ms. Cock's findings are confirmed by the studies done in other areas of South Africa. The views, opinions and statistics in the Eastern Cape are not at all dissimilar to those in the rest of South Africa. For instance, Preston-Whyte found that 60 per cent of the domestic workers in Durban were supporting minor children, and Whisson and Wiel quote that in Johannesburg it was estimated on average that each maid had four dependants.

Part Three of the Book "Discrimination : Race and Sex" describes the ultra-exploitability of domestic workers which flows from the system of racial domination. This consists of various measures of racial domination serving to maintain blacks in a subordinate position, and legitimised by a racist ideology. These measures are elaborated on at length and operate at five critical levels: political rights, property and residence rights, employment, education and income.

Pointing out that "Maids" and "Madams" are very differently located in South African society, Ms Cock notes that both black and white women are subject to discrimination on the basis of sex. Moreover, the system has two components: various measures of sexual discrimination serving to maintain women in a position of dependence and a sexist ideology serving to legitimise this dependence. These form a structure of constraints effectively limiting women at the levels of legal rights, employment, reproduction and education.

The section dealing with employment states that "Overall, women are playing an increasingly important role in economic production, but the



nature of their involvement differs markedly from that of men". In South Africa 32.7 per cent of all women are economically active outside their homes. From 1951-1970 the largest growth in employment was amongst black women which increased by 230 per cent. Domestic service is now the second largest occupational category of African women, engaging 38 per cent of all employed black women in 1970.

The author deserves much credit for having written, researched and published the book inside South Africa.

Jacklyn Cock has attempted to avoid the pitfalls of empiricism that this sort of study could easily degenerate into by locating each case in the broader milieu of South African society, giving an historical background leading to the present day contradictions of the apartheid society.

### **New Organisations**

More recently, since the publication of this book, a number of organisations have been formed in South Africa which are attempting to deal with some of the problems domestic workers face.

On the 26th February this year the newspaper *Sowetan* reported that hundreds of black domestic workers saw the launching of the South African Domestic Workers' Association (Sadwa) in Johannesburg. The Natal branch followed in Durban on March 5. Sadwa is a joint project by the South African Institute of Race Relations and the Domestic Workers and Employees Project (DWEP). One of the aims and objects of Sadwa is to protect the domestic worker against exploitation, hardship and abuse occasioned by employers, officials and the State.

In 1972 the South African Institute of Race Relations set up DWEP – Domestic Workers and Employees project. Centres throughout the country were established and run by local housewives with the aim that domestic workers themselves should gradually take over the running and much of the teaching in the centres.

Dealing with the question of wages Sue Gordon, National Organiser of DWEP, said:

"Adjusting domestic workers' wages to keep pace with the new household subsistence levels, many employers are using the high rate of unemployment among blacks as an excuse to force down wages. DWEP increased its recommended minimum figures by 10 per cent in January (1980), the first in two years because of employer resistance to paying anything approaching living wages" (*Rand Daily Mail*, February 21, 1980).

*Race Relations News* reported on some of the work of DWEP:

"In Killarney, Johannesburg, domestic workers in some blocks of flats lived under terrible conditions in servants quarters. In one block about 20 domestic workers share one bathroom and one toilet, while their employers live in luxurious flats".

To help counter the situation the article continues:

"DWEF has embarked on a new idea – the 'Neighbourhood Group'. For this purpose two rooms were acquired in a big house in Killarney. It will be a place where domestic workers will be involved in directing the decision-making process of the project and where they will control their own affairs. They will also be trained in skills that will make them feel more worthwhile, and add to their sense of dignity as well as to their wages".

In 1976 Mrs. Leah Tutu was appointed Director of the Project and over 100 centres have been formed involving 10,000 people.

Another body, the South African Council of Churches' Domestic Workers' Project (DWP) highlighted the worsening lot of domestic workers. According to Deborah Mabiletsa, Director of the Women's Division of the South African Council of Churches (SACC):

"Domestic workers are a 'special type of labour force' requiring special attention. To this end she hoped the Wiehahn Commission, to which DWP submitted a memorandum last year, would recommend some form of contract service and other 'fringe benefits' like sick leave and notice provisions" (*Financial Mail* 23.5.80).

Similarly in an article in the *Rand Daily Mail* of 13.5.80, Mrs. Joyce Harris, National President of the Black Sash, says:

"All hopes that their (domestic workers') situation would be improved have been dashed by the Government's consistent refusal to include them in any protective legislation".

In the same article it was reported that "the SACC and the Black Sash have called for the full legal status of black women over the age of 21, marriages according to common law, property and succession rights to buy and own land regardless of their marital status."

### **No Visitors**

Not only do domestic workers suffer from the total lack of protective legislation but at the same time "the law forbids domestic workers to have visitors at night, condemning thousands of women to a solitary life, robbed even of the right to see their husbands and children", according to Maggie Oewies, General Secretary of the Domestic Workers' Association in the *Cape Times* of 2.4.80. Since then new legislation in Cape Town has outraged domestic workers particularly in the Green and Sea Point areas.

The 'key law' gazetted on December 17, 1980, states that a register must be kept by employers containing the full names of the domestic worker, reference book number, date of occupation of quarters etc. The employer must also be in possession of a duplicate key which should be made available on demand to any police officer or employee of the council. If the employers go away on holiday leaving their property unoccupied, they must appoint a representative who will stay on the premises to keep charge of the register and keys. No one other than the domestic worker may be present in the quarters between midnight and 8 a.m.

While the Black Sash, DWEP, and other 'liberal' organisations have been pushed into taking a progressive stand, the fact that they remain the "madams" has caused friction between these organisations and the Domestic Workers' Association – which represents the majority of black domestic workers.

Before this law was enacted the DWA distributed 10,000 pamphlets to workers in the area as a reaction against employers who had already taken this law into their own hands. Mrs. Oewies said: 'These people do nothing about workers' living conditions and pay – aren't these things more important than making laws to keep Sea Point streets quiet?' (*Sunday Post* 19.10.80). Workers when asked about the 'key law' said:

"We're human beings, how can it be right for police to be allowed into our rooms anytime they like? I'm joining the DWA to work with them on this"; and "They can get the key, but we'll change the locks every time". (*Cape Herald* 25.10.80 and *Sunday Post* 19.10.80).

This is by no means the only recent action taken by domestic workers. In Port Elizabeth at the beginning of January this year, domestic workers strongly attacked employers for exploitation and advocated a minimum R100 monthly wage. About 60 women resolved to form a union at a meeting called by the cultural organisation Roots. They accused employers of making them work long hours and on public holidays without a break or leave pay and said they were 'hired and fired at the stroke of a pen'.

Although many white established organisations like DWEP, the SACC Domestic Workers' Project and others have taken up some of the problems facing domestic workers, it is the *workers* and *their* organisations, *their* demands and *their* mobilisation that will win not only better conditions but the right to live and work in a free and democratic South Africa.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## A GIANT OF OUR HISTORY

**Freedom for my People. Autobiography of Z.K. Matthews: Southern Africa 1901-1968.** Memoir by Monica Wilson. (Rex Collings, London 1981. Price 12.50)

The story of Z K (as we called him in the movement) is a fascinating story, especially to those who are interested in the relationship between the history of African education and African politics.

Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews was born on October 20, 1901, near Kimberley and grew up like any African child. In 1916 he entered Lovedale Institution. That was the year the University College of Fort Hare was established. This meant that "I and others of my generation would be among the first to be able to advance further than any Africans in Africa before our time." In February 1918 he was admitted at Fort Hare to do matriculation and in 1923 he completed his BA courses as the first graduate of Fort Hare, the first African to obtain a degree in South Africa — many before him had obtained degrees abroad. Z K obtained an LL.B. degree with the University of South Africa, an M.A. degree at Yale

In his characteristic democratic approach to problems Z K says:

"But if it is necessary to accept that all history is biased, the important thing is that all biases be represented, and it is high time that African history, written from the African point of view, takes its place on library shelves."

This autobiography is in a sense unique. Here is an attempt to link the history of African education with the development of the major African political organisation, the ANC; an attempt by one of the leading African academic giants to show from his own experience the disabilities and problems which face African intellectuals and by implication demonstrating that their rightful place is in the liberation struggle whose success will bring about the climate in which their intellectual abilities will flourish and blossom.

We say "attempt" because this is not the final word on these questions – and Z K Matthews would have been the first to agree with us. The book is an honest account of Z K's life but – in the opinion of this reviewer – more could be said about the student strikes and struggles especially at Lovedale and Fort Hare (places Z K new best and about which he writes). The reviewer expected more about the ANC Youth League at Fort Hare and its impact on the ANC; about the change of tactics and strategy of the ANC especially after 1949 etc. There are many interesting names of former Fort Harians, also from other parts of Africa, but they are just mentioned and this tends to make the book disjointed. The photographs of the Matthews family and friends give us a clear picture of the family background of the author. But I am not sure whether Sobukwe's photograph is in any way connected with this background or this story.

The select bibliography of publications by Z K Matthews shows clearly that he was also a publicist who even engaged himself in journalistic activity. He was involved with the World Council of Churches and helped to sharpen its anti-apartheid stance. He died as a diplomat in 1968, representing the Botswana government in Washington and at the UN. He now lies buried in Gaborone, Botswana, but his ideas live on, not only in this book, but in the hearts and minds of all the freedom loving people of South Africa – black and white – who remember him with affection. On October 1, 1970, Nelson Mandela wrote to the widow of Z K from Robben Island and stated:

"Unlike many highly qualified intellectuals Z K had no anti-left prejudices and worked in harmony with lovers of freedom from all schools of thought."

We South African communists will remember him.

*Jonga Kwedini*

## A BIBLE FOR REACTIONARIES

### **Why South Africa will Survive — a historical analysis.**

By L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, published by Croom Helm, 1981.

This book, by two openly right-wing United States academics, appears to be an attempt to provide a "bible" on Southern Africa for the American new right and for the Reagan administration in particular. Its significance is increased by the fact that one of its authors is a senior adviser on southern Africa to the Reagan administration. The book is a much expanded version of the authors' brief paper: "South Africa: War, Revolution or Peace?" which the Hoover Institute published in 1978.

The central argument of "Why South Africa will survive" is set out clearly in the introduction (and repeated in different ways throughout the book). The authors say:

"We do not believe that a South African revolution will come during our lifetime; we are convinced that change will rather come from within the ruling white oligarchy rather than by liberation movements. We believe therefore that American support should go to the *verligtes*, the reformers, within the ruling National Party; our slogan is: all power to the moderates!"

Although the book contains some occasional mild criticisms of certain aspects of apartheid, it constitutes a detailed statement of all the main themes of apartheid propaganda, particularly those meant for overseas consumption. For example:

"The Nationalist government, unlike its predecessors, has induced the South African taxpayer to provide substantial funds to the homelands, much greater in relation to South Africa's resources than the foreign aid made available by the West to the Third World nations." (p.68)

"A Russian skilled worker in Moscow or Kiev, an Asian immigrant in contemporary London, not to speak of a slum-dweller in Delhi, would admire a city like Soweto, in which the average house accommodates less than six persons". (p.83).

"There is indeed much poverty in Soweto. But there is no misery of the kind found, say in Addis Ababa, Kinshasa or Karachi." (p.84).

The first section of the book is full of these irrelevant, thoroughly inaccurate comparisons, which they seldom attempt to justify, and which mirror traditional apartheid propaganda. In fact, the endless comparisons between the happy lot of South African blacks and the terrible conditions of people in the Third World and the Soviet Union become more and more ludicrous as the book proceeds.

There are worse areas than Soweto in South Africa, notably the vast rural slums, the Bantustans and resettlement camps where the majority of our people are confined. But the only valid comparison to make is that between the standard of living of black and white South Africans. It is the difference between Soweto and Sandton, not Soweto and Karachi, which constitutes the indictment of apartheid.

The early sections of the book are meant to provide a guide to the history of South Africa and its people, and the present day economic and political infrastructure. These sections are largely unoriginal, the authors relying substantially on rightwing academics like de Crespigny for their account of the modern South African state.

The one section which is quite useful is a summary of the major strategic thinking and defence planning of the apartheid state.

The last sections of the book are devoted to discussing South Africa's supposed tremendous strategic and economic importance to the West, and to a detailed statement of why revolution is impossible in South Africa. Finally the authors devote a chapter specifically to their title: Why South Africa will survive.

It is interesting to note that in the short time since the book was written, several of the authors' predictions have already come unstuck.

For example they say:

"... given the numerical weakness of the Indian community, existing tensions between Indians and Zulu, and the Indians' fear of losing their stake in the event of an African take-over, the Indians are most likely, in the long run, to side with the whites."

The mass demonstrations against apartheid that have swept the Indian community over the past eighteen months have demonstrated clearly that the opposite is the case.

On the ANC and the SACP the authors state that they have become "important for their publicity value abroad, rather than for their involvement in the internal South African revolution."

Again events over the last two years have swiftly overtaken this particular piece of "objective" academic analysis and rendered it ridiculous.

The authors examine in detail all the possible scenarios they can see for revolutionary change, and then dismiss them one by one. They say sanctions, an invasion from outside, guerrilla warfare, workers' strikes and a mass uprising will be ineffective against the power of the state; that South Africa is too strong, militarily and economically, and too important for the West to be overcome.

While some of the points they raise have validity – especially in controverting the theories of the liberals and the “new left” revolutionaries – the one contingency they never consider is that a *combination* of several of the strategies that they deal with could succeed in overthrowing the apartheid state.

Yet this is precisely the strategy and tactics of the ANC and the liberation front in South Africa, which see the destruction of apartheid fascism as coming only from a successful combination of armed struggle, mass demonstrations and workers’ strikes etc, coupled with international action against South Africa.

Gann and Duignan either do not know this or think it is irrelevant. While they show evidence of having read some articles in *The African Communist*, they seem unaware of the ANC’s “Strategy and Tactics” or the Communist Party’s “Road to South African Freedom”.

They should ponder Nelson Mandela’s message smuggled out of Robben Island after nearly two decades of imprisonment and published last year in which he expresses the basic strategy of the liberation movement: “Between the anvil of united mass action and the hammer of armed struggle we shall crush apartheid and white minority rule”.

This might help dispel the pessimism they themselves seem to feel that genuine reform will ever come from within the ranks of the white supremacists. Not that they seek revolution. Their idea of a South African utopia is a completely free-market capitalist country where racial discrimination would be done away with gradually.

But as they have shown over the last few years, the brave fighters of Umkhonto, our people’s army, the youth, students, women and workers are today demanding more than that. The oppressed people of South Africa want to see the complete overthrow of the apartheid state and are determined to carry on their fight until they have achieved it.

D.Z.

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## NATIONAL AND CLASS STRUGGLE

**Present-Day Problems in Asia and Africa: Theory, Politics, Personalities** by R. Ulyanovsky. (Progress Publishers, Moscow 1980).

This book, by one of the leading Soviet scholars, deals with the present day problems of Africa and Asia; problems of a political and sociological nature; the history of the liberation movements and their future or rather historical place in the world-wide revolutionary process. There are no formulas. It is a straightforward record based on Marxist-Leninist theory.

Ulyanovsky has interesting things to say about the experience of the Asian Republics of the Soviet Union, the countries of socialist orientation and the non-aligned movement. He says:

"Today, with the benefit not only of theory, but of historical experience, we can set out with a fair degree of completeness, the characteristics of a socialist-orientated state. Such a state will have:

- undergone change in the class composition of its political leadership whereby the national bourgeoisie (containing national bourgeois and feudal elements) will have lost their monopoly of political power to the more progressive forces who act in the interests of the broad masses of the people, and will have created a new revolutionary-democratic state with a new state apparatus;
- abolished the political and weakened the economic domination of imperialism and the monopolies;
- set up state and cooperative sectors in the economy and promoted their priority development over the private capitalist sector;
- instituted state regulation and, at a certain stage, limited the private capitalist sector to the extent of nationalising foreign capital or subjecting it to rigorous state control;
- established and developed all-round cooperation with the socialist countries;
- waged an unremitting war on corruption;
- carried out social transformations in the interests of the people, including such measures as agrarian reforms, the abolition of social privilege, the liquidation of illiteracy, the establishment of equal rights for women and the passing of progressive labour and social legislation etc;
- fought against the ideology of imperialism, neo-colonialism and racism and for the establishment of revolutionary-democratic ideology which is

historically linked with the world liberation movement and the experience of scientific socialism." (p.85)

Ulyanovsky does not stop at theory. He applies his theory to concrete historical experiences. His analysis of the ideas and practical-political activities of personalities such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon is a case in point. These were people who were thrown up by the national liberation struggle. Their theories are full of contradictions but yet positive. A comparison of their philosophies gives us a picture of the main trends and tendencies in the philosophy of Afro-Asian nationalism and anti-colonialism; the extent to which they have been influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideas and their shortcomings. This book is topical, especially for such countries as Ghana, where one notices a trend towards the rehabilitation and revival of Nkrumah.

J.K.

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## **DIAGNOSIS BUT NO CURE**

### **Inside the Third World**

by Paul Harrison (Pelican Books, London).

This book has much the same virtues and the same shortcomings as the author's earlier work, *The Third World Tomorrow* (reviewed in *The African Communist* No 85, p 121). The problems of poverty and inequality which confront Africa, Asia and Latin America are described with a wealth of detailed information, with compassion and with indignation. The role played by colonialism, by the multinational capitalist corporations and other exploiters is exposed. Unfortunately, however, it all leads nowhere except to a sense of despair, tempered by nostalgia for the distant past and a faint hope that the Western powers may launch "a co-ordinated assault on poverty and inequality in the Third World."

The struggle of the peoples of Tropical Africa for the liquidation of political and economic colonial oppression, although constituting the essence of their national liberation movement, is closely linked with another of its aspects – the struggle for cultural revival, renovation and development. To those who witnessed the drama on the African continent from the outside, this struggle remained for a comparatively long period of time harder to grasp, probably because the political and economic independence of Africa was rightly regarded as a fateful question for the African peoples, but, perhaps, also because the world was not ready to react to this cultural awakening. It was not sure of the criteria it had to apply in the assessment of the cultural manifestations, and wherever the attitude of Africa was intentionally and purposefully hostile, these manifestations were consciously passed over in silence or depreciated. However, this struggle was not a momentary and purely emotional phenomenon but a deeply realised necessity. One of the most significant moments in the process of cultural consolidation of the peoples of Black Africa was the emergence of written literature in the European languages – English, French, Portuguese.

Which are the historical and artistic influences that form the character of that literature? Bourgeois literary criticism adopts two diametrically opposed, both extreme, approaches to the understanding of African literature. The first one sets African literature against all other literatures in the world, defines it as something different from them, unique in its nature. The second attempts to interpret African literature as a mere imitation of Western literatures, a literature without its own characteristics and specific features.

In spite of the apparent antagonism between the two approaches, they are united by a common methodological basis which is their weakness – the exclusion of the historical aspect from the analysis of literary phenomena. Or, to put it in another way, the implicit involvement of historical considerations in them is completely wrong, because the first approach obviously ignores such a climacteric historical event as the European invasion in Africa, while the second adopts the concept of those bourgeois historians who maintain that the history of Africa begins with that very invasion, which of course they define as a civilising mission.

A careful and unbiased study of contemporary African literature in the European languages will, however, prove that its origin and development have to be associated with African oral literature, or folklore, with achievements of world literature, and with the colonial experience.

Westernised literary works, was extremely sharp, it often seemed logical to negate the entire European civilisation – its science, technology, rationalism. Later during the 60s, at the new stage of the national liberation movement, when many of the newly liberated countries were in the making, it was realised that a deeper insight into the tradition in African culture was necessary.

### **World Influence**

But in spite of the tendency to keep the oral tradition alive, African writers are not indifferent to the achievements of world literature. Together with the European languages they also acquired a good knowledge of the literature written and translated into these languages and managed to benefit from it by accepting and creatively using the foreign literary experience.

An important point in the consideration of Western influence on African creative writing is the novel – the only literary form which was entirely new for Africa, which was totally imported, and yet, from the very beginning of its existence on the African continent, acquired its specific features. Its emergence was connected with the disintegration of the community by the intrusion of the bourgeois world and with the process of separation of the individual from that community. Yet, unlike the classical European realistic novel which is a product of the development of bourgeois society, and presents social processes through the life of the individual most often opposed to the life of society, the African novel preserves to a considerable extent the folklore plot revealing the life of the whole tribe as well as the folklore character, closely linked with the tribe. However, the objective representation from a modern point of view of certain weaknesses of the traditional social order, its degradation, the development of social contradictions, bourgeois relations, compels the writers to develop and reshape the folklore tradition and to introduce new elements in their work – irony, drama, a deeper individualisation of the characters. To meet this requirement, African writers turn to the experience of world literature.

The colonial experience, with all the disasters it brought about, also serves as an important factor in the creation of African literature in the European languages. The congresses of Negro writers which normally followed the Pan-African congresses reaffirmed the latter's insistence that the intellectual activity of the continent should be geared towards the cause of national liberation. All the documents adopted at the various

congresses serve to prove that nationalist feelings and the struggle for freedom have always been a point of departure of the creative work of African writers. The imperative cry for freedom, social justice and equality dominates both pre- and post-independence African literature, because many of the difficult problems facing Africa today are in a great measure the consequences of the colonial past.

With all their features, the works of contemporary African authors, deeply national in character, belong to world literature.



# **WHY I JOINED THE COMMUNIST PARTY**

## **FROM CAPE TOWN PAROCHIALISM TO PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM**

**By Rashad**

I was born in 1923 in a suburb of Cape Town. I was the younger son of a carpenter who was of part slave origin and a mother who was white enough to be registered as such. My childhood was comparatively comfortable, yet despite my father's skill we knew the insecurity of a building worker's family. When one construction was finished we were never sure when my father's next job would begin; and of course when it rained there were no wages.

My last days at school were spent at a high school in District 6, a move which started me on a path which I've never regretted. It was in District 6 that I, together with some school friends, met Chris Ziervogel, that legendary figure of the old Hyman Liberman Institute. It was he who encouraged us to read. It was he who gave me the opportunity to read a book on India written by that veteran communist R. Palme Dutt, a work which drew a very vivid picture of the torment of the people of India and which clearly indicted British imperialism. I realised then that it was not just the people of South Africa who were suffering oppression.

It was while attending high school that some of us visited the nearby offices of the National Liberation League. The NLL as it was known was a well organised, militant, anti-imperialist mass organisation which campaigned against the colour bar and segregation. It was here that I, together with other young people, was first introduced to organised opposition to the regime. Active in the League at the time were men of the stature of Comrades Moses Kotane, Jimmy La Guma, Johnny Gomas and John Morley – all Communists who made a great impression on us. They took a keen interest in us young people, they gave us encouragement, were patient and understanding, and were positive and clear in giving us guidance. Trotskyites were also present as were other unforgettable personalities such as Cissie Gool, Hadjie Gamiet, Mr. Paulsen and "Old Man Brown". The latter two might also have been party members.

My earliest and most indelible impression of political campaigning was experienced in 1959 when Stuttaford, the then Minister of the Interior, introduced the Servitude Bill. By this means he proposed to grant the right to Provincial Councils to introduce the rough equivalent of the Group Areas Act such as we know it today. Under the leadership of the NLL, a massive campaign was launched, the highlight of which was a mammoth mass meeting on the Grand Parade, followed by masses of people surging through the streets of Cape Town, smashing the windows of Stuttafords department store as well as other business premises and clashing with armed police. In fact, I was made to understand that it was as from that night that the police regularly carried arms in Cape Town. Thereafter they could never risk walking alone in District 6. Back at school the next day, those of us who had participated in this so-called "display of hooliganism" were selected for thrashing by the physical culture master. I suppose you would have called this our first "bleeding" in those days.

The net result of this mass opposition to the Servitude Bill was that the Bill was set aside. It should be remembered that General Smuts, who

became Prime Minister, had joined in a declaration of war against Hitler Germany. He thus needed Coloured recruits for the army and could hardly expect a favourable response to such a call if he started off by legalising the dispossession of our people from their homes.

In 1941 I was apprenticed in the shoe industry and here I experienced the daily humiliation of white supremacy on the factory floor. The result was revulsion, which multiplied many times when we came up against discrimination practised by newly arrived white immigrants. The superior position of the whites was not confined to the factory but was even used to entrench their positions in trade unions, a practice which obtains in mixed registered unions to this day.

It was Dr. Dadoo, speaking for the Non-European United Front at a rally in Cape Town, who was the first in the days of my early political enlightenment to impress me with his insistence on a broad based mass struggle. This approach was crucial to us in the Western Cape with its parochialism. We had to get off this merry-go-round set up for us by the regime; a position of semi-privilege for the Coloured offspring of the white slaveowner. Our people had to understand that their future lay in the struggle together with the African people.

With the entry of the Soviet Union into the war began my introduction to working class internationalism. I began to appreciate the extent to which the struggle for a new life in South Africa was part and parcel of the struggle for victory over fascism and the advance of socialism in the Soviet Union. From a backward Czarist society, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had built a country with the capacity to protect itself against Hitler, and a society prepared to undertake the task. I developed a deep respect and admiration for the Soviet Party and the Soviet people.

There were two political forces demanding our attention in Cape Town, that of the Communist Party, and the Trotskyites. While not knowing much about the differences in historical backgrounds or theoretical approaches, I developed a strong suspicion of the Trotskyites: at an early stage their almost complete reliance on the petit bourgeois intelligentsia was made clear to me. In addition, I rejected their attitude towards the Soviet Union.

I attended meetings organised by the People's Club, the Friends of the Soviet Union, and participated in classes run by men like Jack Simons under the auspices of the party.

However, the party was not only to be found in the study class, it was to be found wherever our people's rights were threatened. The members of





# **PATRICE LUMUMBA: PERSONALITY AND FIGHTER**

**by Yuri Vinokurov**

Patrice Lumumba has gone down in African history as a major leader of the national liberation movement. Today, two decades after his death his views and practical activities are the subject of acute ideological debate in and outside Africa between the champions and opponents of progressive development. A flow of publications about Lumumba continues. Some authors focus attention on his lack of political sophistication, at times verging on naïveté, on his errors and miscalculations and try to belittle his role. Others, on the contrary, are inclined to idealise him as a leader and martyr.

A political profile of Lumumba is certain to need more than one colour. In trying to recreate his portrait one should be mindful of the specific conditions which shaped Lumumba's personality as a public figure and statesman of the Republic of the Congo (now Zaire).

Patrice Hemery Lumumba was born on July 2, 1925 in the small village of Onalua in Kasai Province in the family of a poor Batetela peasant. From the age of six the half-hungry boy worked in the fields and was exposed to the hardship of peasant life. At ten he went to a mission school. However,

the career of a priest, just like the other road to a materially secure life, service in the colonial troops, did not appeal to him. The sixteen-year-old youth was eager to devote himself to some socially useful cause, and so entered training as a medical orderly. Before long, however, he left medicine in favour of sociology and politics. Higher education was not available in the colonial Congo and Patrice had to rely on self-education. To this end he moved, in 1943, to the town of Kindu and then went on to Kalima in Kiva Province where he became employed as a clerk in the management of Simetain tin company. There Lumumba first became acquainted with the life of the Congolese proletariat.

He went to great lengths to obtain books and spent most of his free time reading Hugo and Molière, writing summaries of the works of Aristotle, utopian socialists and the French enlighteners. Of the contemporary works he was most interested in those which were critical of capitalism and bourgeois democracy.

At eighteen Lumumba published in the local press his first poems and prose essays praising Belgians who had "saved the Congo from ignorance and slavery". It was some time before he gradually disabused himself from such views which were imposed on Africans by official propaganda, although he was becoming aware even then that these views were at odds with reality.

### **Desperate Poverty**

The living standards of the Congolese were among the lowest in Africa. During the 80 years of colonial rule the country's population dropped by more than half. But the people of the Congo never resigned themselves to slavery. When a child he heard the old folk talking about numerous anti-colonial uprisings cruelly put down by the Belgians, especially the rebellions of the Batetela in the late 19th and early 20th century and of the Bapende in 1931. These stories left a deep imprint on Lumumba's memory. At Kindu Lumumba learnt about the political and religious movement in the Kivu forests whose members called on the people "to take the reins of power in their hands", about the mutiny of the military garrison in Luluabourg (now Kananga) in 1941, and in Stanleyville (now Kisangani), where he moved in the middle of 1944, about the armed uprising of the dockers in Matadi in 1945 and other anti-colonial actions by the Congolese.

Lumumba spent three years in Stanleyville working as a postal clerk and

in a tax office. In July 1947 he was enrolled in a postal workers' school in the colony's administrative centre Leopoldville (now Kinshasa) and graduated from it a year later. By that time Patrice had a perfect command of French, in addition to several local languages. Apart from his school curriculum, he diligently studied philosophy, political economy, the history of political doctrines, the theory of state and law and current African history.

Between 1948 and 1956 Lumumba engaged in political activities in Stanleyville. He headed six public organisations, including the Belgian Liberal Party in the Congo which he set up. None of them was tribalist in character, and Lumumba never divided the people who surrounded him according to the ethnic principle.

That was the period when Lumumba began to formulate his profoundly democratic ideas about the functioning of an African public organisation. In a report on the work of a branch of the trade union of government employees in 1952 he said that such an organisation derived its strength from the collective creative activity of its members. In order not to wither, it must act, constantly set and solve new tasks. Much depends on the leaders, who should be informed, efficient, energetic, courageous and dedicated, and not "sleepy-heads who sit with their arms folded waiting for the task assigned to them to solve itself without the slightest effort on their part".<sup>1</sup>

Lumumba travelled frequently and widely about the country which gave him first-hand knowledge of the life, ideas and aspirations of his people. His countrymen found him not only an interesting conversationalist but also an impressive public speaker: his public lectures and speeches at meetings drew thousands of listeners. He had every reason to say that he wrote his book *The Congo: Land of the Future Under Threat?* (1956) after "thorough investigation conducted among the various strata of the local population". He often travelled abroad to other African countries, to Belgium and the USA.

In July 1955 Lumumba was introduced to King Baudouin who visited Stanleyville. They had a long talk and it seemed to Lumumba that the young monarch inclined to regard his views with understanding. Lumumba wanted to believe that the Congolese and the Europeans could together "dispel the clouds gathering over the country". He wrote in 1957: "Our most cherished, though perhaps somewhat utopian wish is to create in the Congo a state in which racial and religious differences would be erased, and a homogeneous society would be formed of Belgians and

**Congolese welded together by the common destinies of their country”<sup>2</sup>**

**In the mid-1950s a number of Congolese political leaders demanded independence for the Congo. Lumumba did not immediately join them. He continued to favour a “Belgian-Congolese community” and in his writings stressed the importance of such problems as raising the living standards of the people, the development of education and emancipation of the African woman. In criticising the colonial authorities for their reluctance to tackle these problems he advocated “gradual and consistent action.”**

**The changing world situation, the mounting struggle of the colonial peoples for liberation and the impressions of his trips about Africa and to Europe broadened his horizons and led him to see the problems of the Congo in a different light. One is struck by the rapid evolution of Lumumba’s views and the increasingly positive platform of his practical activity. By the late 1950s he was among the leading revolutionary democrats and advocates of complete liberation of Africa from colonialism and neocolonialism. In October 1958 Lumumba founded the party called Congolese National Movement (MNC), the most broadly based and authoritative political organisation in his country. At the end of that year he represented the Congo at the conference of African peoples in Accra (Ghana) and was elected a member of its permanent secretariat. The following year he attended an international seminar of cultural workers in Ibadan, Nigeria, where he delivered a speech on “African Unity and National Independence”. “The aspirations of the peoples of colonial countries,” he stressed, “are identical, their destinies are similar and the goals they pursue in their national development are the same: liberation of Africa from the yoke of colonialism. Africa will never be free and independent if any part of it remains under foreign domination.”<sup>3</sup>**

**At the conference of independent African states in Leopoldville (August 1960) Lumumba said that without unity Africans could not oppose the monstrous appetites of imperialism: the newly-free African peoples and those still fighting for their liberation must form a united front so that every state could count on help from all the countries of the continent.**

**He became aware of the need for the unity of anti-colonial forces inside the country earlier and more deeply than many other leaders of the freedom movement in the Congo. “The more united we are, the more successfully we can oppose oppression, corruption and attempts to disunite us by the ‘divide and rule’ principle,”<sup>4</sup> he pointed out as early as 1956.**

**Lumumba and his supporters were waging a very difficult struggle for**

uniting the Congolese. Congo's ethnic diversity is great even by African standards. The country is inhabited by over 200 tribes with varying levels of social and economic development. There were no stable economic links between regions, and between town and countryside. Separatist trends were clearly felt in areas predominantly inhabited by one nationality (Lower Congo, Kasan and Katanga).

Regarding tribalism as a dangerous "internal enemy", Lumumba tirelessly called on his countrymen to put nationwide interests above narrow ethnic interests and lashed out against the colonial authorities when they gave preference to some regions of the Congo at the expense of others. He opposed the plan to split the Congo into small unviable provinces and against the efforts of some political leaders to set up what he called "little republics" Addressing the Brussels conference which was deciding the question of Congo's independence, Lumumba said: "We protest against any attempts to split our national territory. The Congo's greatness is based on the maintenance of its political and economic unity".<sup>5</sup> He was quite direct in saying that the political, social and economic structures inherited from colonialism had to be destroyed if a united Congolese nation was to be formed.

At the same time Lumumba preached collaboration between various classes and social groups of the Congolese society — the peasants, agricultural and industrial workers, who were more numerous in the Congo than in most African countries, the emerging bourgeoisie, the national intellectuals and the traditional elites. This illusion — one of the many illusions he had — prevented Lumumba from, on the one hand, revealing the existing social strata whose interests were challenged by his policy, and, on the other hand, from identifying the forces whose support he could have enlisted. "All together, dear brothers and sisters," he called, "workers and government employees, workers by brain and by hand, rich and poor, Africans and Europeans, Catholics and Protestants, Kimbanguistes and Kitawalistes" (supporters of religious-political anti-colonial movements. — Y.V.), let us unite and create a great Congolese nation."<sup>6</sup>

One should not forget, however, that to some extent it was his keen awareness of the need for the unity of all the healthy forces of the Congolese society — not only for political but also for economic liberation — and of the dangers inherent in the Congo's ethnic diversity that impelled Lumumba to argue, sometimes even contrary to his own perception of reality, that social harmony among Africans was possible.

A poor peasant who rose to be a prime minister, Lumumba always felt at one with the people, had deep respect for the working people and regarded them as brothers and fellow-fighters. "We know," he wrote in 1956, "that some Congolese are well off, but they are in the minority; meanwhile we are concerned with the majority of the population."<sup>7</sup>

Lumumba tried to make the Congolese National Movement an effective link with the masses. As he saw it, the MNC was to mobilise the people in the struggle not only against the colonial regime but also to destroy exploitation of man by man. The MNC had regular meetings of its central bodies and local branches set up in many parts of the country. The leadership of the party organised meetings attended primarily by peasants, wood-cutters and agricultural labourers. Unlike other parties in the Congo, the MNC had links with the trade unions. In fact it was an organisation similar to a united national front.

Lumumba's enemies in and outside the country regarded his democratic attitudes to be all the more dangerous because they were accompanied by radicalisation of his views and policies.

The leaders of the MNC, notably Lumumba himself, held imperialism to be chiefly responsible for the misery of the Congolese people. They exposed the plans of the neocolonialists to perpetuate their rule in Africa. "The European powers," said Lumumba, "want to enlist the sympathies of those African leaders who follow their lead and deceive their own people. Some of these powers see the meaning of their presence in the Congo and in Africa in exploiting their riches as much as possible, availing themselves of the services of the corrupt leaders."<sup>8</sup>

There were strong elements of a class approach in Lumumba's assessment of the Western policies. "I know that an overwhelming majority of the Belgian people are against the oppression of Africans," he said in October 1959. "They disapprove of a colonial status for the Congo under which 14 million Congolese are exposed to the diktat of a tiny economic oligarchy. If the Belgian people were to have their say, the Congo would never have experienced the misfortunes which are affecting it now."<sup>9</sup> And a short while before that, on September 6 of that year, he told a meeting of six thousand people in Luluabourg that "tensions in the relations between the Congo and Belgium are being exacerbated only by the groups interested in exploiting the Congo's wealth and who egg the authorities on to extend the colonial regime, as well as by some officials who are pursuing their private interests."<sup>10</sup>

Lumumba considered the people to be the prime mover in the struggle

for independence and social progress. This view of the role of the masses distinguished him favourably from many contemporary political figures in his country and in other African states. "History attests," he said, "that independence is never brought to you on a silver platter. It must be won. To that end we must organise ourselves and mobilise all the healthy forces in the country. The Congolese have responded to our appeal and thanks to this united strength we have dealt a mortal blow to rotten colonialism."<sup>11</sup>

Belgium imperialism had to give in to the mounting national freedom movement. On June 30, 1960 the sovereign Republic of the Congo was proclaimed. Patrice Lumumba became head of the first national government. One cannot help recalling the words he said at the ceremony proclaiming independence: "No Congolese will ever forget we have gained our independence through struggle, a daily, persistent and arduous struggle, a struggle in which we were undaunted by privation, suffering or great sacrifice, nor by the blood shed by our peoples."

As soon as he became prime minister, Lumumba, who was probably unaware that the real levers of power were not in his hands and that imperialism preserved its economic and political positions in the Congo, tried to pursue a sharply anti-imperialist policy. The dire legacy of colonialism — an economy geared to agriculture and extraction of raw materials, lack of trained manpower, acute shortage of money and material means for comprehensive development of the national economy — all this made cooperation with foreign capital necessary. Lumumba believed, however, that such cooperation should be made conditional on revision of all the treaties and concessions concluded in the colonial period.

Proceeding from the perfectly sound belief that "political independence would remain meaningless unless it is immediately complemented by economic development" Lumumba began to seek vigorously to gain national control over the resources and the economy of the country. The government banned export of capital from the Congo and set about drawing up a plan of economic development on the basis of the government-owned sector in industry and production cooperation in agriculture. To raise the living standards of the people, it tried to impose price control and induce the employers to raise wages and ensure full employment.

Lumumba proposed to devote much attention to spiritual decolonisation of the Congolese in order to rid them of the "psychological tenor, complexes and habits which colonisation had for centuries instilled in us". Condemning the negative role of the church in the colonial period



and especially its subversive actions against the authorities of sovereign Congo, Lumumba disestablished the church and secularised schools.

Perhaps one of the most dangerous demands as far as Western interests in Africa were concerned was Lumumba's call for an end to the military presence of imperialist powers in the continent, in particular, for placing NATO bases there under the control of the national governments. In the Congo, Lumumba alone among the leaders of the liberation movement raised that question. "Kamina," he said referring to one such base as early as February 1960, "will be the first enterprise to be nationalised by the Congolese."<sup>12</sup>

The very first steps of the Lumumba government alerted the imperialists to the fact that the economic interests of the West in the Congo were being threatened. They were also unhappy about Lumumba's foreign political programme which envisaged a course of non-alignment and full liberation of Africa from colonial and racist regimes, the establishment and development of equal relations between the Congo and the socialist countries.

Having finally shed his illusions that alliance with Belgium was favourable for the Congo, Lumumba rejected the proposal of a merger between the two countries in a state entity under the Belgian king. He also spoke sharply against establishing Western trusteeship over the Congo under the aegis of the UN. "Some people would like to use the UN," noted Lumumba in a public statement on July 9, 1960, "in order to impose on us a certain international status for 15 years. On behalf of the people and government I declare that the Congo is a sovereign state and will never become a country under UN trusteeship."<sup>13</sup>

In a bid to preserve its positions in the independent Congo, imperialism ganged up with local reactionaries to engineer economic and political chaos in the country. In this difficult situation, Lumumba courageously upheld the interests of his country and sought an end to foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Congo, exposing imperialist policy. In abrogating the "treaty of friendship and cooperation" between Belgium and the Congo in July 1960, Lumumba held responsible for the breakdown, not the Belgian people but the country's rulers "who refused to see the Congo as anything but an object of exploitation, domination and selfish interests."

It was then that a conspiracy against the Congolese leader was set in motion. In fact, Lumumba was already a victim of persecution during the colonial period. He was spied on, his speeches were recorded on tape, he

was blackmailed and was twice put on trial as a libelling device.

In a moment of bitterness he remarked: "When you want to defend your country and the cause of freedom, you immediately find yourself stuck with the labels — revolutionary, inciter, rogue, and so on." In 1956-57 he was imprisoned for a year on charges of alleged embezzlement. It was not easy to stain Lumumba's reputation for he was widely known as a man of integrity and principle. In late 1959 he was jailed on a "political" charge of inciting the inhabitants of Stanleyville to riot. The authorities staged a rehearsal of Lumumba's transfer to a prison in Katanga from which he had to be released on the demand of the Congolese leaders who met in Brussels to discuss the question of independence for the Belgian colony.

In June 1960 the colonialists made an attempt to challenge Lumumba's right to head the government of the Republic of the Congo to which he was entitled as leader of the parliamentary majority. Rejecting the slander levelled at him, he said at the time: "Accusations that I was in the pay of the communists began to be spread by imperialist propaganda after I declined the proposals of the Western powers to make a deal with them which would amount to an act of corruption."<sup>14</sup>

He again spoke about attempts to bribe him upon return from the USA in August 1960: "We became the target of attacks because we no longer want to submit and reject corruption. They tried to bribe us and millions were promised to me, but I refused in the name of my people and did not take a single centime."<sup>15</sup>

In September 1960 a group of opposition leaders whose policies reflected the interests of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and other wealthy strata of Congolese society, supported by imperialist powers, removed Lumumba from office. In November of that same year he was seized by security agents and put in jail. Still, Lumumba was undaunted in his determination to continue the struggle for genuine sovereignty for the Congo with the backing of the popular masses. In his last appeal to the people from a prison in Thysville, Lumumba said: "My dear countrymen! In joy and in sorrow I will always be with you. It is together with you that I fought to free my country from foreign rule. Together with you, I am fighting to strengthen our national independence. Together with you, I will fight to preserve the integrity and national unity of the Republic of the Congo."<sup>16</sup>

But his days were numbered. On January 17 secret police bundled Lumumba and two of his associates — Mpolo and Okito — into a plane which headed for the capital of "independent" Katanga. During the many-

hour flight to Elizabethville (now Lubumbashi) the captives were brutally beaten with hobnailed boots and machine-gun butts. At the Luano airport in the presence of Katangese secessionists and their European principals the three martyrs, more dead than alive, were thrown into a jeep and taken to a farm where they were shot dead in the evening of the same day.

"Neither cruelty, nor violence, nor torture will make me beg for mercy, because I prefer to die with my head raised high rather than live in submission neglecting the sacred principles."<sup>17</sup> These words of Lumumba provide an epilogue to his short but meaningful life.

A UN commission to investigate the circumstances of Lumumba's death named as accomplices in the murder the Leopoldville administration headed by the then president of the Congo Kasavubu, the authorities of Katanga, the managers of the Belgian mercenaries in the service of Tshombe.

The US Senate commission which in the mid-1970s looked into the activities of the American intelligence services, found that the CIA back in August 1960 set about "an urgent and important task", namely a conspiracy to murder the prime minister of the Congo who, according to the CIA director A. Dulles, was "like Castro and even worse" and represented a force in the middle of Africa that was a danger for the USA. Similar aims are known to have been pursued by other Western powers.

The national hero of the Congo was a victim of an imperialist conspiracy which triggered the whole crisis of the Congo. Rabid demagogues accused him of insincerity, usurpers of violating democratic principles of government, bigots of inability to understand the needs of the country and the puppets of the foreign monopolies of forgetting the national interests.

History, however, judged him otherwise. Today Africa and the world only remember his murderers in order to brand them and express contempt for them. Meanwhile, Lumumba is spoken and written about, he is credited with great services to the struggle of Africans for independence; factories, streets and schools are named after him and monuments are erected to him.

Set up in Moscow 20 years ago the Friendship of the Peoples University, which is named after Lumumba, is the world's only higher educational institution specialising in the training of students from developing countries. Thousands of its graduates are today working in many parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America. And it seems that Lumumba has bequeathed to them the task of accomplishing what he had no time to do himself but for the sake of which he gave his life.

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