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JOURNAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

75th Anniversary of the ANC



FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER!

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EDITORIAL NOTES

ANC CELEBRATES ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

This year, on the 8th of January, the African National Congress celebrates its 75th anniversary. We take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to this sister organisation, the leader of the national democratic movement of our country. Observed in the course of struggle, this anniversary is an important political event for all forces inside and outside our country that are committed to a democratic South Africa.

The African National Congress has itself determined the significance of this anniversary by proclaiming 1987 as the **Year of Advance to People's Power**. This decision draws attention to the reality that, thanks to a changed and changing balance of forces, nationally and internationally, the central question of the victory of the democratic revolution has become a practical issue facing the entire South African movement for national liberation.

To advance to people's power means further to shift the balance of struggle away from the racist minority towards the democratic majority. It signifies that the national liberation movement has set itself the task not merely to intensify the struggle but, in action, to organise, educate and activate its forces in such a way that they achieve a permanent strategic superiority over the enemy.

This is a revolutionary objective of major importance which the national democratic forces can only achieve if they are clear about the tasks they have to

accomplish, and succeed to communicate that understanding to the broad masses of the struggling people of our country. This is so because to challenge the apartheid regime for power, successfully, requires that these masses must act as a united force, pursue the same tactical and strategic goals and set their minds consciously on the objective of preparing the conditions for the transfer of power into their hands.

It would seem clear that our intensified offensive, directed at securing an advance towards people's power, must aim especially at the enemy's social base and the apartheid organs of government. Our aim must be to narrow the social base of the Pretoria regime, to destroy its organs of government and to weaken its forces of repression. At the same time, we must, of course, ensure a further expansion of the mass forces engaged in active struggle for a democratic South Africa, extend the structures of revolutionary power to all black areas in particular and expand these to include the white areas where possible, and strengthen the combat forces of the revolution.

Realignment of Class Forces

As the general crisis of the apartheid system has deepened, a realignment of class forces has taken place in our country, both as a result of this crisis and as one of its manifestations. This is a development which requires close analysis because on a correct understanding of it depends the success of the democratic movement in narrowing the social base of the ruling fascist clique. In the main, the white working class remains a loyal supporter of this clique and its offshoots such as the HNP and the Conservative Party. This is despite the decline in its living standards, growing unemployment and its ever-increasing use as cannon-fodder and assassins in South Africa, Namibia and the countries of Southern Africa.

Yet we need to take note of the positive development represented by the growing breakup of the yellow trade union federation, TUCSA, which has resulted in the movement of some white trade unionists towards anti-racist positions. Without overestimating our possibilities in the short-term, it is necessary to do everything possible to win the white workers to the cause of democracy. Our prospects for success rest on our intensification of the struggle, the strengthening of the democratic, non-racial trade union movement and consistent political work among the white workers to make them realise that their fundamental class interests require that they join the struggle for a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

The white petty bourgeoisie has also been affected by the worsening crisis of the apartheid system. In the economic sphere it has experienced a large number of personal and company bankruptcies and can no longer be certain that the apartheid system can guarantee a rising standard of living.

For decades quite happy to watch the apartheid system being entrenched and consolidated, the white middle strata have increasingly become uneasy about the future. The sense of insecurity has risen, as have fears about the prospect that young whites, who would otherwise grow up to take their places within the middle class, are now destined to perish fighting a liberation movement which is bound to win. These fears have already found expression in the increasing emigration of highly qualified white professionals.

Large numbers among the most conscious sections of this petty bourgeoisie nevertheless continue to suffer from political paralysis, as is reflected by the leadership of the PFP and the so-called New Nats within the ruling party. While these realise that the apartheid system must come to an end, yet they are afraid of the democratic movement of our country. They feel they would join it in action only if they could lead it. Knowing that they can never achieve this objective, they continue to toy with ideas of a "third path", this being some fictional position between the ANC on the one hand and the Nationalist Party on the other.

The fact of the matter however is that the struggle has shaken the white middle strata out of their torpor. In our own conduct, and taking this development into account, we should not leave this petty bourgeoisie to its own devices or to manipulation by class forces which are hostile to the democratic revolution. We should certainly not treat it as though it were the natural and exclusive preserve of its current political leadership.

Tycoons Tremble

For its part, the big bourgeoisie is beginning to repudiate the Botha regime as unrepresentative of its interests, except for the Afrikaner fraction of big capital which continues to see its future as being intimately tied up with continued rule by the apartheid regime.

The big bourgeoisie is, however, unwilling to act in any serious way against the Botha regime. This is because it is afraid of the eventuality of power passing into the hands of the people. At the same time it is worried that the longer the racist regime remains in power, the greater the likelihood that the democratic revolution will assume an anti-capitalist character.

The result of this is that the representatives of big capital are making strong public statements against apartheid while refusing to take action consonant with such statements. The Botha regime is taking advantage of this hesitant stance to mobilise the big bourgeoisie to act openly as its political ally. But as our offensive escalates, and big capital itself sees that the victory of the

democratic revolution is inevitable, so will the ruling class be obliged to act against a fascist grouping which can no longer promote or protect the perceived interests of the dominant capitalist groups.

A determined and heightened all-round offensive combined with consistent political work within the ranks of the white population is necessary to realise the strategic perspective of advance towards people's power.

Above we have tried to reflect on some considerations that the revolutionary movement has to take into account in its work to narrow the social base of the enemy, to isolate the racists, to neutralise some of those who supported racial tyranny in the past and to transform others into fighters for democracy.

People's Power

One of the most important elements in the fight for democracy continues to be the destruction of the apartheid structures of government and their replacement by organs of revolutionary power. The masses of our people in general and the revolutionary movement in particular have gained considerable experience in the struggle to achieve these objectives. It is necessary to summarise this knowledge so that we are better able to spread the rudimentary organs of popular power to all parts of our country.

Part of that experience shows that it is possible to unite the black people in both town and countryside to confront the Pretoria regime in a sustained contest for power at the local level. However, it is also important that we work continuously to ensure that this unity is achieved through political agitation and organisation to deny the enemy any possibility to foment contradictions among the people and open conflicts, as was the case in Crossroads in Cape Town. To achieve the greatest unity of the people also means that we place ourselves in the best position possible to isolate the genuine puppets and instruments of the apartheid regime such as those who have been organised into murder squads and "vigilante groups".

The call made by the President of the ANC, comrade Oliver Tambo, in the aftermath of the proclamation of the State of Emergency in 1985, to take the struggle into the white areas remains a task of major strategic importance. Taken in relation to the objectives of narrowing the enemy's social base and reducing the number of areas under the control of the Pretoria regime, the goal of engaging the racists in the white areas clearly becomes of great significance.

The general task facing the revolutionary movement as a whole is to plan, organise and act in such a way that, through struggle, we ensure that the

enemy loses control in as many parts of the country as possible. Of course, we know that this will force the enemy to rely to an even greater extent on its army and police to govern our country. This can only serve further to deepen the general crisis of the apartheid system, whatever means it uses, including press control, to hide this fact. It is also important that we act to wrest control from the enemy in as many parts of the country as possible to deny the Pretoria regime the possibility to concentrate its forces on a few areas in which the masses are active.

Mass Offensive

The establishment of revolutionary power in as many places as possible will take us a good way forward towards the achievement of the goal of seizure of power from the white minority regime. This is so because those areas in which we have succeeded in destroying the enemy's organs of government constitute mass revolutionary bases from which we can and must launch an even more determined and united mass offensive to dislodge the enemy from power.

That offensive will be successful because we will have smashed the apartheid forces of repression through both military and political action. Our advance to people's power must therefore mean that we act now to alter the balance of strength between the armed forces of the counter-revolution on one hand and the combat forces of the revolution on the other.

This can only be achieved in struggle and through struggle. The revolutionary movement has enormous potential rapidly to expand its own combat forces, drawing on the millions of our people who have not merely demonstrated their support for armed struggle, but more important, their readiness themselves to take up arms in the struggle for liberation.

On the other hand, as the crisis of the apartheid regime worsens, resulting in the sharpening of contradictions among the white population, so do the enemy forces themselves, especially the army, face contradictions within their own ranks. Confronted by an armed people throughout the country, these contradictions will soon enough come more clearly to the surface and seriously affect their will and the capacity to fight in defence of a system which they themselves know is unjust and is doomed to fail.

As we enter the **Year of Advance to People's Power**, these are some of the most important tasks that face the revolutionary movement of our country. Whatever the pretended strength of the enemy, it can no longer deny that the system it is trying to defend is in a deep and permanent crisis. It can no longer hide the reality that it has lost the strategic initiative and is battling for

survival. In this situation, it is correct that we must consciously and in a purposeful manner make a decisive advance towards the capture of power by the people.

CONSENSUS AT THE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT

The tragic death of Samora Machel has underlined the dangers posed to peace in our region and the world by the continued existence of racist South Africa. The vital need to mount a sustained and unstoppable challenge to the apartheid regime and its imperialist allies was the central theme of the Non-Aligned Movement conference which took place in Harare last September.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was also marking its 25th anniversary. Over the period since its foundation, the main objectives of the movement have remained constant. These are: to eliminate colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialist domination in all their forms and manifestations as well as economic inequality, and the threat of a world war. The ideas and ideals that inspired the vision of Tito, Nasser, Nehru and Nkrumah have been elaborated and brought up to date. During this time the NAM with all its divergent ideological and political positions has grown in prestige and influence. There is a powerful sense of unity in the struggle for peace and the eradication of colonialism and racism, in particular its most evil form — apartheid.

A dominant theme of every speech at the conference was the situation in South Africa and the region. These speeches imparted the strong desire of more than two-thirds of the world to offer solidarity and material assistance to the oppressed and exploited masses of our country and their leading force, the ANC. The overwhelming support for our struggle serves to illustrate that Botha and his regime are illegitimate and have no standing in the international community. On the other hand comrade Tambo, President of the ANC, is increasingly treated as a head of state, and the world-wide reputation and influence of the ANC have grown considerably. There is general recognition that the unprecedented and unremitting mass struggles which are a feature of our political landscape are due in large measure to the persistent work, organisation and sacrifice of the ANC and its allies.

The demand for the immediate and unconditional liberation of Namibia featured in all the speeches and in the Political and Economic Declaration. A special Appeal on Namibia was adopted which calls for increased all-round support for SWAPO, the sole and authentic representative of the people of Namibia.

Conference also set up the Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid Fund, which aims to provide financial and other backing for the front-line states and the national liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia. The Fund is designed to alleviate the hardships incurred by the front-line states as a result of imposing sanctions on racist South Africa. Pretoria's escalation of tension in the region, and aggressive policies and actions make it imperative that we develop, inside and outside South Africa, a broad and vigorous solidarity movement in support of the front-line states.

For six days leaders of 101 countries exchanged views on the burning issues of our time. After lengthy discussions which went on till the early hours, a consensus was reached on questions such as world peace, disarmament — nuclear and conventional — star wars, the debt crisis, economic instability of member countries and the imposition of mandatory sanctions on racist South Africa.

The Political Declaration and the Appeal on World Peace singled out the USA as the principal source of the unbridled arms race, chronic international instability and a threat to world peace. The various peace proposals and actions of the Soviet Union, in particular its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, were appreciated and welcomed. That a broad and diverse body like the NAM, which includes unashamed apologists for US imperialism like Samuel Doe of Liberia and many conservative countries, can and does point the accusing finger at US imperialism, demonstrated the immense mobilising potential of anti-imperialism.

The Reagan administration reacted to these criticisms with hostility. Aid to Zimbabwe was cut and the conference was pilloried. The paid and unpaid hacks of the US were constantly searching for sensational stories in an attempt to discredit the summit. Whilst the imperialists seek to belittle the NAM, the socialist countries support its aims and objectives. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries sent warm messages of congratulations and their mass media gave extensive and favourable coverage to the conference proceedings.

There is no doubt that over the next three years US imperialism will conduct a systematic campaign of vilification and disinformation to smear the NAM. In addition Mugabe's chairmanship of the movement, and his clear-cut anti-imperialist policies and positions will come under attack. The Reagan administration has already launched a campaign to prevent Nicaragua from hosting the next NAM conference. Their hatred for revolutionary Nicaragua is such that in their perception the selection of Managua as host would represent a defeat.

Notwithstanding all the difficulties and divergent ideological positions, the Non-Aligned Movement is large, and growing more influential, organised and cohesive. Its anti-imperialist stance cannot be altered and under the astute and dynamic leadership of Mugabe this aspect of the movement will no doubt be considerably strengthened. In one of the last interviews given before his tragic death Samora Machel insisted that the movement has political and moral strength and "a future of progress and a future of flowers." He pointed out, "The struggle now is an economic one. The crucial point at this moment is development so that we can have peace. So we say here that apartheid, like colonialism, cannot be reformed. It must be destroyed: it must be eradicated. And that is our concept." To the question, "Where does the movement go from here?" he replied, "My brother, look at the beauty of this hall, filled with the people of the Movement, people of all races, of all colours, and all the flowers. That is the indication of our hope, of our future. The people don't make war. It is imperialists who make war." (*Africa Now*, October, 1986).

The NAM conference was a victory for our people and their movement the ANC. In the very heart of the region the isolation of Pretoria from the international community was increased, and the prestige, influence and stature of the ANC and its President comrade O.R. Tambo strengthened. The presence of Alan Boesak as an invited guest helped to sharpen the participants' awareness of the vile and evil system of apartheid. He made a powerful speech at a special dinner given in his honour by comrade Mugabe. The reception given to the ANC and to Boesak clearly shows that the overwhelming majority of humanity support our just struggle for national liberation, peace and democracy.

ADVANCE ON THE SANCTIONS FRONT

Among the achievements of the South African liberation movement in 1986 was that it profoundly divided the imperialist camp and isolated the most reactionary imperialist elements. Throughout the year, controversy raged around the question of sanctions against the apartheid regime. The results to date fall far short of what the South African people demand and are entitled to expect. Nevertheless, there has been more movement in 1986 than for many years before and the ranks of Botha's international supporters are now in disarray.

The policy of the United States government varied only marginally, over many years, with the succession of Presidents of different parties. Reagan's words were franker and more brutal than Carter's, but under both leaders the US could be relied upon to veto any proposal in the United Nations for practical action against apartheid. Beneath the surface froth of party politics ran a strong, deep current of consistent policy. The great monopolies were determined to stay in South Africa. The Pentagon wanted South Africa as a bastion of its world strategy. The permanent officials of the State Department acted accordingly. The fact that individual leaders on the left of the Democrat Party, such as Senator Kennedy, might talk about action against apartheid, was of little significance.

Change began in 1985 and gathered momentum in 1986 for two reasons. The first was that the sufferings and the resistance of the South African people inspired a degree of popular sympathy that had never been seen in America. This sympathy produced unrelenting pressure upon the ruling class, manifesting itself in a variety of ways, from a long series of demonstrations on the streets of Washington to sales by churches, universities and local authorities of shares in companies known for their involvement in South Africa. The second new development was that the multinational monopolies themselves began to feel nervous about the future of their South African investments. The exploitation and the super-profits which attracted them to South Africa were still there for the time being but the prospect that the people might be about to put an end to these things could no longer be ignored.

A complex struggle resulted. Reagan himself and his circle of ultra-right cronies were still wedded to their old policy. Ostensibly they were refraining from action against apartheid because they wanted to reform it through "constructive engagement". In fact they were content with the status quo in

South Africa. In Congress, however, a majority was emerging which found it impossible to go on accepting that position. It was not a question of a sudden conversion to a progressive analysis of the South African situation. The congressional process was slow and tortuous. It involved some highly unsatisfactory compromises between the desire to do something about apartheid and the fear of frank identification with the people's struggle. Nevertheless, in the end, a Bill containing modest but real sanctions was not merely carried, but obtained the majority needed to override a presidential veto. For a President as expert as Reagan to suffer such a reverse was a startling event. True, Reagan's supporters in Congress managed to smuggle into the Bill a number of anti-ANC and anti-SACP clauses which may presage a McCarthyite attack on our liberation movement at some future date. Nevertheless, the passage of the sanctions bill shows that the revulsion against apartheid felt by broad sections of the American public is now a political fact which cannot be ignored. Things will never be the same again for the American friends of apartheid.

Monopolies Take Fright

No less significant is the fact that some of the most important American monopolies have seen fit to take action going beyond that required by Congress. In October 1986, both General Motors and IBM announced that they were selling their South African subsidiary companies. This action has widely been dismissed as a "bogus disengagement" and it is indeed necessary to scrutinise carefully the reality behind it. Neither company proposes to cease selling its products to South Africa. The subsidiaries have been sold to their managers and will continue to function as outlets for the products. In other words there is still a long way to go before IBM and General Motors can be counted among that majority of the world's population which accepts the demand of the liberation movement for the economic isolation of the apartheid regime. Yet the fact remains that IBM and General Motors have been infected with the awareness that things cannot go on in South Africa as they have gone on before. Though not yet on the side of the liberation forces, these companies now think it prudent to begin to ingratiate themselves with the liberation forces.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Mrs Thatcher has also been retreating, step by grudging step, in her rearguard action for apartheid. Finding herself in a minority of one in the Commonwealth, she let it be understood that the really important forum was not the Commonwealth but the EEC. The reasoning behind this became apparent when in September,

after months of procrastination, the EEC Council of Ministers finally got round to considering the South African question.

The West German government then emerged as Britain's ally in rejecting the most serious proposal on the agenda (an embargo on South African coal) and keeping to a list of token sanctions. Victory of a sort for Thatcher and Kohl: they held the EEC to a position appreciably more reactionary than that of the USA. Yet even they have had to move. Each time Mrs Thatcher is forced to discuss South Africa in an international forum she has to concede something. Her stand against the principle of sanctions is a thing of the past. And each step back is merely a preparation for the next. No sooner was the EEC September decision known than it was condemned as inadequate by Denmark, the Netherlands, the British Labour, Liberal and Social Democrat parties, as well as the solidarity movements of Western Europe as a whole. There will be more debates and more concessions, because in Western Europe too, the realisation that apartheid is doomed is beginning to penetrate far beyond the circles of advanced political consciousness.

1986 was the year in which the imperialist front cracked. Botha still has imperialist allies, but they are divided and demoralised and beginning to hedge their bets. Our movement, which brought them to that pass, can be proud of its achievements on the sanctions front.

STEP UP THE FIGHT FOR PEACE

“When we discuss human rights, I will attach priority to man's right to live”. This was the answer of Mikhail Gorbachov, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to a question put to him by a newsman at his press conference in Reykjavik after his summit meeting with US President Reagan last October. In that simple sentence lies the essence of the difference between the capitalist and socialist worlds, not only in the sphere of nuclear weapons, but in everything. It is because they want to create the conditions in which men and women can meaningfully exercise their basic right to live that Marxist-Leninists fight for the ending of the exploitative capitalist system and the establishment of communism based on the slogan “from each according to his ability, to each according to

his need". A man who is unemployed, hungry and homeless is not free, even though in the US he may have the right to vote for Reagan in a presidential election.

In the discussions at Reykjavik, said Gorbachov in a televised address on October 14, "the President sought to handle ideological problems as well, demonstrating, to put it mildly, total ignorance and inability to understand both the socialist world and what is taking place in it. I rejected the attempts to link ideological differences with questions of ending the arms race". Gorbachov stressed over and over again that the human race might not survive the arms race, the full implications of which Reagan did not appear to grasp.

Events before, during and after Reykjavik make it clear that the US had no serious intention of reaching agreement there, and that Reagan went to Iceland only to appease international opinion, including American opinion, which was increasingly coming to regard US policies as a threat to peace. It was not only the Soviet Union, for example, but also a growing body of Americans themselves who were demanding that the US join the USSR in imposing a moratorium on nuclear tests. For nothing had better demonstrated the sincerity of Gorbachov's peace initiative than the Soviet Union's unilateral abandonment of nuclear testing. One might argue till Doomsday about the equivalence of numbers and types of nuclear weapons, but the ability of the Soviet Union to refrain from holding nuclear tests for so long was both easily verifiable and immensely impressive. There was no way Reagan could claim Gorbachov was cheating on that issue. The nuclear test moratorium made a greater impact on world opinion than all the preceding years of debate.

So, yes, Reagan went to Reykjavik but he went empty-handed, bringing no proposals and expecting no result. Although he tried to create the impression afterwards that a considerable area of agreement had been established, and that the only stumbling block in the way of a treaty was Gorbachov's opposition to the US Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) or "Star Wars" programme for the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons in outer space, the fact is that Reagan was ready to agree to anything because he knew in advance that nothing would come of it. He had not even bothered to consult the NATO generals beforehand nor did he report to them afterwards, as they themselves complained. He did not have any top military brass in his delegation. Nor was Nancy by his side. By contrast, Gorbachov pointed out in his October 14 televised speech,

"We, the Soviet leadership, carried out extensive preparatory work on the eve of the meeting, even before we received the consent of President Reagan to meet. Apart from the Politbureau and Secretariat of the CPSU Central Committee, taking part

in it were the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Defence Ministry, other organisations, researchers, military experts, specialists from various branches of industry. The positions that we worked out for the Reykjavik meeting were a result of broad and repeated discussions with our friends, with the leaders of the countries of the socialist community. We sought to fill the meeting with far-reaching proposals.”

The Soviet delegation included a top military figure, Marshal Akhromeyev, Soviet Chief of the General Staff.

Part of the preparation for Reykjavik should have been the creation of a harmonious atmosphere in international affairs, an avoidance of acrimony and confrontation. Before, during and after Reykjavik, however, the US administration did everything in its power to poison the atmosphere. There was the exaggerated hullabaloo over the *Newsweek* journalist Daniloff who had been arrested in Moscow on a charge of espionage. There was US Defence Secretary Weinberger’s vicious accusation that the Soviet Union was cheating over the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. There was the US expulsion of 55 Soviet diplomats and the demand that the size of the Soviet delegation to the UN be reduced. Far from smoothing the way to peace, the US administration did everything in its power to ensure that an atmosphere of tension prevailed, so that Reagan might appear to be justified in his refusal to abandon SDI. The myth of the “Soviet menace” had to be kept alive.

Soviet Proposals

Gorbachov made three proposals to Reagan at the start of the Reykjavik summit — 1. a 50 per cent reduction in strategic (long-range) nuclear weapons, with a view to their total elimination by the end of the century.

2. total elimination of all nuclear missiles in Europe. A freeze on medium-range nuclear weapons in Asia and the US. (Later both sides agreed to have 100 warheads on each side.)

3. Consolidation of the ABM treaty and to start full-scale talks on a total ban on nuclear tests.

And in response to the usual US objection about verification, Gorbachov said: “We reaffirmed our readiness for any form of verification, to guarantee absolute confidence for each side, that there would be no trap.”

Towards the end of the meeting, in a last-ditch bid to secure an agreement, Gorbachov submitted the following text as the basis for achieving a positive result:

“The USSR and the United States would undertake in the course of ten years not to use their right to withdraw from the termless ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) Treaty

and in the course of this period strictly to observe all its provisions. It is prohibited to test all space elements of an ABM defence in outer space except for research and testing conducted in laboratories.

“In the course of the first five years of this decade (till 1991 inclusive) the strategic offensive arms of the sides will be reduced by 50 per cent.

“In the course of the subsequent five years of this period the remaining 50 per cent of the strategic offensive arms of the sides will be reduced. Thereby the strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the United States will be fully liquidated by the end of 1996.”

But still the US would not agree. In violation of the 1972 ABM treaty, Reagan insisted on his right to take nuclear weapons into space, and to continue nuclear tests. But, said Gorbachov, if by the turn of the century we can eliminate all nuclear weapons, what is the point of your SDI? There will be no nuclear weapons left for you to defend yourself against? If there is no sword, no shield is needed.

Trust me, said Reagan. We will share all SDI technology with you. It is a purely defensive weapon and threatens nobody. Gorbachov replied:

“Mr President, I do not take seriously your idea of sharing with us the results of SDI research. You do not want to share with us even oil equipment and equipment for dairy factories, and still you expect us to believe your promise to share SDI studies with us. It would be a kind of ‘the second American revolution’ and revolutions do not happen too often”.

Gorbachov said in his October 14 televised speech that he was often asked what were the root causes of the unwillingness of the US to reach an agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons. His reply was:

“There are a number of causes, both subjective and objective. However, the main cause is that the leadership of this great country excessively depends on the military-industrial complex, on the monopolistic groups which turned the nuclear and other arms race into business, a way of making profits, the objective of their existence and the meaning of their activities.

“In my opinion, the Americans are making two serious mistakes in their assessment of the situation.

“The first one is a tactical mistake. They believe that the Soviet Union would sooner or later put up with the attempts to revive American strategic diktat and agree to the limitation of only Soviet weapons and the reduction of only Soviet weapons. It would do so because, as they think, it is interested in disarmament agreements more than the US. But this is profound delusion. The earlier the US Administration overcomes it — I am repeating it, perhaps, for the umpteenth time — the better it will be for them, for our relations and the world situation in general.

“The other mistake is a strategic one. The United States wants to exhaust the Soviet Union economically through the buildup of the most sophisticated and costly space arms. It wants to impose hardships of all kinds on the Soviet leadership, to foil its plans, including in the social sphere and the sphere of improving our people’s living standards, and thus foment discontent among the

people with their leaders, with the country's leadership. Another aim is to restrict the Soviet Union's possibilities in its economic ties with developing countries which, in this situation, all would be compelled to go cap in hand to the United States.

"These are far-reaching designs. The strategic course of the current administration also rests on delusions. Washington, it seems, does not wish to burden itself with a thorough analysis of the changes taking place in our country, does not wish to draw corresponding practical conclusions for itself, for its course, but is engaged in wishful thinking. On the basis of this delusion, it is building its policy in respect of the USSR. It is not, of course, difficult to predict all long-term consequences of such a policy. One thing is already clear to us: it will not bring, it cannot bring anything that is positive to anyone, including the United States."

The Military Answer

At his earlier press conference on October 12 Gorbachov had said:

"I told the President that the SDI does not bother us militarily. In my opinion, nobody in America, either, believes that such a system can be created. Moreover, if America eventually decides to go for it, our reply will not be symmetrical. True, I told him: Mr. President, you know that I have already been turned into your ally on the SDI issue. He was surprised by this. It turns out, I tell him, that since I so sharply criticise SDI, this offers you a convincing argument that SDI is needed. You just say: if Gorbachov is against, it must be a good thing. And you win applause and financing. True, cynics and sceptics have appeared who say: what if this is a crafty design of Gorbachov's — to stay out of SDI and ruin America. So you figure it out for yourselves. In any event, we are not scared by SDI.

"I say this with confidence, since it is irresponsible to bluff in such matters. There will be reply to SDI. An asymmetrical one, but it will be. And we shall not sacrifice much at that."

Gorbachov stressed that the main objection to SDI was political, that it was a weapon of confrontation and destabilisation, leading the world away from the objectives of detente and peaceful coexistence. The arms race would spiral until it got out of control. The consequences would be most serious for all mankind.

Gorbachov did not regret having gone to Reykjavik, nor write it off as a failure. Differences still exist over SDI, but the area of agreement reached on other proposals for nuclear disarmament was greater than ever before.

All peoples worldwide who want peace and social progress must now step up their pressure to ensure that Reagan's peace talk is turned into reality. The agreement that came so tantalisingly close in Reykjavik must be won and consolidated, removing once and for all the threat of nuclear war which has been lying heavy on all our minds since the end of World War 2.

75th Anniversary of the ANC

A REVOLUTIONARY LANDMARK

by Nyawuza

January 8, 1987 is being commemorated inside South Africa and throughout the world. Those who participate are not indulging in some “ceremonial” event. They are looking back on 75 years of struggle, sacrifice, set-backs, failures and achievements, assessing the present situation and mapping out the future.

When the ANC was formed in 1912 the world was a very different place. Those were the days when the British colonialists boasted that the “sun never sets on the British Empire”. Africa and Asia were groaning under the weight of European imperialism and colonialism. The formation of the ANC was a landmark in a long chain of resistance which began with colonialism itself. This resistance took many forms and went through different phases dependent on the different social forces at work during that time. The discovery of gold and diamonds in the last third of the 19th century threw up new social forces which objectively paved the way for the formation of the ANC.

From its inception the ANC had to contend with the colour bar clause in the 1910 constitution which granted white South Africa “political independence.” By this Act of Union the British colonialists laid the

foundation for what we now call Colonialism of a Special Type where the coloniser and the colonised live within the same geographical territory. Black South Africa became a colony of White South Africa.

The land question which is so central to our struggle has some of its roots in the 1913 Land Act which robbed the Africans of more than 87 per cent of the land. It is the basis of the agrarian policy of the apartheid state and used to justify the mass removals of Africans into arid and uninhabitable areas. The consequences of this inhuman act have been poverty, misery and mass graves.

The 1913 mass demonstrations against the introduction of passes — and their extension to women — became another battleground. That it took the racist regime more than 50 years to impose passes on African women is testimony to the prolonged resistance of the women and the ANC. Much credit goes to political leaders such as S.T. Plaatje, W.B. Rubusana and J.T. Gumede for helping to form the ANC and for charting the new way forward for the African people.

The Protectorates

In addition to the many national battles, the ANC fought against the incorporation of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland into South Africa. The ANC can take some credit for preventing this incorporation. It was an act of solidarity with the people of these countries. The life-giving solidarity of the people of our region has assumed even greater significance due to Botha's violent efforts to drive the ANC out of the neighbouring countries.

In 1919 the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) was formed. The workers were then organising themselves and thus broadening the social base of the ANC and from this emerged new tasks. Amongst the many activists who turned the ICU into a formidable force for a number of years we may single out C. Kadalie, and the communists S. Silwana, T. Mbeki, J. La Guma and J. Gomas.

The Communist Party of South Africa formed in 1921 made a notable contribution to the radicalisation of the national liberation movement as a whole. The ANC learnt a lot from the Communist Party, especially from those communists who were active in the ANC, and in turn contributed to the thinking of the Communist Party. Prominent communists like A. Nzula, E. Mofutsanyana, J. Nkosi, A. Maliba, M. Kotane, J.B. Marks, M. Mabhida and G. Mbeki were stalwart and loyal activists and leaders of the ANC. It is true that this relationship was not without its ups and downs but the

character of the ANC — which accommodates people belonging to different political persuasions and ideological affiliations — provided and continues to provide a platform whereon these problems can be resolved within the ANC.

In the thirties the ANC was badly affected by internal disputes and organisational weaknesses partly caused by the world recession and drought. Nevertheless attempts were made to form broader alliances such as the All African Convention. The barbaric invasion of Ethiopia by Italy strengthened the feelings of continent-wide solidarity amongst our people. By 1937 — on the occasion of its silver jubilee — a revival took place within the ANC. Seven years later we saw the emergence of the ANC Youth League which was to play a vital role in all future struggles. Through the ranks of the Youth League came some of the giants of our movement, N. Mandela, W. Sisulu and O.R. Tambo. New policy documents were adopted in the forties — the most important being African Claims (1944) and the Programme of Action (1949). There was also the famous 1946 mine workers' strike which radicalised the liberation struggle, and the Indian Passive Resistance campaign of the same year which led to the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo pact and laid the basis for cooperation between the ANC and the Indian Congresses.

The ANC Women's League inaugurated in 1949 and the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW 1954) enabled our women to play an immensely significant role in the stirring mass battles of the fifties. Amongst the many heroines of our movement we may mention L. Ngoyi, F. Baard, R. Alexander, A. Sisulu, W. Mandela and there were others.

The 1950s were characterised by mass actions — protests against the Suppression of Communism Act (1950), Defiance Campaign (1952), demonstrations against the Treason Trial (1956), bus and potato boycotts and the May 1961 stayaway. The rural population, revolting against the effects of the 1913 Land Act, resorted to acts of violence in the late fifties and early sixties. The massacre of Sharpeville in 1960 and the banning of the ANC mark a turning point in our struggle.

New Forms of Struggle

The banning of the ANC and the peasant revolts emphasised the fact that new forms of struggle were necessary. Thus on December 16, 1961, Umkhonto We Sizwe was formed by leading activists of the ANC and the SACP. The military wing of the ANC formed under conditions of illegality played a crucial role in the sixties when the leadership and rank and file of the ANC were in jail or in exile. Into the ranks of Umkhonto We Sizwe came

some of the bravest sons and daughters of our revolution. Revolutionaries such as V. Mini, W. Khayinga, Z. Mkaba, R. Mhlaba, E. Motsoaledi, W. Mkwazi and A. Kathrada came to the fore.

In the late sixties black student unrest in the form of Black Consciousness made its appearance and this was followed in the early seventies by a resurgent black trade union movement. Following the Soweto and connected uprisings in 1976 the ANC intensified its armed struggle and the mobilisation of the popular masses. The oppressed people forged new forms of struggle and set up a wide variety of mass democratic organisations including the United Democratic Front.

Over the last decade the imperialist powers — notwithstanding their mealy mouthed condemnation of apartheid — continued to give sustenance to the racist regime. Having ignored the ANC all these years they are now pursuing a different course. They are meeting with the ANC and advising it to renounce and even denounce violence by which they mean armed revolutionary struggle; calling on it to dissociate itself from the SACP, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, and to be a part of the “reform process.” In other words the ANC must renounce its own history and heritage. If one considers that the brutal and violent racist regime is armed to the teeth, the “advice” of the United States and Britain can be understood as forming a part of Botha’s war propaganda. Pretoria has unleashed an undeclared war on the frontline states. Tremendous damage has been caused to the economy, transport system and security of these countries. Moreover state terrorism has been responsible for the deaths of many comrades in these areas including Joe Gqabi and Ruth First.

The precondition for a solution to the conflict raging in our country is the unbanning of the ANC and all people’s organisations including the SACP, and the repeal of all undemocratic and unjust laws. The ANC has repeatedly said that if there is to be any “dialogue” it has to concern itself with the total dismantling of apartheid. The immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners is fundamental to finding a solution to the crisis engulfing our motherland. To those who say: “Stop violence” our reply is, “End apartheid which is the root cause of violence in South Africa.”

Bright Prospects

The prospects for intensifying armed revolutionary struggle are very bright. The overwhelming majority of our people are convinced that armed struggle must remain a central feature of our revolutionary strategy and tactics. Like

the warriors of the previous centuries our young men and women are volunteering in their thousands to fight to the finish. The young lions of Umkhonto We Sizwe have already demonstrated their capacity to engage the enemy in armed confrontation and in daring sabotage actions and rescue missions. New heroes have emerged in the course of bloody battles. The courage and heroism of comrades like Solomon Mahlangu, Sipho Xulu, Clarence Lucky Payi and Sibuyiso Zondo are an inspiration to our fighting youth and students in the urban and rural areas.

Our people are sustained by the knowledge that the whole of progressive humanity supports our struggle. This support is not just an "external factor." In the concrete conditions of South Africa, external support easily becomes part of the internal dynamics of the struggle. Our military successes testify to this. It is in this spirit that the international community has joined with our people in commemorating January 8, an indelible landmark in the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa.



THE PRIDE OF ALL THE OPPRESSED

The 25th Anniversary of Umkhonto We Sizwe

By Magoabi Tshonyane

One of the most important landmarks in the history of the oppressed and exploited people of our country was the formation of the People's Army, Umkhonto We Sizwe — Lerumo la Sechaba. Born out of the crucible of a fierce struggle against the most vicious forms of internal colonialism, MK, as it is popularly known, has become the pride of all the oppressed people of our country.

Our army emerged as a result of the objective and scientific analysis of our own conditions where the white ruling class, after entrenching itself, was relying increasingly on institutionalised violence to maintain its undemocratic and anti-people policies. Violence and extreme state repression had become virtually the norm of life. Popular resistance was crushed with wanton brutality which increasingly displayed absolute contempt for life.

It is appropriate then to pose the question why a decision to launch the armed struggle was taken only on December 16, 1961. Was state violence and brutal repression of the masses a new development in our society? Historically, our people had taken up arms against colonialism and heroic battles had been fought throughout the length and breadth of our country. In these epic battles the names of Hintsá, Sandile, Maqana, Sekhukhune, Moshoeshe, Cetshwayo, Dinizulu, Makhanda have become legendary.

But after the crushing of our people it became necessary to build and forge national consciousness so as to mobilise and rally all our people irrespective of tribe or region to fight for freedom and national emancipation. The reorganisation of our people under the banner of a united nation was undertaken within the context of imperialism which reigned supreme over the majority of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America virtually under the yoke of colonialism. The gun and violence had become triumphant and the gun was used to maintain the dominant position of the colonists.

Thus the initial stage of our national struggle had to assume the character of building national unity and a mass movement. For more than forty years the African National Congress, which throughout this period had undergone both quantitative and qualitative transformation, spent much time on organisation in both urban and rural areas.

Throughout this period the ANC was subjected to persecution and a battery of oppressive laws. The climax of this repression was the outlawing of the ANC in 1960, which clearly showed that the ruling class would brook no opposition to its policies of extreme national oppression and exploitation. Thus, in the light of this new development and after a thorough and exhaustive process of analysis, our organisations adopted the only correct conclusion, that is, the creation of a people's army and the launching of the armed struggle.

A Courageous Decision

Given the overwhelming superiority of the enemy's instruments of repression, the decision taken by the ANC and its allies was a courageous one. 1986 being the 25th anniversary of our glorious army, it is important to recall the momentous events on December 16, 1961 when the brave men and women of the South African revolution vowed to create a people's army to challenge the white state. In the light of literally centuries of systematic disarmament this was not an easy decision. Credit should be given to the leadership of our liberation movement who, defying all the odds and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, decided to launch an armed struggle to challenge state violence. Cynics and detractors at the time dismissed the decision to form MK as an exercise in adventurism and recklessness. They were quick to point out the titanic nature and seeming invulnerability of the South African Defence Force compared to which the newly born MK looked like a dwarf or a Lilliputian in Gulliver's travels. Leaders like Nelson Mandela, Joe Slovo, Jack Hodgson, Govan Mbeki, Andrew Mlangeni, Raymond Mhlaba, Wilton Mkwayi immediately come to our minds as examples of leaders whose achievements have vindicated that 1961 decision as courageous and correct.

The manifesto of Umkhonto We Sizwe clearly pointed out that the time had come for the oppressed people to fight back with every means at their disposal until the system of national oppression was destroyed. The MK declaration was accompanied by systematic and co-ordinated sabotage actions in Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth. At this early stage MK actions were directed against economic installations and buildings which symbolised the repression of the people, and meticulously avoided the loss of human life. Even at that late stage our movement was continually urging the ruling class to hand over power to a democratic government, and emphasised that its stubbornness was generating conditions that would culminate into a fully-fledged civil war.

Concern for human life

This serious concern for human life by our movement was treated with contempt and disdain by the South African minority regime and an offensive was launched against the entire national liberation movement. Stringent laws were quickly enacted to nip the growth of MK in the bud. Torture became the order of the day and a number of MK commanders were either tortured to death or executed. The Commander of Umkhonto We Sizwe in the Western Cape, Looksmart Solvwandle, was tortured to death in Pretoria; the MK Commanders in the Eastern Cape, Vuyisile Mini, Zinakile Mkhaba, Wilson Khayinga and Washington Bongco were executed, despite the most vehement outcry and protests by the world community.

The vehemence of enemy actions against MK, the incarceration of the most prominent leaders in the prisons of Pretoria and Robben Island, crippled the capacity of the movement to build both a political and military infrastructure to challenge the enemy. But despite the major setbacks suffered, preparations were going ahead thousands of kilometers outside our country. Men and women were undergoing training in military science in order to go back to the country to participate in both the political and military work of our organisation.

It is important to emphasise that the preparations for the continuation of our struggle were taking place at a time when none of the countries around South Africa had yet been liberated. So from the very inception of the armed struggle, our conception was that the political struggle was an important element, as it would create conditions for the entrenchment of MK among the masses. The survival of webs of MK units depended on the participation of the oppressed peoples themselves in the entire struggle. The early units sent into the country by the leadership were therefore given the task of

building the underground because this was seen as crucial for the entrenchment and expansion of MK units.

The sixties was a period of extreme oppression. The enemy had dealt a heavy blow against the movement and political activity was at a very low ebb. Mass activity was almost non-existent and there were no mass movements to speak of. The mobilisation of the working class into their own democratic trade unions had hardly taken off. The building of the underground was thus painfully slow.

The process of rebuilding the organisation and the establishment of leadership structures were the early and urgent tasks of the 60's and 70's. Cadres trained outside the country had to be sent in to link up with the ANC cadres inside to tackle the formidable task of preparing conditions for a people's war. In addition, it was important to boost the morale of the people and to set the example of no surrender, however great the odds. The forging of the ZAPU-ANC alliance together with the Luthuli detachment must be seen in the light of the clear determination of our movement and the people's army literally to hack and rough our way to our country, to fight if necessary but never to submit. The spirit of this approach and the determination it represents, runs through our army, which continues to refuse to be daunted by difficulties and obstacles.

Luthuli Detachment

The feats and valiant performances of the Luthuli detachment in Zimbabwe have become legendary. The major contribution of the detachment was the fact that it was the first unit in our contemporary history to confront the enemy with modern weapons. Secondly, the Wankie and Sipolilo battles lifted the spirit of our people. The enemy, which had tried hard to suppress the publication of information about the ANC, was forced not only to publicise the battles it was fighting against MK, but also had to intervene by sending army units to block the advance of our army.

The heroism and courage of the MK detachments in Zimbabwe have become the pride of our people. I shall mention just a few of these outstanding soldiers who, in their commitment to our revolution, fought like tigers to explode the myth of the invincibility of the enemy. Men like Patrick Molaoa, Benson Ntsele, Basil February, Jack Simelane, Masimini, Eric Nduna, Mkhamba, Gandhi Hlekani, Mzathi, Ben Ngalo, Jacques Goniwe, Tatile Melani, Maseko, David Molefe. These and many others died fighting heroically in the bushes of the Zambezi Valley. We say everlasting glory to their memory. Others are still living and contributing to our revolution.

Important to mention are comrades like Mjojo Mugariwano, our first Chief of Staff, Mninzi, Mavuyo Wana, Shuta, Makhasi, Petrus June and Linda Ntsele, to name but a few. We should also not forget our comrades who like Masiza and Hlatshwayo, died in the prison of Ian Smith.

Today MK has become a major force and growing army which strikes fear in the hearts of the enemy. The swelling of its ranks since the heroic uprising of the youth and students in 1976 has brought about qualitative and quantitative changes. But the special significance of the presence of the 1976 and post 1976 generation is the escalation of the armed struggle inside South Africa. It was this generation which fired the first bullet in contemporary history inside South Africa. The late 70's were a period of armed propaganda which was essential if we were to popularise the ANC, especially since the enemy had tried hard to suppress any knowledge of the National Liberation Movement.

Important landmarks of the armed propaganda campaigns which will always stand out in the history of our army are the attacks on Sasol, Voortrekker Hoogte, Koeberg nuclear power plant and the attacks on various police stations. These actions served to popularise the ANC, and Umkhonto We Sizwe captured the minds of the young people who increasingly began to see not only the need for armed struggle, but also the need for full participation in it.

The majority of the youth in our country have grasped the inescapable conclusion that the system of oppression can only be destroyed as a result of militant mass struggle, with the armed struggle forming an important part of it. We take this opportunity to salute the Soweto and post Soweto generation who sharpened the cutting edge of our spear and through whose heroic sacrifices our army has become a real people's army, enriching and deepening the mass militant struggle. These are the heroes who through military operations put the clear perspectives of a people's war squarely before our people. There has been no single political campaign which has not been accompanied by MK actions.

Escalating military operations

The year of the 25th anniversary was observed by MK against the background of mass militant actions accompanied by sustained and ever-escalating military operations. Over the past two years we have witnessed unprecedented mass and armed actions which clearly demonstrate that a revolutionary situation is maturing. It is quite obvious that the oppressed are refusing to live and be ruled in the old way. Scores and scores of local authorities have collapsed like a pack of cards. The ruling class no longer

wields any authority in many townships. Collaborators, police and all traitorous and venal groups have either been eliminated or fled the townships in panic in the face of the anger of the oppressed. MK has been very active in this massive opposition to autocratic rule, training and expanding its units as well as creating grenade squads as it proceeds with the process of building the people's army. The present period has also ushered in a mood of anger and militancy by the overwhelmingly black trade union movement. The emergence of the militant Congress of South African Trade Unions has deepened the political and class consciousness of the working class.

The formation of Street Committees, area Committees and people's defence units have created the infrastructures necessary to accelerate the process of consolidating not only the underground but also the recruiting for and expansion of the people's army. In many townships the enemy only exercises its authority through the massive presence of its troops. As soon as these troops disappear, people's committees take over. The crucial task facing us is to equip the people's democratic organs with a capacity to have at their disposal trained and equipped units of MK whose prime task will be the organisation of security, the defence of the people and the harassment and liquidation of the enemy's forces.

In the rural areas we are confronted with the major task of establishing and entrenching MK units in order to extend the process of ungovernability there. Already the rural masses are beginning to move, boldly challenging the quislings in the bantustans and homelands. In addition to the major task of mobilisation being carried out by the mass organisations, MK units are beginning to stamp their presence in the rural areas and white farms. Landmine warfare is being intensified and military operations have been carried out in areas like the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei and KwaNdebele. The elimination of the arch-quisling Ntuli in KwaNdebele galvanised the people, including the dummy legislative assembly, into rejecting the bogus independence scheduled for December this year. This is the first time that as a result of popular opposition the government's schemes to balkanise our country have been stopped dead in their tracks.

The Eagles of our Struggle in the Soweto and Post-Soweto Periods
Since the late 70's and up to now a number of comrades have made an indelible impact on our revolution as a result of their heroism and absolute commitment. Their deeds and actions serve as a tremendous inspiration as we handle the tasks of improving and consolidating our people's army. The ten years since the Soweto student uprising have produced an impressive

catalogue of heroes and martyrs whose actions and sacrifices “water the tree of freedom”. It is impossible to enumerate all of them, and I shall limit myself to mentioning a few of those we must emulate as we march towards national and social emancipation. Revolutionary giants like Obadi, Nkululeko, Zweli, Cliff Brown, Matroos, Joseph Mayoli, Nkululeko Njongwe, Morris Seabelo, Barney Molokwane and many others — to these we raise our banners and say “everlasting glory to their memory”.

The Party and MK

From its inception our party threw its full weight behind the formation of Umkhonto We Sizwe. Together with the ANC it provided leaders, commanders and commissars to participate in the armed activities of our army. Our party has always insisted that its members should consistently demonstrate communist and revolutionary qualities, inspiring by example and always ready to live up to the rigorous demands of armed struggle. Our party, like the ANC, recognises the crucial and important place of the armed struggle in our revolution and communists are always encouraged to improve the organisation, the combat readiness and the fighting qualities of MK.

Communists have laid down their lives during the numerous military operations carried out by MK. Names like Gene Gugushe, David, Obadi, Gordon Nikwebu, Mavimbela, Njongwe, Leon Meyer, Morris Seabelo immediately come to mind.

Perspectives

The most urgent task facing MK at the present time is to quicken the process of entrenching MK inside the country, making it a people’s army to fight a people’s war. Conditions exist for a qualitative acceleration in recruiting for and expansion of our army. The present mass militant upsurge has thrown up thousands of militant youths who are displaying growing readiness to fight the enemy. This provides our revolutionary movement with a deep and broad pool from which to recruit. It has also become important to converge in a careful manner with the forces on the ground which are engaged in daily battles against the enemy. As well as attacking enemy personnel and its institutions wherever they are, MK is also entrusted with the serious responsibility of escalating the armed struggle by taking the war to the white areas by carrying out operations against the farmers who are virtually co-opted into the enemy’s system of defence. MK is the army of our people, and as it organises, grows and operates it must display high standards of political

consciousness, discipline and morale. To it belongs the task of destroying the monopoly of violence that the enemy has enjoyed for so many years.

MK has the will, the determination and the power especially because it is continuing its military tasks, assured of the overwhelming support of the majority of our people.

Long live MK!

Forward to victory!



BUILDERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

by Jack Simons

(The first part of this article, dealing with the lives of William Henry Andrews, David Ivon Jones and Sidney Percival Bunting, was published in the last issue of *The African Communist*, No.107, 4th Quarter 1986.)

MOSES KOTANE

“I am first an African and then a Communist” said Moses Kotane, speaking at a conference of senior Party members in December 1938. “I came to the Communist Party because I saw in it the way out and the salvation for the African people”.

It was a characteristic remark, challenging and meant to shock. But it also revealed not so much a scale of priorities as a way of fitting Marxist-Leninist doctrine into the African national tradition. He was telling his audience, which included veteran African Party members, that one could be both a good communist and a strong nationalist.

Born in 1905 in the Kwena town of Tamposstad in Rustenburg district, he attended school for only a few years but acquired a good general education through self-study as he went from one job to another — herdsboy on a white-owned farm, domestic help, waiter, baker, miner and photographer’s assistant. He made a big break-through on the way to becoming a class conscious worker by attending the Party’s night school in Johannesburg and joining the Party, ANC and African Bakers’ Union at more or less the same time in 1928.

A natural Marxist, Moses was ready to trade dialectics with the most doctrinaire of members. There was no trace of race or colour consciousness in his dealing with whites. His understanding of the class struggle blended harmoniously with a fervent patriotism and pride of culture. He despised white

supremacy and refused to tolerate any trace of it in the Party and its approach to Africans. They would be emancipated and must not be manipulated in the struggle for power.

The Party and the ANC were not competitors, he urged, but rather the mailed fists of a single force. They would succeed if both were trained to strike their blows at the same time and in total agreement. Impatient of theory that seemed remote from immediate tasks, he brushed Bach's polemics aside and made it his business to strengthen both arms of the liberation front.

Skilled Politician

A skilled politician in the best sense of the word, he had a fine sense of political power and the need to adapt, without compromising principles or departing from basic objectives. Unity was the keynote in his approach to conflicts within the Party and the liberation movement; unity, not at all costs, but firmly directed against every manifestation of white domination. Because of this emphasis he refused to speak up in defence of Bunting and other victims of the purge carried out in 1931-33. He hated the injustices and arbitrary measures taken to remove the "old guard", but believed that only a dramatic rejection of white chauvinism in all its forms would liberate the Party from its pre-1924 obsession with white working class power and win the trust of African militants.

Whites tended to dominate non-racial organisations and gatherings. Africans and other blacks had difficulty in overcoming the handicaps of inferior education, insufficient knowledge of English, the common language, and a conditioned feeling of cultural inferiority. Kotane, like many other radicals, believed that a degree of self-management was necessary to give blacks room to expand and acquire skills of leadership and knowledge of organisation. This approach led to the formation in 1928 of the S.A. Federation of Non-European Trade Unions. Three of its office bearers — Ben Weinbren, Kotane and La Guma — were Party members. Their aim was to promote a united front of black unions, press for equality and move forward to the goal of non-racial unions. No specific mention was made in the programme of the colour bar or demand for equal opportunities. The leaders wanted to stress workers' unity against capitalism, even at the expense of delaying attacks on the parasitical position of white workers.

The League of African Rights, formed in 1929 on Buntings's initiative, represented another attempt to group left-wing radicals and militant nationalists in a broad movement to defend civil liberties and demand African rights. The ANC, ICU and Party were represented on the League's

committee. After a promising start in which Kotane with other committee members spoke at meetings in a country-wide campaign to collect signatures for a petition to parliament, the league broke up on receiving ill-advised directives from the Comintern in Moscow to dissolve. The instruction put an end to the kind of united front that was to become the Comintern's official policy five years later under George Dimitroff's guidance.

Kotane and Albert Nzula, the Party's Assistant General Secretary, attended the Lenin School in Moscow in 1931. Here, Moses said in later years, he learned to think politically and argue logically. On his return in 1933 he found the party in a shambles, almost paralysed by the effects of the 1931 expulsions and on-going wranglings over policy. A party conference held in Johannesburg shortly after his return elected him to the Political Bureau. He acted as general secretary, a position that he held (except for a brief interlude between 1935 and 1939) until his death in 1978.

The Cradock Letter

He toured Party branches throughout the country and gave his impressions in a letter to the Central Committee from Cradock in the Eastern Cape. "The Party is too Europeanised", he wrote. "We are simply theoretical and our theory is less concerned with practice". He argued that there were important differences between the concepts of "proletarian dictatorship" and an "independent native republic". The Party should become more Africanised, he suggested; study local conditions, get acquainted with African languages and aspirations; and present demands derived from first-hand acquaintance with people.

As General Secretary for 45 years, he had ample opportunity to shape the Party according to his vision. Bach's elimination from the leadership in 1935 cleared the way while Kotane's decision in 1937 to settle in Cape Town with Eddie Roux enabled him to take stock and prepare for the challenge of the approaching war.

Unity was the key to success, he maintained, and accordingly opposed Mofutsanyana's motion at the national conference in December 1938 to split into two sections, one for Africans only. Such a division, said Kotane, would produce an autonomous black party with its own leadership. The Conference agreed, rejected the motion, and adopted Kotane's proposal to shift the Party's headquarters to Cape Town.

Though far removed from the main centres of the liberation movement, Kotane while in Cape Town continued to be active in the ANC. Dr Xuma invited him in 1943 to serve on the committee formed to draft the Congress

version of the Atlantic Charter. In 1946 he was elected to the National Executive Committee of the ANC, a position which he held until 1952 when he was listed and banned under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950.

Meanwhile, he stood trial in 1946-48 together with other members of the Party's Central Executive Committee on a charge of sedition arising from the great strike of African miners. Unable to secure a conviction, the government outlawed the Party. The Central Committee decided on dissolution with only two dissenting members, Andrews and Harmel. Kotane visited every party district in turn to explain the decision. It was accepted without dissent.

Kotane moved to Johannesburg in 1956, started a business in Alexandra, went to prison in November 1952 during the Defiance Campaign, stood in the dock with other accused in the great Treason Trial that began in 1956, and after his discharge from the trial, travelled widely, representing the ANC at the Bandung Conference in 1955, visited India, China, Poland, and attended the ANC conference held in Botswana in October 1962. He then left for Tanzania to join the ANC in exile and was appointed Treasurer-General. He and J.B. Marks shared a small office in Morogoro, sleeping in two adjacent rooms, under the difficult conditions of exile.

Incorruptible in his personal life as well as politics, overworked and suffering from high blood pressure, without relaxation and with little rest, his body failed him towards the end of 1968. Partly paralysed by a series of strokes, he was taken to a Moscow hospital where he remained until he died on 19 May 1978. Dr Yusuf Dadoo spoke at his graveside, and paid tribute to the high standard he set for all freedom fighters. Moses, said Yusuf, drove himself to the limit of his endurance; the illness which struck him down was the result of overwork. The President of the ANC, Comrade Oliver Tambo, told the mourners in Moscow that Moses and J.B. Marks had left a deep mark on their comrades in arms.

J.B. MARKS

Uncle J.B., as he was fondly known in later years, will be remembered in the annals of the revolution for many deeds of valour, for his dedication and for three outstanding contributions: his Chairmanship of the Party from 1962 until his death in 1972, his Presidency of the African Miners' Union from 1943 until 1952 when he was listed and banned under the Suppression of Communism Act, and his chairmanship of the famous Morogoro Conference of 1969 which put the liberation movement on the right track at a time when it was plagued by doubts and dissension.

Big in body and mind, he reminded one of the great American singer Paul Robeson. His father was a railwayman, his mother a midwife living in Ventersdorp, Western Transvaal. JB entered the Kilnerton training college at the age of 16 in 1919, qualified two years later for a teacher's diploma, taught in Potchefstroom and the Orange Free State town of Vredefort, and came into contact with workers in the diamond mines.

On one occasion, while attending a meeting of miners, he heard S.P. Bunting speak. His fiery speech opened his mind to many new ideas. Bunting invited him to visit the Party's headquarters in Fox Street, Johannesburg. Here JB got to know something about the writings of Marx and Lenin. He joined the Party in 1928, spoke at meetings and took part in campaigns. On one occasion in Potchefstroom in 1929, a white mob invaded the township, and broke up a meeting addressed by Mofutsanyana and Marks. When JB declared that "Africa belongs to us", one of the whites fired a pistol, killing Hermanus Lethebe, a party member, who died of his wounds. The killer was acquitted by an all-white jury while the eight whites who were charged with public violence were convicted but dismissed with a caution. "For hooligans to shoot an African is but to break a black bottle", remarked Josie Mpama, one of the first African women to join the Party.

Dismissed from teaching in 1931 for his political activities, he became a full time organiser, working for the Party, Congress and the unions. Elected in 1932 to the Party's central committee, he was put forward later in the year as a "demonstrative candidate" in a parliamentary election in the all-white constituency of Germiston. They went through the farce to expose the sham of so-called white democracy, and took advantage of the show to bring a message of struggle for franchise rights, unemployment insurance, an end to colour bars, beer raids, poll tax and lodgers' permits, the grievances that afflicted township residents. The police intervened, broke up the meetings, charged speakers with incitement to race hatred and long after the election business was over, attacked speakers at a meeting called to deal with complaints against the superintendent. Shots were fired, a woman died of her wounds, a score of Africans were injured, but the superintendent who had led the police assault was absolved of all responsibility.

JB, like other African revolutionaries, obtained an insight into Marxist-Leninist theory at the Lenin School in Moscow. While in the Soviet Union, he acquired a working knowledge of Russian which stood him in good stead on numerous visits to the land of socialism. On his return to South Africa, he used his Marxist theory to identify the influence of an African bourgeoisie on the failure of the liberation movement to lead a militant campaign against

grievances and for basic rights. Marks and Mofutsanyana took the initiative in forming a committee to revive Congress in the Transvaal and became members of the Congress Executive in the province during the 1940s. During this period Marks concentrated on organising trade unions at a time when he had ceased to be a Party member, due to expulsion for a technical breach of discipline.

Miners' Leader

He took over the presidency of the African Miners' Union in 1943 and launched a vigorous recruiting drive. A commission of inquiry into the wages of African miners proposed miserable increases with fringe benefits. The Chamber of Mines with government backing rejected some of the proposals, granted others, and refused to recognise the union. Marks told a conference held in August 1944 that "the whole system of colour discrimination, segregation and oppression directed against the African people was powerfully supported by the Chamber of Mines".

A strike, the biggest in the country's industrial history, began on 12 August 1946 and was broken on the 15th, when armed police used rifles and clubs to drive the men down the shafts. The decision to call a general strike was taken at a meeting on the 13th over which Marks presided when the police burst in and arrested him.

Though defeated, the strike had important consequences. It was followed by the dissolution of the Native Representative Council, the prosecution of the Party's central executive committee on a charge of sedition, the outlawing of the Party by statute; the formation of the Congress Alliance; and the emergence of a police state under the Apartheid government using fascist techniques to entrench white domination.

Marks was charged under the Riotous Assemblies Act with other Johannesburg Party members and some union officials, but escaped with an admission of guilt and payment of a fine. In 1947 he travelled to Dakar to represent the Council of Non-European Trade Unions at a conference sponsored by the World Federation of Trade Unions. In 1950 he was elected President of the Transvaal Congress. Banned under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1952, he nevertheless took part in the Defiance Campaign and served a sentence of imprisonment.

The fifth illegal conference of the Party held inside the country in 1962 elected JB as Chairman, a position he held until his death. He was then instructed to join the headquarters of the External Mission in Tanzania. He accompanied many delegations to international peace conferences and

headed the South African delegation at the international conference of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in June 1969.

Also in 1969 he presided over the important Morogoro Conference. Its decisions restored confidence in the organisation and adumbrated a strategy and policy that endured until the Second Consultative Conference of June 1985.

He suffered a serious illness in 1971 while on duty at the ANC headquarters in Tanzania. He was taken to the Soviet Union for treatment, rallied and made good progress, but died of heart failure on 1 August 1972.

YUSUF DADOO

The genial, mild-mannered and somewhat tactiturn "Doc" as he was fondly called by friends and followers combined medicine with politics after he returned from Edinburgh University in 1936 with a medical degree at the age of 25. His surgery in Johannesburg attracted patients from all national groups, among them Afrikaners from the countryside who, he quipped, credited him with a knowledge of Eastern mysticism as well as modern therapy. But politics soon became his main concern and later his entire life.

His temperament was that of a militant activist, intent on putting ideas into practice. Though not given to much talk in the many committees and conferences he attended, often presiding as chairman or president, he had a wide reputation for wise counselling and proper leadership. He attracted a following in all his spheres of activity by setting an example of courage, commitment and consistency in the pursuit of his main objectives which were to weld Indians into a well knit, radical national community and establish firm links with the African people in common struggle against white domination and oppression.

He found in the Party the kind of ideological and organisational framework which he needed to carry out his mission. When he joined in 1939, the Party was well on the way to recovery from the cleavages that had weakened it in the early 1930s. It was preoccupied with the formation of a united front against fascism and war, an objective that came close to Dadoo's main concerns.

The Indian population of about 200,000 was at that time deeply divided over their attitude to the Asiatic Land Tenure Acts of 1936 and 1939 which enforced residential segregation in Natal and Transvaal. A conservative leadership of landowners and businessmen wanted to compromise by accepting segregation in return for the right to acquire titles to land. Militants objected, and Dadoo urged Indians to launch a campaign of passive resistance. Dadoo

and others in the Nationalist Bloc of the Transvaal Indian Congress called for passive resistance. Six thousand Indians meeting in Johannesburg took a pledge to support the campaign as from August 1st, but on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi it was called off.

Parliament voted for participation in the war in September 1939. The Party said it was an imperialist war and urged people to struggle at home against poverty, backwardness and race discrimination — the breeding ground of fascism. Indian radicals put up the strongest resistance mounted in South Africa to the war policy and launched a campaign for citizenship rights that changed the political outlook of Natal Indians for generations to come. Dadoo, leading the nationalist group in the Transvaal, served a sentence of four months in 1941 for agitating against a war “where the rich get richer and the poor get killed”.

Passive Resistance Campaign

An influx of workers strengthened the radical section of the Natal Indian Congress and enabled it to defeat the conservatives in October 1945. Dr G.M. Naicker, the new President, declared that it was the aim of Congress under his leadership to free Indians for life in a free South Africa. Some months later Dadoo was elected President of the Transvaal Indian Congress. A conference of the united congress held at Cape Town in February 1946 called for “a concerted and prolonged resistance” against the government’s ghetto bill. Passive resistance councils were formed and a joint council appealed in June 1946 for “a day of Hartal” when the bill became law. Segregation, declared Dadoo in April, led to political and economic serfdom, crushed the spirit of freedom, and nourished a fascism rooted in race hatred and white domination.

Indians once again showed their high level of cohesion and political maturity. More than 2000 resisters went to jail in the next two years. Convicted twice and sentenced to six months’ hard labour, the doctors Dadoo and Naicker were among the last resisters to be released in July 1948. Before then, in 1946, Yusuf was taken under police escort from Natal to stand trial in Johannesburg with 51 other accused on charges of organising the African miners’ strike.

The resisters left a permanent mark on African opinion. Congress, said Dr Xuma, stood four square behind the resisters. In March 1947 he, Dadoo and Naicker signed the “Doctors’ Pact” undertaking to work together for full franchise rights and equality. The Congress Alliance was beginning to take shape.

The Nationalist Government, continuing its offensive against democratic forces, imposed bans on Dadoo and Sam Kahn and announced the introduction of pass laws for African women. All sections of the liberation movement responded by joining a Defend Free Speech Convention that met in Johannesburg in March 1950 under the chairmanship of Dr Moroka.

When the terms of the bill outlawing the Party became known in May 1950, the National Executive of the ANC called an emergency conference in Johannesburg. Dadoo called for unity against fascism; O.R. Tambo warned that no democratic organisation would be spared if the attack on the Party was allowed to pass without resistance. "Today it is the Communist Party. Tomorrow it will be our trade unions, our Indian Congress, our A.P.O., our African National Congress."

The conference decided to launch a campaign for united action of the various sections of the liberation movement and set aside 26 June as a day of mourning for persons killed by police on May 1st.

In 1951 Dadoo and Yusuf Cachalia represented the S.A. Indian Congress on a joint council formed to plan the Defiance Campaign. Dadoo and Kotane were among the first volunteers to suffer imprisonment for defying unjust laws.

In 1953 Dadoo was elected to the illegal Communist Party's central committee. After the declaration of the state of emergency in 1960 he went overseas at the request of the Party and the Indian Congress to organise an external administration and promote solidarity campaigns. Elected vice-chairman of the ANC's Revolutionary Council in 1969, he succeeded J.B. Marks as National Chairman of the Party in 1972.

Writing on his death bed, he paid tribute to the loyalty and confidence he had received from Party members at all levels, and the many messages of support from fraternal parties, governments, liberation movements and individuals throughout the world which testified to the Party's high standing. A great friend of the Soviet Union and its socialist allies, member of the Presidential Committee of the World Peace Council, Doc was a great internationalist who left a permanent mark in pursuing his main objectives, unity of Indians, unity with Africans, and unity of all oppressed peoples for liberation, equality and justice.

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A FAREWELL SALUTE TO SAMORA MACHEL

by Toussaint

There are few men of whom it can be said that not only his own family and his own nation are the poorer for his passing, but also the wider community outside. Samora Machel's untimely death diminishes all revolutionary Africa, and all progressive and freedom-loving mankind. For here was a man of unique leadership quality, shown in the formative crucible of guerilla war against Portuguese colonialism, refired in a revolutionary victory, honed and tempered finally in that most testing of human challenges — the transition from war to peace and reconstruction. Here was a man of real stature whose place will not be easily filled.

pic of S. Machel



Africa and other areas where independence has come out of the colonial heritage in our own times have known many military leaders whose command of an armed force opened the road for their assumption of personal political power. Machel fought and commanded his forces, not as a lone hero, but as one of a collective Frelimo leading core. In war, as in the post-war reconstruction which set Mozambique on the road to real freedom and national development, it was always the Frelimo collective that led. In that collective Machel was amongst equals; but his special qualities — his steadfastness, his simple humanity and warmth, his attachment to people and their aspirations, and his simple directness of speech — these special qualities made him the first amongst equals.

In the sorrow at this death, the words of regret from the Pretoria regime struck a hypocritical and hollow note. Machel and Frelimo had made themselves some of the foremost opponents of the apartheid state; Pretoria does not forgive its enemies. While Machel headed the Mozambique government, Pretoria threw its entire armoury short of full-scale war against them — economic undermining, by cancellation of a long-standing treaty obligation to pay Mozambican workers on the Rand's gold mines "deferred pay" in gold in Mozambique; direct military assault on selected targets of Frelimo's ANC allies and alleged training camps; indirect sabotage by MNR proxies, paid and equipped to terrorise Mozambican villagers, destroy road and rail links, disrupt ports and cripple the economy.

After all this, who will believe the protestations of Pretoria's sorrow over Machel's death? Who indeed will believe Pretoria's protestations that it had no hand in what is still an unexplained airplane crash within South Africa itself? It accords well with Pretoria's attitude to blacks, to Mozambique and to Machel that survivors of the crash state that the first South African police on the scene paid no attention to the crash survivors, but searched like vultures amongst the bodies for loot, cash, documents. It accords equally well with Pretoria's aims of destabilising all the frontline states that three weeks after the accident a "secret" document — the property of the Mozambique government if genuine, but never returned to them — should be quoted out of context and misquoted to stoke up conflict between the frontline states and South Africa's only ally in the region, Malawi; and to provide the pretext for a stern warning to the frontliners that military reprisals could well follow. It accords well with South Africa's estimate of Machel as a foe of substance and stature, that Pretoria's MNR running dogs should immediately proclaim his death as the signal and the opportunity for increased South African inspired aggression against the Mozambique people.

The Badge of Courage

Neither Machel nor Frelimo lacked the courage to stand up against the rich and powerful South African bullies on their borders. In the face of the threats and attacks from South Africa, they have summoned up their courage and convictions to build the foundations of a new, truly free Mozambique. They have maintained the unity of their people under the collective leadership of a popular people's party which guides the country in the direction of socialism. They have developed new and unique democratic practices and institutions which will serve as an example for other free African states to build upon. Such people, such leading cadres, such parties are not easily pushed off course.

The Fight Goes On

We do not believe even such a sad blow as the death of Samora Machel will deflect them. Steadfast opposition to apartheid, steadfast support for all the freedom struggles of the people of Southern Africa have been their hallmark throughout the years. Even in the moments when we on *The African Communist* believed they had erred in reaching an accord with Pretoria at Nkomati — we never doubted that they remained allies and supporters of our cause, of South African freedom and of the revolutionary struggle to overthrow apartheid.

Nor do we doubt that Frelimo and the people of Mozambique, under the new leadership of Joaquim Chissano at the head of the government, will continue the tradition that Frelimo has built under Machel's presidency. Struggle for freedom has been the very centre of that tradition. Together, we South Africans in our country, Mozambicans in theirs, will carry on that tradition — so that all Southern Africa can finally conquer peace, liberty and stability for all the peoples and countries of the region.

Under Machel's presidency Mozambique confounded Pretoria's constant lying claims that all independent Africa was in disorder, its regimes corrupt, its leaders besotted with personal aggrandisement. Doubtless there will be monuments built in his memory, and tributes in words, marble, and bronze. But he was not a man who sought pomp or grandeur.

He was a man who would have valued the memorial of another type — that free, peaceful and progressive Africa which we will build together. For Samora and all his comrades and colleagues who have died in the struggle to bring it about.

SACP TRIBUTE

Message to the FRELIMO Party and Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique on the death of President Samora Machel, from Joe Slovo, Chairman of the South African Communist Party.

We of the South African Communist Party received the news of the tragic death of Comrade Samora Moises Machel and other leaders of FRELIMO and your Government with profound shock and sorrow. We grieve with you and the Mozambican people. Comrade Samora was not only the foremost son and leader of the Mozambican revolution but a giant of our continent and outstanding internationalist. Your incalculable loss is also a tremendous loss for Africa and the world community.

Comrade Samora will always be admired and revered for his role in the liberation of Mozambique and his tremendous, strenuous efforts against tremendous odds, of consolidating your hard-won independence and sovereignty and of steering your country along the path of economic and social advance. He emerged as an implacable opponent of apartheid and minority rule in Southern Africa and of imperialism throughout the world. All those involved in the struggle to liberate South Africa, Communists and non-Communists alike, came to value his principled support together with the enormous warmth, friendship and militancy that radiated from him.

No amount of crocodile tears from Pretoria can minimise the fact that the racist South African Government saw in Comrade Samora a major foe and obstacle to their aims. We are convinced that this tragedy cannot be separated from the context of Pretoria's strenuous backing for the MNR bandits, its concerted attempts to destabilise Mozambique and the entire region, and Magnus Malan's more recent bellicose threats against your country.

We of the South African Communist Party strongly believe that the leaders of your Party and country, together with the entire people of Mozambique, have the courage and resolve to overcome this heavy blow. We are confident that you will stand united and firm and that you will follow the heroic path forward, blazed with such distinction by Comrade Samora.

Comrade Samora Machel's life serves as an inspiration to all freedom-loving people. Comrades, we mourn with you, and send our heartfelt condolences to your Party, Government and the families of the bereaved.

Let us pick up Comrade Samora's spear and march forward.

A Luta Continua! A Vittoria e Certa!

HOW THE EMERGENCY HAS HIT THE WORKERS

by R.E. Nyameko

South Africa is in crisis. The state of emergency declared on 12th June last year continues to stifle freedom of association, movement and speech throughout the country. Many thousands of democrats, leaders of our people are in detention without right of appeal to the courts.

The clampdown by the racists on the rights and liberties of the people has given a heavy knock to all sides of the resistance movement.

The advance of the national democratic revolution has been checked by the regime's outrageous assaults and use of terrorism. Great hardships have been imposed on the three pillars of our struggle — the black working class; the local communities; and the intellectuals represented by scholars, students, teachers, journalists, and churchmen who reject the official structures and are organised by the UDF.

The black working class is potentially the most important revolutionary force. It too has been severely attacked, many trade unionists have been arrested, detained and restricted. The estimated 20,000 detained persons include a substantial number of trade unionists, shop-stewards and strikers who took industrial action in defence of their interests and in protest against the declaration of the State of Emergency in June 1986.

The regime claims that it detained the trade unionists because of their political activities and not their trade union work. But the two dimensions of protest are inseparable. A trade union leader who does his job — organises

the members for wage increases and improved conditions, against retrenchment and arbitrary dismissals, for decent homes, clean streets, water and electricity, for the removal of police and army from the townships and the release of detainees — such a leader cannot escape the inquisition.

Since the army and police have unlimited powers of arrest and can detain at will without regard to legal process or the courts, every active unionist is at risk when carrying out his responsibilities towards his members and their families.

In spite of these hazards the trade union movement still retains its basic structures and continues to mobilise large numbers of workers to resist the regime's onslaught.

It was the membership of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of SA (CCAWUSA) that immediately gave leadership. It had over 100 strikes, used sit-ins and sleep-ins in the stores in support of the demand to the state to release trade union leaders from detention, and forced employers to support their demand. It was the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) that took legal action against the regime and won the right for trade unions to have meetings. It was the labour movement under the leadership of COSATU with the support of students and community organisations that put May Day, on its 100th anniversary, back into our history of resistance, in the largest stay-away ever recorded with an estimated 1,500,000 workers taking part and calling for the day to be declared a public holiday.

The regime proclaimed the State of Emergency on 12th June to preempt the call for a stay-away on the 10th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising. The regime issued appeals over radio and loudspeakers to make June 16th a "normal working day", issued fake leaflets in the name of unions and mass organisations. In spite of this, the declared State of Emergency, widespread detentions, the presence of the police and army in the townships, the regime did not succeed. It was no "normal working day". The Labour Monitoring Group conducted surveys and reported that the June 16th Stay-Away was supported by as many as the 1st of May Stay-Away.

The 14th July Day of Action Call by COSATU to strike in support of demands for lifting of the state of emergency, withdrawal of police and troops from black townships and the release of detainees received widespread support.

There was another display of trade union strength on 1st October, the day of mourning for the 177 miners, victims of the Kinross disaster. The mourning was organised by the National Union of Mineworkers.

On Wednesday 1st October 325,000 miners responded to their call for a day of mourning for the 177 miners who died in the Kinross disaster. Management put the figure at 250,000. Either way, it was — by far — the biggest ever stay-away in the mining industry, the biggest ever stay-away in any industry and the most impressive response to a safety issue by the SA union movement.

The stayaways went ahead in spite of the fact that the mining houses, with the exception of Gencor, opposed the day of mourning and proposed a five minute silence instead.

Several hundred thousand members of COSATU affiliates engaged in unprecedented solidarity action, arranging various stoppages, memorial meetings and demonstrations. The Metal and Allied Workers' Union, for instance, said that 56 of its 60 organised factories took some form of action, while members of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union at SASOL held a three-hour memorial meeting on Wednesday morning.¹

“About 600,000 people either stayed away from work on Wednesday or observed a one to three-hour work stoppage — called by the National Union of Mineworkers to mourn the 177 miners killed in the Kinross mine disaster. NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa told a press conference that the stayaway was a ‘huge success’ . . . Several mines from Namaqualand to Phalaborwa came to a halt on Wednesday as miners heeded the call to mourn the dead.

“Ramaphosa said the support by unions affiliated to COSATU raised the figure to more than 600,000 people. This figure excludes thousands of schoolchildren who stayed away from school in sympathy with the dead miners . . .”²

We have had a high incidence of strikes in the recent period. The major reasons include the deteriorating economic situation, the rising tide of trade union organisation and the growth of political consciousness.

Types of Strike Action

All strikes contain an element of resistance to state authority on the one hand and capitalist exploitation on the other hand. We might regard these as opposite poles of a single process. However, it is useful, in fact important, to distinguish what we shall call industrial strikes from “political” strikes.

An industrial strike is the ordinary withholding of labour, as the classical writers on the subject call it in terms of Marxist economic theory. The worker contracts to sell his labour power to the employer in return for an agreed payment in cash. This contract distinguishes the ‘free’ worker or proletarian from the slave, serf and other kinds of bonded workers.

Wage earners withhold their labour power for a variety of reasons: to enforce wage demands; improve working conditions; achieve trade union recognition; protest against unjustified dismissal of leaders and comrades;

ill-treatment by foremen and supervisors and bad sanitary and health provisions. All such grievances are serious violations of a moral code if not a legal one regulating interaction between the worker and employer.

As I remarked earlier all strikes contain an element of political action because of the frequent involvement of the State apparatus, including the police, magistrates and judges in action against strikes. In South Africa it is the regular pattern for the police and army to terrorise strikers with the use of brute force.

It is necessary for us to examine the significance of strikes, learn lessons how to develop this proletarian weapon of struggle.

Comrade Lenin explained it very crisply:

“Strikes, which arise out of the very nature of capitalist society, signify the beginning of the working class struggle against the system of society . . .

“A strike, moreover, opens the eyes of the workers to the nature, not only of the capitalists, but of Government and the laws as well . . .

“Every strike strengthens and develops in the workers the understanding that the Government is their enemy and that the working class must prepare itself to struggle against the Government for the people’s rights.

“Strikes, therefore, teach the workers to unite; they show them that they can struggle against the capitalists only when they are united; strikes teach the workers to think of the struggle of the whole working class against the whole class of factory owners and against the arbitrary, police government.”³

Strike Analysis

The industrial consultant Andrew Levy in a recently published report which analyses South African strike activity since 1979 states that two main factors influencing strikes were the rapid growth in union membership over the past years and increasing level of political activity. (He is discussing ordinary strikes, not mass stay-aways like May Day, June 16th).

Wage disputes are increasingly the predominant trigger. Industrial action over grievances and dismissals has fallen because of the increased number of disputes which are handled by the Industrial Court, from four cases in 1979 to 800 in 1985.

Examining the sectors that have been worst affected by strikes, until last year the metal sector was consistently the hardest hit, as from 1985 it moved on to the mining sector. The other sectors are the retail and food sectors, automotive industry and the chemical industry.⁴

Mine Labour and Wage Disputes

There were 109 unlawful work stoppages at gold and coal mines belonging to the Chamber of Mines this year, according to the Chamber’s industrial

relations adviser Johann Liebenberg. He told the Gold 100 conference in Johannesburg that coming to terms with emergent unions was one of the industry's most daunting challenges and was complicated by the general state of unrest in the past two years. He said that between January 1 and September 11, 1986, 52 unlawful stoppages occurred on our gold mines. In the same period our collieries experienced 57 work stoppages, he said.⁵

At the time of writing NUM and the Chamber were still negotiating an agreement, with the mine workers balloting for strike action. The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) at BTR Dunlop's Benoni plant, after a strike lasting for 5 weeks, arrived at an agreement to remain in force until the end of 1987. The minimum wage when fully implemented will be R3.03 an hour, with four months' maternity leave and a small cash long-service award. A three-shift system will be introduced in place of the present two-shift system.

This strike and agreement proved to the workers what unity in action can achieve. The CWIU is due to ballot among 6,000 workers employed at SASOL 2 and 3 at Secunda and at the same time negotiations are in progress regarding wage increases for the 5,500 CWIU members at the colliery which supplies SASOL.⁶

The Metal and Allied Workers' Union is planning a campaign for a living wage and is negotiating at factory level to bring wages up to a minimum of R3.50 an hour. It was forced to suspend its planned strike ballot in preparation for national wage action because of a statement issued by the Steel and Engineering bosses' federation SEIFSA that the industry will have to shed 90,000 jobs if a ban on iron and steel from South Africa is enforced. The issue of national wage action has been referred back to the union's regional structures for review. With the strategy and organising methods adopted we can be confident that the bosses will have to recognise the strength of organised labour.⁷

The list of ongoing strikes and preparations for strike action is growing. The Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU) was last year (1986) engaged in the Clover strike which started with the dismissal of a Durban shop steward in July and threatened to take on national proportions. This became apparent when union members in Natal called for supportive industrial action from Clover workers in other plants around the country. This followed a complete turnaround in the dairy bosses' position over union demands for the reinstatement of more than 230 dismissed Food and Allied Workers' Union members.

All indications were that the bosses are spoiling for a battle even though it could eventually shut down all their plants.

“We will not go back to work unless the company is prepared to accept open ended negotiations,” the workers have warned. The warning should not be taken lightly given FAWU’s strength at Clover plants around the country.

The response to Clover’s anti-worker stance could spark off consumer action, given the mood in working class communities all over the country.⁸

The workers are uniting and mobilising not only workers’ support but community support that has proved very effective in defeating the bosses’ attempts.

Political Strikes

A political strike is a different kettle of fish. We understand by this term a large-scale withdrawal of labour in protest against action by a Government that violates workers’ rights, cripples freedom of association, movement, residence and speech. When workers withhold labour in protest against such measures they are embarking on a political strike. The target is not directly the boss class but the Government which controls and manipulates the state apparatus, consisting of police, armed forces, court and prison.

Strike Action Barometer

According to Andrew Levy’s figures, COSATU unions accounted for 128 strikes and at least half a million lost man days between January and July last year (1986). The COSATU unions involved in most industrial disputes between January and July were the NUM, with 15 strikes and 211,550 lost man days, and MAWU, whose 20 strikes cost 142,350 man days.

This compares to 22 strikes and 22,000 lost man days by CUSA unions and one strike and 2,000 man days by AZACTU unions, who have now formed a federation outside COSATU. TUCSA unions had no strikes.⁹

In addition to leading the industrial and political strikes, COSATU and its affiliates together with all progressives have the task of organising the 4½ million workers who are organisable but are today unorganised, and to bring pressure on CUSA and AZACTU unions to find their way to merge in the industrial unions which COSATU affiliates have set up and are setting up. We need to have only one Federation of Trade Unions in our country. Buthelezi’s UWUSA has to be examined on another level.

Our Party members must fully participate in this work of organising and assisting in these strikes, participate fully in giving political education to

strikers and workers to equip them in this historic situation to abolish the apartheid regime and establish a national democratic government under a constitution that would enable South Africans of all races to participate in government for a full life.

NOTES

1. *Weekly Mail*, 3.10.86.
2. *City Press* 5.10.86.
3. V.I.Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol.4 p.314, 316 & 317.
4. *Financial Mail* 1.8.86.
5. *Star* 17.9.86.
6. Ibid. *Financial Mail* 17.9.86.
7. *The Nation* Sept. 25-Oct 6, 1986.
8. *The New Nation* Sept. 25-Oct 8, 1986.
9. *Weekly Mail* Oct 9-16, 1986. These figures exclude the stayaways and political action, such as those initiated by COSATU unions in response to the State of Emergency or the stayaways after July.





AFRICA

NOTES & COMMENT

By Ahmed Azad

TOGO: EYADEMA IN TROUBLE

On September 24, 1986, the Togolese government announced that it had foiled one more coup attempt. But this time they could not hide the weakness and insecurity of the regime. To retain power President Eyadema invited French troops to intervene, guard strategic installations and defend the capital from some imagined foreign power. In addition to the French troops, Zairean President Mobutu undertook to dispatch 350 Zairean soldiers to bolster the Togolese army.

On the night of the coup attempt sections of the Togolese army indulged in a random shooting rampage which led to a number of deaths, including that of two foreigners, one German and one French.

In terms of the secret agreement between France and Togo, French military intervention is justifiable if there is an external threat to the security of Togo. But as in previous coup attempts, there was no foreign intervention. It was an action by one of the many anti-Eyadema opposition groups.

Following the suppression of one coup, the President of Togo received envoys from Ivory Coast, Benin, Morocco and Nigeria, as well as Mobutu from Zaire and Doe from Liberia. From the imperialist world came a group of experts from the United States to help train and equip the Togolese security forces in the struggle against "international terrorism", and a message of support from Strauss — Chief Minister of Bavaria — a close friend of Eyadema.

Eyadema has been in power for twenty years. During this time he has ruled with an iron hand and dealt ruthlessly with any burgeoning opposition. His hand-picked courts dish out severe punishment for minor political actions. To cite one instance: last July, Randolph Ati and Yema Gu-Konu were given five years and Ablan Randolph three years for "distributing subversive literature". Under conditions of fierce repression and allegations of widespread torture of detainees, it is very difficult for the progressive forces to organise and sustain mass militant actions.

At the moment the opposition seems to be fragmented. The series of anti-government armed attacks in 1985 and the two last year were conducted by small groups with a limited amount of weaponry and ammunition. After one of these attacks, the Togolese authorities announced that they had captured one automatic shotgun, a few hand grenades and some ammunition and plastic explosives. The failure of all these attacks shows that in the long run there can be no substitute for the hard slog of organising and mobilising the popular masses.

Among the various opposition groups there are: The Togolese Movement for Democracy (MTD) led by the son of Togo's first President Olympio; the National Front for the Liberation of Togo (FNLT); and groups organised around Polycarpe Johnson (former Information Minister) and Edem Kodjo, former Foreign Minister and OAU Secretary-General.

Over the past three years the government has pursued a monetarist policy in which the "burden" of state enterprises is handed over to private enterprise. A steel mill was sold to a US firm Ibcon SA whose pre-tax profit in 1985 exceeded half a million US dollars. The Togolese oil storage depot has been taken over by Shell Oil and a dairy processing plant by a Danish company, Emadan. All private foreign enterprises are given generous financial incentives and assurances of a "compliant labour force". Private foreign and local capitalists are hoping to turn Togo into the first "truly free enterprise" country in Africa.

Togo's relations with the progressive governments of neighbouring Ghana and Burkina Faso are badly strained. Whenever trouble breaks out, Eyadema is quick to blame these two countries, and after the last coup attempt, also Libya, for exporting "international terrorism". Eyadema has other reasons for not reducing tensions between Togo and Ghana. Togo derives substantial benefits from the smuggling of goods from Ghana. It is estimated that smuggled supplies from Ghana account for nearly one half of the food requirements of the capital, Lomé. Up to three-quarters of the coffee and cocoa cultivated in Ghana's Volta region is smuggled into Togo and then

sold on the international market, thus depriving Ghana of valuable foreign exchange earnings. The same applies to diamonds and gold produced in Ghana.

But relations with the conservative Chirac government of France are getting closer and closer. Evidence of collusion between the two governments surfaced when the French government attempted to summarily expel from France to Argentina M. Paulin Loussou, assistant secretary-general of the MTD. Loussou thwarted this attempt by going into hiding and the deportation order has been shelved, perhaps only temporarily, as a result of solidarity action. The actions of the French government are even more disturbing when one considers that Loussou has lived and worked in France for 14 years and has no connections with Argentina. It is also reported that the French authorities allowed a gang of Togolese thugs to enter France and forcibly break up a meeting of the opposition, after which they were allowed to return to Togo without any problem.

During twenty years of harsh rule, Eyadema has made a number of enemies, both conservative and progressive. For some years Lomé has had the appearance of a city under siege. The draconian security measures, including armed sentries outside numerous buildings and offices, are a sign of Eyadema's nervousness and insecurity. But this ruthlessness, the detentions without trial, torture of detainees and subservience to French neo-colonialism will not lead to Eyadema's much-vaunted "stability", "calm" and "law and order", but rather to his undoing.

LIBYA: AIRCRAFT-CARRIER DIPLOMACY

Last April US imperialism attacked Libya using aircraft from its Sixth Fleet and fighter bombers based in Britain. The Sixth Fleet includes two or three aircraft carriers with about 200 warplanes, five nuclear-powered submarines and up to fifty warships. In that cowardly attack President Gaddafi's home was bombed and one of his children was killed. The Pentagon, CIA and State Department had prepared the ground by indulging in a vicious anti-Libyan campaign. Many acts of terrorism in the Western world were automatically attributed to Gaddafi, without any evidence of his complicity.

Following this inhuman and vicious act President Reagan dispatched his emissaries to whip his Nato allies into line. His most fervent supporter then as

now is the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, who refuses to impose sanctions on racist South Africa but imposes them on Libya.

Five months later, the Reagan administration once more launched a concerted, co-ordinated anti-Libyan campaign. They tried to bully their Nato allies into taking tougher measures against Libya and to pressure them into backing any punitive action that the USA might take against Gaddafi and Libya. Once more the CIA, Pentagon and the State Department trotted out their lies and distortions in order to justify military and other attacks upon Libya. The CIA dirty tricks department planted false stories in the media — which they have been doing for years — alleging that Gaddafi was planning terrorist acts and that the internal opposition was growing.

But this time the lie-bubble burst. Bob Woodward of the *Washington Post* — of Watergate fame — uncovered the lies and deceit. He found that US Intelligence officials had concluded in August that Gaddafi was “quiescent”. Nevertheless, reported Woodward, Reagan and his cronies were hell-bent on doing everything to overthrow Gaddafi. He pointed out that in August US and Egyptian forces conducted “seawind” military exercises designed to provoke Gaddafi.

The one immediate victim of this lie game was not Gaddafi but Bernard Kalb, the State Department’s Chief Spokesman, who resigned because he could not acquiesce in this US strategy based on deception and treachery directed against friend and foe alike. Was this a genuine case of “modest dissent” or will Kalb prove to be only the first of the “rats” to desert a sinking ship?

At times Gaddafi’s injudicious and provocative statements, and his impulsive and inconsistent actions, offer the imperialist policy makers, ideologues and media hacks the chance to indulge in vile, vicious and unseemly attacks on him. But the real reason why Gaddafi is under attack is because he refuses to bow to US imperialist pressure, bullying, intimidation and aggression. He remains an obstacle to the US imperialist and Zionist Israeli plans to crush the struggle of the Palestinians for national liberation and an independent homeland.

The attacks on Libya form part of the US strategy of state terrorism designed to bludgeon into defeat progressive governments and revolutionary national liberation movements such as our own ANC, SWAPO and PLO. The open attempts to overthrow the legitimate governments of Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Angola are the most shameful manifestations of the policy and ideology of the most reactionary sections of US monopoly capital. Reagan seeks to fan the flames of regional conflict in order to divert attention

from urgent questions such as nuclear disarmament. At the same time the Reagan administration uses aircraft-carrier diplomacy to whip up chauvinist feelings and attitudes around the themes of the "strength, greatness and fortitude" of America and the alleged Soviet threat, to justify pursuit of his hare-brained Star Wars scheme to intensify the arms race. This modern version of gun-boat diplomacy must be resolutely opposed by all those who yearn for a safer world to live in. In its fight for national independence, Libya deserves and should receive the support and solidarity of all peace-loving democratic and progressive forces throughout the world.

CAMEROON: BIYA BITES OFF MORE THAN HE CAN CHEW

In August last year at least 2,000 people died as a result of the Lake Nyos disaster in Cameroon. This tragedy propelled Cameroon on to the front pages of the world's press. Later President Biya caused quite a stir when he invited Simón Peres, the former Israeli Prime Minister, to visit the Cameroon and he himself paid a visit to West Germany.

When Biya took power in 1982, he promised to eliminate rule by terror and to democratise the country. Instead he pursued the same type of repressive policies as his predecessor, Ahmadu Ahidjo. The Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC), which led the fight for independence from French and British colonialism, remains a proscribed organisation. Its members and supporters are regularly arrested and many of them are badly tortured. Last July the government-controlled Supreme Court rejected a petition from Dr. Joseph Sende seeking the legal recognition of the UPC, which has been banned since 1955. The only party that is allowed to contest elections is the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM).

Over the past year hundreds of people have been arrested, some imprisoned in internment camps, and reports suggest that the conditions of imprisonment are atrocious.

The UPC has taken the initiative to set up a broad mass democratic organisation, the National Union Current for Democratic Change (NUCDC), open to all Cameroonians who support the following basic aims:

- “1) Release and social reinstatement of all political prisoners and unconditional general amnesty;
- 2) Recognition of the legal existence of the UPC and implementation of a multi-party system;
- 3) Respect for human rights and democratic freedoms.”

Under Ahidjo, Cameroon was cocooned in the grip of French neo-colonialism. Biya, on the other hand, seems to be attempting to break out of this one-sided dependence and to diversify the sources of dependence. But in doing so he has developed relations with Zionist Israel, a country which acts as an additional arm of US economic, military and strategic interests. For more than three years Israel has been wooing Biya in an attempt to break the boycott imposed by 29 African countries following the Middle East War of 1973. Cameroon has now joined Zaire, Liberia and Ivory Coast in opening the doors to Israeli penetration of Africa. During Peres's visit agreements were concluded on agriculture, trade and industry, construction and communications, tourism and defence.

Military co-operation between the two states has grown rapidly since 1984 when Israel helped Biya to suppress an attempted coup. After the recent visit it was announced that Cameroon will buy 12 Israeli Kfir jet fighters and four Arava short take-off and landing planes, in a deal estimated to be worth US\$70 million. Israeli military officers train and arm some units of the Cameroonian army, security forces and the presidential guard. The latter also wear Israeli-made uniforms. Most of the elite military personnel now receive their training in Israel. This deep involvement of Israel in the military and security apparatus of Cameroon calls into question the independence and stability of the Biya regime.

Two-way trade

Trade between the two countries is gradually building up with the balance in favour of Israel. Leading industrialists and businessmen who accompanied Peres held meetings and discussions with local officials. Whereas previously Israeli firms operated covertly, trade links are now open. For instance, Solel Boneh, one of Israel's big construction companies, has been operating under the name Renolds and has already built several thousand housing units. Israeli exports to Cameroon exceeded US\$1 million last year.

In the talks between the two sides, the situation in racist South Africa featured prominently. Peres indulged in the ritual rhetorical condemnation of apartheid but Israeli economic and military links with the racist regime are being constantly strengthened. The genocidal nuclear alliance between Tel Aviv and Pretoria is a threat to peace both in our region and throughout the world. The struggle of our people, and that of the Palestinians, cannot be used as a mere bargaining counter. It is doubtful whether Biya's move will be supported by his people, since the Muslims in Cameroon have a deep sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians.

On his state visit to West Germany, Biya asked for more aid and investment. Trade between the two countries is booming and reached DM 987m. at the end of 1985. The Cameroons is also one of the main recipients of German "aid" to African countries. All of the aid, such as the building of roads and grain silos and the modernisation of the port of Douala, is tied to using German firms, expertise and equipment. In a slap to the French manufacturers, Biya awarded a contract for the installation of a new television network to a German maker of the PAL system. After this visit "economic co-operation" between the two sides is to be increased, with an open door and soft terms on repatriation of profits offered to West German monopolists.

All this in spite of the fact that in the joint discussions, West German Chancellor Kohl once more expressed his opposition to sanctions against South Africa. It is easy for the Reagans, Thatchers and Kohls of this world to "abhor apartheid" in statements whilst doing everything in practice to keep the terrorists in power.

Since Biya's trip to West Germany was partly designed to reduce dependence on France, one would have expected the French media to pay some attention to it. But, by and large, they ignored it. Not, however, the French government. For no sooner had Biya returned home than Danielle Mitterand, wife of the French President, was in Cameroon. The most important section of the local bourgeoisie is very closely linked with French monopoly capital. They were not, it seems, overjoyed at Biya's "successful" visit to West Germany.

Biya may well be playing a subtle game of shifting alliances. Having ousted most of Ahido's cronies from parliamentary political life, he seems to be banking on West German, Israeli and US aid and investment to counter not only the influence of French monopoly capital but also that of the latter's local class allies. Whether he succeeds or not remains to be seen.

It may be that by antagonising the Muslims, local bourgeoisie and the progressive and democratic forces, Biya has bitten off more than he can chew.

ALGERIA: 50 YEARS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION, PEACE AND SOCIALISM

Last October the Socialist Vanguard Party of Algeria (PASA) celebrated its 50th anniversary. The first communist cells in Algeria were organically linked to the French Communist Party. During the Second World War the pro-fascist Vichy regime imprisoned, deported and killed many communists.

In the anti-colonial struggle the communists fought for unity in action of all patriotic forces. They formed a part of the Algerian Front in Defence of and Respect for Liberties which brought together political parties, trade unions and the Association of Oulamas. The latter organisation was founded in 1931 by patriotic anti-colonial religious leaders and intellectuals. It was the forerunner of the National Liberation Front (FLN) which later spearheaded the armed struggle against French colonial rule.

The communists, though unprepared for the radical shift in strategy and tactics involved in armed struggle, not only joined in the battles but also used whatever legal means were still available to support the armed freedom fighters. But some of the nationalistically-minded sections of the FLN demanded that communists should renounce their views. Thus the Party was forced to create its own armed organisation, the Fighters for Liberation, whilst calling for unity of all patriotic forces. Later, in June 1956, by agreement with the FLN, communists joined the ranks of the National Liberation Army under the leadership of the FLN. The Party still retained its organisational independence, status and activities.

During the years of armed struggle, the Party lost many leaders and cadres and developed many new ones. It emerged as a vital force in post-independent Algeria. The communists supported the socialist option proclaimed in the FLN's 1962 Tripoli programme. But just as the Party was getting stronger and more influential, it was banned by the Ben Bella government. From then on Algerian communists have had to operate under conditions of illegality.

In 1966, following the Boumedienne coup, the communists publicly announced their existence under a new name — Socialist Vanguard Party of Algeria. Reviewing policy in the post-independence period the party, in a self-critical analysis, says that it over-estimated the successes and potentialities of the first years of independence; failed to distance itself sufficiently from the FLN's anti-democratic practices; mistakenly forged an alliance with only one faction of the FLN and did not make a sufficiently clear-cut distinction between the patriotic and the conservative reactionary circles in the Front.

For nearly 25 years the communists, though illegal, have increased their influence in the ranks of the working people and among sections of students and intellectuals.

Communists have helped to renew the FLN on a democratic basis, build the trade union movement and give substance to an anti-imperialist foreign policy. At the moment, together with other anti-imperialist patriots, they are trying to reverse the shift in government policy and ideology to the right. This rightwing shift can be attributed to the growing economic and political influence of the bureaucratic, parasitic and liberal bourgeoisie.

The Algerian communists have remained true to the principles of proletarian internationalism. They have always rejected any form of anti-Sovietism. The PASA fully supports the national liberation movement of the Palestinians and of the oppressed people of South Africa. It plays an important role at regional meetings and conferences of the Arab Communist Parties and is a loyal contingent of the World Communist Movement.

Under increasingly difficult conditions of clandestinity, the communists continue to do their duty to the working people of Algeria. Their approach is spelt out in an article by Sadek Hadjeves, Central Committee First Secretary, who has lived and worked in the underground in Algeria since 1962. In the *World Marxist Review* No. 9, 1986, he wrote:

“The party is carrying on its own work of education and mobilisation, but that has not prevented it from putting constructive proposals before the working masses and the state leadership. We support any initiatives meeting the interests of national independence, developing the productive forces, consolidating the state sector, promoting social progress, democracy and a fair distribution of the national income, and intensifying the anti-imperialist struggle and the movement for peace.

“The Communists do not make these initiatives and practical steps contingent on a socialist option, for the essential thing is that they should objectively meet the national interests and those of the working people. We addressed a proposal to the latest extraordinary congress of the FLN in December 1985 concerning a joint action programme.”

In line with this approach and understanding, the PASA called for a ‘Yes’ vote in the January 1986 referendum on the new edition of the National Charter, even though it is so ambiguous that it could be used by different trends, including anti-socialist ones. But the Party felt that the ‘Yes’ vote was much more a vote in favour of unity in action of the patriotic and progressive forces than a vote in favour of the ideological content of the Charter.

NATIONAL LIBERATION, SOCIALISM AND THE FREEDOM CHARTER

by Observer

During the past year, a debate has flourished in the pages of the *South African Labour Bulletin* and *Work in Progress*. As the struggle has intensified and the historical balance has tilted in favour of the oppressed majority, the glimpse of a post-apartheid society has stimulated debate about the nature of that society and how it might be achieved.

The dramatic rise in the strength and power of the black trade union movement in the past decade — symbolised by the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) at the end of 1985, and the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1984 — has fuelled the debate, which has revolved around the question of “transformation”: on the relationship between national or popular struggle on the one hand, and working class or socialist struggle on the other. At the heart of the debate has been the role, content and function of the Freedom Charter, a document now 31 years old and the most powerful and enduring symbol of the struggle by black South Africans for national liberation.¹

The debate was initiated by Alec Erwin², who perceived a dilemma in the relationship between “liberation politics” and “transformation politics” in that the imperatives of unity dictated by the former tend in his view to suppress and undermine the development of the latter. Erwin implies that the only area in which “transformation politics” is being built is within the democratic shop-floor-based black trade unions, and that this process must be extended throughout the struggle. He rejects what he calls “the usual two stage argument”³ and argues that “the nature of the unity forged in liberation politics

of the form of nation defence, nation building and populism suppress class interests and transformation problems . . . [and] that unity must now be based on the politics of transformation that will secure the interests of the working class and the rural population. It must address the problems of the economy and evolve practices that will establish the basis for transformation . . . ⁴

Jeremy Cronin⁵ argues, in fact, that the dilemma perceived by Erwin is of his own making, and arises from Erwin's failure to adopt a class perspective. Accusing Erwin of being mechanical and undialectic, Cronin points to various instances of mass struggle within black communities, argues that the struggle is moving from protest to challenge, and makes the point "that 'transformation politics' can, and has emerged from the impetus of 'liberation politics'. They do not belong to two irreconcilable tracks, forever presenting us with a dilemma"⁶. Erecting a wall between the two, he asserts, does not aid the development of appropriate strategies and tactics.

Bob Fine, in his short article on the Freedom Charter⁷, examines the origins, contents and possible means of realising the aims of the Charter, and makes the observation that while the Charter has not lost its validity, it is nonetheless inadequate. Fine argues that the Congress of the People was not quite the democratic gathering that we have been led to believe, and that the demands of women and workers in particular were excluded. He concludes that "the Freedom Charter is not wrong to place democracy rather than socialism at the centre of the struggle against apartheid. If socialism is to come to South Africa, it will come through the battle for democracy and not apart from it. Socialism requires the extension of democracy beyond the limits of liberal constitutionalism . . . [and] the depth of the democratic revolution depends on how the future is conceived, programmes are devised and struggles waged in the here and now."⁸ Implicitly, however, Fine calls for the clarification and amplification of the clauses of the Charter, if not for their alteration.

Duncan Innes' two contributions reach similar conclusions. In the first⁹, he asserts that "the broad aim of the Charter is to offer a vision of what a democratic South Africa might look like"¹⁰, but argues that the Charter is nevertheless vague, offering strategies for neither capitalist nor socialist economic growth. Concentrating on the clauses dealing with ownership and control of wealth, he properly notes that these demands are popular democratic ones without necessarily being socialist: ". . . the truth is that the Charter itself does not specify precisely what political-economic system should be established in South Africa"¹¹; rather, it lays down ideals while deliberately leaving such questions open.

Innes wonders whether altering the Charter can only be done at the cost of dividing the people? Such a question cannot be answered theoretically, he says, only tested in struggle. The rise of the trade union movement, he correctly asserts, has altered the nature of that struggle, and black workers have already won the right, demanded in the Charter, to form trade unions, elect officers and make wage agreements with employers (the single demand thus far realised, and then in a severely circumscribed manner given the level of repression of unionists). Innes believes that while the working class must enter into alliances, if the only cost arising from clarification of the Charter would be to frighten off some elements within the nascent black middle class this would be acceptable "because the advantages to be gained for the movement from introducing such clarity far outweigh the disadvantages which the loss of a few opportunists involves",¹² and he concludes by stating that "the issue of a worker-oriented democratic society can be presented in such a way that it is not divisive, but can in fact enhance the unity among the oppressed."¹³

Innes' second contribution is more explicit.¹⁴ While conceding that the Freedom Charter is still a progressive document, he agrees with Erwin that "liberation politics does tend to exclude issues fundamental to transformation politics. The Freedom Charter, as it stands, makes only a limited contribution to transformation politics in South Africa because it excludes such vital issues as worker control, forms of land ownership, the right to strike and democratic accountability."¹⁵

In a brief history of the workers' movement in the last fifteen years, he detects an early tendency towards economism and syndicalism leading to a breach between trade unions and the community which is only now being overcome. It is, he states, difficult to advance working class interests within the ranks of popular organisations without succumbing to populism. The Freedom Charter is a populist document and, as such, "an inadequate basis for . . . unity since it falls short of goals which are fundamental to the workers' movement . . . [which] cannot tackle the problems of transformation in a piecemeal way. It must devise a clear programme, possibly a workers' charter to undertake this task successfully. In the process, it must rid itself of the misdirection policies of economism, sectionalism and populism."¹⁶

Karon and Ozinsky are, in turn, scathing in their response to Innes¹⁷. They view his call for a programme for transformation as being flawed by concentration on reconstruction in a society already liberated from apartheid rather than explaining how that process will come about; they charge him with a partial view of working-class consciousness as being formed exclusively on the

factory floor and unable to comprehend the bases and importance of alliances with other classes; and they regard as a central weakness his claim that working class interests are always being subordinated to popular struggle. They attack his dismissal of the “usual two-stage argument” (in which Innes agrees with Cronin and Erwin) for failing to note that there are, on the one hand, several versions of this theory, and, on the other hand, for failing to see it as a process rather than a series of disjunctures. “The national democratic struggle is the path necessarily followed by the struggle for socialism in South Africa. This is a result of the particular nature of South African capitalism — a structure of minority rule and national oppression which has persisted, in essence, from the colonial era.”¹⁸

The Importance of Alliances

In respect of the Freedom Charter, Innes (and Fine) are accused of gaily flattening history out “into a timeless debate between ‘socialists’ and ‘populists’, between ‘transformation’ and ‘liberation’”.¹⁹ “But in essence,” they argue, “the Charter was and is neither a victory for the left in the national liberation movement, nor a populist sell-out. It is a document with a very wide following, providing guidelines for all democrats in South Africa. While not a socialist programme, it certainly does not put a lid on socialism.”²⁰ Karon and Ozinsky go on to assert the vital importance of alliances for the working class in that failure to form alliances may deliver fraternal allies into the hands of the regime and thereby reinforce obstacles.

Innes is accused of facile constitutionalism, especially in the light of the fact that the Charter is neither a constitution nor a programme of action. Innes’ proposal “for the drafting of a workers’ charter is not inconsistent with the character of the Freedom Charter”²¹, but not as the only basis for class alliances. “The task of transforming society cannot be separated from the process of liberating it,”²² they claim, and “transformation is only possible if the liberation struggle ensures the development of direct democracy based on the organs of people’s power. These are the crucial source of the power of the working class in the national democratic state, and hence the foundation of an uninterrupted transition to socialism.”²³

Karon and Ozinsky then go on to point to the development of organs of people’s power in the townships in the past two years as examples of what is possible. The working class has begun, they conclude, to imprint its stamp on the struggle, albeit in an uneven manner, and “it is in the building of people’s power, and not in constitutional debate, that the Freedom Charter is given meaning.”²⁴

Lastly, Hugh MacLean's contribution²⁵ erroneously asserts that achieving national liberation and socialism are the principal tasks of the working class but that they cannot be achieved separately. He argues that "while all the demands the Charter makes are unquestionably demands of the working class, there are demands in the Charter which cannot be considered as anything but socialist"²⁶, pointing to those very clauses on ownership and control of wealth which Innes has deemed to be social democratic rather than socialist demands. According to MacLean, "the Charter is a set of minimum demands, rooted in the grievances and aspirations of the working class"²⁷. He points to the many documents which embody demands which remain unfulfilled because of the inability of those in struggle to achieve them, such as the Azanian Manifesto of the black consciousness National Forum, their alternative to the Freedom Charter.²⁸

MacLean points to several developments in the mass movement which he views as embodying embryonic socialism and goes on to claim — in what might be termed a one-stage theory — that "the anti-apartheid and anti-capitalist struggles must be waged and won together".²⁹ The construction of a socialist programme depends on the conscious intervention of socialist ideas, that the Freedom Charter already fulfils the role envisaged for a workers' charter by Innes, and concludes that "the Charter provides an excellent basis for the construction of a socialist programme. The persistent attempt to redefine it on paper is an exercise in idealism not materialism. What is needed now is not an abstract redefining of the Charter's content but the movement which upholds the Charter. This is the task for socialists."³⁰

Setting the Context

The Freedom Charter was adopted by 3000 delegates at the Congress of the People at Kliptown in Johannesburg on 26 June 1955. Ever since, it has served as a focal point of struggle against the apartheid regime and, given the de facto unbanning of the African National Congress by the masses in the past two years, it is at present the subject of an unprecedented level of debate and discussion. It is being reviewed and re-interpreted by most and, as we have seen, the object of revision or rewriting by others. Lodge and Fine, for example, claim that the Congress of the People was far from the democratic gathering which those in the Congress Alliance³¹ tradition claim it to be and that, more importantly and more justifiably, the claims of women and the working class were largely ignored. Even if this is the case, it should not divert us from the fact that the Charter was adopted at the most democratic gathering in the history of South Africa, and that it was adopted for a particular set of reasons in a

particular historical context. To remove the contemporary analysis of the Charter from that context, as several of the participants in the debate have done, is both ahistorical and undialectical.

The 1950s were a period of great mass struggle in South Africa, a time of hope, significant advance, and inevitable repression. It was in the 1950s that the ANC cemented its position as the leading organisation striving for *national* liberation. This was so because the Congress Alliance, under the leadership of the ANC, saw the national democratic revolution as an absolute prerequisite for the transformation of the country — whatever the future was to hold. The PAC split from the ANC in the 1950s in a vain attempt to offer an alternative conception of struggle, and the lesson of division in the face of the enemy has never been forgotten within the triple alliance of the ANC, SACP and SACTU. For this reason, it has since placed a premium upon unity within the struggle. As a result, it has managed to unite South Africans of all races, classes and creeds against apartheid. It has retained and extended the support of the majority of blacks more than twenty-five years after it was banned. The Charter has served as a rallying point; the struggle has been waged around demands, not personalities, a factor which has lent the struggle coherence and maturity. In other words, the ANC is a national liberation movement which strives — on the basis of the Freedom Charter — to incorporate as many South Africans as possible in the ranks of the freedom fighters. It is not a political party, so that to require of it or the Charter a specific party programme is not only to misunderstand its role and nature, but divisive.

Returning to the historical context in which the Charter was adopted, it is important to remember that the black trade union movement did not occupy the prominent position which it does today, an important reason why the primary form of mobilisation at the time was nationalist/populist. The strategies and tactics of the 1950s have found a powerful echo in the 1980s, particularly in the UDF, whose forms of mobilisation are not dissimilar, and which operates very much in the Congress tradition. It is in this respect that Erwin perceives his dilemma. We struggle, as Marx made clear, in a context always dictated by history. We are able, however, through struggle, to overcome historical dilemmas because they are not fixed in concrete.

Methods of Struggle

What is different in the 1980s is the presence of a stronger and more cohesive, a more democratic and more progressive trade union movement than at any time in the country's history.

As soon as the Charter is placed in its historical context it becomes apparent that it is absurd to claim that a set of minimum demands enshrined in a document are inhibiting struggle. If up to this point the working class has not played to the full the leading role of which it is capable, the explanation may perhaps be found in the forms of struggle adopted rather than in any failings of the Freedom Charter. And in the recent period, especially since the formation of COSATU, we see the working class more and more taking the initiative, feeling its strength, setting the perspectives of struggle and above all producing the cadres capable of carrying the line forward in all parts of the country. Sadly, most of the academic debate on the Freedom Charter has taken place in a kind of historical vacuum, with the history of the liberation movement largely ignored.

The Freedom Charter is, then, capable of numerous interpretations. Innes is certainly correct in describing it as a deliberately open-ended document. Given the centrality of the concept of democracy to the debate, it is somewhat strange that Innes and Fine, for example, should so easily accept the possibility of the will of the majority being pre-empted by any putative alterations to the Charter. For the most basic reasons of democracy and legitimacy, it is difficult to contradict the position of the African National Congress which, as the leader of the Congress Alliance and the undisputed leader of the liberation struggle today, has insisted that any attempt to alter the Charter can only take place at a reconvened Congress of the People (or a similar gathering).

This, it might be argued, amounts to an excuse for doing nothing, thereby allowing the struggle to limp along in the absence of a coherent programme for socialist liberation — a point central to the argument of those in favour of altering the Charter. However, one of the most obvious lessons of the 31 years of the document's existence is that while words on paper undoubtedly play an important symbolic and mobilising role, they do not remove the necessity of struggle to realise what is contained in them. Given the focal role which the Charter has played, as well as the fact that only one of its demands has so far been achieved (in a severely circumscribed manner), there appears to be little justification for changing it.

On the other hand, as Karon and Ozinsky make clear, it is not inconsistent with the Charter for various groups in struggle to amplify and expand existing demands — indeed, to make new ones — on the basis of the Charter. This process, already taking place, has the virtue of maintaining the centrality of the Charter at the same time as facilitating the formulation of both new demands and programmes according to changing historical conditions. In other words, the need for any changes or alterations lies on the ground, in the

material world of organisation. Whatever the political-economic complexion of post-apartheid South Africa, it is generally agreed that all the demands contained in the Charter must be met; it is in this sense that it is a set of minimum demands, a firm basis for the development and intensification of the struggle without determining in an undemocratic historical vacuum the nature of that society.

To put it another way, socialism is meaningful only when it is lived, when it is part of the very fabric of society, and this can only be achieved through struggle. This is the arena in which the Charter is being clarified, not in the sterile corridors of academia or committees, but in the struggle being waged in communities, schools and factories, and on the front lines of the battle against the racist soldiers and police. The Charter lives on there, because the struggle being waged is, in the first instance at least, for the minimum demands enshrined in it.

It is in this sense that there is a connection between national democratic and socialist struggle, for the demands currently being articulated in the townships, factories and schools have already gone beyond those in the Charter.

This is not to claim that the relationship between the two is unproblematic — however, if Erwin and Innes are in fact correct in claiming that the Charter inhibits socialist struggle, this must in large part be due to the fact that reducing demands or programmes traps them in the historical context in which they were first articulated and thereby takes no account of the uneven and contradictory nature of struggle. It is odd that they appear to wish to replicate the error.

Minimum Demands

The Charter is certainly not a socialist document. It is a set of minimum demands which have inevitably revealed their limitations in the passage of time. But the struggle to destroy apartheid stands to lose far more than it might gain by tampering with it. It is a basis which does not guarantee or even necessarily imply socialism. As McLean points out, the demands contained in the document are working class demands in the sense that they are basic to even a bourgeois democratic society, the first step on the path to socialism. The existence of COSATU and the struggles in the townships for people's power, democracy and justice, the active pursuit of a democratic educational system testify to the fact that national or popular struggle does not preclude the articulation of and struggle for socialist demands. The struggles of the people have never been in spite of the Freedom Charter, but complementary

to it, and it is the form and content of these struggles, the level of organisation and democracy which are making possible not only the realisation of the aims of the Charter but of a socialist South Africa.

This brings us to the two-stage theory, derided by all except Karon and Ozinsky. Unfortunately, this deprecation must arise only from a serious misunderstanding of the theory, which does not, as is implied, see a cleavage between the destruction of apartheid (the bourgeois or national democratic revolution) and the achievement of socialism, but rather argues that the first is an absolute precondition for the latter. This does not, therefore, mean the delaying of socialist struggle until after the destruction of apartheid, but rather the struggle to ensure that the working class becomes, in Marx's phrase, a class for itself rather than simply a class in itself. As the class struggle intensifies, the context develops in which the socialist content of the struggle can be extended. This is what progressives should be doing, rather than tampering with the Charter. This requires education, organisation and struggle; it requires programmes which are coherent but flexible, reflecting a rapidly changing context; it does not require a revamped Freedom Charter. If the working class is accepted as being pivotal in the liberation struggle, then it is important to bring about a rise in the socialist content of the struggle to the point at which the working class has the power not just to demand but to achieve the demands enshrined in the Charter in addition to demands which go beyond the Charter.

Any attempt to alter the Freedom Charter is likely to be resisted by the majority of progressive elements in South Africa, resulting in a divisive and bitter struggle. In the face of a permanent state of emergency and an unprecedented level of repression (particularly of those who are associated with the Congress tradition and the Charter itself) this would be both foolhardy and dangerous. Today, not only is the racist regime continuing its attempts to divide and rule, but its imperialist allies are gearing up for a massive propaganda campaign against progressive forces. Never has the need for unity been more acute.

The struggle for liberation in South Africa must proceed towards the immediate and indispensable first goal, the destruction of apartheid, the national democratic revolution. If that is perceived as a first stage, separate from the struggle for socialism, that is a result of theoretical confusion on the part of those who see such separation. The desire for maximum unity and the refusal to abandon national or popular symbols and forms of struggle have never implied that we should hesitate to increase the socialist content of the struggle — on the ground, where people are experiencing oppression every

day. Slogans must be dialectically linked to the struggle for their realisation and should never arise in a vacuum; similarly the struggle to destroy apartheid is dialectically linked to that for socialism. Together they are a process, not two separate and parallel battles.

NOTES

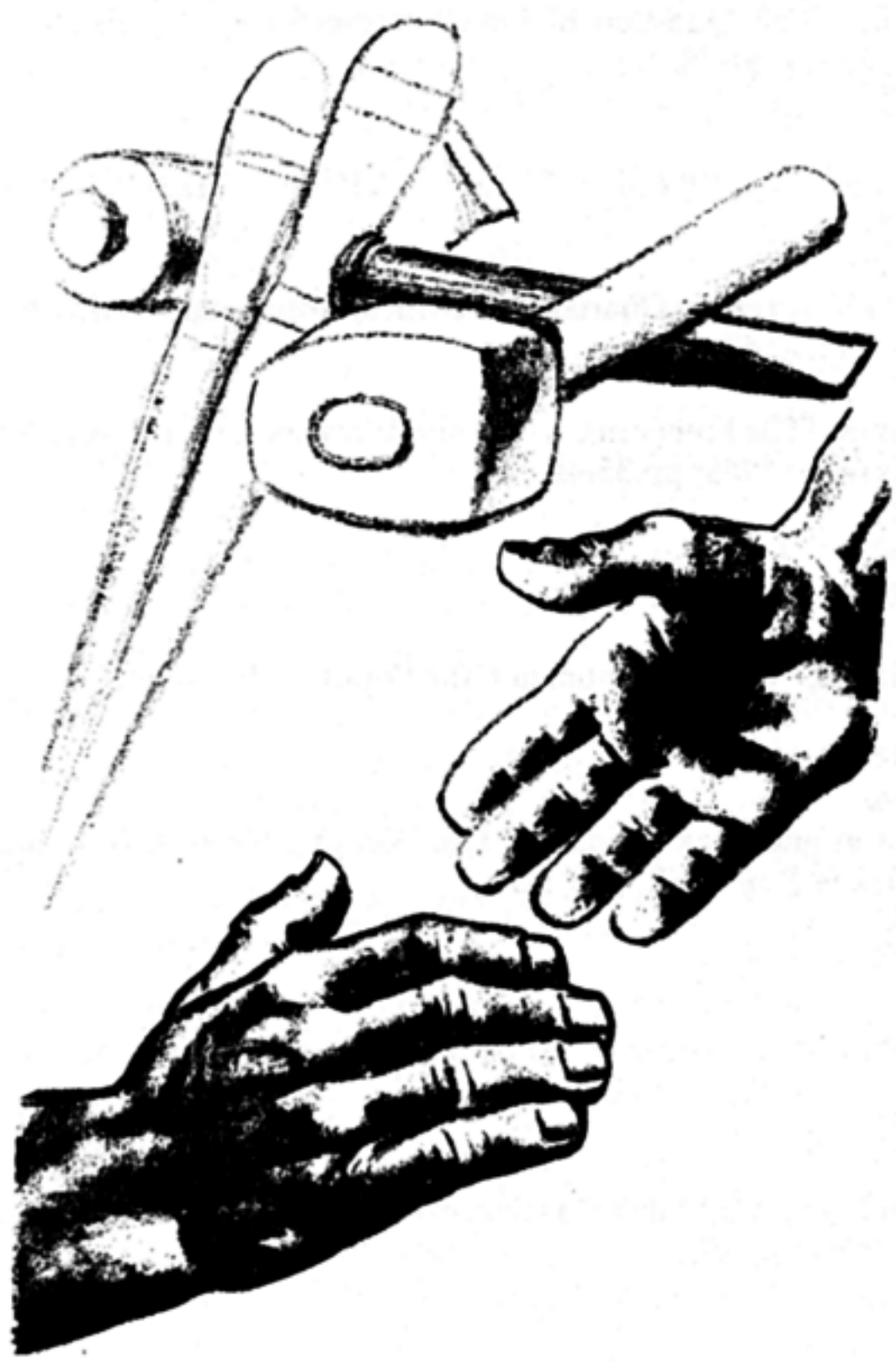
1. See below, p. 68ff., for a brief history of the Freedom Charter.
2. Alec Erwin, "The Question of Unity in the Struggle", *SALB* Vol. 11, No.1, September 1985; pp.51-70.
3. *Ibid.*, p.70.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Jeremy Cronin, "The Question of Unity — A Reply", *SALB* Vol. 11, No.3, January 1986; pp.29-37.
6. *Ibid.*, p.36.
7. Bob Fine, "The Freedom Charter — A Critical Appreciation", *SALB* Vol. 11, No. 3, January 1986; pp.38-42.
8. *Ibid.*, p.42.
9. Duncan Innes, "The Freedom Charter and Workers' Control" *SALB* Vol. 11, No. 2, October-December 1985; pp.35-42.
10. *Ibid.*, p.35.
11. *Ibid.*, p.37.
12. *Ibid.*, p.40.
13. *Ibid.*, p.42.
14. Duncan Innes, "Worker Politics and the Popular Movement" *Work in Progress* 41; pp.11-16.
15. *Ibid.*, p.14.
16. *Ibid.*, p.16.
17. Tony Karon and Max Ozinsky, "The Working Class in National Democratic Struggle" *Work in Progress* 42; pp.31-36.
18. *Ibid.*, p.33.
19. *Ibid.*, p.34.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, p.35.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p.36.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Hugh MacLean, "Capitalism, Socialism and the Freedom Charter" *SALB* Vol. 11, No. 6, June 1986; pp.8-20.
26. *Ibid.*, p.11.
27. *Ibid.*, p.13.

28. The Azanian Manifesto is the black consciousness movement's alternative to the Freedom Charter. Since its adoption two years ago, it has made virtually no political impact on the country. Another important reason why the Manifesto resounds so hollowly is the fact that the National Forum has very little organisational presence in the townships, factories or schools.

29. Ibid., p.17.

30. Ibid., p.19.

31. Fine appears to derive many of his opinions from Tom Lodge's book *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*.





DOCUMENTS

WHITE WORKER — YOUR FUTURE LIES WITH DEMOCRACY

The following leaflet is being circulated throughout South Africa by the S.A. Communist Party

Our country is at war with itself. This is where apartheid has brought us.

From the time Van Riebeeck landed in the Cape to the present you have lived on the basis that the way to your survival, to your privileged wages, and to your prosperity and progress depended on the super-exploitation of black workers and to white domination over all blacks. Our rulers (and they are your rulers too, white worker) fed you with racism and promised you peace and prosperity if you joined hands with the bosses and politicians.

White worker, they asked you to forget your own experience of struggle against the mine owners and the bosses. They fed you with tribalism (of the Afrikaner volk,) and racism (of white superiority) to blind you against the real lessons of the struggle of workers the world over against the bosses and the state that serves the capitalist class. With the spectre of 'Swart Gevaar' and the carrot of economic, social and political privilege if you would serve as junior partners of the capitalists they turned you away from your fellow black workers and from your real future. And so you surrendered your class interests to the poisonous ideas of racism.

Communists have always worked for a future to be won by the unity in struggle of all workers. Unity and struggle based on class not colour is the road to our real future.

Look at South Africa today. Is this the future you wanted?

Is there the peace your heart desires? From centuries of domination and exploitation the black people have risen in revolt. Black workers are uniting in their hundreds of thousands and fighting the bosses and the apartheid state. Black children stand with stones in hand, unafraid of the Caspirs, of the sjambok and rifle-wielding SADF and SAP. The black people have taken to arms and all the power that Botha-Malan can muster is doomed to failure. Apartheid has plunged our country into a bloody conflict. Spurred by profit and power Botha-Malan have set our country on the path of disaster.

What has happened to the never-ending prosperity the ruling class promised you? For decades you closed your eyes to black poverty and black unemployment. Now the economic crisis of our country cannot be rescued by apartheid and capitalism. Economic growth is at a standstill and inflation has become rampant. The breadbasket that your privileged wages buy for you is shrinking. You cannot keep up your house mortgages and the insurance companies are foreclosing on your mortgages. Unemployment is beginning to stare you in the face as well. All this while the capitalists you agreed to join hands with continue to reap fat profits. That is your future along the apartheid road.

And that grim outlook is made even more certain because even the world has risen against apartheid South Africa. The world's revulsion is isolating the Botha regime more and more. And sanctions will most certainly result in a lower standard of living and unemployment for you as well.

When the bosses tempted you to become their junior partners they had a clearer vision of what they wanted to do with you. Today you are apartheid's cannon fodder. It is your life that is threatened and endangered when apartheid invades Angola, refuses to yield Namibia to the Namibian people under Swapo and carries out murderous raids against the independent African states. It is you who are brutalised and your life threatened when the SADF and the SAP occupy the black townships of our country. When the Botha-Malan clique imposed conscription into the army for you and your children, they knew better: they wanted to guard against the day you would wake up to the truth and ask yourselves: why should I and my children serve in an army of oppression, an army that serves a doomed future?

While calling you junior partners, they in fact made you time-servers of apartheid. And because they won you over on the basis of falsehood and raw prejudice, they insist on controlling the media so that your eyes should be closed to the truth.

If until now you have slept in your suburbs in relative peace and security, that will be no more. If you have deluded yourselves into thinking that the struggle of the black man will forever be confined to the black townships and crushed within those townships by repression and military might, that time is now past.

The revolt of the black people can never be repressed and their right to freedom cannot be denied. From the fortresses of the black townships the struggle for liberation is drifting into the white areas and is destined to engulf the whole of South Africa.

Even the capitalists are reading the signs of the future. Big Business is demanding the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners. Big Business is demanding that Botha unban the African National Congress. Big Business and even some Afrikaners are saying apartheid must go and that the future of our country must be negotiated with the African National Congress. Are you going to tail behind those who lured you into deserting your real class interests? Is it not time that you faced the future with courage? Courage born out of a vision that you have lived a lie. Only then will you be able to set yourself free of the prison of racism and strike out boldly towards a future which will be born out of the liberation of the black man and the unity of all the workers of our country. **Stand up against apartheid! Join forces with your class brothers — the black workers! If you do this you have nothing to fear and everything to gain. Fight side by side with the black people for a united South Africa, for a democratic South Africa based on one person one vote, for a non-racial South Africa, and for a South Africa where working men and women who are the real producers of our country's wealth shall truly enjoy the wealth they produce!**

BOOK REVIEWS

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND MILITARY IN AFRICA

Arms and the African: Military Influences on Africa's International Relations, edited by William J. Foltz and Henry S. Bienen. (Yale University Press, 1985.)

The Council on Foreign Relations which claims to be a non-profit-making and non-partisan organisation produced this volume as part of their Africa project. The Africa project receives generous grants, advice and assistance from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations.

The contributors to the book are part of an important think-tank which not only analyses US foreign policy but also makes recommendations for future policy options and actions. In the volume under review the authors are not hawks but forward-looking academics and career civil servants. Their views will undoubtedly have an important bearing on future US policies towards Africa.

In the first chapter W.J. Foltz deals with the historical background to the involvement of the US in Africa. But this admittedly potted history omits the slave-trade which caused immense and incalculable damage to Africa but which made an important contribution to the consolidation and development of capitalism in the United States of America. In relation to an understanding and assessment of the strategic interests of US foreign policy, readers of *The African Communist* would have profound differences with Foltz. But we can agree with him when he argues that it would be disastrous for Africa if existing US military bases were turned into huge conglomerates the size of Wheelus Field (formerly in Libya) and Subic Bay. In the interest of peace and stability we should strive for the closure of all foreign military bases in our continent, in particular the French ones.

On the last three pages of the book Foltz suggests options for future US foreign policy. He starts from a controversial assumption that the "United States has a great stake in international stability." Nevertheless he makes a number of points which merit serious attention. We agree with him that "armaments are economically unproductive" and "siphon off talent and attention that ought to be more productively employed." Contrary to the positions of the Pentagon, CIA, and the State Department he argues that it is to the advantage of the US to ensure that "modest increases in armaments are limited."

Foltz also calls on the US not to expand their military bases in Kenya and Somalia, so that the Soviet Union does not "search for comparative bases as well." But he feels that "French intervention may continue to be useful" — presumably for imperialism in general — and that the US should ensure "that individual African states' appeals for outside help do not call forth a permanent, pan-African force controlled by a few ideologically cohesive and militant states".

The author of the two most important chapters of the book does not belong to the Reagan school of thought. He has a more complex and sophisticated approach to how the African continent can be "saved from the Soviet Union and communism." The thinking behind this approach may assume greater importance after the next US Presidential elections which could give greater power and influence to the more rational sections of US monopoly capital.

The chapter on South Africa has some useful information about the development and shifts of Pretoria's military strategy. But for readers interested in South Africa's military build-up, capabilities, strategy and tactics, the recent works by Gavin Cawthra and Abdul Minty are much more useful. The former has written a book *Brutal Force, The Apartheid War Machine* (1986) and the latter has two contributions in the book *Destructive Engagement* (1986).

The most interesting comment on South Africa comes from Foltz on the last page of the book. He writes:

"Finally, in dealing with South Africa the United States must realize that it is that country's goal to polarize African affairs along an East-West dimension — in the conviction that this is the best way 'to bring the West to its senses' and assure Western support for Pretoria. From virtually every point of view, and most certainly from any concern with military factors in Africa, that is not a game the United States should want to play. The United States does have considerable political and economic stakes in what happens to South Africa, though different Americans will assess those stakes differently. Perhaps the most important stake is in avoiding a direct cross-border military showdown and in facilitating what will have to be a

complex pattern of change coming from within South Africa itself. It is highly probable that this will not be an entirely peaceful pattern of change, and in the future, policy may have to be directed toward holding the ring, so that the struggle remains as internal to the country as possible. Confining the struggle as much as possible to domestic forces would not be helped by a U.S. alignment, even a tacit one, with the South African government, nor by assisting that government in polarizing African states."

A tiresome and irritating aspect of the book is the anti-Soviet assumptions underlying every article. To cite one example: Jaster claims that there are "several indicators that the USSR is not eager for a fight with the South Africans", and that it would not be "eager to incur the cost of an extended blockade of a long and distant coastline that would probably be less than completely effective." (p.143) Jaster does not explain what he means by "fight", but even he has to recognise that the Soviet Union has been, and remains, one of the most bitter opponents of apartheid and has consistently supported our struggle to destroy that evil and hated system. Moreover the Soviet Union already imposes all-round sanctions on racist South Africa, and has consistently demanded the imposition of mandatory sanctions. It is the imperialist countries that have always prevented the UN Security Council from taking effective action against the Botha regime.

This volume gives us a valuable and interesting insight into the thinking of American strategists and analysts who differ with the present Reagan administration.

V. Seme

HOW SOUTH AFRICA HAS BECOME MILITARISED

Brutal Force — The Apartheid War Machine, by Gavin Cawthra. (International Defence and Aid Fund for South Africa, 1986).

Brutal force is what the South African Government (SAG) resorts to in order to maintain its hold over the black population of South Africa. Gavin Cawthra's book is carefully researched and thoroughly documented. It focuses on the military aspects of our country, from the 1960s to the present

day, but always discusses these in the appropriate political context. The book is written in a straightforward, readable manner.

Cawthra documents the composition of the South African Defence Force (SADF), which has approximately 178,000 permanent members and over 400,000 reserves. Women make up 9% of the permanent force, and there are 14,000 blacks in the SADF and 10,000 serving in Namibia. Military spending consumes about 20% of the annual budget, amounting to over R4000 million in direct costs. Added to this are the indirect costs, which are harder to estimate. Examples are money spent on security, which exceeded R1000 million in 1983; the cost to firms which keep a soldier's pay up to his regular pay while he is on duty; and the cost to "key points" businesses to ensure that they can "manufacture, produce, process or treat . . . supply or deliver or sell" any goods or services that the Ministry of Defence requires. Several western arms suppliers allow SA to manufacture their products under licence, which has enabled the country to become largely self-sufficient in arms production. But, whereas the SAG quotes 95% self-sufficiency, Cawthra suggests that as much as 15% of the country's military needs are imported, especially airplanes and parts.

The size of the SADF increased over fivefold in the early 1960s. This was a time of a strong economy to support the cost, and an increased need to combat Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC formed in 1961. The internal role of the SADF was initially to secure the borders of SA and Namibia and to contain the military thrusts of ANC and SWAPO. But gradually it took over many of the roles of the South African Police, including border patrol and the control of "unrest" in the black townships, which was highlighted in the two recent declarations of a State of Emergency. This latter role has included occupying schools, helping to stop rent and bus boycotts, and other actions of a political rather than a military nature.

The SAG has developed a "war psychosis" to deal with the mounting support by the black population of the Freedom Charter and of the ANC, SACP and SACTU. The structure of the SAG has changed, with the National Security Council taking an increased role in running the country. This has weakened the power of the white-controlled tricameral parliament to the point that van Zyl Slabbert, former Progressive Federal Party leader, resigned his seat declaring that parliament was useless. Cawthra suggests that one reason for creating the tricameral parliament is to be found in a statement by Nationalist Party MP de Klerk in 1982: "You can't ask a man to fight for his country if he can't vote".

The "war psychosis" is carried into the schools of the white children, where basic army discipline is taught to cadets, and the "veld schools" resemble Hitler youth camps (p58). The actions of the SADF cannot be reported without permission and most conscientious objectors are liable to six years in prison. In recent months, thousands of whites have failed to show up for army service, because they cannot justify supporting so brutal a regime.

The SAG has conceded that the battle for SA is only 20% military in nature and 80% psycho-social. A massive "civic action" project has been undertaken to project "the image of the soldier as a man of action but who is nonetheless a friend of the black man" (p238). But this approach appears to be too little too late, as shown by the mass rejection of city councils, refusal to pay rent for council-owned housing, and other actions.

Externally, the role of the SADF has been most visible in destabilizing the Frontline States. On a large scale there is still the illegal occupation of Namibia, and the constant incursions into Angola. In a more insidious manner, there have been the commando raids on Matola (Mozambique), Maseru (Lesotho), Gaborone (Botswana) and other centres. What the SAG could not achieve by calling for an economic "Constellation of States" (controlled, of course, by SA), it has tried to achieve by these military actions, in co-operation with clandestine armies such as UNITA in Angola, MNR in Mozambique and LLA in Lesotho. The harm done to these countries can be gauged by the following figures: the material damage inflicted on Angola is valued at over US\$ 12 billion, with more than 10,000 Angolans killed. The war in Namibia costs R3 million a day, money that could help feed thousands of starving Namibians. In Mozambique, the direct cost of destabilization is over US\$300 million, with indirect costs estimated at \$4 billion. These developing nations cannot afford such a massive drain on their economies. This economic and military pressure was one of the main reasons that agreements such as the infamous Nkomati Accord were reached (yet SA has violated them frequently). South Africa's economic blockade of Lesotho in 1985 brought down the Jonathan government, and replaced it with one more friendly to SA. The political needs of the SAG are increasingly being met using the military might of the SADF.

One further point that the book brings out is the role of anti-communism. Ever since the banning of the SACP in 1950, the SAG has held itself up to the West as an ally against communism. In a recent poll in Namibia, 90% of the SADF soldiers there believed that they were fighting "atheistic communism". Ronald Reagan would be proud of them! This ageing weapon is being used in SA today to present the issue of white minority rule

as a cold war item. It is also being used internationally to confuse people about the nature of the ANC-SACP alliance. But the people of our country are not confused, and both the red flag and the ANC flag are seen at meetings and funerals, side by side in the battle for national liberation.

P.S.

FRUITS OF GOVAN MBEKI RESEARCH IN HOLLAND

Transnational Corporations' Involvement in South Africa's Electronic Industry, by Max Vuyisile Sisulu.

Restructuring in Commercial Agriculture in South Africa, by Tessa Marcus (both published by the Dr Govan Mbeki Fund, University of Amsterdam.)

The Dr Govan Mbeki Fund was established in 1980 by the Board of Directors of the University of Amsterdam. Its aims are:

- a. to give financial support to students from South Africa.
- b. to stimulate scientific activities in the spirit of Dr Govan Mbeki and to publish the results of such research.
- c. to involve the University as a community in the work of the Fund as much as possible.

The activities of the Fund are carried out in consultation with the ANC and are intended as a contribution towards the freedom struggle. These two recent publications provide evidence that this intention is being fully realised.

Max Sisulu has taken as his subject the most dynamic, fastest changing and strategically crucial sector of the modern economy — the electronic industry. He brings out very clearly the different ways in which this industry is important. Firstly, the sheer volume and value of its products have grown, from nothing fifty years ago, to an awesome size. Secondly, it provides indispensable tools for the modernisation of all other industries. Thirdly, it is a key sector of the modern armaments industry, with an input to all new weapons.

As Max Sisulu goes on to demonstrate, the electronic industry is a particularly important example of the way in which the main imperialist countries have supported the apartheid economy. Modern electronics have developed from a small number of innovations in the most advanced industrial countries, and the world electronic industry remains dominated by a small number of powerful transnational corporations. The collaboration of these corporations was vital for the South African government. Had there been any willingness on the part of world capitalism to support the liberation struggle by means of economic sanctions, this would have been the ideal sector in which to apply sanctions. In fact, the South African government has been able to get all it wanted, from radar and rockets for the South African Defence Force and computers for streamlining the administration of the pass laws, to thousands of millions of rands worth of the latest equipment for the telephone system. It has for the most part been able to choose freely between the importation of finished products and the acquisition of know-how on which to base local manufacturing. Apartheid's debt to IBM, Siemens, Mitsubishi, Plessey, Philips etc. is incalculable.

Max Sisulu's book is short but packed with information. It is the definitive study of the subject and an essential tool for those working in the field of economic policy, with particular reference to economic sanctions.

No error has cost Africa more than the tendency of leading cadres in liberation movements to believe that, while industry is glamorous and important, agriculture is old-fashioned and boring and need not be the subject of any intensive study. Our own movement is not immune from this tendency. Our literature is disturbingly poor in studies of agricultural problems — a fact which renders Tessa Marcus's work doubly valuable.

The "restructuring" of her title has taken place over the course of the last twenty years and has had two main elements. White-owned farms have been consolidated into large units, using more machinery and other capital equipment and run on more modern commercial lines. At the same time, there has been a determined drive to abolish the traditional system of labour tenancy and replace it with a system of cash wages. Liberal commentators have presented this as a progressive development, calculated to lead to a more skilled, more stable and more prosperous labour force. They are, however, forced to admit that no general rise in wage levels has taken place and they are puzzled about the reasons for this. This is the problem which Tessa Marcus sets out to solve.

A LIFE OF STRUGGLE, SACRIFICE AND ACHIEVEMENT

My Spirit Is Not Banned: Frances Baard as told to Barbie Schreiner. (Zimbabwe Publishing House (Pvt) Ltd; 1986.)

This book provides us with an opportunity to read the life story of the outstanding trade unionist, political activist and women's leader, Frances Baard. It deals with her nearly eighty years of toil and struggle. The main body of the material deals with Baard's involvement in the African Food and Canning Workers' Union and SACTU.

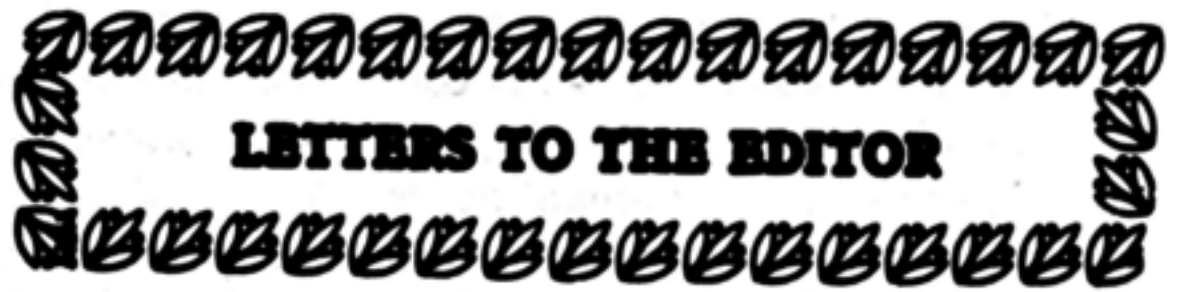
Along with the other women workers at the fruit canning factory in Port Elizabeth, Frances Baard sometimes worked a 14-hour day. She describes the deprivation felt by these women who never saw their children awake. But then "...something good happened. There was a certain lady from Cape Town who was a trade unionist. She was Ray Alexander." (p.22)

Frances Baard's skill at organising the workers and natural leadership qualities quickly propelled her into fulltime trade union work. She soon found her political home in the African National Congress. She vividly describes the path that led to the ANC. One day she walked to work past the single men's quarters in the township: "Some of the men were sleeping outside the building. There were patches and patches of water and mud on the ground... My heart was very sore." (p.82) She wanted to find a solution to this suffering of her people. Her quest led her to her first ANC meeting.

Frances Baard has had to pay a very high price for her involvement in the struggle. After the banning of the ANC she spent an entire year in solitary confinement. For all that time she had absolutely no reading material. "I think they were trying to kill me somehow, but my spirit was too strong." (p.74) Her description of this ordeal is simple and very powerful. The five year prison sentence that followed is dealt with briefly but vividly. The isolation of the women prisoners during this period comes over very strongly.

The book ends with her account of years of banishment and her return to active politics in the UDF and women's organisations. Frances Baard does not just come over as a seasoned campaigner in this book. Her warmth, humility, intelligence and humour are profoundly inspiring. Barbie Schreiner has written her story down with great skill and sensitivity. It is highly recommended reading for activists and supporters of our struggle everywhere.

R.N.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BELIEVERS CAN BE COMMUNISTS

From "A Friend in South Africa"

Dear Editor,

Your journal is great but I wish it was more widely distributed inside the country. I obtained a copy at a little bookshop in the back streets of Bulawayo. I have taken a whole day to write this letter in the hope of making a contribution to this vital question.

Thoko Mdlalose's article "The place of the Church in our liberation struggle", *The African Communist*, No. 104, First Quarter 1986, is incisive and comprehensive. But perhaps because I believe in God and he does not (I assume this) there are some differences in our views.

In South Africa today the churches and religious people are in many cases in the forefront of the struggle against the fascist regime. Does this not suggest that religion as it exists in our country today is different in form from that which existed during the time of Marx and Lenin? In the light of the changed circumstances should communists not make a deeper theoretical analysis of religion and the reasons for its existence?

As Mdlalose notes, Christianity is a contradictory phenomenon and it needs a dialectical approach. In taking this approach he writes: "Failure to

take into account the subtleties of the mechanisms which shape social and class consciousness may reduce the effectiveness of our vanguard role among the masses and lose us sections of the potential fighting force.” But the dialectical subtleties of his conception do not apparently extend to the possibility of there being any basis of religion except “as a vehicle in order to meet important human needs; as a product of society’s attempt to understand and conquer nature” and as “the product of man’s ignorance about the physical world around him.” Nowhere is there even a hint that there may be such a phenomenon as a spiritual experience on which a belief in God may be based.

Furthermore, statements such as “religious consciousness is likely to continue to lurk in the background of human society for a long time to come” and “there is a tendency for subjective factors to outlive their objective base, often by incredibly long periods of time” are insulting to people who really believe in God. One has little hope of winning over people who really believe in God by implying that they are misled or ignorant and that their belief may be tolerated for the sake of expediency.

Communists in general and the SACP in particular can exist perfectly well with or without people believing in the existence of God. It’s time communists realise that espousing atheism can only serve to discredit them with believers, many of whom would otherwise be their supporters. Naturally there is nothing wrong with individual communists being atheists, but they should not try to force it on others, unless they regard spiritual rather than worldly matters (the liberation struggle and the attainment of a just society) as being their chief concern.

Just as there is nothing wrong with individual communists being atheists, is there any reason why believers cannot be communists? I assure you that come what may, the most heinous fascist order which I am now living under, or the most commendable socialist order of a liberated South Africa, my belief in God will not change. I am a believer in God and communism so what I say comes from my heart and my head.

NO FUNDAMENTAL BLOCKS

From "Church worker in SA"

**To the editor of the *AC*, and to the author of article
in issue of 1/86**

Your article on the place of the church in our liberation struggle was encouraging to read — more especially because those of us who are activists and religious are often the butt of both conservative religious people as well as our secular comrades, neither of whom really understand us or the work we are doing.

Some assumptions you make in the article require further discussion though, especially since they might not lead to the best strategies being implemented in the religious sphere.

A central weakness which runs through the body of the article is an assumption that religious people, simply by being religious, are somehow very different from any other activists, that there is a wall that separates them off. This would seem to be a natural consequence of your conception of "church" which you tend to use slightly uncritically. Firstly the church is not a uniform body of believers but rather a grouping of people with conflicting interests which the ruling class presents with a harmonious image.

Secondly, critical religious people recognise that social analyses are not an integral part of their Christian belief, but rather that it is part of the responsibility of religious people to discover the context within which they live in order to be truly religious in it. Hence there are no fundamental blocks to them discovering that the root causes of oppression and exploitation are uncovered by the scientific tools of Marxist analysis, nor to discovering that Marxism-Leninism is the best means to change this reality.

At present the major blocks that do exist are placed there by ruling class interpretations of religion but it could be a mistake for the worker's party to accept this stereotype of what religion is.

Religions need not necessarily be 'alien idealistic philosophies', in fact most of them arose out of the historical material realities that different people found themselves in, even prior to the coming of class societies.

There are a growing number of religious people within South Africa who do not subscribe to the stereotyped 'religious' beliefs that supernatural forces will solve their problems or that their only hope is in after-life, but remain religious because it is here that they are inspired with the hope of changing the world. Hence they recognise that they are responsible for effectively spreading this message of hope so as to ensure that the bulk of religious people are in fact part of the revolution and the resultant democratic society, since the success of both of these are to some extent dependent upon the participation of religious people.

WE BELIEVE IN UNINTERRUPTED REVOLUTION

From CM, Somafo, Mazimbu, Tanzania

As the struggle to overthrow the hated apartheid regime nears its climax the theoretical and practical political questions relating to the different stages of our revolutionary struggle assume greater significance. In this letter I wish to express some thoughts on the concept of the uninterrupted revolution.

This concept emerged out of the experience gained by the working class during the bourgeois and bourgeois democratic revolutions in Europe, in particular the French Revolution of 1848 when the proletariat came out with its own demands aimed against the capitalists. This attempt revealed the link between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism.

The accumulated experience of the international working class movement shows that we have to creatively elaborate the concept of uninterrupted revolution taking into account new circumstances.

Lenin's theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution developing into a socialist one enriched the Marxist concept of uninterrupted revolution. "From the democratic revolution," he wrote, "we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution." (*Collected Works* Vol. 9 p.237). Furthermore Lenin elaborated a special strategic line for each of the stages.

In South Africa the main task of the SACP is to transform the national democratic revolution into a socialist one. Quite correctly we say that the main content of the struggle at the present phase is the liberation of the black people, in particular the Africans who bear the greatest burden of national oppression and class exploitation. At the same time we have to conduct a heightened ideological campaign to disseminate the ideas of scientific socialism within the national liberation and trade union movement and amongst the people as a whole.

To ensure that our revolution is not diluted so that it ends merely with the hoisting of the black, green and gold flag over parliament, representing the interests of black exploiters, it is essential that the ideas and objectives of socialism be well understood by our struggling people.

AN AFRICAN REPUBLIC UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE WORKING CLASS

From Christos Theodoropoulos, Nigeria

Dear Editor,

Sisa Majola's "Nation and Class in the South African Revolution" (*AC*, No. 105) emphatically and persuasively reasserts such important planks of the movement as:

- the existence of a colonial situation in South Africa (p.42);
- the right of the colonised black nation to self-determination, independence and the setting up of their own state (p.43); and

— the voluntary integration of black and white workers after the victory of the national-liberation revolution by the creation of a single, non-racial and democratic political entity (p.45).

There is a point in Majola's article, however, which, in my opinion, tends to obscure the far-reaching implications of the above theses. This point is the reference to the colonised people of South Africa as an "oppressed nation" (p.42), a "black majority" (p.43) and a "nationality" (p.45), all at the same time! As these terms are mutually exclusive, it follows that the colonised people of South Africa cannot conceivably be both a nation *and* a majority or a nationality within another nation. I feel that it is important to clarify the position and to leave no ambiguities in this respect. Thus, if the oppressed black people of South Africa are a 'nation', the said theses acquire a decolonization perspective. If they are a 'majority', a majority rule, one-man-one-vote perspective and, if they are a 'nationality', a power-sharing, a 'participatory' perspective.

I firmly believe that the colonised people of South Africa do constitute a *nation*, which, in addition, has a *prior title* over the entire territory of South Africa to the oppressor, settler colonial, nation. It is the maintenance of this national identity and the forceful non-acquiescence to settler colonial dispossession for three and a half centuries that enables the colonised nation to validly struggle for self-determination and the restoration of its national sovereignty and independence.

Metropolitan Portugal claimed Angola as its 'integral part', but this was not enough to destroy the *national* identity of the Angolan people. No metropolitan trick could transform them into a 'section' (whether 'majority' or 'minority') or a 'nationality' of the Portuguese nation in order to abort the decolonisation struggle.

Today, the squatter RSA claims the territory of South Africa as its own and its President emphatically claims that "The peoples of the Republic of South Africa form one nation, but our nation is a nation of minorities. . . This of necessity implies participation by all communities in the sharing of power. . ." (quoted from *AC*, No.105, p.15). There is no doubt, however, that as in the case of colonialist Portugal, the RSA 'minorities', 'communities' and 'population groups' tricks will not abort the decolonisation struggle. On the tomb of RSA a black democratic, unitary and non-racial republic will be erected, which will accelerate the process of voluntary integration of black and white labour which Majola has analysed so skilfully.

A similar reservation is also due to David Rabkin's "Culture and the National Struggle" (*AC* No.105), which tends to create the impression that

the oppressed people of the territory do not constitute a nation 'in the strict sense', but merely a 'national group', an 'oppressed majority' (p.52), i.e. a majority nationality. In his words, "in South Africa the various national groups cannot in the strict sense be called nations" (p.52).

I am of the opinion that this downgrading of the national status of the African people — an attitude reflective of the outmoded one-nation, multinational-society thesis in respect of the national question in South Africa — places unwarranted obstacles to the further development of the cultural identity and the unfolding of the liberation struggle of the colonised nation. For the uncompromised cultural mission of this *nation* is to liberate itself by freeing its settler colonialist oppressor from its self-imposed imprisonment, eliminate the present contradictions in national (oppressor-oppressed nation) relations and thereby create the preconditions of a new societal synthesis in South Africa. ANC and Party practice by opening membership at all levels to all South Africans who have earned a place in their ranks clearly points to the fact that the African nation, as such, is the rallying point of this new synthesis which is now under way. Consummation of this synthesis evidently passes through the replacement of the RSA, the state of the settler colonial nation, with an African republic which, under the leadership of the working class, will alone be able to guarantee equal rights and privileges to all inhabitants regardless of sex, beliefs, race or cultural origin.

WE ARE DEDICATED TO FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS

From a miner in the Orange Free State

Dear Editor,

Revolutionary greetings to all of my comrades and fellow countrymen. I say, pass my greetings to the NEC of the Party, the vanguard movement of the working class.

I am a miner on the gold mines of South Africa. I was lucky to get your address from a friend of mine. I am very interested in your publication. Please send me one copy every issue so that the information can reach all workers at our mine.

Myself I am branch chairman at our mine. Our workforce is about — thousand, and union members are over 70 per cent. You can imagine how tough it is to recruit and organise this amount within one and a half years. (Figures supplied but omitted for security reasons — Ed.).

We don't complain about our union, the National Union of Mineworkers, but we need special information to rely on, as you know the situation in South Africa. The boers don't allow us to go from room to room to recruit. They say we must recruit the workers outside the compound. They try to weaken our organisation at branch level. But we are dedicated to fight for our rights.

We are waiting to hear from you.

Yours in the struggle.

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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