

# The African Communist

35  
NUMBER 36—FOURTH QUARTER 1968

**NIGERIA**  
THE FACTUAL BACKGROUND

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**CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

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**THE NATIONAL LIBERATION  
MOVEMENT OF S.AFRICA**  
BY DUMA NOKWE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF  
THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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London, S.W.14, England.**

# THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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*Published quarterly in the interests of African solidarity and as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent, by the South African Communist Party*

**No. 35      Fourth Quarter 1968**

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Editorial Notes:

# CZECHOSLOVAKIA

EVENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, culminating in the temporary entry of Soviet and other Warsaw Pact armed forces into that country, have held much of the world's attention since the last issue of this journal went to press. In the interim the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party issued two statements (published elsewhere in this issue\*) briefly expounding the position of our organisation on the situation.

Naturally, the imperialists and their social-democratic and neo-colonialist hangers-on were not slow to condemn the Soviet Union and its allies. A veritable torrent of anti-Soviet, anti-Communist abuse and lies was let loose in all capitalist countries, including South Africa and many African states. The Soviet Union and its allies were painted as 'aggressors,' intervening in the internal affairs of a sovereign country to prevent the alleged advance towards 'liberalisation' and 'democratisation.' It was a heaven-sent opportunity for the bourgeois propagandists to intensify to the utmost limit the newspaper, radio and

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\* See p. 94



television war which they permanently conduct against the revolutionary working class movement—and to distract public attention from the bloody armed aggression and undercover subversion which international imperialism is and has long been carrying on, in Vietnam, in the Arab lands, in Greece, in Africa, in the socialist countries . . . in every part of the world.

It is very difficult for people in the countries subjected to such propaganda to withstand it and see the situation objectively. They are fed continuously with all sorts of misinformation on matters of detail, purporting to be factual reports; the case for the socialist countries is simply suppressed. We have seen many similar campaigns in the past—such as the Soviet-German Pact of Non-Aggression in 1939, the war with Finland in 1940, the exposure of the Stalin cult in 1953, the Hungarian events of 1956 etc. On each occasion, even among the ranks of the advanced working class movement, there have been many who wavered and some who even deserted the ranks of the movement.

An indication of the exceptionally complicated and severe nature of the Czechoslovakian crisis is that this time the critics who have condemned the Soviet Union and her allies include even some of the leaderships of Communist Parties, especially in Western Europe, including Italy, France and Britain. We should make it clear at the outset, that we differ radically from the analysis made and the conclusions reached by the leaders of these Parties.

Certainly, for military forces of fraternal socialist countries to enter another to help cope with the difficulties of the working people there and to maintain the security of the European socialist community, is a lamentable, tragic and extraordinary occurrence. It cannot but be wounding to the national pride of the Czech and Slovak people, with whom we of this journal feel the deepest sympathy and solidarity. No doubt many of them are harbouring feelings of bitterness and resentment at this time.

Yet, to be understood, the August events in Czechoslovakia must be seen, not in isolation but against a broader background. They must be viewed, above all, in relation to the central and overriding clash of our era—that between aggressive international imperialism on the one hand and the forces of socialism and human liberation on the other. Any estimate of those events which minimises or overlooks this great central issue must be one-sided and false. In Czechoslovakia there was a succession of blunders, misjudgments and weaknesses—both before and after the January changes—of the state and Party leadership which brought the country to the brink of counter-revolution and disaster. We must remember the geographic and strategic position



of this country as a key-point for the security of the heartlands of socialism—and we must be acutely conscious of the whole international situation of rampant imperialist aggression on a global scale.

Seen against this background, it is our judgment that the action of the fraternal countries, in response to the call of those in Czechoslovakia most concerned with the preservation of the historic gains of socialism, was justified, timely and in a sense inevitable. Prior to the August events the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (C.S.S.R.) was sliding rapidly towards chaos and anarchy; the forces of reaction, masking their true intentions behind 'socialist' and 'democratic' labels, were more and more taking control and pushing the country towards the restoration of capitalism and desertion of the alliance of socialist countries. Unfortunately the Czechoslovakian Communist Party was in a state of internal disarray and confusion with its leaders unable—perhaps in some cases, unwilling—to organise and rally the healthy elements of the masses to fight reaction and assert the rule of the working class.

We believe that the leaders of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries neighbouring the C.S.S.R. were legitimately concerned at this dangerous sequence of events—dangerous, that is, to the entire international labour and liberatory movement, and not least to the Czechoslovakian people themselves. To have failed to do their utmost to halt this drift, firstly through long months of discussion with the C.S.S.R.'s leaders and ultimately through the provision of military assistance, would we consider have been a dereliction of internationalist duty for which all the anti-imperialist forces of the world—and not least the Czech and Slovak peoples themselves—would have had to pay a bitter price.

Let us examine, briefly, the chain of events.

## **BEFORE JANUARY**

Prior to January this year, the former leadership of the Government and the Party had for a long time been committing a number of serious errors, which had led to much dissatisfaction and criticism among many sections of the population. (Incidentally, we should point out that the existence of a workers' government, even one guided by Marxism, is no guarantee, in the opinion of Communists, that it will not commit errors. It was Marx himself who pointed out that once it gained state power the working class would inevitably commit a whole series of appalling blunders 'until it is fit to govern.' But, let us add, the 'blunders' of a workers' government, bent on improving the lot of the masses and building a new society, are infinitely to be preferred to the 'efficiency' of a capitalist government out solely to



use the state machine to fleece and exploit the masses and perpetuate an evil system.)

From 1948 to 1963 the Czechoslovak economy had surged forward, industry increasing five-fold. Wages went up by 127 per cent. But from 1963 onwards it began to slow down—virtually to stagnate. Naturally, these and other shortcomings led to serious dissatisfaction among wide sections of the people. Almost every visitor to the C.S.S.R.—and this includes many Africans extremely sympathetic to socialism—was conscious of widespread criticism of the government.

No doubt much of this criticism came from and was encouraged by elements from the former exploiting classes, only too eager to discredit socialism, but much of it was honest and well-intentioned. Instead of heeding such criticism and taking radical measures to correct the shortcomings by streamlining the socialist economy, the leadership began to regard all its critics as hostile elements. Bureaucratic methods of government prevailed. Instead of taking the masses into its confidence, drawing them into the democratic process of decision-making and fulfilment of decisions, the leadership reached a position where there was an almost total breakdown of communications between the people and the government. Added to this there was a departure from correct Leninist principles with regard to the relationship between the Czech and Slovak peoples, to the disadvantage of the national aspirations of the latter who are a minority.

These errors accumulated until January this year when the former Communist Party First Secretary, Anton Novotny, was replaced, and a new leadership declared its intentions to institute a series of sweeping democratic reforms of a political and economic character. There was much sympathy among communists and revolutionaries everywhere with the 'Action Programme' embodying these reforms. Unfortunately the 'reformers' failed to reckon with a number of factors—above all the strength of reactionary and anti-socialist elements within the country, and the extent of their connections with and support from West German, United States and other imperialist agencies, all of whom seized the opportunity presented by the 'mood of change' in the country. They threw all their efforts into struggling not for the improvement of socialism in the country but for its overthrow, for the restoration of capitalism, for the elimination of the Communist Party and the wrenching of Czechoslovakia out of the socialist camp and into that of imperialism.

But how, with a population overwhelmingly in favour of socialism could the local reactionaries and their imperialist backers hope to achieve such far-reaching objectives? How could they have hoped to persuade the workers and collective farmers, who had tasted the



benefits of a life free from exploitation, to hand the industries and land back to rapacious capitalists and landlords, to exchange the security and social benefits of a planned economy for the hazards of unemployment, the gross inequalities, the cultural degeneration of bourgeois society?

And again, here is a country which but thirty years ago—at the time of the Munich betrayal by the imperialist powers when only the socialist Soviet Union had stood up for Czechoslovak independence—had known the horrors of German fascist domination. How could they be persuaded that it was in their interests to abandon the security of the socialist community—their sole guarantee of independent survival—for the dubious advantage of association with rampant West German imperialism whose leaders—including many unrepentant Nazis—do not conceal their ambitions to ‘correct’ the historical decisions of the second World War, to establish German imperialism as the dominant force in Europe, and to regain the short-lived European Empire of Adolf Hitler including neo-colonial rule over the Czech and Slovak lands?

### **UNDERCOVER COUNTER-REVOLUTION**

No, of course, they could not and did not put forward any such proposals. The whole tactic and subtle technique of the counter-revolutionary reaction in Czechoslovakia—in sharp contradistinction to that of their Hungarian counterparts and American master-minds in 1956—lay precisely in this: that they concealed their real motives and put forward slogans and demands that the people really wanted and still want—socialism, democracy, a higher standard of life, the satisfaction of legitimate national aspirations. Only, everything was subtly distorted. Under cover of criticism of the errors of the Novotny leadership, everything accomplished by the Communist Party as the governing party for the past twenty years was belittled and attacked, undermining the indispensable leading role of the Marxist-Leninist Party in the building of socialism. Under cover of correcting the undue rigidity and stifling of initiative of the economy in the past, proposals were advanced which encouraged the growth of bourgeois practices and ideology. Under cover of the slogan of ‘democratisation,’ ‘freedom of speech’ etc., a platform was provided in the press, the state radio, television services etc. for the dissemination of views radically hostile to the class interests of the working people, to socialism and the Communist movement. Under cover of defending national interests and traditions, local chauvinism was preached with distinctly anti-Soviet undertones.

And all these ideas and practices were vigorously disseminated



among the population with the unanimous and eager support of the imperialist press and radio. We had the extraordinary spectacle of reading day after day in such papers as the London *Times*—always in the past and still today the most bitter and irreconcilable enemy of communism and socialism—eulogies of the marvellous new brand of Communism in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. No doubt it is an over-simplification to say that whatever the bourgeois press finds good is necessarily bad. But such an enthusiastic chorus of praise from the class enemy in London, Bonn and Washington should at least have aroused the justifiable suspicions of the Communists, both in the C.S.S.R. itself and in the West, as to the direction in which things were going.

This is a quarterly journal which perforce is printed long before it is read. We do not propose in this Editorial Note to proceed to conduct a detailed examination of the numerous facts and incidents which were occurring in the C.S.S.R. from January to August, which convinced us, and more importantly the neighbouring allied states of the Warsaw Pact, that the right-wing danger was growing to alarming proportions and that matters were increasingly getting out of hand. And worst of all, there was little or nothing to be seen of any adequate counter-measures, of even a sharp and effective ideological campaign, on the part of those whose first duty it was and always is to defend and advance the cause of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist ideology—the leaders and members of the Communist Party. Under the banner of 'press freedom' the press—including the very organ of the Central Committee of the Party—and other public information media were thrown open to the open and concealed critics of communism while its defenders seemed more and more to be overcome by inertia. Whether because of insufficient profound ideological work in the previous period—as is stated by Gus Hall, Secretary of the U.S. Communist Party in a notable review of the situation—or because of the disorientation and confusion created by inner factional struggle, the Party seemed more and more not to be directing events but rather to be at their mercy.

It is true, as has been repeatedly stated in documents of the international Communist movement, that questions of internal policy are to be solved independently, in each country, by the Communist Party of that country, whether it is in office or in opposition. But there is another principle which is even more basic and which goes right back to the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels of 1848, that the Communists everywhere are distinguished from other sections of the labour movement in the fact that always and everywhere they put the interests *of the movement as a whole*



before local or temporary sectional interests. It is in the light of *this* fundamental principle that we must view the very understandable and legitimate concern of the Warsaw Allies at what was happening in the C.S.S.R.

And not only the Warsaw allies, let it be said. It is the concern of all Communists everywhere. In this connexion, and in passing, we wish to note our strong disagreement with the proposal that the events in Czechoslovakia should be made the subject of a special conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties. Why 'European' we want to know. This isn't just a European issue; it is a world one. It doesn't only concern the Communists of one continent. If our comrades in Western Europe have discussed and made statements about this question, so have our comrades of Vietnam, Korea, the United States, Cuba, the Middle East, Africa.

The more so since the issues raised are by no means limited to matters of European security. The issues include such vital matters, of interest to all Marxists, as the right of national sovereignty, of bourgeois and socialist concepts of democracy, indeed of the theoretical and political stand of Communists at this period of history. These are precisely the issues which should be discussed at the world meeting of Marxist-Leninist Parties under preparation and due to take place in Moscow in 1968. And if new differences have arisen (we are not so sure that they are 'new'!) this is the more reason why the meeting should be held; not a reason for postponing it.

## **DEMOCRACY AND SOVEREIGNTY**

We believe that a fresh discussion of various theoretical and practical matters facing our movement is indeed long overdue. Perhaps two of the most important are those of democracy and national sovereignty, the clarification of both of which is of absolutely life-and-death significance to us who live in Africa.

We do not think there is room for any doubt as to where we South African Communists stand in relation to the questions of democracy and national independence. Most of us have spent our lives fighting bitterly for both: and many of our finest comrades have lost their liberty or even their lives in that fight. We who have never enjoyed democracy in our own country, who believe passionately in it and are prepared to sacrifice for it, may be conceded to have thought about this question at least as much as those to whom the benefits of democratic rights are so familiar as to be taken for granted.

But we know, too, that however democratic its forms, every state is in essence, and in the last resort, a dictatorship—and that goes for a socialist, working class state as well as a bourgeois, capitalist one.



The difference is that the socialist state is ruled by the workers with a view to raising and transforming the lives of the masses; the capitalist state is ruled by the exploiters with a view to making the maximum profit out of the labour and the poverty of the masses. That is the view of Marx and Lenin, of the Communists.

Any other view, any non-class approach to the question of democracy and state power is non-Communist. In this connexion we may refer to the well-known controversy between Marx and the Marxists, on the one hand, and the Anarchists on the other. The Anarchists do not concede the necessity for any form of state; they demand that the workers, on overthrowing capitalist class rule, should immediately proceed to dismantle all forms and organisations of government, without replacing them with their own instruments of power.

We Communists do not dismiss this ultimate aim as impossible of realisation or undesirable. We, too, look forward to a future for humanity without armies, police and other organs of coercion which represent the essence of state power. But before we can realise this goal, and in order to make it possible by preventing the dispossessed exploiters making a come-back, the workers must institute a state of their own. And since *every* form of state power is in essence a dictatorship, the founders of the Communist movement did not mince words on this crucial issue. Marx wrote:

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transformation period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. (*Critique of the Gotha Programme.*)

Lenin was even more explicit about the demands for so-called 'pure democracy' in a socialist society. 'The indispensable character, he wrote,

the necessary condition of dictatorship is the *forcible* suppression of the exploiters as a *class* and consequently the infringement of 'pure democracy'. . . . The proletariat cannot achieve victory without *breaking the resistance* of the bourgeoisie, *without forcibly suppressing its enemies*. . . (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*—emphasis in original.)

Thus for oppressed people and classes, and in particular for followers of Karl Marx and V. I. Lenin who repeatedly emphasised this question democracy is not merely a formal question of allowing many political parties to function, of voting at elections, of allowing 'anyone' to publish a newspaper and so on. Workers and oppressed people fight for these and similar rights under capitalism and colonialism *as*

*means of putting an end to their oppression, not as a substitute for emancipation from minority class rule. Under capitalism there can be no true democracy for the working people; and he who has forgotten this has forgotten Marxism.*

If—under the pretext of ‘restoring democracy’ (and, of course, socialist democracy had been seriously infringed in the C.S.S.R.)—the Czech reactionaries and their foreign backers had been permitted to restore capitalism in the country it would have spelt the end of Czechoslovakian democracy.

Very similar considerations apply to the complex problem of national sovereignty and independence.

The self-determination of nations, their right to independence, is a fundamental principle of Marxism. But to put this in an abstract, formal way especially in relation to a country like the C.S.S.R., surrounded by powerful neighbours, is to ignore the very essence and heart of the problem.

Czechoslovakia became independent in 1918 not mainly because of a successful national struggle but because of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire at the end of the first world war. She lost that independence in 1938 because of the Munich Agreement entered into by Germany, Italy, Britain and France, and as a result of the betrayal of Czechoslovak national interests by their own bourgeois politicians. The late President Benes and his colleagues were not prepared to stand up to Hitler with the support of the Soviet Union alone (after being deserted by Chamberlain and Deladier) because their class fear of socialism was greater than their patriotism. Independence was only regained at the end of the second world war, in which the main part in defeating the Nazis and ensuring Czechoslovak freedom was played by the Soviet Union and its armed forces.

If we look at the situation realistically, thirty years after Munich, the lesson is plain. Once again, in the German Federal Republic, the principal European limb of United States global strategy, revived German imperialism, whose government includes many unrepentant Hitlerites, is seeking expansion eastwards. Once again the prime target is the stronghold of the international working-class and liberation movements, the Socialist Soviet Union. And once again the strategic essential is access to Czechoslovakia whose geographical position, bordering on Germany, West and East, Poland, the U.S.S.R. and Hungary, making the C.S.S.R. at once the front-line fortress of the socialist community of nations and—for imperialism—the guardian of the road to expansion and penetration eastwards.

These inescapable geographical, and historical realities mean that, from the standpoint of the Warsaw Pact allies, the maintenance of



Czechoslovak security and stability are of vital concern to themselves and to the wider cause of socialism to which they are dedicated.

They also mean that the independence, sovereignty and self-determination of the C.S.S.R. are inevitably bound up with her position as a part of the socialist community. For a bourgeois Czechoslovakia, without the backing of her Warsaw allies, there can be neither independence nor sovereignty.

Thus, from the long-term point of view, the armed forces of the Warsaw allies are no threat either to independence or sovereignty of the C.S.S.R. Quite the reverse. They have come neither as invaders nor an 'occupation force' but to preserve and fortify *those conditions under which true democracy and independence alone can survive in the C.S.S.R.* And whatever wounded feelings may exist we are sure that history will vindicate these fundamental truths and that the working people of Czechoslovakia will in time appreciate them as well.

The howl of anger and disappointment from the imperialists, New York, Bonn, London and Paris, shows that in fact their strategy suffered a shattering blow on August 20th. The superb planning and staff work to move—with such speed, efficiency and security—so huge a force and in so short a time, no less than the abrupt reversal of the trend towards the disintegration of the socialist community for which they had laboured so long, so patiently and at such great expense, is reason enough for their anger and disappointment. We sincerely hope that it will not be long before our comrades in the Czechoslovakian and West European Communist Parties will also come to see the deeper historical meaning behind these events against the background of the great central issue of our times—*the fight against imperialism.*

To us of South Africa, whom history has thrust into the front lines of a most crucial battle front of this fight, it is impossible for one moment to forget this priority. We know which side we are on. When the bourgeois press in South Africa exalted at the further disintegration of the socialist camp, which they imagined was taking place, we were alarmed, and we are correspondingly relieved when that trend was checked. That is why it is not surprising that not only the Marxists-Leninists of our country, represented by the S.A.C.P. but also our national liberation movement, the African National Congress, expressed firm support for the Warsaw allies' move.

So far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, the continued fruitful and fraternal negotiations hold out every promise that we shall witness steady return to normality. No doubt there are still formidable difficulties, but we are confident that with patience and understanding these will be overcome.

But there are deeper implications in the crisis that has arisen. It has revealed the imperative need for Communists of all countries to reach a common appreciation of the new problems of today's world. Clearly the long gap since the last world conference of Marxist-Leninists in Moscow in 1960 has contributed to misunderstandings and drift. After long and careful preparation another such conference is planned for Moscow this year.

We find it impossible to understand why some fraternal parties regard the Czechoslovakian crisis as a reason for delaying or postponing this meeting.

On the contrary, we see in these very events, the most cogent need to press ahead with the conference at the earliest possible date. We are faced on an international scale with a relentless, powerful and cunning enemy who has taken and will take advantage of even the slightest rift in our ranks.

The existing disunity, more apparent now than ever, is of benefit only to the imperialists and to the disadvantage of the toiling and oppressed hundreds of millions who look to our movement for leadership.

Somewhere, somehow, a new beginning must be made to re-establish the closest of bonds between the revolutionary vanguards of the world's working classes, on the rocklike basis of the principles proclaimed in the *Communist Manifesto*.

To that end our Party and this journal are ready, now as always, to contribute our utmost.

## **INDEPENDENCE FOR SWAZILAND**

THE UNION JACK flew for the last time outside The Residency, Mbabane, a year ago. With the final move from self-government to independence this month, Swaziland is at last surrounded by all the trappings of formal freedom—two houses in her parliament, a British-approved constitution, representation abroad, and a seat in the United Nations. With the exception of Rhodesia, Britain's grim game of imperial politics in southern Africa is now virtually at an end. But what newborn African state is this, landlocked between Mozambique and South Africa, and ruled by an ageing monarch whose power is anything but 'constitutional'?

Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana have always appeared as interesting anomalies in the power bloc of the racist sub-continent. Under Britain's imperial rule they attempted to keep clear of the contamina-



tion of the Republic's apartheid policies, and succeeded only in becoming gallant (and miserably poor) hostages. Independence from Britain has clarified their status as client lands of the Republic, and none more so than Swaziland. Although her population is less than 400,000, she has more natural wealth and more development than her sister territories. But she also has more white settlers: 8,000 of them, who privately own just under half of the whole country.

The evolution of this tailor-made Swazistan, rurally backward, conservative and largely illiterate, is a comment on trusteeship which can be compared with the case of South-West Africa. The position of King Sobhuza II in the new Swazi government is an example of Britain's system of indirect rule taken to its logical absurdity. Sobhuza's royalist Imbokodvo party (formed on South African advice to counter the success of Ambrose Zwane's workers' party, the N.N.L.C.) occupies all 24 elected seats in the new parliament, while Sobhuza appoints the remaining six. As monarch, he also has executive powers. When it became clear that independence would mean one-man rule, the Swaziland whites jettisoned their hastily-formed settler party, trusting their interests to the reactionary power of feudal office. The device whereby one-fifth of the electorate, largely urban working-class Africans, has been denied a single seat in the new government is a bizarre delimitation of eight constituencies, each electing three members. so that rural conservatism can easily swamp any progressive urban-based movement. Despite the avowed intent to become a non-racial state, the tremendous pressure of apartheid attitudes from the pervasive influence of South Africa is already apparent with the framing of 'immorality' legislation to prevent sexual 'promiscuity' across the colour line. The depth to which the social institutions of economic exploitation enter into the life of multi-racial Swaziland may well serve as a guage of the true nature of its independence.

Economically, Swaziland's new constitutional status coincides with the exchange of the City and the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund for Hollard Street. South African capitalists began pumping spill-over funds into extractive agriculture and industry on a fairly large scale in the late 1950's and early 1960's at a time when returns inside the Republic appeared to be diminishing. The increasing production of timber and pulp, citrus, sugar, iron ore, asbestos has trebled Swaziland's export figures in the last seven years. The territory is notorious for its rand millionaires who have carved fortunes out of the fertile lowveld and cheap peasant labour. As in South Africa, the basis of profits is the utilisation of extremely low-wage labour, made possible by land starvation. Prosperity in Swaziland, the catchword of tribalist apologists, is a glossy myth; relative to the income of the



bourgeoisie the Swazi peasant is grossly poor. This gap between politician and peasant, between white settler and African worker, is crudely visible, and constitutes one of the many contradictions which could trouble the smooth development of Swaziland into a model Bantustan.

Land, the basic means of production in a peasant society, is of crucial importance in Swaziland, as elsewhere in Africa. On taking the throne in 1921, Sobhuza travelled to London to press the claim of the Swazi people for the return of land 'sold' to Europeans at the time of the Barberton gold-rush—all in vain. After sixty-five years as a protectorate, Swaziland now has a constitution protecting European land ownership and entrenching their right to full and fair payment for their land. Swaziland, whose national budget is R2 million in the red every year, is hardly in a position to buy back the people's land—some merely lying fallow as trek-grazing for Transvaal sheepfarmers. Land-hungry peasants are already agitating for more direct action on the land question. The prime minister, prince Makhosini, has rightly described this unresolved contradiction as a 'time-bomb in the Swazi nation.' The defection to the royalist party of one-time African nationalist politicians may lead to action on this and other grievances arising from the accelerating economic exploitation. Any form of political activity outside the party can expect to meet with swift suppression.

Swaziland has never been in more need of contact with Africa and the outside world. It appears at present that her external relations will not pose her current leaders much of a problem, however. The economy is totally integrated into the Republic, which handles her marketing, currency and customs. Although Swaziland has applied for membership of the O.A.U., her voting behaviour and attitudes are gloomily predictable. It is a tragic irony for the Swazi people that they, who saw early in their history the rapaciousness of the white tribes and sought protection from the only possible source, should now forge a link in the chain of buffer states around the Republic. Caught as they are between the millstones of political backwardness and intense exploitation, the Swazi people must learn that from them the substance of true independence cannot be separated from the freedom and independence of their brothers in southern Africa.

## **PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM**

The international meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in 1957 decided to establish a common theoretical and information journal. The result of this decision was the appearance



of *Problems of Peace and Socialism* (the English edition is entitled *World Marxist Review*) the first issue of which was published in September 1958.

During the past ten years, the journal has made a most important contribution to the development of Marxist-Leninist science and to the development of the working-class and national liberation movements.

Leading Communists and other revolutionaries from all five continents have enriched its columns with contributions containing informative reports and analyses of the situation in their own countries, as well as articles of a general character dealing with various problems of the anti-imperialist movement as a whole.

The *World Marxist Review* has made steady progress. At present it is published in no less than 34 separate editions in 26 languages—Arabic, Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Japanese, Icelandic, Italian, Mongolian, Norwegian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Singhalese, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Vietnamese. It circulates in nearly 400,000 copies in 142 different countries.

In addition to its publishing activities, the editorial board of the journal has on a number of occasions organised international discussions on important theoretical questions, or on historic occasions such as the thirtieth anniversary of the Seventh (and last) World Congress of the Communist International, the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, and the centenary of the publication of Marx's *Capital*.

Particularly important, from an African point of view, was the Seminar organised by the journal, in conjunction with the Arab socialist review *At-Talia (Vanguard)*, at Cairo, from October 24th to 29th, 1966, under the title 'Africa: National and Social Revolution.'

An outstanding success, the Seminar brought together leading theoreticians, both Marxists and non-Marxists, representing twenty-five revolutionary parties and organisations in various parts of Africa, in a comradely and searching discussion of some of the most burning questions facing all the peoples of Africa in their difficult quest for true independence, freedom, unity and socialism. A number of the papers presented to the Seminar, many of a high order of content and interest, have recently been published in a volume advertised elsewhere in this issue of *The African Communist*.

On this tenth anniversary of its first appearance we warmly congratulate our colleagues of the editorial board of our distinguished contemporary, *World Marxist Review*, on their past achievements, and wish them even greater success in the future.



## STUDENT PROTESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

If you students stage another sit-in, Vorster told a University of Cape Town student deputation, I will send my boys in to put a stop to it.

The Prime-Minister's 'boys'—(boys will be boys, everywhere—Chicago, Mexico City, even Londonderry, and certainly Cape Town and Johannesburg)—also went into Fort Hare with dogs, tear gas and the usual paraphernalia to escort 200 African students home under 'protective custody'. The 'boys' invaded the Wits campus and tore posters from the hands of white students when they protested against this Fort Hare action. (Next day the students were out on protest again, this time against the police invading their campus, but they held blank posters. Even the 'boys' realised that confiscating blank posters would prove something—for once they stayed away.)

Vorster also told the U.C.T. delegation that he is introducing legislation next year to allow racially-exclusive organisations to operate. At present the English-language Universities require that any recognised student organisation be open to any student at the University.

But it is not legislation that puts an end to student protests in South Africa. It is relentless pressure and intimidation.

Students at Cape Town who sat-in to protest against the decision not to appoint Mr. Archie Mafeje as a lecturer after government pressures on the university council are only a minority of the white student body, which is, of course, only a segment of that super-privileged minority, the whites of South Africa. Yet their action in an authoritarian country where pressures on white youth for conformity are enormous was like a great breath of fresh air in a stifled land. They are brought up against every possible kind of pressure and threat: names and addresses and photographs taken by Vorster's 'boys', threats of violence from pro-apartheid youth and the angry threats of terrified parents who respond to Vorster's warning to them—bring your children into line—look what happened to those who did not. The smallest independent act requires courage. (Duncan Innes, president of N.U.S.A.S., says his parents disapprove of his views and everything he is doing. 'We no longer speak to each other,' he says of his father.)

Thus even among the white students the apartheid state's determination to combine the quest for knowledge with absolute submission to apartheid authority breaks down from time to time. Among African students independent thought and even the most innocent protest has only one conclusion: termination of education.

'The wardens enforce discipline . . . by patrolling late at night and using duplicate keys to enter rooms. Rooms are often searched,



usually between midnight and 2 a.m. . . . such invasions of privacy are bitterly resented. . . . They often break up gatherings which they suspect are political . . . married couples are not allowed to live together.'

Concentration camp? Of course not. Just a student's description of life at the Xhosa Tribal College, Fort Hare (many of the students are aged between 24 and 30).

The 200 suspended Fort Hare students are now being permitted to apply for re-admission and made to sign stringent and humiliating undertakings which mean immediate expulsion from the college if they are broken.

The pattern of student protest in South Africa does not follow the same forms as in other countries. But the spirit that motivates it is the same search for truth, longing for self-expression, desire for greater freedom and justice. Student protest may be only a breeze at Cape Town and Wits (and a slight intake of breath at Rhodes) but it may yet find a way to join with other, more representative, groups, and brings the hope that together, black and white youth will yet bring a south-easter to blow across the land.

# **THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**DUMA NOKWE<sup>1</sup>**

FOR CENTURIES the continent of Africa has been subjected to colonisation and the most brutal aggression by the European and North American countries. Prominent among these were Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, Holland, Germany, the United States and Italy. These countries followed different patterns of colonisation at different periods of history.

We may distinguish various periods in this colonisation and aggression, namely, slave trading, which robbed the African continent of millions of people, mercantile capitalist colonialism, imperialism and colonialism.

The chief characteristic has always been the rapacious robbery of the human and material resources of Africa, the cold-blooded massacres conducted against the indigenous people, and the complete disregard of the human rights and dignity of the indigenous population.

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<sup>1</sup> The Scientific Congress AGAINST RACISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM—FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA—held in Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic on May 22nd-25th this year, brought together scientists from many European socialist countries and leaders of the Southern African national liberation movements. After thorough analysis and discussion, the Conference condemned the 'racist, colonialist and fascist regimes in Southern Africa' and called for a world-wide 'anti-imperialist united front' for Southern African liberation, for solidarity and support for the freedom-fighters of the armed struggle. Among the many important papers presented was this outstanding contribution by the Secretary-General of the African National Congress of South Africa.



This system left Africa with a heritage of poverty, disease and ignorance.

In some parts of Africa, the colonial system developed and based itself on a settled European community which dominated the state and the economic, social and cultural life.

In Southern Africa, the national liberation movements, the M.P.L.A., F.R.E.L.I.M.O., Z.A.P.U., S.W.A.P.O., and the A.N.C., have a similar development whose characteristic is primarily the unification of the oppressed African people, to struggle against white racism and fascism, imperialism and neo-colonialism, by methods which were originally purely political and eventually military in character.

Each of these movements has to be surveyed in the light of the specific historical conditions of the country concerned, the nature and history of colonialist domination and the unification of the masses of the people into a resistance and revolutionary movement of the indigenous workers and peasants aiming at a complete national and social revolution. It was the realities of the situation that compelled these organisations to embark on armed struggle.

In this contribution to the conference, we shall concentrate on the development of the national liberation movement in South Africa in its struggle against racism, fascism and imperialism, its driving forces and trends of development. We shall do this against the historical background of the conquest and ruthless oppression of the country by Dutch, British and locally-based imperialism. We shall also draw attention to the part played by the working class movement.

## **I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

It was the historical fate of the peoples of Southern Africa to experience the onslaughts of European colonisation through the agency of the most retrogressive, unproductive and barbarous elements of West Europe: the ferocious adventurers and slave traders of feudal Portugal and the Netherlands' mercantile capitalists represented by the Dutch East India Company.

Prior to the advent of the Europeans, the African peoples of Southern Africa had evolved stable societies based on animal husbandry and various forms of agriculture. Various handicrafts had been developed. In Zimbabwe and what is now the Transvaal, an African mining industry had been developed, stimulated by trading contacts with the East and the Arab world. Private ownership of land was unknown. Fundamentally the economy was of a self-supporting subsistence character, without the use of money or other medium of exchange. There were no acute or antagonistic class divisions. The forms of government were essentially popular and democratic in



character, the Chiefs being assisted in their duties of legislation and administration by the traditional general meetings of the people, which are common to traditional South African cultures.

The appearance of the Portuguese and the Dutch radically altered the lives of the African people in these areas, prevented the evolution of their societies and subjected them to untold calamities. On the South Western coast of Africa, the Portuguese slave-traders created havoc. Between 1486 and 1641 they took 1,389,000 slaves from Angola—an average of about 9,000 a year.<sup>2</sup> In the 18th Century, the traffic increased to an average of 25,000 a year.

'The effects of this gigantic slave trade spread further and further inland. Fugitives from slave raids would drive out the inhabitants of inland areas in order to find a refuge for themselves, and then the new fugitives would displace other people further away, setting up a chain of disorder and migration which had repercussions throughout the entire sub-continent.'<sup>3</sup>

The Dutch East India Company set up a 'Refreshment Station' in Cape Town under the command of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652. Its object was to provide fresh meat and vegetables for the Company's ships plying between Holland and Java and other Dutch colonies in the East. The Dutch East India Company has aptly been described as a typical creation of mercantile capitalism . . . a ferocious plunderer which only destroyed and never built.'<sup>4</sup> Sir Stamford Raffles, once the governor of Java, described the history of colonial administration of Holland as 'one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre and meanness', The Company's record was one of unmitigated destruction and genocide. For example, Banjuwangi, a province of Java, had a population of 80,000 in 1750. By 1811, during the Company's administration, the population fell to 18,000. The vast depredations of the Dutch East India Company, however, brought no benefit to the people of Holland, but only to the trading bourgeoisie who dominated the country. Karl Marx pointed out that 'By 1648 the people of Holland were more overworked, poorer and more brutally oppressed than those of the rest of Europe put together.' Even before van Riebeeck's party arrived to establish the settlement, Dutch and English ships calling at Table Bay had begun the sickening process of robbing the indigenous people of their cattle, which played such a prominent part in the subsequent history of South Africa.

Van Riebeeck himself has in his diary recorded his attitude and that of the Company towards the indigenous people. At one stage the

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<sup>2</sup> Basil Davidson, *African Awakening*.

<sup>3</sup> H. Lawson, *Liberation*, No. 16, Johannesburg, February 1956.

<sup>4</sup> H. Lawson, *op. cit.*



Company wrote to criticise him for being too friendly towards the local Khoisan tribes, whom they called 'Hottentots.' He replied 'This we did to make them less shy, so as to find hereafter a better opportunity to seize them—1100 or 1200 in number and about 600 cattle, the best in the whole country. We have everyday the finest opportunities for effecting this without bloodshed, and could derive good service from the people, in chains, in killing seals, or in labouring in the silver mines which we trust will be found here.'<sup>5</sup>

In a further letter, van Riebeeck complained about Company regulations limiting the seizure of cattle: '. . . it is therefore very vexing to see such fine herds of cattle . . . although, were it permitted, we had this day opportunity enough to take from them 10,000 head . . . and we might make prisoners, without a blow, of many savages, in order to send them as slaves to India, as they constantly come to us without weapons.'<sup>6</sup>

The Dutch settlers brought to the Cape during the time of van Riebeeck had, to start with, no land or cattle or other means. They acquired them by a simple process of aggression and robbery from the African peoples in the Western Cape. Not only did they deprive them of their land and their cattle, they enslaved them to work on their lands and seized their women-folk. This process continued throughout the 18th century. A hundred years of Company rule virtually destroyed the once-flourishing Khoisan communities that existed in the vicinity of Table Bay in the Western Cape. The traveller, Dampier, wrote: 'Those of the Hottentots that lived by the Dutch town have their greatest subsistence from the Dutch, for there is one or more of them belonging to every house. They do all sorts of servile work . . . Three or four of their nearest relations sit at the doors or near the Dutch house, waiting for the scraps and fragments that come from the Table . . .' Contrast this with van Riebeeck's description of the herds of 10,000 cattle belonging to these 'paupers' barely a century before.

In addition to its genocidal wars against the Khoisan people, the Dutch East India Company also introduced chattel slavery at the Cape. It appears paradoxical that slavery should have been introduced into the country by a capitalist company. As Lawson points out 'The key to this paradox lies in the purely mercantile character of the Company's capitalism; that is to say it was a capitalism that had not yet penetrated the field of production and therefore could do little more than extend older systems which it found already in existence.'

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<sup>5</sup> Van Riebeeck's *Journal*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*



Although the Dutch East India Company had brought the original settlers to Table Bay as its servants, it neither wished nor was able over the period of years to control the steady infiltration of the 'Boers' (farmers) into the interior of the country. Their methods of extensive farming rapidly exhausted the soil, and armed parties of them were continually moving eastwards and northwards in search of fresh pastures and undertaking marauding cattle raids against the indigenous people. It is sometimes sought to present these movements of the 'Trek Boers' as if they were some sort of civilising mission. Eventually they spread far into the interior, to Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal—a chapter of history which is glorified by modern ideologists of the mystique of Afrikaner nationalism and the Voor-trekkers. It is a theme often taken up by apologists for present-day neo-nazism as exemplified by the Vorster government. Thus the American writer Allen Drury writes: 'The achievement, as with the westward pioneers of America, is impressive and moving enough in its own right, filled with great determination, heroism and bravery.'<sup>7</sup>

But Lawson puts it more accurately when he says:

The trekking movement had begun by the end of the sixteenth century and continued steadily for almost two centuries. Its peculiar character derived from the fact that it was impelled by poverty. This was no confident advance by a rich and expanding economy; it was a furtive creeping trickle that seemed to transplant its own poverty, ignorance and cultural sterility wherever it went. It stifled rather than destroyed the indigenous societies in its path; it brought no economic advance, no civilisation, only stagnation and degradation.<sup>8</sup>

Towards the latter part of the 18th century, the settler colony at the Cape came up against stronger opposition than the scattered Khoisan tribes who were not of a warlike character. In what is now known as the Eastern Cape Province, dwelt the people of the Xhosa tribes. Their vast herds of cattle and fertile farmlands attracted the greed of the settlers. But the Xhosas were formidable opponents, well organised and with a military tradition. They were not easily prepared to surrender their cattle and their lands. Thus began the long series of acts of aggression and cattle raids against the Xhosa people which white South African historians distinguished by the name 'Kaffir Wars,' which lasted for 100 years. Some details given by Lawson indicate the real scale and nature of these wars:

Early in 1780 two Commandos made a cattle raid and murdered many defenceless people. In 1781 a Commando took 5,330 cattle in two months. In 1788 a Graff-Reinet official wrote to Cape Town that 'some of the inhabitants here have already for a long time wished to pick a quarrel with

<sup>7</sup> Allen Drury, *A Very Strange Society*, Michael Joseph, London, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> H. Lawson, *Liberation*, No. 17, Johannesburg, March 1956.



this nation (the Xhosas) in order that, were it possible, they might make a good loot, since they are always casting covetous eyes on the cattle the Kaffirs possess.' In 1793 they obtained their object. The first Commando of that year took 1,800 cattle and murdered the owners, another Commando took 2,000 cattle and murdered forty people, while the third and largest Commando under the 'Liberal' Maynier took no fewer than 10,000 cattle and also 180 women and children as prisoners for slave labour.<sup>9</sup>

It is absurd to describe these cattle-raids as wars. There were no casualties among the Boers: as soon as serious resistance developed they ran away. Invariably, Khoisan troops, coerced by the colonists, were sent in front of the Boer marauders on their cattle raids.

But in 1799 there was a real war. The oppressed Khoisan slaves arose and made common cause with the Xhosas. On the causes of this war, Governor Young wrote in 1800 'that neither the Hottentots nor the Caffers have been the aggressors but the savage and oppressive conduct of the Dutch Boers, more uncivilised than the others.'

In June 1799 a Commando of 300 Boers was defeated on the East Bank of the Sundays River by 150 Xhosa and Khoisan warriors. But this defeat did not dampen the white cattle thieves, By 1802 they were at it again and in this year they captured 15,800 cattle from the Xhosas.

But the Cape Colony under Dutch rule, whether of the Company or later of the Batavian Republic, was never able to conquer or subdue the Xhosa people. Nor for that matter, did the Boers, despite their advantage of being armed with firearms produced in Europe, ever succeed in decisively conquering any African people in South Africa.

However, a far more formidable, merciless and destructive power appeared at the Cape at the beginning of the 19th century. In 1806 the Colony was taken over for the second time by British imperialists. The sporadic cattle raids of the Dutch colonists, conducted by part-time cowboys and cattle thieves were replaced by a huge army of ruthless mercenaries enrolled by Great Britain for the purpose of conducting total war. In their very first campaign against Chief Ndlambe they took 23,000 cattle.

The British appeared as systematic and highly organised colonisers. They settled large numbers of unemployed English families in the Albany district of Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape in 1820, and built forts wherever they went, manned by full-time professional soldiers. Their object was not merely to steal cattle, and seize land but to destroy the fabric of traditional African society and convert the tribespeople into hired labourers and customers for British manufactures.

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<sup>9</sup> H. Lawson, *Liberation*, No. 20, Johannesburg, August 1956.



The Xhosas resisted fiercely. Under such inspiring leaders as the Prophet Makana, they resisted foreign conquest and fought for their independence against the British, and African collaborators such as Ngqika. In the war of 1818, writes E. R. Roux:

... there is no doubt that the whites were the aggressors. In December of that year white troops crossed the Fish River, the 'legal boundary' of the Colony. They were joined by some of Ngqika's followers and Makana and Ndlambe were forced to retreat to the forests. After burning down all the huts they found and capturing some 23,000 cattle, the colonists retired, though first they shared the cattle equally between themselves and Ngqika. But without continued white support, Ngqika could not hold his own. When Ndlambe and Makana attacked him once more, he was hopelessly defeated. 'Following the tracks of their cattle' as they said, the Xhosas then crossed the Fish River and carried the war into the Colony. Makana's army advanced in the spirit of a crusade.<sup>10</sup>

In the end, after frightful slaughter of the Xhosa troops, who were armed with shields and assegais, against the firearms of the British troops, their attack was beaten and Makana himself sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. But the resistance of the Xhosa people under such leaders as Ndlambe, Hintsa and Makana was an epic struggle which long held up the advance of imperialism in Southern Africa.

A similar story may be told about the rest of what is now the Republic of South Africa. In Natal the Zulu people, making use of the famous battle tactics evolved by the military genius of Shaka and under such leaders as Dingane, Cetshwayo and Bambata, continued to fight for many years against the invasions of the Boers from the North and the British advancing from Port Natal at Durban. Countless thousands perished in heroic advances against fortresses manned by men armed with rifles and cannons, where they had only spears.

In the Transvaal the Pedi, Tswana and other people resisted the continuous attempts of the Boer Republic to capture their land and take their cattle. Indeed the Republics, both of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, were continuously in a state of running warfare with the various African tribes who inhabited these territories.

In his mountain fortress of Lesotho, the King Moshoeshoe I, an outstanding military strategist and diplomat, founder of the nation, repeatedly repelled onslaughts by the British and Boer forces. He was compelled by the British to cede the fertile areas west of the Caledon River to the Boer Republic of the O.F.S. But the heartland between the Drakensberg and Maluti Mountain ranges, now called Lesotho, remained unconquered and has retained a precarious independent existence until the present day.

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<sup>10</sup> E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope*, University of Wisconsin, 1964.



For some time the British tolerated the Boers governing the northern parts of South Africa, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, even though—having originally illegally left the Cape Colony, the Boers were technically ‘rebels.’ There were complaints from philanthropists in Britain and elsewhere against the brutal ill-treatment of the indigenous people by the Boers, but these, like most matters concerning South Africa, caused little concern in official circles.

At the close of the nineteenth century, however, dramatic events occurred which completely changed the attitude of the British government. In 1867 huge deposits of diamonds were found in Kimberley. The area was claimed by the British Cape Colony, by the O.F.S. and, justly, by the local Griqua tribe who lived there. However the British managed to win the legal battle and to establish control over the diamond fields as part of the Cape Colony.

At once there was a rush of capital and immigrants to the country.

In 1877 the battle of Ngcayechibi was fought between the Xhosas and the British. Although the war dragged on for a further two years, this battle in fact ended the hundred years resistance of the Xhosas and their military power was broken. In 1879 similarly the Bapedi under Sekhukhuni were finally defeated. The mighty Zulu armies which inflicted the biggest humiliation on the British forces in the famous battle of Isandhlwana in 1878 were finally beaten in the battle of Ulundi in 1879. So that by 1880, all the African peoples in the Republic of South Africa today had come under the control of European governments.

In 1886 gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand and all the processes of capitalist development were carried forward with fantastic speed. Expropriation of African land; poll taxes; hut and animal taxes; pass laws and labour control proceeded apace. The gold mines could not acquire enough labour and immigration was stepped up. For a short while Chinese workers were introduced to work on the gold mines.

The gold mines were situated within the territory of the Transvaal Republic which was under the control of the Boer farmers. The British imperialists who had poured millions in capital into the development of the gold mining industry were determined to wrest control of the Transvaal from the Boers. A number of pretexts were found to wage war on the Transvaal Republic. Among the most cynical was the claim of the British that they were waging war on the Boers by reason of the latter’s ill-treatment of Africans.

The British won the war. The Republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal were overthrown. The Peace of Vereeniging signed



in 1902 represented a compromise between the British imperialists and the Boers.

The old Boer Republican policy towards the African people was endorsed. The seeds were laid for joint Anglo-Boer oppression of the non-white people. For the next few years after the Treaty of Vereeniging discussions were held concerning the possibility of establishing a single state uniting all the British colonies in South Africa. Eventually a South African Convention was called which laid the basis for the formation in 1910 of the Union of South Africa. The non-white people were completely ignored and left out of these discussions and negotiations. The African people had no hand whatsoever in the setting up of the State now known as the Republic of South Africa.

The way to the military conquest of Southern Africa had been paved by white traders and missionaries. The tribal socio-economic structure of African societies was not sufficiently developed to counter the professional soldier of imperialism, armed with modern weapons. Above all, the various African peoples were disunited. They never succeeded in establishing a common front against the invader. Moshoeshe I indeed envisaged the need for such a front. He sent emissaries to the leaders of the Xhosa and Zulu peoples as well as to the famous Coloured leader, Adam Kok, who had established an independent republic of Griqualand. But these efforts failed, as indeed they were bound to fail. The oppressed people of Southern Africa had to pass through the fire of the disintegration of their tribal societies, the proletarianisation of the masses of the people and the mass absorption of advanced modern concepts of national and social liberation before their unity could find an effective realisation in a form which could seriously challenge white imperialist domination of South Africa.

That form was found in the modern liberation movement headed by the African National Congress which is supported by the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Congress, the Congress of Democrats, the S.A. Congress of Trade Unions, the South African Communist Party, organisations of women, of youth and others. The liberation movement has developed its own fighting organisation—Umkhonto we Sizwe—which is now engaged in a life and death struggle to free South Africa.

## **2. THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

It is significant that the year 1880 which saw the defeat of African military resistance in the country (though it flared up again briefly in the so-called Bambata rebellion of 1906) also saw the birth of the first African political organisation—the Imbumba yama Afrika



(Unions of Africans) in the Eastern Cape. In 1884 an African newspaper—Imvo Zabantsundu—was established under the editorship of J. T. Jabavu. These pioneer efforts were followed by others in other parts of the country, and paralleled by a trend among the African churches to break away from the missionaries and establish themselves independently.

The pioneer political organisations from the four British colonies—Cape, Natal, Transvaal and the O.F.S.—met to oppose the proposed Act of Union drawn up by the all-white National Convention in 1909, which proposed that Britain should hand over political power in the entire area not to the people of the country, but to the privileged white minority alone. The meeting, led by three African newspaper editors, the Rev. Walter Rubusana, J. T. Jabavu and the Rev. John Dube, demanded 'full and equal rights' for all in the new Union. A deputation was sent to London to petition the British Parliament to reject the proposal for an all-white S.A. Government—but their demand fell on deaf ears. Opposed only by the small Labour group, led by Keir Hardie, the British Parliament duly passed the 'South Africa Act of 1910'—which provided for a Parliament of whites only, elected almost exclusively by whites. The same British Act of Parliament, with few modifications, is basically the same as the present Constitution of the fascist republic of South Africa.

This situation faced the Africans of all parts of the country with an urgent need for unity. After two years of hard preparatory work by Pixley Ka Izaka Seme and other overseas trained professional men, the founding Conference of the African National Congress (at first called, in English, the 'Native National Congress') opened in Bloemfontein on January 8th, 1912. Many Chiefs, African clergymen, teachers and people from all walks of life participated in the conference. The very nature of the conference was full of dynamic and revolutionary potential. Its purpose was to 'find ways and means of forming one national union for the purpose of creating national unity and defending our rights and privileges,' in the words of Seme's opening address.

The Rev. J. L. Dube was elected first President of Congress, with S. T. Plaatje as Secretary-General.

From its inception the new organisation was faced with a struggle of immense importance to the future of the African people: the fight against the Native Land Act of 1913—that profoundly illuminating expression of the class interests of the united front of imperialist mine-owners and rich farmers who dominated the newly-formed Union of South Africa. They had their own inner differences; but they had an insatiable appetite for cheap labour and African land. The



1913 Land Act expressed their common drive to satisfy these appetites at the expense of the African people.

The Chamber of Mines, representing all the gold mine owners, had complained of lack of labour supplies. As early as 1903 a Government Commission on this question reported that 'the scarcity of native labour is due first and foremost to the fact that the African native tribes are, for the most part, primitive pastoral or agricultural communities who possess exceptional facilities for the regular and full supply of their . . . needs. . . . The subject of food supplies is thus intimately bound up with the fact that African natives are in possession or occupation of large areas of land . . . No considerable change can reasonably be expected in their industrial habits until a great modification of these conditions has been brought about.' The Commission therefore recommended 'legislation modifying the Native Land Tenure system,' and also 'that the entire native social system should be attacked with the object of modifying or destroying it.'

In other words, to force the African to work on the mines it was essential to alienate him from the land and destroy the fabric of his social and economic systems.

The 1913 Land Act went far indeed to satisfy these demands of the mining monopolists. It made it illegal for Africans to own or occupy land outside the overcrowded rural areas designated as 'Native Reserves' (now rechristened by the Nationalist Government as 'Bantu Homelands'), comprising less than 13 per cent of the country.

This law created untold misery for the Africans. Tens of thousands of families, unwilling to work as agricultural labourers for white farmers, or unwanted by them, were suddenly turned adrift on the roads; a whole nation turned suddenly into a landless proletariat, wanderers and 'foreigners' in the land of their ancestors.

The A.N.C. campaigned vigorously up and down the country against this vicious law, winning a widespread popular response.

A substantial sum of money was collected from the ordinary people to send yet another deputation to London, for the British had retained power to veto certain types of legislation affecting Africans (a sop to Labour and Liberal opinion). But once again, the deputation was unsuccessful; the mine owners were far more influential than the liberals, and in any case, most of the shares in the Witwatersrand mines were held by British monopolists and financiers. Other, more pressing problems faced British imperialism; it was the eve of the first world war.

Despite all their disappointing experiences, the A.N.C. leadership at that time continued to insist that the British Government should rectify its betrayal of the African people.



On the eve of the 1st World War in 1913, Congress campaigned against the Land Act. In the same year, Congress women in the O.F.S. conducted a militant struggle against the extension of pass laws to women.

The war temporarily interrupted mass activities. At the end of 1917, under the impetus of the economic crisis arising from the war, which hit the African workers hardest of all, further steps forward in militancy and organisation were taken. One of the great world factors which also, directly and indirectly, played a most important part, was the world-wide wave of revolutionary feelings evoked by the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia.

It was during the first ten days of the Revolution in Russia that members of the executive of the African National Congress met the Prime Minister Botha and Sir Jacobus Graaff to protest against the proposed Native Administration Bill. The interview took place on November 15th, 1917. Those representing the A.N.C. included such famous names as S. M. Makgatho, H. N. V. Msane, D. S. Letanka, Alfred Mangena, L. T. Mvabaza and others. During the interview General Botha warned the leaders of the African people against the International Socialists who were then advocating a strike against the Native Administration Bill. The President of the A.N.C., S. M. Makgatho informed General Botha that if the Bill were proceeded with there would be a general strike. The Bill was withdrawn and it was ten years later that the ruling class felt strong enough to pass it.

In March 1918 one of the greatest strikes in South African history broke out when 100,000 African workers in the mines refused to work until their demands for higher wages were met.

In 1919 a renewed A.N.C. campaign against pass laws broke out both in the Free State and the Transvaal. On the Rand a mass movement of defiance and strikes broke out, over 700 Congress supporters being arrested.

For a number of years, vigilant and militant struggles were conducted by the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, (the I.C.U.), which had then emerged. We shall deal with this organisation later. At the same time the Communist Party of South Africa was established.

But though the A.N.C. went through a period of relative recess in the twenties, it never ceased to function. It represented profound forces of national unity and aspirations among the people, and contained within it not only conservative forces, but also the revolutionary representatives of the working masses and the youth.

At the 1927 national conference of the A.N.C. there was, writes Mary Benson 'a sharp swing to the left.'<sup>11</sup> The new President, James Gumede,

<sup>11</sup> Mary Benson, *The African Patriots*, Faber and Faber, London, 1963.

was sent to attend the militant conference of the League Against Imperialism. The Soviet delegation invited him to tour the U.S.S.R. He 'had in South Africa been subjected to the usual humiliations'. He now found himself fêted 'as though I was the Prime Minister of the Union,' and visited Asiatic parts where he saw that non-Europeans, some as dark as himself, enjoyed the same political and social rights as the whites. Back in Cape Town in January 1928, he told a crowded reception in his honour that he had come from the 'new Jerusalem'; Russia was a land of equality and freedom raised from serfdom. 'Your land and yourselves,' he told South Africans, 'are held in bondage. You must redeem your heritage.'<sup>12</sup>

The methods of struggle and the tactics of the A.N.C. have always been determined by the concrete situation in which it had to lead the people.

From its inception and throughout its whole history, the A.N.C. rejected white domination and white minority government. It has always stood for pan-African unity. It participated in the very first Pan-African Congress.

To arouse the political consciousness of the African people in South Africa, the A.N.C. has since its inception adopted its own independent national anthem which basically expresses and calls for African Unity. It has also had its own flag around which it rallied the masses of the people in South Africa as opposed to the flag of the ruling group.

In addition to the task of uniting the African people, the African National Congress has sought and participated in the unity of all the non-white peoples in South Africa and all persons of whatever colour, whatever their creed and ideology, people who believed and believe in the destruction of racism in South Africa.

One of the greatest achievements of the liberation movement in South Africa was the establishment of the Congress Alliance. It is necessary to proceed now to consider the evolution of the fraternal movements that together with the African National Congress belong to the Alliance.

### **3. THE COLOURED PEOPLE**

Centred mainly in the Western Cape, the numerous Coloured community forms a distinct national community in South Africa. Of mixed descent, they speak European languages (English or Afrikaans) but because of their skin colour, they are denied practically all citizenship rights.

One of the earliest political organisations in South Africa was the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



African People's Organisation (A.P.O.) formed by the Coloured people in the Cape in 1902. Dr. A. Abdurahman, a member of the Cape Town City Council was elected president in 1905, and continued for many years to head this organisation. The late Lionel Forman considered Abdurahman 'one of the giants of the liberation movement. After Gandhi, he stands out among the men of the early years of this century. It is utterly shameful that no one has yet written his biography.'<sup>13</sup>

Certainly in its early years, the A.P.O. was a militant organisation, favouring a united front with the African people and workers' unity for the eventual achievement of socialism.

What undermined the A.P.O. however, was the fatal tendency towards alliance with the white bourgeois South African Party (now the United Party) the Party of Smuts and the Chamber of Mines. No doubt E. Roux overstates the case and overlooks the many achievements of the A.P.O. in building Coloured unity when there were no other organisations to do so. But there is some justice in his statement that:

For over thirty years, the A.P.O. dominated Coloured politics, and, except during the brief period when the Bond existed, it was the only political organisation of any importance among the Coloured people. It could be relied upon always to support the S.A.P. and was considered by its critics as little more than a Coloured branch of that organisation.<sup>14</sup>

The virtual collapse of the A.P.O. with the death of Dr. Abdurahman in 1940 left a gap in the political life of the Coloured people which was not to be adequately filled for many years. Efforts to found new bodies such as the National Liberation League under the leadership of Dr. Abdurahman's daughter, the late Mrs. Z. Gool, enjoyed important but only temporary success.

A new revival of militancy and consciousness took place with the establishment of the S.A. Coloured People's Congress, closely allied with the A.N.C., and sharing its common programme—the Freedom Charter.

Under the leadership of the C.P.C., the Coloured People have entered the political field as a formidable force. Mass Coloured participation in the general strikes of the 50's and early 60's shook the South African ruling classes who had previously held the delusion that the Coloured community could be relied on as an ally against the 'black revolution.'

As with the other organisations of the Congress Alliance, the C.P.C. has suffered heavy casualties in the period of fascist repression since 1960. Many of its foremost leaders have been jailed, banned or forced into exile. With public activity virtually precluded by police terror,

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<sup>13</sup> Lionel Forman, *From his History Notebooks*, S. Forman, Cape Town, 1964

<sup>14</sup> E. Roux, *op. cit.*

the C.P.C. is compelled to work mainly underground, but it retains the warm support of the great majority of the Coloured population.

#### 4. INDIAN CONGRESS

In 1860 the white sugar planters of Natal made an agreement with the British Government of India to import from that country indentured labourers to work on the plantations. After their terms of indenture were over many of the Indian labourers elected to remain in South Africa, and by the 1890's numbered about 80,000 in Natal (compared with 40,000 whites).

But the whites both in Natal and in the Transvaal discriminated viciously against the Indian people. A young Indian lawyer, M. K. Gandhi had come to Natal in 1893, temporarily, so he thought, to conduct a law suit. But, on a visit to Pretoria, he was subjected personally to the sort of insults which, then as now, affect Indians and all persons of colour in South Africa. Returning to Durban he found the local Indian community in a ferment about the proposed Indian Disfranchisement Bill. They wanted to set up an organisation, and they asked the young Gandhi to lead it. This was his first experience of political activity, but he immediately agreed to found the Natal Indian Congress. It was not until 1914 that M. K. Gandhi returned to India to head the national liberation movement of his motherland. The formative years of his political experience were spent in South Africa.

Much influenced by the ideas of Tolstoy and other humanist thinkers, Gandhi led a number of famous passive resistance struggles, both in Natal and in the Transvaal, where the Transvaal Indian Congress was formed to join the N.I.C. in the South African Indian Congress (S.A.I.C.). One of the greatest of these campaigns began in the Transvaal in 1906 against a Smuts measure requiring Indians to carry passes. The Indians defied *en masse*; thousands were arrested, and the campaign, in many forms, carried on for many years. An attempt to meet this resistance by deporting Indians from the Transvaal to Natal was countered by a mass march of Indian defiers across the border in 1913.

In sympathy, and in protest against a discriminatory poll tax, a mass strike took place among the Indian coal miners of Newcastle and among other workers. The strikers joined the march to the Transvaal. Against a world-wide storm of protest and solidarity with the Indians, the South African government was forced to retreat and to withdraw a number of the discriminatory measures it had imposed against the Indians.

With the departure of Mahatma Gandhi for India in 1914, a leader-



ship vacuum was left in the Indian Congress which was not filled for decades.

Moreover, while tribute must be paid to the many positive and inspired features of Gandhi's leadership, it must be noted that it had its negative side as well. He concentrated solely on the justified grievances of the Indian community, but had little to say, at that time, about the even more grievous disabilities of the oppressed Africans, the great majority of the population.

After his departure the leadership of the S.A.I.C. was taken over by representatives of the Indian commercial bourgeoisie, bent on negotiating with the authorities for minor concessions for their class, with little regard for the ever-deepening difficulties of the Indian workers and none at all for those of the African masses.

It was not until the advent, in the early forties, of the militant and radical group headed by Dr. Y. M. Dadoo in the Transvaal and Dr. G. M. Naicker in Natal, that a completely new orientation took place in the S.A.I.C. They boldly challenged the 'go-it-alone' policy of the bourgeois leaders and proposed that a revolutionary alliance be formed of all oppressed people on the principle of equal rights and opportunities for all. This challenging policy won the enthusiastic support of the Indian people who, after a difficult internal struggle, removed the reactionaries from office.

Immediately a new round of passive resistance struggles was begun by the S.A.I.C., as thousands of courageous volunteers, headed by their leaders, defied the new segregation laws and were sent to jail.

On March 9th, 1946, Dr. Xuma, the President of the A.N.C., Dr. Naicker for the N.I.C. and Dr. Dadoo for the T.I.C., signed the famous 'Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Agreement' for the two Congresses to work together for full franchise rights and equal opportunities for all.

This was the forerunner of the great Congress Alliance which developed in South Africa.

Since then the S.A.I.C. has been a firm and unswerving partner in all the great campaigns of the liberation movement. One of the first achievements of the A.N.C.-S.A.I.C. Alliance was the Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws (1952) in the course of which over ten thousand disciplined Congress members were jailed for deliberately flouting apartheid legislation. The campaign was a landmark in Congress history, winning for the movement greater mass support than it ever had. It had a historic and indelible impact on the struggle for national liberation. As Nelson Mandela has pointed out, the Defiance Campaign had far-reaching effects at home and abroad:

... it pricked the conscience of the European public which became aware in a much more clear manner of the sufferings and disabilities of the

African people. It led directly to the formation of the Congress of Democrats. It also influenced the formation of the Liberal Party. It also led to discussions on the policies of apartheid at the United Nations and I think to that extent it was an outstanding success.<sup>15</sup>

## **5. WHITE DEMOCRATS**

A prevailing atmosphere of intense white chauvinism dominates official politics in South Africa. The ruling Nationalist Party differs only in degree from the 'opposition' United Party, which also upholds white domination, segregation, police terror and fascist legislation and all other main aspects of government policy. Between them these two parties hold all the seats in the whites-only Parliament with one exception. This is the solitary seat held by Mrs. Suzman of the Progressive Party. It is only against the background of South African politics that this party deserves the name 'Progressive', for, though Mrs. Suzman takes a courageous stand in opposing many aspects of government despotism and injustice, her Party advocates a modified franchise for non-whites which would leave political power firmly in the hands of the white minority.

Against such a background considerable credit is due to that courageous band of white men and women of principle, some of them Communists like Bram Fischer, others earnest Christians like Bishop Huddleston, who have come out unequivocally for the Congress stand of complete democracy in every field.

In 1953, following the Defiance Campaign, a number of white South Africans approached the A.N.C. to find out in what way they could help the movement. As a result the A.N.C. called a crowded meeting in Johannesburg in which the then Secretary-General, Mr. Oliver Tambo, suggested that an organisation be formed whose main task would be to campaign amongst the white minority, against racialism and in support of the Congress policy of equal rights.

The result was the establishment of the Congress of Democrats, whose first president was Abram Fischer (son of a notable Boer Republican family) and which played a full and honourable part in the Congress Alliance. It took part in the Congress of the People and fully endorsed the Freedom Charter. It was outlawed in 1962; many of its former leaders and members are in prison today, or have been placed under house arrest, banned and exiled.

## **6. THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT**

It is impossible within the limitations of such a paper as this to do justice to the history of the South African labour movement—a stormy story indeed, rich in varied experiences.

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<sup>15</sup> Nelson Mandela, *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, Heinemann, London, 1965.



We shall content ourselves with outlining some of the main features of the development of the labour movement, under two headings—the trade union movement, to be dealt with in this section, and the revolutionary political working class movement, the Communist Party, which will form the subject of our next chapter.

The trade union movement in South Africa has its origins among immigrant workers, mainly British. The Cape Town branch of the Amalgamated Society of Joiners and Carpenters was established in 1881 as a part of the parent organisation in Britain, and most of the early craft unions followed this pattern.

Many militant struggles were fought against the employers by these pioneer labour organisations, particularly on the Witwatersrand goldfields. In 1922, the famous miners' strike (misnamed the 'Red Revolt') developed into an armed confrontation between troops of the Smuts government on the one side and 'workers' commandos' established by the strike committee to prevent the strike being broken by force, on the other.

However, despite its early militancy, the white labour movement suffered from a fatal weakness, which led to its almost complete surrender to the imperialist bourgeoisie. That was its colour prejudice which has alienated it from the non-white workers (today the great majority of the labour force) and their national liberation movements. As Michael Harmel has pointed out:

. . . the white trade unions did not reach out to include Africans in their ranks, or even to assist their organisation into separate unions of their own. On the contrary, they often looked upon the African worker as a dangerous competitor who was able to offer labour at a rate far cheaper than their own. They adopted holus-bolus the vicious anti-African theories of the ruling classes, and sided with them against the young liberation movements of the non-Europeans,<sup>16</sup>

Even the 1922 miners' strike was fought around the issue of preventing the employers from introducing Africans into certain categories of skilled work.

However from the end of the first world war, a new factor entered the picture. The African workers began organising trade unions of their own. In November 1917 the International Socialist League organised the Industrial Workers of Africa, (predecessor of the famous I.C.U.) which in 1918 issued the first Marxist pamphlets in the Zulu and Sotho languages.

In the same year, following the famous 'bucket strike' of African sanitary workers in Johannesburg, five A.N.C. leaders (N. D. Ngojo, A. Cetyiwe, H. Kraai, D. S. Letanka, L. T. Mvabaza) and three I.S.L.

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<sup>16</sup> M. Harmel, *Liberation*, No. 16, Johannesburg, November, 1954.

leaders (S. P. Bunting, H. C. Hanscombe and T. P. Tinker) were arrested and charged with incitement to violence.

However, the main drive of African trade unionism in the twenties is bound up with the spectacular rise of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa (I.C.U.). The I.C.U. was founded in Cape Town in 1919, among the dock-workers. Its founder and first secretary was Clements Kadalie, a Malawian.

Police terror and massacres were used against the I.C.U. Twenty-three Africans were killed and many more wounded when police opened fire at Port Elizabeth in October 1920; and five Africans were killed and 24 wounded by police at Bloemfontein a few years later. This terror did not stop the movement. The I.C.U. made remarkable progress, conducting militant strikes and enrolling members throughout the country and even as far afield as Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. At its peak it claimed a quarter of a million members.

However, under the influence of white 'liberals' Kadalie decided on a fatal step, the expulsion of the 'reds'—i.e. the most hard-working and incorruptible builders of the I.C.U. Roux writes that Kadalie:

... was not unwilling to be influenced by the suggestions. He was not immune to subtle flattery of being spoken to courteously almost as if he were the equal of these humanitarian representatives of the ruling race. He was persuaded, some say against his better judgement, to listen to these people. They told him that Government hostility could be attributed only to the presence of certain communists and agitators among the leaders of the I.C.U. They told him that if only he would get rid of these 'reds' all would be well with the I.C.U. The Government would tolerate—may, even recognise—the organisation.<sup>17</sup>

He succeeded in carrying through a motion in the Executive (by six votes to five) excluding members of the Communist Party from membership in the I.C.U. This marked the beginning of a process of decline in the I.C.U. which ended in its disintegration.

When the African trade union movement was revived in the 1930's, it was not on the 'all-in' basis of a general trade union like the I.C.U., but in individual trade unions for different occupations. These were united, after various divisions had appeared, in the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions. This body was established in November 1941 at a special unity conference presided over by Moses Kotane. The C.N.E.T.U. did great work organising African workers until 1955, when it merged into the S.A. Congress of Trade Unions, which it helped to form.

One of the greatest achievements of the African trade union movement of that period was the great African Miners' strike of August 1946 when over 100,000 African workers on the Witwatersrand gold

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<sup>17</sup> E. Roux, *op. cit.*



miners struck for a week in the face of overwhelming police terror in which the miners were machine-gunned and bayoneted, suffering hundreds of casualties. The Union President, J. B. Marks, was arrested, together with scores of militants and supporters of the Union. It has been said of this strike:

The miners' strike of 1946 was one of those great social events which at once illuminate and accelerate history: brilliantly showing up and hastening the main conflicts which determine social development, pitilessly exposing the hypocrisy, cowardice or futility of those who seek to evade those conflicts and stand on the sidelines. The strike destroyed, once and for all, the myth of the State as a 'neutral' body, standing above the conflict between employer and employed, rich and poor. It spelt the end of the compromising, concession-begging tendencies which had hitherto dominated African politics.<sup>18</sup>

But the rise in militancy of the African trade union movement was not paralleled in the officially 'recognised' white labour movement, organised in the Trades and Labour Council. The T.L.C. sent a disgraceful cable to the World Federation of Trade Unions, to which it was then affiliated, condemning the African miners and condoning the state brutality against them.

In 1950, the nationalist government used the Suppression of Communism Act to 'purge' the trade unions, both white and non-white, of all their most militant leaders. This weakened the T.L.C. still further, and by 1954, the right-wing leaders were able to carry a resolution dissolving this body, which had been founded by Bill Andrews and other militants thirty years earlier, on the basis of a non-colour-bar constitution.

In its place, the right-wingers set up a new body—the Trade Union Council of South Africa (T.U.C.S.A.) whose constitution barred African workers' organisations.

A section of the former T.L.C. affiliates fought bitterly against these actions as a betrayal of trade union principles. These unions refused to join T.U.C.S.A.

Instead they joined with the T.C.N.E.T.U. to found a new body, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, based firmly on non-racial and internationalist principles.

S.A.C.T.U. became the first and only non-racial trade union movement in South Africa to ally itself fully with the national liberation movement. It endorsed the Freedom Charter and became a partner in the Congress Alliance.

As a result it has been bitterly persecuted by the fascist government. The national president, Steven Dhlamini is serving a long term jail

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<sup>18</sup> M. Harmel, *Liberation*, No. 16, Johannesburg.

sentence and all the former officials have been banned, jailed or exiled.

## **7. THE COMMUNIST PARTY**

In 1915 the South African Labour Party, political wing of the white trade union movement, split over the issue of the war. The left-wing headed by the Party Chairman, W. H. Andrews, the Secretary, D. Ivon Jones, S. P. Bunting and others, denounced the war. The right-wing jingoists, however, managed to capture a majority at a special conference. The revolutionary section thereupon set up a new organisation—the Internationalist Socialist League, which campaigned vigorously against the imperialist war.

Although the International Socialist League broke away from the rest of the Labour movement on the war issue, it did not take long before it became clear that on a whole host of matters this organisation took up positions which were until then alien to South African political organisations. The League began to turn away from the idea that only European workers could be organised. In August 1917, the Industrial Workers of Africa movement was formed under the auspices of the International Socialist League. A campaign called 'WAR on WAR' was waged on class lines. Efforts were made to link up with international working class organisations. When efforts were made to hold a Peace Conference at Stockholm in 1917, the I.S.L. sent Bill Andrews as a delegate. When the idea of forming the Communist International was mooted by Lenin, it found ready response in South Africa. The I.S.L. was among the first working class organisations to affiliate to the Comintern.

Subsequently it was the healthy elements in the Industrial Socialist League and the International Socialist League who came together to form the Communist Party of South Africa as a section of the Communist International on July 29th, 1921. A giant meeting of over two thousand people was held to inaugurate the formation of the Communist Party at the City Hall in Cape Town on that day. On the following day, July 30th, 1921, the formal proceedings of the first Conference began and lasted for three days.

The Executive of the Comintern on which Comrade Ivon Jones represented South Africa took a great interest in the affairs of South Africa. Very detailed resolutions on developments were adopted which had results on matters of day to day tactics in the liberation struggle. The 1928 Congress of the Comintern in particular considered the position of the Communist Party and its programme and concluded that the main demand was the establishment in South Africa of an 'Independent Native Republic.' At the time the resolution was adopted



South Africa was still a self-governing colony of Great Britain. It was only in 1931 with the passing of the Statute of Westminster that the country became independent. In fact, what the Comintern was demanding in the parlance of today was the establishment of a Republic under African majority rule.

In the South West Cape and Natal the Communist Party had made great strides. During 1929 and the following year big anti-pass campaigns were organised by the Communist Party. It has by now become traditional to have protests against pass laws on December 16th, every year. In Potchefstroom in the Transvaal, a demonstration was held on December 16th every year. In Potchefstroom in the Transvaal a demonstration was held on December 16th, 1929. The principal speakers were Edwin Mofutsanyana and J. B. Marks. Groups of white hooligans broke up the meeting when they fired shots at the speakers. Miraculously both J. B. Marks and Mofutsanyana escaped. But one African was killed and six injured. The following year bigger demonstrations were held in Durban and in the Western Cape. In Durban a huge pass burning campaign took place on December 16th, 1930. The police intervened in force. Johannes Nkosi, the leader of the Communist Party in Natal was shot and killed with two other men. Over two hundred Africans were deported from their homes. The government boasted that 'Communism' had been smashed in Natal.

During the second world war and in the postwar years, close fraternal relations were established between the national liberation movement and the Communist Party. On May 8th, 1945, when the victory over Hitlerite Fascism was celebrated the biggest gathering ever seen in Johannesburg met under the joint auspices of the national liberation movements, the trade unions and the Communist Party.

In the 1949 elections of the African National Congress the moderate leadership of Dr. Xuma was ousted and a new militant one elected which included prominent members of the Youth League such as O. R. Tambo, W. M. Sisulu, Nelson Mandela and others. Early in 1950 a mammoth Defend Free Speech Convention decided on a strike throughout the Transvaal province to protest at the bans imposed on J. B. Marks, Yusuf Dadoo and other leaders. On May 1st, 1950, a powerful strike took place in the Transvaal which was the most widespread in the long history of liberatory politics. In parliament the government introduced the Unlawful Organisations Bill to give it power to proscribe organisations. The African National Congress, the Indian Congress, the Communist Party and the Non-European Council of Trade Unions together organised the first general strike covering the whole country in protest against this law. On June 26th, 1950, hundreds of thousands stayed away from work. This was a



historic date because it laid the foundations for close co-operation between national liberation and working class organisations which was to be a feature of progressive politics in South Africa. Two days before the general strike the Suppression of Communism Act had become law and the Communist Party of South Africa which had worked legally for thirty years was illegalised. Savage penalties were provided in the law for any person who advocated Communism or who defended any of its objects. A list of Communists was prepared by the Liquidator and administrative action was taken against people on the list.

The Party was formally dissolved, but the Leninist core came together in underground conditions to form the South African Communist Party. Throughout the hard struggles of the fifties and sixties the S.A.C.P. has a proud record of service in the united front of national liberation which as its programme declares is 'its immediate and foremost task.'<sup>19</sup>

## **8. THE FREEDOM CHARTER AND THE NEW PHASE**

Between 1953 and 1955 a giant campaign was organised which covered every part of the country with the aim of mobilising the people behind a common programme. The climax of this unique campaign was the holding of a Congress of the People in Kliptown. The Congress adopted the Freedom Charter on June 26th, 1955. The Freedom Charter was and is the programme of the united front of national liberation in South Africa. The government called this programme a treasonable document and in December 5th, 1956 arrested 156 leaders of the National Liberation Movement on a charge of High Treason. The trial was to drag on for four years. The importance of the Freedom Charter lay in the fact that the different national organisations of the African, Indian and Coloured people together with the working class organisations had a common programme of national liberation. The various strands of the progressive movement which had worked separately with brief moments of co-operation were now pledged to work together for long term aims. A complex structure of united front emerged with tremendous potential for the future. The unity of the A.N.C., the S.A.I.C., the C.P.C., the C.O.D. and the S.A.C.T.U. became famous as the Congress Movement. This is one of the greatest achievements of the liberation struggle in South Africa.

In 1960 the African National Congress which had previously been made illegal in the rural areas of Zeerust and Sekhukhuniland was declared illegal throughout the country. The other organisations of

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<sup>19</sup> *The Road to South African Freedom*, Programme of the S.A. Communist Party.



the Congress Alliance were immobilised by arrests, banishments and restrictions of all kinds. In 1962 the Congress of Democrats was also declared illegal.

The campaigns before 1960 had been based on militant mass actions such as strikes, boycotts, and civil disobedience. But the situation internally and the upsurge in Africa resulting in the emergence of many independent states caused a change of policy. The national liberation movement decided to prepare for armed struggle. The terrorism practised by the government against the freedom struggles of the people made it clear that this was the only way out. Therefore the liberation movement added armed revolution to the methods to be used in the overthrow of the apartheid regime. In 1961 Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) came into existence as the military wing of the liberation movement. Numerous acts of sabotage took place. People were sent abroad for military training which they could not get in the country. Thousands of freedom fighters were imprisoned by the government in retaliation. These imprisoned include a number of the foremost leaders of the national liberation movement and the Communist Party.

Beginning in August 1967, a new phase of the armed struggle has opened with the formation of a military alliance between the A.N.C. and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Z.A.P.U.).

Freedom fighters of the A.N.C./Z.A.P.U. Alliance have entered into armed clashes with the combined forces of the Smith and Vorster regimes.

Inevitably the guerrilla struggle will be intensified and the masses of the people will continuously join in meeting armed repression with armed revolt.

Our people's eventual and inevitable victory is also dependent on the vital role played by the government and peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the international working class movement and the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

We are waging our struggle not only against the fascist Vorster government, but also against the Unholy Alliance of Vorster, Smith and Salazar. International imperialism, led by the U.S., also considers it its fundamental duty to protect the fascist white minority government in South Africa and to maintain the hegemony of imperialism over the whole of Southern Africa.

For this reason, the imperialists have ensured that the Republic of South Africa continues as their fortress. Hence the military, technical, economic and other might that the South African white racists control and have turned against our people and organisation.

A sinister characteristic is that Nazism is firmly resolved to regroup

in South Africa. The involvement of West Germany in this development has been fully documented, especially by the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee of the G.D.R.

Imperialism and fascism are using South Africa as their base and springboard for launching a counter-revolutionary offensive in Africa. The aggressive nature of these forces constitutes a direct threat to peace and independence not only in Africa, but also in the rest of the world.

In this situation, and as an internationalist duty, it is crucial in the present world situation that all progressive forces throughout the world realise that they constitute one of the main motive forces in wiping out imperialism and fascism in South Africa. That realisation must be translated into concrete action in support of the national liberation movement in South Africa, as led by the A.N.C., for the victory of the peoples against imperialism, for true national independence and a lasting peace.

In this year, the Year of Human Rights, the duty of the anti-imperialist forces that stand against Vorster fascism is not less than the duty that faced the progressive forces against Hitler Nazism during the Second World War.

From the progressive international point of view, a fundamental change of attitude and outlook is required towards the struggle against fascism in South Africa.

The brunt of the struggle is ours—it is a duty to our people and it is our internationalist duty to destroy the monster of white domination in our country. That struggle is also international.

It is of basic importance to the whole development of the worldwide revolutionary and progressive movement, urgently and immediately. This conference establishes that and, if only for that reason, is of great importance.

Prosecution of action by all progressive forces to destroy fascism and imperialism in South Africa, Southern Africa and the rest of the unliberated countries in Africa, is, we repeat, the urgent and immediate duty of all anti-imperialists and progressive forces.

The African National Congress and its allies are confident that victory will be ours in the hard and protracted struggles that lie ahead. The long night of oppression that descended on our people is approaching its end. A new dawn of freedom is heralded by the machine guns of our freedom fighters—the first African army with modern weapons ever to tread the soil of our motherland.

However hard and long the battles ahead may be, because our cause is just, it is supported by our own people, the peoples of Africa, the whole of progressive mankind, we shall win!

Amandla Ngawethu!



# **NIGERIA IN TURMOIL**

## **The Factual Background**

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### **SOL DUBULA**

AT THE MOMENT of writing it seems that the survival of Biafra as an independent state—though not necessarily as a resistance struggle—is an unlikely outcome of the tragic battles which are being fought in Nigeria. The war which is now in its fifteenth month has already cost the lives of thousands of soldiers and civilians, and has brought with it a toll of destruction and famine on an enormous scale.

Whatever detailed constitutional arrangement is finally arrived at, the challenge of the post-war situation threatens to be an extremely complex one. The destruction of men and resources which the unhappy conflict has caused cannot only be calculated in material and quantitative terms. How measure the flood of tribal and sectional prejudice which has been generated by each side in the conflict? How weigh up the difficult problem of the post-war integration of tens of thousands of young people who have been taught to kill with little, if any, understanding of the more profound issues involved? How assess the effect of economic manipulation in the post war period of the neo-colonialist interests which control the basic resources on both sides of the fighting lines? In the absence of a satisfactory political settlement, will a military victory by the Federal Government not be the forerunner of a protracted guerrilla struggle or at best implacable non-co-operation with the administration by the Easterners?

Above all, will the future of the Nigerian people once again be returned into the hands of those who governed it before the first coup of January, 1966—a corrupt partnership between the feudal dominated North and the political bosses of the South which gave the neo-

colonialists their biggest and most effective political and economic leverage on our continent? Little lingers of the groping towards a more independent and viable state which was held out (albeit in an imprecise way) by the action of the young officers on January 15th, 1966. What they hoped and planned for has been totally frustrated by the upper military castes in alliance with the civil service and the old generation of politicians.

### **THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE**

One thing is crystal clear. The mass of the people on both sides of the conflict have had little, if anything, to do with the course of post-January 1966 events. Soon after the coup it was clear that the indiscriminate illegalisation by General Ironsi of all political organisations including those which might have played an indispensable role in combating tribal, sectional and regional bitterness, left the field free to those sinister groupings who rely not on mass public activity but on backroom conspiracy and economic and financial intrigues. These forces want not change but the old rotten order. We warned at the time (*THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST*, No. 26, Third Quarter, 1966), that so long as the fate of the Nigerian people was to be juggled about by élite groups and their advisers, so long would the chaos become more profound.

Those who believed that the prohibition of all political groupings would create a power vacuum in which healthy elements would assert effective control, were deluding themselves. It is precisely in a situation in which people are prevented from asserting themselves that those who thrive on backdoor conspiracy and manipulation come into their own. It is one thing to put out of action the political parties with a record of sectional propaganda and appeal. It is another thing for a country to try to rehabilitate a broken-down political system without mass political mobilisation and without any consistent social and economic policy for doing so.

But then of course the government of General Ironsi which controlled Nigeria from January to July, 1966, was anything but a revolutionary government. It was a hurried improvisation of army and civil service to suppress the coup staged by the young majors. Because it imprisoned them and smothered their efforts to bring about change, it could itself be no more than a holding action of the administration, under cover of which the old reactionary, or new but equally conservative, political forces could stir again. The Gowon Government which followed the Ironsi Government was not all that different. The original constitutional arrangement for Nigeria was a compromise that never really worked. Power was divided between the three large majorities



and under this arrangement all the minorities were almost totally excluded. The Gowon Government, by a curious set of causes, crystallised at the centre the interests and pressures of minority groups together with two out of the three majorities (without the Ibo, that is), and devised a new State scheme to accommodate minority peoples. But for all its variation of the constitutional form, the Gowon government has still to demonstrate that it is better equipped or intentioned than any other group to pursue a long term social, economic or foreign policy that will break with the old Nigerian patterns.

But these issues of the shape and direction taken by the Nigerian governments that succeeded one another in 1966 and thereafter, have been pushed into the background and obscured by the outbreak of the war after the declaration of Biafran secession.

### **THE ATTITUDE OF THE NEO-COLONIALISTS**

The varied postures adopted by different sections of the neo-colonialist camp and the divisions amongst African states serves to underline the complex and confusing nature of the basic issues involved rather than to clarify them.

Britain, the neo-colonialist power which has most to do with the tragic course of development in Nigeria, and which has by far the biggest economic stake on both sides of the war, clearly and unequivocally supports the Federal government both morally and materially. This came after an early period of indecision when the interests of Shell BP on the Biafran side had to be weighed against long-entrenched United Africa Company, banking and other interests on the Federal side. For Britain secession by Biafra has resulted in enormous losses, particularly from its oil investments and now the sooner the war can be brought to an end the sooner will oil production resume.

The United States of America, ever on the watch to ease its loyal 'allies' out of any area with an investment potential, waited to see which side would come out on top and has now firmly opted for the Federal government.

France, with extensive oil interests in Biafra, in the shape of a state-owned oil company—S.A.F.R.A.P.—but also appreciable commercial interests in Federal Nigeria, rather perversely terminated its arms supply to the Federal government from July, 1968 and declared for the Biafran side at a time when most of its holdings had already been over-run by Federal forces.

There is convincing evidence that arms supplies have been received by the Biafran side from Portugal. Each side has accused the other of receiving military, material and financial aid from West Germany

and from South Africa; I have not yet come across any hard evidence that would convince me of the correctness or otherwise of these allegations.

### **AFRICAN AND SOCIALIST ATTITUDES**

In Africa itself the overwhelming majority of the independent States have not recognised Biafra. The exceptions are: Tanzania which recognised Biafra in April, 1968 followed by Gabon, Ivory Coast and Zambia, all in May 1968.

In the socialist world both the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia sold military supplies to the Federal government in the early stages.

Whether the decision of the four African states on the one hand and the socialist countries on the other hand, was a correct one or not, one thing is abundantly clear. This is that unlike the neo-colonialists there are no underhand or overt social groupings in these countries which make a profit out of the conflict.

There can be no doubt that the socialist world was motivated by a consistently pursued policy of anti-imperialism and a belief that disunity and fragmentation in Africa could operate only to the advantage of the imperialist powers. There can equally be no doubt that those African countries that recognised Biafra were moved by a sincere belief that the basis for Nigerian unity had been historically eroded and that the Ibos had shown sufficient cohesion as a group to claim the right of self-determination.

But neither the principle of unity nor the principle of self-determination are absolute principles. In practice it is often difficult to decide which of these principles should take precedence in a given situation. To avoid the danger of transforming these principles into all-purpose clichés it is vital to pose a number of questions. Unity—yes! But of what sort? A unity that is based on firm consent or one that made pre-1966 Nigeria an unworkable constitutional shell with unending centrifugal tendencies exploited by foreign interests? Self-determination? Yes, but for whom? For a people genuinely expressing its claim to separate existence or for a group whose tribal emotions are capitalised upon by a clique for motives of personal power?

There are no simple answers to either of these questions because in fact they both over-generalise about an extremely complex combination of facts and circumstances.

To reject the external conspiracy theory in Biafran secession is not to reject the evil role of imperialist forces who are ever-ready to exploit division and disunity. To reject the charge of genocide in its full Hitlerian sense is not to reject the reality of the terrible, and so far unpunished massacre of Ibos both in the North and in parts of



the conquered territories. To adhere to the concept of unity against fragmentation is not to embrace its formalistic shell when most of the framework becomes seriously corroded. To accept the principle of national self-determination is not to accept every sectional claim which parades under its mantle.

At the present time priority number one is not to decide who was right and who was wrong but to use all the sources that can be mustered to bring about a political settlement which will lay the basis for a further advance of the peoples towards real independence. There must be no return to the past. As this journal said editorially after the January 1966 coup '... there will be few to mourn the failure of the Nigerian experiment in bourgeois democracy in a country dominated by feudal tyranny and neo-colonialist hirelings.'<sup>1</sup>

In order to be able better to judge and understand present and future developments in Nigeria a brief historical background is necessary.

## **THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Nigeria at the time of its independence in 1960 covered an area of 357,000 square miles. Exact population figures cannot be quoted with certainty. Prior to 1966 corrupt administrations used the technique of census manipulation to gain political advantages in the electoral structure. The estimate of Nigeria's population in 1966 varies from between 55 to 65 million people.

According to rough estimates made on the basis of the 1963 census the main language and cultural grouping are divided as follows: 16 million Hausa—Fulani, occupying mainly the northern region; 11.7 million Yoruba occupying mainly the western region and 10.3 million Ibos occupying mainly the eastern region. In addition there are approximately 20 million minority peoples. The variety of languages and dialects of all the groups inhabiting Nigeria has been put as high as 250. It is clear from the figures quoted however that two-thirds of the population speak only three languages, Ibo, Hausa, and Yoruba.<sup>2</sup> These three languages are mutually unintelligible.

By the beginning of the twentieth century all the groups who now inhabit Nigeria had been brought under the control of British colonialism. Lord Lugard, the first Governor, pioneered the technique of indirect rule—imperialist domination by the utilisation of traditional rulers. In 1914 Lord Lugard christened this new administrative creation, Nigeria. As was the case with other colonies the inclusion of

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<sup>1</sup> *The African Communist*, No. 24, First Quarter, 1966, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates quoted by K.W.J. Post—International Affairs, p. 27.

diverse territories, peoples and tribes into one entity was arbitrary and for the convenience of the ruling colonial powers. As we know there are even many examples where tribes were arbitrarily cut in half and 'united' with completely diverse peoples. This happened with South West Africa and Angola, Tanzania and Mozambique, the Cameroons and Togo. For a long time after 1914 Nigeria's administration was conducted by a body known as the 'Nigerian Council' with a British Governor in control. Until 1946 the administration of the North was run separately. In 1946 under what became as known the Richards constitution a Legislative Council was set up for the whole of Nigeria and it was then, for the first time that the three separate regions—North, East and West—each had its own House of Assembly but some common meeting point in an embryonic federation.

In 1951 under the MacPherson Constitution the majority of the members of the regional Assemblies were indirectly elected and for the first time a central House of Representatives was provided for with 148 members of whom 136 were elected—34 each from East and West and 68 from the North.

K. W. J. Post<sup>3</sup> makes a pertinent comment on the technique employed by the British Colonial Office during the whole of this period.

It was not merely that the British carved out for themselves a very large stretch of West Africa with a comparatively huge population characterised by a very great cultural diversity. They also, during the greater part of the Colonial period contributed enormously to the perpetuation, even the reinforcement of these differences. 'Indirect Rule,' Lord Lugard's baleful gift to Africa, created the Native Authority system, which envisaged Nigeria developing as a hotch-potch of local government units of varying sizes: far from creating any sense of transcending loyalties it even emphasised differences within ethnic groups.

The need at the same time to create a cohesive administrative centre whilst retaining as much emphasis on diversity as possible led to the adoption in 1954 of Nigeria's first Federal constitution. The institutions which were then set up emphasised the ethnic nature of control by the three main groups of their regions.

It is interesting to note that even at this early stage the basis in favour of domination by the North was evident. The North feared that it would be swamped by the South and as a result over four-fifths of Nigerian land area and over half the population were included within its jurisdiction.

The traditional and mainly feudal native authorities of the North were always apprehensive lest their co-existence with more developed social and economic groupings within one national state would lead to a loosening of their grip on the reins of power. It is this very fear

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid p. 27-28.



which, ironically enough, made the North the most powerful threat to Nigerian unity almost right up to the time of Biafra's secession.

### **UNWORKABLE CONSTITUTION**

Independence in 1960 was not the climax of a long drawn out mass struggle. As in all West African countries independence was negotiated in very close partnership with the departing colonial authority which was historically no longer able to cling to direct political control. One of the results of this fact was that Nigeria was given an unworkable constitutional arrangement, basically federal in character, but which had grafted onto it many of the provisions of the Westminster export model then in fashion at Whitehall. It is worth emphasising the remark of A. Langa in 'Nigeria: Behind the Coup' (THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST No. 25, second quarter, 1966, page 68.)

There has been little trouble to conceal the fact that federalism in Nigeria was conceived by the British to ensure that a controllable administration was in power, faithful to the needs of imperialism in the economic and political field. As Henry Bretton, an American bourgeois academic points out, the constitutional structure of Nigeria at independence in October 1960 was designed so as to transfer power to an élite chosen in advance by the British.

The structure of the country's three regions—North, East and West (later the Mid West was added)—was carried over from the colonial period. This meant that the more backward North had a dominating position in the federation.

### **POLITICAL PARTIES**

Politically the Northern interests were represented by the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.) which in alliance with Dr. Azikiwe's National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.) remained in office until 1964. A more detailed survey of events between October 1960 and the coup of January 1966 is contained in Langa's article and it is not therefore proposed to traverse the ground in detail again. Suffice it to note that Nigeria was in a continuous state of turmoil. The formation of the Socialist Workers and Farmers' Party (S.W.A.F.P.) in 1963 and the great million strong general strike in June 1964 which won big concessions, were encouraging signs of a growing organised working class participation in Nigerian events.

Influenced by the inspiring 1964 strike and by the growing revulsion of the Nigerian people towards U.S. style politics which characterised the activities of Nigeria's office seekers, progressive elements in the N.C.N.C. forced a change of policy in its opportunistic but floundering collaboration with the N.P.C. A new political alliance was formed—the United Grand Progressive Alliance (U.G.P.A.)—which included

the N.C.N.C., the Western Region orientated Action Group, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (N.E.P.U.), a radical progressive movement directed against the N.P.C., and the United Middle Belt Congress (U.N.B.C.)—a group with roots amongst the Tiv people struggling against domination by the feudal Emirs of the North.

In the December 1964 election U.G.P.A. was geared to contest control of the Federal Government against the Nigerian National Alliance (N.N.A.) formed by the N.P.C. together with reactionary elements from the west. No one doubts that had the elections been anything but a murderous fraud, U.G.P.A. would have won a majority. As it turned out, in the North alone the henchmen of N.E.C. leaders like the Sardauna of Sokoto killed, arrested, kidnapped or had the nominations declared void of no less than 67 U.G.P.A. candidates. In the west also terrorism on a professional scale was practised against the U.G.P.A. candidates.

U.G.P.A. declared a boycott of the elections which was a massive success. Not only was the poll as low as 27 per cent of the registered voters but even in regard to this figure there is reason to doubt its genuineness in the atmosphere of terror and fraud which then existed and the long tradition of corrupt electoral practices which Nigerian politicians had established.

The post election situation was one of mounting turmoil with the President, Dr. Azikiwe eventually succumbing to British pressures and faltering in his resolve to call out the armed forces to back up the declaration by the Federal registration officer that the elections were void.

In the western regional elections in October 1965, the same methods—murder, kidnapping, arrests, declarations of nominations as void—were employed against U.G.P.A. The fraudulent 'election' of Akintola's group sparked off mass riots and uprisings which lasted for weeks. There was in fact a state of incipient civil war and an almost complete breakdown of constitutional authority.

## **THE FAILURE OF BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY**

By the end of 1965 the unworkable farce of Nigerian bourgeois democracy stood exposed in all its nakedness. Many of the gutless leaders of the opposition attempted once again to purchase office through shady compromises with the Emirate. This was not surprising. These politicians consisted in the main of the educated élite, aspirant bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, with few grass roots amongst the masses and no programme of social and economic reform except the replacement of white entrepreneurship and management by Africans.

Thus when the news reached the Nigerian people on January 15th,



1966, of the action taken by the young majors to topple the corrupt structure, there was dancing in the streets. But inherent in the action was the one fatal weakness which plagues every attempt at a palace revolution. The inevitable resistance of the establishment can only be answered by a mass political mobilisation of the people. The ideological limitation of the men involved and the nature of the techniques chosen to bring about the transformation implied a minimal mobilisation of the ordinary people who played no part at all.

Thus although motivated by idealistic and reformist intentions the young majors were out-manouvered and the coup was in reality crushed the very weekend that it commenced. The army command acting on the request of the remaining rump of the Federal cabinet assumed power. Major Njeogwu with most of his fellow junior officers who led the coup were immediately imprisoned by Ironsi. General Gowon, the inheritor of the Ironsi tradition, declared on assuming power that the first January coup was a 'national disaster.'

### **THE MASSACRE OF THE IBOS**

Most of those who took part in the January coup were Ibos. Apart from this coincidental fact, there is no evidence whatsoever to support the oft-repeated contention that this was a tribal Ibo coup. If this were so then it is odd that its purposes should be so swiftly frustrated by an Ibo general—General Ironsi—whose aims were totally removed from those of Major Nzeogwu. But this fact enabled the most backward elements to play successfully on tribal sentiments for their own purposes. There followed in May and September, 1966 the horrific massacres of the Ibo's in the north.

In between in July the impatient old northern power group inspired the murder of Ironsi and the new military regime headed by Gowon took over. General Gowon belongs to one of the minority tribes which has its home in the North.

On the evidence there can be no doubt that even if the original coup was partly motivated by a desire for Ibo domination, the counter measures against the Ibo masses living outside the eastern region were savage expressions of reactionary-inspired tribalism and racialism. Not only were something like 30,000 ordinary people, most of whom could have had little to do with the January events, massacred but it became impossible for well over a million surviving Ibos to continue their life outside the east.

Neither after the May killings, nor after the September massacres were any measures taken by the military government to punish either the organisers or perpetrators of the biggest pogrom that had ever taken place in Africa.

## **THE NORTH OPPOSES UNITY**

At this point it is relevant to take up the evolution of the issue as it bears on the question of Nigerian fragmentation or unity. On May 24th, 1966, Ironsi's military government announced by decree that henceforth Nigeria would be known as the Republic of Nigeria; that it would cease to be a Federation and that her former regions would be abolished. The response against this move towards unification was the unleashing of the violence in the North already referred to. The immediate reaction by the military government to these anti-unity riots inspired by the north's feudal oligarchy, was to clear up what it called a 'misunderstanding' of the May 24th Decree which, it was claimed was not intended to abolish federalism. (THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST, No. 26, third quarter, 1966, pages 73-74).

After Ironsi's murder in July General Gowon's first pronouncement was an unambiguous declaration that Nigeria had no basis for unity. He subsequently denied that he wanted the country split up (THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST, No. 27, fourth quarter, p. 69).

At the constitutional conference which commenced on September 12th 1966, General Gowon ruled out a unitary form of government and put forward as one of the possibilities a confederation of the loosest type. On September 13th the delegation from the North put forward the proposal for the complete autonomy of the four regions, each with its own army, and with the right to complete unilateral secession. This stance was consistent with the North's traditional isolationist and secessionist tendencies. At a later stage for a reason which it is difficult to understand the North withdrew its proposals and somersaulted into a recommendation for an 'effective central government' with a prohibition against secession. This was opposed by the delegation from the East.

By the time the interim report of this conference was presented to General Gowon the second round of the Ibo massacre in the North (which had started on September 29th) had occurred. Colonel Ojukwe refused thereafter to attend any conferences in Nigeria unless he and his advisers were guaranteed safe conduct.

## **BIAFRA SECEDES**

The next important stage was the meeting of the full military council which was finally arranged to meet at Aburi in Ghana in January 1967. At this meeting attended by both Gowon and Ojukwe full accord appears to have been reached on most of the outstanding issues and the agreement was signed by all present. Amongst the agreements reached was one relating to a resumption of the suspended constitutional conference, 'as soon as practicable.' On his return to Lagos,



General Gowon announced that the Aburi decisions were to be annulled and that in doing this he was acting on the advice of his 'financial advisers and highly placed civil servants.'

A period of escalating tension followed with charge and counter charge and eventually in May 1967 the new state of Biafra was proclaimed. On the eve of secession General Gowon's government produced a change in the units comprising Nigeria by dividing the North into six new states, the West into two and the East into three, making, with Lagos, twelve in all. Whether this new attempt to rescue Nigeria as a single entity will in the long run work or not does not depend solely on military victory. As stated in the programme of the South African Communist Party (*The Road to South African Freedom*) on the question of unity in Africa

**but if this great historical process is to be effected without sowing the seeds of new conflicts, it must be based on consent and persuasion, not upon force.**

# AFRICA

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## *Notes and Comments*

**J. J. JABULANI**

### **Egypt Fights Reaction**

THE PROCESS OF CONSOLIDATION of democratic and popular gains made in the U.A.R. after last year's Zionist war of aggression in which 11,500 Egyptians lost their lives, has been continuing over recent months.

The directions of this process were outlined by President Nasser when he introduced the 'March 30th Programme of Action.'

Some of these were:

(i) the extension of democratic participation of the workers and peasants in all political and popular organisations;

(ii) the liquidation of the centres of reactionary power in the armed forces, the civil and diplomatic service and in the economy; and

(iii) the further strengthening of the economy.

The March 30th Programme of Action, whose most important aspect is the democratic reconstruction of the Arab Socialist Union (A.S.U.), the U.A.R.'s only political party, received almost total approval in a referendum conducted among all the electors during the beginning of May. (98.2 per cent of the 7 million electors cast their votes. Of these 99.9 per cent cast their votes in favour of the Programme of Action).

The democratic reconstruction of the A.S.U. provides for the election of all units of the organisation starting with its basic units. Thus over 5 million electors participated in the creation of 7,584 of these basic



units in the elections conducted on June 25th. This was the first stage.

The (third stage) elections of representatives to the National Congress resulted in the strengthening of the genuinely progressive forces in the leadership of the A.S.U. These elections took place in the middle of June.

The fourth and last stage took place on July 27th when the first General National Congress of A.S.U. was convened.

The National Congress is now the highest authority in the state 'being the living embodiment of the alliance of the people's working forces' as Nasser, elected chairman of A.S.U., said.

The National Congress will elect a 150-man Central Committee and the latter will elect an eleven-man Executive Committee who, together with the chairman, will collectively supervise the carrying out of the decisions of the National Congress. The latter will also draft a new constitution and call for the election of a new National Assembly.

The popular role of the A.S.U. is further strengthened by a new statute issued on May 9th which, describing the A.S.U. as the 'socialist vanguard,' enumerates A.S.U.'s objectives as:

(i) the achievement of sound democracy (guarantee of a minimum of 50 per cent workers and peasants representation in all popular and political organisations at all levels, is written into the charter setting up A.S.U.).

(ii) being a positive force inspiring the people to work, defending the principles and objectives of the revolution and struggling against the infiltration of foreign influence, reaction, opportunism and deviation.

The liquidation of the centres of reactionary power has been most marked in the armed forces.

A group made up of one Air Marshal and three Air Vice-Mmarshals had their sentences increased in August as a result of a retrial. Similarly four leading security officers, including the Chief of Security, Salah Nasr, have appeared before the courts.

These retrials have exposed to the mass of the people the dereliction of duty and anti-popular machinations on the part of these reactionary centres of power in the U.A.R. army even at the height of the Zionist war of aggression. They have shown that the command of the national armed forces must pass into the hands of the cadres who embrace and are guided by the socialist, democratic and anti-imperialist demands of the people of the U.A.R.

The further reported removal of 200 officers from leading positions in the defence forces at the beginning of July represents further advances in the liquidation of the centres of reactionary power.

Meanwhile, to increase the defence potential of the U.A.R. in the face of the constant provocations of U.S. backed Zionist aggression, in the current budget of £1,900 million expenditure on armaments and the defence industries will increase. In fact the 10 per cent increase in total government spending is mainly absorbed in these two items.

Simultaneously it is realised that the economy needs strengthening both to improve the living conditions of the people and to secure the genuine national independence of the U.A.R.

In keeping with this realisation and in the world context in which the balance of forces has changed in favour of socialism and genuine national independence, the U.A.R. concluded an economic agreement with the Soviet Union in May.

The two countries agreed to build a £360 million iron and steel complex at Helwan. When completed in 1976/7, the complex will be the second largest industrial centre in the country.

It is expected that the Helwan works will increase the U.A.R.'s output of iron and steel six times.

After satisfying its own local demands, the U.A.R. will be able to export steel and cast iron to the amount of about £E47 million per annum.

The agreement provides for a balanced development of the project. Thus while the lower grade ore now obtained from Aswan will be replaced by the better ore obtainable at Baharia Oasis, an electric grid will be built to take advantage of the Aswan-produced electricity. Further, road and rail links will be built and a metallurgy institute set up to train Egyptian engineers and technicians for the plant.

By these measures the U.A.R. is establishing its position as a leading force in the advance of the African continent towards true national independence and socialism.

It cannot be doubted that both local and reactionary forces and the imperialists operating within the context of the global strategy of U.S. imperialism will constantly attempt to fight rearguard actions to try to destroy the popular gains of the people. It is however equally certain that so long as political power in the U.A.R. rests in the hands of the popular masses and the U.A.R. allies itself with the socialist countries led by the U.S.S.R., local and international reaction will receive a resolute rebuff.

## **Kenya—Land and Elections**

Two events, one in May and the other in August provide further evidence of how the leadership of the Kenya African National Union (K.A.N.U.), and the government are continuing to pursue policies which are contrary to the interests of the people of Kenya.



In the early 1950's the Kenya peasantry were driven to arms by land hunger. The British imperialists mercilessly suppressed the armed revolt and imprisoned such men as Kenyatta and Kaggia, leaders of the national movement for independence. That however could not wipe out the fact that while thousands of the indigenous people had to go without land, Europeans were profitably farming the so-called white Highlands.

Thus it was that during the negotiations for independence the question of land for the poor peasantry of Kenya had to be raised. Then, it was decided that 400,000 acres of the fertile 'White Highlands' would be sold to African farmers and for this purpose the British Government agreed to advance the Kenya government a loan of £6 million which would be used to help these African farmers buy the farms.

The fact that there has been, to a considerable extent, mere substitution of a white landed gentry by a black landed gentry, is illustrated by the events of May we alluded to above.

At the beginning of May, 4,000 peasants overran and seized a 3,000 acre British-owned farm, called Engoshura Estate, at Nakuru in the Highlands.

One of the joint owners of the farm later stated that a contract had been signed to sell the farm to two Africans but that negotiations had at some stage been entered into with the 4,000 peasants. The peasants had, however, just moved in, offered a price 'considerably less' than that which the owners had indicated they would accept and started cultivating. The police failed to evict the occupying peasants.

The continued sharpness of the problem of Kenya's landless peasantry was again brought into focus later in the month of May when two white people were killed in the Kitale area of the Highlands which is still largely farmed by whites. The latter immediately armed themselves and a dusk to dawn curfew was imposed.

The events in August concern local government elections. On the 22nd, all the 1,800 candidates entered by the Kenya People's Union (K.P.U.) for the elections were disqualified on the orders of President Kenyatta. The candidates were disqualified on technicalities such as that the leader of the K.P.U., Oginga Odinga had merely initialled the candidate's nomination forms instead of signing them in full.

The connection between these events in Kenya may be found in a warning Odinga was to issue in a lecture at the University of Boston, U.S.A. The warning was to the effect that unless economic and social revolutions, through 'self-reliance and socialism,' quickly followed 'nominal political independence,' independent Africa would soon be

faced with violent uprisings. (Odinga's passport was confiscated shortly before he was due to leave for the University of Boston and no explanation was given.)

The erosion of democratic rights in Kenya is evident from the way the government has dealt with the K.P.U.

For instance at the beginning of April, Odinga's office was searched by the police who then announced that they had found a pistol and ammunition as well as 'documents of a subversive nature.' Odinga has said that the pistol was planted by the police.

In the same month, K.P.U.'s deputy leader Bildad Kaggia and the chairman of the south Nyanza region were sentenced to 12 months imprisonment for 'holding unlawful meetings.'

The only recent break in this terrorist campaign against the Kenya democrats was the release of the two K.P.U. members, Ochola Makanyengo and Christopher Makakokha, both detained since 1966. No reason for their release at this stage was given.

It is clear that the representatives of the neo-colonialist forces in the K.A.N.U. and the Kenya government, having failed to satisfy the demands of the people, are frightened that a mass movement of workers, peasants and the progressive intelligentsia might emerge to seize power from them. Hence the use of imprisonment, banning of meetings, smear tactics, the disqualification of candidates unjustly, and the other tactics used in the attempt to smash the K.P.U.

On another front, the Minister of Commerce and Industry announced during July that January 1st, 1969 was the deadline by which non-Kenyan nationals must withdraw from trading in certain products.

These are: Maize and maize meal, sugar, charcoal, rice, fresh vegetables, biscuits, ghee and ghee products, khaki drill, second hand clothes, soap, matches, sweets, salt, khangas, grey cloth, cement, beans, potatoes, corrugated iron sheets, barbed wire and nails, cigarettes and kerosene.

By such means the government is trying to restrict trade in the consumer goods which the African population spends most on to Kenya businessmen. It is hoped that by this means a local capitalist class will be strengthened and thus the base of the neo-colonialist forces consolidated.

So long however, as the government of Kenya continues to take measures contrary to the interests of the people as a whole, so will the struggles against the neo-colonialist forces in Kenya intensify.

## **Malawi—A Base for S.A. Fascism**

Addressing the Israeli parliament on May 27th, during his visit to Israel, Banda offered his services to the Zionists. He said that he had



seen the actual truth, that there was co-operation between Arabs and Jews in Israel and that he would do his 'best to help you in your cause . . .'

Thus Banda confirms more and more his position as an enemy of all progressive forces throughout the world. Banda and the South African fascists are united not only as far as perpetuating fascism, imperialism and neo-colonialism in central and southern Africa is concerned, but also, in acting against the Arab people in their struggle against Zionism.

Thus by the middle of June this year, it was estimated that South Africa had earned £25 million from handling shipping that would otherwise have gone through the Suez Canal. (About 4,000 ships had gone through the South African ports since June last year, with Durban handling 2,300 and Cape Town 1,700).

It is because the imperialists are assured of the security of their main base in Africa, namely fascist South Africa, that they are continuing their provocations against the U.A.R. which they hope will result in the closing of the Suez Canal indefinitely. They hope that in return for the guaranteed safety of shipping in the Canal by them, the U.A.R. will be forced to negotiate an unjust settlement favourable to the imperialists.

The imperialists, the Zionists and the South African fascists know that they cannot themselves succeed in recruiting allies of Zionism in the African continent. Thus they use discredited agents of neo-colonialism such as Banda for such jobs.

In return of course, Banda receives his rewards.

At the beginning of May, Banda announced that the South African Government had lent Malawi £4,700,000 towards the building of Lilongwe, the proposed £25 million capital of Malawi. South African government appointed consultants are already working on the project. The loan is payable over 20 years. There is a 5-year moratorium on the repayment of the loan which carries interest of 4 per cent.

The South African fascists have also made a gift of radio equipment and lent technicians to Malawi.

The South African State Industrial Development Corporation has made a further loan of £6 million to Malawi. This is for the construction of the rail to Nacala, on the Mocambican seaboard. The contract has been awarded to a South African construction firm.

Pursuing its policy of support for the most reactionary regimes throughout the world, West Germany also stepped in, in the middle of June, with a loan of \$1,750,000 for Malawi's road building programme.

The forces of reaction throughout the world have an interest in the continued dictatorship of Banda over the people of Malawi. It is to

safeguard Banda's position, that South Africa, as reported, has stationed troops in Malawi. The troops stand poised not only against the people of Zambia, Tanzania, and other African countries but also against the people of Malawi.

On June 14th, eight men were sentenced to death for entering Malawi in October 1967 with intent to assassinate Banda. All had pleaded not guilty and were given up to 30 days to appeal.

That Banda is intent on pursuing a policy at home of physical annihilation of all those who are opposed to his neo-colonialist policies, was clear when he cold-bloodedly ordered the shooting of the patriot Yatuta Chisiza earlier this year. The hanging of the other patriots who were sentenced in June would mark an intensification of that policy.

Banda has fallen into the hands of the most reactionary force in Africa, South African fascism. Thus he has learnt to rule with force over the people of Malawi. (A former M.P., Ledson Chidengu and four other men were sentenced to death in May, charged with the murder of a former official of the Malawi Congress Party. In court Chidengu gave evidence of the torture and force used by Banda's police to secure 'confessions'.)

Thus is Malawi being turned into an aggressive base threatening the independence of various African countries.

Thus is Malawi being used to create division among, and to weaken, the revolutionary forces throughout the African continent. (On July 8th, Banda called for the expulsion of the Arab people from the African continent, using such provocations as 'Arabs are murdering Africans in the Sudan . . .').

The task of eliminating this neo-colonialist base in the heart of Africa has ceased to belong to the people of Malawi alone. It is a pressing task facing the whole of progressive Africa.

## **Algeria—Foreign Firms Nationalised**

Since May, the Boumedienne government in Algeria has taken certain measures which will reduce the hold that foreign monopolists, mainly French, have had over the Algerian economy.

On May 15th, the government announced the nationalisation of all foreign-owned petroleum distributing companies. All the banking accounts of the companies, mainly French, were blocked.

Trade in the one million tons of petroleum products consumed per year in Algeria has since been transferred to a state trading company Sonatrach.

The government has stated that Sonatrach will not be guided by



commercial objectives, but would perform a public service. Therefore prices of all petroleum products are to be reduced. Further a price differential is to be operated so as to eliminate the discrimination against people in rural areas, mainly small farmers.

On May 21st further measures were announced to nationalise twenty-seven French companies operating in the mechanical and electric sector, in the building materials sector, and in fertilisers. The activities of the two former groups of companies were to be taken over by two state companies, the National Metal Company and the National Company of Building Materials respectively. Some provision been made for the payment of compensation.

A further statement issued on the 14th of June said that 18 more companies would be nationalised. The companies affected are in the food processing, chemicals, mechanical engineering and in construction and building materials.

After these measures were announced, *El Moudjahid*, official organ of the F.L.N., stated that the companies involved in no way 'contributed to the promotion of the working class' and called for the institution of socialist planning which would now be possible as the government had eliminated the various sectors of private enterprise.

The total turnover of the 18 companies amount to DA 311 million a year and they employed 3,000 people. Arrangements were made for the payment of compensation.

In the financial sector, eleven establishments have so far been taken over. On June 30th, all branches of Société Marsellaise de Credit were taken over by the publicly-owned Credit Populaire d'Algerie.

The banks so far taken over include subsidiaries of major French banks such as Credit Lyonnais and the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas. Also taken over are the subsidiaries of the British controlled Barclays Bank Ltd. and the Belgian Société Generale. (The Banque Extérieure d'Algerie has taken over the activities of some of these banks.)

Two French banks, the Compagnie Francaise de Credit et de Banque and the Banque Industrielle de Afrique et de la Mediteranee, are still operating in Algeria.

On August 2nd a further eleven companies in the mining and industrial sectors were nationalised.

There is no doubt that these measures coincide with the demands put forward by progressive forces in Algeria itself.

It is however still difficult to make a precise assessment of their impact on the Algerian economy. French interests are most important in the textile, food processing, paints and dyes and public works sectors. In trade relations France maintains a dominant position over

Algeria. It is clear that much still remains to be done before Algeria achieves true economic and political independence.

## **Liberia—the Fanbule Trial**

The trial of Mr. Henry Fanbule in Monrovia closed on July 7th when Mr. Fanbule was given the maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment and confiscation of all personal property after he had been found guilty on July 4th on various charges.

Mr. Fanbule, former Liberian Ambassador to Kenya and Tanzania, was arrested on February 13th and was charged with treason, subversion and an attempt to overthrow the government of President Tubman in favour of the 'Liberian aborigines.' The trial began on June 10th.

Before asking for leave to appeal, which was granted, the defence counsel asked for a retrial on the grounds that no proper evidence had been led and the charges were based on hearsay and assumptions. The defence petition was refused.

During the trial, evidence was led that, inter alia, Fanbule had derided the Tubman administration as a corrupt neo-colonialist appendage of U.S. imperialism which had sold Liberia's rubber and iron ore resources to the U.S.; that he had attacked Zionist aggression against the Arab countries and that he had spoken of the liquidation of the 'American Liberians.'

It however seems clear that for Tubman the trial of Fanbule was not important in that it would secure the just imprisonment of the accused but in that it presented Tubman with an opportunity for mounting a scare-campaign against all progressive and anti-neo-colonialist forces in Liberia.

Thus before the trial, the legislature debated the case and condemned Fanbule. Further, the government instigated mass demonstrations against Fanbule.

Throughout the campaign, the regular bogys of Chinese and Kwame Nkrumah's involvement have been raised. The intention is clearly to isolate the progressive elements in Liberia from the mass of the people by representing them as mere tools of foreign groups or countries.

In similar vein, on April 30th, Tubman warned all foreigners at the University of Liberia and at Cuttington College, claiming that some of them were involved in subversive activities.

He further warned all Liberian students that if he found out that they were involved in such activities, he would deny them jobs once they qualified. He also stated that he stood for 'free enterprise democracy' and denied charges that he had an account in a Swiss bank.

Even after Fanbule's appeal has been heard—it is set down for



October—Tubman and his clique will be faced more and more with the growth of genuinely anti-imperialist forces which will progressively challenge the age-old neo-colonialist policies which have been pursued by the ruling caste in Liberia.

## **Congo Kinshasa—Belgium Comeback**

After eight years, since 1960, during which Belgian imperialism suffered many reverses both at the hands of the anti-imperialist forces in the Congo and in competition with U.S. imperialism, we have entered into a new phase in the history of the relations between the Congo and Belgium.

The phase is characterised by the rapid re-establishment of friendly relations between the Mobutu government, on the one hand, and the Belgian government and private interests, on the other.

Immediately following Mobutu's visit to Belgium, at the invitation of King Badouin, the Belgian government announced in July that it would give aid of £9 million to the Mobutu government. These were some of the first serious signs that the new phase had begun.

The 'rupture' between the two states had never been as complete as some reports indicated. The Director General (and his Assistant) of Gecommin, the company that took over the assets of Union Minière, and his Chief Assistant, are both Belgians. Further the Congo's Water Board has been entrusted to a Belgian Company for five years.

In the middle of July a further agreement between the Mobutu government and the Belgian company, Fabri, was concluded. This agreement provides for the study of tourism in the Kivu Province. Fabri holds a forty per cent share of the one million Belgian franc capital issued to start a tourist industry in Kivu. A further agreement was to be signed with Fabri for the company to build a 250-room hotel in Kinshasa.

The most important developments however arose during the Congo Foreign Minister Justin Bomboko's visit to Belgium in August.

It was there that he announced that the Mobutu government had decided to free all Belgian assets and earnings frozen in the Congo since 1960. He gave the reasons for this as being the improved economic situation in the country and the improved relations between the Congo and Belgium.

Meanwhile it is reported that the World Bank will give further aid to the Congo as soon as negotiations about compensation for expropriated Union Minière stock are concluded—reportedly, soon. (In May Mobutu announced Union Minière's successor Gecommin had been turned into a state company since no private interests had taken

Bureau of the M.N.R. and the creation of a Committee for the Defence of the Revolution whose members would be appointed 'by the country's leading officials.' Debat also announced that he would rule by decree until the elections for the new National Assembly had been held. He also announced a general amnesty for all political prisoners.

Debat also explained that he had taken the various measures in keeping with the demands of the workers' demonstration, the day before, which had called for the dissolution of parliament and the expulsion of 'extreme left' members of the M.N.R.

Apparently led by the Prime Minister, Ambroise Noumazalay and two Ministers, Michel Bindi (Interior) and André Hombessa (Information, Youth and Sport), on August 3rd, a section of the army supported by the para-military sections of the youth movement, seized power, arresting and deposing Debat. A counter coup occurred two days later and Debat was reinstated. On August 6th, Debat announced the formation of the council for the Defence of the Revolution.

When attempts to arrest two of the ex-Ministers who had taken refuge in the camps of the youth movement were made, an open clash occurred. This was mainly between the army and members of the youth movement.

Later reports stated that Massemba-Debat had again been deposed.

Progressive forces throughout Africa, especially in Southern Africa, are greatly concerned that the people and the government of Congo Brazzaville should maintain the active anti-imperialist stand they have taken in the past.

## **Chad: French Troops called in**

On August 28th, the Tombalbaye government of Chad announced that it had asked the French government to help it with troops to suppress an uprising in the north and north-east of the country, especially in the province of Tibesti. (The area is bounded by three countries, Niger, Libya and north-west Sudan).

President Tombalbaye invoked the 'agreements for mutual defence' which Chad concluded with France when she joined the 'French Community' in 1958 and which were confirmed when Chad became independent in 1960.

Armed groups have been active in the Tibesti area of Chad for about four years. It is however only recently that they have been able fully to stretch the Chad army.

The French garrison of 1,000 men who are stationed at Fort Lamy, capital of Chad, were immediately ordered to give active support to



the Chad army. Further the French government said that it was flying out reinforcements via Niamey, Niger.

(Chad, one of the largest of the ex-French colonies, has an area of 750,000 square miles. At Fort Lamy, France maintains one of her largest military establishments in ex-French black Africa and Madagascar. The other two are at Dakar and at Diego-Saurez.)

The Tombalbaye government has claimed that it tried to achieve a peaceful solution of the Northern problem, but 'the instigators of the troubles adopted an extreme position, creating in that part of the country (the north) a situation which posed a danger to the integrity of the national territory.'

Though it is true that there is an element of struggle between two cultural groups in Chad, the north being Islamic and the south Christian, it cannot be said that the Front de Liberation Nationale Tchadienne (Frolina) which leads the struggle is guided by secessionist objectives. Frolina has its headquarters in Algeria.

The current struggles of the people of Chad should be a clear enough warning to the various neo-colonist governments in Africa, including 'L'Afrique noire francophone,' that the people are seizing the initiative more and more.

## **Dahomey: Military Rule Ended**

The Military Revolutionary Committee through which the junior officers had ruled Dahomey since they overthrew General Soglo (see last issue of THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST) was dissolved at midnight on July 31st.

The President, Dr. Emile Derlin Zinsou, announced his ministerial cabinet on August 1st and Dahomey finally and peacefully returned to civilian democratic government.

Zinsou was to be appointed to the Presidency by the military officers after three ex-Presidents of Dahomey, Apithy, Maga and Ahomadegbe, had, from Paris, limited the success of previous elections.

The elections were held on May 5th. The ex-Presidents, themselves barred from standing for elections, called on their supporters to boycott the elections. About 75 per cent of the electorate then boycotted the elections. The election of Dr. Adjou was therefore annulled.

To get round the problem the army officers after consultation with all political parties in the country, appointed Zinsou and then held a referendum to decide whether the choice was a popular one. Zinsou obtained over 75 per cent of votes cast and more than half of the total electorate. This was on July 28th. His appointment as President was therefore confirmed.

Zinsou's government is a broad one, containing within it people from all the six provinces of Dahomey. In it are represented, as well, the various political tendencies in the country.

On his election, Zinsou said the popular vote represented 'victory for unity, good sense and the rejection of narrow and retrograde tribalism.'

## **Zambia: Vigilance Against Reaction**

Encouraged by the increasing daring of the white fascist forces in their actions inside Zambia, local Zambian African reactionary groups have also begun to raise their heads openly.

Suddenly, the months-old violence in the Copperbelt between different political groups, erupted on August 14th into mass inter-party rioting concentrated at Chililabombwe.

One of the political parties involved in the rioting, the recently formed United Party (U.P.) was banned.

In a dawn broadcast, President Kaunda said the United Party had threatened public security. Later he ordered Nalumina Mundia, leader of the U.P., Willie Chipango, its National Organising Secretary and member Julius Namakando into indefinite restriction in an undisclosed rural area.

Since the U.P.'s formation, political fights along tribal lines have increased in Zambia. There is also evidence that one of the monopoly copper companies is playing some part in this whole process.

Of course, this is accompanied by more daring fascist provocations than in the past. Late in August, three members of the South African Police were arrested in Zambia and charged with illegally importing guns and ammunition into Zambia. They were fined and deported. This follows the blowing up of the bridge over the Luangwa River near Mozambique on June 9th. The bulk of Zambia's supplies of diesel fuel arrive over this bridge.

It is obvious that the fascists in southern Africa will increasingly draw Zambia into the war zone. The government and people of Zambia are called upon to be vigilant against these forces and to prepare to meet them. Vigilance against local reaction which will try to seize, its opportunity specifically at times of crisis, is also an immediate duty.

The U.P. is a case in point. It is noteworthy that its leader, Mundia, had earlier been Minister of Commerce. He had been dismissed from that post and from U.N.I.P., the government party, when it was discovered that he was secretly accumulating shares in a company that



the government was promoting. He subsequently lost his seat in the National Assembly.

## **Senegal—Worker-Student Struggles**

On May 8th, the National Union of Senegalese Workers (U.N.T.S.) presented a memorandum to the Senghor government putting forward several demands. These were:

- (i) The revision of the Minimum Wage which had been decided in 1961,
- (ii) The abolition of a system of payment according to wage zones,
- (iii) The institution of a social security system, and,
- (iv) The reorganisation of the fund for family allowances and industrial accidents.

Other demands included the formulation of a new policy on questions of retirement, housing and unemployment. On the latter issue, the workers' representatives suggested that, to reduce unemployment, new industries must be established and that these industries must have workers' representatives in the management. (There were 40,000 unemployed in Senegal in 1967. The figure for 1968 is estimated to be 70,000 with 50,000 being in the capital city Dakar.)

Towards the end of May, while the government was considering the workers' demands, the students at the University of Dakar came out on strike, demanding that all students be put on full grants. Grants had been reduced to half, in some cases, and two-thirds in others, of what they had originally been. A few remained on full grants. Students at secondary schools also came out on strike in sympathy with the University students.

Almost simultaneously, the workers also came out on strike backing their demands. Students and workers staged demonstrations in Dakar.

On May 31st, Senghor broadcast a call to the workers and students calling for an end to the strikes and the demonstrations. He threatened to shut the University and said the workers would receive no pay while on strike.

Alleging that 'there were also political demands from abroad' involved in the student strike, he ordered the closure of the university in order to break the strike. 350 students were arrested and then released without a charge and 400 foreign students at Dakar (from Togo, Upper Volta etc.) were expelled and ordered back to their countries of origin.

By June 4th the government, in face of their determined stand, was

forced to conclude an agreement with the trade unions. It was only after that that the workers went back to work.

Bent on destroying the progressive student movement in Dakar, Senghor's government has ordered that the University be shut for a year. The government says this is so that it can undertake a broad reform of higher education. Leaflets distributed by progressive forces in Dakar have stated that the closure of the University is a security measure, with very little to do with reform of higher education.

Attempting also to solve the problem of the unemployed youth of Dakar, the Senghor government adopted a draft bill on July 24th, establishing National Service under the supervision of the Armed Forces.

It was said that the purpose of the National Service would be educational, economic and social. Recruitment to it would be voluntary but the unemployed as well as criminal offenders would be called up. The Senghor government claims that by imposing military duty on the unemployed working youth of Senegal, it is giving them 'protection' since they are 'exposed to moral danger as a result of urbanisation.'

In another sphere, Abodulaye Diop at the conclusion of the conference of the Union of Economic Groupings of Senegal (U.N.I.G.E.S.), of which he is President, called for a more aggressive economic policy transferring ownership of productive property to the hands of Senegalese nationals. He pointed out the Senegalese nationals earned 13,000 million francs from property while foreigners, forming only 0.5 per cent of the population of Senegal, earned 57,000 million per annum.

Thus the bankruptcy of the policies of the Senghor government which has proscribed and still persecutes the patriotic organisation, the African Independence Party (P.A.I.), is every day becoming clearer to all sections of the population of Senegal. As the patriotic forces have pointed out, the only solution which accords with the interest of all the people of Senegal is the total abandonment of the neo-colonialist policies so far pursued by the Senghor government and the adoption of a new democratic perspective, envisaging complete economic and political independence for Senegal and the pursuit of a programme which is non-capitalist in content.

## **Morocco: Party of Liberation and Socialism**

The formation and legal recognition, in July, of the Parti de la Liberation et du Socialisme (P.L.S.) in Morocco marks a notable step forward in the consolidation of the forces of progress and revolution in Africa.



The P.L.S. takes over from the Moroccan Communist Party which had been working as an illegal organisation since 1959, when it was proscribed. It was founded in 1943.

Acting on decisions taken at the Third National Congress of the Communist Party, held in July 1966, the Central Committee at its two meetings on October 22nd, 1967, and June 2nd this year, examined the problem of the illegality of the Party and finally, in its resolution of June 2nd, formally set up the P.L.S.

The c.c. declared that the P.L.S. will adhere to the ideas of scientific socialism and will apply these in the concrete reality of the social, historic and psychological conditions of the Moroccan people.

The P.L.S. 'will maintain and reinforce fraternity in struggle with the international working-class movement and the national liberation movement'.

The c.c. charged Ali Yata and Mohammed Chouaib Rifi with the task of drawing up the constitution of the P.L.S. and taking the necessary steps to secure its legal recognition.

The recognition of the P.L.S. remains a living tribute to the unflinching struggles that the Moroccan Communists waged to secure the legal recognition of the Party since 1959. This struggle they waged within the general objective of striving to spread the ideas of socialism and continuously developing mass struggles for the consolidation of national independence, for social progress and democracy.

The P.L.S. has declared its participation in the struggle for socialism and peace and noted its ardent desire to secure the unity of the international communist and workers' movement, and to strengthen the ties of solidarity and struggle with all fraternal Parties, 'for the triumph of our common cause'.

Drawing on the experience of the world revolutionary movement, the P.L.S. abides by the principles of democratic centralism and does not permit of factionalism.

In its call of July 17th, the P.L.S., through its General Secretary, Ali Yata, pointed out that its constitution will enable the Moroccan people to make the most effective contribution to the revolutionary and historic tasks of our epoch.

It called on workers, peasants, intellectuals, artisans and small businessmen to join its ranks 'for the triumph of the struggles against imperialism and reaction, for the realisation of national and popular aspirations'.

This call will not only find response among the popular masses of Morocco but will also serve as an inspiration to the people of Africa as a whole.

# **THE SOVIET UNION AND AFRICA**

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## **VASILY SOLODOVNIKOV**

THE STRUGGLE OF the African people against the colonisers began when the first invaders appeared in the middle of the 19th century. In the early stages the peoples often gained temporary victories in spite of the clear technical and military superiority of their oppressors. Lacking, however, any political leadership in the form of parties or movements that could instil anti-imperialist consciousness, they fought separately against the powerful imperialist enemy who took advantage of their tribal differences to subjugate them.

The victory of the Russian Revolution aided the spread of socialist and Communist ideas among the advanced workers and the best sections of the African intelligentsia. They began to realise that colonialism could be defeated; that to do it, it was necessary to prepare the anti-imperialist forces ideologically and organisationally.

The October Revolution thus laid the basis for the first stage of revolutionary struggle of the peoples of Africa against national and colonial oppression. In several countries Communist parties were created. At the beginning of the twenties Communist parties appeared in Egypt and the Union of South Africa. In Algeria, Tunis and Morocco sections of the French Communist Party were created in 1920. They became independent parties: in Algeria in 1936, in Tunis in 1937 and in Morocco in 1943.

### **IMPACT OF OCTOBER REVOLUTION ON NATIONAL LIBERATION**

The influence of October was reflected in the unfolding of the national liberation struggles on the African continent. In 1919 and 1921 there were armed uprisings in Egypt against English rule, which forced the British Government to abolish its protectorate over Egypt in 1922. During the uprising the fellaheen formed Soviets in the villages.



In 1921, Moorish tribes revolted against Spanish colonial domination in Morocco and this resulted in the formation of the Moroccan Republic, later that same year. Led by the famous leader Abdulkarim, it lasted five years.

In 1918-19, there were peasant uprisings in Nigeria, Gambia and Sierra Leone. In 1922, there were demonstrations in the city of Puerto Nuevo (Dahomey), the Cameroons and Togo.

During the period of the world economic crisis (1929-33), the conditions of the colonial masses worsened. A wave of peasant disturbances spread in the Congo, the Upper Volta, Dahomey, on the Gold Coast and in Sierra Leone. In many countries the African workers began strike struggles for improvement of their conditions.

In the thirties, Italian and German fascism became the main enemy of the national liberation movement of the African peoples. Taking advantage of the impotence of the League of Nations, Mussolini started war against Ethiopia in the autumn of 1935, and by May 1936 he declared it to be a colony of Italy.

The Soviet Union was the only great power which came out determinedly for Ethiopia and exposed the policies of Italian fascism. On November 22nd, 1935, it sent a note to the League of Nations, calling for sanctions against Italy and declaring:

The Soviet Government considers it impermissible that Ethiopia should constitute an exception to the rules applied by the League of Nations to all its other members. In the opinion of the Soviet Government, all members of the League are entitled to equal rights in the event of an attack, regardless of race or creed.<sup>1</sup>

At a reception in the Kremlin in 1959, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia recalled that only the Soviet Union '... supported the cause of Ethiopia in the League of Nations and refused to recognise the seizure of Ethiopia by the fascists.'<sup>2</sup> The policy of defending the equal rights of all nations in the struggle against aggression was and remains the cornerstone of the foreign policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet government.

Representing an even greater threat to the African peoples, the Hitlerite fascists demanded the 'return' of 'their' colonies, i.e. those, belonging to the German imperialists up to World War I. After subjugating the West European nations, the Hitlerites openly proclaimed as their goal the conquest of all of Africa, and its conversion into a source of cheap raw materials.

For this reason the war of the U.S.S.R. against fascist Germany was

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<sup>1</sup> *Vneshnaya Politika USSR (Foreign Policy of the USSR)*, Collected Documents, Vol. IV, Moscow, 1946, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, July 12, 1959.

simultaneously a war against the colonial seizure of Africa by the Germans.

Even while the war was going on, the Soviet government came out with an important declaration on the postwar world arrangement:

The Soviet Union in its foreign policy maintains the high principle of the sovereign rights of nations. [It] is guided by the principle of self-determination of nations . . . champions the right of each nation to independent government and territorial integrity of its land, the right to establish whatever social system and to elect whatever form of government it deems suitable and necessary to secure its economic and cultural growth.<sup>3</sup>

This declaration corresponded to the aspirations of the revolutionary forces in the colonies and inspired them in their struggle against the colonialists.

The historical victories over fascism in World War II constituted a weakening of the imperialist system as a whole.

The liquidation of colonialism after World War II began in Asia, where at that time the contradictions between the peoples and the colonialists reached the boiling point. The colonisers were in no condition to cope with the national liberation movement in that area. They were compelled in many instances to retreat before the people and agree to independence.

The imperialist powers at first hoped that, having made concessions in Asia, they would succeed in maintaining intact the colonial system in Africa. The national liberation movement in Algeria (1945) and in Madagascar (1947) was drowned in blood.

## **SOVIET SUPPORT OF NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES**

The Soviet Union unmasked the plans of the colonial powers to perpetuate the oppression of the African nations and supported them in their just demands. In 1946, the representatives of the Soviet Union in the U.N. Security Council supported the demand of the Egyptians and Sudanese for removal of British troops from their territories. The U.S.S.R. supported the granting of independence to Lybia, Morocco and Tunisia. In 1954, the heroic armed struggle of the Algerian people for freedom and independence unfolded. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries rendered political, diplomatic and military aid to the Algerian people who, in an eight-year struggle, achieved the freedom of their country. The struggle of the Algerian people became an important landmark in the national liberation struggles of the African peoples.

The determined support by the U.S.S.R. of the national liberation

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<sup>3</sup> *The USSR and the Countries of Africa*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1963, page III, Russian edition.



war in Algeria, and wherever else such wars were fought, showed that the U.S.S.R. always supported, and will continue to support, the just national liberation wars of the oppressed peoples. Therein lies the essence of the proletarian internationalism of the C.P.S.U. This fact does not contradict the statements of the C.P.S.U. and of the Soviet Government that they have always stood for peaceful coexistence with countries having different social-economic systems. One cannot impose a social system by force or war on any country. The changing of a social order is the internal affair of each nation.

At all stages of the national liberation struggle of the peoples of Africa against their colonisers, the U.S.S.R. has always been on the side of the revolutionary forces. It is well known that, having unleashed the Anglo-French-Israeli aggression in the autumn of 1956 against Egypt, the imperialist powers hoped not only to crush the national liberation movement within that leading Arab country, but to put the brakes on the development of such a movement in the whole world and, first of all, in Africa.

The determined help given by the Soviet Union to the people of Egypt played a major role in the failure of these plans. Imperialism was compelled to retreat.

## **TURNING POINT IN THE BATTLE FOR INDEPENDENCE IN AFRICA**

The failure of the Anglo-French-Israeli aggression was a turning point in the movement of the African peoples for political independence. These events showed that there exists a new alignment of forces in the international arena which strengthens the struggles of the African peoples for independence.

The position of the U.S.S.R. on the national liberation struggle of the African nations is demonstrated by the fact that it was on the initiative of the Soviet Union that, in 1960, the General Assembly of the United Nations issued a Declaration of Independence for Colonial Lands and Peoples.

Within a short period 39 African countries gained political independence. In the mid-sixties the first stage of the anti-imperialist revolution in Africa was in the main completed. With the liquidation of colonialism an entire stage in the history of the peoples of Africa ended. The peoples of that continent entered the road of independent political development and for the first time in history started to play an important role in the world arena. We must at the same time remember that in a number of African countries colonialism still rules, and in its most virulent form—racism. For this reason, the struggle of the revolutionary forces against colonialism and racism still continues. The

Soviet Union, together with all the revolutionary forces of Africa, struggle hard and persistently against the racist regimes established in South Africa and Rhodesia. The U.S.S.R. has broken off all relations with these countries, including commercial relations.

Our country also calls for the liberation of South West Africa from the domination of fascist South Africa. 'We,' declared the representative of the U.S.S.R. at the 21st session of the U.N. General Assembly, fully support the demand of the African governments that the South African Republic be deprived of the mandate to rule South West Africa.

He declared further:

We share the opinion that in the event of the South African Republic refusing to fulfil the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations, it is necessary immediately to recommend to the Security Council the application of appropriate sanctions.

The Soviet Union also insists that Portugal should, without further delay, grant independence to its colonies, cease its repressions against the African people and accede to their lawful demands.

The struggle against colonialism and racism in Africa has always been one of the revolutionary Leninist principles of Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet Union has always been on the side of the people struggling for their independence. As has been correctly noted in the progressive press everywhere, the successes of the national liberation movement have come about as the result of true unity of the socialist countries, the world Communist movement and the national liberation movement. In our opinion, this is one of the historic lessons to be learned from the struggles of the revolutionary peoples against colonialism and imperialism in general.

### **NEO-COLONIALISM IN AFRICA**

In the first stage of the anti-imperialist revolution, direct political domination by the colonial powers was done away with in most of the colonies, but imperialist exploitation and economic dependence were not destroyed. Instead of the classic form of colonialism with the 'mother country' openly depriving the peoples of the colonies of their political rights, there is now neo-colonialism, whereby a country remains formally independent but, in reality, is so stifled by economic and financial dependence, that it cannot utilise its political independence.

How strongly dependent the African countries are economically on international imperialism is illustrated by the character of their foreign trade. In 1964, about 84 per cent of the state exports from the African countries went to the developed capitalist countries, at a time when the comparable figures for exports from all the developing



countries taken together was 72.7 per cent. The imperialist powers, through the world capitalist market, to this day maintain and exploit the monocultural character of production in the African states. Ninety per cent of the exports of the independent countries of Africa consist of raw materials. These countries suffer systematic worsening of trade relations with the imperialist countries. The president of Senegal, analysing the status of the African countries on the world market, said with good reason that 'the more we work, the less we earn.' Neo-colonialism has led to a tremendous overflow of wealth from Africa into the coffers of the imperialist powers in the form of profits, interest, and dividends to private foreign investors.

Neo-colonialism, that of the United States in particular, utilises all means and methods—from financial economic dependence to open intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states and, finally, direct aggression—in order to retain the developing countries within the orbit of imperialism. They want these countries as economic appendages and as military strategic reserves in the struggle for world domination.

Another grave consequence of colonial rule is the political fragmentation of the continent into small countries, many of which cannot exist as independent economic entities, and thus cannot attain independent development without outside help. From the start, one of the immediate urgent tasks which confronted the African nations, was to find the path toward political and economic collaboration on a regional or subregional basis. Without this there can be no future for Africa. A long stride in this direction was the creation of the Organisation of African Unity, the role of which, however, has to a considerable extent been nullified through the activities of the imperialist powers. The recent session of the heads of government of the O.A.U. gave rise to a more optimistic outlook for the strengthening of the unity of the African countries.

After the attainment of political independence there arose before the African nations, in all its gravity, the problem of doing away with the medieval living conditions and the aftermath of colonial rule, especially economic backwardness.

The African countries desperately needed a radical change in the economic and social structure they inherited from colonialism. This system is distinguished by the diversity of their economies and undeveloped class relations. In the African countries, particularly in tropical Africa, the dominant sector is the single-commodity and even the natural economy. In a number of countries foreign capital predominates. As a rule, national capital is weak. In most African countries the state sector is the best developed.



The problems of the transition period about which we speak arise, on the one hand, from the incompleteness of the anti-imperialist revolution and, on the other, from the policies of neo-colonialism.

## **THE NON-CAPITALIST PATH OF DEVELOPMENT**

The anti-imperialist revolution in Africa has entered its second stage with the struggle for economic independence, for a choice of paths toward socio-economic development, for methods of overcoming economic backwardness. The complexity of these problems, and the necessity of determining the class approach to them, has given rise to a sharpened internal political struggle to determine the political orientation of these countries. These factors, in our opinion, lie at the basis of the many military coups in Africa.

The impact of the October Revolution on the fate of the peoples of Africa was far-reaching: the very existence of a powerful bloc of socialist countries and their strong support in opposition to imperialism, helped to accelerate the historic conditions for the transition to, and the construction of, a socialist society in a number of African countries, by-passing capitalism.

Already at the present time, two basic groups of states have been formed in Africa. Some of these are attempting to overcome their economic backwardness by choosing the capitalist road of development. Other African countries have declared their ultimate goal to be the construction of a socialist society, and are introducing socio-economic measures in that direction. A third group have not yet decided what path to follow.

The struggle for a non-capitalist path of development is the most characteristic phenomenon of present-day Africa. This specific path toward socialism stems from the concrete historical conditions obtaining in these countries, where the struggle is not only against capitalism, which is poorly developed, but mainly against medieval conditions. Lenin, addressing the delegates at the Second Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, said:

In this respect you are confronted with a task which has not previously confronted the Communists of the world: relying upon the general theory and practice of Communism, you must adapt yourselves to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries; you must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism . . . You must find specific forms for this alliance of the foremost proletarians of the world with the labouring and exploited masses of the East whose conditions are in many cases medieval. . . (Collected Works, Vol. 30, P. 161.)

It is the search for these new forms of struggle for socialism, under the backward conditions of Africa, that constitutes the main content



of the ideological struggle of Marxism-Leninism in Africa. The Marxist-Leninist concepts of the non-capitalist path of development, industrialisation, planning, etc., constitute state policy in many African countries. In Africa one hears less and less the assertion that Marxism is inapplicable to African countries. The influence of the Communist parties is becoming stronger. In the Republic of South Africa the Communist Party, which has been driven underground, constitutes the basic force leading the heroic struggle against the policies of the racist government. The Communists of the Sudan played a leading role in the overthrow of the reactionary military dictatorship. Today, too, in spite of having been outlawed, Sudan's Communist Party remains in the front rank of the fighters for the democratisation of their country. More and more the foremost activists of the national liberation movement in Africa are turning to the basic works of Marxism-Leninism. African Marxists took an active part in the organisation and work of two theoretical seminars dedicated to a discussion of urgent problems of the continent—in Cairo in October, 1966, and in Algeria in May, 1967.

### **THE TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM**

The non-capitalist road of development, advocated by the revolutionary democrats, is characterised by the introduction of measures to limit private enterprise and the economic and political rights of the feudalists and other privileged groups. Government control is being introduced over the activities of foreign capital and, in some instances, has led to its nationalisation. There is also strong emphasis on the development of the state sector and the realisation of far-reaching social and democratic transformation. The final aim of the non-capitalist path of development is to create the material-technical base and the socio-political conditions for the transition to socialism.

The group of countries, which have declared their final aim to be the building of socialism and the realisation of definite measures in that direction, includes Algeria; Guinea, Congo (Brazzaville), Mali, the United Arab Republic and Tanzania. This is where the political parties and their leaders see the only solution to the problems. The method of struggle for socialism in each of these countries is determined by its historic peculiarities.

Marxism-Leninism teaches that each nation takes its own road to socialism. Different countries will require different periods of time to make the transition. But in the final result, the essence of socialism is the same for all countries: the elimination of private ownership of the means of production and their transfer into the hands of the people. In spite of its socio-economic backwardness, Africa is going

through a period of ideological and political struggle characteristic of the whole contemporary world.

Under these conditions, the progressive forces in the African countries carry on a struggle not only against foreign imperialism and neo-colonialism, but also against internal reaction, which has a stake in the perpetuation of foreign domination.

Reactionaries—the feudal lords, the big capitalists and the middle bourgeoisie, and in the first place the merchants—lead the struggle against the opponents of capitalism within their own countries as well as against the governments that stand for the non-capitalist path of development. The feudal lords and the bourgeoisie see in the socialist orientation a threat to their class interests, to their privileged position.

The second stage of the anti-imperialist revolution is taking place under conditions where the imperialist powers—England, France, Belgium and other countries, with the U.S. imperialists in the lead—are attempting to smash the progressive regimes in the African countries and to split the unity of the African nations to assert their domination over the continent. Such an imperialist course inevitably leads to the sharpening of contradictions between the imperialist powers and the developing countries. All the developing countries, regardless of which socio-economic path of development they choose, suffer equally from imperialism through exploitation on the world market and the export of capital.

The struggle for economic independence, against interference by the imperialists in their internal affairs, against super-exploitation by the monopolies, is the burning issue of the day for the majority of the developing countries of Africa.

Under these conditions, the alliance of the socialist countries, the world Communist movement and the national liberation movement constitutes the vital force which is in a position to defeat the policy of neo-colonialism. The Soviet Union and the other socialist lands are directing all their efforts toward strengthening that unity and are also doing everything possible to help improve conditions in the African states.

## **THE MAOIST THEORY OF 'HAVE' AND 'HAVE NOT' NATIONS**

In relation to this, it is impossible not to mention the harm done to the national liberation movement and to the unity of all revolutionary forces by the Mao Tse-tung anti-party group. Setting forth the thesis that so long as the U.S.S.R. and the other socialist countries follow a policy of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems,



the main contradiction today is not the struggle between socialism and capitalism, but the struggle between the 'rich' and the 'poor' nations, between 'the world of the cities' and 'the world of the countryside.' This concept is thrown in by the Maoists in the hope of isolating the U.S.S.R. and the other socialist countries from the national liberation movement.

In reality this would-be theoretical concept does not hold water. The actual course of historic events refute it. World history since 1917, bears witness to the fact that the main struggle at all its stages has been between socialism and capitalism, and that the socialist countries have always been on the side of the national liberation movement regarding it as an organic part of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism on a world scale. The U.S.S.R. and the other socialist countries, while advocating peaceful coexistence of countries with differing social systems, have supported and continue to support the national liberation movement against the oppressors, against the colonisers.

The essential weakness of this so-called theory—that divides the world into 'have' and 'have-not' nations—ignores the main character of the ownership of the means of production. The complete bankruptcy of such thinking is revealed when one realises that it equates the imperialist countries, whose wealth was accumulated not only as a result of the exploitation of their own people but also the super-exploitation and outright plunder of the colonial and dependent peoples, with the socialist countries, where economies were developed by the efforts of their own citizens and which never exploited other nations. In reality, this is a bourgeois theory which has as its aim the splitting of the international unity of the revolutionary forces. This is to be accomplished, on the one hand, by weakening the anti-imperialist character of the national liberation movement and directing it against the socialist countries and, on the other hand, by removing historic responsibility from the imperialist powers for the economic exploitation of the colonial and dependent nations over a prolonged historic period.

The prominent English economist Jack Woddis, in his article 'The Old and New Style of British Imperialism,' published in the *World Marxist Review* brought out the shocking facts about the tribute which British imperialism exacted from the colonial peoples. For 165 years, beginning with the years 1800, England's total import *surpassed its total export 159 times*. The difference was covered by the inflow of super-profits from the colonies and other overseas investments. This is why the pro-imperialist propagandists have fastened on to this 'theory' and continue to spread it far and wide.



Its social significance lies in the fact that it both helps the imperialist powers disclaim their historic responsibility for the colonial oppression and masks the continuing exploitation of the developing countries by private foreign capital. We have already discussed the fact that super-exploitation by foreign imperialist companies has resulted in a colossal outflow of wealth from Africa and other regions. The volume of this outflow, according to the most moderate estimate, is about \$1,000 million a year, with \$150 million squeezed annually out of Africa alone. The result is a sharp increase in foreign indebtedness, a lowering of the tempo of development and a growing new indebtedness. That is why it is urgent to raise the question of putting an end to imperialist exploitation of the developing countries, and not to shift this responsibility on to the socialist countries, as is done by the sorry theoreticians of China. No matter how paradoxical it may seem, this 'theory' of the Maoists in reality defends the actions of neo-colonialism in the developing countries.

Soviet economists, in opposition to this 'theory,' have put forward a plan for the liquidation of the outflow of wealth from the developing countries. The essence of the plan is that the governments of the imperialist countries should create a so-called 'compensation fund' from the entire sum of super-profits extracted from the developing countries by private foreign investments, in order to finance the economic development of the 'third world'. Another proposal made by the Soviet economists is to conclude an international compensatory mercantile agreement, which would establish a fair level of prices for the raw materials taken out, that would secure the growth of the export of these commodities from the developing countries.

### **SOVIET RELATIONS WITH AFRICAN NATIONS**

What, in reality, are the relations between the U.S.S.R. and the independent African countries, with all the revolutionary movements which carry on the struggle against the remnants of colonialism and racism in the South of the continent?

The U.S.S.R., which maintains diplomatic relations with the majority of the independent African countries, is developing economic and commercial relations with them on the basis of equality. Such international economic relations are possible only with socialist countries, where the socio-economic order does not seek to exploit, either within their own countries or on the world market.

At the present time the Soviet Union carries on trade with 28 African countries and has direct trade relations with 24. The Soviet Union imports the traditional goods from these countries and exports chiefly machine equipment and rolled steel products, that is, products



which are essential to the creation of a national industry. Beside trade, the Soviet Union is extending its technical, scientific and cultural collaboration with the countries of Africa. The Soviet Union has concluded agreements on economic and technical co-operation with 16 African countries.

The total sum of long-term credits extended by the U.S.S.R. to the countries of Africa exceeds \$150 million. This provides for the equipping and expansion of 330 enterprises, and other facilities of which 118 are already under construction. By November 1966, 5,121 persons from 16 African countries had attended higher and middle educational institutions in the U.S.S.R. Even now one may speak of the wholesome influence on the development of the African countries of the economic help rendered by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. The expansion of economic co-operation on a basis of equality has led to breaking the monopoly formerly held by the imperialist powers in regard to the supply of equipment, credit and loans to Africa.

The socialist countries recognise the unequal status of the new independent countries on the capitalist market, where relations between the contracting parties are determined on the basis of economic power and where laws of competition and exploitation predominate. The socialist countries support the legitimate demands of the developing countries to protect their interests.

The co-operation of the U.S.S.R. with African nations, as is known, is not limited to the economic sphere. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, with all the means at their disposal, support the heroic struggle of the peoples of Africa against the colonial and racist domination maintained in South Africa, Rhodesia, South West Africa, in Angola and Mozambique, in Portuguese Guinea and other countries. The resistance of the colonisers and racists has compelled the people of these countries to take up arms. Under the existing conditions, we believe that the armed struggle is legally justified and the entire blame for the unleashing of such a struggle falls on the colonisers and the racists.

The Soviet Union has always given moral, political and material aid to the African peoples struggling for national liberation, and resolutely opposes the intervention of the imperialists in the internal affairs of the African countries. This is underscored by the firm and consistent position of the U.S.S.R. in regard to Israeli aggression against the Arab countries, aggression which is receiving support from the imperialists of the U.S.A., Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany. The U.S.S.R. and the other socialist countries were decisively on the side of the Arab countries against this aggression.

The achievements of the October Revolution and the policy of the Soviet Union, which firmly follows the path of socialism, are fully recognised by the peoples of the African lands. 'The Great October Revolution brought with it the solution of the problem of the future of our Africa,' said the president of Mali, Modibo Keita, in an address in Moscow on May 30th, 1962, and 'we must recognise that the Soviet people have opened the path to freedom for the colonial nations.' 'The October Revolution,' said the president of Guinea, Sékou Touré, 'has exerted a decisive influence on the development of contemporary history. Since October, 1917, not only has the zone of freedom been broadened and strengthened, but the struggle against imperialism and the faith of the nations of the world in the ability to crush imperialism has also grown immeasurably.'

*(Reprinted from POLITICAL AFFAIRS, New York.)*



# BOOK REVIEWS

## A MARXIST ON BLACK POWER

*Ghetto Rebellion to Black Liberation*, by Claude M. Lightfoot, International Publishers, New York.

THE OPPRESSION OF the black people in the United States has been brought forcibly into the consciousness of humanity in the past decade, mainly because of the resurgence and struggles of the Afro-Americans themselves. Every African in particular identifies himself with the sufferings and movements of our brothers in America, and yearns to help, and to know more about them. For this last purpose, nothing could be more useful and enlightening than this new book by Claude Lightfoot, himself a veteran of the Negro's fight for emancipation and an outstanding leader of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.

Comrade Lightfoot has brought an acute and lively mind, fortified with diligent research and the discipline of Marxist-Leninist science, to bear on the problems of his people in America today. What are the roots of colour discrimination? What are its main characteristics today? How to fight it? And what, ultimately, is the way to put an end to this outrage—as Gus Hall puts it in his Preface 'the most crucial problem facing the U.S.A. as a nation?'

The Negro liberation movement today has evolved from what was primarily a 'civil rights' campaign for non-discrimination laws to be placed on the statute book, or for discriminatory laws to be repealed. It has become a revolt, a militant movement of mass *action*, embracing both non-violent and violent aspects, and aimed at basic economic and political changes in the social structure—embodied in the popular slogan 'Black Power.' As the author points out, new developments—'the terrible conditions in the ghettos . . . the problems

the majority of our people in the U.S. were still living 'on the cotton fields down South.' Lightfoot puts the picture straight.

Since World War II there has been a continuous mass exodus of black people from the rural area (in the South). Today only about four million out of twenty-two million are there. *More Negroes live in Chicago* today than in the entire state of Mississippi.

All small farmers in the U.S. are going through a crisis, as mechanisation and rising costs make any but large-scale farming unprofitable, more and more starving landless black farmers flock to the industrial centres aggravating the overcrowding, the problems, the poverty and the unrest of the ghettos.

### **APARTHEID IDEOLOGY**

Virulent white chauvinism is on the increase in America today. Unemployment and job insecurity creates a material basis for it among the white workers—and here Lightfoot courageously tackles the anti-labour scabs in the building and other craft unions who fan racist ideas—and big business is only too eager to find a scapegoat for mass resentment against the problems created by technological advance in a war economy.

Whites find themselves competing with black men for jobs, for housing, and social amenities and react by adopting racist attitudes. On their part, the Afro-Americans are no longer prepared, as they once were, to accept the lie into which they had for long been 'brain-washed' that

their ancestral background was at a level of social organisation not much higher than animal life. Today, as they witness Africans playing a major role in the affairs of mankind, it evokes in them a feeling of great pride in their own race, in the colour of black, and brings out a deep desire for greater identity with their past.

Thus white chauvinism is challenged by a rising tide of black nationalism whose main content as Lightfoot wisely observes 'is of a progressive character.'

It does not exclude Negro and white unity but it demands that such unity be meaningful and *between equal partners* (my italics. A.L.)

In his search for the historic roots of racism Claude Lightfoot enters into a discussion of the fascinating question of why some societies (predominantly those of Western Europe) achieved rapid economic, technological and military progress at a time when others (mainly non-European) appeared to be stagnant. He bases himself firmly on the Marxist approach that economic development and resulting class struggle is the key to the problem of social advance. Though African and Asian societies long ago were far in advance of Western Europe, it was the 'white' races who were the first to develop



capitalism, which enabled them to achieve superior techniques. This advantage gave capitalism the possibility of imposing colonialism on the great majority of the world's inhabitants who happen to be dark-skinned. Thus it is not fundamentally a race or colour problem but one of abolishing colonialism and its consequences which faces the oppressed majority of mankind—including the African-descended people of the U.S. itself.

This theme leads the author straight into a discussion of American foreign policy, the war in Vietnam and the growing danger of fascism in the U.S.A.—issues which as he convincingly shows are not only crucial to the future of the black liberation struggle, but also to the interests of all Americans, whatever their origin.

The United States is a sick society with a sick economy, in spite of great technological advance. Unrestrained private capitalism is poisoning the air and the water supplies of America at a fantastic rate. Concentration on war is leading to a sharp decline in health standards. Mental illness and crime rates are rising steeply.

Capitalism is at the roots of all America's ills, writes Lightfoot, including the gross racialism and national oppression of the Negro people, and only socialism can solve those ills. His fine chapters on the smashing of racialism and the winning of true equality in two socialist countries—the Soviet Union and Cuba—are particularly illuminating in bearing out this thesis. It is not merely a question of establishing formal legal equality within a capitalist framework: for 300 years of gross oppression have placed the black people at a disadvantage from which they cannot recover without special measures which capitalism never has or would envisage. The Negro has been robbed by slavery for two centuries and by colonial-type super-exploitation for another.

. . . to expect that the captains of American industry . . . will provide funds to make up this wholesale robbery is of course sheer fantasy. The 300-year differential can be wiped out only in the context of a situation in which the dispossessed white workers, together with their black brothers, take full control of our country, establishing a system of socialist public ownership.

All the same, Lightfoot strongly opposes tendencies towards Negro passivity on the grounds that reforms are impossible within capitalism and the people must 'wait for socialism to come.' On the contrary he sees the struggle of the Afro-Americans for their rights as a vital component of the forward movement of all working people for the new American revolution. And he advances a challenging list of radical demands capable of realisation within the framework of capitalism, and warmly backs the demands for 'black power' meaning 'essentially the right of the Negro people to have a share in the power structure of this country.'

## **INSPIRATION FROM AFRICA**

The inspiration for the black man in the United States to seek a socialist solution has arisen out of the ebb and flow of the African revolution.

With these words, Claude Lightfoot introduces a section on his visit, some years back, to various West African countries. He was deeply impressed by Nkrumah's achievements in Ghana, and includes a warmly-worded tribute addressed directly to 'Comrade Nkrumah.'

But though he makes the essential points, this reviewer at any rate has the view that Claude Lightfoot should, in his future writing on the African theme in its relation to the United States, lay more emphasis on the significance, both for America and Africa, of the most crucial struggles in the continent: namely those in the South, the most developed area, against the fortress of white supremacy. For it is here, as in the United States, that the decisive struggle for the dignity and equality of the children of Mother Africa is being fought and must be won.

And he positively must find time in his busy life to write again and again on these themes, because he brings to his subject knowledge, lucidity and a level head—combined with a passion for liberation—which our people are sorely in need of. I think Claude Lightfoot's book is a brilliant, informative and indispensable guide to the struggle of our people in the United States today.

**A. LERUMO**



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## Algeria

WE HAVE READ with interest the article published in your third quarter 1968 issue under the signature of J. J. Jabulani on Algeria 'The Cure for Instability.' On behalf of our Party we thank you for the help you give us in showing the real conditions in Algeria. We will however make two remarks:

—There has not been any Congress of the F.L.N. in December 1967. The last (and only) Congress was held during Ben Bella's time in April 1964.

—The Algerian Communists are now organised in the 'Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste d'Algerie' in which former members of the left wing of the F.L.N. who have been gained to scientific socialism are also working. The members of this Marxist-Leninist party are fighting for legality and for the unity of all anti-imperialist and progressive forces. So, it is not quite correct to ask for the 'lifting of the ban on the Communist Party' as it is said in your article.

HENRI ALLEG

## Dark days in Ghana

I HAVE JUST FINISHED reading the No. 34 (third quarter 1968) issue of THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST, and feel that I must at once express my surprise and indignation at your reviewer's treatment of President Nkrumah's book *Dark Days in Ghana*. I have read this book with great interest and consider it an immensely valuable contribution to the literature of the African Revolution. The author has achieved his purpose in exposing the true nature of the 'coup' in Ghana and publication of the facts may, as he himself says, help to prevent in other progressive independent African states.

Anyone reading the review you have printed might well suspect the genuineness of your magazine's concern for the communist cause in Africa.

JUNE MILNE

(We are glad to publish Mrs. Milne's letter as expressing a point of view contrary to that of our reviewer concerning Kwame Nkrumah's book. However we cannot pass without comment over her final paragraph. The

setback in Ghana was a major historical event with grave consequences for our continent. It calls for a profound and perhaps prolonged analysis and discussion among all African revolutionaries. And with all respect to the great contributions of President Nkrumah, such a discussion requires a frank and open atmosphere, without regard to personalities, however eminent. Since the purpose of the review was to contribute to this discussion and advance the African Revolution we think it is unwarranted to question our devotion, or that of our reviewer, to the cause for which we stand—EDITOR.)

## **Czechoslovakia**

We, South Africans temporarily resident in the German Democratic Republic, are in full agreement with the statement issued by the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party on the protective measures taken by the five fraternal socialist countries of the Warsaw Treaty Pact to prevent counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia and to save the socialist achievements of the people there from being destroyed.

The Party statement makes it absolutely clear that any breach in the socialist camp does irreparable harm to the liberation movements, peoples' power and world peace.

Those who are today crying loudest about 'freedom' in Czechoslovakia are the enemies of our people at home. For instance, the capitalist monopoly press in South Africa, the British Labour Government, which is betraying the African people in Zimbabwe, and the ruling clique in Bonn who give their full support to Vorster, Smith and the Portuguese colonialists. The former Nazis sitting in the government seats in Bonn have the nerve to talk about intervention in Czechoslovakia when they refuse to recognise existing European borders and try to revise the results of the Second World War by making territorial demands on the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia as well as wanting to annex the socialist German state, the G.D.R.

It is noteworthy that the very circles which refer to the brave liberation fighters of the African National Congress and the Zimbabwe African People's Union as 'terrorists' also refer to the protective measures of the five fraternal socialist countries in Czechoslovakia as 'aggression', 'intervention', 'invasion' and so on. They deliberately change the meaning of words to suit their imperialist propaganda against the peoples.

The anger of our enemies at the turn of events in socialist Czechoslovakia shows that they suffered a severe defeat there. A defeat for our enemies is a victory for us. It clearly shows that we and our comrades in the socialist countries face a common enemy.

T. C. A.





# THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN CRISIS

*Statement by the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party.*

THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY is gravely concerned over the turn of events in Czechoslovakia. We fully respect the right of our comrades of the fraternal Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to take radical measures to correct bureaucratic distortions, economic blunders and wrong methods of ensuring Party leadership. Indeed our observations showed us that such measures were long overdue, and their implementation would result in strengthening socialism in the C.S.S.R. and thus the entire socialist camp.

A serious and growing threat has arisen from reactionary, anti-socialist forces in the country, based on remnants of the former exploiting classes, and supported by international imperialism. They are conducting a well-planned counter-revolutionary campaign to undermine the achievements of Socialist Czechoslovakia, and the security of the entire socialist community of nations.

The future of socialism in Czechoslovakia is a matter which vitally affects not only the people of that country but the whole of the socialist camp, of the international working class and national liberation movements.

We fully appreciate and share the anxiety of the Soviet Union and other countries of the Warsaw Pact over these developments. It is false and slanderous to paint the situation as if the Soviet Union were resisting the process of 'democratisation' in Czechoslovakia and threatening to intervene in the internal affairs of that country.

It is rather a tribute to the internationalism and sense of responsibility of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the leaders of other countries of the Warsaw Pact that they should offer their assistance in preserving the socialist gains of the Czech and Slovak working people.

The main enemy of the Czechoslovak working class and its Communist Party is the same as that of all progressive forces in the world: international imperialism and the bourgeois and landlord exploiting classes. We urge upon our fellow-Communists of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to mobilise all their resources against these reactionary forces, within and outside the country; to assert Party leadership in the fields of propaganda and information, to rally the masses and unite the Party and working class against the main enemy. We pledge our support to carry out these aims.

We, South African Communists, declare that the future of Czechoslovakia is the concern not only of Europe but of the progressive anti-imperialists throughout the world. Any weakening of the anti-imperialist front—as we in Africa have learnt from bitter experience—is a setback to our struggle on an international scale, including our own bitter struggle for the liberation of Southern Africa.

July 29th, 1968

*Statement by the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party.*

IN ITS STATEMENT of July 29th, 1968, our Central Committee expressed grave concern at the direction events were taking in Czechoslovakia. We welcomed the measures to correct serious past distortions of socialist democracy and economic abuses. But we regarded with serious apprehension the use being made of the occasion by anti-socialist and reactionary forces within and outside the country which, without effective reply, could endanger the socialist gains of the Czechoslovakian working people and jeopardise the security of the socialist community of nations. For this reason we fully understood the concern of the Marxist-Leninist Parties of the Soviet Union and other neighbouring socialist countries, and appreciated their efforts to strengthen socialism in Czechoslovakia and rebuff the forces of counter-revolution.

Unfortunately, since that time the situation has deteriorated. Despite agreements reached with the leaders of the Soviet Union and allied socialist states at Cierna nad Tissa and Bratislava, adequate counter-measures were not taken and the dangers of a counter-revolutionary break-through increased rather than diminished—with



internal divisions and disorientation apparently gravely weakening the ability of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to check the drift.

In the face of these circumstances we understand that a majority of the presidium of the C.P. of Czechoslovakia and the Government appealed to the Soviet Union and other neighbouring Warsaw Pact governments to render aid to them, including the provision of armed forces, to defeat the threat of counter-revolution, of the restoration of capitalism and the opening up of socialist Czechoslovakia to penetration by international imperialism.

We consider that the response to this request by the countries and parties concerned to be entirely warranted and necessary. We must deeply regret that affairs in Czechoslovakia had taken such a turn as to require such unusual and exceptional measures, but we fully support the action of the fraternal Parties of the Soviet Union, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria and Poland. Had they failed so to respond they would have failed in their duty to the Czechoslovak working people, and risked the loss of Socialist Czechoslovakia, with incalculable consequences to the socialist community and to the cause of national independence, people's power and peace everywhere.

The Czechoslovakian events have been made the occasion for an unprecedented new anti-Soviet campaign by the forces of imperialism, Social Democracy and other elements throughout the world, on the pretext that, for motives of their own, the Soviet and Allied states are interfering in the purely internal affairs of another country.

We believe these allegations to be without foundation. We are convinced that the allied socialist states acted from principled motives and a high sense of responsibility to the international working class and national liberation movements.

The Czech and Slovak people will solve their own internal problems themselves; the allied forces are there to establish the necessary conditions to enable them to do so. We express our solidarity with the Czechoslovak people and our confidence that they will overcome the forces of reaction.

The Central Committee calls upon all our members and supporters to fight vigorously against the anti-Soviet campaign and to strengthen with all their might the fraternal ties within the international Communist movement, and between Communist and non-Communist fighters against imperialism, so as to defeat the world-wide counter-revolutionary offensive of reaction, and to win liberation for our motherland and advance the cause of world peace and socialism.

August 23rd, 1968

*Statement by the African National Congress (SA) on the situation in Czechoslovakia.*

THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES are great supporters of the liberation struggle throughout the world and we are confident that their unity and joint might will remain unimpaired by recent events in Czechoslovakia.

The recent statement by Mr. Cernic, Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, on the dangerous situation which developed in the country and which was deliberately engineered by right-wing counter-revolutionaries with the support of imperialism, throws further light and justification for the steps taken by the Warsaw Pact countries.

The gravity of the situation which faced the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia and the other socialist states is revealed in the following extracts from the Prime Minister's speech to the Prague Parliament reported in the *Dar Es Salaam Standard* of September 14th, 1968:

We did not manage to analyse trends affecting both the internal political arrangement of the country and its consequences for our international position

Further,

the serious danger from the right led to the conclusion that there was an actual danger to the interests of all socialist countries.

The normalisation of the situation in Czechoslovakia is the concern of the family of socialist countries and the peoples of the world.

The fraternal negotiations between the U.S.S.R. and the Czechoslovak Government, and the implementation of the agreements reached, we believe, will solve the problem and thus maintain their unity which will protect and consolidate the achievements of their revolutions and make them continue to march arm-in-arm to fulfil the objectives of international socialism.

September 19th, 1968

D. NOKWE  
*Secretary-General.*



# LANDMARKS OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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## MOSES M. KOTANE \*

MOSES KOTANE is the member with the longest active service in our national movement. This year Moses Kotane has been a member of the A.N.C. for over forty years. Throughout this period he has been a tireless consistent and principled fighter for freedom. Today, alert and youthful as ever, Kotane is in the thick of the national revolutionary armed struggle waged by Mkhonto WeSizwe under the leadership of the A.N.C. His contribution to our movement and to the cause of the oppressed people of South Africa is immense.

Moses Kotane was born in the rural area of Tampusstad in the Rustenburg district of the Transvaal on August 9th, 1905. Of peasant stock, he left home as a young man to seek work on the Rand. He joined the A.N.C. at the end of 1927. A year later he joined the Communist Party of South Africa. It is a tribute to the patriotism and statesmanship of Kotane that from the comparatively early age of 34 he was entrusted with the highest responsibilities in both organisations.

In these days when expressions like 'youth,' 'revolutionary,' and 'generation gap' are bandied about loosely, Moses Kotane is an example of the true revolutionary fighter whose merit rests on consistent hard work and loyalty to the cause of freedom through forty years of the zigzags of struggle in South Africa.

The following interview was held in Morogoro, Tanzania. In it Moses Kotane answered questions put by a *Sechaba* correspondent:

*Question: Comrade Kotane, we believe you are one of the oldest active members of the African National Congress. When did you join Congress and what prompted you to do so?*

Yes, I suppose I must be one of the oldest active members of the A.N.C. I am not certain of the exact date when I joined the Movement, but it was somewhere towards the end of 1927 or the beginning of 1928.

It is not always easy to remember the details of an event which

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\* Moses Kotane—elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of South Africa in 1938 and continuously re-elected to that position until the Party was declared illegal in 1950—is today the Treasurer General of the African National Congress. This interview with him and the introductory remarks are reprinted from *SECHABA*, organ of the A.N.C. (Vol. 2, No. 8, August 1968)

occurred some forty years back. What I do remember is that from my youth I have always had a deep-seated hatred of foreign domination and exploitation. As one who detested foreign political and economic exploitation, racial discrimination and social humiliation and insults, I saw in the A.N.C. a formidable instrument with which the African people could rid themselves of a scourge and national calamity.

It is a well-known historical fact that our forefathers and earlier leaders were defeated by the invaders because they were terribly divided on tribal lines. Thus the invaders were able to defeat the various tribes one by one. Recognising this important fact, the A.N.C. made the question of national unity and elimination of tribal divisions and suspicions, its cardinal principle and political objective.

*In your long experience within Congress there have been many changes of leaders. Who would you say influenced Congress most?*

In the 56 years of its existence the A.N.C. never really had many radical or complete changes in its leadership. There were many changes of the heads of the organisation and some slight changes brought about by periodical accession of new blood to its national policy-making body, the National Executive Committee. Strange as it may appear, the leadership of the A.N.C. has always been collective. So, no single leader could correctly be said to have alone influenced the Congress more than any other member of the National Executive. This is not to say there were no outstanding individual leaders. There have been many over the years.

*What are the most important landmarks in the history of Congress, especially during your membership of the A.N.C.?*

There have naturally been many important events affecting the A.N.C. in this long period starting from the Jubilee of Congress in 1937, which saw a great revival in the organisation after a period of great difficulty. During the Second World War there were growing demands for militant mass actions against oppression. The year 1946 was an important one. It was during that year that the Passive Resistance Campaign of the South African Indian Congress took place. This occurred at the same time as a great Anti-Pass Campaign organised by the A.N.C. The well-known Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Pact was entered into, providing for co-operation between the A.N.C. and the S.A.I.C. Very important was the great African Mine Workers Strike under the leadership of J. B. Marks.

Another important year for the A.N.C. was 1949. The Programme of Action of 1949 was the basis of many mass activities which were to shake the political scene in the fifties. The forms and methods of



struggle were formulated and laid down in that document. Prominent among these methods was the national industrial strike, which was often used.

1950 saw the first united front conference called by the National Executive of the Congress. The conference was called to devise ways and means of defeating the notorious Suppression of Communism Bill. By that time there had been a major change in the leadership of the organisation.

Other important landmarks were in 1952 when the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign was launched. This was one of the greatest campaigns organised by the Congress and it laid the basis for the building of the A.N.C. as a big mass movement. In 1953 the annual conference of the A.N.C. will be remembered for its epoch-making decision to organise a Congress of the People. This great Congress adopted the Freedom Charter, which is the common programme of the A.N.C. and all progressive organisations in our country.

Perhaps the most important landmark of all was the decision taken in 1961 to organise Mkhonto WeSizwe as a national revolutionary army.

*You are a well-known and prominent Communist. The A.N.C. has been constantly attacked by sections of the Western press and governments as being a so-called 'communist front organisation.' What is your answer to such statements?*

Yes, I am a Communist and have never denied that I was. My membership of the former Communist Party of South Africa was never a secret to members of the African National Congress. I joined the Communist Party a year after I had joined the A.N.C. I was a member of both organisations from 1928 to 1950, when the C.P.S.A. was suppressed by the fascist government of South Africa. I was elected to the national executive of the A.N.C. at a time when I was General Secretary of the C.P.S.A. The reasons for this are the following:

The A.N.C. was and always has been a broad national organisation and not a sectional or class party;

The political demands and aims and objects of the A.N.C. and the short-term or immediate aims of the C.P.S.A. were similar;

I hope and believe that I am in the leadership of the A.N.C. through merit and because of my past and present service to the organisation;

The fact that I am a Communist has never changed or interfered with my representations on behalf of the A.N.C. When I have been charged with a mission by the A.N.C. National Executive, I have protected and promoted the interests of the A.N.C. and have never changed my mandate. Likewise when I have been charged with a mission by the

Communist Party I have stuck to the terms of my mandate and defended the interests of the Party. In the formulation of policy I never think of two organisations. I look for a correct political stand and formulation for the organisation concerned;

The attacks on the A.N.C. are either malicious or based on a misunderstanding of the character of our struggle. They are also largely due to the hoary old-wives-tale of a 'communist conspiracy' everywhere and in everything.

*How do you see the end of apartheid?*

My considered view is that it is only through a grim and bitter armed struggle that the system of apartheid can be overthrown by the oppressed people of South Africa. We must fight.

*Comrade Kotane, as a person who has participated so long in the various phases of our struggle against oppression, what message have you to give to the youth both at home and abroad?*

I should like to issue this appeal to the youth of South Africa:

At this hour of destiny your country and your people need you. The future of South Africa is yours and it will be what you make of it! Remember our heroes who are today sacrificing their lives for the freedom of their country and for the freedom of their persecuted, terrorised and tortured people. Our gallant and heroic fighters expect every young South African to join the struggle for the freedom of the fatherland and our people.

To our friends all over the world I wish to say that we have now begun our armed struggle against the evil forces of racialism, apartheid and imperialism in Southern Africa. Our men are facing great odds. Not only do our fighters have to face the soldiers of fascist South Africa and Ian Smith, but in addition they have to face the huge material resources of the Western imperialist powers. We on our side have good friends, supporters and well-wisher all over the world who have always given us and are giving their moral support and encouragement. But moral support and encouragement cannot win a battle. We need increased material support. We need funds, medicine, clothing, blankets, boots, soap, cigarettes, and above all—arms.



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