

## OUR PARTY

An Address by Dan Tloome at a meeting held in London on 30 July 1986 to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the South African Communist Party

Distinguished Visitors, Friends and Members;  
Your Excellencies and Comrades !

We have great pleasure in welcoming you to this gathering, held to commemorate the 65th birthday of the South African Communist Party and to take stock of our position in the National Democratic Revolution now under way.

### Our International Family

~~Our~~ Party is remarkable in many ways. It is not, however, unique. That is a quality which no Communist Party claims or desires. There are close on 100 Communist Parties scattered around the globe. <sup>Each</sup> All retain a separate identity that bears the stamp of history, tradition, and adaptation to circumstances of time and place. Yet all adhere to basic principles of Marxist-Leninist socialism, sharing important characteristics of doctrine, theory, organisation and aims

As a member of the Communist International pioneered in 1919 by that revolutionary genius V.I. Lenin, the Party accepted and ever since maintained the commitment and discipline expected of all those belonging to the world-wide fraternity of Communists. Their common aim is to establish working class rule, promote a planned economy based on public ownership, do away with all forms of national and race discrimination, and advance towards a world order based on equality, peace and friendship between nations. We set great store by our fraternal alliance with the Soviet Union and its socialist allies. They have been a great source of inspiration and material aid for the Party and our colleagues in the national liberation movement

Born in 1921 on July 30th the Party underwent its baptism of fire in the epic Rand Revolt of 1922. Though newly born, the Party took a leading hand in that great struggle of white workers against the armed forces of a State controlled by huge mining corporations and the interests of their overseas shareholders. The Communists, who at that time were deeply rooted in the white section of the working class, while deploring the strike's racial dimension, adopted the slogan of being with the workers in struggle wherever they are, and called on the strikers to go forward side by side with their fellow African workers in a joint struggle for freedom from capitalist exploitation and race discrimination.

### ~~Outlets~~ Black Republic

Our Part never departed from these basic concepts, neither during the Rand Revolt

nor in 1928 when it made an historic turn from being the left wing of the labour movement to becoming the militant working class wing of the liberation movement. That transformation took place when the Party, guided by the Communist International, adopted a policy of working for the creation of what came to be known as the Black Republic, an independent state with a government elected by a majority of citizens, black and white, under a system of adult suffrage based on equality for members of all race and national groups

Though a commonplace today, when a vote for all is on the agenda of practical politics, the announcement of the Party's decision to work for an extension of the franchise to all adult South Africans came as a bombblast in 1928 among Africans and whites of all shades of opinion. S.P. Bunting that dedicated and courageous communist leader, took the message into the Transkei during a general election, suffered severe persecution, and bore the brunt of the storm that raged within the Party and throughout the working class movement around the slogan

It was far removed from the thinking of radicals in all sections, including the African National Congress. The most important immediate effect was on the Party itself. Its African membership shot up from 200 in 1927 to 1 600 in 1928. Twenty African and Coloured delegates and ten whites, representing about 3 000 members, attended the seventh annual conference in January 1929. The African influx included teachers, such as Edwin Mofutsanyana and J.B. Marks, workers such as Moses Kotane and Johannes Nkosi, who Africanised the Party, wrote articles for its press in Tswana, Sesuthu, Zulu and Xhosa, organised branches in country districts or concentrated on trade union work

### Outlawed

Through patient and dogged work the Party laid a firm basis in the working class, including the whites, and was adequately represented in the South African Trades and Labour Council by such veterans as Bill Andrews, Willie Kalk and Izzy Wolfson, to mention only a few. At the same time its African members were active in the African National Congress, keeping it together during a period of decline in the capitalist crisis of the 1930s.

At this time Afrikaner nationalism, egged on by the Broederbond and the Dutch Reformed Churches launched a frontal attack on the trade unions and the Party. The attack failed to dislodge the Party trade unionists, but was renewed during the war, more than 40 years ago. Communism, declared the Cape synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, had spread its tentacles over Africans and the unions in a bid for revolution, atheism, equality and the abolition of private property. The church was instructed to fight the menace and urge the government to suppress the Party

Ten years later the racist government headed by D.F.Malan, former member of the Cape Synod and preacher turned politician, passed the Suppression of Communism Act outlawing the Party. In its condemnation of the measure, the Party's Central Committee warned that all persons, organisations and institutions who raise the demand for an end to racial discrimination are in danger of being branded and declared illegal. But no law could crush "the desire of the overwhelming majority of South Africans for a society based on justice and equality; and no government would be able to deprive Communists of their "passionate desire for peace and security for all, a condition possible only under a socialist order"

The Party was banned because of its total rejection of apartheid and ~~the~~ its life-long struggle to organise and unite workers of all races against capitalist exploitation. Ten years later, in 1960, the axe fell on the African National Congress. It too went underground under conditions that favoured the growth of an enduring alliance between the forces of national liberation and class struggle

### Our Objectives

Our Party is a focal point in the debate now taking place about constitutions and policies of a liberated South Africa. An issue of great concern to revolutionaries and reactionaries alike is the relation between the Party and the ANC. The question is persistently raised by the various interest groups - businessmen, trade unionists, university personnel, students and spokesmen of various churches - who travel from South Africa to discuss the future with the ANC

P.W.Botha, trying to hold back the pressures for talks with the ANC, has said that he is willing to meet the 'pure nationalists' within the movement, provided they detach themselves from the Communists, renounce violence and lay down their arms. The offer is absurd, coming from a government that is in disarray and on the verge of collapse. Botha can hardly suppose that the ANC will take him seriously; his main purpose is to blame the Communists for his troubles, and persuade the rest of the ANC to repudiate the Party

To demonstrate our wickedness, P.W.Botha has quoted extensively from a discussion paper issued by the Political Bureau in May, 1986 under the title "The Developing Situation and some of our Strategic and Tactical objectives". The quoted passages appeared in the South African press. It is no secret therefore that to achieve people's power the Party is attempting to "mobilise the masses" for political action and armed struggle. Botha seems to think that his spies pulled off a remarkable feat by obtaining a copy of the document. In fact, it adds little to what has been said before in statements and speeches by Party spokesmen on the objectives of the revolution and the tasks of Communists. It is however an important contribution and merits serious study. I shall therefore conclude my talk by summarising its main provisions

The documents describes the class content of our revolution are an alliance of urban and rural working people with other groups of black South Africans who will gain materially from the transition to a liberated South Africa under majority rule

Another important category consists of a so-called "liberal" bourgeoisie whose representatives initiated the current round of talks with the ANC. They reject "old style" apartheid; but their primary concern ~~is~~ is to preserve capitalism and therefore negate the the revolutionary struggle for majority rule. This approach is shared by Van Zyl Slabbert and other members of the Progressive Federal Party

In spite of its resistance to a fundamental restructuring of the social order, the "liberal" bourgeoisie is a potential ally of importance, particularly in view of the threat posed by Neo-Nazi ultra racists and the possibility of a naked military dictatorship.

While taking note of these currents, all sections of the revolution agree that its immediate aim is to broaden their base and organise a united front for the overthrow of the racist autocracy. The main thrust of this strategy is the revolutionary seizure of power by an alliance headed by the ANC. The Party's mission is serve as an independent vanguard of the working class and prepare the way for a transition to socialism. It is not 'on the agenda' at the present time but in the words of Lenin, our revolution is 'taking the first step towards it in the only possible way, along the only correct path, namely the path of a democratic republic'

This was the path marked out 60 years ago by Party stalwarts and visionaries such as James La Guma, Johnny Gomas, Sydney Bunting and Moses Kotane. As the revolution unfolds, bringing to fruition their dreams and the cause for which they suffered and sacrificed, we proudly salute their memories and those of the thousands of combatants who died in the struggle for national liberation and socialism

Long live the National Democratic Revolution

Long live the unity of National Liberators and Communists

Long live the international fraternity of Communist Parties

Long live the South African Communist Party

What is it that makes South Africa the eye of the global revolution, a storm raging on all continents. One reason is the heroism of our revolutionary, whose ages range from 8 to 80. There is no parallel in Africa to the duration of ~~the~~ the wars of liveratn, the enormous discrepancy ~~between the forces~~ in material resources between the forces of reaction and those of the fighters for freedom, and the stubborn determination of boys and men who use sticks, stones and petrol bombs to against armoured cars and troop carriers

There is another reason for the prominence given to our revolution. It is a war by all possible means against the last remaining remnants of colonial servitude, against the inhumanity of whites towards Africans that marked the centuries of slavery and the slave trade. Apartheid is a crime being seen as a crime against humanity, a violation of human rights, a religious heresy, and an abomination in the eyes of all who value peace, democracy and friendship between peoples. ~~The fight against apartheid transcends all ideologies. It is conceivable that the racist-fascist now in control with the aid of enormous armed forces will remain in power for years, but nothing can stop the advance of the SA revolution to its primary goal of placing power in the hands of the people~~ The fight against apartheid transcends all ideologies. It is conceivable that the racist-fascist now in control with the aid of enormous armed forces will remain in power for years, but nothing can stop the advance of the SA revolution to its primary goal of placing power in the hands of the people