

development would make it possible once more to address the people in the 'limpid, unequivocal' language of Marxism-Leninism. *The African Communist* commenced publication as a quarterly in October 1959, at first anonymously but from its third issue in September 1960 announcing that it was the organ of the South African Communist Party. It was on July 14, 1960, however, in the midst of the state of emergency declared by the Government after the police massacres at Sharpeville and Langa, that the Party first declared its existence by issuing in its own name a leaflet calling on the people to intensify their resistance to the repression of the apartheid regime.

The decade of the fifties witnessed the greatest upsurge of the South African liberation movement since the formation of Union in 1910. The Defiance Campaign of 1952, the Congress of the People in 1955, the bus and potato boycotts, the formation of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, the treason trial, the rural revolts, the campaign against the extension of passes to women – everywhere the people were on the march, in their tens and hundreds of thousands. And in the vanguard of the mass resistance to apartheid tyranny were to be found the leaders of the Congress movement and the Communist Party, working together more closely and effectively than ever before.

Symbolically the decade had opened with the calling of a Day of Protest on June 26, 1950, by the African National Congress with the support of the Communist Party, the Indian Congress, the African People's Organisation and the ANC Youth League. The Day of Protest took the form of a strike in protest against the Suppression of Communism Act which, the ANC Executive said, 'is primarily directed against the Africans and other oppressed people, and is designed to frustrate all their attempts to work for the fulfilment of their legitimate demands and aspirations'. That Day of Protest led to June 26 being celebrated thereafter as South African Freedom Day, and the unity of Communists and non-Communists in the liberation movement which was displayed on that day has become ever deeper and more profound in the ensuing decades.

#### **DOCUMENT 95:**

#### **'Our Policy', editorial in *The Guardian*, June 29, 1950.**

With the passing of the Suppression of Communism Bill, it becomes unlawful 'to perform any act which is calculated to further the achievement of any of the objects of Communism' or 'to advocate, advise, defend or encourage the achievement of any such object or any act or omission which is calculated to further the achievement of any such object'.

*Guardian* readers are no doubt acquainted with the definition of Communism contained in the Act. But how does one judge what is 'calculated' to further the achievement of any of the objects of Communism? The definition is framed so widely, and political terminology is in any case so unprecise, that one is left in doubt as to exactly what would and what would not constitute an offence under

the Act. Fear of making a mistake will no doubt persuade many not to hold or express opinions which are unpopular with the Government in power, however far they may be from Communism, however uncalculated to further the achievement of Communism. In this way the Nationalists undoubtedly hope to intimidate all sections of the political opposition, even though they may not at present contemplate taking action against them under the Bill.

### **FIGHT FOR JUSTICE**

However much we may regret and condemn the censorship of human thought in this way, the fact remains the Suppression of Communism Bill is now law; and The Guardian intends to publish nothing in contravention of the law. Within the limits of the Act, we feel it is still open to The Guardian to further its main task – to give publicity to the wrongs and injustices which are daily perpetrated in this country, to fight against the tyranny of the colour bar, to give expression to the grievances and aspirations of the oppressed people of this country, to press for social reforms, and to continue the struggle for the achievement of equal rights for all South Africans, irrespective of race, creed or colour.

Above all we intend to carry on with the utmost vigour and determination the struggle against the Nationalist Government and its apartheid policy. We remain convinced that the longer this Government is in power, the nearer we shall be driven towards the excesses of open fascism.

The Nationalist road leads to increasing tension and bitterness between one race and another, to the debasement of all truth and morality, to the degradation of all our peoples. So long as the Nationalists remain in power, there is no prospect of peace and progress in our country, only of an increasing burden of poverty and hardship for all, resulting in ever-sharpening race and class conflict.

### **REPEAL GESTAPO ACT**

We intend also to continue to protest against the Suppression of Communism Act and to use every lawful means to work for its repeal. The basic task before all democrats is to restore freedom of speech, Press and organisation in our country, to restore to the individual his right to think and speak as he pleases without the restraint of fear.

Such a policy, we are convinced, will be supported by the majority of people in South Africa, who want an end to race-hatred and Nationalist tyranny, who long for peace and the opportunity to live out their lives in dignity and freedom. In this conviction we are confident that our readers will continue to give us their moral and material backing, without which our task is impossible.