

A high-contrast, black and white profile photograph of a man, J.B. Marks, looking towards the right. He is resting his chin on his hand, which is clasped in front of him. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of his face and hand against a dark background. The image is the central focus of the magazine cover.

# The African Communist

NO 51 FOURTH QUARTER 1972

**JB MARKS  
1903-1972**

## **INKULULEKO PUBLICATIONS**

Distributors of *The African Communist*

### **PRICE AND SUBSCRIPTION**

**AFRICA**            *1 shilling (5p) per copy*  
*4s. (20p) per year post free*  
*Airmail £1.50 per year*

**EUROPE**            *15p per copy*  
*60p per year post free*

**N.AMERICA**        *50 cents per copy*  
*\$ 2.00 per year post free*  
*Airmail \$ 5.50 per year*

**INKULULEKO PUBLICATIONS, 39 Goadge Street, London, W.1.**

**THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST**

*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*

**J.B. MARKS  
MEMORIAL  
ISSUE**

**No. 51      Fourth Quarter 1972**

## CONTENTS

### IN MEMORIAM – J. B. MARKS 1903–1972

*Member of the National Executive Committee, African National Congress  
Chairman of the South African Communist Party*

5 *Moses M. Kotane*

#### ON THE DEATH OF J.B. MARKS

6 *J.B. Marks*

#### BREAKING THE SHACKLES

*Some recollections, published in World Marxist Review  
(Problems of Peace and Socialism), May 1972*

17 **A SAD FAREWELL**

*The speeches of Alfred Nzo and Yusuf Dadoo at the funeral in  
Moscow on 11 August*

25 **MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCE**

*Messages from five continents, to the Central Committee of the  
South African Communist Party*

33 *Z. Nkosi*

#### THE LIFE OF A REVOLUTIONARY

*A biographical sketch*

\* \* \* \* \*

43 **EDITORIAL NOTES**

*To the Future; Time to Speak Out; Rhodesia and the Olympic  
Games; Which Way Egypt?*

47 *Boris Ponomaryov*

#### 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE USSR

*In preparation for the commemoration, on 30 December 1972, of  
the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the USSR, an inter-  
national conference was convened in Prague on July 5–7, under*

*the joint auspices of the Editorial Board of the World Marxist Review and the Soviet Institute of Marxism-Leninism. We reproduce here the important opening address by B.N. Ponomaryov, head of the Soviet delegation. It will be concluded in our next issue.*

**69 ONE YEAR LATER**

*A statement by the Central Committee of the Sudanese Communist Party on the anniversary of the 19 July Movement.*

**73 Alexander Sibeko**

**STUDENTS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM**

*Thoughts on the notable struggles of students in South Africa and the rising tide of Black consciousness.*

**88 Ali Mattan Hashi**

**THE SOMALI REVOLUTION**

*Colonel Hashi, a member of the Somali Revolutionary Council, explains the background and perspectives before and after the revolution of October 1969.*

**94 Albert Tshume**

**AFRICA'S REVOLUTIONARY WAY FORWARD**

*Laying the basis for what is hoped to be a continuing dialogue on the theme of the non-capitalist road of development, the author explains and defends the concept. We plan a further article in our next issue, and invite readers to participate in the dialogue.*

**111 Peter Mackenzie**

**MALAGASY BREAKTHROUGH**

*A factual background to recent developments in Madagascar.*

**117 BOOK REVIEWS**

*African Liberation Movements (Gibson); New Theories of Revolution (Woddis); African Perspectives (Allen and Johnson, ed.); Rhodesia (Mlambo); An Ill-Fated People (Vambe); South Africa — the Terror of Torture (Hilda Bernstein); Apartheid is Built on Torture (Brian Bunting).*

## **ON THE DEATH OF J. B. MARKS**

The Communist, working class and national liberation movements have lost a man whose qualities it would be difficult to replace.

For me, I have lost not only a leader but also a comrade with whom I have planned and worked for over forty years.

I will never forget him.

**MOSES M. KOTANE**

**General Secretary, South African  
Communist Party**

**Treasurer-General, African National  
Congress of South Africa.**

PAGES FROM HISTORY

# **BREAKING THE SHACKLES**

by J. B. MARKS

Recently a new book, *Fifty Fighting Years*,<sup>1</sup> appeared in London. It is a survey of the history of the South African Communist Party. While work on the book was going on, my Party comrades requested that I should look it through and express my opinion on this treatment of the history of our Party and perhaps recall something to make the necessary additions. My past life rushed into my memory. Just then I was invited to give my recollections in the journal *World Marxist Review*.

I was eighteen years old when, at the end of July 1921, the founding conference of the Communist Party of South Africa was held at the Cape Town City Hall. It was the first Communist Party that had appeared on the African continent. It was founded by D.I. Jones, S.P. Bunting and W.H. Andrews. These wonderful representatives of the labour movement in our country, and internationalists deserve special mention.

I never had a chance to meet Jones. From 1920 on he was in Moscow where, along with representatives of other newly-

1 *Fifty Fighting Years – The South African Communist Party 1921-1971*. By A. Lerumo, Inkululeko Publications, London.

founded brother parties, he helped Lenin to found the Third, Communist International and to build it up organisationally. Four years later, in 1924, he died of consumption. But while I did not know him personally, he exerted a direct and strong influence on the formation of my world outlook. It was he who taught us to approach every event from a class and Party standpoint. He set us an example of Leninist internationalism.

Jones was the first man in our country who, on hearing the news of the victorious rising in Petrograd, fully appreciated the significance of the 1917 events, which shook the world. He immediately saw the magnitude of the revolution and he told us, his young comrades, that it was not a miracle but the greatest advance ever made by mankind towards freedom and socialism. He was certain that the workers of South Africa must follow the same course and he fought for it. Even today I cannot read without emotion the following lines he wrote in November 1917: "Our task in South Africa is a great one. We must educate the people in the principles of the Russian Revolution. We have to prepare the workers against any attempt to mobilise them against their Russian comrades, and in preparing, spread the flames of the most glorious and most peaceful revolution of all time."

I was strongly impressed by Jones's report to the Comintern entitled "Communism in South Africa". In it he dealt in full measure, and even prophetically, with that difficult task which was so highly important to us. He called on us to regard the task of "bringing Negro workers" into the fight for the working-class cause and seeking co-operation between the movement of white workers and that of Negroes as a task of vital importance. Jones revealed to us the breadth and flexibility of genuine revolutionary, Marxist strategy and tactics having nothing to do with barren sectarianism, which regards every movement for partial reforms as a betrayal of the proletariat's interests and dismisses every struggle, except



the 'purely proletarian' struggle, as a waste of energy.

Our Party is indebted to Jones for its early knowledge of the great Lenin's ideas. He explained them to us indefatigably, and did that even in his last letter from the hospital. I would like to quote several lines from that appeal to us. "I have just been reading one of Lenin's early brochures of 1902, where he declares that the political struggle of the working class is not exclusively a struggle for the economic betterment of the workers, but also a struggle in which the party of the workers enters in defence of every oppressed section, even non-worker sections, of society. For example he cited the call to the workers to demonstrate against the Czar drafting . . . students into the army. A positive attitude on every issue!"

I learned a great deal from W. Andrews, an outstanding organiser and revolutionary. It was he who announced the founding of the South African Communist Party at the meeting held before the Party's founding congress, which sat from July 30 to August 1, 1921. He was the Party's first General Secretary. His articles and speeches helped me and my Communist friends the better to see the goals and tasks of our Party and to fight devotedly for the interests of the Party and the people.

I knew S. Bunting best of all. I will come to that somewhat later. At this point I will only say this much, that I am glad because now that a history of the SACP has been written, young Communists and progressive people of our country have an opportunity to learn much that is interesting and instructive about those fiery revolutionaries.

At a time when our Party was being formed, I was a share-cropper working for a white farmer, and a labourer. And before explaining why I became a Communist let me tell you about my modest experiences of that time.

I was born in the town of Ventersdorp in West Transvaal. I was the seventh child of mixed parentage (an African father who was a worker on the South African Railways for the

better part of his life and a mother of white origin who was a laundress and midwife).

In a country where everything was dominated by inhuman laws and racial segregation as early as the turn of the century, the non-white origin doomed me to constant humiliation. I performed all kinds of casual work at the time and this brought me face to face with the lot of the non-European worker who laboured from dawn to dusk. That was when I first realised the need to fight for the workers' just cause.

I was lucky, for I succeeded in finishing a primary school. I wanted to study further but I was barred from a boarding school because of the discrimination against non-whites. In 1919 my parents succeeded in having me enrolled in Kilnerton Teachers' Training College in Pretoria. I remember well my countrymen saying when they saw me off: "John, you must become a priest and pray for us that God will ease our lot."

It was not so easy for a young African to enrol in a teachers' college and a still more difficult task to study in the oppressive atmosphere of drill and violence. Students were locked up and kept on "hard tack"; they were punished for every small fault and often for no fault at all. Naturally most of us could not, and did not, put up with this order of things. In the end, students went on strike and the honour of its leadership fell on me. Thus, for the first time in my life, I acquired some habits of political struggle. I realised that my path was not the career of a clergyman, enjoined by my countrymen, but the path of active struggle against evil. Since that time I have been advocating the need for a constant struggle against racial and social oppression.

But I had to travel a long path before I became a conscious Communist. This happened in the following way. Having overcome considerable difficulties, I at last got a teacher's diploma. I taught in several places in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. I also taught the children of diamond mine workers. African miners performed the most arduous and unhealthy

jobs for a pittance. The recently-born Communist Party conducted active propaganda among the workers. As for me, I could no longer live without fighting our oppressors since the time of the student strike mentioned above. This, incidentally, accounted for frequent changes in places of work. No one wanted to employ a man who was aware of injustice and exploitation and refused to put up with them.

When I was employed at a mine, I naturally joined in the miners' struggle and attended their meetings. Once, at a meeting, I saw on the platform a man whose fiery speech enthralled me and I opened my eyes to many things. I made up my mind to get acquainted with him. It was S.P. Bunting, whom I mentioned before, promising to tell more about him.

When he heard that I was a teacher and had a keen interest in progressive ideas, Bunting invited me to come to Johannesburg, where at 414 Fox Street there were Communist Party headquarters. Making Bunting's acquaintance turned over my life. He apprised me of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. I realised that I should join the Communist Party. I had been prepared for this by my long search for an answer to the question of how to eliminate social and racial hatred, how to secure happiness for my people. It became clear to me that to understand the ideas of Marxism-Leninism means actively struggling for them in the ranks of the Communist Party.

Thus, in 1928, I for ever associated my life with the Communist Party, with the struggle for the triumph of Marxism-Leninism. I realised the main thing at that time, namely, that both whites and Africans must join in the class struggle. I fully realised the harmfulness of nationalist sentiments to which I had not been entirely immune in the past. Marxism-Leninism opened my eyes to the fact that the decisive thing is not national but class distinctions, the irreconcilability of the class contradictions between the proletariat and the capitalists, and that only the working class

can fight consistently against capitalist exploitation, rallying all the oppressed and disinherited behind it. This convinced me that the Communist Party is the only party which can free my people from oppression and lead them to freedom and a just social system.

From then on I took part in many battles carried on by my working class, by my people. For instance, I recall December 1929, the anniversary of the bloody struggle in which Zulus had suffered defeat at the hands of the united forces of colonialists armed to the teeth. Communists decided to use the mournful anniversary for stepping up the movement against racial discrimination. We organised a big meeting of protest in Potchefstroom. The first speaker was E.T. Mofutsanyana, a prominent Communist Party leader. No sooner had he said a few phrases than white racialists howled: "Shut up, Kaffir!" The meeting, however, continued. I also took the floor and spoke for 20 minutes or more. The racialists who were present at the meeting started brawling and opened fire on the crowd. Eleven Africans were wounded, one of them mortally. I was pulled down and trampled underfoot. I was saved from imminent death by a few African women who snatched a pistol out of the hands of the racist who aimed at me.

We turned the funeral of our comrade who had died in the hospital into a massive demonstration. At the graveyard S.P. Bunting said words which were stamped on my memory for all my life: "The seeds of liberation will germinate out of the shed blood!"

In 1931 I was barred from teaching for my political activity. On hearing this, the Party immediately called me to Johannesburg to undertake important organisational work. From that time onwards I continued my political activities in the Communist Party, African National Congress and the trade unions. In 1932 I was elected to the Central Committee. In the same year the Party nominated me for election to

parliament. Being an African, I had no right to seek election to that legislative body but the Party nominated me to stress the utter injustice of a constitution that only served the interests of the whites.

In the Party ranks I learned skilfully to combine legal, illegal and semi-legal means of struggle. I read a lot in those years. To many questions I found answers in the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin. However, I did not have a chance to study the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin thoroughly until I went illegally to the Soviet Union, where I studied in the Communist University of Working People of the East for a while. The works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism have become my companions for all my life. It seems to me (and this will be especially useful for all young Communists to know) that it is not advisable to read works by Marx, Engels and Lenin only once, or to assimilate them at a swoop, so to say. They must be studied constantly. True, the works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism are read differently by a beginner and an experienced fighter, and each time we find ever new valuable ideas and advice.

I recall the great African miners' strike on the Witwatersrand in August 1946. Although the Second World War had come to an end and the colonial system of imperialism had begun to crumble under the impact of the historic victories of the Soviet Union over Nazism, the condition of South African miners remained cheerless. Their wages were abysmally low. The management banned workers' meetings convened without its special permit. Under these conditions, the African Mine Workers' Union demanded a minimum wage and the repeal of draconic measures, failing which strike action would be taken. The employers categorically refused to meet the workers' demands, following which, in May, a conference representing a majority of the gold-mine workers was held in Johannesburg. It was attended by over 1,100 delegates. A general strike was set for August 12.

The appeal to strike was supported by 100,000 miners. The protest movement was joined by workers from other industries. The general strike caused alarm at the New York and London stock-exchanges. Prime Minister Smuts ordered police to open fire on the strikers. Hundreds of miners were killed or wounded. The government never published official data on this. Leaders of the Mine Workers' Union and members of the Johannesburg District Committee of the Party were arrested and were charged with sedition in a trial. Police also arrested me, for at that time I was the Mine Workers' Union president. Only the workers' solidarity saved me and my comrades from the authorities' savage reprisals.

That strike was one of the important events which taught my people, revealed to them what had been hidden from their vision, and destroyed lies and illusions. True, the strike was brutally crushed by the racialist state and reprisals against the miners were succeeded by unprecedented persecution of the Communist Party.

Under the racialist regime, to be a Communist, a fighter for Marxist-Leninist ideas, meant incurring more difficulties and facing greater dangers. Since 1950 the situation had worsened, for the fascist rulers, frightened by the growing anti-racialist and anti-colonialist movement and the spread of progressive ideas, adopted the Suppression of Communism Act. This draconic measure made Communists go underground. It was followed by a series of new heavy blows struck at the Communist Party; many of my comrades-in-arms were arrested.

I would like to tell how the racialists dealt with Bram Fischer, a prominent Communist. He never stopped fighting in even the harsh conditions of illegality, forming militant groups throughout the country and operating for a long time under the very nose of the police. It was only by mere chance that police managed to track him down. His courage was a source of strength to patriots. In the dock he assumed the

role of prosecutor and courageously challenged the monstrous system of racialism. "I, who come from one of the most privileged South African families," Bram Fischer said at the trial, "took the right road. I was with those whom apartheid had robbed of everything. I knew what they expected me to do and I did that. I felt deeply responsible not to those who are indifferent to the suffering of others but to those who suffer." This courageous revolutionary has been in Pretoria prison ever since, sentenced for life. But a party which has such fearless leaders as Bram Fischer is certain, hard as its path may be and however great the sacrifices to be made, to lead the peoples of its country, the long-suffering peoples of South Africa, to freedom and happiness.

I have mentioned a few of our pioneers and leaders in these brief reminiscences. But it would be impossible here to recount the names of all the talented and courageous comrades of our Party. South Africans of all national origins such as Johannes Nkosi, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Alpheus Maliba and many others who faced death and torture in the fascist prison cells or who fell on the battlefields as guerrillas of Umkhonto we Sizwe – side by side with Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela and thousands of non-Communist fighters in our national liberation movement.

Despite all police atrocities, the fascist rulers failed to strangle the Communist Party or stop the spread of Communist ideas in the country. In May 1950 a hastily convened Central Committee dissolved the Communist Party without consulting the Party membership. Subsequent developments clearly revealed the distinction between those Party leaders who regarded this move as a temporary, tactical measure and those who had succumbed to the hardships of the struggle. The staunch Marxist-Leninists, who were in the majority, soon restored their organisation, working underground.

In 1961, having tried all possibilities of bringing about a peaceful transfer of power to the people, our Party decided,

in common with other democratic forces, primarily the African National Congress, on overthrowing the racialist regime by force of arms. To make adequate preparations for this, the Party is carrying on many-sided activity in the country, in which it combines illegal and armed struggle with peaceful and legal struggle where possible. It devotes special attention to the organisational and ideological consolidation of the Party and to the propaganda and dissemination of Marxist-Leninist teachings.

In 1962, the Party held its national conference in illegal conditions. The conference adopted a new programme – The Road to South African Freedom – calling for a united national-liberation front as an immediate task. I was elected Party Chairman. By the time I was expelled from South Africa, in 1963, I had already been restricted from participating in any political or trade-union activities.

A fresh surge of energy for struggle has always been and is given by trips to the Soviet Union, which I visited for the first time in 1933. All the details of this trip are still fresh in my memory. You will readily imagine the impression it left on a man who had just burst from a world where life was subject to the laws of racial segregation and found himself in an entirely new world, the world of socialism. Here he saw that all nations, irrespective of the colour of their skin, enjoy equal rights and live in full harmony.

Since then I have visited the Soviet Union on many occasions and each time I was amazed by the gigantic scale of socialist and communist construction, the immense growth of the people's well-being and the scope of socialist democracy and humanity for all working people. I had the honour of attending the historic 24th CPSU Congress and conveyed to it greetings from the South African Communists.

I was happy to be present in the Soviet Union in the significant year of 1972, when the Soviet people and all progressive humanity are going to solemnly mark the 50th



anniversary of the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a multi-national socialist state, the bulwark of peace and friendship for all peoples.

I would like to end my story by stressing that the struggle waged by the South African Communist Party for the liberation of South Africa is part and parcel of the world anti-imperialist struggle waged by the Soviet Union, the socialist countries, the revolutionary working class and its allies – the oppressed peoples struggling for national freedom.

## THE FUNERAL OF J. B. MARKS

# A SAD FAREWELL

In a moving ceremony at the Novodevichye Cemetery in Moscow on 11 August, many of his friends and supporters gathered to pay their last respects to J.B. Marks. A large group of South Africans was present, prominent among them Moses Kotane, General Secretary of the Communist Party, Alfred Nzo, Secretary-General of the African National Congress, and Yusuf Dadoo, member of the Central Committee of the S.A.C.P. The funeral was also attended by a number of leading representatives of the Soviet Union and of the international Communist movement, as well as many members of the public.

The funeral meeting was addressed by Comrades A. Nzo, I.S. Gustov, candidate member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Hero of the Soviet Union, Academician Y.K. Fyodorov, Vice-Chairman of the Soviet Peace-Committee, G. Starushenko, deputy director of the Africa Institute, and Y.M. Dadoo, on behalf of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party.

A military band played Chopin's Funeral March, and after Comrade Dadoo's address the South Africans sang *Nkosi Sikalel' iAfrika*. The ceremony concluded to the strains of *The International*.

Reproduced below are the speeches of Comrades Nzo and Dadoo.

## **'J.B.'s IMMENSE CONTRIBUTION'**

**Alfred Nzo**

On behalf of the African National Congress and the millions of oppressed people in our land, we are gathered here to say a final farewell to our beloved comrade Marks – a true man of the people and a worthy champion of the working class and all oppressed people of our country.

There are indeed few men in the history of our land who have equalled comrade JB's immense contribution to the bitter struggles of South Africa's millions against national oppression and exploitation.

Here was a great patriot who blended national fervour with a true spirit of internationalism. For over 40 years he was a loyal and devoted member of our national movement and rose to become one of its chief guides and architects during the period of its emergence as a great revolutionary force. He was one of the founders of African Trade Unionism, the leader of the African Mine-workers Union whose great strike in 1946 shook the ruling class to its foundations. He was a true Marxist Leninist and one of the pillars of the South African Communist Party whose chairman he was when he died. He was well known and loved by millions beyond the borders of our country for his great spirit of internationalism.

Comrade Marks' many-sided qualities enriched our whole movement. In him was personified the indispensable unity of national and class forces which characterises our revolutionary united front. He will be remembered not only as a great political figure but as a man whose warmth and humanity endeared him to all who had the privilege of working with him. No one was afraid of seeking Uncle JB's advice on all manner of problems whether personal or political because they knew that even in the midst of turmoil they would be met with that broad warm smile and fatherly wisdom.

We are all so much the poorer for the passing of a man such as this; a man born out of our struggle but one who at the same time helped so enormously to give it direction and clarity. The cause to which he devoted his whole life is still unfulfilled and he died in forced exile away from the land of his birth. But when the inevitable victory comes it will bear the stamp of this great figure and his name will be honoured by our people forever.





*Yusuf Dadoo*



*Alfred Nzo*



*I. S. Gustov*



Uncle JB's final resting place is here in the land of Lenin – a land which he always correctly regarded as an advanced outpost of humanity's surge towards a life free from national oppression and all forms of exploitation.

It is, of course sad that we cannot lay him to rest in the soil of our own country but it is fitting that his remains should rest in the temporary custody of what comrade Marks always described with real affection as the Land of the Proletariat. To the Soviet People, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government and all who looked after him so lovingly during his last illness we say a humble thank you.

We who remain will dedicate ourselves to complete Uncle JB's life-work. We pledge not only to honour his memory but to ensure that what he stood and worked for throughout his life will come to pass.

We will guard, as he did, the unity of our movement.

We will pursue our national struggle, as he did, in the true spirit of internationalism.

We will make even firmer the bridge which he helped to build in our country between the national and class forces.

Above all, we will live out our lives, as he did, in the service of our revolution and we will ever be inspired by his simple words which explained why he became an activist:

'As for me' he said, 'I could no longer live without fighting our oppressors.'

**AMANDLA NGAWETHU!**

**'TRULY A HERO OF OUR STRUGGLE'**

**Yusuf Dadoo**

We are gathered here to bid our last farewell to one of the greatest sons of our country, South Africa, outstanding fighter of the international working class, John "Beaver" Marks.

Uncle J.B., as he was affectionately known to us all, was truly a hero of our struggle. His long history of courageous leadership of the cause of liberation, his dauntless championing of the aspirations of the

working people, deservedly made his name a household word among the oppressed and exploited people throughout the length and breadth of the land, inspiring confidence among the masses and striking awe into the hearts of the enemy – the ruling class and the white racialists.

As Chairman of our South African Communist Party and a member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress, he played an indispensable role in helping to guide our whole liberation movement through one of its most difficult periods. His conviction that our cause would triumph never for one moment flagged.

After listening to the late S.P. Bunting addressing a meeting of workers at the mine where he was employed, J.B. Marks joined the Communist Party in 1928 and devoted himself thenceforward to the fight for national and social emancipation, undeterred by the fierce hostility of the white racialists towards the revolutionaries of our country. He narrowly escaped death in 1929 when a fascist opened fire on the platform he was speaking from. The incident served only to steel his determination. He was elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1932.

The name of J.B. Marks will ever be associated with the bitter struggles of the African gold miners of the Witwatersrand, surely among the most savagely exploited proletarians in the world. Recruited from all corners of Southern Africa, both inside and outside the borders of the Republic of South Africa, herded like prisoners into barrack-like compounds, and constantly policed and spied upon by the monopoly-capitalist owners and their state, the organisation of these workers was a most formidable task. This task was successfully accomplished by the African Mine Workers' Union under the presidency of our late Comrade J.B. Marks. In August 1946 under his inspiring leadership the miners came out in a historic strike directed at the heart of the cheap labour system until after a week they were forced back to work by police bullets and batons.

There followed a wave of unprecedented repression and persecution of Communists and all revolutionaries which has continued to the present day – first under the Smuts government and then its successor, headed by the openly Nazi Nationalist Party of Malan, Verwoerd and Vorster. The Communist Party was banned in 1950 and the African National Congress in 1960.

J.B. Marks, like his comrades, was subjected to numerous and

repeated bans and restrictions on their activities and movements. He continued undeterred with underground activity, both in the A.N.C. and in the South African Communist Party of which he was elected Chairman at its fifth illegal conference in 1962.

He was then instructed by the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress to join the headquarters of the External Mission in Tanzania in organising our resistance. He stood at the heart of this movement until he suffered a stroke – that is, cerebral damage – one year ago.

Comrade Marks was an outstanding internationalist. As the Chairman of our Party he ardently supported our unanimous policy: unity of the international Communist movement – the core of the worldwide struggle against imperialism and war, for national independence and peace.

As a Marxist-Leninist he firmly believed in the need at all times for the international working class to rally around the banner of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the community of socialist states, the main force against imperialism and reaction.

The Soviet Union – “land of the proletariat” or “the Mecca of revolutionaries” as J.B. was fond of calling this country – was very dear to his heart and it was but fitting that the last year of his life was spent here, and that this great land has become his resting place. The Central Committee of the South African Communist Party expresses its deep and sincere appreciation of the wonderful care and attention which was shown towards Comrade J.B. Marks by the government of the Soviet Union and the leadership of the CPSU, the skill and kindness of the doctors and the nursing staff and the hospitality of the Soviet people.

Farewell Comrade Marks!

Your personal warmth, humanity and charm will ever remain fresh in our minds. We shall ever be inspired by your example as a man, a comrade and a great political figure.

Rest assured that we and the millions of our oppressed and exploited people shall not relent nor waver, but shall continue to work unceasingly, as you did, for the complete victory of the noble cause of destroying once and for all the hideous system of white supremacy and of creating a South Africa free from all forms of exploitation.



We pledge to carry on to the complete victory of our revolution — for the final triumph of the noble cause for which you lived, struggled and died, in your own words:

‘The triumph of peace, national freedom, democracy and socialism, all over the world!’

Hamba kahle, J.B. Marks!  
Maatla ke a rona!  
Amandla ngawethu!  
Mayibuye i’Afrika!



# MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCE

From all parts of the world, messages of condolence on the passing of our late Chairman have been reaching the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party. Those which arrived before the going to press of this issue of *The African Communist* are reproduced below. The Party expresses its appreciation to all who have written to us on this sad occasion.

## COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION

It is with profound grief that we inform you that Comrade John Marks, Chairman of the South African Communist Party, member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress of South Africa died in Moscow on August 1, 1972 after a long and grave illness.

The African and international Communist, workers' and national liberation movements have lost an outstanding figure, true Marxist-Leninist, passionate fighter for the cause of liberation of African peoples from the fetters of imperialism, colonialism and racism.

Comrade John Marks for decades headed the South African Communist Party, he has made an invaluable contribution to the struggle of African proletariat and was a prominent leading figure of the African National Congress of South Africa.

In the years of his indefatigable political activities Comrade Marks consistently upheld the principles of proletarian internationalism, tirelessly fought for the unity and consolidation of the world communist and workers' movement. This has won him deep respect of communists, fighters for national liberation, of all people of integrity in Africa and throughout the world.

Soviet people know Comrade John Marks well as a faithful friend of the Soviet Union, and highly appreciate his contribution to the strengthening of friendship between our parties and peoples. Together with you we are deeply grieved by this severe bereavement.

The fond memory of Comrade John Marks will remain in the hearts of Soviet people forever.

*Central Committee*

### **COMMUNIST PARTY OF BELGIUM**

Comrade Marks made an everlasting contribution to the cause of socialism and the liberation of the South African people from imperialism, racism and oppression. The Belgian Communists will treasure his memory.

*Marc Drumaux*  
*President*

### **BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY**

It was with deep sorrow that we learnt of the heavy loss suffered by the South African Communist Party by the death of its President — Comrade John Marks. The communists and all progressive forces in South Africa are parting with their true son who has devoted his life to the struggle against racism and apartheid, for independence and equality.

With the death of Comrade Marks the international communist and working class movement has lost an outstanding leader and fighter for unity and progress and for the victory of communism.

*Central Committee*

### **COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA**

It was with deep sorrow that we learned of the death of Comrade Marks, Chairman of your fighting Party, outstanding champion of proletarian internationalism, great Communist leader and Marxist-Leninist scholar. With you the International Communist movement mourns the passing of a courageous leader of the revolutionary struggle of the South African working class and toiling masses for freedom, social justice and destruction of the hated fascist apartheid, for peace, social justice, democracy, independence and socialism. . . . Rest assured, dear comrades, that our Party in the spirit of your departed leader, Comrade J.B. Marks, will always march shoulder to shoulder with you to victory in our common cause.

*William Kashtan  
General Secretary*

### **COMMUNIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

Please accept our most profound condolences on the demise of the Chairman of your Party, Comrade J.B. Marks. Your Party and the whole international Communist and workers' movement has lost in his person a devoted active opponent against racialism and Fascism in South Africa, an advocate of the liberation of African countries from colonialism and neo-colonialism, of co-operation of all anti-imperialist forces.

In his unswerving effort for the unity of the world Communist and workers' movement, Comrade Marks always relied firmly on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Let his memory be honoured.

*Central Committee*

## **FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY**

We have learnt with sorrow of the death of Comrade John Marks, chairman of your Party, eminent fighter of the international Communist and labour movement, in the anti-colonialist and anti-racialist struggle. Please convey our condolences to his family and accept, at this sad time, the fraternal solidarity of the French communists with your just struggle.

*Secretariat of the Central Committee*

## **SOCIALIST UNITY PARTY OF GERMANY**

As an outstanding leader of the international Communist and workers' and national liberation movements, as well as an unyielding fighter for the freeing of the African peoples from the shackles of imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racialism, John B. Marks rendered great and lasting services. The Socialist Unity Party of Germany will ever treasure his memory as a true Marxist-Leninist and as for many years the Chairman of the South African Communist Party.

*Erich Honecker*  
*First Secretary, Central Committee*

## **COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN**

It is with the deepest sense of loss that we heard of the untimely loss of that great fighter for freedom and socialism, J.B. Marks. This was a severe blow not only for South Africa but for the international working class.

I knew J.B. personally and with every meeting my admiration for him grew. A truly great man his whole life was a model for the national liberation movement the world over. We in the British movement have always felt the closest friendship and solidarity with the South African Communist Party and people. We pledge anew to do all within our power to fulfill our responsibilities of solidarity with your struggle.

*John Gollan*  
*General Secretary*

## **COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE**

The Communists of Greece will keep forever in their hearts the bright memory of J.B. Marks, who dedicated all his life to the cause of the liberation of the peoples of Africa from the shackles of imperialism, colonialism and racialism, of the defence of the ideals of peace, democracy and socialism; who consistently fought for the unity and consolidation of the ranks of the world Communist and working class movement.

*Kostas Kollyanis*  
*First Secretary, Central Committee*

## **UNITED PARTY OF COMMUNISTS OF HAITI**

We join with you in sorrow at the passing of a great militant, Comrade J.B. Marks. On this sad occasion our Party renews its complete solidarity with you for the liberation of the South African people. Your fight against the racist and neo-colonialist regime of the upholders of apartheid is for us the same as the fight against Duvalier tyranny sustained by North American imperialism. Our two peoples and our two Parties are closely linked in combat against the common enemy, imperialism, the oppressor and exploiter; for national liberation and socialism.

*Jean Gerard*  
*Member of the Central Committee*

## **COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND**

Many members of our leadership had the occasion, and great privilege, of meeting 'Uncle J.B.' personally, and we recognised him not only as a big man physically, but also as a man who was big, tireless and strong in his contribution to the brave struggle of your Party and our common movement of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the world. With you we mourn the passing of an outstanding South African fighter against imperialism, for national liberation and socialism and an ardent internationalist. Salute to his memory!

*Michael O'Riordan*  
*General Secretary*

## **COMMUNIST PARTY OF ISRAEL**

Please accept our heartfelt condolences on the untimely death of Comrade John B. Marks, Chairman of the South African Communist Party. We always admired this staunch fighter against racist apartheid, social and national discrimination; for freedom and international solidarity in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism.

*Meir Vilner*  
*General Secretary*

## **RUMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY**

Following the death of Comrade J.B. Marks, Chairman of the South African Communist Party and member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress (South Africa) we express our profound feelings of sympathy and our sincere condolences.

*Central Committee*

## **AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE PARTY, SENEGAL**

The Central Committee, the militants of our Party, were profoundly moved by the death of our comrade, J.B. Marks, chairman of the S.A.C.P.

A very great African has departed. For us Senegalese Communists Comrade Marks was not only one of the pioneers of Communism on the continent, but also one of the very first protagonists of the modern anti-imperialist struggle. This dual quality makes the loss of Chairman Marks all the more sad for those who have followed, with sympathy and solidarity, the struggle of the fighters for freedom against the regime of racist terror in South Africa.

Many leaders of our Party knew Comrade Marks personally. During the course of long discussions with him we were always struck by the extraordinary passion and joy with which he greeted everything which in any way concerned the struggle for the liberation of our continent and the fight for Communism.

A protagonist of the modern anti-imperialist struggle in Africa, he always stressed that the liberation movement in Africa is intimately bound up with the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, and that the Soviet Union, led by the glorious Party of Lenin, has been and remains the unconquerable bastion of world revolution.

For the teachings of the great man who has departed we express, to you, dear comrades, our appreciation; for his death all the grief we feel.

*Central Committee*

### **COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

We join with comrades and people from all parts of the world sharing your loss of the great Communist John Marks whose heroic, steadfast leadership of the working class and Communist Party in South Africa had special meaning for us in the common fight against racism, oppression and imperialism. His contribution to the struggle for freedom, national liberation, world peace and socialism was monumental. Our condolences to all who were dear to him. We will always cherish the warm comradeship he gave to our meetings and conversations.

*Henry Winston, National Chairman*

*Gus Hall, General Secretary*

### **WORKERS' PARTY OF VIETNAM**

We are profoundly moved by the news of the death of Comrade J.B. Marks, Chairman of the South African Communist Party and member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress.

In the name of the Workers' Party and the Vietnamese People, we express our sad condolences to you, and through you to the militants of the S.A.C.P., the people of South Africa and the family of the deceased.

*Central Committee*



## **PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM**

*(World Marxist Review)*

We have known Comrade Marks as a prominent leader of the African and world Communist movement and a contributor to our journal. This unyielding Communist and fighter will forever remain in our memory.

*Konstantin Zarodov*  
*Editor-in-Chief*

## **PARTY OF LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM (MOROCCO)**

The life of Comrade J.B. Marks revealed his great qualities as a leader, a man of the masses and a statesman. He was, for the South African people, for the African and other peoples, a model of patriotic and revolutionary action and devotion. We bow our heads with emotion in memory of a great African whose many struggles raised the national and international prestige of the South African Communist Party and the African cause in general.

*Ali Yata*  
*General Secretary*

## **COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRAZIL**

Remembering the revolutionary activities of Comrade John Marks, his firm stand in defence of the principles of proletarian internationalism and Marxism-Leninism, a great loss has been suffered both by the South African revolutionary movement and by the international communist movement. Our fraternal solidarity at this moment of sorrow.

*Luiz Carlos Prestes*  
*Central Committee*

# The Life of a Revolutionary

by Z. NKOSI

John B. Marks was born in the small town of Ventersdorp, in the Western Transvaal on 21 March 1903. His parents were working class. His father was a railway worker all his life; his mother, a midwife, died earlier this year, aged 108.

From his earliest years our late Comrade Marks displayed the outstanding physical and mental qualities which were to mark him off from his fellow-men. Brought up amidst all the grinding poverty and suffering which was the lot of the oppressed African people in the townships, he was clearly destined to fill a position of leadership. But what type of leadership? The older people in the community, resigned to having all doors slammed in their faces by the colour bar, expressed the desire that he should become a minister of religion. But Marks himself chose teaching, and after passing through all the classes of the country school, he went to a training college where he received a teaching diploma.

It was at school, incidentally, that Marks acquired his second initial 'B'. He had been born John Joseph Marks, and is still so called in police records. At school he was nicknamed 'Beaver' by his schoolmates, and the 'B' became incorporated in his name. Ever since he was known to everybody as 'J.B.' and to his comrades in the African National Congress and the Communist Party, as 'Uncle J.B.' – a measure of the esteem and affection in which he was held.

In an interview with the African National Congress journal *Sechaba* in November, 1969, Marks said: 'When I eventually joined the struggle for national liberation I remember meeting one of the oldest residents in our town who said: "My son, my dreams and wishes have come true only that you have not gone to the pulpit, but you are today on the platform to demand what we have been craving for all the time." That was in the early days when I appeared on the platform of the I.C.U. and of the Communist Party and the League for African Rights. I joined the A.N.C. in 1928.

'I was much influenced by my father who was a staunch supporter of the A.N.C. and I myself had revolted against conditions, particularly those at the institution where I was trained, where the missionaries did not treat the students well.

'In 1919 I participated in a strike of students because conditions were not good. We were not allowed time to go visiting, we were punished very frequently, and the food supply was very poor. This strike led to my expulsion from school.'

Despite all these obstacles, J.B. Marks completed his training and embarked on his career as a teacher. In his young days he was also a very keen sportsman. With his dominant personality tall build and striking physique, his political insight, brilliant smile and quiet good sense, he bore a striking resemblance to his American colleague Paul Robeson.

Marks was irresistibly drawn into political action by his proud and rebellious spirit, and before many years had passed he was sacked from his post at Vredefort, in the Orange Free State, on account of his political activities.

He was appearing at this time on the platforms of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (I.C.U.), the Communist Party, the League of African Rights and the African National Congress. He joined the Communist Party in 1928. It was a period of increased militancy among the oppressed peoples of South Africa – a militancy which was met in turn with increased repression from the side of the Government, with the Nazi-minded Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow – later the friend and admirer of Hitler, Mussolini and France – setting the pace.

During 1929 the Communist Party, acting in terms of the 'Black Republic' resolution passed by the 1928 Comintern congress, launched and took part with other organisations in a number of campaigns

against the pass laws. Pirow did not hesitate to resort to force, and many demonstrations were drowned in blood. At an anti-pass demonstration in Potchefstroom, in the Transvaal, on December 16, 1929 – anniversary of the Battle of Blood River between the Zulus under Dingane and the Boers in 1838 – Communist leaders Marks and Mofutsanyana were the main speakers when the meeting was invaded by a crowd of about 100 white hooligans.

### **PARTY PLATFORM UNDER FIRE**

Mofutsanyana reported later: 'I got on the platform and before I got very far with my speech, the whites began shouting in Afrikaans "You lie!" and "Shut your mouth, Kaffir!" I managed to go through my speech however. The next speaker was Marks. He appealed to the police, who were present, to deal with the hooligans, but in vain. At about the same time a comrade touched my coat from behind and I looked back. A white man was just taking aim at me with a revolver. I jumped off the platform. The next thing I saw was Marks coming down from the platform head foremost. Several revolver shots rang out and I saw a man crawl on his knees, his leg completely broken by two shots.'

The Africans made a rush for the Whites, who were now running away. The police now became quite active and a number of people were injured besides the one shot in the leg. Hermanus Lethebe died later in hospital.

Later a White man, Joseph Weeks, a brother of the location superintendent, was arrested and charged with murder, but the white jury returned a verdict of 'not guilty' despite the overwhelming evidence against him.

What had provoked the Whites was Marks' declaration: 'Africa belongs to us'. From this moment on J.B. Marks was to devote himself to the task of bringing about a national democratic revolution in South Africa, overthrowing White supremacy and winning power for the people.

The communist challenge to White racism was presented most vividly in 1932, when Marks was proposed as a demonstrative candidate for a parliamentary by-election in Germiston. Africans of course had no vote in the Transvaal, nor could any African sit in the South African parlia-

ment. But the Communist Party argued that the majority of the inhabitants of Germiston were Africans, and if they were enfranchised would vote for a Communist candidate. The Africans of Germiston location were in an extremely militant mood at this time, reacting very fiercely to repeated police raids for 'illicit' liquor, taxes and lodgers' permits. The Communist Party held several large meetings and demonstrations, many of which were broken up by the police. Hundreds of men, women and children were arrested and many of them jailed for 'public violence'. In one clash 18 Africans were injured by police bullets, and one old woman later died of her wounds.

In his election speeches, J.B. Marks said the white candidates represented imperialist slavery, whereas he brought a message of struggle for full franchise rights, unemployment insurance and an end to colour bars. The election resulted in a defeat for the candidate of the Hertzog Government. The Communist Party conducted its own ballot in the location, and reported that Marks had received 3,000 votes. The white parliamentary farce had been effectively exposed.

After this J.B. Marks was sent overseas for a course of study at the Lenin School in Moscow. While he was in the Soviet Union he acquired a working knowledge of the Russian language which stood him in good stead on numerous visits to the land of socialism in later years. On his return to South Africa, he devoted himself full-time to the work of the Communist Party.

The thirties was a period of great stress and strain for the South African Communist Party, the victim not only of ferocious assaults from the White racists but also of internal schisms and factionalism which seriously undermined its work and support amongst the masses. In 1937 Marks himself was temporarily excluded from the party for a technical breach of its regulations. But he remained loyal to the cause and a year or two later, when the party leadership and policy had been placed on a firmer footing, he was restored to the full rights of membership and once again began to play a leading role.

Following the failure of the All-African Convention to halt the passage of Hertzog's Bills to disfranchise the African people, J.B. Marks and E.T. Mofutsanyana took the initiative in forming a committee to revive the African National Congress in the Transvaal, and were successful in replacing the old, tired leadership with men more capable of facing the challenge of the future. Marks himself was to become an



*J.B. Marks (left) presiding at a mineworkers' meeting in the forties. A.M.W.U. Secretary J.J. Majoro, flanked by two interpreters, is at the microphone.*

executive member of the ANC and was elected Transvaal President in 1950. He devoted over 40 years of fruitful work for South Africa's premier national liberatory organisation.

In the 1940's J.B. Marks also began to devote more attention to the trade union movement. Unrest was growing on the mines, where over 300,000 Africans, separated for most of their lives from their wives and families, slaved underground as migratory labourers for starvation wages — at that time averaging about £3. 11s. 8d. a month. In the reserves, where more than a third of the people had no land, malnutrition and disease were rife, with infant mortality ranging from 150 to 700 per thousand. In 1943 the Government had granted a cost of living allowance to all African workers except those in mining and agriculture. A series of spontaneous strikes on a number of mines was a warning that the Government chose to ignore.

In 1942 Marks was elected President of the African Mineworkers' Union which had been formed the previous year. In the same year he was elected to the presidency of the Transvaal Council of Non-European trade unions. In both capacities he exercised a tremendous influence on the development of the trade union movement among the African workers.

The Mineworkers' Union met with a tremendous response from the African miners, and was able to generate such pressure that the Government was compelled to appoint a commission of inquiry into conditions on the mines. The Commission recommended a miserably small increase in wages and improvement of conditions of work, but the Chamber of Mines implemented only a portion of even these recommendations and ignored most of the report completely. Dissatisfaction continued amongst the mineworkers, aggravated by a Government proclamation banning meetings on mine property without permission. Marks and a number of other union officials were arrested under this war measure, but escaped conviction on a technicality.

### **THE GREAT MINE STRIKE OF 1946**

In April 1946, a conference of the African Mineworkers' Union decided to put forward the demand for a wage of 10s a day, and this was followed by spontaneous strikes in a number of mines in support of

the union's demand. The bosses refused to budge. On August 4, 1946, a public conference of over 1,000 delegates was held in Johannesburg where it was decided to call a general strike of all mineworkers as from August 12, 1946. Marks warned the delegates: 'You are challenging the basis of the cheap labour system and must be ready to sacrifice in the struggle for the right to live as human beings'. The workers were in militant mood.

Up to 100,000 African miners responded to the strike call, and ten mines were shut down completely and 11 others seriously affected. But the Government responded with brute force, throwing in the full force of the police, armed with batons and guns. African miners were attacked wherever they were found, and in the course of the next few days nine were killed and 1,248 injured according to official figures, though the actual toll was probably far higher. The strikers were driven back to work at the point of the gun. Marks and other union officials were arrested, together with all the members of the Johannesburg District Committee of the Communist Party, and charged with incitement under the Riotous Assemblies Act – a charge which was eventually reduced to supporting an illegal strike, for which the accused were sentenced to fines and suspended terms of imprisonment. Later the Central Committee of the Communist Party was arrested and charged with sedition arising out of the strike events, but after a two-year long battle in the courts, the charges were eventually withdrawn.

Less than two years after this strike – the biggest in South African history – the Nationalist Government under Dr Malan came to power. One of its first aims was to suppress the Communist Party and the growing militancy amongst all sections of the Non-White peoples. The Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 not only outlawed the Communist Party but also gave the Government sweeping administrative power to ban and restrict any opponent of the Government's apartheid policy, whether or not he had been a member of the Party, and to ban newspapers and other anti-apartheid publications.

J.B. Marks, together with other Communist leaders, was amongst the first victims of the Act. In 1950 he had been elected Transvaal President of the African National Congress, and shortly afterwards had presided over the foundation conference of the South African Peace Council.

18 Africans were killed and 30 wounded in the Great May Day



demonstration of 1950 in Johannesburg, in which 'J.B.' had been a foremost organiser. The Congresses declared June 26 to be a national day of protest and mourning, and called for a general strike on that day. The strike was an enormous success, bringing the main industrial centres to a standstill. From that day June 26 has been observed as Freedom Day by all sections of the South African liberation movement.

On Freedom Day 1952 the African and Indian Congresses launched a campaign of defiance against six specified unjust laws 'whose continued operation, enforcement and observance is both humiliating and degrading to the Non-Europeans of South Africa' and which the Government had refused to repeal, Nelson Mandela was appointed Volunteer-in-Chief.

In an attempt to prevent the growing agitation amongst the people, the Government had in May served notices on a number of prominent trade unionists and leaders of the African and Indian Congresses ordering them to resign from all political organisations, prohibiting them from attending any gatherings and, in some cases, confining them to the provinces in which they lived. Marks was one of those banned, but together with most of his colleagues chose to defy his ban as a way of making his contribution to the Defiance Campaign.

Over 8,000 people went into action in the Defiance Campaign, openly defying the apartheid laws, and serving sentences of imprisonment imposed on them by the white magistrates for breaches of various discriminatory regulations. For Marks and other top Congress leaders the Government intended a more serious punishment. They were charged under the Suppression of Communism Act with attempting, as leaders of the Defiance Campaign, to bring about the aims of Communism by the promotion of disturbance or disorder or by unlawful acts or omissions. They were found technically in breach of the law, but the judge gave the accused a suspended sentence of nine months imprisonment.

For the following ten years, Marks was unable to take any open part in politics, and no word that he spoke could be published. For a short while after the first ban was imposed on him in 1952, he managed to spread his voice to audiences at meetings by means of gramophone records, but eventually the Government closed this 'loophole' too.

But if the Government thought that it was preventing J.B. Marks from carrying on political activity it was very much mistaken. The

fifties was a period of intense mass action throughout South Africa. Both in the towns and in the African reserves the people were on the march. Political strikes, boycotts, demonstrations of all kinds, anti-pass campaigns were conducted under the leadership of the Congress movement and the underground Communist Party. As one leader was struck down another came forward to take his place. At the heart of the resistance movement, Marks and his comrades were hard at work. Marks himself held the positions of chairman of the South African Communist Party and executive member of the African National Congress.

With each open act of rebellion on the part of the people, the Government replied with a new repressive law, more vicious restrictions, longer prison sentences, more brutal police reprisals, culminating in the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 and the savage repression of the general strike of 1961. Thereafter the political organisations of the people realised that new methods of struggle were called for. A campaign of sabotage directed against Government installations was launched in December 1961, and preparations were made for guerrilla warfare. The logic of history had persuaded the masses that the only road to liberation was the revolutionary road.

### **MISSION ABROAD**

J.B. Marks was sent out of South Africa on a mission connected with this revolutionary task in 1962, after presiding at the historic Fifth underground conference of the Communist Party. He was a member of South African delegations at many international peace conferences, and headed the South African delegation at the international conference of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in June 1969. Although getting on in years and in declining health, nothing could dim the revolutionary fervour which inspired his every waking moment.

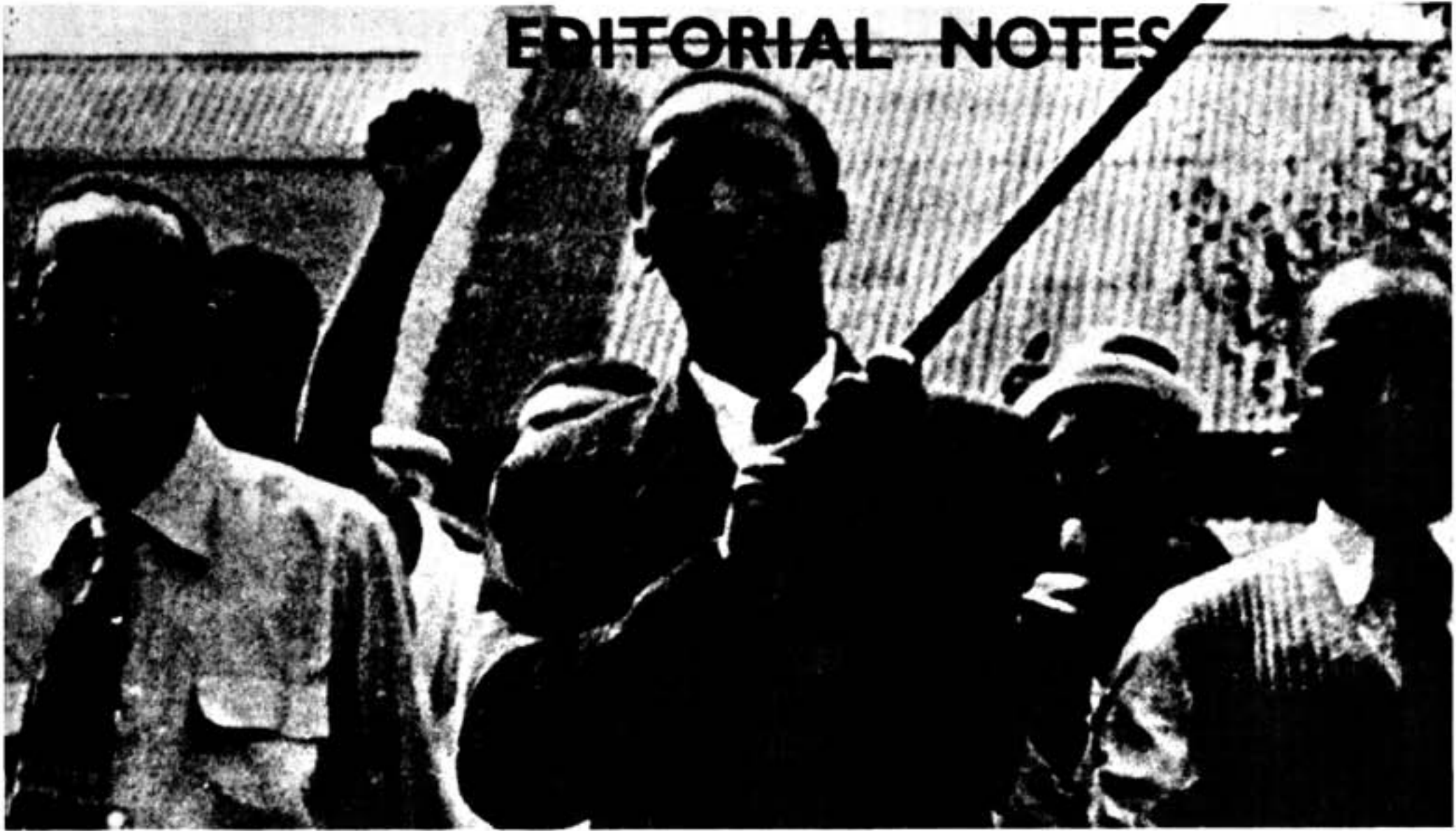
'There is no way to emancipation except that of revolutionary armed struggle', he said in his speech at the 1969 Moscow conference. 'In our conditions of total suppression of the people's rights, of constant daily terror and force exercised against the masses, with tens of thousands of patriots in detention and massacres a commonplace, with the great majority of the people in a state of seething revolt against

enslavement and intolerable affronts to their human dignity, there could be no other way forward.

‘Indeed, comrades, a war has already begun and is in progress for the liberation of Southern Africa. In Mozambique, in Angola, in Guinea-Bissau, in Namibia and even in the Republic of South Africa itself, fighting has broken out. Brave African guerrillas are dealing heavy blows at the fascist and racist regimes. Behind the lines the workers of town and countryside are increasingly defying the fascist terror and raising the banner of resistance. Inevitably the struggle will spread and merge into a single people’s war which can only end in the destruction of White minority rule and the establishment of people’s power. We shall win!’

A year ago, in 1971, ‘Uncle J.B.’ was struck down by a severe illness while on active duty at the headquarters of the ANC External Mission in Tanzania. When he had recovered sufficiently to travel, he was sent to the Soviet Union. With intensive treatment and his own indomitable spirit, he rallied and seemed to be making good progress, but suffered a fatal heart attack. J.B. Marks died on 1 August 1972.

## EDITORIAL NOTES



# TO THE FUTURE

The life and times of J.B. Marks spanned three generations in the development of the South African revolution, whose stature and spirit were so remarkably personified in his own heroic mould. It is natural that the many speakers and writers from many parts of the world whose tributes to our late Chairman appear in this Memorial Issue of our journal should have dwelt largely with his never-to-be-forgotten contribution to the working class and liberation over more than forty years of energetic and capable leadership. Yet, though he turned to reminiscence towards the end to which we are indebted for the valuable article here reproduced, composed in the last year of his life, J.B.'s own attention and thought were ever absorbed by the present and the future. He had, to an exceptional degree, the gift of moving with and

comprehending the ever-changing times, so that he seemed eternally young. He belonged to the youth; it is above all to the youth whom we look to vindicate and complete his life's work.

### **TIME TO SPEAK OUT**

We of *The African Communist*, while indignantly rebutting the many anti-African slanders and propaganda distortions which ceaselessly pour from the imperialist press, have never believed that the path of true African patriotism consists in covering up or even justifying those actions of some of our leaders which bring nothing but harm and shame to our continent.

When a man like President Bokassa of the Central African Republic, for example, encourages his army thugs to beat up, even murder, unarmed convicts it is time for us, especially in Africa, who believe in human dignity, to speak out. It is true, and it needs to be said also, that nothing done in Africa by Africans today or ever can exceed in scale or brutality the atrocities perpetrated by American imperialism in Vietnam or by the Hitlerites on a world scale. It is also true that Bokassa was never chosen by the African people; he and his regime were and remain puppets of French imperialism. All the more need to repudiate him and his like; to ensure that our Continent is in the hands of true representatives of our people, guided by principles of justice and respect for the common man.

The Asians of East Africa are national minorities whose origin, character and future are subjects we hope to elucidate in an article to be published in a forthcoming issue of this journal. No doubt these are not simple problems, and they are bound up with the past misgovernment of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika by foreign, especially British, imperialism. What is certain is that the method of dealing with them by General Amin — the wholesale expulsion of tens of thousands of people, adults and children, regardless of their economic position or citizenship status, purely on grounds of national origin — will solve nothing, and reeks of racialism.

### **RHODESIA AND THE GAMES**

Those governments and athletes of Africa, Black America and elsewhere

who have come against the participation of a 'Rhodesian' team in the forthcoming Olympic Games have struck a resounding blow for the principles of true sportsmanship and internationalism.

The hypocritical pretence that a team of thirty whites and six 'token' Blacks (from a country of 5 million Africans and less than a quarter million whites) could possibly be representative or fairly-chosen is absurd and insulting. So is the naive idea that the Smith regime could possibly allow a representative team to be selected.

And what shall we say of the childish notion that this fundamentally discriminatory team should somehow become more acceptable to Africa when it agrees to march under the Union Jack and sing 'God Save the Queen'?

Mr Avery Brundage and his Western European and North American clique who for so long – far too long – have dominated international sport, are living in an era that no longer exists. They have, for the sake of their disreputable white racist friends from Southern Africa, threatened to wreck the Tokyo, the Mexico City and now the Munich Olympics.

The world had better understand that as far as Africa is concerned we shall compete as equals or not at all.

### **WHICH WAY EGYPT?**

Upholders of the Egyptian revolution and of the Arab People's struggle against imperialist and Zionist aggression, cannot but feel perturbed at certain aspects of President Sadat's current policies: the terms of the impending union with Libya and the withdrawal, at the request of Egypt, of a substantial number of the members of the Soviet military mission sent to fortify the country's defensive capacity. There is no evidence at all that the policies underlying these decisions were adopted with the approval or even the consultation of the working people of Egypt.

So far the principal manifestation of Egyptian-Libyan co-operation has been the disgraceful intervention against Sudanese democracy in July 1971, whose counter-revolutionary consequences are still continuing. We remain to be convinced that this is a genuine manifestation of Arab solidarity in the spirit of the late great President Nasser. It

presents more of the appearance of an unprincipled line up of petty-bourgeois nationalists united only in their fear of Communism and revolution.

Israeli and other imperialist propagandists have not concealed their delight at what they have construed as a deterioration of Soviet-Egyptian relations. No fuel for such speculations has been provided by Soviet commentators, whose attitude has remained entirely correct and imbued with profound respect for Egyptian independence. It is a thousand pities that the Egyptian authorities and publicists themselves have not seen fit likewise to rebuff the imperialist mischief-makers. So far as we are aware, not a word has recently appeared in Cairo concerning the immense sacrifices and contribution of the Soviet people to Egypt's advancement and indeed, survival.

We cannot resist contrasting the attitude of Fidel Castro. In his great speech on his return to Havana on 26 July (published in *Granma* on 6 August) the President of Cuba pointed out:

The Soviet people don't have any investments in any other country. The Soviet State doesn't own any mines, oil wells or factories outside of the USSR. What it has, what it owns, what it lends and the aid it gives comes from the natural resources of that country and the labour of its people.

The economic relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union have been the most generous and the most revolutionary possible between two countries.

It is precisely the absence of such warmth and revolutionary understanding among Egypt's present rulers, combined with continuing repression of many of the country's leading patriots and working class militants that causes the gravest doubts not only regarding their internal policy but also concerning their ultimate intentions and allegiance in the struggle against international imperialism.

*21 August, 1972*

# **THE USSR – a great international force**

by **BORIS PONOMARYOV**

On December 30, 1922, the 1st All-Union Congress of Soviets adopted, on Lenin's proposal, its historic decision proclaiming the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This decision, expressing the will of all the nations and nationalities of the Soviet Republics, was a triumph for proletarian, socialist internationalism, a triumph for our Party's Leninist national policy. At the same time it was another major victory for the international working class, a victory for the forces of socialism.

The formation of the USSR is, in terms of economic, political and ideological consequences, an outstanding landmark both in the history of the Soviet state and in the social progress of all mankind. It is an event that is indissolubly connected with the Great October Socialist Revolution. It was its direct continuation and served as a most important prerequisite for realising its goals. The integration of the Soviet Republics into a single state played a great role in consolidating and multiplying the gains of the October Revolution.

The class substance of the Soviet power not only secured a radical change in the relations between nations in the country but also predetermined the new character of its foreign policy, a fact that led to a fundamental shift in the whole system of international relations. The friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union has invariably been an important source of its revolutionising and transforming influence on world development.



The results of the great path travelled by the Soviet multinational state are summed up in the resolution of the CPSU Central Committee 'On Preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics'.

The formation of the USSR and the 50-year experience in the development of the multinational Soviet state have provided practical evidence of the truth and viability of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the national question, and have confirmed that a consistent solution of this question can be ensured only on the basis of a socialist transformation of society. Lenin's theoretical elaboration of the national question and the generalisation in CPSU documents of the experience of the national policy pursued by our Party and our state constitute an outstanding and broadly recognised contribution to the treasure-store of Marxism-Leninism. The Soviet country has provided a full-scale answer to the question of how the most intricate national problems can be practically solved.

Considering that the whole of mankind consists of big and small nations, that the national form of state and social development will continue to exist for a very long time, taking into account the great role the national aspect has always played and continues to play in relations between states and within states, and finally, bearing in mind that it has a definite and sometimes very important place in the class struggle on a world scale and in individual capitalist countries, it becomes especially clear that the Leninist theory of the national question and our Party's activity in implementing the fundamental principles of this theory in the practice of international relations and relations between nations are of epoch-making importance.

### *I The CPSU's Historic Contribution to the Theory and Practice of Solving the National Question*

It is quite safe to say that the fundamental transformation of national relations in the USSR would have been impossible if our Party had not had at its disposal a profoundly and comprehensively formulated theory of the national question and a concrete programme for its solution. Therein lies one of Lenin's greatest revolutionary accomplishments.

Marx and Engels approached the national question as being a fundamentally social one and showed its interconnection with the problems arising from the socialist transformation of society. They gave a theoretical substantiation of the principles of proletarian internationalism, of the unity of the proletariat's international and national interests. In this context, comrades, it should be emphasised that the scientific theory of the national question itself could be created only after the working class emerged in the world arena, and that it is to the working class that history assigned the definitive role in solving the national question.

Under imperialism and during the transition from capitalism to socialism on an international scale the national question became even more acute. Lenin stressed that in the epoch of the stagnation of capitalism this question was 'extremely important in itself as well as in its relation to imperialism' (*Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 268).

Lenin, who developed the principles of proletarian internationalism with reference to the new epoch, was the greatest theorist and practitioner of the national question. The unfading light of his genius has illuminated the modern epoch in the development of this question. The epoch of the liberation of all nations, of the elimination of every brand of national and colonial oppression.

Lenin equipped the proletarian party with a revolutionary programme on the national question; he formulated both its political requirements and its methodological principles. This programme became an organic part of Lenin's strategic plan for socialist revolution and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

Lenin discovered the dialectics of an effective solution of the national question. He theoretically substantiated and proved in practice that the great slogan — 'the right of nations to self-determination, including secession and formation of an independent state' — can and should lead under the guidance of the Communist Party not to a separation of nations but to a *voluntary* and *free* union and federation of nations in their common struggle for a better future, for socialism.

Lenin put forward and solved in practice the fundamentally new problem of the socialist national statehood. He formulated the theoretical principles of international and inter-state relations of the socialist type and found the concrete ways and forms for building a multinational socialist state.

Lenin showed that the essence of a correct approach to the national question in conditions of a multinational country is to draw into the revolutionary struggle, and then also into the struggle for socialism the peasant, the broad petty-bourgeois masses. One of the conditions for the victory of the October Revolution and the victory of socialism in the USSR was that the Russian working class by its internationalist policy succeeded in winning over and leading the multi-millioned peasant masses of different nationalities to the revolution, to the struggle for socialism.

Lenin subjected to withering criticism the Right and Left opportunist conceptions on the national question, and exposed the untenability both of nihilism with respect to national aspects and the role of the national liberation movement, and of the nationalistic attempts to obscure or distort the social content of national problems. Lenin recognised the progressive, anti-imperialist nationalism of the oppressed nation, simultaneously indicating the forms and the framework for the support of such nationalism on the part of the proletarian party.

Lenin showed to the full extent 'the ideological and political affinity, connection and even identity between opportunism and social nationalism' (*Collected Works*, Vol.21, p.154). He showed the great danger that nationalism combined with opportunism and revisionism could present for the cause of the revolution.

Emphasising the importance of the national aspect for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat of Russia, Lenin at the same time constantly showed its connection with the international tasks of the working class.

The Bolshevik programme for the solution of the national question and the Party's whole activity in its practical implementation became a powerful factor in the revolutionary awakening of all the nations and nationalities of Russia and served as a necessary prerequisite for the formation of the broadest and most massive base for the Great October Revolution.

Lenin's great slogans on the right of nations to self-determination including secession, and on the free and voluntary union of nations have had a great role to play not only in the development of the revolution in Russia. After October 1917 they spread all over the world and became a mighty force in revolutionising the masses and

unfolding the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples. That was when a principled basis was already laid for the solution of this two-fold task not only in Russia but on a world scale: ensuring full-fledged development for each nation and at the same time their close cooperation, mutual enrichment and closer drawing together.

Comrades, there is need to emphasise the fundamental importance of the Leninist internationalist approach to Party construction. Let us recall that this approach triumphed as a result of the struggle against the conceptions propounded by Austrian Social-Democrats about so-called 'cultural-national autonomy', as a result of the struggle against the Mensheviks and the Bundists, who were carrying things towards a fragmentation of the Party, and a separation of various nations in their 'national quarters'. Exposing these views, Lenin wrote that:

in matters pertaining to the struggle against the autocracy, the struggle against the bourgeoisie of Russia as a whole, we must act as a single and centralised militant organisation, have behind us the whole of the proletariat, without distinction of language or nationality, a proletariat whose unity is cemented by the continual joint solution of problems of theory and practice, of tactics and organisation; and we must not set up organisations that would march separately, each along its own track; we must not weaken the force of our offensive by breaking up into numerous independent political parties; we must not introduce estrangement and isolation . . .

*Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 335*

Long before the Revolution our Party had already been structured as a coherent organisation on an internationalist basis. It was of exceptional importance that both by 1917 and by 1922 united Party organisations bringing together Communists of different nationalities — Russian, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Latvians, Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Jews, Tartars, Bashkirs, representatives of the peoples of the Northern Caucasus and others — had already operated on the whole vast territory of the country for many years. This largely helped to find the correct solution for the national question in our country and to establish the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics itself.

## NATIONALISTIC PARTIES

This other point also needs to be stressed: after the February Revolution in Russia literally dozens of nationalistic parties were formed. These were parties of the most diverse orientation: extreme Rightist, anarchist and Menshevik. In the Baltic area alone there were almost 15 of them. By early 1918 there were nearly 20 bourgeois nationalist parties and groups in the Transcaucasus and as many in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Numerous nationalistic groups and parties operated in Tataria, Bashkiria and so on.

All these parties advocated independence in the bourgeois nationalist spirit, the 'independence' which objectively led to national hostility and the incitement of nations against each other. Had this process been allowed further to develop, had it not been frustrated by the fraternal ties of solidarity which had taken shape between the peoples of Russia in the course of the revolutionary struggle against tsarism and counter-revolution, had it not met with resolute resistance from the multinational working-class party united on an internationalist basis, it would have been impossible to safeguard the gains of the revolution, to say nothing of building socialism. The logic of nationalism led to counter-revolution, and thereby to a betrayal of the vital national interests of the people. It is characteristic, indeed, that many nationalistic parties turned out to have connections with the imperialists and the interventionists and became their hirelings.

Pursuing its consistent internationalist policy, the Party started, even before the October Revolution, the process which ultimately led to the formation of the great union of Soviet Republics, to the triumph of the brotherhood of nations in our country. The internationalist nature of the Party which relies on the principles of democratic centralism is a major prerequisite for the proper combining of local and general state tasks in a multinational state.

The concrete history of the formation of the USSR, the process of change within its internal structure, and the great wealth of experience in the development of the various nations and nationalities over the past 50 years are an important subject that needs to be dealt with separately. This report has the purpose of considering the international importance of the CPSU's policy, which has ensured the establishment and powerful development of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The solution of the national question under a multi-national state has become one of the most important factors in the socialist reconstruction of society.

*In state reconstruction* the consistent implementation of the Leninist programme meant the establishment of Soviet states for all nations, and the ensuring of complete political and legal equality for the numerous peoples of Russia within the framework of one federal state.

This laid the groundwork for the voluntary unification of nations ruling out any coercion by one nation against the other, a union based as Lenin said, 'on complete confidence, on a clear recognition of brotherly unity, on absolutely voluntary consent' (*Collected Works*, Vol.30, p.293). Such relations between nations had not been established anywhere in the world.

By guiding the creative endeavour of the masses, the Party proved in practice that the Union of Socialist Republics – a union which has truly gone through the ordeal of fire in the Great Patriotic War – is the soundest and simultaneously the most flexible structure for a multinational state. It makes it possible consistently to improve the country's nation-state structure, and harmoniously to blend the interests of the whole of society with those of every nation on the basis of the principles of Soviet socialist democracy. The Soviet Union consists of 15 Union republics, and these include 20 Autonomous republics, 8 autonomous regions, and 10 national areas. This diversity of forms of national statehood, which has a single substance, is a striking expression of the CPSU's attention to the specific features of the numerous nations and nationalities of the USSR.

### **ABOLISHING INEQUALITY**

In the sphere of economic and cultural construction the implementation of the Leninist national programme meant above all concentration of efforts on doing away with the actual – economic and cultural – inequality of nations inherited from the past. The ensuring of actual equality – herein is the fundamental distinction of the Leninist, truly communist approach to the solution of the national question. And only such an approach leads to its real solution. The

most difficult task of overcoming the age-old backwardness of formerly oppressed nations and nationalities could be tackled and solved under the socialist system.

The policy of the CPSU has enabled a number of nationalities of our country practically to realise the possibility, discovered by Lenin already prior to the October Revolution, of making the transition to socialism bypassing the capitalist stage of development.

This policy of the CPSU and the Soviet state has resulted in the accelerated economic growth of the non-Russian Soviet republics which now represent organically inter-connected component parts of the mighty economic complex of the USSR.

This deep-going revolution in the economic life of the Soviet republics has gone hand-in-hand with and has been backed up by a cultural revolution, whose fruits are complete elimination of illiteracy, flourishing culture and the growth of numerous national personnel.

Of exceptional importance has been the CPSU's conception for a development of culture, that is national in form and socialist in content. This is an important discovery by our Party. Its policy along these lines has yielded epoch-making results.

The CPSU has devoted special attention to the question of the national languages. It has not only consistently worked for the complete equality of these languages but has also put in an effort to develop them that is unprecedented in history. In accordance with the decisions of the Party's 10th Congress Soviet scientists produced alphabets for more than 50 nations which had no alphabets of their own. At the 5th Congress of the writers of the USSR speakers said that Soviet literature today consisted of works written in 75 languages, as compared with only 13 written languages before the revolution. Thus, in the sphere of language as well – and it is one of the most important spheres of national life – the Soviet power not only proclaimed equality but also created all the necessary *material* conditions for the real implementation of such equality.

*In the ideological and political sphere* the implementation of the Leninist programme meant a consistent policy pursued by the Party and the Soviet state in developing and consolidating the friendship of the peoples of the USSR on the basis of the principles of proletarian internationalism, and a struggle against bourgeois-nationalistic survivals in the thinking and behaviour of men, and against great power chauvin-

ism and local nationalism.

It is generally known that Lenin took an implacable attitude to the slightest expression of great power attitudes with respect to the once oppressed nations. At the same time, he insistently demanded that a persistent struggle should be carried on against local nationalism, which is equally fatal for socialism. Lenin stressed that the Communist must never fail to 'fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, seclusion and isolation, consider the whole and the general, subordinate the particular to the general interest' (*Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 347).

The whole struggle for a correct solution of the national question in the Soviet state was carried on with an unfailing implementation of Lenin's dialectically two-fold formula of fighting great-power chauvinism and local nationalism. At the various stages in the development of Soviet society greater stress has alternately to be made now on one now on the other part of this formula and that is exactly what the CPSU has been doing in its political and theoretical activity.

In 1922 Lenin wrote:

Our five years' experience in settling the national question in a country that contains a tremendous number of nationalities, such as could hardly be found in any other country, gives us the full conviction that under such circumstances the only correct attitude to the interests of nations is to meet those interests in full and provide conditions that exclude any possibility of conflicts on that score.

*Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 386

Indeed, comrades, no other country in the world has had so many different nations and nationalities as our country, no other country has had such a diversity of national problems. Some peoples of our country had in the past their own forms of statehood, others did not. The national question also appeared as a colonial question, it was complicated by religious strife, it included problems of relations between peoples, densely settled on their historical territory, and problems of scattered national minorities. At different stages of its activity the CPSU has had to reckon not only with internal socio-political but also international conditions in tackling the national question. For the first time in history the Party found the answer to all these problems. Taken all together this makes for the exceptional



wealth and universal importance of the experience the Party has accumulated in this sphere.

The construction of a full-scale socialist society in our country has raised the problem of improving national relations in the new conditions.

A great accomplishment of our Party, and the main result of its Leninist national policy, is that in the struggle for socialism and communism a new historical entity of men – the Soviet people – has taken shape. Cemented with the unity of economic and socio-political life, and welded together by their Marxist-Leninist ideology, the peoples of our country constitute a coherent multinational collective. The Soviet people is characterised by an organic blend of national features and common Soviet features, which are socialist, internationalist in essence.

The CPSU is safeguarding, like the apple of an eye, the friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union, the biggest factor of its historic gains, the growth of its economic and political might, steady advance in the material and cultural standards of the Soviet people and the development of their communist consciousness. The CPSU is vigorously rebuffing any nationalistic tendencies wherever and in whatever form they are displayed. Just before the 50th anniversary of the USSR the 24th Congress of the CPSU adopted another grand plan for further communist construction, which provides for an all-round development of each of the fraternal Soviet republics and at the same time for a further gradual drawing together of the country's nations and nationalities. In the CPSU Central Committee's Report, Comrade L.I. Brezhnev said:

This drawing together is taking place under conditions in which the closest attention is given to national features and the development of socialist national cultures. Constant consideration for the general interests of our entire Union and for the interests of each of its constituent republics forms the substance of the Party's policy in this question.

24th Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1971, p. 92

Comrades, the Leninist international policy of the CPSU always proceeds from the principle that the long-term national interests cannot be ensured without considering the general tasks of the world revolutionary movement. There is good ground to speak of the steadily grow-

ing international impact of the CPSU's experience in solving the national question, of its Leninist internationalist line both at home and on a world scale. This is due not only to the strengthening might of the Soviet country, its growing role in world affairs, not only to the spread of the truth about our country into the very midst of masses of people in foreign countries. This is due also to the enhanced importance and specific features of the national question at the present stage. Allow me to dwell on this at greater length.

## *II The National Question in the Modern World and the Importance of the CPSU's Experience*

A new stage has essentially opened in the development of the national question on a world scale. What are its main characteristic features?

*First*, the enhanced dialectical inter-connection between the international and the national in social development. On the one hand, there is a rapid process of formation and self-assertion of nations and their flourishing, and persistent struggle for their economic, social and cultural development. This tends to revive the national question. On the other hand, there is a process of the drawing together of peoples, an extension of objective, especially technical and economic prerequisites for economic integration, for a breakdown of barriers between nations and for their drawing together, as the community of their interests in the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress is increasingly revealed. Mutual influence and inter-penetration of cultures are growing.

*Second*, the practical solution of the national question within the framework of a *whole group* of socialist states, the emergence of a special type of inter-state relations between free socialist peoples and the establishment on that basis of the socialist community, an international and inter-state entity which is unparalleled in history.

*Third*, the realisation in the main of the principle of state self-determination of nations in the vast zone of the once colonial and semi-colonial periphery, the consolidation of young national states, and the formation on a new basis of their foreign policy and foreign economic ties; the transformation of the contradiction between imperialism and the colonies into a contradiction between neocolonialism and the young national states.

*Fourth*, the resurgence of national movements in a number of developed capitalist countries which had long since gone through their period of bourgeois and bourgeois-democratic change.

*Fifth*, the qualitatively new social content of the national question, and the close connection between the struggle for liberation from imperialist fetters and the struggle against relations based on exploitation, the close connection with anti-capitalist tendencies.

*Sixth*, the process of converting Communist Parties of a number of capitalist countries into a substantial political force has increased the scale of general national tasks in the activity of the Communists. The participation of Communists in putting forward, and working for the accomplishment of, these tasks which affect the interests of the overwhelming majority of the nation, is becoming ever more palpable. This makes more pressing the problem of properly combining national and international tasks and demands deep understanding and account of the fact that the successes of Communist Parties are inseparably linked with the general problems of the international communist movement, with its influence on all world development.

It goes without saying that for the Communists the statement that a new phase has started in the development of the national question is not only of theoretical interest, it is also of great political importance in the struggle for the great liberatory goals of the Communists.

The most essential point here is that the revolutionary anti-imperialist potential of the masses, whose national interests and aspirations are in irreconcilable conflict with imperialism has now been extended as never before.

### **FIGHTING FOR NATIONAL FREEDOM**

Today there is much more resolute resistance than ever before to the encroachments of the imperialists and neocolonialists on the national sovereignty of the peoples, on their right to determine their own future and to choose their own way of development. This is due to the new balance of class forces in the world arena, to the rise of the political consciousness of the peoples and to their confidence in support from the socialist countries and all the organised progressive forces. This is also due to the fundamental changes in the whole atmosphere of the

international life. The Leninist idea of national self-determination and equality has now become a truly powerful material force.

A striking instance of the readiness and ability to beat back imperialist aggression to the end, to final victory, to defend one's freedom and independence is the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people and of the peoples of Laos and Cambodia. The Arab peoples are taking a firm stand for their rights and are working to eliminate the consequences of the Israeli aggression. The patriots of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique are courageously fighting arms in hand against the NATO-equipped Portuguese colonialists. Our Leninist Party and the whole internationalist Soviet people have displayed unflinching and effective solidarity with the peoples in Indochina, the Arab countries, with all the peoples fighting for their freedom and independence, and against imperialism.

The elimination of every form and brand of national and national-colonial oppression and its consequences, and the free national development of all peoples have become a vital requirement of social progress. However, this is being blocked by imperialism. And it is not only because imperialism has put its stake on the fanning of national strife. The economic system and the political line of imperialism, its neo-colonialist encroachments are such that they run counter to the national liberation of nations, the establishment of relations of friendship and co-operation between them, making the solution of the national question impossible. That is why the national liberation movement today is most essentially an anti-imperialist movement.

In the present epoch, the development of the national liberation struggle is most closely connected with the impact of the Leninist international policy of the CPSU and the general line pursued by the socialist community in strengthening world peace and curbing the forces of aggression. This has had important consequences. The rapid process of winning state independence by 70 national states is largely due to the fundamentally different international situation in which world socialism operates as a powerful factor for peace, a factor which puts a freeze on the military-political claims of imperialism. It is directly connected with the new balance of class forces in the world arena, which has accelerated the elimination of the national-colonial enslavement of peoples, moreover in many countries, in relatively peaceful forms.

The implementation of the Peace Programme, adopted by the 24th Congress of the CPSU, has resulted in especially considerable shifts in the relaxation of international tension. The foreign policy initiatives of the USSR, especially the entry into force of the treaties with the FRG and a number of important agreements with the United States, have helped further to develop the world situation in a direction that is favourable for the solution by many peoples of their fundamental national and social tasks. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have forced the imperialist circles to reckon with the real situation in the world, and have secured the respect for the right of nations to self-determination, to independent and free development without outside interference.

The present period sees the greater objective connection between the national question and the development of the fundamental contradiction of our epoch, the process of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale.

The very fact that hitherto unprecedented relations between nations and nationalities have been established in one-sixth of the globe, in a country embracing more than half of the European and a considerable portion of the Asian continent, has introduced a qualitatively new element in the 'world balance' of social forces and into the state of the national question as a whole.

The fraternal union of the peoples of the USSR signified a substantial restriction of the sphere in which imperialism uses national contradictions and has radically changed the national-state panorama of the world. Moreover, it has become a major factor enhancing the Soviet Union's influence on the evolution of social processes in the modern world.

Socialism's emergence from the boundaries of one country and the formation of a system of states with a common social system and common end goals have taken the development of the national question to a new stage. The creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has set an example of the development of national statehood within a single union state. The formation of the world socialist community signified the start of the solution of the problem of nation-to-nation relations within a system embracing many countries.

The long development of the peoples of Russia within a single state, the struggle for socialism in face of a brutal capitalist encirclement,

and the close economic, political, social and cultural relations that evolved in the course of the joint struggle against the bourgeois-landowner system and the imperialist intervention were predicated on the fact that the fraternal co-operation between the peoples of the Soviet Union had acquired the form of a federative union. In this case it proved to be the most expedient for the self-determination of nations, for the emergence of their national statehood and, at the same time, for their international unity.

In the world socialist community the same twofold task is resolved differently. It sets an example of the increasingly closer relations between independent and equal socialist nations not on a federative basis but on the basis of relations between the fully independent states within the framework of the socialist community.

While taking full account of the distinctions between these two forms we must not lose sight of the elements of their basic similarity.

This similarity lies in the embodiment of the Marxist-Leninist principles of nationalities policy, and in the *socialist* solution of the national question, a solution which combines the sovereignty and independent development of national statehood with genuine fraternal co-operation between the peoples in the attainment of common objectives.

Their similarity also lies in the fact that both satisfy the objective requirements of the internationalisation of the economy in the modern epoch.

Also common to them is the indivisible unity between their all-sided national development with the building of the new, socialist system.

Lastly, a common element is that they ensure the joint defence of revolutionary gains against the aggressive forces of imperialism and foster the fraternal mutual assistance of the peoples in the most diverse fields.

Thanks to the formation of the world socialist system the countries in it have successfully repulsed all the intrigues of imperialism, upheld their right to follow their chosen path of progress, created favourable conditions for the building of the new society and ensured their growing prestige and influence on the destinies of all mankind.

The present experience of the relations between socialist countries shows that the all-sided free development of each socialist state is the condition for the success of all the socialist countries and that, in its

turn, each socialist state really flourishes when it carries out its international duty and does its utmost to promote the economic, political and ideological unity of the socialist countries.

The development of the new relations between the socialist states requires the consistent surmounting of objective and subjective difficulties and an active struggle to uproot the nationalistic prejudices inherited from the past. This task is complicated by the efforts imperialism is making to galvanise these prejudices. It pins its hopes mainly on reanimating the nationalistic tendencies that have found their most striking expression in Maoism. At the recent symposium of United States 'Sovietologists' convened in Dallas as a kind of imperialist 'preparation' for the 50th anniversary of the USSR, the principal speaker declared that today communism could be smashed only with the aid of nationalism. This is a very indicative statement. It contains the main ingredient of modern anti-communism.

Marxists-Leninists oppose this policy and ideology with proletarian internationalism. Thanks to the persevering efforts of the fraternal parties of the socialist countries the principal result of the development of the socialist community lies in the obvious successes of co-operation in all spheres. Neither the subversive actions of imperialism nor the divisive, chauvinist actions of the Peking leaders have, with all the harm they have inflicted, been able to break the main line of development, namely the strengthening of friendship between the peoples of the socialist countries.

A major achievement of the fraternal parties of the socialist countries was the institution of a manifold mechanism for co-ordinating their political line on the international scene. It ensures the charting of an effective collective policy of the socialist community. This is an entirely new political mechanism. It does not have hard and fast centralised forms, is founded on the complete independence of each party and is sufficiently developed to determine unity of will and action. It is flexible enough to take the political and theoretical contribution of each fraternal party into account and on that basis to chart a common, international line on the basic problems of the day.

A considerable contribution to the further development of world socialism is being made by socialist economic integration implemented on the basis of a comprehensive programme that has been collectively drawn up and unanimously adopted by the fraternal countries. Mutual

trust and close all-sided fraternal co-operation between the socialist countries mirror the objective requirements of world socialism's development and the laws of its further strengthening, and moreover ensure the realisation of the national interests of each of the members of the socialist family of peoples.

## SOVIET ROLE IN LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Comrades, permit me now to dwell on the role of the Soviet state, its experience and policy as a powerful, real factor of social progress in the zone of the national liberation movement.

Each of the main stages of the national liberation struggle is organically linked with the international impact of the Soviet peoples' historical achievements.

The *political and ideological* impact began to be felt from the very first days of the existence of the Soviet state and grew steadily. Here the main thing lies in the following. For decades the peoples of the colonies have been taught to believe that their liberation struggle was hopeless and that destiny had ordained their subjugation to the 'great' imperialist powers. Colonial oppression was sanctified by all the canons of imperialist international law that sanctioned 'freedom' of pillage, and it was given the cover of myths about the 'civilising mission' of the West and the 'white man's burden'.

The slogans of the October Revolution and the socialist principles of the national policy embodied in the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia and in other eloquent documents of the Russian revolution fundamentally changed the 'ideological climate' in which the enslaved peoples had been living. As was cogently put by Jawaharlal Nehru, outstanding leader of the national liberation movement and founder of the Indian state: 'The October Revolution lighted a torch that cannot be extinguished.'

Under the impact of the ideals of the October Revolution and of the experience of forming the Soviet state the peoples acquired faith in the possibility of shaking off colonial oppression and rid themselves of the feeling of helplessness in face of imperialist might.

The Soviet state's consistent and steadfast struggle against colonial oppression played an extremely important role in that through it the



principles of the national self-determination of all peoples ultimately became a norm of international law recorded in, among others, the documents of the United Nations Organisation.

The colonialists and their backers flagrantly flout these documents. With NATO support the South African and Portuguese imperialists openly violate UN decisions. But the very fact that today international law recognises the legality not of colonial rule but of the struggle of the peoples to abolish the last bastions of the system of colonial regimes is of great practical significance.

The Soviet state's *military and political* assistance to the liberation struggle of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries likewise dates from the very first days of the October Revolution. The plans for the colonial enslavement of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan were frustrated thanks to assistance from the then young Soviet Republic. In the course of decades the USSR helped the Chinese people in their struggle against the foreign imperialists and the internal reaction.

A particularly great role and a truly global scale were assumed by the Soviet Union's direct and indirect military and political assistance to the forces of national liberation during the Second World War and in postwar years. The blows dealt at imperialism by the Soviet Union, the conversion of socialism into a world system and its achievements and growing might created a situation in which imperialism could no longer stand up against the pressure of the national liberation revolutions which crushed colonial empires. The all-round support given by the CPSU and the Soviet state to the peoples of Indochina, the Arab countries, revolutionary Cuba and Chile, and the fighters against colonial and racist regimes in Africa represents a major contribution to the liberation movement of our time.

Today the successes of the struggle to strengthen the independence won by the peoples and the efficacy of their opposition to neo-colonialism depend chiefly on the manner of using the positive changes in the world situation that have taken place during the past decades largely as a result of the growth of the economic, military and political might of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

In proportion to the growth of the USSR's economic might increasing significance is acquired by its *economic assistance* to the struggle of the peoples of the former colonial world against imperialism. The Directives of the 24th Congress of the CPSU for the ninth five-year

plan provide for the further expansion of stable economic, scientific and technical links with the developing countries.

The long-term interests of the developing countries and the Soviet Union, as well as of other socialist countries create a broad historical prospect for the further all-sided promotion of their economic co-operation in the interests of raising the economic level and the standard of living of the masses. This co-operation has already introduced major changes in the system of international economic relations. There is hardly any doubt that still in the 20th century the economic map of the world will undergo a substantial change in this respect as well.

In speaking of the present state of the national question in the former colonial and semi-colonial zone it must be stressed that the achievements of the national liberation revolutions have introduced new elements into the struggle for the solution of this question.

What are the reasons for this?

*First*, the fact that imperialism is resorting to the methods of neo-colonialism in an effort to impose a new, camouflaged and refined system of economic and political subordination on the young states. As a result, the mounting processes strengthening their economic relations and the general trend towards breaking down economic, political and cultural barriers between different countries are increasingly finding themselves faced with the exploitative nature of the imperialist economic system. The great possibilities for social progress and for drawing the peoples together being created by the modern productive forces are fettered and distorted because under imperialism they are inevitably realised in coercive and oppressive forms.

*Second*, account must be taken of the various consequences of the active inclusion of dozens of young national states in international life. They are, of course, driving towards the consolidation of their independence and seeking to win greater international influence. But in practice this natural striving is implemented in such a way as to cause friction and conflicts between the liberated countries.

There is a definite line, however mobile and finely drawn, beyond which the defence of legitimate national interests is adulterated with egoism, an underestimation of the general tasks of all the peoples, when one's own problems are solved without consideration for the interests of other nations and sometimes to their detriment. In such instances the national becomes nationalistic.

There is something else one must bear in mind. National consciousness is naturally rising among the huge peasant masses that are being drawn into the world revolutionary process. But their liberative, revolutionary potential is still closely welded to nationalistic tendencies.

Imperialism speculates on this objective fact, pushing certain forces in the young states against other regions of the world, encouraging the concept of 'exclusive' laws and principles of the development of the emergent nations, and so on. Increasing attempts are being made to hinder the unity of these countries for the defence of their common interests and, in particular, the expansion of co-operation with socialist countries. This is fraught with a serious danger because it is obvious, as has been proved by facts, that it is precisely the support of the Soviet Union and the socialist community that opens for the young national states a real prospect for strengthening their political independence, building up their national economy and taking part in international economic integration processes on an equal and mutually beneficial basis.

Comrades, the fundamental principles of solving the national question worked out by Lenin and the CPSU and the extensive practical experience of the Soviet Union are of inestimable significance for a correct approach to the problem of relations between the different nationalities and ethnical groups in the countries that have won liberation from colonialism.

The sharp national conflicts that flare up in that region are the consequence of various processes. In some cases the deepest roots of these conflicts are in the distant past, in the period of the rise of feudal states that united different peoples and tribes within their boundaries. Account must also be taken of the fact that the imperialist conquerors had established such boundaries for their possessions as did not coincide at all with the historical settlement of the different peoples.

The colonialists not only preserved and sustained the hotbeds of national and religious conflicts that had existed before they appeared on the scene, but deliberately fostered the deepening of these hotbeds. Suffice it to recall the harm that was inflicted on the peoples of the Hindustan subcontinent by the policy of the British colonialists, who fanned Hindu-Moslem hostility. The delayed-action mines that have time and again led to tragic consequences and the death of hundreds of thousands of people were laid during the epoch of British rule.

The seeds of the present Middle East conflict were likewise sown by imperialism, which successively created and fanned a situation for strife and sharp collisions between the Arab peoples and the Jewish population. Today this is being used by the ruling circles of Israel and their imperialist patrons to further their own ends.

The antagonism between the Greeks and Turks on Cyprus was cultivated by the British colonialists after they seized the island in 1878. The aggravation of the Kurdish problem is also due to direct and indirect interference by the imperialist powers. Many such examples may be given.

With the achievement of political independence by the former colonies these conflicts between nations frequently acquire new forms. They include the struggle for the equality of national minorities, collisions between representatives of various nationalities in their bid for key positions in the state leadership and in the allocation of state funds to the various ethnical regions, conflicts linked with the language problem, and so forth. In one way or another all these issues are linked with the problems of socio-economic development.

Another factor that must be taken into account is that in many countries the process of the formation of nations is at its initial stages. In these countries the population is still frequently divided into tribes and is governed by tribalistic notions and the age-old traditions of tribal hostility. All this frequently leads to turbulent and sometimes dramatic conflicts, in which the imperialist, neo-colonialist forces frequently participate directly or indirectly. 'National' demands are frequently used as a cover for the mercenary interests of definite social groups, for which nationalistic slogans are only a camouflage.

One cannot, therefore, use solely external indications for a judgment of which national movements in the multi-national states of Asia and Africa are progressive and which of them are reactionary. It is important to take into account all circumstances, the entire range of not only internal but also international factors.

Some of these movements may objectively play a reactionary role by nourishing separatist tendencies that play into the hands of the imperialists. Such was the case, for example, in Nigeria, where by fanning the nationalistic ambitions of the Ibo elite the imperialists tried to dismember the country and set up the puppet 'Biafra' state in the country's richest oil region.

A different, anti-imperialist, orientation was adopted by the East Bengali movement. The creation of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was a blow at the internal reactionary and neocolonialist forces, which in the given case acted under the guise of safeguarding the country's 'integrity'.

Apparently, the national question can be fully solved within multi-national Asian and African states only on the basis of deep democratic and anti-capitalist changes, a consistent struggle against the intrigues of neocolonialists.

In this context it is only natural that tremendous importance is attached by progressive forces and the Communist Parties of multi-national Afro-Asian states to the study of the experience of building up national statehood, accumulated by the peoples of the Soviet Union. S. Sardesai, a veteran leader of the Communist Party of India, writes in his book *India and the Russian Revolution* that independent India can derive for herself much information and experience by thoroughly and attentively studying the methods, with the help of which the Russian revolution and the Soviet Union have solved the intricate problems which Indians have been unable to cope with successfully in the course of the struggle for independence and which continue to complicate the situation in India. He adds that there is no doubt whatsoever that the successes scored by the Soviet Union in setting up a happy family of different nationalities and cultures will illumine the path of the Indian people and help them avoid mistakes and complications.

It is common knowledge that the Communists have always been and continue to be the standard-bearers in the struggle for national independence and freedom, that they are implacable and uncompromising opponents of every brand of national oppression and discrimination. This is the invariable and principled stand of the Communists from which they have never departed in the slightest degree. True to Lenin's behests, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union regards the great upswing in the national anti-imperialist movements and the peoples' unwavering urge for independence and equality as a great progressive phenomenon.

*(To be concluded in our next issue.)*

THE NINETEENTH OF JULY 1971

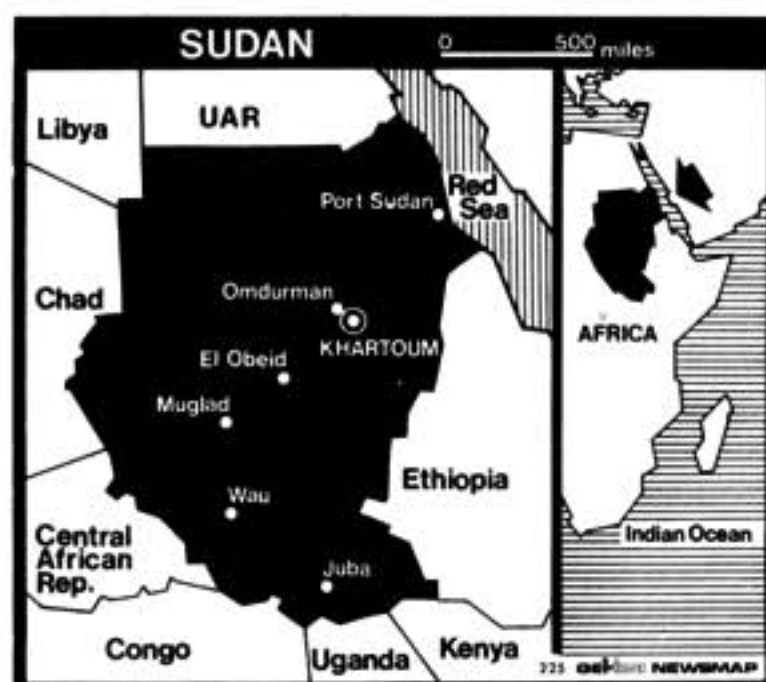
# ONE YEAR LATER

## A Statement from the Sudanese Communist Party

On this day, marking the first anniversary of the glorious 19th July movement, we pay tribute to the memory of our immortal martyrs Abdel Khalig Mahjoub, El Shafia Ahmed El Sheikh, Joseph Garang and their fellow martyrs from the military and civilians. Their heroic deeds and the sacrifices they offered will remain to inspire our struggle beneath the banners which they

raised for the sake of our people and working class and for the promotion of the international working class movement.

The 19th July movement was an unparalleled event in the history of the Sudanese revolution. It will continue to be a colossal beacon that illumines the way forward for our revolution. It will continue to be that rich endowment ever rendered to the Arab and African liberation movements. No wonder, for that was the first time when the vanguard within the armed forces having assumed power, placed it firmly in the



hands of the national democratic alliance. Unfortunately, external as well as internal forces collaborated to render the 19th July movement abortive, otherwise it would have survived; it would have been able to contribute new directions to the Arabian and African revolutions.

A year has now elapsed since that celebrated day, the 19th of July, 1971. A year has also elapsed since that bloody retrogression which our country has gone through after the victory of counter-revolution and the return to power of Numeiry and his gang.

On this occasion we wholeheartedly greet with comradely gratitude the international solidarity movement led by the party of great Lenin . . . the CPSU and the Soviet Government. We are similarly indebted to the communist parties of the socialist countries, capitalist countries and newly independent countries as well as to all the revolutionary and progressive movements and organisations that stood by our side at that hard time. Had it not been for that unyieldingly adamant solidarity the massacres would have continued and the infection of the anti-communist hysteria would have spread beyond the boundaries of our country.

At the same time we denounce, once again, the position taken by the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party together with those who followed suit in supporting the counter revolution, encouraging and backing Numeiry while his hands were still dripping with the blood of our martyrs. That position serves as new evidence of the deviation of the Chinese leadership, its repugnance and enmity to the international working class movement.

With the lapse of a year since the Sudan events, let us recapitulate which way the regime of bloody retrogression has taken thenceforward.

More than three thousand of the best sons and daughters of our people are still languishing in prisons and detention camps enduring with patience and perseverance the most cruel and coercive conditions. The fascist military regime has scrapped all forms of democracy and freedom, while repression and suppression are unabated. After the campaign against the patriotic and progressive elements in the wake of the bloody executions, it has become easier for reaction to carry on with attempts to establish the so-called 'Sudanese Socialist union', 'Union of Sudanese Women' and the 'May Battalions'. Attempts have also been made to set up a 'trade union' movement, the leaders of which would be nothing more than tools in the hands of the regime.

Yet all these attempts proved futile and resulted only in distorted images that attracted nobody other than those known for their opportunism and corruption throughout the history of the revolutionary movement in Sudan.

Thus our heroic people give further evidence of their revolutionary consciousness and of their adamant adherence to their revolutionary ideals and principles however violent the repression and coercion.

The regime of bloody reaction proceeds with its faulty internal and external policies. Our country has been transformed into a reserve for neo-colonialism, since all doors are kept wide open for the World Bank and other neo-colonialist institutions and for conditioned 'aid' from Imperialism.

Numeiry's present allies have been all the time enemies of the Sudanese revolution and imperialist puppets on the Arab and African arena. The puppet regime of Sudan is now one of the most reactionary among Arab regimes. Even the Cairo papers have recently commented that it has sold out the Arab cause for a handful of American dollars.

The regime of bloody reaction has surpassed the worst of its predecessors in Sudan by committing, through conspiracy with imperialism, that drastic crime that is called the 'Southern Sudan Agreement'. That agreement endangers the passage of progress and revolution not only in Sudan, North and South, but also in all parts of the Nile valley as well as in the Arabic area.

The agreement that Numeiry has reached with the secessionists is nothing short of a prologue to the total breaking away of Southern Sudan. It is an antidote intended to counteract the revolutionary movement in the North. That agreement was reached with Joseph Lago, the number one puppet of international imperialism in the South who had his military and political training in Israel. Other participants were the Anya Nya leaders known for more than fifteen years as imperialist puppets who are there to obliterate any democratic settlement of the Southern Sudan problem that would open up roads of development and progress before the people of the South. The agreement, blessed and endorsed by imperialism, has been finalised in the absence of participation on the part of the people of the North and the South.

The South agreement hands over authority in that dear part of our country to elements that today voice a lot of lies about their support of the unity of Sudan. This is going to pose the biggest danger facing



both North and South.

We call upon all democratic and revolutionary elements in Africa and in the Arab world to beware of this agreement. We beseech them to exert their efforts towards exposing it and revealing the danger it has in store for the people of the South.

With the failure of the military mutiny in 'Biafra', imperialism is now resorting to a new tactic for the secession of Southern Sudan and the installation there of a new colony. The agreement is a manifestation of this new tactic.

The Numeiry regime goes from bad to worse as it reveals its enmity towards the socialist countries. Numeiry finds the courage to attack the Soviet Union in a way unprecedented even by the most reactionary leaders. We all know what anti-Sovietism means, at a time when the Soviet Union is the reliable friend of all oppressed peoples, in the forefront of which are the Arab peoples.

The Sudanese Communist Party, the party of Abdel Khalig, El Shafia and their comrades, was, still is and will continue to be guided by Marxism-Leninism in all its steps and undertakings. It knows that revolution, as the great Lenin said, is a delicate and intricate science that needs a considerable amount of wisdom. The Sudanese Communist Party, together with its honest leadership, has a clear-cut history of refusing and struggling against the conspiratory coup de ètat mentality and against the elements within its ranks that had a petit bourgeois orientation.

In spite of all the difficulties our Party has been able to gather together its forces and the Central Committee managed to hold periodical meetings. Our party has been the only fortress our people now have to survive this crisis. It has already resumed its struggle to rally the masses along the road to a national democratic government that would retrieve to our people their dignity and prestige.

The day of victory is not far away.

Long live proletarian internationalism!

Long live the Sudanese Communist Party!

# STUDENTS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

by ALEXANDER SIBEKO

*Of what purpose is your education if you cannot help your  
people in their hour of need?*

Abraham Tiro

The Administrator of the Transvaal was claiming at the end of last year that 'the youth revolt in South Africa had passed its peak and was on the decline'. The stormy events of 1972 have proved the exact opposite, with student protest on an unprecedented scale embracing almost all Black institutions of higher education, and culminating in the savage police attack on radical White students and the Government's ban on demonstrations.

Abraham Tiro's graduation day speech at the University of the North at Turfloop in May was a clarion call to all Black students. The speech, described by the White authorities as 'disgraceful', boldly attacked the racist educational system and the Government's apartheid policy, and profoundly reflected the thinking of all South Africa's Black students; African, Indian and Coloured. When Tiro was summarily expelled and his 1,200 fellow Turfloop students had walked-out in sympathy, the entire Black student body at South Africa's 'ethnic' universities demonstrated their active solidarity in strike actions, campus boycotts and militant protests, with a vigour and unity that had been forged by a common consciousness. The Government was visibly shaken; its repugnant Bantu Educational Policy, which aims to brain-wash Black youth and condition them for servitude, was in a shambles.

Moreover, the students were challenging in word, in deed, and by their very unity, the cornerstone of apartheid strategy, the fraudulent policy of 'separate development', which aims to divide and weaken the oppressed and avert the impending mass political struggle and armed revolutionary confrontation. The Government knows that it stands little chance of foisting 'separate development' on the backs of the oppressed masses if it cannot get the co-operation of the Black intelligentsia. The militant unity of Black students is therefore a potentially very serious threat to White rule. The lesson was there for all to see; as *Inkululeko*, underground organ of the Communist Party, pointed out in its July issue:

When Africans unite as Africans, and all Black people unite as Black people, then it becomes increasingly difficult for the Government to maintain its authority.

### ROLE OF SASO

Quite clearly SASO, the all-Black South African Students' Organisation, must take the credit for developing the militant spirit and solidarity of Black students. This it has achieved in a remarkably short space of time, since the organisation was only founded in 1969. SASO has established an effective platform through which Black students can express their demands and aspirations, and translate their words into meaningful action. In doing so it has had to overcome the difficult problems created by the isolation of the ethnic institutions from one another, and the rigorous Government control enforced on these campuses. SASO can claim to represent some 10,000 students at the various 'homeland' universities, including the major teacher training colleges and theological seminaries for Blacks, as well as important off-campus branches for correspondence course and 'floating' students in Durban, Soweto and the Western Cape. However, SASO represents far more than Black students, for its aspirations are inseparable from the aspirations of the Black masses, and it can be seen as 'spearheading a national re-awakening among the oppressed peoples in the country'.<sup>1</sup> In the words of Abraham Tiro:

We Black graduates . . . are being called upon to greater responsibilities in the liberation of our people . . . The magic story of human achievement gives irrefutable proof that as soon as nationalism is awakened among the intelligentsia it becomes the vanguard in the struggle against alien rule.

## PROBLEMS OF GROWTH

It is important to bear in mind that the Black student movement emerging at the present time is in an embryonic stage of development, and many of its concepts and aims have not been fully worked out. From its inception SASO has been surrounded by a great deal of controversy. Much of this controversy has had the effect of creating some confusion and misconception about the organisation which in the long-run could hinder SASO itself. The controversy centred around two issues: the concept of 'Black Consciousness' propounded by SASO, and the decision to 'go it alone' and break with the predominantly White National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). Unfortunately, the controversy that boiled-up and the facile 'racial' explanations for many events and trends in South Africa, served to cloud the perfectly natural factors calling for an all-Black student body. To understand why the situation in 1969 was ripe for the formation of SASO one needs to go back a little in time.

Up until the Government's Extension of University Education Act in 1959 small numbers of Black students attended the English-language universities. The only significant body of Black students was at the 'open' university college of Fort Hare, which was a stronghold of the ANC Youth League. Black students were not particularly interested in NUSAS affairs because they had legal organisations of their own and their concern was with the national liberation movement rather than with specifically student problems. It should be remembered that NUSAS held aloof from the liberation struggle and was very moderate in its approach. In 1961 the ANC Youth League founded ASA (African Students Association) to organise African university and high school students, but the organisation could only briefly function owing to Government repression.<sup>2</sup> This also occurred with the PAC-sponsored ASUSA (African Students Union of South Africa) whose impact, in comparison to ASA's, was insignificant.

In the political hiatus that followed the banning and savage repression of the peoples' organisations in the early sixties, NUSAS momentarily enjoyed an unchallengeable position as spokesman for anti-Government student opposition. NUSAS domination of the student scene in the sixties could not have occurred had the liberatory movement not been driven deep underground. To be fair to NUSAS it conducted its affairs with courage and determination, and refused to wilt under the Government's bullying tactics, but its claim to represent Blacks as well as White students was illusory.

Meanwhile Black students were attempting to come to grips with an entirely new range of problems which had never confronted their predecessors. For the first time in South African history a whole complex of exclusively Black universities were being created. These institutions or 'tribal college', as they first came to be called, were designed to produce tame flunkies to administer the 'Bantu homelands' for the Government. The students were guinea-pigs in the Government's ethnic universities experiment. Many were hand picked and their numbers were few. The difficulties faced by the students in organising opposition to their highly regulated situation were prodigious. They had to organise from scratch, and one of the most serious handicaps was the fact that they did not have the physical presence of the liberation movement or its student wing to aid them. According to Joe Kumalo of the ANC Youth and Student Section: 'The vacuum was causing strains and anxieties to the Black students.'<sup>3</sup> The students were feeling the weakness imposed by their geographical separation, their lack of representation, and their crisis of identity. However their common problems and their consciousness of their common destiny, indelibly imprinted on the African people by the tireless efforts of the ANC in sixty years of struggle, helped them to overcome these problems and brought them together. The unity of the African students, across the artificial ethnic divides formed the basis from which unity could be extended to the Indian and Coloured students.

The awakening national consciousness of the Black students was bound to lead to a confrontation with NUSAS, since a predominantly White organisation cannot represent the aspiration of Blacks. This was a fact long since understood by the ANC from its formation in 1912, and by the Communist Party from the twenties. Liberals, be they White or Black, seek to ignore this fact of life, because they place the *ideal*

before the *reality*. The founders of SASO recognised this fact, but, perhaps unwittingly, probably owing to the pressures of the situation, behaved as though they were propounding an entirely new concept. The White press certainly have conspired to compound the myth that so-called 'Black Power' thinking and 'Black Consciousness' are entirely new phenomena in South Africa. This is a-historical and, as manipulated by the press, counter-revolutionary, because it serves to conceal from a new generation the dynamic principles and historical experiences of the liberatory struggle.

When Black students launched SASO they were immediately plagued by the false issue that they were appearing to conform with Government policy by forming a segregated organisation. Liberals and NUSAS were bitterly disappointed at the rejection of their 'non-racial' ideal and SASO found itself on the defensive, spending much time and energy justifying its existence. Much of SASO rhetoric therefore was initially involved in an attack on NUSAS and the liberal structures. Some SASO spokesmen continue to give the impression that they regard White liberals as a major obstacle to ending White oppression. Neither do they bother to distinguish between White liberals and genuine White revolutionaries. The Government of course benefits from such unnecessary diversions and enjoys the discomfort caused to NUSAS and the liberals. The racist Afrikaanse Studente Bond (ASB) went so far as to express its sympathy for SASO's attempts to be the exclusive representative of Black students, although no doubt the May-June events have made the ASB think again.

In reality SASO's formation represented a quite obvious rejection of apartheid style exclusiveness by its very fact of uniting, in the first instance, the various African groups, and in the second instance, the Africans with the minority Black groups. The Government is frightened of such developments and its Departments of Indian and of Coloured Affairs announced that they would not allow the campuses under their respective controls to affiliate to SASO, because 'there was nothing in common between the African, Indian and Coloured socially or culturally.' Apartheid doctrine declares that there is nothing in common between the various African tribal groupings too, but, for the moment at any rate, the authorities are hesitant about moving against SASO on these grounds. It is this aspect of Black unity that represents the most positive and necessary feature of SASO's existence, rather than the

negative reason of repelling White liberals. This latter factor was purely a subjective one, resulting from the transitory set of circumstances that briefly placed NUSAS at the head of the student movement. SASO would benefit by passing beyond this phase of its history since the point has been well enough made, although this is not to suggest that one must cease exposing liberal illusions. Indications that SASO recognises this need were expressed by Barney Pityane, the current Secretary General, who declared last year that 'SASO undertook not to involve itself in unnecessary mudslinging at NUSAS and that recent attacks on NUSAS by White politicians, particularly in Parliament, obviously call for a declaration of solidarity on the student front.' (*Rand Daily Mail*, 7 July 1971).

### BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

The advocacy of Black Consciousness has played a central part in infusing the students with a militant spirit and mobilising them in the struggle against White supremacy. It has been integral to the forging of the unity of the Black students. The age-old idea of group solidarity has made a substantial impact on broad sections of our people, and not for a decade has South Africa seen such renewed stirrings of national consciousness. SASO has played an important role in this present ideological ferment. In the words of its constitution it sees the crucial need for Black South Africans 'to re-assert their pride and group identity' in the belief that 'unity and positive re-awakening will result'.

An integral part in the development of revolutionary consciousness, whether it be national or class consciousness, is an awakening on the part of the exploited and oppressed to the position they occupy as a group in society. Barney Pityane, in an essay he has contributed to *Student Perspectives on South Africa*,<sup>4</sup> a recently published book which sheds illuminating light on the student movement, quotes from a SASO newsletter on what makes Black consciousness 'immanent in our eyes'.<sup>5</sup>

The first step . . . is to make the Black man see himself, to pump life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward looking process.

In part, one is reminded of Lenin's description of the awakening consciousness of Russian workers in his comments on the first wave of strikes in the mid-nineteenth century:<sup>6</sup>

The workers were losing their age-long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them and began . . . I shall not say to understand but to sense the necessity for collective resistance, definitely abandoning their slavish submission to the authorities.

But consciousness, as Lenin would point out, does not only depend on 'an inward-looking process'. The masses must be imbued not only with a consciousness of their position but *also* a consciousness of their task. This element is imperative if consciousness is to become fully political. Political consciousness requires a deep grasp of what the system is about and what the solutions are. Without a scientifically formulated political programme, reflecting the realities of society (the forces of change, the nature of the state, the strategy and tactics of the revolution and so on), a political struggle cannot rise above erratic and spontaneous challenges to authority. The weakness of SASO's present concept of Black Consciousness is the illusion that consciousness of position *alone* will necessarily lead to fundamental change. According to Barney Pitso: <sup>7</sup>

Black people . . . must work towards a self-sufficient political, social and economic unit. In this manner they will help themselves towards a deeper realization of their potential and worth as self-respecting people. The confidence thus generated will give them a sense of pride and awareness. This is *all that we need* in South Africa for a meaningful change to the *status quo*.

(Emphasis added.)

The dangers of a subjective view of consciousness is that it can be used to justify a retreat from political struggle into exclusiveness and isolationism. This occurred to both the Non-European Unity Movement and the PAC. There is no lack of such thinking in South Africa today, particularly on the part of certain Bantustan leaders and Black businessmen, who seek to use Black exclusiveness to promote their own narrow, sectional interests. There is always the tendency that some sections of the student-professional-business strata who, when isolated from the masses, become subject to moods of despair at the apparent impregnability of White rule and use revolutionary sounding phrases to cover



a withdrawal from active struggle. Adam Small, the Coloured poet and lecturer at the University of the Western Cape, who has become a prominent spokesman on Black Consciousness, has fallen prey to this latter pit-fall and struck a tune common to the Unity Movement. Urging against SASO's call for a strike on the Black campuses in June, he declared:

Protest itself is a form of begging, really, and we have indeed decided that we were no longer going to beg White South Africa . . . Instead we are simply to manifest our pride in Blackness time and time again.

Unfortunately the mere assertion of pride in Blackness, no matter how often and how verbose, will not bring apartheid to its knees. It requires the harsh testing-ground of the political struggle to expose false impressions, and it is testimony to the good sense of the Black students that they ignored Adam Small's strictures and pressed forward with their task.

### LESSONS FROM THE PAST

The students would benefit by studying and analysing the development of 'Black Consciousness' in South Africa, and the role it has played in forging the unity of the oppressed at previous stages of the struggle, albeit that the term is of recent coinage. In *Student Perspectives on South Africa* two views are offered which considerably differ from one another. Terence Beard, a White lecturer in politics at Rhodes University, in his essay on student activity at Fort Hare prior to its conversion to an ethnic college in 1960, points to a similarity in approach between the ANC Youth Leaguers (who came to prominence in the ANC in the late forties) and many present-day proponents of Black Power. Beard continues:<sup>8</sup>

The formation of SASO has been seen by at least some of its founders as an entirely new development based upon the concept of Black Power. The past history of Fort Hare reveals this to be only partly the case. Black Power is certainly a new term in the political vocabulary but it does not denote an entirely new development.

Beard proceeds to describe the structure of the Congress Movement, with each organisation in the alliance devoted to organising towards a common goal within its own community and the ANC 'regarded as the main agent of political change'. According to Beard:

The arguments in favour of this pillared structure were precisely the arguments which are today employed to justify Black Power, that the goals of Africans could only be attained by Africans themselves and that this necessitated an all-African organisation.

Liberals argued against the structure of the Congress Alliance as they argue against the structure of SASO today, and when Whites who had shown themselves in sympathy with the struggle of the African people were invited by the ANC to set-up an organisation propounding Congress policy but dedicated to working amongst the White community (the Congress of Democrats), the liberals declined and set up their own organisation (the South African Liberal Party). Terence Beard is well acquainted with the arguments because he was associated with the Liberal Party before it dissolved itself.

Steve Biko, a past president of SASO and still very active in the leadership of the organisation, offers a different view with which one must differ profoundly. We offer his view as an example of a possible trend within SASO, and as a warning of the erroneous path along which the organisation could easily run. Quoting approvingly from Aime Cesaire's letter of resignation from the French Communist Party in 1956, in which Cesaire propounded on the notion of the Black man's 'peculiar uniqueness'. Biko writes:<sup>9</sup>

At about the same time that Cesaire said this, there was emerging in South Africa a group of angry young Black men who were beginning to 'grasp the notion of (their) peculiar uniqueness' and who were eager to define who they were and what. These were the elements who were disgruntled with the direction imposed on the African National Congress by the 'old guard' within its leadership. These young men were questioning a number of things, among which was the 'go slow' attitude adopted by the leadership, and the ease with which the leadership accepted coalitions with organizations other than those run by Blacks. The 'People's Charter' adopted in Kliptown in 1955 was evidence of this. In a sense one can say that these were the first real signs that the Blacks in South Africa were beginning to realise the need to go it alone and to evolve a philosophy based on, and

directed by, Blacks. In other words, Black Consciousness was slowly manifesting itself.

What Biko fails to remind his readers, or perhaps grasp himself, was that the 'angry young Black men' of the Pan African Congress, about whom he is referring, defined themselves in narrow, racially exclusive terms that rejected co-operation not only with Whites, but with Coloureds and Indians; and that their overt racialism together with their anti-communism was of benefit to White supremacy and imperialism and threatened to create division, rather than unity, within the ranks of the African people. The ANC 'old guard' against whom the PAC factionalists revolted, included young revolutionaries like Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe, several of whom were former Fort Hare Youth Leaguers. The Youth League's 1949 Action Programme infused the ANC with a dynamic militancy resulting in the inspiring campaigns of the fifties that mobilised the masses in their hundreds of thousands, spread a revolutionary consciousness, developed the firm unity of the broadest sections of the suffering people, and adopted the Freedom Charter as a programme that would place real power in the people's hands. In a word, this was real 'People's Power' in action and it had White Supremacy rocking on its heels. The PAC, and the opportunistic, bankrupt path it has followed, is an example to our people of the politics of destruction and not the politics of salvation. PAC's concept of 'going it alone' is an example of an idea that abysmally failed to serve the cause of liberation.

### WHITE STUDENTS

Lenin repeatedly stressed that 'working class consciousness cannot be genuine class consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected'.<sup>10</sup> It is only this way that consciousness can develop into a realisation of the total reality of the needs of society, and become a revolutionary consciousness capable of transforming society into a just society for all the people.

The White students in Johannesburg and Cape Town who demonstrated in solidarity with the Black students, and who were conse-

quently brutally beaten-up by the police with over 500 being arrested, were a product of the militancy of the Black students. But SASO more or less ignored their predicament, and in so doing was effectively ignoring an attack on the interests of the Black students and on the oppressed generally. Temba Sono, at the time President of SASO, stated that 'White students must not come and burden Black students with their weakness'. It is precisely the militancy of the Black students that has succeeded in radicalising a section of White students. According to *Inkululeko*: 'This is an indication of the moral force and political creativity that can be unleashed once oppressed people gather together and speak with the authority of one voice.' It is most important for Black students to develop a spirit of solidarity and closer co-operation with this section of White students, for the effect is to isolate and weaken White Supremacists and expose the myth that they represent the interests of all the Whites. In fact the struggle has shown that every time the oppressed forcefully challenge White rule deep divisions appear within White society, and create a serious crisis for the Government. This is the reason why Vorster dealt even more ruthlessly with the White students than he did with the Black.

As the armed revolutionary struggle unfolds in our country solidarity from within the ranks of the White group will be as vital as solidarity in America is to the Vietnamese revolution. Whilst most Whites certainly do not want to make any fundamental changes in the status of Blacks things do not remain static, and the Whites will not necessarily unite and present a common front when faced with the demands of Black people.

The Government is stepping up plans to create a reserve counter-insurgency army among White youth through a 'preparedness programme' in the schools that aims to mix 'moral values' with shooting, field tactics, map reading, first aid, road-maintenance, fire-fighting and so on. Vorster needs to extract unwavering loyalty from White youth, which is why he has virtually declared war on dissident White students. These students promise to be a useful ally in the cause of Black liberation. No effort should be spared to bring them closer to the Liberation Movement. It is interesting to note that just prior to the police assault on Cape Town students slogans appeared on the walls of the university proclaiming: "Free Mandela – Hang Vorster".

The Black masses of our country have always responded enthus-

astically to those White revolutionaries who have courageously merged their interests with those of the people. They have always been welcomed by Black communists and by the ANC and its allies.

## PERSPECTIVES

If SASO is to develop and make a dynamic and permanent contribution to the national liberation struggle then it must clarify its views about the nature of revolutionary change in South Africa, and its concept of the future. Whilst SASO as a legal organisation cannot propound the need for armed struggle, it must bring itself into the mainstream of liberation thinking and steer clear of those dead-end roads trodden in the past by the likes of the Unity Movement and PAC. Essentially SASO must develop its ideological concepts along the lines of the national liberation movement. This means understanding the ANC's role as the leading vehicle for national emancipation, and the Freedom Charter as the policy programme for a free South Africa. This will not come about automatically and will ultimately depend on the impact the ANC and Umkhonto We Sizwe makes in the coming stage of the revolutionary struggle. Concerning the vital issue of unity of the oppressed masses, of Africans, Indians and Coloureds, and of unity of all the democratic forces, including White democrats, the students have much to learn from the ANC and its allies. On the issue of Black Consciousness they have much to learn as well. Oliver Tambo, Acting President General, made the most important statement on this issue, in a 1971 New Year message to ANC members, when he declared:<sup>1 1</sup>

. . . The Black people of racist South Africa must recognise that freedom for South Africa, no less than for them as the most exploited, will come only when they rise as a solid Black mass — rising from under the heel of the oppressor and storming across the colour barriers to the citadels of political and economic power.

Then only shall the noble principles enshrined in the Freedom Charter see the light of day, and turn South Africa into a happy home not only for Black people at last, but for all people.

Let us therefore be explicit. Power to the people means, in fact, Power to the Black people — the gagged millions who cannot set their foot in the Cape Town Parliament where Bantustans and Coloured and Indian Councils are made: the most ruthlessly

exploited, the tortured victims of racial hatred and humiliation. Let the Blacks seize by force, what is theirs by right of birth, and use it for the benefit of all, including those from whom it has been taken. And who are the Blacks in South Africa? They are the people known, and treated as 'Kaffirs, Coolies and Hotnots' together with those South Africans whose total political identity with the African oppressed makes them Black in all but the accident of skin colour. Where this identity is not merely reformist but is revolutionary, there in my view, you have a Black man. This type of Black man in South Africa is rare today. But he will grow in numerical strength as we drive our point deeper and deeper with Umkhonto We Sizwe – the Spear of the Nation . . . (let us) go out to the world, and back to the urban and rural areas of our common homeland, as one man, with one voice and one cause which is: Power to the Black People of Fascist South Africa!

## TASKS

Black students can play a unique part in mobilising our people; this has always been an honoured role of the Black students of our land. In the first place SASO must concentrate on organising, not only university students, but Black secondary school students as well. ASA and the ANC Youth League always attached great importance to the high schools which have always been fertile grounds from which to recruit the youth. This year has seen many examples of secondary school students boldly defying the authorities.

SASO's work in the wider society may not prove as fruitful as the Youth League's because it is primarily a student organisation. But interesting trends are materialising in South Africa today which should prove of benefit to the organisation if it can correctly understand and make use of these trends. At its July Conference SASO resolved to increase contact with Black workers. Recent events in Madagascar have shown what a force the alliance of students and workers can be. However, if SASO's work among the workers is to prove fruitful, then it must begin to understand not only the colour issues of South African society but the class issues too. SASO has made an important contribution to defying the Government's 'Bantu Homeland' project which it uncompromisingly opposes. A heated controversy erupted at the Conference when Temba Sono advised on co-operation with Bantustan

leaders on the grounds that 'we have to move away from the aloof attitude of regarding Bantustans and separate development bodies in a negative light'. Whilst Sono advanced some useful views on the prospects of making use of apartheid institutions in order to strengthen the hand of the oppressed, (a view which SASO could well re-think) he foolishly suggested: '. . . we have to seek out those who differ with us and try to sway them to our way of thinking. This is the essence of our solidarity. This includes everybody – Blacks and Whites, whether they are Security Police or liberals'. Sono was expelled from the organisation after refusing to withdraw those sections of the speech with which the Conference disagreed. Whilst his call to co-operate with the enemy could not for a moment be tolerated, his plea that chiefs like Buthelezi – who have support among the people – should not be rejected, has its validity. Another issue debated at the Conference over which there was no precise definition was that of Pan-Africanism. Sharp differences emerged during a debate on the desirability of founding an all-African students movement. According to the *Rand Daily Mail* (July 6, 1972) one delegate disassociated himself from the term Pan-African 'if it was being used in the sense that it had been by Robert Sobukwe'.

Super-purist notions, and the verbal militancy often associated with them, invariably leads to isolation from the masses. If SASO is to succeed in its tasks then it must shed the 'go it alone' perspective and model its approach along the revolutionary lines outlined in Oliver Tambo's speech. The motto: 'He who is not against us is with us', sums up the authentic revolutionary ethic that can unite the broadest possible sections of the people against exploitation and tyranny.

### **COMBINING LEGAL AND ILLEGAL METHODS OF STRUGGLE**

Finally all students must realise that SASO can only play a role within the legal terms of the struggle. Vorster attacked the students' protest as being part of a campaign to soften-up the country for a violent, non-parliamentary change of government, ignoring the fact that violence and chaos have long stalked the land in the form of the brutal system he administers. *Inkululeko* pointed out:

Every Black man and woman knows that the last place they will find justice or freedom is in the all-White parliament. In the course of a long and bitter history of suffering our people have learnt that the only way to overthrow White rule and win freedom is through a combination of legal and illegal methods of struggle, of the need for mass political action and armed revolutionary violence. This is the only way in which the violence and terror of the White State will be crushed and the struggle for national liberation emerge triumphant.

The students, and all our people, must prepare for the revolutionary challenge to White rule. They must organise clandestine groups and structures side by side with the emerging legal and semi-legal structures, for all the signs are that South Africa is entering a period of revolutionary storm. Above all, the students must learn to use those ideas which conform with the true needs of the people, for as Karl Marx pointed out: 'Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses'.

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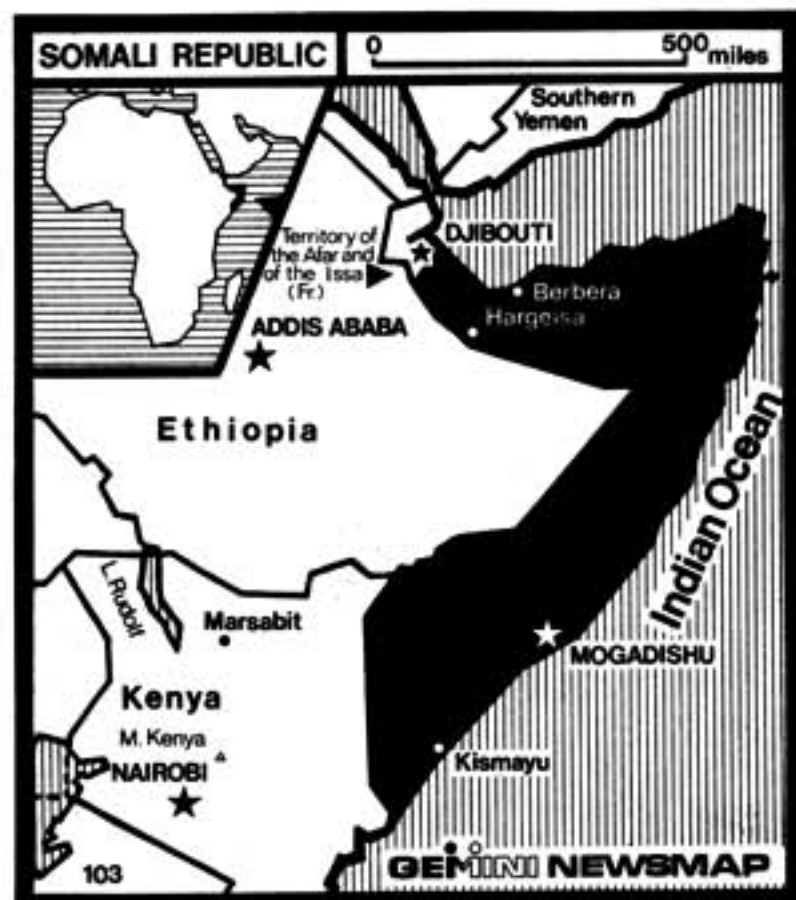


# THE SOMALI REVOLUTION

by ALI MATTAN HASHI

On 1 July 1960, Somalia, a trust territory administered by Italy, merged with Somaliland, a British protectorate, to form an independent state, the Somali Republic. A backward economy, poor communications, a budget deficit, a low-standard educational system and hundreds of 'experts', as one-time colonial officials were called, were the heritage left to our people by the two 'mother' countries.

Somali was for centuries a politically and economically unorganised society of nomads, peasants, fishermen and shopkeepers. At the close of the industrial revolution in Europe it was occupied and partitioned by imperialists, who were unconcerned about the country's socio-economic progress. This state of affairs lasted until the proclamation of



independence. However, the reactionary regime which succeeded colonial rule hardly did anything for the people.

Tribalism, corruption and nepotism were rife in the country, public funds were embezzled and the ruling elite got rich while the masses became still more impoverished.

In 1961 Aden Abdullah Othman, acting President of the Republic, appointed Dr Abdirashid Ali Shermak Prime Minister. Most ministers of the cabinet formed by Dr Shermak were members of the nascent Solian bourgeoisie, which had shared in the national administration during self-government. By then many puppet parties had disappeared from the political scene as ideological and political misfits. But some of their leaders kept their cabinet posts. Still in charge of key functions in the administration were indigenous officials appointed by the British and Italian colonialists. The new government dreaded tribal strife and so let them be.

The independence of justice from the executive, though proclaimed by the Constitution, was a dead letter. The judiciary remained in the same hands as before and the judges were closely linked with the administration by reciprocal interests. Corruption was widespread. Arrested criminals were set free the next day. A telephone call from a minister or MP led to the immediate release of a common criminal because he belonged to the caller's tribe or was an acquaintance of his. Embezzlers caught red-handed were never put on trial.

Non-governmental organisations, for their part, were a sorry sight. The more than twenty trade unions and a similar number of youth and women's organisations were controlled by agents of the reactionary regime and their activity was partly financed by foreign embassies and the reactionary trade unions of capitalist countries. The Western, especially the American, press encouraged the anarchy prevailing in Somali, and comments like 'genuine democracy in Somali' or 'an example which all Afro-Asian countries should emulate' were not infrequent in its columns.

The 'experts' who lingered in the country, including past masters in embezzlement, set out to train the new elite in the art of amassing a fortune at the people's expense. Ministers, MPs and civil servants tried to outdo one another, building villas and buying cars, land and shops.

The anti-national character of these people was only too obvious in their attitude to Soviet aid. Under the economic, technological and

cultural agreements signed with Somali in 1961, the Soviet Union began to build modern agricultural complexes, hospitals, dairy and meat-packing plants, fish canneries, schools and printing plants. Somali imported Soviet agricultural equipment needed for the mechanised state farms in construction in the Jelib and Tug Wajale areas, as well as building materials and other goods, which were resold on the home market to secure money for various projects.

However, the reactionary top leadership gave scant attention to the projects. The authorities refused to cooperate with Soviet experts and technicians and made no effort to carry out approved projects. Ministers, MPs and high-ranking officials used Soviet equipment for their own households, in particular by distributing tractors and trucks among themselves. As for the money which was made by reselling building materials and should have been spent on economic projects, it was embezzled or used for financing various political actions of the ruling quarters.

I recall my trip to Jelib, where an agricultural complex was going up, in 1965. I was chief pilot of the aeroplane which took a government delegation to the site. I asked the head of the Soviet specialists how many workers were employed. 'That's hard to say', he replied. 'We have 150 Somalian workers, technicians and drivers working on the project. But the payroll drawn up by the Somalian manager lists 450 employees. Tractors, bulldozers and other equipment are sent away to be used on private estates on orders from the Minister of Agriculture. The motor vehicles actually used on the project are hired from ministers and MPs. Yet many of the new Soviet vehicles, complete with spares, stand idle although they're intended for use at Jelib.'

We owe it to sustained control by Soviet specialists that some of the projects were completed after all in the face of great difficulties, resistance and abuses of the ruling quarters.

Small wonder that government projects were built very slowly and entailed fantastic outlays having nothing to do with the real cost of materials or labour power. These facts were typical of the venal administration of the time. An elementary school of three class-rooms, built from local materials, cost over 300,000 Somali shillings, or over \$42,000, according to the Ministry of Education.

Politics are a short cut to wealth. Presidents were elected and Prime Ministers appointed as a result of back-stage deals by MPs and top

bureaucrats. Administrative posts and votes were sold, the bargain being made publicly. He who paid more got more votes. This was an open secret. The 1969 election campaign involved 88 parties. Parties were so numerous because anyone could rally his tribesmen and found a 'party' with the sole aim of securing election to parliament. As the game was worth the candle and election expenses were more than compensated out of the Treasury in the event of electoral victory, the ambitious sold their villas and lands and motor vehicles and whatever else they could turn into money to win elections. One fraud was to transfer thousands of voters from one constituency to another. Civilian and military personnel alike were granted extraordinary leave of absence to canvas in various electoral districts. By agreement between themselves, ministers put their subordinates at the service of other ministers or MPs for the election campaign. Cabinet members bribed candidates with public money in exchange for the promise of support in parliament. Officials or party representatives empowered to supervise the vote were bribed or put out of the way if they refused to 'cooperate'.

Some electoral districts set up no polling stations and the boxes turned out to contain ballots with the names of candidates of the Young Somalian League, the ruling party. Elsewhere the candidates of other parties were barred from the vote because there was an official order to block all opposition. The election degenerated into a farce. The political situation was extremely tense during the campaign and there were clashes between warring factions. Thirty-eight people were killed and 50 wounded.

After the election Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, who held pro-American views, formed a cabinet some of whose members – former ministers – had made a fortune out of public funds. On the other hand, a number of men who disapproved of the government's anti-popular policies were disgraced. Chief of Police Mohamed Abshir Mussa was dismissed and the same lot threatened the army commander. The situation in the country became intolerable.

On 15 October 1969, President Shermark was assassinated while touring the country. The subsequent five days saw an unabating struggle for power, mainly between Prime Minister Egal, Haji Mussa Bogor and Abdullahi Isse. Bogor was a spokesman of the pro-American bourgeoisie and ex-Prime Minister and Minister Isse (1956-1960), former member of the Central Committee of the Young Somalian League, represented

the interests of domestic capital. In other words, all three pretenders to the Presidency were chosen by the national bourgeoisie, which made no secret of its pro-imperialist orientation. The country hovered on the brink of disaster.

The people had had more than enough of rulers who for ten years had been disrupting the economy and national unity and undermining the country's prestige. They refused to stand for this any more. But where were they to seek support?

I have indicated that the trade unions did not really defend the working people's interests and as for the peasants, they could offer the regime no serious resistance on their own. The only force holding out any hope was the progressive section of the army. Army officers and most police officers realised that the country was in crisis and resolved to take its destiny into their hands.

In the small hours of 21 October 1969, troops occupied Mogadishu according to plans made beforehand. All district commanders were ordered to take power and set up local revolutionary councils. While the troops were carrying out the operation not a shot was fired nor a drop of blood shed. It was a peaceful revolution backed by the people. In a matter of hours, control of the country was assumed by the armed forces. All members of the venal government under Egal were arrested.

The Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) that was constituted under Division General Mohamed Siad Barre immediately dissolved political parties, parliament, the trade unions and student organisations and repealed the Constitution, which had never been applied anyway. A new government was formed, mostly of young progressive intellectuals and specialists.

The SRC came up against formidable socio-economic and political problems aggravated by colonial rule. It had to decide where to begin and what problems to tackle first.

The Treasury and bank vaults turned out to be empty. As a first step towards ending the economic lag, it was decided to establish control over currency circulation and then over capital goods. A few months after the revolution all foreign banks, power, the sugar industry, import of fuel and most other goods and home trade in them were nationalised. This was the beginning of the country's economic progress and the gradual abolition of decayed survivals of the colonial and post-colonial period.

In October 1970 the SRC announced its choice of the only road guaranteeing socio-economic progress – the road envisaged by scientific socialism. The people readily supported this option recommended by Marx and Lenin and tested in practice by millions of people.

The venal capitalist system could not end the people's political and socio-economic lag. It will never be able to make people set on working on its own soil in conditions fit for man swerve from the road of progress.

**LABOUR MONTHLY**

*Founded 1921*

*Editor: R. Palme Dutt*

A Marxist commentary on political events in the cause of national liberation and socialism.

20 pence monthly – £1.20 half-yearly subscription – £2.40 yearly.

(Students: £2.20 yearly – £1.10 half-yearly.)

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134 Ballards Lane  
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# **Africa's revolutionary way forward**

by ALBERT TSHUME

The world is advancing towards socialism. Sixty years ago imperialism dominated the globe, enslaving hundreds of millions of people in Africa, Asia and other parts, while in the imperialist heartlands, millions more lived under capitalism's almighty sway. Today there are no less than 14 socialist countries, comprising nearly one third of mankind, and producing some 40% of the entire world's industrial output.

The socialist countries, led by the first socialist state, the Soviet Union, have banished hunger, starvation, illiteracy and unemployment. In varying degrees they have raised the standard of living of their peoples, and have become or are in process of becoming industrialised, ensuring the material and cultural conditions for the further well-being of their peoples and the growing satisfaction of their spiritual and physical needs.

This tremendous historic achievement, holding out for the first time in Man's history the prospect of an end to exploitation, want, backwardness and war, stands in vivid contrast with the continuing and deepening crisis of capitalism in its highest and last stage, imperialism. Wars of conquest and aggression, like that of the US in Indo-China, wars of colonial domination, like those of Portugal in Africa, racism as in Southern Africa, mounting impoverishment of the peoples of the Third World, intensified exploitation of the working people in the advanced capitalist countries, destruction of the environment and pollution of

great cities, suffering, brutality and oppression – these are the hallmarks of the dying capitalist system which only one lifetime ago ruled the globe unchallenged.

The transition from capitalism to socialism is the principal characteristic, the main content of our epoch. It was the great achievement of Marx and Engels to show that this was an inevitable advance for mankind on the path to communism – as inevitable as had been the earlier evolution of society from primitive communism through slavery and feudalism to capitalism. No theory devised so far, no country in practice has charted any other possible choice for the twentieth century but that between capitalism and socialism. No third way presents itself.

For most if not all independent African countries, the choice is a crucial one. Under colonialism they were kept backward and turned into suppliers of raw materials for the big capitalist monopolies, and markets for the manufactured goods of the rich metropolitan powers. Since independence, won within the last decade or two, these countries find themselves still burdened with the legacy of colonial backwardness, still exporting a narrow range of raw materials to the imperialist metropolis and importing manufactured goods – and this on increasingly disadvantageous terms – still unable to raise the standard of living of their peoples as a whole. So the question arises whether independent Africa, having advanced to the first stage of its revolution, and having willy-nilly been launched to varying degrees on the path of capitalist development, must tread the same grim road as Latin America has for over a century. Is there any alternative to that stunted, deformed sort of capitalist development which the advanced capitalist countries permit their former colonies, perpetuating through neo-colonialism nearly all the ills of the old colonial systems?

Or is there some better way out, some path to socialism which does not require African countries to drag themselves slowly and painfully through each stage of capitalist production until eventually, at the cost of the lives and happiness of several generations, the conditions are ripe for socialism?

Better still, cannot Africa proceed immediately to the construction of socialism, before class antagonisms develop too sharply, destroying the collectivist forms of social organisation and communal traditions of African society which existed before the advent of colonialism and have to some extent survived its demise?



## MARXISM AND RUSSIA

These questions are neither new, nor peculiar to Africa. As soon as the very maturing of capitalism put socialism on the agenda of history, revolutionaries began to ponder how to get to socialism without traversing the centuries-long course that capitalism took in Western Europe. Thus it was that Marx and Engels, working both in the sphere of theory and practice to advance the coming of socialism, and living in the heart of capitalism's earliest and most developed home – England – watched with interest the late development of capitalism in backward feudal Russia and debated whether she might not by-pass capitalism. The more so because the bulk of Russia's down-trodden peasants lived in tightly-knit communities with strong communal traditions. Could these not, perhaps, be the nucleus of a socialist society? The idea was attractive, satisfying the impulse of the working people towards a classless society without the prospect of capitalism's destructive divisions. Yet it appeared to run counter to the very idea which Marx and Engels had pioneered, the discovery they made that socialism grows *out of capitalism*, not out of theories of some ideal society held by a few dedicated revolutionaries. Marxists were all agreed that socialism presupposes an undefinable minimal level of development of productive forces, plus the emergence of the proletariat, which, being the only class deprived entirely of ownership of the means of production, has no stake in capitalist society and therefore leads the advance to socialism. Engels himself wrote that

Only at a certain level of development of the productive forces of society, an even very high level for our modern conditions, does it become possible to raise production to such an extent that the abolition of class differences can be a real progress, can be lasting without bringing about stagnation or even decline in the mode of social production. But the production forces have reached this level of development only in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie, therefore, in this respect also is just as necessary a precondition of the socialist revolution as the proletariat itself.

(Marx/Engels *Selected Works* (3 volume edition) Vol 2, p. 387)

The founders of scientific socialism never advocated or tolerated any Utopian ideas about soup-bowl socialism. For them, socialism was not dignified collective poverty but the wresting of the tremendous produc-

tive capacity and wealth generated by capitalism from the hands of a tiny minority of selfish exploiters and putting it to use for the benefit of all working people. But this necessity for socialism to arise out of developed capitalism, while historically appropriate on a general world scale, does not condemn every country and all peoples to the same stages of transition. Once socialism arrives, new prospects open up. In an Afterword to the work quoted above, "On Social Relations in Russia", written shortly before his death Engels identified the conditions under which new forms of transition to socialism might be achieved:

It is not only possible but inescapable that once the proletariat wins out and the means of production pass into common ownership among the West European nations, the countries which have just managed to make a start on capitalist production, and where tribal institutions or relics of them are still intact, will be able to use these relics of communal ownership and the corresponding popular customs as a powerful means of considerably shortening their advance to socialist society and largely sparing themselves the sufferings and the struggle through which we in Europe have had to make our way. But an inevitable condition of this is *the example and active support* of the hitherto capitalist West. Only when the capitalist economy has been overcome at home and in the countries of its prime, only when the retarded countries have seen from their example 'how it's done', how the productive forces of modern industry are made to work as social property for society as a whole — only then will the retarded countries be able to start on this abbreviated process of development. But then their success will be assured. And this applies not only to Russia but to all countries at the pre-capitalist stage of development.

(*Op. cit.* Vol 2, p. 398) (My emphasis)

In the event, it was in backward Russia that capitalism developed so quickly as to confound the possibility Marx and Engels once envisaged, and create the objective conditions for the first socialist revolution. The revolutionary movement expected the socialist revolution to come first in Germany, with its advanced capitalist system and mature working class movement. Only Lenin foresaw the possibility that Russia, combining within itself both the features of imperialism and colonialism, might prove to be the weakest link of the world system of imperialism, and it was under his inspired leadership that the Bolsheviks

guided the working class and poor peasantry to victory in 1917.

Now the prophecy of Marx and Engels could be made reality. Vast tracts of the old Russian empire knew no factories, no railways or electricity, no modern forms of production or social organisation. Yet, without passing through the traumas of capitalism, these huge, sparsely populated regions with their nomadic, semi-nomadic and pastoral peoples moved swiftly forward with the development of the first socialist state. Today, Soviet Republics like Bashkiria (which Lenin once compared to a backward African colony), Uzbekistan, Khirgizia and Kazakhstan are prosperous industrialised areas with efficient mechanised large-scale agriculture and no illiteracy or malnutrition. Not only was this possible within the framework of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it was possible too outside the Soviet Union but in close political and economic alliance with it, as the experience of Mongolia has shown.

### **LENIN'S VISION**

Lenin did not live long enough to see this remarkable transformation. But from his profound study of imperialism he saw that the epoch opened up by the October Revolution would entail not only a general and ever-deepening crisis for capitalism but also a mighty upsurge of the oppressed peoples in the colonial and semi-colonial world, and this liberatory movement, merging with the growing revolutionary movement of the working class would destroy the old colonial empires and hasten the advance of hundreds of millions of people towards socialism. At the 2nd Congress of the Communist International in 1920 he dealt specifically with the new prospects that this inevitable process opened up. So valuable are his ideas, that they warrant quotation at length. Reporting the discussion in the Commission on the National and Colonial Question, Lenin said:

Are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation . . . ? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal — in that event it will be mistaken to

assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organisations in the colonies and the backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organisation of peasants' Soviets and strive to adapt them to pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, *backward countries can go over to the Soviet system, and through certain stages of development, to communism*, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.

Lenin went on to add, in a passage that has been relatively neglected by comparison with the above, deservedly well-known remarks, that

The necessary means for this cannot be indicated in advance. These will be prompted by practical experience. It has, however, been definitely established that the idea of the Soviets is understood by the mass of the working people in even the most remote nations, that the Soviets should be adapted to the conditions of a pre-capitalist social system, and that the Communist Parties should immediately begin work in this direction in all parts of the world.

(V.I. Lenin – *Selected Works* (3 volume edition) Vol 3, p. 459, 460)  
(My emphasis)

The Soviets were, of course, organs of the political power of the workers, soldiers and poor peasants. In urging the creation of similar popular institutions of political power in backward countries, Lenin was drawing attention to the need for democratic forms of state and the wide participation in them of the broad masses of peasants and other non-proletarian strata as a crucial condition for the realisation of the possibility of by-passing capitalism and reaching socialism through a transitional stage.

The difficulties of effecting the transition to socialism faced the young Soviet state itself in its early years. Although pre-war Russia had some big industrial concentrations, notably in St Petersburg (now Leningrad), and developed extractive industry, notably the rich coal mining area of the Donbas in the Ukraine, it was far less developed than Germany or France or Britain at that time, and the spread of electricity, railways and motorised transport had hardly gone beyond a few main centres. The proletariat was consequently a relatively small class

compared with the tens of millions of peasants – a small class-conscious island in a great sea of petit-bourgeois consciousness, as the Bolsheviks used to describe it.

In addition, the economy was reduced to chaos first by the imperialist war, and then by the foreign interventions aimed at overthrowing socialism. Food shortages were acute, starvation stalked the land. Deliberate sabotage of industry by the old exploiting classes sought to exploit the Bolsheviks' difficulties. Many factories closed down altogether, others could barely limp along with inadequate supplies. Workers streamed back into the countryside to escape the hunger and unemployment of the cities. Production sagged below pre-war levels, and it was only well into the middle and late 1920's, after almost a decade of Soviet power, that the pre-war levels began to be reached again. In this desperate situation Lenin saw clearly that the only path to socialism lay through a further development of capitalism, especially in the countryside, *within the framework* of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence the New Economic Policy which helped to stabilise the economy, restore food production to adequate levels, and promote partnership of the socialist state in industrial enterprises with capitalist skills and resources. Answering the pessimists who predicted the failure of the Bolsheviks because the preconditions for socialists were so largely lacking, Lenin wrote in one of his last works:

If a definite level of culture is required for the building of socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite 'level of culture' is, for it differs in every West European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then*, with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations?

(V.I. Lenin – *Collected Works* Vol 33, p. 478)\*

In the event it was not until about 1936 that the material basis of socialism was completed in the Soviet Union, with collectivisation of agriculture and industrialisation. In this rich experience, as well as in

Here as often elsewhere Lenin means by culture not just education and literacy but also levels of science and technology and the material resources (other than raw materials) of a society.

that of the Central Asian Republics and Mongolia, lies much of relevance and importance for African countries striking out towards socialism from a pre-industrial base — always bearing in mind that the *class* character of the Soviet state, of the dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the working peasantry, was and is of a fundamentally different character from the essentially petit-bourgeois character of state power in socialist-oriented African states.

Lenin himself never coined a phrase to describe succinctly the path of transition to socialism by-passing capitalism which he charted for the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial world. It was only with the collapse of the colonial empires after World War II that the problem of defining this path's characteristics and finding them in practice became an acute one for millions of newly-liberated peoples in Burma, Indonesia, India, Ceylon, Egypt, etc and beginning with the Sudan and Ghana in 1956, for a large number of new African states. Thus it was that while the imperialists were devising their strategy of neo-colonialism to retain control of their former colonies, the world communist movement began to elaborate systematically the tremendous possibilities facing the new states. The 1960 Meeting of Representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow dealt *inter alia* fully with the question, summarising and generalising the experience and study both of the greatly enlarged and multi-form world socialist system and that of Communist Parties in dozens of new states. First, the tasks facing new states, tasks of a national democratic character were identified. They comprise:

- 1) to consolidate political independence;
- 2) to carry out agrarian reforms and eliminate survivals of feudalism;
- 3) to uproot imperialist economic dominance, restrict the activities of foreign monopolies and later expel them from the national economy;
- 4) to secure substantial improvements in living standards for all the people;
- 5) to democratise social life;
- 6) to create a national industry (i.e. enterprises belonging to the nation and to its citizens, not to foreigners);
- 7) to pursue an independent and peaceful foreign policy, including the development of economic and cultural co-operation with the socialist states.

It must be stressed that these tasks exist not simply as policy options in the minds of well-intentioned politicians, but are objective requirements of the national liberation movement's development from national to social revolution, from political independence through profound socio-economic changes to socialism. They merit the description 'national' because they hold out the need of curbing the role of foreign monopolies and building industry to serve the people – measures fulfilling the interests of the whole nation except the tiny compradore section of the bourgeoisie dependent for its existence on the foreign monopolies.

Similarly the carrying out of agrarian reform and democratisation of public life accord with the needs of the overwhelming mass of the people, only big landlords and feudals standing to lose by such measures are termed democratic, as distinct from socialist towards which they approach but from which they are qualitatively different. They are not yet socialist in essence because the economic foundation of socialism does not yet exist in these countries. 'The only possible economic foundation of socialism is large-scale machine industry.' (Lenin – *Collected Works*, Vol 32, p. 492). Also, in the socialist revolution the hegemony of the working class is a law of social development, but this possibility does not arise yet for most of Africa where in practice the petit bourgeoisie is in reality in its various forms the leading force in economic and social life.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY ANSWER

The point is that the development of agriculture, trade and industry is inevitable in African countries. Societies never simply stand still, though some have in the past stagnated for long periods. But in our epoch, with socialism growing rapidly on one hand, and capitalism declining but still a potent force on the other, some form of development is bound to occur. The question is: what sort of development? The revolutionary answer is that just as the first stage of the national liberation movement – political independence – was inevitable, so is the second stage an inevitable process impelled by the objective need, as well as by subjective desires of their peoples, of African countries to break the shackles of economic dependence, limit the growth of capitalist forms and

relations of production, and prepare the basis for socialism. With this general tendency in view, we have to identify the social forces that are capable of carrying through the necessary broad democratic changes. It is obvious that from their different social positions the working class and the great bulk of the peasantry stand to gain from the changes listed above. So do many of the intermediate strata – the intelligentsia, small traders and entrepreneurs, most civil servants, radically minded army officers etc. What about the bigger property owners, aside from those (already mentioned) which can exist only as agents of foreign monopolies? The 1960 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties gave careful consideration to this element, and gave the following acute analysis:

In present conditions the national bourgeoisie of the colonial and dependent countries unconnected with imperialistic circles is objectively interested in the accomplishment of the principal tasks of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution . . . But it is unstable; though progressive, it is inclined to compromise with imperialism and feudalism.

The past decade in independent Africa has borne out fully that warning about the vacillating and potentially reactionary character of the national bourgeoisie. It has also borne out the conclusion of the analysis made in 1960 that

*As social contradictions grow, the national bourgeoisie inclines more and more to compromise with domestic reaction and imperialism. The people, however, begin to see that the best way to abolish age-long backwardness and improve their living standard is that of non-capitalist development.*

(My emphasis)

The African continent, with its comparatively late and shallow penetration by capitalism, and consequently better prospects for avoiding capitalist stages of development, has since 1960 furnished more examples of countries taking the non-capitalist path than any other continent. Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Guinea, Mali, Ghana, Somalia, Tanzania and Congo (Brazzaville) have all struck out in this revolutionary-democratic direction, and to them we may legitimately add the non-capitalist, socialist-oriented forms of social and economic organisation being promoted in the liberated areas of Angola, Mocambique, and



Guinea-Bissau. Just to list the countries, throwing together those which have been blown off course, those where democratic changes have slowed to a standstill, and those still persevering, brings out the aptness of Khrushchev's observation that

A country cannot simply drift on to the non-capitalist path of development. Only active struggle by the working class and all working people, only the unification of all democratic and patriotic forces in a broad national front, can lead the peoples on to that path. (Report on the Programme of the CPSU to the 22nd Congress of the Party, October 1961)

The non-capitalist path is a path of sharp class struggles, against imperialist manoeuvres and domestic reactionaries. This makes it necessary to clarify some essential political features of this way of development. The form of state appropriate to the non-capitalist path is the state of national democracy. By this is meant a state which

- consistently upholds its political and economic independence
- fights against imperialism and its military blocs, against military bases on its soil
- resists new forms of colonialism and the penetration of foreign capital
- rejects dictatorial anti-popular methods of government
- ensures the people broad democratic rights, especially trade union rights, and enables their participation in shaping government policy
- embarks on radical socio-economic changes including the promotion of co-operation in the countryside and the development of the public sector, together with the provision of social services such as education and health.

The state of national democracy, like the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe and East Asia in the post-war years, is a revolutionary state transitional to socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Its class character in general terms can be described as a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of proletarian, semi-proletarian and non-proletarian social groups who have a stake in national independence and steady socio-economic development towards socialism. The actual

balance and combination of forces in any given case is a matter of concrete analysis. But in African conditions the state of national democracy has up to now shown, and will continue to show some specific features connected with (1) the relative under-development in tropical Africa of the two main classes of our times (the bourgeoisie and the proletariat), (2) the numerical and political predominance of the intermediate strata, which are of petit-bourgeois character, and (3) the rapid, contradictory process of class formation within these strata. In these circumstances the state exhibits a *relative* autonomy in relation to social classes because no single class is developed enough to dominate others.\* This relative autonomy makes the state power a more fragile thing than is common in societies with developed class formation: state power is more easily won by revolutionary democrats (e.g. in Sudan on 19th July last year) and more easily wrested from them by imperialist (external) and pro-imperialist, pro-capitalist internal forces – as in Sudan in the counter-coup which restored Numeiry. The complex of domestic factors working for and against the stability of petit bourgeois revolutionary democratic regimes is well assessed as follows by a leading Soviet scholar who has done much to enrich the theory of the non-capitalist path:

Vacillation, change of heart and fence-sitting as between the working people and the bourgeoisie are the mark of the petit bourgeois intellectual. On the non-capitalist way, with class antagonisms largely rudimentary and general nation-wide tasks prevailing, this intermediate layer acquires some stability. Relying on the armed forces and one-party regimes, it may for a long time keep the contending trends in equilibrium and represent the nation as a whole, without

‘Because of the embryonic class relations in most of these countries, there is either no mechanism, or only a very minor one, for direct subordination between the petit bourgeois intellectuals in power and class organisations, wherever such exists. The petit bourgeois intellectuals holding the key posts in the state, the party, the army and the economic apparatus, are relatively free of the chief classes of society. That is why the state tends to take steps which variously meet or clash with the interests of the labouring social sections. This creates the illusion that the (state) power is above class.’

(R. Ulyanovsky: ‘Some Aspects of the Non-Capitalist Way for Asian and African Countries’ – *World Marxist Review* September 1969.

losing its class specific. But as the balance between the general democratic and socialist tasks of the revolution changes, and in periods of military and social crisis leading to clashes between the forces of revolution and of reaction, this balancing act can become a real problem, and the petty bourgeois section has to make a choice.

(Ulyanovsky – *op.cit.*)

## INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Equally important in determining the direction of the regimes in African states is the international context. On one hand the imperialist powers and the international monopolies strive to use every weapon at their disposal to keep these states oriented towards capitalism. The dependence of these countries on the world capitalist market, and the powerful cultural and political influence of metropolitan powers on all classes, especially the intermediate strata, both civilian and military, provides ample opportunity for the promotion of such reactionary schemes. On the other hand the rise of the world socialist system as the decisive force of our epoch, its growing attractiveness to the peoples of the Third World and its capacity to contribute substantially to the expansion of productive forces in developing countries, not to speak of its tremendous technical, cultural and moral support for progressive states is the guarantee, the *sine qua non*, as Lenin stressed, for the by-passing of capitalism. Without this possibility the idea of the non-capitalist path would remain a Utopian pipe-dream.

The idea of the non-capitalist path, though not (as we have seen) a new one, although the term is relatively new, is prone to misapprehensions of various types, the more so because the phenomenon it reflects is an extremely complex one, embracing the economic, social, political and ideological spheres, and a transitional one between two clearly defined socio-economic formations, capitalism and socialism. Additionally, no country has yet effected this way of passing to socialism starting from the conditions prevailing in many African and Asian countries. (In this respect we distinguish the case of Mongolia, without casting it overboard as completely irrelevant.)

But even given these difficulties, several mistakes can be avoided. A common error is to assume that the non-capitalist path is an option which arises only for a relatively brief moment of time, and once passed,

can never be recaptured. In reality, the non-capitalist path is the general form of the transition to socialism *for recently liberated countries in Africa and Asia*. Thus we distinguish the course of the Latin American revolution which, as Cuba has shown and Chile is again demonstrating, has a different character, closer to the experience of the people's democracies, flowing from the higher level of development of capitalism in that region. In Indo-China too, as the experience of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam shows, the path to socialism is being taken in a different way again, under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat, in the peculiar conditions of their heroic struggle against US aggression. The paths to socialism are many, but for African countries neither theory nor practice has yet revealed any other path away from neo-colonialist dependence towards socialism than the non-capitalist path.

### INDIAN CAPITALISM

Even in India, where all types of capitalist production and relations of production exist, from simple commodity production to monopoly capitalism, the objective possibilities exist for taking the non-capitalist path, provided all social forces interested in this path – the working class, non-exploiting peasantry, and non-monopoly national bourgeoisie – unite to fulfil the tasks of the second stage of the national democratic revolution. India's example is of great interest because it shows that the non-capitalist path is open even to countries with some aspects of relatively highly developed forms of capitalist production and production relations. This points up the necessity of carefully analysing in each case all the different types of capitalist development and seeing the country as a whole, not taking a particular mode of production as necessarily being the predominant one because it represents a more advanced stage of capitalism. In African countries even more than in India, the bulk of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture and market relations are but tenuously developed. In the developing countries generally,

the communal, clan and tribal system, and commercial, usurer (i.e. loan) and primary capitalist accumulation and small-scale peasant

farming on owned or rented land are, in the final analysis, subordinated to the finance capital of imperialist powers and closely associated with national capital. However, if capitalist relations of production were dominant throughout the non-socialist world, the question of the non-capitalist way would obviously never arise. We know that as a system of production relations among people, capitalism is not dominant everywhere in the non-socialist world.\*

The Indian example also illustrates the revolutionary-democratic potentiality of the anti-imperialist, non-monopoly section of the national bourgeoisie at the present stage. The Communist Party of India in recent years has striven effectively to realise the alliance of this element with the working class and working peasantry, and the fruits of its efforts, together with the objective development of the contradiction between the anti-national pro-imperialist monopoly bourgeoisie and the section referred to, have been seen in the realignment of forces within the Congress Party, the rout of the reactionary faction, and the closer co-operation of Mrs Gandhi's majority following with the Communist Party and other revolutionary democratic forces. All this is not to say that India is fully launched on the non-capitalist path; developments are contradictory, but the real possibilities exist and they are drawing the country in that direction like a magnet.

### THE CRITICS

The concept of the non-capitalist path tends to be attacked from two directions by those who profess revolutionary intentions. The ultra-left tends to deny the feasibility of the non-capitalist path, to insist on the hegemony of the proletariat in the national democratic revolution, and to emphasise the political instability and anti-Communism of the army officers or intellectuals in power in many revolutionary-democratic regimes. This is a dogmatic and one-sided view which condemns revolutionary forces in African countries to wait (how long?) until the working class develops as a strong social and political force. It also underestimates the revolutionary potential of the semi- and non-proletarian

(R. Ulyanovsky and others: "Once More about the Non-Capitalist Way": *World Marxist Review*, June 1970.)

masses in the national democratic revolution. Who would say that Tanzania, Guineá or Somalia must wait for the formation of the revolutionary party of the working class before undertaking social change? Or who would take up a wholly negative attitude to the regime in Algeria because of its negative attitude to Communists? The recent entry of Communist Parties into governing coalitions with the Baathists in Syria and Iraq proves what Marxism-Leninism teaches, that there is an objective tendency towards the unity of all democratic forces in the national democratic revolution, whether they be of socialist character or not.

Conversely no scientific socialist would expect the present regimes in countries such as Tanzania or The Congo to be able to steer through to socialism without undergoing transformation, without the ruling revolutionary-democratic parties approaching closer to scientific socialism and the working class coming more to the fore either as an independent force or in and through the mass single party. The growing recognition of the class struggle as a reality of life by revolutionary democrats, for example in the Arusha Declaration, or the evolution of Nkrumah's and Nasser's thought in their later years, serve to illustrate the way in which the objective and subjective conditions in which revolutionary democrats exist today are highly favourable to their evolution towards Marxism-Leninism, towards truly socialist revolution.

The other type of attack on the non-capitalist path comes from those who equate it with socialism and argue over-simply that if development is not capitalist it must be socialist. Often this view sails under the flag of some national or religious variant of socialism such as African, Arab or Islamic socialism – in short anything but scientific socialism. It overlooks the fact that a definite, maybe even long historical period must elapse for the completion of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and democratic transformations, and for the maturing of the material, political and cultural conditions for socialist revolution. It may conceal the desire of some strata (small and middle capitalists, anti-imperialist but not anti-capitalist in orientation) to halt the national democratic revolution at the present phase, fearing the rise of the working class and the prospects of socialism. This right-wing opposition to the non-capitalist path shares with its 'leftist' counterpart a denial of the Leninist idea of a general democratic anti-imperialist revolution creating the conditions in backward countries for socialist revolution

and development. Half a century ago Lenin foresaw the very exciting possibilities for anti-capitalist revolutionary achievement within the anti-imperialist national liberation movement. His words ring out today as a clarion call to all progressive forces in Africa and elsewhere:

The movement in the colonial countries . . . has undergone great change since the beginning of the twentieth century: millions and hundreds of millions, in fact the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, are now coming forward as independent, active and revolutionary factors. It is perfectly clear that in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect.

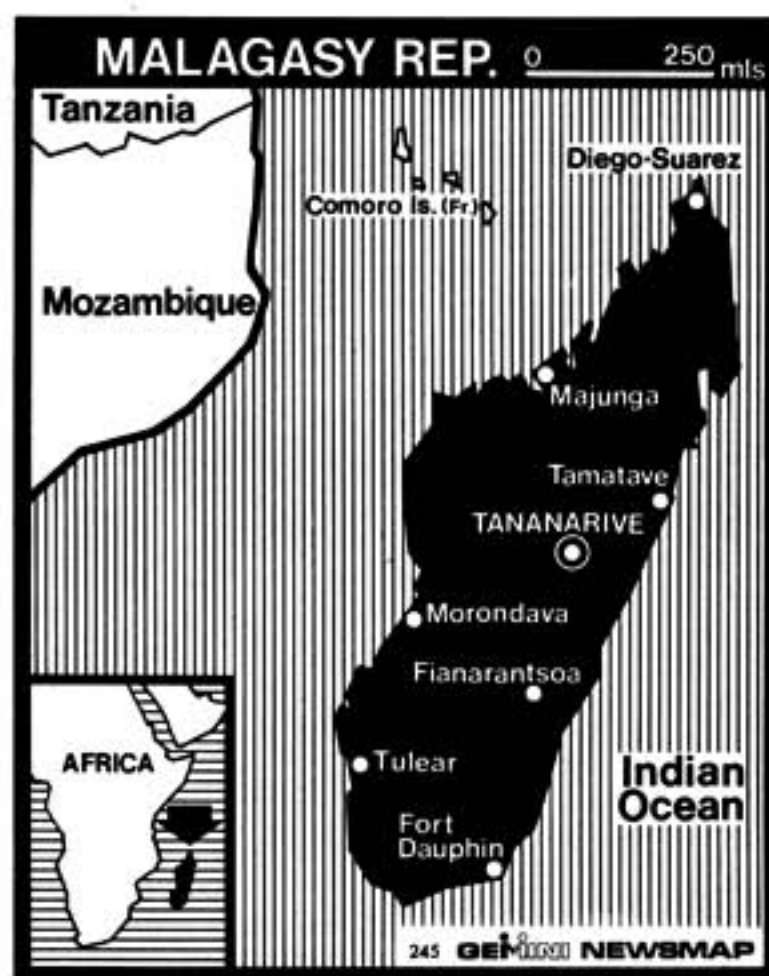
(Lenin: Speech at the 3rd Congress of the Communist International, July 5th 1921, *Collected Works*, Vol 32, p. 481)

It is that turning against capitalism and imperialism, and its corollary, the turn towards socialism, which is the essence of the non-capitalist path. For the peoples of independent Africa, this is the way out of neo-colonialist domination, towards industrialisation and the modernisation of agriculture, away from unemployment and the exploitation of parasitic classes, towards the steady upwards advance of socialist society. In sum, the non-capitalist path is the revolutionary path forward!

# Malagasy Breakthrough

by PETER MACKENZIE

Madagascar, the fourth biggest island in the world, has a population of mixed descent, African, Indian and Polynesian, the majority of whom live in desperate poverty. Only 200,000 are rich enough to pay taxes, and the average income is only R65 a year. The island gained its independence from France in 1960, but is still a member of the Francophone bloc in Africa, has a French military base at Diego Suarez, a French community of about 30,000, and has associate membership of the European Economic Community, which takes about 45 per cent of the island's exports and provides 70 per cent of its imports (in 1969 totalling R75.5 million and R119.7 million respectively). An increasingly adverse balance of trade, caused mainly by the processes of neo-colonialism aggravated by the closing of the Suez Canal after the 1967 war, led the island's government, headed by President Tsiranana, to





look to South Africa as a source of capital and know-how for development. For his part, Vorster was hopeful that Madagascar would follow in the footsteps of Malawi and open the way for further South African political and economic expansion in Africa. 'The political and strategic benefits are clear', commented the Johannesburg *Star* on 24 November 1970. 'Madagascar is a valuable stepping stone into Black Africa and a useful friend in the Indian Ocean arena . . . There is certainly cash profit for the taking but most sources are already in the hands of a few French who have fattened on them for years, ploughing little back into the economy.'

The initial agreement reached in 1970, providing for hotel development on the island of Nossi Be and South African participation in the construction of a R50 million deep-water harbour at Narinda by an international consortium including France, Portugal and West Germany, was regarded as only a first instalment. In 1969 South African imports from Madagascar were under R1 million, and exports R1.1 million. There was obvious room for a two-way increase in trade. By 1970 the figures had risen to R2.4 million and R2.1 million respectively. Dr Frans Cronje, chairman of South African Breweries which was involved in the hotel construction project, and who was present at the signing of the financial agreement between the two governments, was enthusiastic about the prospects. Wages in Madagascar were low, even for skilled workers, he pointed out. Artisans were earning an average of about R22 a month – a fraction of the wage of a White worker in South Africa, and less even than African workers in industry are getting.

'Local people seem to be intelligent and receptive to training', he said. 'I feel sure that later there will be a big potential here for South African manufacturers. This could be quite a paradise in fact.'

The 'local people' of whom Cronje spoke so patronisingly proved to be more intelligent than he gave them credit for. From the start the agreement with South Africa was attacked by the opposition A.F.K.M. party, which, though it had only three sitting members of Parliament compared to the ruling party's 104, controlled the country's capital city Tananarive, of which its leader, Richard Andriamanjato was Mayor. The A.K.F.M. also had the support of the trade unions and the students, to whom all thought of 'dialogue' with South Africa was anathema.

More seriously, it soon became evident that the South Africa agreement was causing division within the ranks of the Government itself.

Tsirananana tried to bring unity to his ranks by shuffling his Cabinet several times, but without success. The very man Tsiranana had earlier officially nominated as his successor, Interior Minister Andre Resampa, turned out to be the firmest opponent of the President's South Africa policy. When rebellion broke out in the southern Tulear province of Madagascar in April 1971, Tsiranana seized the opportunity to have Resampa arrested on faked treason charges and detained on the remote island of Sainte-Marie.

The southern rebellion – suppressed at the cost of hundreds killed and wounded and hundreds more jailed and restricted – was brought on by outright famine and poverty which the Government had done nothing to relieve. Students and workers sided with the southerners, with the result that Tsiranana shut down Tananarive University, thereby at a stroke turning the intelligentsia against him. Though the university was later reopened, it remained a focus of insurrection.

Madagascar's educational set-up reflected the imbalance in the development of the island's economy as a whole. In 1968 there were 1,620,000 school-age children under 14, but only half of them were at school, with pupils at public (state) schools numbering only 37.16 of the total. Selection for school entry was by lots, and every year thousands of children were turned down for no other reason than that they had failed in the lottery. In that same year 1968 there were only 23,000 children receiving secondary education, 5,400 receiving technical education, and just under 4,000 students at the university. By this year (1972) the number of university students had grown to 5,000. Higher education was given only in French and was financed by the French Government under a co-operation agreement. When the students finally emerged from this lop-sided and neo-colonialist educational system, most found there were no jobs for them.

### **STUDENT STRIKE**

The troubles which started with the southern rebellion in 1971 simmered on for about a year until in May 1972, the students at Tananarive University went on strike in protest against the French-orientated educational system and the lack of jobs. Carrying their demonstration into the central square outside the city hall, they were met by the

much-hated political police who opened fire on them with automatic weapons. An official 34 people, including 10 security police, were killed; unofficially the total was nearer the 100 mark. Hundreds of students were arrested and flown off into detention camps.

The shootings triggered off a full-scale rebellion. The trade unions called the workers out on a strike which paralysed not only Tananarive but other main centres and ports as well. Over 100,000 people marched through the centre of the capital in a protest demonstration. The city hall, the office of the pro-government newspaper *Le Courier de Madagascar* and two fire engines went up in smoke. The hated political police were hunted down, many were beaten to death and the bulk penned in their barracks by the fury of the crowd. From his palace President Tsiranana threatened to kill 10,000 or even 100,000 if necessary to maintain order, but since the army and the ordinary police sided with the demonstrators, there was nothing he could do. Day by day the crowds of demonstrators in the streets grew in size, demanding the release of the students, the ending of the agreements with France and South Africa, the disbandment of the security police, and the initiation of a programme of educational and social reform.

On May 18, Tsiranana capitulated, and announced the dissolution of his Cabinet and the appointment of army general Gabriel Ramanantsoa as head of the government. Leaders of the workers met the general and within hours reached agreement on the government's future courses of action. That same evening the agreement was endorsed by a mass meeting of workers in Tananarive. The points agreed between the general and the workers were:

- 1 That power was given to the general by the people.
- 2 That military rule would end soon and be followed by general elections.
- 3 That a national congress will be held, including the new regime, to define national policy.
- 4 That individual freedom will be guaranteed.
- 5 That no strikers will be prosecuted or victimised, and employers will not withhold wages from workers who were on strike.
- 6 That a committee of workers will discuss their problems with the government.
- 7 That all political prisoners will be released.

The detained students had already been released. Within days Resampa and other political prisoners were also free.

### **S.A. AGREEMENT BREACHED**

Madagascar's cancellation of the agreement with South Africa was announced on 23 June. Two factors had precipitated the breach.

- 1 The brutal police attacks on students in South Africa, so reminiscent of the Malagasy people's own recent experiences.
- 2 The summit meeting of the Organisation of African Unity at Rabat, Morocco, in June.

All observers are agreed that the Rabat meeting displayed a greater unity amongst the African powers than has been seen for a long time. Only 1 of Africa's 42 Black independent states was absent – Malawi, with Vorster's running-dog Banda unwilling to face the criticism he knew was bound to come his way. The level of representation was also higher than usual, with over half the states represented by their presidents or prime ministers.

The OAU meeting reached unanimity on a wide variety of issues, and perhaps nowhere was this more impressive than on the issues concerning southern Africa. The leaders of the 12 liberation movements were drawn more fully into the discussions, and were able more effectively to influence their outcome, than on any previous occasion. The meeting agreed to increase aid to the liberation movements in southern Africa by 50 per cent. It also agreed on a common Middle East policy, condemning Israeli aggression and pledging every assistance to Egypt in her struggle to regain her lost territories.

Most significant of all was that the question of dialogue with South Africa which had dominated the previous OAU meeting and revealed an ominous split in the ranks of African unity, was barely mentioned at Rabat, where there seemed to be general agreement that it was not a feasible or desirable proposition at the present moment.

During the Rabat conference, under pressure from some of the delegates, the leader of the Malagasy delegation announced that the new Government intended to revise its policy towards South Africa, as well

as to pay its arrears to the Liberation Committee. Shortly after the end of the Rabat conference, the Madagascar Government duly announced the cancellation of its agreements with South Africa.

It seems clear that both in home and external affairs Madagascar has begun a breakthrough from the sterile and reactionary policies of the past. The future will depend on how thoroughly and consistently the progressive forces are able to consolidate and advance from these positions.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## GOSSIP, SMEAR AND INNUENDO

*African Liberation Movements: Contemporary Struggles Against White Minority Rule*, by Richard Gibson. Published for the Institute of Race Relations by Oxford University Press, £3.50.

According to the dust-cover of Gibson's book, 'He was one of the founding editors, in 1962 in Algiers of *Revolution Africaine*, and he took charge of its monthly edition in English until 1964.' However, the September-October 1964, issue of this journal stated that 'Following most serious accusations brought forth by comrades from New York, London and Accra concerning Richard Gibson who has used his former position on the Fair Play for Cuba committee to infiltrate the international revolutionary movement, he must not be considered any longer as a member of *Revolution* staff. We cannot be held responsible for any of his past or present activities, projects or ideas.'

It is a pity that his publishers, anxious to give Gibson revolutionary credentials, should have withheld this warning. This book claims to fill a serious gap. 'Unfortunately', it says 'most of the literature that is

devoted to the liberation movements has been propagandistic, largely eulogistic and outrageously biased.'

Here, at last, Gibson would have us believe, is balance and fairness and until his revelations – paid for by the British Institute of Race Relations – we have, it seems, all been barking up the wrong tree.

For a start, we always thought that the United States was the main external prop of the colonial powers and minority regimes. This apparently is not so. He tells us that the US not only 'strongly supported the revocation of the South African mandate over South West Africa but it has also repeatedly condemned Portuguese policies in Africa'. Sources described as 'reliable' and 'serious' are quoted as saying that 'the US was, and still is, supporting the guerrillas themselves'; and even the CIA, it seems, 'gives covert assistance to all the African movements without exception'. Secretary of State William Rogers is quoted more than once as reaffirming US support for the self-determination for the peoples of the Portuguese colonies. The US, we are further told, went as far as pressuring Portugal to negotiate with one of its (and Gibson's) pet organisations – Holden Roberto's GRAE – but unfortunately has now 'resigned itself to colonial rule' because it 'now believes that (self-determination) should be achieved by peaceful means'.

Who then is the main enemy of the peoples liberation struggle in Africa? It is none other than the 'white' Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Their aid, Gibson has to concede, is on a large scale and is overt but it has been exaggerated and used to 'justify Soviet attempts at political control of the aid-receiving movements' – a motive which, up to now, we have thought was the explanation for CIA hand-outs but which Gibson (perhaps for understandable reasons) altogether omits to mention.

'New' light is thrown on the Liberation Movements whom we have always regarded as the corner-stone of the struggle against colonial rule in Africa. MPLA, according to Gibson, concentrates its 'Soviet-equipped forces' not so much against the Portuguese as against fellow guerrillas like GRAE. When next you read a FRELIMO Communique don't be so gullible as to accept it at its face value. Gibson has now warned us that, like its Portuguese adversaries, they are dishonest. Even in Guinea-Bissau we cannot be certain of the unchallenged position of PAIGC. He tells us that FLING which 'sources clearly favourable to the PAIGC' claim to be dead (if it ever lived the fact must have escaped us all!) might well

be heard of again because 'in African politics amazing resurrections are not unheard of'. But maybe Gibson has the best possible sources of information on how dissident groups are created or resurrect themselves, given the right kind of help from certain sources.

Perhaps because he knows that his assessment of the objective condition of the struggle in the Portuguese colonies is too easily assailed, Gibson resorts next to his own brand of character-assassination of its leadership. Amilcar Cabral, Marcelino dos Santos, and Mario de Andrade, he tells us, have created serious political problems for their movements because 'they are not black' and this 'fact' complicates their relationships with independent African governments who are 'suspicious of light-skinned cosmopolitan intellectuals whose life styles were generally closer to those of fellow-intellectuals in Lisbon and Paris than the majority of African people in the Portuguese colonies'.

This then is Gibson's next exposure but, if anything, it is a devastating self-exposure. Combined with the soft-peddling of US policy is his unprincipled attack on movements which are the most serious antagonists of imperialism on the continent. The two approaches dovetail neatly together: imperialism is not the real enemy, and those who are in the forefront of the fight against it are not the real resistance.

If he objects to the life styles of PAIGC, FRELIMO and MPLA guerrilla fighters, who are his mentors and heroes? Principal among them — and here is yet another Gibson self-exposure — is Potlako Leballo of the Pan-Africanist Congress. Here is a man whose life-style has had maximum publicity, above all by his one-time associates in PAC who have testified in great detail to his squandering of his organisation's resources and security. Gibson, who is a past master at ferreting gossip from the most unsavoury sources, is suddenly without information. There is no mention of the fact that when Leballo was expelled from the ANC and helped form PAC, he was in the employ of the American Information Service in Johannesburg and that the first PAC financial drive outside was in the US where right-wing trade unionists and State Department elements were persuaded that PAC was an effective counter to the ANC.

Perhaps this was inevitable in the light of Sobukwe's basic declaration of PAC policy (quoted by Gibson) that 'Africanists reject totalitarianism in any form and accept political democracy as understood in the West'.



The eventual somersault by the exile group to a policy of Maoism must have startled some but, we suppose, not those who saw in this an as yet untapped source for maintaining an 'exile life style'.

What Gibson tells us about Leballo is simply not true. Leballo was not dismissed as a teacher because of his 'political activities' in the 50's; unless you think a criminal conviction for embezzling school funds contributed by African parents is a form of political activism. Then there is Gibson's handling of Leballo's notorious announcement on 1 April 1963, from the safety of Lesotho, that PAC units within South Africa were on the point of launching a mass uprising and were merely 'waiting for the signal from Maseru'. The announcement led to a raid on PAC offices the day after, and widespread arrests within South Africa. (A political crime at last!)

'Undoubtedly' says Gibson 'the material seized in Maseru aided in the massive arrests but the amount of information found in the Basutoland office of the PAC has since been greatly exaggerated by the ANC and other adversaries of Leballo who repeatedly castigate him and the PAC in general for "irresponsibility".' After all, the police only found about 8,000 names and a variety of plans for a revolution in 1963! The thousands of innocent people who, as a result, were rounded up and thrown into S.A. gaols were, no doubt, consoled by the fact that 'the wily Leballo escaped and after pressure had been put on the British government' (by whom Gibson does not say) 'and the warrant for his arrest withdrawn, he was able to reach Tanzania'. Was it pure omission on Gibson's part not to have told his readers that the 'wily Leballo' reached Tanzania after being given safe conduct through S.A. territory by the good offices of its white regime?

Most of the Leballo story is well enough known. We cite it here to show how Gibson, in his need to project a leadership that will in the final result be manipulable by the interests he represents, will snatch at any discredited straw. The same purpose explains his inventiveness about the South African Communist Party. He says the SACP was and still remains predominantly white; that it ceased to fight racism after the Soviet Union entered the war; that it was always opposed to armed revolution and so on. Possibly because he did not want to clutter his book with supporting evidence he makes not the slightest attempt to indicate the sources of these calumnies. Perhaps it was Leballo who did duty once again.

Where Gibson does refer to published documents he leaves us with the distinct impression that he is in possession of special and unique editions hitherto unseen by any of us. He tells us, for example, that 'the Africanists were appalled to note the complete lack of any reference to African liberation, inter-African cooperation and the doctrine of Pan Africanism' in the ANC's Freedom Charter. He could not have read the Freedom Charter, though it is one of his principal targets. It does say, after all:

*The right of all the peoples of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised and shall be the basis of close cooperation*

He twice repeats the astonishing allegation that the Freedom Charter makes no pledge NOR DOES IT AT ANY TIME MENTION 'ONE MAN ONE VOTE'. The very first demand contained in this document reads:

*Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws*

Is Gibson worth tackling seriously other than to rebut some of the more obvious distortions like those above? Hardly. For though the book is camouflaged by his exploitation of his 'black identity' his approach is too convenient by far for United States Africa operators. Gibson's 'study' is filled with gossip, innuendo and outright distortion. He searches for the minutest cracks to prise even wider. His bias is far more than a failing of judgment, it has taken him over to the side of the enemy, i.e. if he were not there from the start. His sick and jaundiced attacks on the most important resistance movements and their leaders is complemented by his crude smear of those (like the Soviet Union) whose aid has been so vital. The course he has chosen is predictable enough; it is littered with signposts that read 'Soviet Imperialism', 'reds' and 'whites'. He goes one better than the State Department and this is his value. The more revolutionary the language you use to try to destroy a revolution the better chance you have of being believed.

SOL DUBULA

## STIMULATING POLEMICS BY WODDIS

*New Theories of Revolution* by Jack Woddis. Lawrence & Wishart, £4.50

Jack Woddis is a leading member of the Communist Party of Great Britain and a well-known authority on Africa. This book really consists of three extensive essays, each consisting of a critical examination of a modern writer on revolutionary themes: Frantz Fanon, Regis Debray and Herbert Marcuse.

Each of these rejects capitalism but differs (each in different ways, and to a different degree) with the familiar Marxist analysis. They have little else in common in theme, approach or conclusions.

Fanon, born in Martinique of African descent, was a psychologist who came to Algeria during the war of liberation and was struck down by a fatal disease at the tragically young age of thirty one. His regrettably few political writings deal almost exclusively with the anti-colonial, specifically the African revolution. He wrote like a man in a hurry, with passionate, indeed, poetic, intensity and penetration.

The theme of Debray, who was in Bolivia with Che Guevara, is the Cuban and the Latin American revolution. Readers of this journal will recall Joe Slovo's notable account of his theories in 1968 (No. 33). The experiences of Chile have since served to some extent to modify his somewhat adventurous and romantic concepts of revolution.

Marcuse, academic sociologist teaching in America, is very influential among sections of the students and the 'new Left'. While providing a powerful indictment of advanced Western monopoly capitalism his writings inculcate a contempt for the working class and its ideology that can only lead to political sterility.

Tackling each of these writers in turn from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism, Jack Woddis sets out successfully to assert and vindicate the basic principles of our movement. He proves himself an admirable debater, undogmatic, cool and lucid; producing an impressive array of hard facts; relying on the traditional British appeal to practice rather than sweeping ideological assertions.

Except for brief introductory and concluding chapters, Woddis does not attempt to impose upon his volume a unity which it could not inherently possess. Yet, perhaps inevitably in the very form and plan of

his book, the author concentrates on the only character his subjects share in common: namely, their departure from accepted Marxist theory. Such an approach is not conducive to an all-round appreciation.

Fanon in particular is the victim of this unbalanced emphasis. To be sure, he was mistaken in his serious underestimation of the role of the African working class as the leading force in the revolution against imperialism, and for socialism. Based on his limited experience of the (very uncharacteristic) Algerian situation, Fanon generalised incorrectly about the class character of the African revolution. He wrongly wrote off the working class and the need for a worker-peasant alliance, and romanticised the inconsistent, declassed, 'lumpen-proletariat'. Woddis demonstrates this at considerable length and with pulverising thoroughness. It is all true, and it needed to be said, the more so since Fanon's error has evidently misled others.

But really, is that all, or even the main thing, that has to be said about the passionate African revolutionary Frantz Fanon?

Jack Woddis pays tribute to Fanon's 'honesty of purpose'; his 'hatred of oppression and racialism'; his yearning 'for an end to the old world of capitalism and the creation of a cleaner, nobler world'. Had he been writing about Fanon alone, he would surely have found space to present more adequately and in a more balanced way the positive contribution he makes to a comprehension of the 'third world', and the sharp challenge his writings present to the complacency of 'the West'. And – unlike Debray and Marcuse, who frequently are guilty of this practice and are fittingly rebuked by Woddis – Fanon did not indulge himself in slanderous and baseless attacks on the Communist movement.

Having said which, one must repeat that Woddis has rendered an important and much-needed service by these three studies. Like all good polemics, this volume informs and clarifies the mind of the reader and provokes him to further thought and study.

A. LERUMO

### A USEFUL SOURCE BOOK

*African Perspectives*, Allen and Johnson, (Editors), Cambridge University Press, £5.25

*African Perspectives* comprises a selection from a large number of essays

which were presented to Thomas Hodgkin on the occasion of his 60th birthday. Hodgkin's deep interest in and involvement with Africa extends over more than a quarter of a century. That involvement, as the brief biographical note in the book makes clear has taken various forms. Firstly, his numerous articles and his books on Africa raised important new historical and political questions (none more so than his path-breaking *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (1956)) which stimulated and guided the research of a generation of Africanists. Secondly, as a teacher both in Africa and Britain, he encouraged research which penetrated beneath the narrow and distorting limits of the imperialist version of African history. But, thirdly, Hodgkin was no mere academic, for not only did he associate himself closely with the anti-colonial struggle, but he also made important contributions to the development of institutions of higher education in various African countries. The publication of this book, therefore, is an appropriate tribute to a man who has committed himself so completely to the interests of Africa.

The book consists of twenty essays (some written by former students of Hodgkin's) covering a wide range of topics. The essays are divided into two main sections. The first – *Historical Perspectives* – contains four detailed studies, of interest only to the specialist historian, tracing Islamic influences on West African history. This is followed by a number of essays, of rather more general interest, dealing with the political context of the religious response to colonial domination in the former colonies of Algeria, Ghana, Senegal and Zambia.

The second section – *Political and Economic Perspectives* – begins with four essays on the political economy of Africa (one focuses illustratively on Tanzania and another on Western Nigeria) and concludes with case studies of political movements – struggles in the Portuguese Colonies, Guinea, the Ivory Coast and Gambia.

It is, of course, extremely difficult in a short review to give even a brief summary of the factual material covered in twenty papers dealing with such vastly different topics and societies. Nor is it possible to draw out of *African Perspectives* any coherent theoretical framework which might unify the diverse empirical material of the book. Indeed, the very basis of selection of the essays virtually makes this impossible, for as the preface emphasises, the papers were not selected in terms of any theoretical criteria at all. The criteria for selection were:

'First, that as far as possible the book should reflect Thomas's own major concern and interests. And, secondly, that it should be representative of the several generations of Africanists influenced by Thomas.'

The choice of authors on these grounds is reflected in the very different theoretical perspectives from which the essays are written. The book thus lacks unity and suffers from its failure to pursue and develop from a consistent theoretical position (particularly a Marxist one), the subject matter it is concerned with.

Taken individually, the papers which attempt to analyse the political economy, although raising some important problems, are the least interesting because they either remain trapped within the concepts of conventional economics and sociology (Green and Apter) or because of a lack of theoretical rigour and clarity where Marxist ideas are used (Williams).

On the other hand, many of the essays concerned with the various manifestations of political conflict contain much interesting and informative descriptive material even though there is a tendency towards a 'hero in history' approach rather than an analysis of social forces.

On the whole *African Perspectives*, despite its faults will prove a useful source book for the academic historian.

S. O'C.

### IN SEARCH OF RHODESIA

*Rhodesia – The Struggle for a Birthright*, by Eshmael Mlambo, C. Hurst & Co., £2.50.

*An Ill Fated People*, by Lawrence Vambe, Heinemann, £3.50.

Rhodesia, once the least studied, least written portion of Britain's colonial empire in Africa, is rapidly catching up, perhaps even overtaking the rest of Africa. Books about the country and its problems pour out relentlessly into the bookshops. Most of those which have come my way have contributed something to my understanding of the country, its people, their past, present and future; and yet not enough. The works I have read – I do not claim that they cover the whole field – are unsatisfying, leaving too much unexplained.

Eshmael Mlambo's *Rhodesia – The Struggle for a Birthright* serves to strengthen that feeling. Not that it is in any way a superficial book. On the contrary. It is a scholarly and studious compilation of the facts about Rhodesia – its history, the sociology and politics of its development, its constitutional structure at different periods, the growth and nature of African political movements, and the recent internal and international contortions of successive British and Rhodesian governments in their attempts to hold the trembling house together. If one seeks the facts, they are here.

But they are facts presented in a curiously uninvolved, uncommitted fashion for a writer who has himself been actively concerned with political events and struggles in the country, and has suffered detention without trial during them. It is a handbook, a reference work, rather than a guide to a living issue. It sets out succinctly and in detail *what* happened; but never *why*. Its contribution is to knowledge about Rhodesia, rather than to understanding.

Lawrence Vambe's *An Ill-fated People* takes a small, but important part of the whole canvas – the history, or better the folk-lore of the VaShawasha people, his people, who form part of the majority Shona people of Rhodesia. Unlike Eshmael Mlambo, Lawrence Vambe is concerned not with the bald facts of history, but with the memory of tribal clashes with the Ndebele sweeping up from the Transvaal before the white invasion, and of the great popular uprising and defeat of the Mashona by the white invaders in 1896-97. Folk lore is a valid part of the historical record; in those parts of Africa where there is no written record of contemporary events it is perhaps the vital part. Every attempt to set it down before the memory dies out altogether as tribal institutions decline is a valuable contribution to the preservation of Africa's history.

Vambe, unfortunately, does more than set down the verbal history current in his tribe when he was a boy. He adds to it from his subsequent reading – especially from Dr Ranger's writings – but in a way that blurs the dividing line between what he heard from the tribal elders, and what he has since learnt from non-tribal writers and researchers.

In the end, Vambe succeeds less in his task of setting down an oral history than in arguing a special plea for a people whose troubles, it would seem, he sees more as the result of Matabele viciousness than of any understandable historical process.

## PAMPHLETS ON TORTURE

*South Africa, the Terrorism of Torture*, by Hilda Bernstein, International Defence and Aid Fund, 30p.

*Apartheid is Built on Torture*, by Brian Bunting, World Peace Council.

Nobody really doubts today that the South African Security Police resort to torture in their interrogation of political prisoners under the various laws providing for detention without trial. The death of 20 political prisoners while in the hands of the security police is in itself gruesome testimony to the brutality of the methods involved.

These two pamphlets, recently published, give detailed accounts of what has happened in South Africa's torture chambers since the no-trial detention laws were first introduced in 1963.

Both pamphlets can safely be recommended to readers of *The African Communist*. They are factual and informative, and the ground to be covered is so vast that neither is merely a duplicate of the other.

The picture which emerges is so horrifying that it is to be hoped these pamphlets will stimulate some effective action on a world scale, not only to put an end to prison outrages in South Africa, but also to the apartheid regime which is directly responsible for them.

P.M.



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