


# The African Communist

NO 69 SECOND QUARTER 1977

ZIMBABWE'S  
WAY  
FORWARD





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## **THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST**

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**No. 69 Second Quarter 1977**

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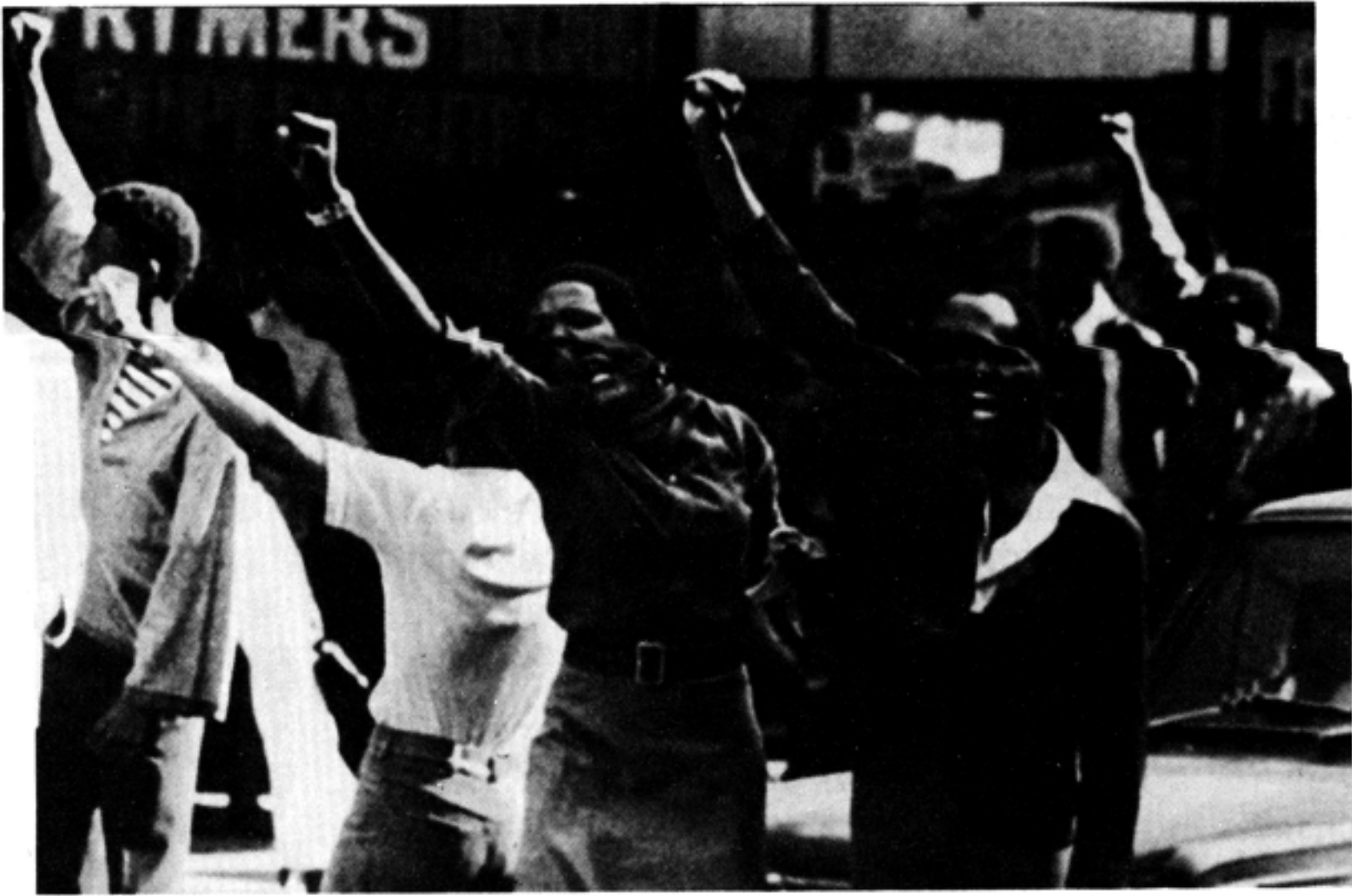
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## Zimbabwe's Way Forward;

The breakdown of the Geneva conference on Zimbabwe was imminent at the time of our last issue. To no one's surprise it has happened, despite desperate last-minute manoeuvrings in some imperialist circles trying — as they put it — to 'keep the door open'. Nothing could have been more revealing of the real nature of the Geneva exercise than the manner of its abandonment. The pretence that the Zimbabwe people's organisations were equal parties to the talks was contemptuously cast aside. Smith and Richard alone curtly announced the end of the conference without either consultation with or even advance notice to anyone.

For in truth, whatever gloss was put upon the Geneva talks to convince the world of their democratic purpose, there was never any intention that power should be transferred to the black majority. Geneva was not designed to give Rhodesia back to its people. It was designed to save it for those who exploit it today and who hope to continue exploiting it tomorrow. It was designed not out of democratic principle, but out of panic fear that unless the structure of white Rhodesia could be modified in some form acceptable to the majority, the rising libera-



tion struggles might topple the whole regime in the dust, and bring to an end the deep economic, political and strategic interest of imperialism.

It can never have been in doubt — at least not recently — even in Whitehall, Washington, Pretoria or Salisbury, that sooner or later the Smith regime will have to go, and Rhodesian minority rule give way to majority. But to recognise the inevitable is one thing. It is no part of policy in any of those capitals to hasten the day. All are at one in postponing it as long as possible. The Smith regime serves their combined interests better and more certainly than any other that can possibly succeed it, but only as long as the regime's grip remains firm, the country calm and good for imperial business.

If there are differences between the four capitals — and there are! — they relate not to this first objective of preserving what has served them well for a long time, but to another related question. That is, what changes in the regime, what shifts of policy must be made, and when, if the real interests of imperialism are to be maintained without provoking a popular revolution in which the whole imperialist interest, perhaps even capitalism itself, will be swept aside.

This was the consideration which underlay Kissinger's run-up to the Geneva conference, Britain's chairmanship of the conference itself, and the differences of emphasis and timing revealed during the conference by the spokesmen of the white supremacist 'gang of four'. Had Washington, Whitehall and Pretoria desired it, their fourth gang partner in Salisbury could long ago have been eased from power. But while Britain maintained a fairly ineffectual sanctions patrol off the eastern seaboard, South Africa openly transported petrol through to Smith, and America stood aside. While Vorster's troops fought on Rhodesia's eastern front against guerilla incursions, America filled the Smith coffers in payment for sanctions-busting purchases of chrome, and Britain stood aside, pleading impotence against Smith's technical 'rebellion' against the Crown.

Shadow boxing! Despite apparent disagreement over means there was always, at all times, consensus over ends. And when the rising tide of Zimbabwe's popular struggles put in doubt the real end of saving their Rhodesian stake, there was sudden agreement over means — a constitutional 'settlement', whether Smith would, or Smith would not.

This imperialist unity was the answer, clearly, to the new situation which had arisen in Southern Africa — Rhodesia's white defences of



Portuguese Angola and Portuguese Mozambique overturned, and hostile borders on every side except only Vorster's in the South.

It was in this situation that the Zimbabwean freedom fighters had enlarged the whole scope of their guerilla struggle, and carried the war directly into Smith's territory. The guerilla forces had grown in numbers, in daring and in experience, and begun to bring disruption into aspects of Rhodesian life, including its main transport links with South Africa. But more importantly, in Zimbabwe itself, the guerilla successes had roused the people; hope was in the air, and a growing confidence that the Smith fortress was beginning to crumble. The rising tide of people's war signalled the prospects of people's victory, perhaps of revolution.

For imperialism, the sands of time were running out. Thus all imperialism's forces gathered to mount a rescue operation — not necessarily for Smith (for with the high stakes for which they are reaching, Smith and his Rhodesia Front party are, if needs be, dispensable), but for rescue of their own vast imperial interests in Rhodesia, of Anglo-American corporation mining and South African owned manufacturing; of stakes in gold and copper, in ranching and chrome, in tobacco and manganese. Revolution had to be forestalled; the freedom fighters had to be bought off or suborned before all was lost.

### **The Reality of Power**

The Zimbabwean movements made a simple demand; transfer state power to the majority. None of the deals talked of or actually on offer at Geneva — neither Kissinger's 'package deal', Smith's interpretation of it, nor Britain's offer of a 'presence' to hold the contestants' coats in the centre of the ring — approached anywhere near the substance of a genuine transfer of power. All that was on offer at Geneva was the shadow — 'participation' in government, 'sharing' in government, behind which the reality of imperialist interest would remain intact, unchanged.

Inevitably, the shadow was rejected, despite all the efforts to package it prettily. But the rejection came not without some wavering by elements outside the Patriotic Front alliance of ZAPU and ZANU. Transfer of power was never intended to be on the agenda. And when it had been made clear beyond all doubt that the Patriotic Front would settle for nothing less — and that theirs was the authentic view of Zimbabwe's majority inside and outside of the guerilla ranks, there was nothing left to talk about. The bait had not been swallowed. The quarry had not been trapped within the net. The talks were terminated

summarily without more ado. If this end was a bitter pill for the 'gang of four' to swallow, for the Zimbabwean people and their liberation organisations it was something of an achievement, a clearing of the air. The talks were over! Long live the people's struggle!

Why then did the liberation movements decide to enter the talks in the first place? Certainly there is nothing to suggest that they were ever in doubt about the reality of what the 'gang of four' was attempting to put across. There is scarcely a statement of any leader of any importance, before, during, or after the Geneva talks, that does not show that they understood full well that freedom was not on offer; and that they were not being helped but rather diverted from their main purpose by Kissinger, Richard and all.

Men, as it has often been said, make their own history. But not always exactly as they choose, but circumscribed by conditions transmitted to them from the past. To this general limitation, the Zimbabwean movements are no exception. They have had to act in circumstances which were not of their own choosing, and in which their range of choice was not unlimited. In some circles there may have persisted illusions that power would or could be transferred as it had been in the case of many other African colonies by negotiation round the conference table, whether at Lancaster House in London or in Geneva. There is no indication that there was ever any such illusion amongst the leaders of the Patriotic Front, and if the Geneva conference achieved anything, it was to prove that they were right in their conviction that victory could be achieved only through an intensification of struggle; that only the destruction of the Smith regime and the whole apparatus of white domination would bring about a real transfer of power to the majority in Zimbabwe.

Of course, there were illusions amongst the participants at the Geneva conference. There was the illusion in the American ruling class, and certainly in Henry Kissinger, that the combination of American military and financial muscle with the Kissinger Batman act could make people anywhere dance to the State House tune — the last dying flicker of an illusion, once widely held, which had been killed off for most of the world by the people's victory in Vietnam. There was illusion too in the British ruling class, that the benighted black masses of once darkest Africa can still be persuaded to accept that some jaded Foreign Office gentleman can be the arbitrator of their lives and liberties through his mere 'presence' in the role of a latter-day Sanders-of-the-River. There was illusion in both Washington and London that South Africa's Vorster could be bought, bribed or flattered into abandoning his whole



life-long white supremacist crusade, and come down heavily on Smith to concede the very black power-sharing he refuses to contemplate at home. And there was illusion amongst some of the more ambitious, more naive of Zimbabwean politicians that there could be easy pickings of office without recourse to struggle, by playing the conference table game according to the Whitehall rules.

Such illusions die hard and slow. But die they must. If the experience of the Tiger and Fearless talks, of the Pearce Commission and of the Geneva talks has not finally dispelled them, then dispelled they surely will be in the days ahead. For there is a single hard reality which everyone who dabbles in constitutional engineering anywhere in the modern world must learn. *The people have to be reckoned with. Everywhere!* However long it takes, that realisation will ultimately be learnt as surely in Cape Town and Salisbury as it has to be in Washington and London. The fact that, with the Geneva talks patently broken down and incapable of further progress, there are no other proposals from any of those capitals for a realistic settlement in Rhodesia, shows that the illusions are not yet dead. There is still no recognition of the patent fact that no settlement is possible in Rhodesia except through real transfer of power from the minority to the black majority. Though America's new UN ambassador Young talks hopefully, and Smith leaks rumours of a referendum which will lead to a deal with the 'real leaders' of the black majority outside of the Patriotic Front, the reality will have to be faced, sooner or later. There are no alternatives, except transfer of power, gracefully now, or abjectly in defeat later.

So we are back to the politics of the period before Geneva — confrontation between the minority white regime and the overwhelming black majority, with armed struggle ever more important in the conflict.

But yet not *exactly* as before. It is not as though Geneva never happened, changed nothing, effected nothing. In fact many aspects of the struggle have been transformed, to the dismay of those who conceived of Geneva as a means to divide the liberation movement, destroy its international support, and seduce its weakest members into the ranks of the Rhodesian establishment.

Firstly — and most importantly — the Zimbabwean liberation movement emerges into the post-Geneva era with a higher level of unity than before.

Secondly, the Zimbabwean movement has gained a standing and respect internationally, both for its unity at Geneva and for the

tenacious adherence to principles, which the Patriotic Front maintained at every turn of the conference manoeuvring. This new stature is not an intangible asset, but pays immediate dividends in the united support for the guerilla war which has been won from the five front line states, previously themselves divided in reflection of the Zimbabwean divisions.

Thirdly, there is new political consciousness and determination amongst the Zimbabwean people, as evidenced by the recently much publicised decisions of entire high schools to defect from Smith's Rhodesia and join the guerilla forces. There is no longer significant belief amongst the people that anything of any value lies along the road of compromise and power-sharing with the white regime. Despite Smith's hopes to the contrary, everyone must by now have learnt to distinguish between a mess of pottage and their rightful inheritance.

Thus, the scene returns to a resemblance of the status quo before Geneva, but not to precisely the same point. History has swept on, and the freedom fighters of Zimbabwe now occupy higher ground upon the battlefield than ever before. Their forces, both in the guerilla camps and in the towns and countryside are larger than before, more aware; there is in the air the scent of decisive rounds of struggle ahead. And because they now stand closer to the decisive moment of their struggle than before, there has been created the possibility to mobilise the great power of the urban and rural workers of Zimbabwe in mass struggle, to complement and merge with the guerrilla struggles being carried on by the volunteers. In Zimbabwe the conditions now exist for the rallying of the whole people in a struggle which will shake the white supremacist regime to its foundations and pave the way for the transformation of the state.

The growing tempo of struggle, the growing unity in the ranks of the people's forces, is at the same time developing new perspectives in the liberation movement, a new clarity about objectives, a new realisation that the fight does not finish with the fall of Smith, that the real testing time for the liberation movement comes after victory, after liberation and independence.

Standing in the wings, even now, after Geneva, hoping to pick up the pieces and remake Zimbabwe to suit themselves, are the vultures of imperialism and those Zimbabweans who still hope to rise by clinging to their coat-tails. But these hangers-on, these agents of neo-colonialism, are faced by a movement which is clearer about its programme than ever before, more confident of its allies in Africa, in the socialist coun-



tries and in the whole progressive world. And this clarity will sharpen as the struggle intensifies.

We have concentrated on developments in Zimbabwe in this issue of the *African Communist*, and in doing so we wish to pay tribute to a man who played a great part in raising Zimbabwe to its present phase of struggle, only to be assassinated as the climax approaches — Jason Moyo, Joshua Nkomo's leading lieutenant in the ANC (Zimbabwe). In an interview given at the time of the Geneva conference, Moyo said:

“We are determined to fight against capitalism. . . We are part of the world movement against capitalism and imperialism. We have never been fighting to replace the white bourgeoisie with a black bourgeoisie. We have always been fighting to effect a revolution.”

The shape of the new Zimbabwe is emerging from the clouds of battle around the old. The will, purpose and vision of the liberation movement is being sharpened in struggle. The sights of the freedom fighters are being raised beyond the immediate target to appreciate the need for the planning and development of the new Zimbabwe.

To all this the Geneva conference has made its contribution, by exposing and discrediting the path of compromise and sell-out. The Geneva conference is dead! Forward to the Zimbabwe revolution!

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## **RACIST FEROCITY**

No one should be under any illusions about the nature of the conflict which is escalating in Southern Africa. As the pressures on the white racist heartlands increase, the inflexibility of the Vorster and Smith regimes is more and more glaringly exposed. Unable to accept the reality of majority rule, they are left with little room for manoeuvre or compromise, and while the South Africans may be willing to sacrifice their Rhodesian colleagues to secure a settlement satisfactory to themselves, they are unwilling to abandon any part of their own apartheid fortress.

This explains the almost total absence of meaningful response by the Vorster regime to the crisis which has overtaken the Republic since June 16, 1976, when the Soweto massacre began. The so-called concessions which have been announced — in relation to home ownership, the use of Afrikaans in schools, etc. — are ludicrous when seen in relation to the national aspirations of the oppressed black peoples. The

escalation of revolt is testimony of the people's rejection of any shabby compromise with white domination.

A great deal of noise has been made by the press about the demands for change coming from the ranks of Afrikaner academics and businessmen, and from certain sections of the opposition. But none of these demands have been sufficiently concretised to offer any alternative to apartheid or white domination and so constitute no threat to the continuation of Nationalist rule. On the contrary, the consequence of all the negotiations for the creation of a single centre of opposition to the government has been the fragmentation of the opposition parliamentary forces and the strengthening of the government in the electoral field.

Nevertheless, there is no denying that South Africa faces its greatest political and economic crisis since Union in 1910. The fact that Vorster is unable to come forward with any initiatives for solving this crisis is the clue to the rigidity of the posture he has adopted. Though his electoral position may seem secure, he is fighting with his back to the wall to defend himself against the ever-mounting extra-parliamentary assaults, both from the oppressed black masses and from their allies abroad, the front-line African countries, the international Communist movement, the OAU and the UN. The guerrilla front-lines are moving steadily southwards.

This is why Vorster continues to allow his police to use bullets instead of teargas, water-cannon or baton charges in confrontations with children. This is why the security police are given a free hand in their treatment of detainees, 18 of whom have been killed by the police during the last year alone, bringing the total deaths of political detainees since the no-trial laws were introduced to 37. The government, desperate to stop the revolution before it gets out of hand, is fighting for its very life, with no holds barred.

The plight of those who fall into the hands of the police is frightening. Held in solitary confinement and subjected to every known form of torture, denied access to courts or lawyers, family or friends, they are completely at the mercy of brutal and merciless interrogators whose job is to break them and who do not shrink from destroying those they cannot subdue. In South Africa itself the law prohibits the press from telling the truth about what goes on in the jails, and a pall of silence hangs over the scene, broken occasionally by the complaints and descriptions of torture made by those prisoners finally brought to court to face a charge under one or other of the security laws. It is note-



worthy that in recent months these complaints of torture have been made in practically every case heard in the aftermath of Soweto.

The government has made its own admission of guilt by passing a law this session of Parliament indemnifying any of its officers in relation to any offence committed since the disturbances began. The men who shoot innocent children, the police who torture defenceless prisoners, the bullies and the brutes who maim the bodies and minds of blacks who resist their apartheid laws — these thugs are not to be brought to justice, nor is there to be any redress for their victims.

Vorster and his agents need not think they will escape justice by these means. In Europe Nazi torturers and murderers are still being brought to book for the crimes they committed against humanity during the last war. We take this opportunity of warning Vorster, Kruger and their agents like Swanepoel and Van Wyk that they day is not far distant when they, too, will have to face their accusers. Hitler's Reich did not last for the allotted 1,000 years, nor will theirs.

They have done what they have done with their eyes open. Last January Justice Minister Kruger in a press interview praised his police and security forces and boasted that South Africa would overcome all attempts to create disruption. The Minister said that during the struggle to conquer the "aggressors", there was no such word as "sorry" — if "terrorist" plans for an onslaught continued, the police would seek out the culprits and "kill them". (*Star*, January 7, 1977.) The South African police, their hands stained with the blood of their victims, are certainly living up to the expectations of their paymaster.

For years, ever since the murder of Looksmart Solwandle and Bellington Mampe in 1963, the liberation movement has been almost alone in its protest against the barbarities and murders perpetrated by the Security Police under the protection of the security laws. But slowly the general public, both in South Africa and abroad, has come to see the truth. Last February the Roman Catholic Bishops' conference in Pretoria in the course of a general resolution denouncing the injustices of apartheid, expressed themselves "especially perturbed by what appear to be reliable reports of police brutality. . . of seemingly systematic beatings and unjustifiable shootings during disturbances and of cold-blooded torture of detained persons. . . We call for an investigation and resolve to collaborate with others intent on bringing the truth to light". Anglican and Methodist churchmen followed suit.

We call on progressive forces throughout the world to raise their voices in protest against the torture and killings that are being carried out by Kruger's thugs. In South Africa itself Kruger refuses even to in-

form Parliament of the number of deaths, injuries, detentions and subsequent court cases resulting from the recent disturbances, though in an interview he alleges, without a scrap of evidence, that some of the dead were members of the African National Congress who were committing suicide on the orders of the Communist Party.

We take this opportunity of throwing this lie back in Kruger's teeth. The South African Communist Party has never given orders to any members of the African Nationalist Congress, which is a completely independent organisation; nor has the South African Communist Party given orders to anybody, including its own members, to commit suicide. Kruger's lies are an attempt to exculpate his police butchers by resorting to blatant anti-Communism in the hope that this will be accepted as reason enough for any excesses perpetrated by the regime.

The time has come for an international campaign to save the lives of the prisoners of apartheid. They have no protection in South Africa from the courts, the law, or effective public opinion. It will be a stain on the conscience of all mankind if these atrocities are allowed to continue.

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## **BANTUSTAN BLUFFERS**

South Africa will not soon forget the role played by the leaders of the so-called Bantustans during the disturbance which have racked our country and people since June 16, 1976. Most of them turned their backs on the people's struggle and laid low, hoping the storm would blow over and leave them still sitting safely in their government jobs. Few of them dared to show their faces in the urban areas, and when they did so they went under police escort or protection, knowing they would be targets for attack as collaborators and agents of the Vorster regime. Not surprisingly, Bantustan institutions were among the government buildings demolished by the demonstrators as symbols of their oppression.

Once again the role of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi calls for condemnation in this context. At a time when blacks were being shot down, bludgeoned and beaten in their thousands in the segregated townships all over the country, Buthelezi chose to criticise the victims. In an interview with the *Washington Post* last November, he condemned the student protests and said the violence they had unleashed had serious-



ly set back African efforts to break white minority rule and damaged the credibility of black economic action.

“I share the anger of the young people. But self-mutilation does not further our aims”, he said. He favoured “well-prepared mass action through strikes and boycotts” as the “most important tool we have in our struggle for liberation”. Despite the setback, he added, he would continue working towards mass action of the type he favoured to bring an end to apartheid.

We can only express our disgust at this act of betrayal of the people in the hour of their suffering and agony. To accuse the students of “self-mutilation” is to condemn them as the instigators of the conflict, and to exculpate the police who by implication are presented as responding to rather than initiating the violence. This is a desecration of the memory of the brave men, women and children who gave their lives in the cause of freedom; who were the victims of police brutality, not “self-mutilators” as Buthelezi insultingly describes them; who were killed or clubbed to death because they had dared to demonstrate, peacefully, in support of their demand for an end to Bantu education and apartheid. Police Minister Kruger must have been grateful for this unexpected apologist for the atrocities of his teams of mass murderers.

Or perhaps it was not entirely unexpected. The chief director of the Natal Bantu Affairs Administration Board, Mr. S. Borquin, giving evidence to the Cillie Commission last January, praised Buthelezi’s Inkatha movement and “Zulu conservatism” for having prevented large-scale riots in Natal during 1976. He said Inkatha had impressed on people that they should not get involved.

Buthelezi says that instead of “mutilating” themselves, the students should go in for well-prepared mass action through strikes and boycotts, which is “the most important tool we have in our struggle for liberation”. Yet these were precisely the weapons used by both students and workers in Soweto and elsewhere – strikes which twice paralysed the economy of Johannesburg, and a Christmas boycott in memory of the dead which had widespread effects throughout the country. Buthelezi said not a word to encourage support of any of these demonstrations. Quite the contrary. It was at the very moment when black revolt was being channeled along these lines that Buthelezi chose to accuse the organisers of “self-mutilation”. And we have yet to see Buthelezi or his Inkatha movement organising any strikes or boycotts, or even preparing for them. We can assure them that when he does (if he ever does) he and his supporters and followers will find themselves the victims of what he calls “self-mutilation” just as much as

did the brave fighters of Soweto. The moment Buthelezi proceeds from words to action (something he is very careful to avoid) he will find himself struck down without mercy.

So what game is Buthelezi up to? Certainly it is a very complex one, but if he shows any consistency it is in his opportunism. He speaks with different tongues, depending on his audience. The language he uses at home is different from that employed abroad. On the day of Transkei "independence" (October 26) Buthelezi was in Lagos, appealing to the African National Congress to join "other organisations still legal in South Africa" in setting up a black national convention to end white minority rule. The ANC had provided South Africa with the only tradition of liberation which could unify the people, he said. "We blacks in our organisations are in a sense pieces of the ANC jigsaw puzzle. The ANC must strengthen us and not oppose us".

Back home Buthelezi denies the claim of ANC leaders on Robben Island to be the real leaders of the people, and proceeds to organise substitutes for the recognised liberation movements. He wants his Inkatha to become a political home for all sections of the African people. In November he announced the formation of a Black Unity Front comprising urban Bantu councillors, homeland leaders, their urban representatives and other professional people. "We have lost faith in white leadership of whatever persuasion", he said. Yet in December he was proposing that opposition white political parties should join with black groups such as Inkatha to discuss the political future. He has particularly close relations with the Progressive-Reform Party.

Buthelezi has also starred in a Chamber of Mines recruiting film in which he is shown being interviewed during a visit to a gold mine. In reply to the question: "Now that you have seen this mine, will you recommend that your people come and work in the mines?", Buthelezi replies: "I and my ministers are very happy at what we have seen and at the working conditions on the mines and the efficiency of the workers".

Buthelezi is a political chameleon who changes the colour of his coat to fit in with his surroundings. It's sometimes hard to see where he stands. He who wants to be all things to all men ends up satisfying nobody.



## THE COST OF APARTHEID

“South Africa is no longer a haven of stability and lush profits for United States investors” lamented a recent report from New York published in the *Star*. New American investment in South Africa has dwindled to virtually nothing since last year’s disturbances and US concerns are nervous of risking capital in South Africa while political conditions are so unstable. A University of Delaware survey has downgraded South Africa to 19th place, behind Iran and just ahead of hot-spots like Brazil and Venezuela, in its latest worldwide Business Environment Risk Index. The senior vice-president of the Import-Export Bank told a Congressional Committee that South Africa did not get a R326 million loan guarantee to help finance the second SASOL plant because the bank was unable to find “reasonable assurance of repayment”. The US journal *Business Week* commented: “What worries businessmen is a faltering South African economy and, more disturbing still, the potential for continuing racial conflict in a country where four million whites wield political and economic control over 19 million non-whites.

“The slump has also brought home to businessmen the economic costs of the apartheid system which results in companies paying white clerks up to five times as much as blacks for doing the same job. One result is that the affluent but numerically small white market has become saturated, many businessmen believe, while the country’s 19 million non-whites lack both the skill to produce and the money with which to buy.”

Figures compiled by the US Department of Commerce and processed by the weekly American newsletter *Business International* show that South Africa has lost its premier position as the biggest source of profit for foreign investors. Whereas in 1970 the US investor was able to get a 16 percent profit on his investment in South Africa as compared to 11.2 percent in the rest of the world, in 1975 he got only 8.7 percent from South Africa whereas the profit rate from the rest of the world had gone up to 13.2 percent. Figures issued by South Africa’s own Department of Statistics, based on an analysis of the accounts of 220 companies in secondary and tertiary industry with assets of R8.6 billion, indicate that this decline in profitability has continued into 1976. Operating profits as a proportion of shareholders’ investments dropped from 20.1 percent in 1975 to 16.9 percent in 1976; net after-tax profits fell from 16.5 percent to 14.1 percent.

The Nationalist government has often proclaimed that it would prefer South Africa to be poor and white rather than rich and

integrated. But the big business interests, both local and foreign, who have buttressed the apartheid state in the past because it was so profitable, prefer money to ideology and are today calling for reforms so that the profit-rate can be increased. The Chambers of Commerce and Industry who call for an end to job reservation, and the politicians of Britain and the United States who call for majority rule in Zimbabwe and South Africa are motivated by strategic and commercial rather than moral criteria. Proof of this was provided recently by none other than the new US Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, a black man whose appointment was heralded as an indication of the "new look" liberalism of the Carter administration. In an interview last February with the US mass circulation magazine *Jet*, Young said he had been ordered by the President to give first attention to Southern Africa, and to make contact with black leadership in South Africa.

"And he's committed and he sees that as a trouble spot and we haven't had that kind of commitment before", said Young. Asked just what kind of commitment it was, and whether he would be limiting his concern to South Africa, Young replied: "The potential wealth of black Africa and the resources of black Africa are just so superior in the long run to South Africa that in order to continue to do business in all of Africa, corporate America is going to have to do better by blacks in South Africa".

This is the morality of the stock exchange and the cattle market. The South African liberation movement wants none of it.



# How Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle Began

by Bernard Mazoe

*Jason Z. Moyo, second vice-president of the African National Council of Zimbabwe, was brutally murdered by a parcel bomb in Lusaka, on 23 January 1977. This outrageous crime, intended as a blow against the people of Zimbabwe, and most probably carried out by the agents of the racist regime of Ian Smith, has robbed Africa of one of its outstanding sons. The following article is intended as a tribute to Comrade Moyo, to the movement of which he was such a resolute leader, and to the cause for which he lived and died.*

Twenty years ago, in 1957, the first truly national organisation in Zimbabwe was formed – the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress. In the same year, Ghana won its independence, and in South Africa the Treason Trial got under way, as the Nationalist government sought to label as treason both the revolutionary programme of the ANC (the Freedom Charter, adopted two years previously), and the mass campaigns of the constituent members of the Congress Alliance. Why did a national liberation movement emerge so much later in Rhodesia than elsewhere in Africa?

The answer to that question lies in the fact that colonialism came late to Zimbabwe, and it came as an extension of already existing patterns of white settlement, colonial domination and foreign exploita-

tion established in South Africa. It was only in the second half of the 19th century that the first attempts were made to 'open up' the territory to foreign trade, hunting and mineral exploration. And it was only in the 1890s that the colonists were able to establish control — a step which was met with fierce resistance by the African peoples in the wars of 1896-7.

These wars of resistance (called 'rebellions' in the colonial history books) were crushed in a very bloody and brutal way. But pockets of resistance continued to survive for several years, and the spirit of the resistance lived on into the twenties and thirties. Under the rule of the British South Africa Company ending in 1923 and thereafter under white settler rule, various African organisations came into being to protect and advance the interests of various sectors of the people.<sup>1</sup> Some were principally interested in securing the extension of the franchise to the small educated stratum that was emerging from the mission schools. Others were in the nature of social clubs and welfare societies, trying to keep people together at a time when migratory labour, the drift to the towns, and Western education were breaking up the traditional communities. These bodies also sought to solve the immediate day-to-day problems of the people, especially in the towns where their main influence lay, and this inevitably brought them into politics, though they were not usually formed with clear political goals in mind.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, labour organisations came into being, like the various attempts, none of which were allowed to succeed for very long, to form a union of African mine-workers. Social and economic conditions were hard on the people, especially in the various depressions after World War I, and occasionally workers were driven to take strike action, as in the big Shamva mine strike in 1927.

The only organisation that was truly a mass organisation in this early period and which made its mark on the settler government was the *Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU)*. Like its South African counterpart in the mid-twenties, the ICU was partly a general union of working people, partly a movement for national liberation, and it certainly fulfilled a need at that time because it grew very rapidly and made a lasting impact on the growth of political consciousness. As in South Africa, however, the organisation itself did not stand up very long to the repression of the authorities and weaknesses from within. After two very successful years in 1929 and 1930 under the leadership of three great figures in Zimbabwe's history, Masoja Ndlovu, Job Dum-



butshena and Charles Mzingeli, it crumbled quickly leaving only a couple of small branches in the two main cities, which struggled on into the forties.

Parallels abound between the histories of the South African and Zimbabwean liberation movements. And so do direct connections between the two. After the ANC was formed in 1912, the people of Zimbabwe were usually directly represented at the ANC's annual conferences, although the ANC as such did not exist in Zimbabwe at that time. The land demands of the Zimbabwean people were usually included in the representations made by ANC delegations to the British government, as happened in 1914, for example. Many Zimbabweans have lived, studied or worked in South Africa from the earliest years of this century down to the present day, and taken home with them the influences of the developing movement down south. In the case of the ICU, the Rhodesian body was an integral part of the South African body, and this worked to its disadvantage when the latter was badly split into several factions in the late 1920s.

### **The Land Question**

As in South Africa, it took the land question to bring out the first attempt at the formation of a national organisation. Yet because of the circumstances of the time, the result was a tribal movement. This was the *Ndebele home movement*, which, under the leadership of Nyamanda, eldest son of Chief Lobengula, exercised considerable influence between 1915 and 1921. The Ndebele people in the west, southwest and southern parts of the country had suffered much worse losses of their land and cattle to European settlers and land speculation companies than had the Shona in other parts.<sup>3</sup> Attempting by a variety of legal processes and protest activities to recover some of their land, they were devastated by the recommendations of a Reserves Commission in 1917, and a Privy Council decision of 1919, which instead of adjusting the division of land between the races in their favour, effectively put the seal of law on the theft and robbery with which the 'pioneers' had carved up the possessions of the indigenous people.

In this situation, and with the aid and encouragement of some of the Congress leaders in South Africa, who were similarly involved in land battles in relation to the Beaumont Commission and the British government, Nyamanda set to work to build a movement of protest and agitation around the land issue. He exploited his high social status to good effect, and also the lingering 'national' sentiments of the Ndebele people, many of whom still found it difficult to accept the defeat their

nation had suffered barely 25 years before. He made some attempts to voice the land demands of the Shona peoples, but he had no authority or organisation amongst them, and in the end was caught up in the tribal logic of his approach — asking for a giant ‘reserve’ for the Ndebele people within a settler-dominated society. This appealed neither to the settlers, nor to the Shona, nor even to some Ndebele. So the movement died, and the settlers proceeded to a ‘final’ settlement of the land question, agreed between themselves and the British government, with only the liberal missionaries in the Aborigines Protection Society actively voicing the land needs of the African people.

The Land Apportionment Act of 1931 reserved approximately half of the country to the white minority, who at that time numbered less than 50,000 or just under 5% of the total population. As in South Africa, liberal whites saw merit in a strict segregation of the races in respect of land ownership, believing that it would offer a measure of protection to poorer Africans from the better-placed whites, who, if there were a free market, might buy up most of the land. But the hope was misplaced. The Land Apportionment Act remains one of the fundamental grievances of the Zimbabwean people, and the land question will be a major issue for the first Zimbabwean government.

The liberal illusion was not confined to whites. It was shared also by some of the emergent African middle class. This class, which developed much more slowly than its counterpart in the Union, and only began to play an active political role in the late twenties, threw up a number of pre-nationalist organisations. Some of these were specifically Christian in character, and Christians predominated in most of the African movements of the day. The major attempt at a nationalist movement sprang from people of this sort — Reverends Matthew Rusiki and T.D. Samkange, and Aaron Jacha, a farmer. The *Bantu Congress*, formed in 1934, opposed many discriminatory measures, but not the Land Apportionment Act. Its failure to take up the land issue, and also to spread effectively outside of Matabeleland, testify to the predominance of the urban elite, of teachers and ministers, in its ranks and contributed to its virtual disappearance within a few years. Its later revival as the African National Congress in Bulawayo in 1945/6, with T.D. Samkange in the presidency and his son Stanlake as the general secretary, reflected the opening of a new chapter in the history of nationalism in Zimbabwe.

### **The African Working Class Enters the Scene**

The Second World War gave a big boost to the Rhodesian economy, and the post-war period saw even more rapid growth. The value of gross



output in manufacturing industry rose from an index base of 100 in 1938 to 140 in 1946 and to 194 in 1949. The number of industrial establishments increased from 381 in 1938 to 823 in 1949, while the size of the labour force in industry as a whole increased by 130% between 1938 and 1949, and by 209% in manufacturing industry. State sponsorship of steel making and cotton growing and spinning were two of several important developments in the war years which promoted the vigorous growth of the economy in the late forties. The value of agricultural production (excluding the subsistence sector), which in the 6 years before the war had risen by 50%, trebled during the war. The main crop expansion was tobacco, output of which doubled in volume during the war years.

But while the growth of industry and commercial agriculture drew large numbers of Africans into the urban areas and into wage labour, the policy laid down by the Land Apportionment Act was to treat them as aliens, temporary workers in the white man's establishment. Urban housing was neglected, and living conditions in the towns quickly became atrocious. Real wages fell throughout the war years. At the same time, the rigid limits to land ownership by Africans which the Land Apportionment Act introduced, were causing overcrowding in the Reserves, and forcing many young men to move to the towns and cities. In the Reserves in 1935 there were 32 acres of land per person, whereas in the European agricultural areas there were 1,800 acres per person. By 1938 there were over 7½ million head of cattle in the Reserves, far more than the maximum thought possible by government experts. The government answer was always to cull cattle; the people fought back, resisting any reduction in their physical wealth and demanding instead more land on which to support both their cattle and themselves.

These were the conditions that in the mid-forties rapidly transformed the political scene. Previously the resilience of the traditional societies and the limited impact of capitalist development in the scattered mining areas (unlike the concentration of gold mining in the Witwatersrand) and the two small cities of Salisbury and Bulawayo, had not created the social classes which could unite around perspectives of national liberation and form a national government. Resistance to many aspects of white rule, and pressure for incorporation in the system of government, were reflected in a variety of organisations, forms of struggles and demands. But before the mid-forties no *national* movement or organisation developed capable of uniting the African people as a whole in their struggle for self-determination. It was the

emergence of the African proletariat as a social force which transformed this situation, and laid the basis for the development of a national movement.

### **The 1945 Rail Strike**

Bulawayo, though smaller than the capital city, was in advance of Salisbury when it came to working-class action. Wage rates tended to be lower, rates higher, and urban garden plots smaller in Bulawayo,<sup>4</sup> and the sufferings of the people on the land in the surrounding areas were more acute. A poor maize crop in 1941 led to near famine in 1942. The first section of the working class to move into action were the railway workers. Their Benefit Society, which dated back to the twenties and had few members, transformed itself into a trade union in 1944 — the Rhodesia Railways African Employees' Association (RRAEA). Its approach was conciliatory and non-political. But management ignored its letters, and arbitrarily cut meat rations by 25% later that year. Then in 1945 a sudden change was introduced in the way overtime rates were paid, which adversely affected the lower-paid workers, and on October 20 a strike began. Although the RRAEA had only 300 members when the strike began, it was widely supported by the workers, and over 2,000 came out on the first day. By the end of the week the strike had spread along the line of rail towards Salisbury and also up towards the Copperbelt. The week-long strike was disciplined, orderly and effective. It also attracted the immediate support of the existing African political organisations, which rallied round with moral and material assistance.

The strike won concrete gains. After a government inquiry, small wage improvements were made, and the union won recognition — the first African union to achieve it. The effects on the people in the cities and towns was electric. Trade Unions were seen as the answer to all problems, and people rushed to form and join them. Work stoppages followed at the Wankie mines, in hospitals, and in brick-making establishments in Salisbury, while threats of stoppages occurred in various industries. More important, the strike transcended tribal limits, uniting Africans of different ethnic backgrounds in a common and successful struggle. While previously attempts had been made to do this, none had got very far. Now “even the Matabele Home Society called for an end to tribalism in Rhodesia and the rallying of all Africans under the banner of trade unionism.”<sup>5</sup> The newly-formed unions in the Bulawayo area (which was the headquarters of the Rhodesia Railways network and had the greatest concentration of railway workers)

came together to form the *Federation of Bulawayo African Workers' Unions*, while in Salisbury Charles Mzingeli stepped into the limelight again with the formation in early 1946 of the *Reformed Industrial & Commercial Workers' Union (RICU)*.

The RICU got involved in everything. It fought the implementation of the 1946 Native Urban Areas Act – which, like a host of similar laws in South Africa, set out to prevent the growth of a stable urban African community and in particular a stable black proletariat. It took up individual and collective grievances, and put up candidates for the Native Advisory Board, usually successfully. It fought for the rights of African women who were being driven out of the townships under the segregation policies being enforced. And after 1948 it got heavily involved in making representations to the Native Labour Boards that were set up to investigate conditions in various industries. Mzingeli, it has been said, became 'for several years the unofficial mayor of Harare'<sup>6</sup> (the oldest township adjoining Salisbury, where once, in his more militant days, he organised an annual May Day demonstration through the streets).

But within a few years, young militants like Nyandoro and Chikerema found it necessary to break with Mzingeli, to repudiate his approach of dealing with the authorities to mitigate aspects of the colonial-type system of settler rule, instead of confronting the system of domination as a whole. With his personalised style of leadership and pre-nationalist perspectives, Mzingeli could only oppose the younger radicals and move on to the other side of the fence, as a black ally of white rule. His great partner in the original ICU of the twenties, Masoja Ndlovu, developed the other way, taking office in the S.R. African National Congress after 1957 and ending up in a detention camp in his old age.

The 1945 rail strike and related upsurge of trade union organisation and working class action galvanised the political movement. Jasper Z. Savanhu (who later ended up as a willing stooge for the 'partnership' policy hoax of Welensky and Whitehead) was then General Secretary of the Bantu Congress and secretary of its Bulawayo branch, the only branch with much life left in it. He played an active role in the 1945 rail strike relief committee, and on behalf of the workers his organisation together with the Matabele Home Society negotiated an end to the strike with government officials. Afterwards he resigned his leading



posts in the Bantu Congress to turn his attention to trade unionism, quickly ending up as president of the Bulawayo African Workers' Union, forerunner of the Federation mentioned above.

Around the same time Benjamin Burombo came on the scene. Large of voice and body, he was a self-educated working man with close connections with the countryside. Confident in himself and inspiring to others, he played a prominent part in the development of African nationalism in Zimbabwe at this crucial period, and his influence is acknowledged by many subsequent leaders. He led local opposition to compulsory destocking of cattle in the mid-forties, and formed his own organisation called the *African Workers' Voice Association*. It was more of a political movement than a trade union; as an organisation of workers it was weak, being much smaller than the Federation, which was its main rival. But it had mass appeal, and could call out large numbers for its frequent public meetings.

While these developments were going on, the newly-named *African National Congress* had undergone a quiet revival in 1945, with newer personalities — young educated men — coming to the fore while old Rev. T.D. Samkange provided a link of continuity with the pre-war Bantu Congress. The change of name from Bantu to African was itself a sign of the times. The revival of the Congress was partly a response to the new conditions in the towns, but partly also grew out of the dissatisfaction of the growing middle strata in the African community with the paternalism and gradualism of white liberals like Rev. Percy Ibbotson, and their heavy-handed 'guidance' of the various Welfare Societies — black organisations which usually fell under white leadership or elitist black leadership.

### **The Mass Movement and Its Emerging Leaders**

Even a brief account like this reveals that in the later forties the distinction between a political movement oriented towards national liberation and workers' organisations defending the immediate interests of African workers was very blurred, and the forms of organisation and action which emerged in this situation displayed a close interconnection between the class and national dimensions of the struggle. The point was, that for the first time in Zimbabwe since the wars of resistance in the 1890s, the masses were getting involved in purposeful united action for common goals. True, the people in the rural areas were seldom involved, the clarification of goals had a long way to go, and regional differences, reflecting both tribal and class factors, were still pronounced. But in the post-war years many thousands of Zimbabweans

entered political life, and subsequently some of them were to stand at the head of the popular movement. Let us look at three of them.

The late Jason Z. Moyo was born in southwest Matabeleland in 1926. He attended Mzingwane boarding school near Bulawayo, a government-run institution which (like Domboshawa near Salisbury) laid heavy emphasis at the secondary level on training in agricultural and industrial skills. Jason Moyo obtained a certificate in building and carpentry and soon proved himself to be an outstanding craftsman capable of holding his own with the best. But the best money went not to the best workers but to the white workers, and he soon saw the need for African workers to unite and defend themselves. He was a founder of the Artisans' Association, and later became vice-president of the African Trades Union Congress. An admirer of Burombo, he was also a critic of the narrow, tribalistic perspectives of the Matabele Home Society, which was still widely influential in that part of the country and attracted many a budding young nationalist. Not that the society was essentially reactionary; on the contrary, its aims and activities were largely progressive. But Moyo and others saw that it offered no basis for national unity, no scope for building a movement of national liberation, and they therefore turned their backs on it and threw themselves into 'nationalist' politics. But unlike so many others, Moyo's roots were firmly in the working class, and this laid the basis for his internationalist perspective which later made him such an influential and important leader.

The man who more than any other embodies all the main strands in the Zimbabwean movement at this turbulent and crucial stage of its development is Joshua Nkomo. Son of a teacher, he went to school at Tjolotjo (between Bulawayo and Wankie), and later to Adams College in Natal (in those days Professors Z.K. Matthews and Edgar H. Brookes were on its staff). Then he moved to the Jan Hofmeyer School of Social Work in Johannesburg where he qualified as a social worker. In this capacity he was employed by Rhodesia Railways in 1947, based on the Bulawayo railway workers' compound. There he came into contact with workers from all over Southern and Northern Rhodesia, and quickly became an organiser for their union, the RRAEA. Within two years of the 1945 strike, the union had grown to have 3,500 members in Southern Rhodesia, of whom 1,645 were in Bulawayo. Nkomo worked to consolidate these gains. In 1951 he became full-time general secretary of the RRAEA. (Today, as the RAWU, it is still the largest African trade union, with a membership of nearly 11,000 comprising 80% of all workers in the industry.) When in 1953 it became possible

for the first time to establish a national trade union body, the S.R. African Trade Union Congress, Nkomo was chosen as its president.

Even before 1953, Nkomo was also getting very involved in political work. In the late forties he participated in Congress activities, and in 1952 he and Jasper Savanhu were invited to London by Prime Minister Huggins to participate in talks about the proposed Central African Federation. Both men went, but whereas Savanhu came back in favour, Nkomo returned to lead the fight against the Federation. At the end of 1952 he was appointed president of the All African Convention (with Mzingeli as its interim chairman) which was brought into being for this purpose. He soon formed links with the movements in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, but the colonialists had moved too quickly and in October, 1953, the Federation was formed. The AAC died out, but the need remained for a national organisation of the African people, and when it was finally formed in September, 1957, Joshua Nkomo was chosen to lead it. As first president of the *S.R. African National Congress*, Nkomo "brought with him into that organisation a maturity in leadership which no other Zimbabwean had." <sup>7</sup>

One-time lay preacher in the Methodist church, a graduate of the University of South Africa through private study, and for a time an auctioneer (when he tried, like many African political leaders, to support himself by running a small business in the mid-fifties), Nkomo enjoyed a wide range of experience and contacts. As a man of broad humanity, whose views and work made him an unyielding opponent of tribalism in the national movement, he was truly a man of the people, well fitted to become leader of a mass movement and to guide it through the many vicissitudes that were to follow.

Many others stepped forward in the post-war years. One of them was Joseph Msika, now secretary-general of the African National Council of Zimbabwe. Once a chief clerk in a Bulawayo textile factory, he became chairman of the old African National Congress (the Bulawayo-based organisation revived after the war by the Samkanges), until it merged with its Salisbury counterpart, the City Youth League, in 1957 to form the S.R.A.N.C. Like Charles Mzingeli in Salisbury, he ran a grocer's shop, which gave him economic independence, time for his organising activities, and ample scope for meeting people from all walks of life. He played a crucial role in the 1957 merger, and occupied several leadership positions in later years. A staunch patriot, he person-



ifies the small entrepreneurial social stratum which has thrown up many vigorous and capable leaders and activists in the movement.

While the three personalities mentioned can be made to stand for various strands that were coming together to form a movement of national liberation, it must be recognised that 25-30 years ago the processes of class formation amongst the Zimbabwean people were at a very early stage. The working class was relatively small, as indeed it still is today. Its growth as a class, conscious of itself, was slow, hampered by objective factors. Chief of these was migratory labour – not only the cycle of migration between the towns and the Reserves so characteristic of the colonial-type economies of all the countries of Southern Africa, but also the migration of workers across territorial boundaries. The mines were the first big employers of wage labour; they started out at the turn of the century with 80% 'foreign' (non-Zimbabwean) African labour, and in 1965 the proportion of 'foreign' labour they employed was still as high as 60%. The importation of labour from Mozambique and Malawi, partly promoted by definite policies of the settler government and capitalist interests, partly resulting from the 'natural' economic forces of the capitalist labour market, has always been a key feature of employment in Zimbabwe. Even in white agriculture 56% of the labour force was 'foreign' in 1945, and the proportion rose still higher in the fifties before falling to about 34% in the early 1970s. A somewhat similar picture is found in wage-labour in the towns. In 1956 nearly half of all workers in the seven main urban areas were from outside the country.

### **The 1948 General Strike**

The strengths and limitations of working class action in the post-war period were displayed by the 1948 general strike. This confrontation, together with the rail strike 3 years previously, are of comparable significance in Zimbabwe to the 1946 miners' strike in South Africa. The action was precipitated by the African municipal workers in Salisbury and Bulawayo who were amongst the best organised after the railwaymen and were inspired by their successes. Burombo and his organisation were agitating widely for wage demands and on political issues, and the townspeople's mood was high. Seeing a strike coming, and fearful of a premature confrontation with the state, at a time when rivalry between the Federation of African Workers in Bulawayo and Burombo's 'Voice' organisation endangered unity, the A.N.C. at a meeting in Gwelo counselled caution. But in Bulawayo a mass meeting of 20,000 (big for the times) roared out its rejection of any stalling tactics,

and the next day – 14 April – the strike began. Ironically the railway workers kept out of it because they'd already won their battle, and the municipal workers also, because the government had agreed to investigate their claims. So the strike was largely spontaneous and leaderless, and there was not much organisation to keep it going. Huggins' government called out the army and the reserves, and sent the Minister of Justice Beadle to negotiate a settlement with Burombo, T.D. Samkange and other prominent figures. They, however, had no organisation to guide them, and quickly settled for some vague, if not misleading promises. On the 16th the workers began to drift back, and soon the strike was over. Burombo was prosecuted for public violence or incitement.

The shock to the settler community was great. New repressive laws were brought in, and comprehensive policies to control and weaken the African labour movement were devised and implemented over the next few years, following South African models to some extent, and with the active backing of the white aristocracy of labour. A government-appointed commission criticised the authorities for being slow to recognise and deal with worker grievances, and recommended a minimum starting wage of 35/- per month for unskilled workers, plus a standardised ration scale.

Thus despite the limitations of migratory labour, the post-war situation was highly favourable for the growth of the African working class. The total number of Africans in wage employment grew from 376,000 in 1946, to 527,000 in 1951. Looking on further to 1961, when the total was 628,000, one can see how the rate of growth later slowed down considerably, and after UDI it actually went into reverse for a period. Average annual earnings of African employees rose from £26 in 1946 to £43 in 1951, and even allowing for rising prices this represented an increase in real wages of about 30%.

The important question for the national movement was, what was the influence of the African proletariat in the political sphere? This cannot be answered without recognising that the very economic changes which promoted the growth of the African proletariat (the growing penetration of British and South African monopoly capital and the emergence of manufacturing as the most dynamic sector of the capitalist economy) also served to promote the emergence of an African middle class. Whilst this was an objective socio-economic process, it was also a conscious aim of some of the rulers of the day. In 1948, for example, at the peak of the strike movement, Huggins said in his

typically patronising way: "We shall never do much with these people until we have established a native middle class."

There were economic and political reasons for pursuing such a policy. The growth of a prosperous peasant class in the Native Purchase Areas, with its own, individually-owned land, would halt the declining productivity of the African rural areas and contribute thereby to the stabilization of the labour force. This in turn was becoming more desirable because the need for semi-skilled labour was growing with the introduction of new industries and the growing concentration of production in manufacturing. The creation of an African kulak class in the countryside and an elite in the towns, with secondary education, and scope for the accumulation of capital mostly in commerce (bus companies, traders, taxi drivers, building contractors, etc.) could release some of the frustrations of the African people, divide them on class lines and provide a sector of the white ruling classes with a useful ally. Much of the key post-war legislation in Rhodesia, notably the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and the revised Industrial Conciliation Act of 1959, reflects thinking of this sort. In the years 1950-58 government expenditure on the promotion of African agriculture increased rapidly, totalling six times more than had been spent in the preceding nine years. The provision of African schooling and higher education was also expanded vigorously to fulfill these aims.

But the policies outlined above were inconsistent within themselves, and incompatible with the class interests of the white farmers. So, the policies were not pursued consistently. But the fact that they were partially implemented helps us to understand how the ruling classes were able to win over to their side some of the emergent leaders of the African people, whether — like Savanhu — they came from the intelligentsia — or — like Mzingeli — from the working class movement. It helps also to understand how the myth of multi-racial partnership on which the Central African Federation was built (1953-63) managed to deceive wide sections of the African petty bourgeoisie, and orient much of the leadership of the national liberation movement towards an accommodation within the existing power structure instead of confrontation with the system of white minority rule and the perspective of *majority rule*, i.e., the transfer of power from the white ruling group to the African people as a whole.

### **The Emergence of the Worker-Peasant Alliance**

To return, however, to the immediate post-war period, we have to see not only that the changing nature of the ruling classes in the country



tended to promote class divisions within the African people, but also that the same policies tended also to promote the increasing insecurity and interdependence of the peasants in the Reserves and the working people in the towns, and to forge closer links between them. As Arrighi has described it:

“... the emergence of a proletariat did not mean that the solidarity between wage workers and peasants was diminishing. On the contrary, the interests of the two classes largely overlapped, for the decreasing productivity of the peasantry was at the root of the impoverishment of both classes. Unrest spread from the towns to the rural areas where grievances over destocking and the organised expulsions provided a ready demand for political leadership.”<sup>8</sup>

This was the crucible from which emerged the organisations and individuals we have been looking at. At one level, that of mass struggle and mass mobilisation, it was the emergence on to the stage of the proletariat, and the spontaneous growth of its alliance with the peasantry, which laid the basis for the development of the Zimbabwean national liberation movement. But at another level, it was the emergence of the African petty bourgeoisie in both town and country, with its aspirations of developing into a national bourgeoisie, and the attraction of this road of advance to the African intelligentsia, which provided the *national* framework and perspectives for the emergence of the liberation movement.

There followed a long and complex period when the search for a neo-colonial ‘solution’ to the Zimbabwean crisis amongst sections of the settler ruling class, and within the Zimbabwean movement itself, encouraged by international monopoly capital operating chiefly through the British government, was frustrated by two factors: firstly the dominance of different and less adaptable class interests within the settler population; and secondly the gradual, though uneven and extremely complicated resolution of the class differences within the national liberation movement in favour of the worker-peasant alliance and against the class interests of the compromising aspirant national bourgeoisie. But that is another story, which will be told at some future stage.

Against this background of emerging class forces among the Zimbabwean people one can see why organisations like the RICU and Burombo’s “Voice” emerged in the late forties, with their mixed class and political character. One can see too how the incipient national

bourgeoisie among the African people, with its contradictory perspectives of alliance with white manufacturing capital on the one hand or with the working class and peasantry on the other, came to play an active and influential role, but an ambivalent one, on the political stage. And finally one can see how the most consistent fighters for national liberation, represented by men like Joshua Nkomo and the late J.Z. Moyo, began to come to the fore, and to realise in practice – without yet, at that stage, advancing it at the level of theory – the worker-peasant alliance as the foundation of the national liberation movement and the guarantee of its final and decisive victory. That victory is what the young generation of Zimbabweans now entering the armed struggle in their thousands are certain to achieve.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. For example, there was:

a) The S.R. Native Association, founded about 1911 by a man called Chirimuhata. It pleaded for justice from the whites for the people who were being robbed of land and cattle.

b) The African Voters' League, formed by Jerry Sobantu in 1919.

c) The Rhodesian Bantu Voters' Association (1923). This was more of a nationalist organisation, but urban in its outlook and without much influence outside of Matabeleland. Its main rival was

d) The Rhodesian Native Association, which was strong in Mashonaland and more rurally-oriented, though less directly political.

These organisations and others are discussed by Saul Ndlovu in his book **Zimbabwe: Some Facts About its Liberation Struggle** (1973), and by Enoch Dumbatshena in his semi-autobiographical book, **Zimbabwe Tragedy** (1975).

2. Typical of this type of organisation was the Gwelo Native Welfare Association, a body which surmounted tribal differences and agitated for the interests of people in the Midlands. There were several others, which are described in the books mentioned above, and also in Richard Gray: **The Two Nations** (1960) and Terence Ranger: **The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia** (1970).

3. Giovanni Arrighi has summarised in a stimulating way the important differences between the Ndebele and Shona societies and modes of production and the impact upon them of capitalist forms of develop-

ment. See his two articles on Rhodesia in Arrighi and Saul: *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa* (1973), especially pages 186-8 and 223-4.

By 1951 the Reserves comprised barely 17 percent of the total area of Matabeleland, compared with 26 percent of the area of Mashonaland.

4. Oliver Pollak: *The Impact of the 2nd World War on African Labour Organisations in Rhodesia* (*Rhodesian Journal of Economics*, September, 1973).

5. Pollak, page 127.

6. Richard Gray, page 320.

7. Dumbutshena, page 45. The author, a teacher and lawyer, is the son of Job Dumbutshena, a leading figure of the ICU in the twenties. The son, Enoch, was prominently involved in the revival of the ANC from 1945 onwards. A supporter of the NDP and ZAPU throughout the sixties, he apparently parted company with the movement in 1970/71 when a deep crisis arose in ZAPU's ranks around the leadership of Chikerema and Nyandoro, who left to form FROLIZI. J.Z. Moyo and T.G. Silundika, with others, reunited the movement around them, but Dumbutshena, without a word of evidence, attributes tribalistic power-seeking motives to them in their differences with Chikerema and Nyandoro.

The leaders of the S.R. African National Congress in 1957 were: President — Joshua Nkomo; Vice-President — James Chikerema; General Secretary — George Nyandoro; Committee members — J.Z. Moyo, J.W. Msika (both described in the article), Francis Nehwati (a trade unionist), Peter Mutandwa and Peter Mudikwane.

These and other details are given by Eshmael Mlambo in *Rhodesia — The Struggle for a Birthright* (1972), p. 117.

8. Arrighi — page 352.



# Transkeian Cats Out of the Bag

by Phineas Malinga

In a recent issue of *The African Communist*, (no. 66, Third Quarter, 1976), J. Villiers examined the patterns of apartheid exploitation of the Transkei up to the time of granting of so-called "independence" to the Matanzima puppet regime. He concluded that the Transkei was, and would continue to be, "an integral part of the economy and policy of South Africa." That conclusion can now be further documented. A remarkable collection of "treaties" between the government of the Republic of South Africa and the so-called government of the Transkei has been published in the South African Government Gazette, no. 2384 of 1976. These spell out — not, indeed in complete detail, for certain matters relating to military and secret police cooperation obviously remain undisclosed, but nevertheless with a considerable measure of frankness — how the reality of South African dominance will continue to operate behind the facade of independence and separation.

## **Military System**

Even in the military sphere, the broad outline is revealed of the means by which South Africa will ensure that the territory of the Transkei remains inside the system which has been set up in the vain hope of defeating the

armed struggle of the people. The Non-Aggression Pact, dated 17 September, 1976, signed by P.J. Botha, Minister of Defence for South Africa, and by Kaiser Matanzima for the Transkei, contains the following provisions:

**“Article 2**

**Neither Party shall allow its territory, territorial sea or air space to be used as a base, thoroughfare or in any other way by any state, government, organisation or person for military, subversive or other hostile actions or activities against the other Party.**

**Article 3**

**Each Party shall accord to military aircraft of the other Party a right to peaceful overflight through its air space and to naval vessels of the other Party a right of innocent passage in its territorial sea and a right to take shelter in its ports in time of urgent distress. ”**

Article 2 is plainly directed against the rendering of assistance to the liberation movement by anyone in the Transkei and Article 3 provides for the air and naval surveillance by which, among other methods, the South Africans hope to enforce Article 2. Tucked away among the provisions of ostensibly more innocuous treaties, there are further precautions directed at the maintenance of surveillance.

In terms of an “Exchange of Notes concerning Civil Aviation Matters”, South African air traffic services will continue to provide flight information, advisory and area control service to aircraft flying in Transkei airspace. This means that all aircraft movements in the Transkei will be reported to and controlled by the South African air traffic control. And in case anyone is thinking of evading that control, it is provided that technical personnel of the South African Department of Transport will continue to maintain the non-directional aviation and marine radio beacon at Port S. Johns. Lighthouses on the Transkei coast are also to remain under South African control.

### **Economic Domination**

Next in importance to their determination to ensure that “independence” would not prejudice their military system was the South Africans’ concern to see that their economic boat would not be rocked. The first step towards this end is the integration of the Transkei into the Customs Union which already binds Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana. Next, provision is made for the Transkei Development Corporation to take over and continue the neo-colonialist activities of the Xhosa Development Corporation. (For details of the XDC see *The African*

*Communist*, no. 66, pp. 38-40). Thirdly, there is an extremely significant agreement "in regard to industrial development". The preamble to this agreement recites that "disruption may result from situations where the measures applied in regard to the encouragement of regional industrial development in their respective countries are not in harmony."

In other words, if the Transkei were really to become independent, its government might encourage industrialisation in such a way that Transkeian industry became a serious competitor of South African industry and the supply of cheap labour to the industrial centres of South Africa might even be jeopardised. To prevent this, the agreement provides that the measures taken by the Transkei "government" to encourage industry shall continue to be the same as those taken by the South African government to encourage industry in its own rural areas, including "Bantu homelands". The incentives which may be offered to industrialists to move to the Transkei are prescribed in considerable detail, so as to preclude any attempt by the Transkei to outbid other rural areas (whether "homelands" or not) in the Republic.

Next, there is an exchange of notes providing that banks, building societies, insurance companies, pension funds and unit trust schemes registered under the laws of the Republic and carrying on business in the Transkei shall be deemed to be registered under the law of the Transkei and shall be allowed to continue their activities. Then, there is an agreement providing for Escom to continue to supply electricity in the Transkei, and another providing for the S.A. Railways and Harbours Administration to continue to operate railways in the Transkei. There is also the little matter of offshore prospecting rights over the continental shelf adjacent to the Transkei coast. These have already been parcelled out among South African companies under mining leases granted by the South African government. No interference with those arrangements could be tolerated, so there is an agreement binding the Transkei to give full recognition to the leases.

### **Migrant Labour**

The migrant labour system has long been the principal economic bond between the Transkei and the industrial centres of South Africa. The idea of comparing the hideous mechanism of "influx control" to the controls on migration which exist between separate states is one which occurred to South African propagandists many years ago. One of the major objects of Transkeian "independence" is to lend greater plausibility to this propaganda line. As J. Villiers pointed out in his article, the role of migrant labour in the Transkeian economy is increasing, not



diminishing, and the "Transkeian passport" is simply going to take over the function of the well-known *dompas*, the permit required to be carried at all times by African urban workers.

The new treaties duly make the necessary provisions. An agreement dated 17 September 1976, "relating to the employment of citizens of Transkei in the Republic of South Africa" provides in Article 2 for the well-known and well-hated recruiting organisations of the mining and sugar industries to continue their activities in the Transkei. Article 3 makes the continued right of residence in South Africa of Transkeian citizens who are employed there on the date of "independence" subject to their possession of a "valid passport or other recognised travel document".

A further agreement of the same date, "relating to the movement of citizens of Transkei and of the Republic of South Africa across the common borders", takes the matter further. Under Article 3(2), Transkeian citizens now in South Africa have two years in which to obtain a "Transkeian travel document", which must be *endorsed with the purpose of the holder's sojourn and the conditions attached thereto*. Here is the key provision, which enables the document to serve the purpose of the existing pass. No equivalent provision appears in Article 3(1), which prescribes the documents (either the ordinary identity card or the ordinary international passport) to be held by a South African citizen in the Transkei.

### **The Gauleiters**

The role played by white civil servants, members of the bureaucracy of the Republic, in the government of the Transkei during the past years of so-called "self-government" is well known. (See *The African Communist*, no. 66, p. 29). This role is not to come to an end. There are two agreements making elaborate provisions for the conditions of service of persons "seconded" by the South African government to the Transkei. One relates to "technical and administrative personnel" and the other specifically to judges. As might be expected, the South African bureaucrats who drafted the agreements have omitted nothing which could be thought necessary to safeguard their position. For example —

**Article 3(b)**

**"The government of Transkei shall not institute disciplinary action against any seconded official but shall report any action or conduct on the part of such an official which calls for disciplinary action, to the government of the Republic of South Africa, who shall cause such action to be instituted as it may deem appropriate."**

## **Article 5**

**“The government of Transkei shall, in respect of seconded officials**

- a) . . . pay transport or travelling allowances. . . ;**
- b) provide free housing of a standard appropriate to their ranks;**
- c) exempt them from taxation on emoluments paid by the government of the Republic of South Africa and any other income derived from a source outside the Transkei;**
- d) accord them the right to effect transfers of money from banking accounts maintained by them in Transkei to the Republic of South Africa.**
- e) facilitate the repatriation of them and their families in the event of civil commotion or other crisis;**
- f) grant them immunity from criminal prosecution and indemnity against civil liability in respect of words spoken or written in the course of their official duties.”**

Here is paradise indeed for the South African bureaucrat, who has yet to achieve total immunity from criminal prosecution and civil liability in Pretoria itself!

The agreement on judges is to much the same effect, but the list of privileges has one additional item, namely, “an official motor car, of a standard appropriate to his office, to be operated at the expense of the Government of the Transkei, for his sole use.” It scarcely needs saying that the first judge to be seconded under these arrangements is not one of those South African lawyers who have roots in the Transkei and sympathies with the African people, but Mr. G.G.A. Munnik, a life-long supporter of the Nationalist Party, who comes from Johannesburg.

## **Education**

Education is one of the few matters in which the Matanzima gang have occasionally expressed an idea of their own, and the agreements accordingly stop short of ensuring that Bantu education shall continue absolutely unchanged in the Transkei. They nevertheless contain adequate mechanism by which the South African educational authorities can bring their influence to bear.

There is provision for Transkeian pupils to sit for South African examinations, and for syllabuses and lists of prescribed setworks and textbooks to be supplied to Transkeian schools. Teachers, inspectors and educational advisers can be “seconded”. There is also an agreement empowering the Cape Provincial Education Department to “establish, conduct and maintain at Umtata, Butterworth and . . . other places in the

Transkei. . . such primary and high schools. . . as may be considered necessary and desirable.”

At first sight, this might appear to mean that the Cape Province is to run the entire school system, but that is not the intention. This provision has to be read in the light of the existing South African system, under which the provincial councils control white schools, while the Bantu Education Department controls schools for Africans. What is envisaged is the continuation of segregated education, with schools for whites (and possibly also coloureds) controlled from Cape Town.

The SABC transmitters in the Transkei are, by Article 1 of an agreement on broadcasting, to become the property of the Transkei government. Free of charge, too — such generosity has seldom been known in international relations! By Article 2, however, the SABC is empowered to go on using the transmitters, three of them for its English, Afrikaans and commercial radio transmissions and the fourth for its Xhosa Service.

The Transkei government may make its own broadcasts from this fourth transmitter, “on condition that such transmissions be undertaken at fixed times and periods agreed between the two Parties in advance.” The Transkei government agrees not to erect any new transmitters without “proper and prior consultations” with the SABC.

The list can be extended almost indefinitely. Lawyers in the Transkei are to continue to belong to the Cape Law Society. Post Office savings banks in the Transkei will be operated by the South African government “as agent for the administration of Transkei”. The South African government has the right to maintain private hospitals in the Transkei (again the unspoken assumption is that these are to cater for the white population). The staff of these hospitals are to enjoy the same “diplomatic immunity” as is enjoyed by the “seconded” civil servants and judges.

There are also agreements on provision of survey services, veterinary training and practices, movement of animals, continued activities of the S.A. Bantu Trust, companies, patents, trademarks, the South African State Tender Board, library facilities, registration of voters, unemployment insurance, microfilm records, postal and telecommunications services, international bridges, roads in the Transkei hitherto classified as national and provincial roads, compulsory motor vehicle insurance, meteorological services, scheduled air services, oil pollution of the sea and road motor transport.

It is a hard life being a South African propagandist. Other departments of the South African government have this discouraging habit of blurting out what they are actually doing, thus wrecking all the



propagandist's efforts. Those in charge of selling Transkeian "independence" to the world are going to have to put in some overtime to repair the damage done by the publication of the South Africa-Transkei "treaties".



# **Military Doctrine of the Apartheid Regime**

by F. Meli

**“Israel ate Arabs before lunch. . . I will eat them (the African States) before breakfast. . . I will hit them so hard that they will never forget. . . ”**

*B.J. Vorster*

These words not only express the inhumanity of apartheid but also the simple fact that South Africa plays an important role in the global strategy of imperialism and in effect South Africa is the main active striking force of imperialism and NATO in Africa. John Vorster, the racist Prime Minister, uttered these words when he was still a wolf; before he donned the garb of a sheep and had taken on the cunning of a fox; before he took on the role of a “statesman” and a “reasonable man”; before his “secret” visits to independent Africa. They were uttered before the Angolan disaster.

A study of the military doctrine of the South African racist regime gives rise to a number of questions and difficulties which need to be posed first before any attempt is made at answering them. One of the difficulties – according to the African National Congress – is the fact

that the question of the *use of violence* as a means to suppress the peoples' struggle has been neglected by those doing research on South Africa:

"The historians and researchers of African history who are so fond of enquiring into obscure and irrelevant subjects ought to spend more time examining the use of violence and massacre of peaceful people in South Africa as a technique against protest. The material is vast and is well documented." <sup>1</sup>

Treated properly such a study could be part of a broader contribution to the study of the military history of South Africa, whose central theme and driving force are the struggles of the African people against colonialism. This is not to say that the military traditions of our people consist simply in the reaction to colonisation. The African people evolved military strategies and battle tactics before their contacts and confrontation with the Whites. This was a result of internal dynamic development. Unfortunately, even the South African National Museum of Military History seems not to be interested in these questions.

The other aspect of this manipulation of our military history is represented by some Bantustan chiefs.

These traitors to African interest ironically portray themselves as custodians and carriers of African "tradition" and cultural heritage. Matanzima of the Transkei is a typical example. In a recent interview, he unashamedly denied the historical heritage of his people.

"The Transkei is being confused with the rest of the Black countries in Southern Africa which were taken over militarily. Our position is different. We never had any military engagements with the British forces in the Cape Province. The Ciskei did." <sup>2</sup>

This division of the Xhosas into "Ciskeians" and "Transkeians" is artificial and serves to reinforce apartheid which fathered the idea.

There are other questions connected with the military doctrine of the South African racist regime. Are we dealing with a "national army" or a "colonial army"? Is it possible to win over a section of the army or navy to our side? Or even some officers? Can one honestly expect anything of "white civilians" when every white adult (male or female) is armed to the teeth to "defend himself" against the "swart gevaar" (black danger)? There are no easy answers to these questions.

In his contribution to the question of army and politics in South Africa, comrade Villiers answered some of these questions. <sup>3</sup> He emphasised the need for intensification of political agitation amongst the troops and further stated that some of these questions will ultimately



be solved in the course of the maturing practical political struggle, an important aspect of which is armed struggle. In other words, the answer to these questions goes beyond purely military considerations, it involves a number of questions which are essentially and basically political, including our strategy and tactics.

In this contribution we shall deal with some of these questions with emphasis on the issues which have been worrying our people these last years. These are Vorster's hypocritical "detente offensive", racist South Africa's involvement in Angola and the so-called "independence" of the Transkei. They are interlinked and are motivated by both political and military considerations.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: COLONIALISM AND VIOLENCE**

The colonisation of the Western Cape by the Dutch in 1652 and the occupation of the Eastern Cape and Natal by the British in 1820 meant the beginning of a systematic robbery of land, cattle and independence of our people and the *military presence* of a foreign occupation power. The "Great Trek" of the 19th century was an act of aggression against the African people in the interior of our country. Even the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) which is usually portrayed as an anti-imperial war par excellence was, looked at from the point of view of the African, "an anti-imperialist struggle only in an extremely technical and qualified sense".<sup>4</sup> In 1910 the Union of South Africa was formed and this reinforced the forces of colonialism and reaction. One of the products of this development was the creation of the South African Defence Force in 1912 which corresponded with the character of the state.

In 1914 the First World War broke out. It was an imperialist war which was fought for more colonies. This was not all. The war was fought with the help of the colonial people. Through bribery, corruption, deceit and *force*, thousands of people from the colonial world were recruited to fight side by side with their colonisers for a cause that was not theirs. Smuts, then Minister of Defence, was more than cynical when he stated that Africans in South Africa could not be armed to fight against Europeans" and "the government was anxious to avoid the employment of its native citizens in warfare against Whites".<sup>5</sup> This was in line with the Defence Act of 1912 which stipulated that Blacks could not be soldiers but "auxiliaries" who were to act as drivers and guards without firearms and in terms of the Public Service Act they were to do unskilled jobs, cleaning up, running messages and making

tea – in short, working as “labourers” of the South African Native Labour Corps.

Of the First World War, it has been said that: “No official statistics are given of the number of native and coloured workers killed and wounded, but unofficial reports reveal even greater losses on their part. Besides the native and coloured toilers received the most brutal, inhuman and slave treatment in the ‘labour conscript armies’, which numbered 23,000 in South West Africa, 17,000 in East Africa and 21,000 in Europe.”<sup>6</sup>

During World War II, things did not change as far as the Africans were concerned. On the contrary, they became worse. The Africans were not only unarmed but were disarmed. The victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany, the emergence of the socialist countries in Europe and Asia and of national democratic states in Asia and later Africa weakened imperialism and its colonial system. In South Africa there was noticeable an upsurge of the revolutionary movement. In its attempt to curb this development the racist regime enacted the notorious Suppression of Communism Act in 1950. The South African police and army were now to take a more active part in the internal politics of the country. Not that this was the first time that the South African army was to be used against protests – in 1922 it was used to suppress the “controversial” strike of the white workers and in 1946 it was used against the famous African mine workers’ strike which shook the racist edifice in South Africa to its very roots.

The Suppression of Communism Act made it clear that the *internal function* of the South African State and its Armed Forces was to suppress internal opposition, destroy any vestige of civil liberties and even some democratic trends within the Army. The enforcement of the pass laws was not unrelated to this. It was not just an “administrative” measure to “register” Africans and control the “influx” of the Africans into the cities.

Colonialism has been consistent in its use of violence to suppress our people and to impose itself on us. It has used naked violence and brutal force, treachery and deceit to subdue us. The events in Soweto seem to indicate that there is no end to this process. Violence, like racism, emerged with colonialism and will disappear with the destruction of apartheid and fascism in our country by the ANC and its armed forces.

## **THE MILITARY–INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX**

In an earlier article on the role of South Africa in the militarisation of the Indian Ocean, we dealt with the emergence of the military-industrial

complex in South Africa and also pointed out that South Africa has acquired licences for local manufacture of foreign-designed military equipment.<sup>7</sup> It is necessary to add that the establishment of the Armaments Production Board in 1964 and the Armaments Development and Manufacturing Corporation (ARMSCOR) in 1968 was not just meant for acquisition of stores and equipment, armament procurement, development of know-how and skill, stimulation of economic growth, less dependence on foreign countries, self-sufficiency and what have you but *primarily* to defeat the United Nations arms embargo of 1963.

Those were the days when the South African economy was said to be in a boom and the myth was widely spread that the country was on the verge of a golden era of prosperity. This myth has now been shattered mainly due to the fall in the price of gold and the racist adventure in Angola "the full repercussions of which will not be known for some time."<sup>8</sup> In connection with gold, it should be remembered that it accounts for about 60 percent (by value) of all mineral production in the country.

The result of the Angolan adventure for the South African military was its anti-climax — a humiliated and defeated army. This defeat came at a time of increasing inflation which expresses itself in a near-zero growth rate, increase in prices (the Africans being the most affected), reduction in living standards (in 1975 per capita income dropped by 4 percent), agricultural crisis, rising taxes, higher oil prices, ever-rocketing military budget and police expenditure and balance of payment difficulties.

Owen Horwood, Minister of Finance, is quoted as saying that in 1976, "the Government has to repay R230 million of R1005 million, a total that doubled between March, 1975, and March this year (1976)."<sup>9</sup> He goes on to lament that government borrowing, however, accounts for only a portion of this country's total foreign loan commitments. "Loans of the Reserve Bank, monetary banks, public corporations and private sector also form part of it."<sup>10</sup>

The White racist regime boasts that besides gold, South Africa has other minerals such as copper, manganese, coal, radium, chrome, platinum, diamonds and uranium. Chrome is essential for making alloys for jet engines, guns, armour-piercing projectile and gas turbines. According to experts, South Africa (which produces 10.76 percent) could overtake Canada (which produces 15.86 percent) as the West's biggest uranium exporter.<sup>11</sup> But there are some problems connected with this. Although South Africa can refine uranium to produce nuclear energy, she will not have a plant to enrich it in quantity before the mid 1980's; nor does she



have a specialised reactor to produce plutonium. She is also in dire need of electronic and communications equipment for the project "Advocaat", the long-range military surveillance system with headquarters at Silvermine, near Cape Town. The harm done to our cause by the British government's permission to Marconi to supply troposcatter equipment for this system cannot be overemphasised.

According to racist military strategists, one of the problems they face is that *South Africa has no petroleum* which is indispensable for military purposes. She depends on Iran and other Middle East countries.

It is in this context that two documents recently published by the ANC of South Africa on the "Economic Relations between France and South Africa" and the "Nuclear Conspiracy — F.R.G. Collaborates to Strengthen Apartheid" become relevant. It goes without saying that all NATO countries are involved in the military build-up in South Africa; Israel too, especially with its experience in "counter guerilla" warfare. The Latin American juntas are to act as reservoirs for recruitment and supply of mercenaries — those dogs of war.

It is important that we frustrate these plans and one of the ways is to strengthen the solidarity movement in these countries with our struggle. Vorster knows very well what it could mean to his military build-up if the communists and other democrats in, let us say, Italy and France were to come to power.

## **THE MILITARY DOCTRINE AND WAR PHYCHOSIS**

The South African army is organised along apartheid lines and its military doctrine is based on the reactionary philosophy of the state and the social system. As is well known, the state policy of the Vorster regime is racism, anti-communism and religious dogmatism. An integral element of this is the falsification of South African history and the goals of our movement. The aim of this racist falsification of South African history is the justification for the status quo — the Africans have no right nor historical justification for their claim and demand for *land* and *national self-determination*. This massive brain-washing does not stop at that. The blacks must be divided too. The Coloureds and Indians, it is said, would "suffer dreadfully" if Africans were to come to power because there would be "chaos" and a "bloodbath"; in short, "racial discrimination in reverse"!

Racism in the South African Defence Force is manifested in the fact that there is no equal representation of the different nationalities and guarantee of their rights in units. There are separate units for blacks and whites and no equal pay between black and white servicemen. The army

is therefore a white army defending the interests of the white racists. Its function is the defence of capitalism in South Africa and the subordination of the economy to military needs. The external function of the Armed Forces is the capture and enslavement of other people and "terrorisation" of independent African states so as to ensure the interests of international imperialism and of racist South Africa and to prevent these countries from passing over to socialist transformation. This is the real meaning of Vorster's "detente offensive"!

In their preparations for the "coming war" in South Africa, the white racists have turned the whole country into a huge military camp. Weapons and equipment, rifles, mortars, grenades, smoke bombs, poison gases and defoliants, napalm and explosives are being produced under licence and pill-boxes have been built up. Militarily all South African whites are inducted into the army and many join other para-military bodies for white civilians such as the pistol clubs which have been set up for training white women. The powerful para-military South African police force is another weapon of reaction and servant of capital which serves to reinforce the army.

Whilst it is true that the South African Army has the indelible stamp of the British Army, it is important to stress that a number of changes have been made in the organisational structure of the military leadership to suit the South African conditions. Besides these changes in the command structure, emphasis is laid on the "efficiency" of the armed forces. In 1973, we are told, South Africa had 72,000 trained servicemen available for instant mobilisation and 54,000 of these were on active duty in training and in ready service. An additional 200,000 trained men could be mobilised at short notice. There is also the so-called Citizen Force which consists of active reserve units and training units which number 55,000 troops. They are all whites. The Army and Citizen Force constitute more than 50 major units including 40 infantry battalions some of which are air-borne units and the so-called "fast-striking shock elements" known as Mobile Watches.<sup>1 2</sup>

There are also the "traditional" commandoes which are made up of whites in the rural areas who equip themselves from material kept in their homes. They train for three weeks or more annually and also participate in weekend shooting competitions — the so-called "citizen involvement". These commandoes are subdivided geographically throughout the country in nine Territorial Army Commands "so as to meet local demands". An important aspect of these commandoes is horsemanship, which does not belong to regular cavalry as such but is a makeshift for purposes of mobility in rough terrain, inaccessible to most

motor vehicles. The South African Defence Force subsidizes these mounted units by providing them with stables, feed, blacksmith services and other basic needs.

Talking about the terrain, it is relevant to point out that bourgeois military commentators and theorists waste no time in reminding us that two-thirds of South Africa is mountainous and semi-desert, barren, semi-arid, with "bushveld" (short trees, thick underbush, small streams and water-holes). From this it is concluded that "South Africa's terrain would seem ill-suited for guerilla operations. There is just not enough cover to furnish hiding places from aerial surveillance." 13

This nonsensical piece of propaganda overlooks the simple fact that guerilla warfare is essentially a war of the people who provide the guerillas with all their basic needs including "cover from aerial surveillance".

## **THE BLACK TROOPS**

The first armed confrontation in Zimbabwe in 1967/68 between the forces of white racism on the one hand and those of the ANC of South Africa and ZAPU on the other, struck fear in the hearts of the white racists. They hurriedly made changes and readjustments in their military strategies and tactics. We are told that in 1969 about five so-called "anti-terrorist" training camps were set up and emphasis in the training was on counter-insurgency and counter-guerilla warfare. At the same time, anti-guerilla manoeuvres in Sibasa and Thabazimbi were organized involving 5,000 and 2,000 men, respectively. It was said that the aim of these manoeuvres was to strengthen the country's defence against guerilla infiltration "from the North", that is, from independent African states. Even before that, South African Army officers visited Algeria in the late 50's and later Mozambique and Angola to be briefed by the French and Portuguese colonialists on counter-guerilla warfare. There was also noticeable closer collaboration between South African Security Service, the American CIA and Portuguese PIDE. The formation in the 60's of the South African Bureau of State Security, BOSS, which became directly responsible to the Prime Minister was therefore no surprise.

In 1974, sensational stories were reported by the South African press as a result of "revelations" that in March of that year fifteen Africans started basic training at the Prison Service College, Pretoria. Later that year it was reported that a total of 224 Cape Corps soldiers "the first Coloured national servicemen to be trained as anti-guerilla fighters" had ended a one-year course at the regiment's training centre near Faure and also that a group of 48 Africans were being trained at Baviaanspoort near



Pretoria and that two intakes were expected in 1975.<sup>14</sup> It was later reported that a "nucleus of the future army of the Transkei" is being created and that the Ovambo and Kavango people of Namibia next to the Angolan border are being trained with the consent of Chief Majavero and his "cabinet" which agreed in September, 1975 that 83 recruits be trained. There is also the 21 Battalion inaugurated at Baviaanspoort in 1974 and now in the Lenz Military Base, 30 km southwest of Johannesburg. (It has 18 African instructors, eight of whom were promoted to corporal in 1975). The 21 Battalion is composed of members from seven different ethnic groups: Zulu, Venda, North Sotho, South Sotho, Tswana, Ndebele and Shangaan. These troops are put through a "stiff course" and learn the mechanism of the South African R-1 rifle which is a copy of the NATO FN 7.62 assault rifle.<sup>15</sup>

The Transkei "army" is said to consist of 164 trained infantry men and has brand-new equipment "donated" by the South African racist regime. It has a fully-equipped base (about 20 km west of Umtata) which has been built by Pretoria at an undisclosed cost. The base has headquarters, administration blocks, houses for key personnel, bungalows, a stable for 45 horses, recreational centre with a shop and bar, lounges, billiard room and library. At this base there are 29 white officers and NCO's seconded from the South African Defence Force to train the Transkei troops. Brigadier Phil Pretorius is the military adviser "on loan" from the South African Defence Force.

Some of the Transkeian recruits are trained at the Potchefstroom Cavalry School to learn to be horsemen while others go to the Eerste Rivier base near Cape Town and Lenz near Johannesburg. The mounted troops are to travel through parts of the "rugged Transkei" where no heavy armour can penetrate. The Transkei "army" is said to be very active and energetic: providing essential services to the rural population, repairing roads, bridges and farming implements, providing medical supplies and assistance to the Transkei peasants. The aim of all this is simple: to "win the hearts of the people"! <sup>16</sup>

The Indians and Coloureds are also being increasingly incorporated into the military machine, especially in the South African Navy.

What are the causes for and significance of this "new approach"? The political and military defeat of fascist Portugal in the former African colonies, the escalation of armed struggle in Zimbabwe, the routing of the racist forces of the South African regime in Angola and the revolutionary upsurge which found its expression and climax in the heroic struggles of the people of Soweto are some of the causes. As for the significance, it should be stated that for the first time in the history

of the South African Police and Defence Force, blacks are being trained in the use of fire-arms. This new trend does somewhat change the racial and social composition of the South African army and broadens its social base. This is supposed to "solve" the problem of manpower and personnel. The problem is that from the point of view of the racists, these black soldiers are "unreliable".

What is the ideology imparted to these black troops? There is the question of religion whose message humiliates the African: in the face of all "supernatural powers", that is, capitalism and white domination, the African is powerless; there is no need to struggle and to resist because *this system* is the Will of God. There is also the question of demagoguery. The Africans are being made to feel that they have a great deal to defend against their enemies who are the "communist backed" and "communist inspired" guerillas of the African National Congress who are called "terrorists". The second "mortal enemy" of South Africa — it is said — are the independent African States whom these black soldiers are taught to despise because they are not as "developed" as South Africa — a false "patriotism".

This rubbish is essentially an escalation of white chauvinism and racism. It is a violation of the principles enshrined in the OAU Charter and overlooks the fact that South Africa has been developed not by "South Africans" alone. Millions and millions of Africans from Malawi, Tanganyika (now Tanzania), Botswana, Mozambique, Angola, Swaziland, Lesotho, Namibia and even as far afield as Kenya worked (and some continue to do so) in South Africa and contributed tremendously to the development of that country.

A question may arise: Why do the Africans in South Africa allow themselves to be used by the racist regime?

When one considers that by the end of 1976 African unemployment reached the astronomical figure of two million, that is, 30 percent of the economically-active African population, one understands why hundreds of jobless South African youths regard the army as some form of temporary employment. The relatively high wages are used as a bait and "incentive" to attract them to the permanent force.

## CONCLUSION

The assessment of the military strategy of the South African racist regime leads one to the inevitable conclusion that its aim is total mobilisation of an enormous potential military force which during war or "national emergency" will be led by an efficient force of regulars under the guidance of a streamlined command structure which is responsible

and answerable to the Minister of Defence and the Prime Minister. This is in line with Vorster's "detente offensive" which aims at neutralising the so-called "moderate" states in Africa so as to weaken the radical states and movements in Africa. In other words, Vorster's "friendly" relations with some African states is an integral element of his aggressive designs against progressive Africa.

This in turn further intensifies national and racial oppression within the country. The so-called black "armies" which are built up by the South African racist regime, wear South African army uniforms. Picked and trained by its military advisers, they are sponsored by the racist regime to protect white racism and to assist in the continued oppression and subjugation of the blacks in South Africa and — as in the case of Angola — to fight side by side with racist soldiers against independent African states and liberation movements in this region.

Racist South Africa has declared war on Africa, a war which no African state can escape, even those which have "secret" ties with the racists. The recent amendment of the Defence Act passed by the all-white Parliament enabling South African troops to fight anywhere, not just in South Africa, reveals the aggressive and expansionist aims of the South African militarists and racists. This is a result of almost 30 years of the apartheid system which entrenched racism to such an extent that it barred all contacts between black and white except in a master-servant relation.

On the other hand, this has led to the present crisis which is heading to what in classical political theory is known as a *revolutionary* situation. There is every reason to believe that *victory is certain* because Vorster's army represents the interests of the minority against the majority; it is an army of racists fighting for an unpopular and undemocratic cause. Its defeat is inevitable.

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# **S.A. Communists at Vietnam Congress**

A delegation from the South African Communist Party, headed by its chairman Dr. Yusuf M. Dadoo, was one of 29 foreign delegations which attended the historic fourth congress of the Vietnam Workers' Party held in Hanoi last December.

The congress, attended by 1,008 delegates elected by congresses of local party organisations throughout Vietnam, marked the triumphant reunification of the people of Vietnam after a generation of struggle and sacrifice. The victory of the Vietnamese revolution is of the greatest significance, not only to the 100 million people of Vietnam, but also to the international communist movement, the national liberation movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and progressive forces everywhere. Reunified Vietnam ranks third in population among the socialist countries of the world.

The congress took place in an atmosphere of unity and enthusiasm and there was stormy applause when, at the final session, the decision was taken unanimously to rename the party as the Communist Party of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The main resolution passed by the congress summarised the party's achievements and perspectives. The first part of the resolution stated



**Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Le Duan, general secretary of the Vietnam Communist Party.**

that the great victory of the Vietnamese people's war of resistance against foreign imperialism demonstrated that today, when the world revolutionary forces are in the offensive posture, a nation with no large territory and no big population, closely united and fighting resolutely under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist party armed with the correct revolutionary line and methods, holding aloft the twin banners of national independence and socialism, and enjoying the sympathy, assistance and support of the socialist countries, of the revolutionary forces and progressive people the world over, is capable of defeating all the aggressive forces of imperialism and local reaction.

The resolution continues: "With the complete and thorough victory of our patriotic war against US aggression, the Vietnamese revolution



has switched to a new stage, the stage of the whole country becoming independent and unified and fulfilling a single strategic task: carrying out the socialist revolution, advancing rapidly, vigorously and steadily to socialism”.

The resolution says: “The first pre-requisite is to establish and unceasingly strengthen proletarian dictatorship and to exercise and constantly enhance the rights of the working people as collective masters”.

The general line for the socialist revolution in the new stage is set out as follows:

“To firmly grasp proletarian dictatorship, promote the right to collective mastery of the working people, carry out simultaneously three revolutions: the revolution in production relations, the scientific and technical revolution, and the ideological and cultural revolution, of which the scientific and technical revolution is the kingpin; step up socialist industrialisation which is the central task of the period of the transition to socialism; build the system of socialist collective mastery, build the large-scale socialist production, build the new culture, mould the socialist new type of man; abolish the regime of exploitation of man by man, do away with poverty and backwardness; unceasingly uphold vigilance, constantly consolidate national defence, maintain political security and social order; successfully build our motherland Vietnam into a peaceful, independent, unified and socialist country; actively contribute to the struggle of the world’s peoples for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism”.

The congress unanimously endorsed the directives on the implementation of the tasks and basic aims of the country’s development embodied in the second five-year plan covering the years 1976 to 1980. A new central committee of 101 members and 32 alternate members was elected and at its first meeting elected comrade Le Duan as its general secretary.

### **Warm Reception**

The South African delegation was received everywhere, both at the congress and on visits to Haiphong and Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), with enthusiasm and respect. Meetings were held with general secretary Le Duan, the legendary General Giap, and with the Chief of the General Staff, General Van Tien Dung and other top military men at the Defence Ministry. The South African delegation presented a full report of developments in southern Africa in the recent period, and received assurances of the fullest support and solidarity in the

revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples of the sub-continent on the basis of proletarian internationalism.

On behalf of the South African Communist Party Dr. Dadoo delivered to the congress a message of greetings which was received with tremendous applause. It reads as follows:

Dear Comrades,

It is with a full heart that I stand here to address you on this auspicious occasion, the 4th National Congress of your Party. No Communist, no freedom-lover anywhere in the world can be insensible of the importance of this Congress, and I would like, on behalf of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, to express my thanks for the honour and privilege you have extended to the South African Communist Party by inviting our delegation to be present here today.

No words can adequately convey the love, respect and admiration which the oppressed and exploited South African people and, indeed, the whole of progressive mankind feels towards your Party. Its stupendous achievements defy description. Who could have imagined, when your party was first formed in February, 1930, the magnitude of the tasks which would confront you in the ensuing decades? You had to overcome, not only the resistance of the entrenched bourgeois and feudal elements in your own country who ruthlessly exploited the labour of the toiling workers and peasants, but also the foreign imperialists who helped maintain them in power. You faced and defeated not only the white terror of the Vietnamese landlords and factory owners exercised through their political agents, but also the terror of the invading French, Japanese and American imperialists frantic in their efforts to prevent the Vietnamese working people from taking power in their own country and enjoying the fruits of their labour.

Applying the tried and tested principles of Marxism—Leninism, your Party from the outset correctly evaluated your struggle as a revolution of national liberation. This enabled you to merge the forces working for social and national emancipation, to forge a broad alliance of patriotic elements belonging to different social strata but willing to accept the leading role of your party based on the worker-peasant alliance, and to win to your side the invincible forces of the world Communist movement of which you were and are a vital component. Under the brilliant leadership of the late comrade Ho Chi Minh, you succeeded in educating and mobilising

the mass of the Vietnamese people, combining armed with political struggle, mastering the art of fighting under all conditions in town and country, establishing an impregnable fortress in the minds and hearts of the people which stood firm in the face of the most vicious and barbaric assaults thrown against it by the imperialist powers – in particular by US imperialism.

When he departed from our midst in 1969, our beloved comrade Ho Chi Minh said in his great Testament: “No matter what difficulties and hardships lie ahead, our people are sure of total victory. The US imperialists will certainly have to quit. Our Fatherland will certainly be reunified. Our fellow-countrymen in the South and the North will certainly be re-united under the same roof.”

### **Role of the Party**

Well, comrades, here you are, reunited under the same roof. In the spring of last year your people and army won the final victory in the 30-year-long war and literally drove the US imperialist barbarians and their puppets into the sea. And your triumphs, your endurance, your determination and courage, your perspectives of struggle and your vision of victory – everything was possible only because of the work of your party. In his Testament, comrade Ho Chi Minh stressed the importance of the Party above all things as the main factor in deciding every victory of the revolution in Vietnam.

In common with progressive mankind everywhere, my party and the oppressed working people of South Africa salute you for the ardent patriotism and tremendous revolutionary heroism you have shown in carrying out the terms of Comrade Ho Chi Minh’s Testament. Your Party has led the Vietnamese people through a morass of blood and fire, death and destruction, to the expulsion of the imperialist invaders and their puppets, the reunification of your country and people, putting an end to the vicious system of capitalism and exploitation, and laying a secure foundation for the building of socialism, the only guarantee of your independence, democratic progress and prosperity.

The Vietnam Workers’ Party has performed all its tasks in the true spirit of proletarian internationalism, and your victories are at the same time the victories of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world still struggling for peace, national independence and socialism. Your glorious victory paved the way for the defeat of Portuguese colonialism – and once again in Angola we



were given a practical demonstration that the combination of the forces of national liberation, the Soviet Union and the socialist world and the working class and democratic forces of the capitalist countries are invincible.

This in turn has paved the way for further advance of the national liberation movement throughout southern Africa. In Zimbabwe, Namibia and our own South Africa the people have raised their struggle to new heights, and have been inspired by your success to redouble their efforts to destroy the last remnants of imperialism and racism in the sub-continent. Our black school-children and the working people, bloodily martyred in Soweto and elsewhere throughout our country by the brutal police forces of the Vorster regime, died holding high the banner of revolutionary struggle and sacrifice which you amongst others have handed on to them. Our Party pledges never to cease striving to emulate the example of dedication and sacrifice in the freedom struggle which has been set for us by the Vietnam Workers' Party.

Once again we wish the Congress resounding success!

Long live the glorious Vietnam Workers' Party!

Long live the Socialist Republic of Vietnam!

Long live the International Communist Movement!

Long live proletarian internationalism!

# Communist Internationalism: a Factor We Can Rely On

by Carlos Rocha  
Political Bureau member  
People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)

Carlos Rocha led the MPLA delegation to the Eighth Congress of the Portuguese Communist Party in November, 1976. Following is an interview he granted in Lisbon to *World Marxist Review*:

*The Eighth Congress of the Portuguese Communist Party opened on the first anniversary of the declaration of Angola's independence. That was a coincidence, of course. But it may be said to symbolise and stress the connection between revolutionary changes in Portugal and gains of the national liberation struggle of the peoples of Portugal's one-time colonies. Could you draw on Angola's experience for a definition of the mechanism, so to speak, of that connection, or interaction?*

I don't think I can answer your question without first stating certain facts although they are known widely enough. If I said nothing about them, my definition of the "mechanism" wouldn't be specific but very general and even abstract to a degree.

It is worth recalling, for example, that relations between the freedom fighters of Angola and the democratic forces of Portugal were built up over several decades, in particular through close personal contacts.

Comrade Agostinho Neto, now President of Angola, established such contacts as early as 1947, when he was here in Portugal. Many Angolans who came here to work or study joined the ranks of active anti-fascists and worked in democratic organisations.

In 1956, the MPLA was founded. That gave the Angolan people's will for national independence precise political and organisational shape. However, it not only provided new opportunities to foster our cooperation with Portugal's democrats but created certain problems. The point is that there was no unity of views in the Portuguese democratic movement on the future of the colonies.

*In other words, not all those who were against the fascist dictatorship were for granting freedom to the colonies?*

Not all by far, especially in the early period when a broad democratic opposition to the Salazar regime was only just in the making.

In those conditions, an event occurred which played a tremendous part in the growth of the revolutionary struggle in both Portugal and its colonies. The Fifth Congress of the Portuguese Communist Party made a statement recognising without qualification the colonial peoples' right to immediate and full independence. To make such a statement in the atmosphere of 1957 was to show uncommon courage. After all, it is a fact that no other party or anti-fascist force could bring itself to do as much.

Afterwards, numerous democrats adopted a similar position, but they did so only afterwards and only under the influence of the Communist example. Anti-colonialist ideas began gradually to win recognition among the most diverse social strata and political circles of Portugal and gained much ground among the students. Many of the students who were called up undertook to spread these ideas among the troops. Due largely to their effort, colonialist and militarist tendencies in the armed forces were defeated.

In 1969, the colonies' rights to freedom were recognised by the Aveiro Congress of the Portuguese democratic opposition. Indeed, the Caetano government was no longer in a position to ban the congress or prevent it from passing anti-colonialist resolutions.

Be that as it may, I must stress that the Communists' initiative played a decisive role in that awakening. The Portuguese people owe it



primarily to the PCP that they grasped the meaning of the colonial problem and came near seeing the only workable way to solve it.

This is why, leaning on the solidarity of Portugal's democrats in our liberation struggle, we always remembered that the Communists were our staunchest and most consistent friends. If there was general democratic solidarity on the part of the Portuguese with the peoples fighting for liberation from colonial bondage, the pivot around which it took shape was the thoroughly-internationalist position of the party of the Portuguese working class.

Incidentally, genuine internationalism at times implies readiness to risk certain temporary political reverses in the interest of the main strategic line. The PCP did risk that in 1957, for there was no guarantee that other anti-fascists and democrats would respond to its initiative, that it would not be misunderstood and find itself all alone with its far-reaching appeals. It is obvious now that subsequent events justified the step and showed it to be principled and hence far-sighted.

*Do you mean the events of April 25, 1974, and later?*

Yes. But I must point out again that even in the new conditions created by the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship, cooperation between Portugal's democrats and the freedom fighters of the colonies was rather a complicated process. Sometimes there was no mutual understanding, let alone cooperation. This was true above all of Angola.

Indeed, Lisbon's official policy towards Angola as distinct from other colonies was aimed, even after April 25, at preventing full national independence. The first provisional government appointed Silvino Silverio Marques Governor of Angola. He had held the post earlier, under Salazar, and his reinstatement was marked by brutal punitive measures and massacres.

It was not until after vigorous action by the Angolans, including a series of impressive demonstrations, that Lisbon removed Marques. The post went to Admiral Alba Rosa Coutinho. He was a democrat and played an essentially positive role. But he couldn't do much. He was resisted by both a substantial part of the army and reactionary Portuguese settlers. When a transitional government of Angola was formed, leaders of the FNLA and UNITA insisted on Coutinho's resignation. His functions were assumed by General Silva Cardoso, made High Commissioner.

A very hard period followed. Many people still wonder who was in charge in Angola at the time or what the transitional government's policy

was. But surely all talk about government or policy is irrelevant in this case. The government as such was, in effect, unable to provide any leadership because the FNLA and UNITA men in it did nothing but plunder the country through the ministries they controlled. It was monstrous. Those were real gangsters with ministers' portfolios. The limit was certainly reached when, one day, the FNLA Minister of Health pulled up at a bank in a truck carrying troops and forcibly withdrew 100 million escudos. Nobody has seen the money, the truck, or the minister since. Much the same went on in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, headed by an FNLA man. If our country escaped an irreparable economic catastrophe, it was only because the Ministry of Finance was in MPLA hands.

Everybody knows what imperialism and home reaction were after in Angola from the spring of 1975 on. They planned to expel the MPLA from Luanda and seize the capital by November 11, the date fixed for the declaration of independence. I suppose I don't have to remind you of the general trend of events. The outcome is well known. But it may be useful from the point of view of the subject we are discussing to stress that throughout the period of struggle, which ended in the complete liberation of the country in March, 1976, we were unfailingly backed and really aided by our traditional allies outside Angola.

We owe a debt of infinite gratitude to the Soviet Union and Cuba for their tremendous contribution to our victory. We will always single out and emphasise the role of the peoples of both socialist countries in our fight. But we are also deeply grateful to other friendly countries, such as the People's Republic of the Congo and the Guinean Republic, which have a lesser capability but did all in their power to identify themselves effectively with Angola's patriots.

As regards Portugal — and I mean the new Portugal which by then had travelled a road 18 months long (after April 25, 1974) — the social and political antagonisms of Portuguese society and the Portuguese revolution, and hence serious differences in the attitude to us and to the goals of our fight, made themselves felt.

Let us not speak of the rightists, of those who, like the High Commissioner, Cardoso, refused on November 11 to surrender power in Luanda to the MPLA government. (However, his attitude didn't matter any longer because power was in our hands anyway.) The rightists' attitude was clear. But we also had to deal with influential political circles that represented Portuguese democracy and yet did not become our allies.

They may be said to have taken an intermediate and most hesitant stand. They didn't explicitly oppose the MPLA but advised us, for ex-

ample, to merge with UNITA. They said UNITA was "better" than the FNLA. We argued in vain that there was no reason to prefer one group of imperialist puppets to another. In short, they didn't understand Angolan realities even though they tried to justify their vacillation and indecision by invoking "realism". They said we must be "realists" and so discard the illusion that the United States would allow Angola to be freed, hence it would be unrealistic to back the MPLA's struggle for full independence.

Why did Portugal's democrats — and we are speaking of the democrats, of course — talk and act in such a way as to play virtually into the hands of the enemies of our people's freedom? Precisely because they were democrats, not revolutionaries. This distinction stands out all the more when their attitude is compared with the policy and activity of the Portuguese Communists.

At the Eighth PCP Congress, we stressed again how very greatly free Angola values the firmness and consistency of Portugal's Communists, who invariably and most emphatically demanded recognition of the full sovereignty of our republic. We never forget that the Portuguese delegation which greeted us in Luanda on liberation day, November 11, was sent by the Portuguese Communist Party.

History repeated itself in a sense, for on that occasion, too, the PCP set an example which other political forces of Portugal followed because they had to. Nor did that come at once. We had already been recognised by Sweden, Norway, Italy, France, Brazil — 87 countries in all — and Portugal turned out to be the 88th state on the list.

*How are relations between the two countries shaping up now? What are the prospects? Angola still has no embassy in Lisbon, does it?*

No, we really have no embassy here yet. But there's nothing political behind this. Portugal has an embassy in Luanda and as for us, we are simply short of trained personnel. This is one of the consequences of our colonial past.

On the whole, there is every opportunity now for the development of sound Angolan-Portuguese relations. We do all we can for them to be based on mutual respect, equality and non-interference.

Speaking of the prospects, they will certainly depend, among other things, on how well we achieve our aims in Angola and how the process of social change goes on in Portugal.

At the threshold of the first anniversary of independence, Angola confiscated the property of two major banks, the Bank of Angola and Com-



mercial Bank of Angola. Two new banks, the National Bank of Angola and People's Bank of Angola, were founded instead. In this way, our people exercised their sovereign right to dispose of their own finances.

In deciding on the measure, we proceeded from Marx's and Lenin's ideas, from what they said about the importance of banks as levers of economic power which the revolution must not leave in private hands. The banks have also been nationalised in Portugal. It is a big revolutionary gain for its people. Obviously, these similarities in the development of the two countries strengthen — and will go on strengthening — the basis for their mutual understanding and cooperation.

However, we must fight if we want this cooperation really to assume vast proportions and bring both peoples the greatest benefits. The slogan of our movement, "The struggle is continuing", also applies to this field. And since the struggle is continuing, we again regard Portugal's Communists as our most loyal allies.

We speak a common language, both literally and politically. Both aspects of this reality are important. We must eliminate illiteracy, which affects 85 percent of the population. Besides, the lack of trained personnel is an acute problem with us, as I've said. But in striving to give the people an education and special knowledge, we want their schooling to include the acquisition of a revolutionary political world outlook. And from whom do we get prompt aid, for example literature that doesn't have to be translated, or teachers who don't have to learn a foreign language? From Portugal's Communists, of course. We are now working to organise a steady flow to Angola of books and periodicals which are published by the PCP and treat from Marxist-Leninist positions problems of interest to our people.

All in all, life has shown very clearly that the policy of proletarian internationalism, whose principles have been tested over decades of revolutionary practice, is a fruitful policy. This means that our internationalist alliance with the Portuguese Communist Party has always been and will remain the most dependable basis for the cooperation and interaction of all revolutionary and democratic forces of Portugal and Angola.

# Marxism and the Theory of Knowledge

by Dialego

**This is the third of a series of four articles intended as a basic introduction to the theory of dialectical and historical materialism.**

Previous articles have dealt with the importance of dialectical materialism in helping revolutionaries both to formulate and to put into practice scientific strategies for change. It is now necessary to examine more closely the area of Marxist philosophy which tackles the question of knowledge and ideas, how they arise, and how we assess the thorny issues of truth and falsehood, appearance and reality, freedom and necessity.

It is true that these sort of questions are often very much “taken for granted” and not considered worthy of serious study, particularly by those who feel that they have enough on their own hands with the day to day pressures of political struggle. Yet it is important to remember that the objective of this political struggle is *revolution* – a far-reaching change in our present way of life and world outlook – and if a social revolution represents, in the words of Marx and Engels, “the most radical rupture with traditional property relations”, it is hardly surprising that **its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.**<sup>1</sup>

We can only eliminate apartheid and white supremacy, establish a national democracy and prepare the road for the advance to socialism if

reactionary ideas in all their forms and at all levels are consciously combatted. This ideological struggle — a crucial part of our political work — requires more than simply understanding what is wrong with this idea or that idea. It also requires an overall understanding of what ideas *themselves* are, how they develop in society, what makes them true or false and how we can effectively make use of them in our political struggle.

The events of June 16th in Soweto have unleashed a mighty wave of protest, demonstrations, strikes and street battles — an intensification of the struggle which makes it all the *more* important that we have a clear-headed conception of where we are going and what we want to achieve. In the ringing words of the ANC newsletter circulated shortly after the events,

**It is time to hit back at the enemy with everything we have got. It is time to be more skilful and strike at him in small groups so as to vanish quickly. It is time to hit where he is weak and least prepared. Let us avoid concentrating in big numbers and deprive him of visible targets. <sup>2</sup>**

Vital practical advice in the conduct of revolutionary struggle, but advice which can only be properly heeded and carried through to the full when we are able to speedily identify our mistakes and work effectively to rectify them. In this, a correct theoretical approach is crucially important, and although general philosophical study may seem remote from the burning issues of the day, in fact an overall grasp of the nature of knowledge and theory can only assist in putting our revolutionary ideas on to a firm and consistent basis.

Indeed, just how politically relevant questions of what we call “the theory of knowledge” really are, will become evident as I turn to examine:

## **1. The Development of Ideas in Social Production**

How do ideas arise and what are they? For thousands of years people have observed that men, unlike animals, have a unique ability to *think* and religious people have explained this capacity by saying that God created man “in his own image” and thereby endowed him with certain qualities which animals do not have.

Marxism, however, as the scientific theory of the working class, focusses its attention upon material *production* in order to explain the development of human thought, for while it is always possible, as Marx



and Engels put it, to distinguish men from animals “by consciousness, religion or anything else you like”,

**they themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation.** <sup>3</sup>

The activity of production requires the evolution of the species to the point in which man’s immediate ancestors began to adopt an upright posture, to develop manual dexterity, vocal cords capable of articulating speech sounds, and a complex nervous system in the brain, so that the formation of abstract ideas becomes possible. Indeed, the simplest act of production – the manufacture of stone flints, for example – is only possible if there is the coordination of all mental and manual faculties. To make something, we not only have to use our hands, we must also be able to identify the objects in our environment, and describe them with words and ideas to those with whom we cooperate, for production is and always has been, a *social* activity. This means – the question which concerns me here – we must develop the capacity to *think*. Just as natural evolution enables us to understand how it became *physically* possible for men to actually produce their means of subsistence, so the act of material production makes it possible to explain why men need to think as a necessary part of their social activity as producers. In a famous passage on “The Labour Process” in *Capital*, Marx comments:

**a spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.** <sup>4</sup>

The use of ideas is an essential part of the activity of production, for as Marx adds,

**at the end of every labour process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement.**

It is true that we are able through our imagination to conjure up ideas which bear no obvious connection to the external world, and it is for this reason that idealists argue that ideas exist as “other worldly spirits” originating in a world all of their own. In fact, there is no mystery about the origin of our ideas, even in their most fantastic and unreal form: all ideas arise as a necessary part of our social activity, our relationships to one another and to the world around us. Because our outlook on life has its roots in the way we produce, Marxists reject all attempts to explain the differences between people simply in terms of their religion, nationality or “race”. The thoughts people have, the culture they develop, the

society they build arise in the last analysis from their activity in social production.

But if the roots of our ideas are to be found in the world of material production, what relationship do the ideas in our head bear to the objective world of reality? This is a vital question to answer if we are later to tackle the whole question of "truth" and "falsehood". To explore it more fully, it is necessary first to go into the problem of:

## 2. Ideas as a Reflection of Objective Reality

In an immediate sense thinking is of course the activity of the brain as "matter which thinks" but the brain itself only functions as part of human activity in general, relying upon the stimuli it receives (via the nervous system) from our practical contact with the world at large. In fact, without this practical contact with things around us, we would have no ideas at all: the brain would remain a mere fossil, embryonic and undeveloped.

It is because the *source* of our ideas lies in our social activity — the relationships we have with other people and surrounding nature — that the character of our ideas takes the form of *reflections* in our minds of the objective world outside of us. It is obvious that a peasant farmer whose life is spent herding cattle in some remote district of the Transkei will have a very different outlook on life from someone who lives in one of the large townships on the outskirts of Cape Town or Johannesburg. The small shopkeeper who works by himself with the help of his family will see things quite differently from a man who has to work in a large factory or down a mine. If the practical experiences of people differ, so too must their ideas because these ideas are basically a mental *reflection* of the world around them.

It is true that this concept of ideas as a reflection of reality is sometimes taken to imply a rather static concept of the mind as a "mirror" which passively "reflects" the objects around it, and it is argued by some philosophers that if this is the case, then in fact we would never be able to acquire any real knowledge about the world our ideas reflect, since all we would have would be a series of images, often contradictory in character in the way, for example, that a penny is sometimes circular, sometimes elliptical, sometimes large, sometimes small: it all depends on how you look at it! Now this argument, that if thought reflects reality then the real world simply "lies in the eye of the beholder", rests upon a completely mistaken attitude to the way our mind actually works and produces its reflections of external reality. The fact is that ideas only arise as part and parcel of our living *practice*. They are not drawn

“mirror like” from the world in a passive way, but are derived solely from the practical activity through which we discover things, learn to identify them and understand how they work, “opening them up”, so to speak, altering their character, even making them ourselves so that we are able to understand what life is *really* like. The “sceptical” position which questions whether the real world actually exists outside of our reflected images, wrongly assumes that thinking simply involves “contemplating the world from afar”. Of course this is how the activity of thinking may appear to bourgeois philosophers who live off the wealth which others produce, but it is not how thinking actually takes place.

It is important here that mental reflection — the basic property of human ideas — should not be confused with mere “sensations” or “impressions” as they are sometimes called. A *sensation* simply refers to a stimulus that our senses receive from the outside — a reaction by our body to extremes of hot and cold, for example — whereas a mental *reflection* involves some degree, however minimal, of conscious *understanding* so that we can identify objects through language and express our thoughts through speech. The first is an instinctive activity which we share with animals; the second is a specifically human act which has to be *learnt* through social practice. Naturally as people develop they become able to perform many quite complicated acts — like riding a bicycle, driving a car, writing their name — almost unconsciously, but all these activities have had to be learnt through practice: they develop as the result of an infinite number of daily experiences which our mind continually reflects.

Indeed, this concept of an idea as a reflection of the real world is vital if we are to tackle the question of

### 3. Distinguishing Truth from Falsehood

If ideas arise in our minds as reflections of the external world, then the extent to which these ideas are true or false depends upon the accuracy with which they reflect or “reproduce” in our minds, the relationships, processes and objects of outside reality. But how can we tell? How can we say, for example, that the ideas of a factory worker may be more valid or truthful than those of a shopkeeper or farmer when all ideas derive from the particular experience of those who hold them?

The answer lies, once again, in the question of *practice* — in the *active* way in which we develop our ideas. It is because our knowledge is being continually put to practical use through production, in waging the class struggle, in performing scientific experiments, that we find, as the well known saying has it, that “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”.



When our plans fail, when our experiments back-fire, when our way of life crumbles, when our strategies are wrecked, we soon discover which ideas match up to the outside world and which do not! We learn the truth by continually testing our ideas in practice — the practice of operating a machine correctly, of producing a leaflet which expresses the mood of the people at a particular time, of successfully hitting the enemy “where he is weak and least prepared” etc. — and because our ideas enable us to change the world through an infinite variety of practical activities, we learn in this way how things really function, what is true and what is false.

But if we judge the validity of our ideas by the extent to which they accurately reflect external reality, how do we account for the existence of ideas which are false? If, in fact, all ideas derive from practical experience and there is no other source (despite what idealists think), why should these ideas not *always* reflect the real world correctly?

The problem is that “truth” and “falsehood” are not the simple black and white categories that they sometimes seem: the Calvinist “dominie” may imagine that everything his bible tells him is *absolutely* true and that everything someone else’s bible says is *absolutely* false, but the fact is that once we remember that *all* ideas are drawn from our practical experience of the world, it is clear that even when ideas are *basically* false, they will still contain elements of truth in them, and even when ideas are *basically* true, they will still have elements which are false. Why? Because all ideas, without exception, represent some kind of reflection of what is going on.

Take the concept of apartheid as an extreme example. This concept is regarded by the vast majority of people in South Africa and by world public opinion at large as one of the most deceitful and warped political and social policies ever to be implemented in modern times. And yet, although it is obvious to millions of progressive people that “separate development” is merely a cynical justification for denying democratic rights to the black people who live and work in an *integrated* economy, to a minority of die-hard reactionaries and white supremacists, apartheid appears as a “moral”, even divinely ordained, solution to the country’s “problems”. Why should this be? Looked at from the standpoint of the Marxist theory of knowledge, the answer can only be that the doctrine of apartheid is not merely a distorted theory of society, it is a distorted theory which *reflects* a warped and distorted way of life. The theory is inhuman because the practice is inhuman. For the financier who wants to draw vast profits without any “problems”, for the capitalist who wants a supply of cheap labour which can be turned on and off like a

tap, for the labour aristocrat who wants to keep his job and privileges at his fellow workers' expense, in short, for all who look upon the black people of South Africa as mere objects to be exploited, the doctrine of apartheid has a perverted logic which reflects one of the cruelest forms of capitalist exploitation anywhere in the world.

This is why eliminating apartheid is not, as liberals seem to think, merely a question of a "change of heart" or a "change of mind"; on the contrary, it is because distorted ideas must reflect a distorted reality that a revolution is required which will radically restructure the social relations of production in South Africa, nationalising the major industries and restoring the land to the people, so that the exploitation of one class by another — the material roots of racism and apartheid — can be checked and then eliminated. To change false ideas we need to alter the conditions which give rise to them. This is the Marxist approach to the question of truth.

It follows that just as false and reactionary ideas contain superficial elements of the "truth" in them, for they exist as the reflections of a real world, so likewise do ideas which are basically correct, contain elements of distortion and one-sidedness. The truth, in other words, is both absolute *and* relative. It is real and yet never complete. This is why serious revolutionaries *constantly* find it necessary to observe and study, to investigate both theory and reality. Political consciousness needs to be advanced by conscious effort as a regular part of political struggle.

Precisely because we acquire our knowledge through our practical experience in the objective world, this knowledge is always developed as part of an on-going process of discovery, in which, as Lenin puts it, "incomplete, inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact".<sup>5</sup> We continually *deepen* our understanding of the real world as science advances, technology improves and our understanding of politics and society grows, and yet, although our expanding body of knowledge increasingly *approximates* to objective reality, nonetheless, as Engels stresses,

**each mental image of the world system is and remains in actual fact limited, objectively by the historical conditions and subjectively by the physical and mental constitution of its originator.**<sup>6</sup>

Such images or reflections are *absolutely* true to the extent that they correctly reproduce elements of an objectively real world, but they are also of necessity *relatively* true in that the knowledge of any one individual, like the collective knowledge of all mankind, can never be more than a *part* of an infinite world which is always changing and developing. This unity of the absolute and the relative holds also of course for our Marxist

world-outlook, for while the basic principles of dialectical materialism are true and correctly reflect reality, their truth is dynamic rather than static, for these principles are continually being applied to new circumstances and in new conditions. New aspects of Marxist theory — like the concept of a non-capitalist path to development for the countries of the third world — develop to take account of new situations and possibilities in a changing world. This is why all our ideas have a relative as well as an absolute side to them. Political tactics which may be correct at one time — like the ANC's policies of peaceful resistance pursued until the end of the 1950s — have to be altered as conditions change: the resort by the Nationalist government to acts of bloody repression like Sharpeville and the introduction of police terror and torture on a massive scale, all made it necessary to develop a strategy of armed struggle. What is true at a particular time is not necessarily true forever.

In order to understand more of what is involved in this process of *deepening* our knowledge of the world through the progress of science, technology and the class struggle, I turn now to briefly examine the question of:

#### **4. Scientific Knowledge and the Movement from Appearances to Reality**

Marxists argue that all our knowledge arises through the activity of our senses and the impressions which our mind receives from the outside world are generally called sensations or, to take another word philosophers commonly use, *perceptions*. But although these perceptions form the basis of our ideas — and we can only develop thought through the action of our senses — on their own, perception or sensations, as already noted, are not *ideas* in the strict sense of the term. Ideas only emerge when perceptions develop into what we may call *judgements* (where we “conceive” as well as “perceive”) so that objects around us can be named and described. Indeed, even the simplest words in our vocabulary involve an element of “abstraction” or “conception” for the word “chair”, for example, requires us to be able to identify *all* chairs, irrespective of shape, size and location. Learning to speak, therefore, involves more than “perceiving”: it involves learning to *think*.

The movement of perception to ideas, of sensations to “judgment” is often called the movement of our thinking beyond “appearances” to “reality” — a penetration beyond our first “impressions” of what things are like to a correct understanding of their reality: how they arise, develop, and relate to other things around them. Indeed, this movement



of our thought beyond "appearances" is the precondition for knowledge as a science, for the development of a serious and systematic body of ideas.

Marx makes the point that our everyday experience "catches only the delusive appearance of things" <sup>7</sup> whereas scientific investigation looks towards the inner connections and relationships which explains why things develop as they do. Appearances may be highly misleading as we know from the fact that whereas the earth *appears* to be flat with the sun moving around it, in *reality*, exactly the opposite is true. We can only go beyond superficial and often deceptive impressions by, as it were, "digging beneath the surface" so as to probe the underlying reality — a method which Marx employs with great skill in *Capital* by showing that the exchange of one commodity for another simply appears to be an exchange of "things", whereas in reality, people have to enter into social relationships to produce the commodities. "Behind" the rosy appearance of the Cape apple or the glittering golden Kruger-Rand lies the "hidden" misery of sweated labour and low wages, just as the labour contract in which worker and capitalist "mutually agree" to exchange wages for work masks the brutal realities of exploitation. The acquisition of knowledge is a process, therefore, as Lenin describes it, of going "endlessly deeper" from appearance to essence, from essence of the first order, as it were, to essence of the second order, and so on *without end*" <sup>8</sup> and indeed it is precisely this restless search for the truth beneath appearances which makes it possible for us to learn from mistakes and adjust our plans so that they reflect more accurately the realities of the situation.

Thus we find that the South African Communist Party was able during the Rand strike of 1922 to grasp the importance of the class contradiction between the miners and the government but failed to penetrate sufficiently into the *particular* nature of this contradiction. Hence while the party was critical of the racist attitudes of the white miners, it still neglected the interests of the African miners and the importance of taking a vigorous stand in support of equal pay and conditions. As Lerumo comments,

**these omissions cannot be ascribed only to the objective conditions, but also to the theoretical analysis made at the time.** <sup>9</sup>

Indeed, it was only with the experience of the 1922 strike, a better understanding of the reactionary character of the S.A. Labour Party (which had been misleadingly compared to the Labour Party in Britain) and the growing African influence in the party, that a more precise understanding of the character of class contradictions in South Africa came

to prevail. The “appearances” of white labour militancy had proved highly deceptive.

The importance of always searching for the reality beneath appearances brings me to the final point I want to consider in outlining the Marxist theory of knowledge and that is,

### **5. Freedom as the Understanding of Necessity**

When we look superficially at what I have called the “appearances” of things, the world appears to be governed only by chance and accident. As we probe beneath the surface, we begin to understand how things are related to one another so that what initially seemed to be accidental now reveals itself as the work of *necessity*, the inevitable result of the forces at work. Thus a worker may think in the first instance that he is exploited simply because he has a “bad” employer, but further experience and study teaches him that all employers exploit their workers because exploitation is a *necessary* rather than accidental feature of the capitalist system. Reality can only be scientifically understood when we discover the “laws” or necessary forces which make things what they are.

This does not mean, however, that because everything is *basically* determined by laws of development there is no room in the world for accidents. On the contrary, just as reality always presents itself to us as a particular and often deceptive appearance, so the basic laws of motion at work in any particular process or situation can only realise themselves through a particular set of circumstances, the *precise* formation of which, is always *accidental in character*.

Thus we can say that while the great eruption of protest and demonstration that began in Soweto on June 16th 1976 was no accident in the sense that it was the *necessary* product of unbearable oppression, the particular character of this protest — against the compulsory use of Afrikaans in the schools — was “accidental” in that many other grievances could have served equally to spark off the protest. In fact, of course, the widespread actions of solidarity with the fighters of Soweto throughout the country show that it was not simply the language question which was under attack. It was and still is the whole system of apartheid itself.

While therefore all relevant factors need to be taken into account when we examine things, the accidental aspects of an event can only give us the surface causes or superficial reasons. A *scientific* analysis requires

that we try to discover the laws of development at work which enable us to explain why an event or process is necessary and inevitable.

But if it is true that everything which takes place must be understood in terms of the "inner, hidden laws" which work themselves out through the "surface accidents", how can we have any place for "freedom" or "free will" in our theory? Indeed, many critics argue that it is absurd to see, for example, a revolution as historically inevitable, a *necessary* product of social forces, and yet organise and mobilise the people to bring this revolution about.

In fact this contradiction between "free will" and "necessity" only exists for those who cannot understand that *real* freedom requires us to exercise a real *control* over the world around us and the only way in which we can extend our mastery over the forces of nature and society is through a clear-headed understanding of the laws of development, the forces of necessity which are actually operating. How else can we bring about change, so that what we *want* to happen does in fact take place? To change anything, whether it is a faulty machine or an unjust social order, we must understand why it is what it is: the forces which *determine* it. This is why the Communist Party and the ANC base their strategies for revolutionary change upon a close and careful analysis of the historical laws which govern the development of apartheid and white supremacy. Understanding the way the system necessarily works is a precondition for getting rid of it altogether! Indeed, the more ambitious our plans are to liberate society, the more soberly and scientifically we need to examine laws of necessity which affect the situation. One is essential if we are to achieve the other.

This is why a thorough grasp of the question of "freedom and necessity", "appearances and reality", the nature of truth as a reflection of the objective world is so important at this particular time. For who can deny that the dramatic developments since June last year are compressing into months and weeks — even days — lessons which in more "normal" times take years to learn? In the great challenge facing the liberation movement in the days which lie ahead, the Marxist theory of knowledge has an important role to play, for never before has it become so important to scientifically analyse events and be crystal clear about where we are going.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", *Collected Works* 6, (Moscow/London, 1976), p. 504.



2. **The African Communist**, 4th Quarter, 1976, p. 12.
3. "The German Ideology", **Collected Works 5**, (Moscow/London, 1976), p. 31.
4. **Capital 1**, (Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), p. 178.
5. "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism", **Collected Works 14**, (Moscow, 1972), p. 103.
6. **Anti-Duehring**, (Moscow, 1962), p. 57.
7. "Wages, Price and Profit", **Selected Works in one vol**, (Moscow/London, 1968), p. 209.
8. "Philosophical Notebooks", **Collected Works 38**, (Moscow/London, 1961), p. 253.
9. **Fifty Fighting Years**, (Inkululeko Publications, 1971), p. 52.



# Has Art Failed South Africa

by Gala

The rolling veld, the karroo in spring, still-lives of wild flowers and the majesty of the Drakensberg Mountains, these are the subjects chosen by many South African painters, and they decorate the houses of the well-to-do or are lined up in various art galleries.

It is concentration on this aspect of the South African scene which has compelled the painter Cecil Skotnes to comment (*Rand Daily Mail*, 3.11.76) on 'a singular lack of guts' in South African art. 'Since the high days of the little Bushman who set down a complete document of his life style, no school of art or period has ever attempted to come to terms with what we call "South African",' he says.

Skotnes observes that South Africa at present is embroiled in 'a classic revolutionary situation' and that the stimulation arising from this situation should affect all the elements of the creative society and in particular the artist.

'In South Africa there is a small bright light pointing the direction we must travel. The main artistic contribution of that direction has been made by our writers. . . they have written without fear and sometimes at great personal discomfort. From Plaatje to Gordimer and Fugard, from

Eglinton to Grey, the accent has always been man and his living in our sun-kissed land. Not so in painting and sculpture.'

Putting aside censorship and the practice of apartheid, reading is of course among the most popular cultural pursuits of the people. They can go to libraries, buy from second-hand stalls and bookshops, but it is only the rich who can afford to purchase individual works of fine art, and the ruling minority prefers not to have its walls hung with reminders of the oppressive society it perpetrates. In addition to the ideological influence of the ruling clique, the painter and sculptor are also bound to consider the home market while the writer often has the chance of selling his work abroad.

In more open class societies, art for the general populace has to a certain extent gained ground. One can, for instance, name places like Mexico where the gigantic public murals of Riveira and Orozco are on view. In the socialist countries a point is made of orientating art towards the political and cultural upliftment of the common folk.

Certainly over the years South Africa has produced individual artists who have demonstrated various degrees of social consciousness and we are reminded of such as Peter Clark, Lesley, Gerard Sekoto, Feinberg, Dumile Feni, but Cecil Skotnes is commenting on the sum of fine art in South Africa.

## **CULTURAL POVERTY**

It was once remarked by an overseas observer that white South Africa had not produced one painter of international repute, no singer, opera or ballet company. Neither, one can say, had Nazi Germany. It is not necessary to dwell on the cultural poverty of racist and fascist minorities, but these are phenomena of capitalism, a class society, and it is in this type of society that we find the emergence of two cultural expressions: that of the upper class and that of the oppressed.

Mr. Skotnes laments that 'since the British decided to do away with the last vestige of the Zulu empire in 1879 to further the aims of the great imperial family, the systematic application of Western culture has destroyed those tribal forms which might have created a folk art of consequence.'

For us 'the systematic application of Western culture' also means the development of capitalism in South Africa, but far from attempting to turn the clock back or mourning the destruction of tribal forms, it should be realised that the process, together with the emergence of the national movement of the blacks, also welded the various ethnic groups into a vast working-class and a united African people. The cultural ex-



pression of this force in South African society, in spite of attempts to divide it, consequently transcends the more ethnic or folkloric.

Here we must also question Mr. Skotnes' knowledge of the history of the African people when he asserts that there is 'on the black front the lack of a strong artistic tradition'. If, as Cecil Skotnes goes on to say, 'the almost total disregard for the visual arts by the indigenous people is perhaps the greatest loss', it is not their fault, but that of a system which has little regard for culture and denies a population the stability and security in which such as the plastic arts can flourish. For this reason, among others, the oppressed people have concentrated on other art forms: songs, poetry and writing. While Cecil Skotnes might claim that the 'vast urban complexes such as Soweto develop without any consideration for the artistic potential of the black man' we need not agree that it 'weakens the artistic power of the white nation' for the people continue to manifest a cultural life.

What should be expected from the present revolutionary situation, Skotnes states, is a 'meaningful artistic upsurge and an intensification of output although it must be realised that what finally emerges might well be mediocre in quality'. Again we do not agree that mediocrity is the result of artistic commitment to or involvement with a revolutionary upsurge. Mr. Skotnes' view is perhaps echoed by the poet, Uys Krige (who, incidentally, we understand supported the Spanish Republic in the Civil War) who said in the *Johannesburg Star* (9.11.76): 'The poet's job is to express what is lasting and abiding, what is common to all people. The closer you get to the politics of your times, the more insignificant you become.'

Revolutionary situations and revolutions themselves unleash the vast cultural potential of the common people and great works of art and literature by individual artists have been inspired by such upheavals in society. We do not wish to repeat all the discussions on this theme which have appeared before in this journal, but it is worthwhile reiterating that for the artist to ignore social realities is no guarantee that he will produce works of merit.

Mr. Skotnes nevertheless longs for 'effective contact' between the various fragments of the 'art world' which he rightly says 'has been blocked not only by government decree but more so by the vast difference in living standards between the overfed whites and the underfed blacks. This applies to intellectual pursuits as well as food,' and acknowledges that 'the blacks, after all, control the final outcome of the present confrontation of ideas.'

His complaint is that the divisions which exist in South Africa, and the destruction of 'tribal forms' and 'folk art' did away with 'a foundation on which to build an identifiable expression,' perhaps a unified art. This is also ignored by artists who go on demonstrating the 'lack of guts' by producing '“good” pictures' that have '... little to do with humanity and atmosphere of Africa and in any particular shape or form of our part of that spirit or atmosphere.' This also includes the few blacks who, he points out, are also isolated from their white fellows, while both sections are being influenced by 'European ideas' consolidated by the influx of the international print and the marvellous magazines and art books.

Likewise, 'in the mid-sixties, a small group of professional black artists began to express their reactions to township life in a strong "German expressionist" manner, using conte chalk as a medium,' while, on the theoretical and ideological level we assume, the 'application of international ideas to our situation has clouded our artistic insight.' All these he says, have contributed to the 'spiritual bankruptcy that seems to be establishing itself in our art.'

But 'European ideas' need not necessarily detract from the merit of artistic creation or its national character, and certainly the success of the revolution does not mean the jettisoning of worthwhile cultural acquisitions, theoretical or material, in order to return to 'a folk art of consequence' which Mr. Skotnes longs for.

### **The Dilemma of Isolation**

The absence of stimulation among artists might not be mainly historical, as Cecil Skotnes claims, and it need not be 'international ideas' which cloud artistic insight, although he does not identify these ideas; nor need it mean that these artists are necessarily oblivious of or unaffected by the revolutionary situation referred to. Certainly the oppressed black majority are far from pessimistic, both in their political and artistic resistance. But believing that all artists, plastic and literary alike, must entertain a broad-minded outlook, albeit on varying levels, it is not difficult to imagine the dilemma of those who belong to the ruling racial minority in South Africa.

The black artist in South Africa is not averse to mixing his work with 'politics'; he cannot but accept that as one of the victims of the oppressive society, his work almost automatically becomes involved, even if merely to 'record our times' as Mr. Skotnes wants art to do.

For us or the conscious artist, man is not made for the sabbath, but the sabbath for man — society is not made for the artist, but the artist

for society. The function of art is to assist the development of man's consciousness, to help improve society.

Others of course emphatically reject this standpoint. They maintain art is an *aim* in itself and to convert it into a *means* of achieving any extraneous aim, even the most noble, is to lower the dignity of creative production.

Those who have been raised in the school of the bourgeoisie easily cling to such conceptions. On the other hand, considering that it is impossible for everybody to be of like mind, it is not difficult to imagine that there are artists in South Africa who are by no means in agreement with the course taken by their society and are embarrassed by it. The artist's relations with the ruling sphere may be a source of great vexation to him. But unable to accept the so-called utilitarian view of art, that is the tendency to attach to artistic productions the function of judging the phenomena of life, he chooses to ignore life, society, altogether. At best this might mean 'art for art's sake', and adopting this theory is an easy way out; the ivory tower is a refuge from the slings and arrows of an outrageous society.

For any intelligent and sensitive person, life in the South African racist atmosphere might be a distressing experience. The general callousness of his community and the forbidding stare of the oppressed must frighten the sensitive white artist in particular. Rather than paint the ugly face of his racist community, he turns to the natural beauty of the land; rather than eulogise the luxurious life of his people, he prefers still-lives and wild flowers. Under these circumstances, emphasis on 'art for the sake of art' might have its merits.

But we have seen that even the most tightly fortified white laager cannot ignore the effects of the upsurge of the revolutionary black people forever, if at all. The life of the black people can never be separated from the social environment as a whole, and so the artist inside the laager too must take cognisance of this upsurge.

### **Meaning of Revolution**

The development of the revolutionary struggle is a most important characteristic of the South African scene today, and not even the practice of apartheid or the police state can separate experiences which can be shared, however difficult, across the barriers. Skotnes says that through 'limited confrontation between a few artists and the reality of our time some anger has resulted, but here again it is the writer who has led. . .' Then it is the writers who are more in touch with reality and this



is demonstrated by their general concern with social and political problems.

It must mean that all the complaints and observations made by Cecil Skotnes about the failure of painters and sculptors being unaffected by developments in South Africa must hinge largely on their ignorance or lack of awareness of reality. Sensitivity is one thing, but to demonstrate this sensitivity positively is another. 'Art for art's sake' arises essentially where the artist is out of harmony with his social environment, but the millions of black people are also part of the South African picture and the beauty of the African landscape is no substitute for the dynamism of their life and struggles.

Undoubtedly the momentum of the revolutionary struggle will drag many more artists from their ivory towers to force them to come out on one side or the other. Though he himself queries 'what events will check the spiritual bankruptcy', Cecil Skotnes passes his own judgement on his guilty colleagues:

'The key to a meaningful art that will record our time lies in the spirit of the artist — in his humanity and his intellectual honesty. And if the times have little influence on an artist's work, especially such momentous times, he should seek a new profession.'



# Problems of the Ethiopian Revolution

by W. Jones

Recent events in Ethiopia, including the attempted coup last February which culminated in the execution of the head of state, Brigadier-General Teferi Bante and other members of the Dergue, indicate that an intense struggle is being waged to determine the direction in which the Ethiopian revolution moves.

The consolidation of the authority of the group in the Dergue headed by Mengistu Mariam, then vice-chairman of the Dergue and one of the key figures in the government, meant that the progressive forces were still in control. However, this was not the first time that an attempt had been made to dislodge Mariam and his supporters from power, and it will probably not be the last. Powerful forces are at work attempting to turn the clock back in Ethiopia – both reactionary and ultra-revolutionary elements in Ethiopia itself and the cohorts of imperialism attempting to turn Ethiopia on to the path of neo-colonialism. Counter-revolutionary pressures are also being exerted by the governments of the Sudan and Saudi Arabia who are assisting the

Eritrean secessionists in a bid to balkanise and weaken the Ethiopian state in the interests of Arab reaction and feudalism.

Class and national elements are also involved in this intense struggle, the outcome of which may well determine the course of events in north and east Africa and the Middle East for a long time to come.

Since February, 1974, Ethiopia, which had for so long been a happy hunting ground for the local feudal and reactionary elements, imperialism and Zionism, has undergone radical change. This process of radical change from the remnants of feudalism and low level capitalist development to the path of socialist orientation is of significance for Africa as a whole.

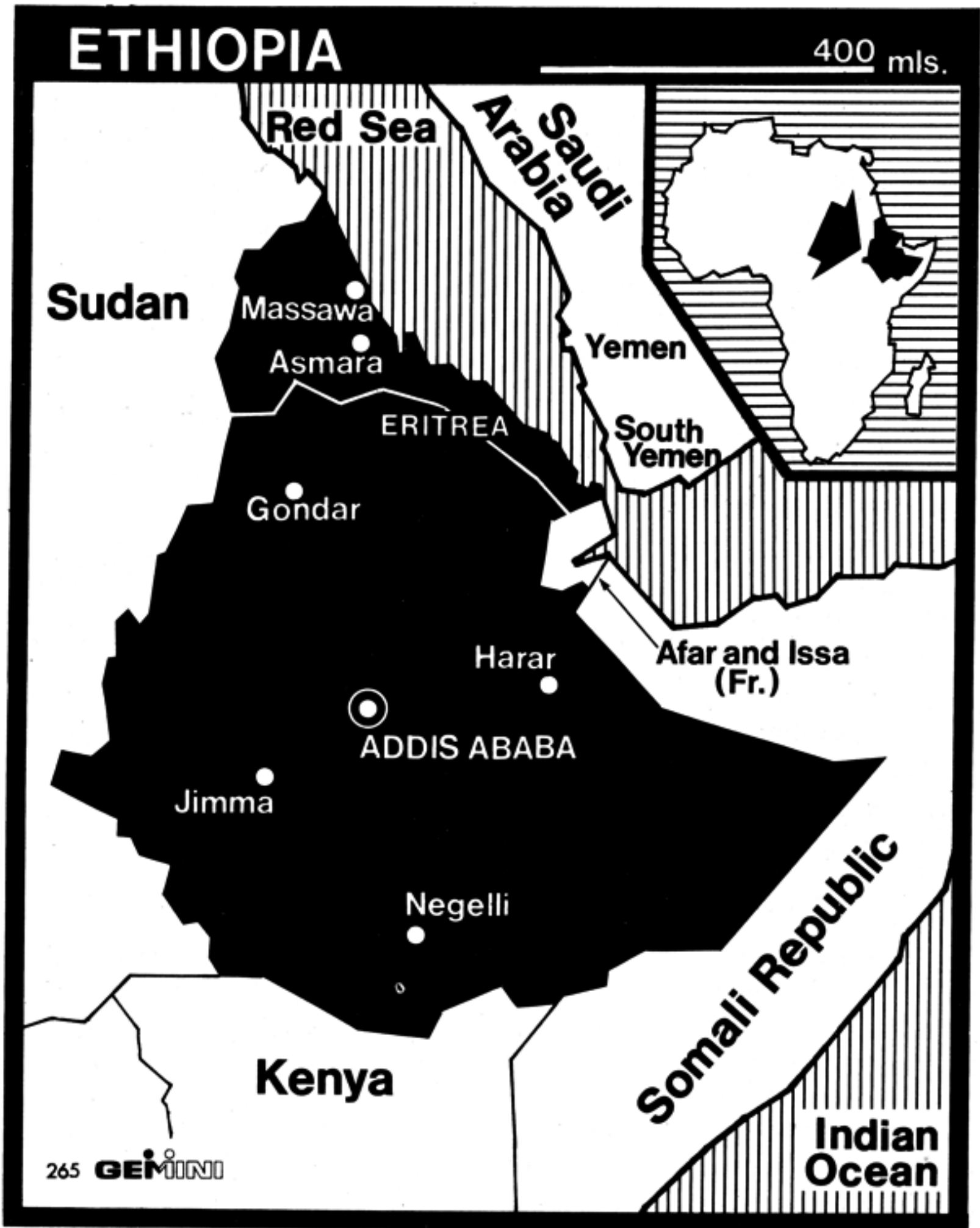
Prior to the revolution members of the royal family, the feudal aristocrats and the higher officials of the church owned and controlled most of the fertile land, with 60% of the cultivated land belonging to less than 1,000 families. The political power exercised by the feudal autocracy had its base in the ownership of land, the excessive exploitation of the peasants and its dependent links with imperialism.

Peasants were compelled to surrender up to 75% of their crop to the landowners and were press-ganged into providing services, such as building and mending of fences, houses and stables and herding of animals. Moreover in a typically feudal relationship the landowners and their agents exercised great control over the lives of the peasants by giving them loans at exorbitant rates of interest which could be as high as 300%.

The peasants, like the workers and other strata in the urban areas, suffered harshly from exploitation, taxes, natural disasters and lack of basic rights. Indeed the scientific and liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism were proscribed and it was dangerous to be in possession of such literature. The old regime was totally corrupt and the corruption can be traced from Haile Selassie downwards. Investigations showed that in addition to all the lands and property that he and his family owned, he received more than \$11 million in dividends from the St. George Brewery and the staggering amount of \$979,506.84 was found at the National Palace.

By the beginning of 1974 the position of the outdated system of government based on the ruthless exploitation of the toiling masses had been severely aggravated by the criminal failure of the Selassie regime to tackle the effects of the drought, bad harvest and famine which killed hundreds of thousands of people. The country was also hit by the monetary and energy crisis of the world capitalist system. Thus the social, economic, political and national problems which had for so long





shackled Ethiopia came to the fore and aroused the wrath and indignation of growing sections of the people, in particular the intellectuals and students.

In February, 1974, there were mass demonstrations and virtual uprisings in Addis Ababa. Taxi drivers and teachers went on strike, workers and students staged mass protest rallies. In the rapidly-evolving situation the first general strike in the history of Ethiopia took place in March, 1974, under the leadership of the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions. The peasants, workers and students advanced slogans such as "land for the tiller" and "liquidate poverty and backwardness".

### **Armed Forces**

In the absence of any organised political force, the armed forces played the leading role in opposition to the monarchist regime. Realising that they had to be better organised and united in order to overthrow the old regime and to withstand pressures from world imperialism, especially US imperialism, units of the army and police democratically elected their representatives to form a Co-ordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army. By skilfully utilising their position the Co-ordinating Committee began unmasking the old regime and even compelled Haile Selassie to agree to the abolition of the Crown Council, Imperial Court and Judicial Review Commission, and the transfer of the Chief of Staff Office to the Ministry of National Defence. By September the Co-ordinating Committee fully supported by the popular masses deposed Haile Selassie and changed its name to the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC).

However, within the armed forces, even as now, two main tendencies asserted themselves. One sought to arrest the development of the revolutionary process and the other fought to intensify the search for socially progressive solutions. The internal battle led to the execution of Aman Mikail Andons and 69 other officers and members of the armed forces.

The military regime characterises the present stage as completing the National Democratic Revolution which would lay the material and technical basis for the transition to socialism.

As in the rest of tropical Africa the key to resolving the socio-economic problems lay in carrying out an effective radical programme of land reform. In Ethiopia approximately 90% of a population of 28 million are peasants toiling hard for a living. With the nationalisation of rural land in March, 1975, the PMAC undertook one of the most radical agrarian reforms in Africa. The land reform procla-

mation transferred ownership to the toiling peasants, abolished the archaic social relationship between landlord and tenant, annulled all outstanding debts and halted the onerous system of rent collecting. Small farmers and landless peasants who were willing to cultivate the land personally were allotted land not exceeding 10 hectares and which cannot be divided, sold or mortgaged. On the huge estates owned by large landowners state farms are being established.

In order to organise the farmers in a collective and cooperative manner and to enable them to protect their interests, farmers' associations and production units have been or are in the process of being created. Already there are over 21,000 farmers' associations with a membership of over 5 million. Through these associations the previously downtrodden and exploited serfs are becoming active participants in the fight to build a new Ethiopia. The duties of these associations range from digging wells, purchasing farm machinery, constructing schools and health clinics, to organising self-defence units for the defence of the revolution. Today the latter units have a membership of over half a million. In addition women have formed their own organisations to better enable them to play their rightful role in socially transforming the countryside, improving living standards and raising agricultural production.

To ensure that the land reform programme was implemented, in particular the setting up of peasants' associations, eradication of illiteracy and improving of health conditions, about 60,000 students and teachers, including 982 officers and rank and file soldiers were sent to the rural areas under the National Work Campaign for Development through Cooperation. This campaign played a very important role in explaining to the peasants their new rights and obligations in setting up peasant associations, in teaching a great number of people the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic and in building many new schools. In the initial period alone some 4,377,500 functional literacy books were published in Amharic, Tigrigna, Oromigna, Wolaitigna and Somaligna. In the public health sector over 200 medical clinics were set up, people were taught the elementary rules of hygiene, diet and child care, mass vaccinations were carried out against tuberculosis and small-pox and nearly half a million cattle were inoculated against animal disease.

### **Nationalisation Measures**

In the cities too action was taken by the PMAC to check the domination of private capital. Banks, insurance companies and



hundreds of leading firms were nationalised. The emperor's financial interests and palaces were brought under popular control and the government took over the extractive industry including precious metals, salt and oil refining. Landlordism was officially abolished and rents slashed by the nationalisation of urban land. Under this proclamation no person or family can own more than one dwelling house and only cooperative societies of urban dwellers are allowed to earn rent on ownership of land or house. The urban land proclamation also contains details on the creation, functions and membership of cooperative societies and judicial tribunals, the highest of which would have jurisdiction over disputes arising between urban dwellers and cooperative societies.

A new labour law was also promulgated under which an All-Ethiopian Trade Union Federation replaces the former CELU, workers have more rights to form trade unions including within the public sector and women workers are guaranteed equality in employment opportunities and an extension of paid maternity leave to 45 days. The proclamation points out that through trade unions led by progressive leaders in line with socialist principles the working class can more effectively participate in the struggle for national and social revolution.

Ethiopia has a relatively small industrial working class – less than 100,000 – scattered over numerous small enterprises. But it has played, is playing and will continue to play a very significant role. This is recognised by the Programme of the National Democratic Revolution of Ethiopia which assigns to the working class the leading role and correctly stresses the fundamental importance of the worker-peasant alliance.

At present preparations are in hand to create a new political party based on the principles of scientific socialism and which would rely on the working class. A step in this direction was taken recently when the PMAC was transformed into a people's congress of 100 members, with a central committee and a permanent committee.

### **Foreign Policy**

In its foreign policy Ethiopia has moved closer and closer to the worldwide progressive anti-imperialist forces. It is now a much more active member of the non-aligned movement and is more closely identified with the progressive governments in the OAU. Its cooperation with the socialist world, in particular the Soviet Union, is on a higher level.

In line with their new foreign policy the Ethiopian government agreed to host last October the jointly sponsored AAPSO-ANC emergency conference in support of the people of South Africa. Before and

during the conference solidarity meetings and rallies were held throughout the country in support of the ANC and the people of South Africa. At the end of this historic and highly successful conference a mass rally was organised by the PMAC. Over 70,000 people representing different enterprises, peasant associations and cooperative societies attended the rally. Representatives of the ANC, Angola, Vietnam and the Soviet Union were accorded exceptionally warm receptions and the entire rally was punctuated by tremendous applause for the most anti-imperialist and pro-socialist declarations. Only in a socially progressive country is it possible to have such a mass rally which clearly identifies the enemy as imperialism, capitalism, neo-colonialism, racism and fascism.

As is to be expected there has been and will continue to be fierce resistance from the local feudal and reactionary elements and world imperialism. There is a concerted conspiracy to create a political atmosphere of tension and insecurity in which a counter-revolutionary plot may be hatched. The reactionaries have organised campaigns leading to the destruction of crops, sabotaging industries, price rises, currency speculation and disruption of food supplies. Within the armed forces also there are elements who wish to stop the revolution in its tracks. Many of them have already been deprived of their posts or executed. Nevertheless, there remain certain sections in the armed forces who are opposed to socialism and would like to keep Ethiopia within the orbit of world capitalism. This is not peculiar to Ethiopia but is an objective factor which must be taken into account in any liberation movement. In Ethiopia as in other parts of the world there is an ongoing struggle between the progressive anti-imperialist trend and the conservative pro-capitalist trend. In such a situation it is the duty of communists and other progressive and democratic forces, notwithstanding political and ideological differences, to support the mainstream of anti-imperialist and socialist struggle.

### **The Ultra-Left**

It is in this light that we should view the actions of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party. The EPRP characterises the present government as a fascist regime and compares it to Pinochet's Chile. Under the guise of demagogic ultra-left revolutionist slogans and phraseology the EPRP has systematically carried out terrorist and adventurist actions. These included the smashing of machinery, bank robberies, sabotage and the murder of political functionaries. In September and October, 1976, they attempted to assassinate Mengistu Mariam, the

first vice-chairman of the Dergue, and destroyed a political studies centre and library in Addis Ababa which contained a large quantity of Marxist-Leninist literature.

The EPRP cannot be merely dismissed as a hired gang of thugs, as they do arise from a certain social class. It seems that the EPRP consists mainly of disgruntled intellegentsia from the old upper classes and middle strata. Coming basically from a feudal bourgeois or petty-bourgeois background they are especially susceptible to petty-bourgeois revolutionism, adventurism and dogmatism in their interpretation of the revolutionary process. Some of them claim to be Marxists fighting for a proletarian revolution.

But Marxists should never be sectarian or dogmatic. Lenin and Dmitrov have in their writings demonstrated the great dangers of sectarianism. They point out that sectarianism a) ignores the essential and distinctive features of any given situation, b) ignores the real disposition of class forces and overestimates the actual level of the class consciousness of the masses, c) solves complex problems on the basis of stereotype schemes and d) treats the science of Marxism as a dogma rather than as a guide to action.

To be sure Ethiopia is not yet a socialist society but is in the transition stage in which it is attempting to move in the general direction of socialism. The transition stage represents an exceptionally complex and at times contradictory process. This struggle requires the greatest possible unity in action of all the anti-imperialist forces. Precisely because of the low economic, political and cultural development, the superstructure plays a crucial role in determining the direction in which a country moves. It is therefore possible that whilst a country in such a stage may at one time follow socially progressive policies, it can with changes in superstructure follow a different course. Egypt under Sadat offers a very good example of this. Nor should we ignore the fact that certain sections of the armed forces may be corrupted and that the governments may take hasty and ill-prepared social and economic decisions which can lead to social and economic deterioration. Socialism can never be built by wishful thinking but only by preparing the historically necessary socio-economic basis. To do this requires, in Ethiopia as in other parts of tropical Africa, the completion of the National Democratic Revolution.

Thus we are not arguing that Ethiopia has irreversibly taken the road to socialism and that severe setbacks, indeed social regression, cannot occur. But we are arguing that we should not confuse the main trend of development and elevate secondary contradictions to primary ones.



The main trend of development in Ethiopia today is a progressive anti-imperialist one in which the remnants of feudalism are being smashed and capitalist development curtailed. Great changes have already taken place and it is therefore necessary to support and to strengthen the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist content of the revolutionary process. This cannot be done by acts of terrorism and adventurism which objectively are of value only to the national reactionary and bourgeois elements and world imperialism. What is needed is to ensure by the greatest mobilisation of the toiling masses that the programme of the government is implemented in full.

US imperialism has over the past three years hatched a number of plots, mainly through the CIA, to strengthen the hands of the pro-imperialist forces. In Ethiopia a popular watchword is "beware of the CIA and we shall not have another Chile". From our own experience in Southern Africa, from Chile and through the recent revelations of former CIA agents and employees, we are fully aware that the CIA is ever ready to use any disgruntled elements from the right or the ultra-left to prevent a country and people from pursuing socially progressive policies.

### **The National Question**

The Ethiopian government has also indicated its intention to resolve the national question and under the Programme the nationalities have for the first time been given the right to regional autonomy and to develop their native languages and culture. As the Programme points out: "Given Ethiopia's existing situation, the problem of nationalities can be resolved if each nationality will have regional autonomy to decide on matters concerning its internal affairs. Within its environs, it has the right to determine the contents of its political, economic and social life, use its own language and elect its own leaders and administrators to head its internal organs".

What is needed above all is for the progressive forces to ensure that this part of the programme is implemented in full. Any prevarication on this sensitive question will only exacerbate the present difficulties and conflicts which are grist to the mill for the forces of reaction, imperialism and neo-colonialism. Lenin vigorously and consistently pointed out that oppressed nationalities should be given the greatest consideration and that their justified feelings of national oppression under reactionary regimes should be fully recognised. The implementa-

tion of this policy on Leninist lines is vital to the solution of the problem in Eritrea.

In attempting to analyse whether radical changes have taken place in Ethiopia we should bear in mind that in all countries suffering from abject poverty and backwardness the socio-economic problems are immense and cannot be solved by a stroke of the pen. There is in Ethiopia grinding poverty. The streets of Addis Ababa have a large number of hungry looking beggars, mainly urchins; prostitution is still rife. It must be remembered that the industrial base is very small and agricultural production is still at a low level. Nor should we ignore the fact that US imperialism through its various nefarious agencies still exercises some influence amongst certain sections of the population including within the armed forces.

Like the other socialist-oriented states in Africa and Asia, Ethiopia faces tremendous problems in giving life to their revolutionary programme, strategy and tactics, and in creating the necessary political, economic, social and cultural organisations which can allow for and encourage the greatest participation of the masses in every aspect of life and decision-making. Practice has shown that without this active participation it is not possible to carry out fundamental social transformations whatever the subjective wishes of the leaders.

In the transition stage a fierce class struggle takes place against imperialist exploitation, remnants of feudal production relations and predatory tendencies of local capitalists. This is first and foremost a struggle against those sections comprising the reactionary bourgeoisie, comprador bourgeoisie, feudalism and agents of imperialism. But there is also a duty to examine and analyse objectively and honestly the social base, programmes, strategy and tactics of the ultra-left. Where they are in conflict with the main trend of development the authorities must firmly but patiently show them the correct path and win over the most honest and dedicated elements within that group.

As Marxist-Leninists we are for an enduring unity of all the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-neo-colonialist forces. We should not allow our political and ideological differences to impair in any way the fundamental unity of Marxist-Leninists and the revolutionary democrats for a new and better society free from the shackles of imperialist and capitalist domination.

Thus in taking a historico-dialectical view we can see how rapidly Ethiopia has developed over the past three years, the problems it has faced and those which it faces in the future.

# **Frelimo's Third Congress – A Great Event for Africa**

## **WHICH CLASS WILL RULE IN ZIMBABWE?**

The creation of People's Republics in Mozambique and Angola has dramatically underlined the change in the balance of forces in southern Africa following the collapse of Portuguese colonialism. In this vital area, hitherto a bastion of imperialist and racist domination in Africa, states committed to the course of the socialist revolution have arisen. Whilst both young states face an intensification of imperialist aggression and manoeuvres, the revolutionary process is taking its dynamic path forward. In this respect, the decision taken by FRELIMO to transform itself into a Marxist-Leninist party is of historic significance for Mozambique, for Africa, and for the international anti-imperialist forces striving for socialism, peace and national liberation.

The decision to convert FRELIMO into a vanguard party dedicated to scientific socialism was unanimously adopted at FRELIMO's Third Congress, which was held in Maputo during the first week of February after months of preparation and mobilisation. FRELIMO was established as a 'front for liberation' at its first Congress, which took place in Tanzania in 1962. The movement's second Congress took place in 1968 on liberated soil in the bush, and concentrated on the tactics and



politics of the guerilla war. The third Congress thus crowns the victory over the forces of colonialism, and paves the way for the construction of a new society.

Prior to the third Congress and defining its tasks President Samora Machel declared: "Once more we accept a new battle. The first stage, leading the people to independence, is over. But now, in the second stage, our task is the building of socialism. This is the exact word. This is what the Congress demands. The building of socialism in Mozambique."

It is this historic task which in the opinion of the FRELIMO leadership requires the development of the worker-peasant alliance guided by the scientific ideology of the proletariat, that has necessitated the transformation of the movement into a vanguard Marxist-Leninist party. For, as a congress document stated: "Without a revolutionary party and without a revolutionary ideology it is impossible for the revolution to advance." Whilst the vanguard will consist of leading cadres, the broadly patriotic, anti-imperialist popular front will be preserved and expanded in order to mobilise the masses in the task of building the new society.

Whilst the question of the vanguard party was a dominant theme of the congress, the 333 delegates (who included 50 representatives from the armed forces) also discussed the application of scientific socialism to the revolutionary process already underway in the country; the priorities facing the Party and the people in the present phase of the struggle; and the launching of an ideological offensive in order to break completely with the structure and traditions of the past. Reading the FRELIMO Central Committee report to the delegates, President Machel, who was elected leader of the new party (which retains the name FRELIMO), stressed: "As we go on to the phase of the people's democracy, we begin a long historic stage. The transformations which we must implant in our society are profound. There are many tasks facing us. The struggle we have taken on is arduous and long, before we reach the stage of socialism."

Outlining FRELIMO's strategy for the advancement from an under-developed to a socialist economic order, President Machel told the applauding delegates: "The people's democracy is the phase when we socialize the means of production, when we set up and develop the two essential forms of socialist property — state property and cooperative property. It is the phase when we shall develop and transform our economy in a qualitative way, constructing the material base of the socialist society. Taking agriculture as the base and industry as the

activating factor, and the construction of heavy industry as the decisive factor, we shall once and for all break with poverty and dependence, and we shall construct an advanced economy at the service of the people.”

Clearly emerging from the guidelines of this overwhelmingly successful congress is the construction of a society on African soil based on the principles of scientific socialism and the strengthening of a People's Republic that aims to become a revolutionary base for the overthrow of the racist regimes of Southern Africa. Pledging resolute support to the liberation struggles in Namibia and Zimbabwe, President Machel paid warm tribute to the ANC of South Africa, ‘uniting and organising the broad masses of the people’ . . . ‘drawing up the correct strategy and tactics for the liberation fight’, and asserted that ‘the People's Republic of Mozambique must fulfil its international duty of solidarity with the South African people, led by the ANC.’

At the time of going to press, the final wording of the congress resolutions was not yet available. However, the congress endorsed the key document entitled “FRELIMO and the Mozambican Labouring Classes in the Building of People's Democracy” containing a number of theses put forward by the FRELIMO leadership for discussion and approval. For several months before the congress this document was exhaustively discussed in seminars and meetings all over the country in the FRELIMO structures, the mass organisations, the radio and press. We print the full text of these theses in the “Documents” section at the end of this issue of the *African Communist*.

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### **Congo Party Congress**

The Congolese Workers' Party celebrated its seventh anniversary at the end of 1976. The current year will be important in two ways. It will be the year of the Party's Third Congress and is also the final year of the Congo Republic's first Three Year Plan. By way of preparation for the Third Congress, the Party has embarked upon an important new experiment in inner-Party democracy. This was the holding of a Party Conference, attended by 800 delegates (a substantial proportion of the Party's total membership) and lasting a whole week. Held under the slogan “Unity – Criticism – Unity”, the Conference proceeded to a full and frank discussion of the numerous problems which have confronted the Party and the Republic recently. It was essentially consultative in

nature and its resolutions took the form of recommendations to the Party leadership. They covered a wide range of subjects, notably the need to broaden the base of the Party and to institute an adequate programme for the training of cadres. In his address to the Conference, comrade Marien Ngouabi, Chairman of the Central Committee, warned that the success of the Three Year Plan had yet to be achieved and faced formidable obstacles, particularly in the agricultural sphere.

Agriculture has been allocated the highest priority for the current period. The objective is to organise the rural areas into "cooperative villages" along the lines laid down in 1975. This cannot be achieved overnight and the majority of areas are still in the lower stage of "pre-cooperative groupings." Another method of advancement towards the objective is the declaration of certain areas of land as "Party fields." These are in some cases situated near urban areas and are worked by large numbers of volunteers from the towns. In other cases, they constitute part of the land of a rural community. The "Party fields" are worked on a fully collective basis. They have aroused enthusiasm among the peasantry wherever they have been instituted, and some of them are already producing yields superior to those generally prevailing in the areas concerned.

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### **Support from Nigeria**

The Nigerian government has recently taken a number of steps to curb imperialist influence on its internal economy and development and followed this up with vigorous action against imperialism in the sphere of foreign affairs. Its early recognition of the People's Government of Angola was a crucial factor in winning majority backing for the MPLA in the Organisation of African Unity, and Nigeria showed that its support did not stop at words by making 12 million Naira available to the government of President Neto (at the rate of exchange at the time £1 equalled 1.15 Naira).

More recently the Nigerian government launched a South Africa Relief Fund and made an initial donation of 2.5 million Naira. The leader of the government, General Obasanjo, donated 2,000 Naira personally. Brigadier Shehu Var Ardua, who launched the fund in Lagos, donated 1,500 Naira and all members of the supreme military council donated 1,000 Naira each. It was announced that pledges to the extent of over 2 million Naira had been received from private citizens, including well-known figures in Nigerian commerce and



industry. The fund drive will be made in the administration, private enterprises, the universities and schools, so that in a short time a truly impressive sum will be collected.

The aim of the fund is simple: it is to be used "to alleviate suffering and promote education, though the granting of scholarships, health and general welfare of all the peoples under minority regimes in southern Africa."

It will also be used to give material relief and help alleviate refugee problems in any part of southern Africa.

In launching the fund Brigadier Ardua condemned the inhuman treatment of Africans in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa and pointed out that "even as individual black Africans, you and I cannot ourselves feel free until the entire African people, the men, and women and children in southern Africa are also free."

To give the campaign its full weight a high-level board of trustees has been set up, comprising among others the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and several permanent secretaries from the federal ministries.

And the chairman of the fund committee, Dr. Olosola Saraki pointed out that the tragedy of South Africa was that there were enough resources in that country to support "a just, fair and equitable existence for all its people."

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# New Trends in African Nationalism

by A. Langa

The South African state has entered a stage of profound crisis. The capitalist economy is afflicted not only by the fundamental malaise which has driven the entire capitalist world into recession since 1973, but by the particular rigidities and distortions of apartheid's economic organization. The waves of liberation are surging around South Africa's borders, following the ignominious defeat of the South African-led aggression in Angola, and the progressive collapse of racist domination in Zimbabwe and Namibia. And most importantly of all, the African population — particularly the working class and youth — is in a state of virtual insurrection, despite systematic repression and murder by the regime.

It is clear that the regime will have to intensify its repressive capacity *and* increase the rate of exploitation of African workers if it is to survive these pressures, even for the fairly short run. The question is: how? South Africa may, in answering that desperate question, be moving towards new forms of domination and exploitation, in which racial oppression will still occupy a central place, but in which a differentiation within the African working class will be encouraged on the basis of industrial skills and place of residence, and in which the attempt will be made to

create and foster an African auxiliary petty bourgeois class to act as capitalism's intermediary in the dispossession of the masses of workers and peasants.

The development of this line of policy is a process which is in essence comparable to the transition from colonial domination to neo-colonialism in other African countries. It poses for the South African liberation movement analogous problems of tactics and strategy — particularly on the national question and on the programme on which the movement's alliance of class forces is based.

### **What is Neo-Colonialism?**

Neo-colonialism is the product of a double political contradiction on a global scale. The *primary* contradiction which destroyed the colonial system was the struggle of the socialist states and the masses of exploited people of the world against imperialism. *Secondarily*, however, the terminal colonial phase was also characterized by contradictions among the imperialist powers themselves, as a consequence of the emergence of the United States as the power exercising political and economic hegemony over the weakened colonial-imperialist powers of Europe and Japan. The working out of these contradictions has a rhythm which varies in different regions, but can nevertheless be fairly easily summarised.

Firstly, in regions, such as much of Latin America, where colonialism of the modern type had not been predominant, where U.S. domination was virtually unquestionable, and where there was a relatively higher level of material development and of class forces, national movements have on the whole been under the control of bourgeois forces which were capable of making certain advances in industrialization and social reform. They thereby displaced to some extent the influence of semi-feudal agrarian ruling classes, but in the process in fact allied themselves to U.S. imperialism and facilitated the accelerated penetration and expropriation of their economies by new forms of imperialist capital.

Secondly, there were a number of areas, especially in Asia, in which it was impossible for either the old colonial power or the new U.S. overlords to seize the initiative, because the people's movements had long since transcended the stage of petty-bourgeois nationalism and had emerged as a fully revolutionary national movement under working-class leadership. The demise of imperialism and capitalism in all forms was therefore immediately on the agenda — even if, as in Vietnam, the struggle was to be fierce and prolonged.

Thirdly, in the case of the Portuguese Empire, where the life of fascism was prolonged long after World War II, the course of struggle



developed perforce along similarly revolutionary lines. The victory of the peoples of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola was thus the more thoroughgoing: the enemy could not “dabble” in neo-colonial solutions to the problem of revolutionary war both because the revolutionary movement would not trifle with it, and because such solutions would in any case have meant the destruction of the material base of the fascist state, unable as it was to compete with stronger imperialist powers. Portuguese colonialism could only limp in the old way, as it were, until Frelimo, MPLA, PAIGC and the Portuguese people killed it off.

But for vast areas of the imperialist-dominated world, and especially for most African colonial countries, none of these conditions obtained. The nationalist movements were the genuine, in some cases, the overwhelming, expression of revolt against colonial oppression. But their ideological and political development was in the majority of cases sufficiently weak to enable the emerging national bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships to seize control of the State (assisted by the departing colonialists, eager for an “orderly transfer of power”), dismantle the organizations of *popular* representation and power – dissolving the mass organizations, subverting and emasculating peasant and trade union movements, deploying chauvinist and tribalist ideologies – and to use the State apparatus in the process of accumulation and exploitation for the benefit of the “new masters”

This emergence of African independent states as *class states*, controlled by a local emerging bourgeoisie under imperialist hegemony, also reflects the secondary contradiction of the neo-colonial phase: the emergence of new forms of capitalist organization and exploitation as a consequence of the rise of U.S. imperialism.

The internationalization of capital and the accelerated penetration by imperialism of the less-developed parts of the capitalist world have taken two forms. Firstly, we have seen the emergence of huge transnational firms, active in many countries and often in many branches of production, most of them increasingly under the effective control of the U.S. bourgeoisie. Secondly, there has developed a “servicing” structure of international organizations (primarily the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the imperialist nations’ club, OECD), and imperialist “aid” and technical assistance programmes, the objective of which is to provide infrastructure and services for the international circulation of imperialist capital, to speed up the destruction of

pre-capitalist forms of production, and generally to facilitate the secure insertion of peripheral areas into the imperialist world system.

This global change in the forms of imperialist exploitation thus coincided with the anti-colonial struggles — but only to the extent of necessitating political changes to break the old colonial monopoly on underdeveloped territories and allow entry and in due course dominance to the new forces within imperial capital. Beyond this point, imperialism cannot allow anti-colonial struggle to be maintained without affecting not merely imperialist interests, but the future of capitalism itself in the country concerned.

*Primarily*, however — and this is the major point of relevance to the South African situation — neo-colonialism is a defensive response to anti-imperialist struggle, at a stage where the differentiation of potentially antagonistic class forces within the colonial society both allows for and requires the creation of a local ruling class alliance. Such a class alliance, as we have seen in much of Africa, is basically bourgeois/petty-bourgeois in character, and closely allied in a subordinate capacity to imperialism. It is heavily reliant on its control of the State apparatus — not only to preserve class dictatorship over the working masses of proletarians and peasants — but also to accumulate capital and create the possibility of attaining auxiliary rather than mere appendage status vis-a-vis imperialist capital.

### **South Africa's Colonialism**

While it is important not to transfer this argument crudely to the South African case, which is different in many respects, there may nevertheless be some important lessons to be drawn.

Firstly, is the *colonialism of a special type* which, as the Communist Party programme points out, characterizes the South African system of racial domination, undergoing changes analogous in some respects to the development of neo-colonialism elsewhere on our continent? The answer is yes — in the sense that the political arrangements of racial domination and national oppression are in a crisis of which the insurrection of the cities is the latest and most fully-developed expression.

There has now developed to crisis point a double contradiction within the apartheid system which bears a close correspondence to the contradictions of world capitalism described earlier. The main contradiction, of course, is between the South African imperialist state and the broad masses of the subject population — and that is now reaching the point where even the feverishly built up repressive might of the state is unable to contain it. Secondly, however, the agenda of South African capitalism

includes not only this overriding requirement of sheer political survival, but also a re-fashioning of the overall system of domination in order to maintain and increase the rate of exploitation of the African working class.

The need for political "concessions" therefore coincides with a rapidly-developing economic crisis for the dominant fractions of South African capital — a crisis related to the international position of South Africa within the capitalist world economy (manifested particularly in the fall in the price of gold and the currency devaluation), and to the intensifying difficulties of huge pools of black unemployment (2 million total), rapidly degenerating bases for the reproduction of South Africa's labour power in the Bantustans, and chronic shortfalls in the supply of skilled labour at an "acceptable" (i.e., black rather than white) rate.

What are the South African authorities going to be able to do with this situation, which is so rapidly sliding out of their effective control? The answers are of course not yet clear, but the possible outcomes pose urgent issues for the liberation movement.

It is likely that movements in the world economy towards separation of different processes of production will be reproduced in South Africa on a wide scale. This means, in practice, growing distinctions between labour processes which use high technology and heavy capital investment and relatively little labour (petro-chemicals, advanced engineering, aspects of electronic manufacture, for example), and those which need large labour forces, at a relatively low level of skill and at the lowest possible wage (mining, agriculture, certain assembly processes, etc.).

In part, too, these are not merely different requirements of different industries, but levels of advance *within* particular industries — thus, for example, backward farmers need to cut the rate of their large labour forces even further if they are to survive in the market competing with mechanized farming.

In the longer term, in other words, there is not a question of division into low-technology and high-technology industries, but of the constant modernization of all branches of production and a drop in the quantity of living labour (as distinct from machine production) embodied in the output of industry. For the apartheid system, this means using the huge pool of African unemployed to hold down wage levels. Thus, the "border industries" and Bantu Development Corporation and Xhosa Development Corporation investments will take advantage of the situation to cheapen lives and labour even more — after all, if you recruit a worker in Butterworth, you do not even have to pay to transport him to Johannesburg, or to house him in a miserable barrack! But at the same



time, South African monopoly capitalism, like other imperialist capital, is constantly struggling for self-expansion and against its own contradictions, and attempting to reduce the extent to which it depends on its workers for the generation of profits.

Superficially the mining industry may seem to contradict this assertion. By paying higher wages, the mines, in the last year or so, have been able to recruit something like two-thirds of their African labour force *inside* South Africa, dramatically reversing the trend of half a century whereby the mines had to cast their net ever further outside South Africa for labour. But the mines were forced to this expedient to replace the problematic Malawi and Mozambique sources. Furthermore, even with their higher wage levels, the wages of African miners remain far below those obtaining in the rest of industry, and serve to drag down the overall level as they have always done. In addition, the mines continue to invest large sums in mechanisation of all mining operations, so as to require less labour in total.

Thus, the general picture remains one of a movement to modernise relatively backward (i.e., labour-intensive) industry, *and* a movement to drive down wages. They can both be expressed in the same way — a movement *to increase the rate of exploitation of every African worker*, in one case by using fewer workers and more machines, in the other by driving wages well below subsistence rate (by relying on pre-capitalist modes of production in the homelands to make up the difference).

So the partial re-modelling of the system of national oppression and capitalist exploitation in South Africa involves an *intensification* of the role of the Bantustans as depositories for the surplus population for which imperialist South Africa can find no use, and as the means of constantly reproducing the reserve army of cheap labour, especially for the labour-intensive, relatively backward branches of production. At the same time, the modernization of production involves both diversification (away from gold) and the restructuring of the black labour force — to substitute for unavailable skilled white labour directly (blacks in formerly “white” jobs) and indirectly (decomposition of labour processes, or “de-skilling”).

### **New Policies**

What are the political requirements, from the point of view of the regime, for this re-modelling to be pushed through? Firstly, as was the case in the neo-colonial countries of the Third World, South African imperialism must now attempt to co-opt allies within the subject population, to deflect the mass anti-imperialist struggle to some extent, and to

establish a bridgehead, on the basis of a *comprador class*, within the oppressed people themselves. Secondly, it must ensure that the repressive capacity of the State is strong enough to withstand onslaughts at weak points — especially, of course, in the economic citadels themselves. And thirdly, it requires an appropriately mystifying ideology to make the struggles of its enemies — the African and other oppressed peoples — more difficult and confused.

In the face of the mass struggles of the African workers and youth, it is clear that the desperate hope of the racist regime that the Bantustan “leaders” could provide these functions on the basis of *tribalist* ideologies is completely dead. Mantanzima’s charade of “independence” was too embarrassing for most of the other “leaders” to bring themselves to attend his celebrations on 26 October last year — very importantly, for Mantanzima above all has stood out for the original apartheid formula of tribal chauvinism and extreme subservience. The others, with Buthelezi at their head, have for the most part understood very well what the apartheid regime is only now beginning to comprehend: that its only option is to help the ruling groups of the Bantustans to make common cause, politically and economically, with the African urban petty-bourgeoisie, on an ideological basis in which tribalism plays a relatively secondary role, for homeland consumption only. That entails, of course, that there will be well-publicised “tensions” and “ultimatums” and “demands” from these spokesmen, as they attempt to construct a political constituency, on a class basis, within the African people. Buthelezi, for example, has long tried to distance himself from his paymasters, even going so far as to claim the mantle of the ANC.

In other words, as Toussaint demonstrated (*African Communist*, no. 64, 1st quarter, 1976), the emergence of both Bantustan subordinate state apparatuses and urban petty-bourgeois elements has been accompanied in recent years by the gradual emergence of an ideology of “Black capitalism”, eagerly propagated by the White capitalist power structure as well, which serves to rally this emergent comprador class to the possibility of evolving to full capitalist status within the framework of white domination. Politically, it is obviously in the interests of the apartheid state to accord this emerging alliance some sort of political recognition — particularly if it can be arranged that the settled urban labour force is “represented”, in due course, by these sober, responsible, non-revolutionary would-be exploiters.

The struggle for South Africa, in short, has reached a new stage. South African capitalism, now thoroughly integrated with the world imperialist economy on developed and favourable terms, is nevertheless

faced with the maturing of its own contradictions with the class which, above all, it exploits – the African working class. Capitalism's laws of motion *and* the revolutionary crisis of our country both demand that the regime intensifies the subjection and exploitation of the African people, but also tries to do so within new forms of domination – because it cannot go on ruling in the old way.

In this situation, two questions are posed very sharply for the liberation movement, and particularly for the most advanced sections within it. Firstly, what political response is needed to the evident fact that petty-bourgeois and bourgeois elements within the African people will increasingly emerge as a distinct political/economic grouping (a social class in the making), with interests and political options which, if the regime is remotely successful, will conflict directly with the interests of the masses of exploited Africans?

What, in other words, is the right strategy for dealing with the gradual development of internal neo-colonial forms, in which the African bourgeois elements are assigned the role of intermediaries between oppressor and oppressed?

Secondly, does the ideological foundation of the liberation movement as expressed in the *Freedom Charter* and *Strategy and Tactics of the ANC* give adequate voice to this developing contradiction within the African people, or does it need to be changed to reflect more accurately the primacy of the African working class in the South African revolution? These questions can ultimately only be settled within the practice of the struggle itself; but our task in these pages must be to unite that practice with Marxist-Leninist theory, analysis and debate.



# BOOK REVIEWS BOOK

## AN OCTOPUS IN AFRICA

### **Lonrho: Portrait of a Multinational**

by S. Cronjé, M. Ling, G. Cronjé, published by Penguin Books, 1976, (paperback) £1.50 and Julian Friedmann Books (hardback) £6.95.

The dominant tendency of capitalist development in the era of imperialism has been towards monopoly.

“If it were necessary to give the briefest definition of imperialism,” wrote Lenin, “we should say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism.”<sup>1</sup> The growing concentration and centralisation of finance-industrial capital is the central factor of monopoly capitalism, and is reflected in the emergence of those giant monopoly corporations which have come to dominate large sectors of the economies of the developed capitalist countries and to exercise decisive influence in the policy and decision-making processes of the capitalist state.

In the last 25 to 30 years the further development of monopoly capitalism has given birth to the transnational or multinational corporation leading to the further internationalisation of finance-industrial capital, no longer through the trade relations fostered around the capitalist countries only, but through the penetration and integration of those giant multinational corporations in the “foreign” economies in which they operate, especially in the so-called Third World countries.

Home and foreign in this context become relative economic categories. As the director of one of the largest multinationals, Nestle Food Company, reminds us:

“We cannot be taken for pure Swiss nor for pure nationals, but rather as dependent on the entire world; if such a thing is possible, we are probably an intermediate thing, a race apart. In other words, we have a special nationality, the Nestle nationality.”<sup>2</sup>

The objective basis for the growth of multinational corporations lies in two inter-related features of capitalist development: Firstly, in the general tendency of a fall in the rate of profit in the more advanced capitalist countries. Secondly, the tendency of the higher profitability of capital in less developed economies, particularly in the Third World countries. It was in the United States, the most advanced capitalist country, that the multinationals began proliferating after the Second World War. Hence the continuing domination of US finance-industrial capital, not only in the Third World countries, but also in Canada and the Western capitalist countries.

Multinationals have through their diverse and complex operations penetrated not only the economies of many countries but indeed the consciousness of millions of people in these countries. Names like Ford, Chrysler, Nestle, IBM, Standard Oil, Esso, Texaco, ITT, Coca-Cola, to name only a few of these giants, have become household names, in most cases hiding the reality of gigantism, exploitation and political manipulation which are synonymous with their economic operations. Can we forget ITT's role in plotting the downfall of Salvador Allende's popular government in Chile? Or the attempt of Standard Oil of New Jersey to bring down the revolutionary government of Cuba when their vast assets were nationalised without compensation? Or the countless ways in which capitalist states regulate laws and form international policy in the interests of monopoly capitalism?

Lonrho is a British-based multinational whose spectacular development from the early sixties to one of the most widespread financial empires on the African continent today has been thoroughly researched by the authors of this book. The facts about Lonrho have, it seems, been patiently collated and presented in every possible detail, so that one of the “invincible empires”, as the multinationals have come to be aptly described, can be scrutinised and analysed in the scope and magnitude of its operations, its style (mostly synonymous with that of its chief executive, Mr. Tiny Rowland) and its impact on the economy of those African countries where its profits are reaped. For African

revolutionaries, concerned with the anti-imperialist, anti-neocolonialist struggle, and the achievement of radical socio-economic transformation of our continent, this well-documented book is a valuable addition to our understanding and knowledge.

Two outstanding features of the book: One, an insight, through Lonrho's style of operation, into the social forces willing and welcoming the penetration of their country's economy by capitalist enterprises for personal benefit. Lonrho's philosophy: Partnership. To maximise profits lucrative directorships are offered to the aspirant capitalist elite (more a compradore bourgeoisie in Africa) to grant rights and concessions to Lonrho to give it an African image. Secondly, the degree of involvement of Lonrho, despite repeated disavowals by Tiny Rowland and Lonrho's Board of Directors, with the white minority racist states of South Africa and Rhodesia, where the corporation has growing investment stakes in mining industries – mainly platinum in South Africa and copper in Rhodesia. The degree to which Lonrho's Rhodesia operations have been crucial in sustaining the Smith regime, tantamount to sanctions-busting, is indisputably revealed in the Report of the Inspectors mandated by the British Department of Trade and Industry to enquire into the affairs of Lonrho. Says the report:

“Mr. Rowland, Mr. Ball and Mr. Butcher (Lonrho directors) were more closely involved in matters relating to the financing and in consequence the development of the Imyati Mine (in Rhodesia) than was consistent with the terms of UK sanctions legislation.”<sup>3</sup>

According to the authors: “. . . the evidence which the report presents of the constant and close liaison that members of the Lonrho board, notably Mr. Rowland, maintained with the Company's Rhodesian and South African interests was in contrast with the assurances which Rowland had given to black Africa.”<sup>4</sup>

In South Africa, apart from highly profitable platinum mining, further acquisitions and expansions are taking place in a way which can leave no doubt that Lonrho, like any other capitalist company operating in racist South Africa, is concerned only with economic exploitation and hence profits. Despite Mr. Rowland's oft-repeated assurance that he loves Africa, we know better. After all, love for Africa sits very uneasily with the rising extraction of profits from Africa: from £14.4 million in 1969 to £46.48 million in 1974, with profits from the Southern African operations rising from £1.46 million in 1970 to £7.44 million in 1974.<sup>5</sup>

Despite its lack of a theoretical framework within which the authors can locate Lonrho as a growing feature of capitalist development, and



which would enable the authors to critically examine the company in an era where the balance of forces on the African continent is decisively moving in favour of national liberation and the anti-imperialist struggle, the book is a valuable piece of documentation.

1. V.I. Lenin: *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.
  2. *Tricontinental*: No. 91, Year 1X-1974.
  3. *Lonrho*: Page 260.
  4. *Ibid*: Page 260.
  5. *Ibid*: Page 263.
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## THE GREAT DAUGHTER OF A GREAT MAN

**Eleanor Marx, Vol. 2, The Crowded Years 1884 – 1898**  
by Yvonne Kapp, published by Lawrence and Wishart, £12.

The second volume of Yvonne Kapp's monumental work has now joined the first, *Family Life 1855–1883*, published in 1972, to provide the definitive biography of Karl Marx's youngest and most brilliant daughter. To Yvonne Kapp, our salutations. She has performed not only an important historical task but a labour of love, and her own ardour and intelligence, leavened with a dry and enchanting wit, shine out of every page.

Eleanor Marx was a woman of great distinction in her own right — author and journalist, politician and trade unionist, linguist, translator of *Madame Bovary* and Ibsen, interpreter, public speaker and lecturer, with Engels, her father's literary executor, pioneer in many fields of human endeavour, one of the leading figures associated with the fight for a British socialist party, for the 8-hour day, the observance of May Day, the foundation of the Second International, the formation of the Gas Workers' Union and the organisation of the unorganised workers in Britain — the range and intensity of her activities were immense. The book teems with information about the socialist movement and its pro-

tagonists, and contains much that is new about the Marx-Engels relationship.

As impressive as the quality and quantity of Eleanor's labours was the spirit in which they were carried out. Yvonne Kapp says of her: "She could have become one of the foremost figures in the annals of British socialism. But this implies an urge to be in the fore; and that she never had. She was not trying to make a name for herself. Indeed, she would have wished to be counted among the ranks of that great army of anonymous men and women who, over the generations, without recognition or reward, have given their volunteer service to end the exploitation of man by man and, in doing so, helped to make history. The lives of any one of them might be worth the telling. We happen to know Eleanor's name because it was Marx."

Was the name Marx a blessing or a burden? It was in the shadow of her great father that she grew up, and his influence remained strong upon her, not only as a political thinker but as a man, until the day when she took her own life by poison at the tragically early age of 43. To her nephew Jean Longuet she left a short note: "My last word is addressed to you. Try to be worthy of your grandfather." Was she herself trying too hard to be worthy of her father? Was she oppressed by a sense of guilt and failure?

Outwardly there was no sign of it. She was always charming and accessible. A *Daily Telegraph* report of a Hyde Park meeting on the Irish question attended by over 100,000 people noted that Eleanor had "a winning and rather pretty way of putting forth revolutionary and socialist ideas as though they were quite the gentlest thoughts on earth" and added: "She was enthusiastically applauded for a speech delivered with perfect self-possession".

Dockers' union leader, Ben Tillett, wrote of her unceasing work, day and night, in support of the striking dockers in 1889: "Among those who live in my memory. . . Eleanor Marx remains a vivid and vital personality, with great force of character, courage and ability".

Yet the Eleanor Marx who emerges from this biography was not so much a leader as a devoted follower; she needed the inspiration and guidance of those stronger than herself. In her youth it was the giant figure of her father upon whom she leant; afterwards the scarcely less impressive personality of Engels provided the necessary authority and endorsement for her actions. When both were gone, only Edward Aveling was left, and he had not only betrayed her personally (though never, Yvonne Kapp stresses, politically) but was also crippled by a

wasting disease and was, in the event, to survive her by only four months.

Eleanor died feeling she had nothing more to give or to live for. And indeed she had given more in the last 15 years of her life than most people can aspire to in their allotted three score years and ten. After the almost cosy intimacy and warmth of *Family Life*, Yvonne Kapp in *The Crowded Years* has documented it all in great detail – indeed, perhaps in too great detail, for the book is too long (775 pages) and too expensive (£12) to suit the taste and pocket of the ordinary reader. To the extent that this may prevent the widest possible readership for this magnificent biography it is to be regretted.

P. M.

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## THE SOCIOLOGY AND POLITICS OF SELF-DESTRUCTION

### **Race and Suicide in South Africa**

by Fatima Meer. Routledge & Kegan Paul (London), 1976, £5.95.

*Race and Suicide* by Fatima Meer is an intensive, statistically rich study of social conditions and relationships based on the hypothesis that these are associated with suicide patterns in Durban over two periods of time. These periods of time include the surge of momentous political campaigns in the struggle for national liberation from white supremacist domination. The Passive Resistance Campaign of 1946; the Defiance Campaign of 1952; the Congress of the People and the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955; the Treason Trial of 1956 and the launching of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 were concentrated political campaigns in a continuing struggle by the oppressed people of our country. These constitute for Fatima Meer events of heightened social cohesion for the black community and provide the opportunity to test the theory of the sociologist Emile Durkheim that suicide is a phenomenon of "anomie" loosely translated as the individual disruption in social integration.

Is the rate of suicide amongst Africans, Coloureds, Indians and whites related to political campaigns in the way that suicide rates dropped in Europe during the Second World War? Durban is the laboratory; the African, Coloured, Indian and white suicides the participants; and the campaigns the experimental conditions for this study which employs data collection of sociological phenomena of each of the



groups. The answer is that the frustration suicide rate in Durban does not bear out Durkheim's theory. Despite the vast amount of social data collected, if she had stopped there, the study at least would have identified the fact that suicide is not purely a sociological phenomenon though aspects of social life clearly will have an influence on medical and other social-psychological aspects of existence.

Not having stopped at this point the author proceeds to construct anecdotal accounts based on inference from interviews with relatives, where possible, suicide notes and from information that she has gleaned from inquest records. This information is liberally interpreted in terms of suicide being an act of aggression, sometimes an act of vengeance against the individual's primary social contacts, at other times aggression inwardly directed and in these circumstances displaced from the true sources of frustration on to the self.

These ad hoc accounts make plausible reading, but they carry with them the inherent danger of appearing causative when in fact the phenomenon of suicide is a complex issue probably associated with biochemical, social, psychological and psychiatric factors. One instance in the author's interpretation which illustrates this reviewer's scepticism of her generalisations is in the account of an Indian girl working as a domestic for an Indian family. The author says that Indian families tend to treat their domestic help as part of the family and that the workers might regard their employers as substitute families (p. 151). My own experience as an Indian visiting Durban, a vivid politicising event for me, was to see that Indian employers of Indian domestic help did not differ in their operation of the master-servant relationship in spite of similar racial origin. Mrs. Meer's own account soon reveals the contradictory nature of her original tenet when the employer, however benevolent, became aware of the possible "harmful" influence of this working girl's personal conduct on her own petty bourgeois moves for her family.

There is a need for sociological-ethnographical study of the peoples who constitute the South African community. The inhuman compound existence of the African migrant workers and the breakdown of social customs obtaining in rural society even in relation to customary social drinking described by the author is interesting. The changes in mores consequent on the indentured Indian labourers becoming proletarianised in Natal is of sociological significance. What actually is the transition process of the Coloured people in Durban with

the hardening of apartheid — the Job Reservation Act and the Population Registration Act? Do white people kill themselves when they no longer feel masters?

*Race and Suicide in South Africa* is interspersed with ethnic characteristics and cultural traits but hardly elucidates the tragedy of suicide. The book will be a disappointment to anyone expecting insight into either of these questions. It is particularly weak in that, though there is an abundance of tabulated data on various social aspects, it is lacking in information; e.g., about psychiatric services for blacks, the existence and adequacy of disability allowances or medical services to the “incurably ill” (e.g., tuberculosis) amongst blacks which she cites as stated causes for suicide by black breadwinners.

In general, the study suffers from the malaise of bourgeois sociology in that its methodology is based on a static concept of society — collection of data — rather than that social process is a dialectical phenomenon within which data collection is part of scientific methodology. The individual is not a constituent element of society but stands outside of society and on whom social processes operate.

As a black sociologist teaching in a South African university, the author of this book is a woman’s leader and a black consciousness exponent, and is in a position to influence ideology in the social sciences. Though one senses aspects of a national consciousness in the midst of work that aims to be scientifically neutral its weakness is its unqualified basic acceptance of bourgeois tenets of human life.

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## **DON'T PLAY WITH APARTHEID**

### **Southern Africa: Which Side is Britain On?**

by Jack Woddis, published by the Communist Party of Great Britain, 20p.

Jack Woddis is the head of the International Department of the British Communist Party and the writer of many books on Africa. In this pamphlet he exposes the role of British imperialism in propping up the Vorster racist regime and its apartheid system.

The root and fruit of racialism is profit, he writes. It is because the imperialists extract greater profits from their investments in Southern Africa than from anywhere else in the world that they are reluctant to

take action against the apartheid system. Britain has about £3,000 million invested in South Africa, and the rate of British investment in recent years has been steadily rising. Twenty-nine percent of all South Africa's exports are taken by Britain.

“Because Britain, as the main investor in South Africa, is the key backer of Vorster and Smith, it is the British labour and progressive movement, above all, whose solidarity is most urgently needed. It is action here, in Britain, especially by the organised working class, that is needed to bring to an end the biggest flow of aid to the racist regimes.”

Woddis points to the failure of successive labour governments to carry out the policies on South Africa laid down by the Labour Party and the TUC calling for an end to military collaboration, a halt to all new investment, withdrawal by British banks and a ban on trade with South Africa.

Far from injuring the British economy, Woddis points out, these measures would be in the direct interest of the working people of Britain. “We and the black people of South Africa have a common enemy, the giant firms. We should, therefore, strengthen our common fight. Every measure of help to the national liberation movements is an aid to our own struggle here for better wages and conditons, for jobs and security, and to end monopoly rule and usher in socialism”.

D.P.





greater engagement of the masses in the fight against the colonialist oppressor, ensuring that their sacrifices are enriching a better future.

The impetus of the struggle against the new exploiters develops parallel to the growing defeats of colonialism and imperialism, these new exploiters being more and more deprived of the support of their accomplices and masters.

The positive solution of the antagonistic class contradictions in our midst, the elimination of the new exploiters in leadership posts, increase the popular dimension of the struggle and transform the struggle for national liberation into a People's Democratic Revolution, the patriotic war reaching the dimension of people's liberation war.

It was these transformations in the nature of the struggle waged which enabled us to expose, resist and defeat the attacks of the enemy, their manoeuvres and their subversive notions. It was these transformations which enabled us to carry out the process of national liberation and to prevent defeated colonialism from being replaced by neo-colonialism, blocking the internal bourgeoisie's chances of acceding to power after the defeat of the colonial bourgeoisie.

Thus the masses' sacrifices were not in vain and the dynamic of the revolutionary process was maintained.

## **2ND THESIS**

The winning of power by the Mozambican working masses intensified the class struggle at national level and at the same time increased the aggressiveness of imperialism against our country.

The internal reactionaries and imperialism, the permanent enemy, cannot resign themselves to defeat and therefore, although they are on the defensive, they multiply their subversive and provocative acts against the revolutionary power and the sovereignty of our state.

As Comrade Samora Machel explained, faced with an enemy whose nature is to commit crimes and aggression against us, the proper strategy is to combat reaction while it is weak, prevent it from consolidating, disorganising it while it is still concentrating to attack us, organise the people to smash the enemy.

The class analysis of our society shows us that the overwhelming majority of our people, who belong to the worker-peasant alliance, are in radical and frontal opposition to the handful of old and new exploiters.

The exploiting classes can be classified by origin in two groups:

1. the colonial bourgeoisie, demobilised and in disarray because of the defeat of Portuguese colonial-fascism, is systematically abandoning the country;

2. the small and middle internal bourgeoisie, numerically small and with a very weak economic base, but which are desperately trying to replace the colonial bourgeoisie as an exploiting force and intermediary of imperialism.

Joined in an alliance with these forces, one in full decadence (the colonial bourgeoisie) and the other extremely feeble (the internal bourgeoisie), are marginal elements from the labouring classes, corrupted by the process and crimes of the colonial war (former GE, GEP, Flechas and OPV, delinquents and professional criminals, etc.).

Collectively they are weak, but their penetration in the apparatus of the state and the economy and above all their situation as internal representatives of imperialism make them highly dangerous. Likewise their cultural values and tastes, being those of the colonial-capitalism which used to dominate society, still predominate and pervert society, especially the urban zones and the disorganised strata of worker and student youth.

Strong because of its support from the broad masses, strengthened by the prestige of its victorious struggle against the aggressors in our country, FRELIMO unleashed powerful offensives and delivered mortal blows against the forces of reaction and the bourgeoisie:

- starting the process of dismantling and destroying the colonial-capitalist state apparatus and setting up the bases for the worker-peasant state;

- taking control of the principal financial instruments and the main industries, blocking economic sabotage and imposing state control on the vital sectors of the economy;

- nationalising the land and rented buildings, principal economic base of the forces of the internal bourgeoisie;

- nationalising education and creating a new justice, uprooting the bourgeoisie's power in these sectors, uprooting its control of the Mozambican's mind.

- nationalising health, the funeral agencies and eliminating the trade in sickness and death.



These blows against the class enemy permitted us to consolidate power, accelerate the disintegration of the colonial bourgeoisie, block the growth of the internal bourgeoisie, disorganise it and demoralise it.

The broad masses resolutely support these gains which were immediately materialised in the taking of the cities by the people, the substantial lowering of house rents, the increase in school attendance, the increase in the number of people using hospital establishments, etc.

Using various direct or indirect attempts at sabotage, the enemy tried to neutralise, pervert or empty of their content the new popular victories. The enemy here and there managed to spread confusion and impede the process of materialisation of the achievements, but taken as a whole, the capitalists' actions were a failure, the victories were consolidated and became irreversible.

### **3RD THESIS**

The conditions for building People's Democracy in our country have been created:

- the country has been liberated;
- the worker and peasant class is imposing its power in the state and society.

People's Democracy is for our people the historic stage in which we consolidate the ideological base and build the material base for the passage to socialism. It is the stage in which the whole of society, under the leadership of the worker-peasant alliance –

- strengthens the power of the labouring class;
- consolidates ideological and class unity;
- carries out the liquidation of the vestiges of feudal and colonial-capitalist society, destroying in particular the exploitation of women and youth, and the decadent and corrupt values of the old society;
- breaks definitively with dependence on, and integration in, the imperialist system;
- constructs a powerful system for the defence of national sovereignty and the Revolution;
- builds heavy industry, starting point for an advanced and strong industry;
- leads the broad masses to win and exercise power on the fronts of education, science, culture and health;
- definitively establishes the principle of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his work.”

In this stage the ideological struggle is accentuated, so as to build the

New Man, the socialist Man, the Man free from all superstitious and obscurantist subservience, the Man who dominates science and culture and assumes the fraternal and collective relations and duties of society.

#### **4TH THESIS**

The undertaking of this task presumes the creation and organisation of the vanguard Party of the worker-peasant alliance, guided by the scientific ideology of the proletariat.

In his message of September 25, 1970, Comrade Samora Machel referred to the task of organising this force. Without a revolutionary Party and without revolutionary ideology it is impossible for the revolution to advance.

This presumes the transformation of FRELIMO into a vanguard Party of the worker-peasant alliance, a Party armed with the scientific ideology of the proletariat.

At the same time, the broad patriotic, anti-imperialist and popular front, which will mobilise and organise the broad masses in the glorious task of building the New Society, must be preserved, consolidated and expanded.

While the class vanguard is organising itself in Party Committees, the broad masses will be organised in the democratic mass organisations, under the leadership and in the framework of the Party – FRELIMO.

#### **5TH THESIS**

Taking agriculture as the base and industry as the dynamising factor, making the building of heavy industry the decisive factor in the battle to break with misery and imperialist domination, we will build the material base of People's Democracy.

The battle for the cooperatives and the communal villages will create the conditions for the socialisation and industrialisation of our vast agricultural potential.

Getting the best out of, and utilising, our natural resources, parallel to the maximum utilisation of existing industrial capacity and taking advantage of our situation as a maritime country on a route essential to the world economy, will enable us to give decisive support to agriculture and promote the rapid economic growth of the country.

The transformation of the whole of our country into a school in which everyone learns and teaches, everyone raising their potential, technical, scientific and cultural knowledge, will guarantee the training

of the cadres necessary to the development and putting into practice of our class's power in science, culture and technology.

To preserve and expand the gains of the revolution against imperialism and reaction, to support the advance of the revolutionary liberation struggle it is necessary to continue the drive for the building of powerful and modern armed forces, rooted in the mobilised and organised People.

## **6TH THESIS**

The Mozambique Revolution is an integral part of the world proletarian Revolution. Internationalism is a major and fundamental constant of our revolution, explains President Samora Machel.

At international level we struggle to strengthen the natural alliance that unites us to the workers' and peasants' parties, to the progressive and national liberation movement in the rest of the world, to the world democratic movement.

This vast anti-imperialist front should be continuously consolidated and expanded in the common fight for independence and freedom, for justice and progress, for peace.

The task of FRELIMO is to act so that the unity of workers and peasants, fundamental weapon in the battle, is continuously reinforced in the process of the struggle. In its methods and criticism, FRELIMO will always distinguish between the errors of a friend and the action of the enemy, and will avoid any confusion being created about who is a friend and who is an enemy, no matter how serious the friend's errors.

## **7TH THESIS**

As the leading force of society and the state, the Party must guide, mobilise and organise the broad masses in the task of building People's Democracy, carry out the construction of our state apparatus which materialises the power of the worker-peasant alliance and serves as an instrument for the construction of the ideological, political, economic, cultural and social base of the socialist society.



# Letter to the Editor

**WHICH CLASS WILL RULE IN ZIMBABWE?**

**from Jama Somhlolo**

The Geneva Conference on the independence of Zimbabwe achieved nothing for the working class of Zimbabwe and the other toiling masses who are groaning under the yoke and fangs of British colonialism and the racialism of the white bourgeoisie of Zimbabwe who are nothing more than the guardians of imperialist interests in the country.

The Conference was convened mainly to select a black imperialist puppet to take over from the Rhodesia Front. In other words, the Rhodesia Front is now regarded as a threat to imperialism in the sense that its remaining in power any longer will only make the working class and its allies fight with more determination. The longer the armed struggle against colonialism and exploitation is prosecuted, the quicker it will be for the working class and the peasants to realise that nothing but socialism will destroy once and for all the forces of exploitation, colonialism and political subjugation of the working people.

It is the fear (on the part of imperialism and those who want to be its puppets) of the rise of a truly workers' leadership that made them call for the Geneva Conference. A black puppet taking over from Ian Smith has more advantages for imperialism than for the working people. So far,

the struggle in Zimbabwe has been made to look as if it is basically a struggle between the white race and the black race. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of Zimbabwe's black population believes that if any black leader takes over the reins of power in Zimbabwe, a land flooded with freedom and happiness will automatically have been created for them. It is no wonder that we find the imperialist news media focussing the bright stage light on the racial side of the issue — racialism does nothing but camouflage the real source of the suffering of the working people.

If Smith goes, and a black bourgeois takes over now, imperialism will celebrate once again because to them, the change will not have threatened their interests in the country. In fact, it may turn out that the black puppets are more cruel, more oppressive than the white puppets have been — what with the general acceptance of a black president/prime minister by the petty-bourgeois-dominated population!

Many African countries today are ruled by black imperialist puppets. Typical is Malawi where Dr. Banda's rule has brought very little change for the working people of the country. In other words, it is a Zimbabwe Banda the imperialists want to see taking over from Ian Smith.

What we want, what the masses of Zimbabwe want, what the working class of Zimbabwe wants is everlasting happiness. This happiness, this satisfaction of both material and spiritual needs of the working people, will come about as a result of the establishment of a workers' government, a government of the working people in the country. It is this government that will then nationalise the land, factories, mines, imperialist and racist farms, cooperativise the peasant land, nationalise the means of distribution and exchange, nationalise institutions of education and make them free for all. It is the power of the working class that will nationalise hospitals and all medical institutions and make them non-fee-paying; it is this power that will establish a planned national economy, that will give the people the chance to vote for their representatives, that will create conditions for free trade unions. And it is only this power that will do away with exploitation, tribalism and racialism in Zimbabwe.

To those wanting to take over the reins of power from Ian Smith, we ask: What class are you negotiating for? Why the rush to a constitutional conference if you believe in the armed struggle? What are you going to do, when you have exchanged positions with Ian Smith, to those who have been militarily trained to fight against colonialism and racialism?

Let us wait and see who the imperialist stooge is going to be, let us wait and see who will occupy Ian Smith's chair to command the Zimbabwe forces of reaction against the working people of Zimbabwe, let us wait and see who will take over command of the army, air force, and the police force that have detained, tortured, maimed and murdered thousands upon thousands of Zimbabwe's brave and true sons and daughters of the working people.

To the working class of Zimbabwe and its allies, we say: *the fight must go on until you have established your power in Zimbabwe.*





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