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NO 85 SECOND QUARTER 1981



***SOUTH AFRICA
DECLARES WAR
ON AFRICA***

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EDITORIAL NOTES



S.A. DECLARES WAR ON AFRICA

The bloodthirsty and murderous raid conducted by South African commandos on ANC houses in Matola, near Maputo, last January amounts to a declaration of war against the frontline states and all independent Africa. What the Botha regime has hitherto described as a "low intensity" war against invading guerrilla forces is rapidly developing into a full-scale confrontation as the racists attempt to crush all opposition at home and in neighbouring territories with a view to consolidating white domination over the whole sub-continent. Over the years, the aggression of the racists has steadily intensified at the cost of thousands of lives, not only

of freedom fighters, but also of civilians in South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and other neighbouring states who are being hunted down and exterminated like animals by murderous bands of South Africans and foreign mercenaries. Progressive forces everywhere must be mobilised now to call a halt to this racist aggression before the war spreads ever wider, bringing terror, death and destruction in its wake, and possibly serving as the detonator of a world war involving all the great powers. Following Israel's example, a South African attempt to occupy neighbouring territory is an immediate danger.

It should now be clear to all who are the real terrorists in South Africa, as elsewhere in the world — not our gallant freedom fighters, struggling against fearful odds to turn their country into a non-racial democratic state in which there will be equal rights and opportunities for all. No, the real terrorists are the specially trained death squads of the white supremacists, the bounty hunters who shoot women and children in cold blood, and lop ears and limbs off corpses to claim their reward from their paymasters, the guardians of privilege and profit for the white minority and their imperialist allies. The real terrorists are those whose only passport to power is terror, who refuse the vote to the majority of South Africans because they know they could never survive a free election. Reagan, Haig and Thatcher, who demand free elections in Afghanistan, are silent about South Africa or the implementation of UN Resolution 435 calling for free elections in Namibia. The “democrats” of the western world are very selective in their criticism. None of them have condemned the murders of Matola.

Now Premier Botha has called a general election for April 29 as part of his “total strategy”, allegedly to defend South Africa against the “total onslaught” to which he claims it is being subjected, but in reality to distract attention from his total failure to solve any of the problems which confront his regime inside South Africa. The election will be fought, as usual, on the issue of the “reds” and the “blacks” who threaten white supremacy — the issue which brought the Nationalists to power in 1948 and has kept them there with steadily increasing majorities ever since. And Botha's sole aim is to consolidate the power of his clique within the Nationalist Party by once more calling on the tribal loyalty of Afrikaner Nationalism.

Unnecessary

In terms of "whites only" politics there was no need for an election. The Nationalist Party has an enormous majority in the House of Assembly, and there is no possibility that the opposition Progressive Federal Party can come to power. The PFP loss last year of two by-elections it could normally have been expected to win is a measure of the polarisation which is taking place among whites as the revolutionary pressures intensify amongst the oppressed black majority. True, a sizeable minority of whites are moving to the left: the number of war resisters is growing, many whites are taking a stand in resistance to the tyrannical acts of the racist regime, doubt about the viability of white supremacy in its traditional form is being voiced openly even in some sections of the pro-government press, pessimism is the prevailing mood among the Nationalist intellectuals, dissent has even surfaced in the Dutch Reformed Church.

On the other hand, the surge to the right has been even more marked. The breakaway right-wing Reconstituted Nationalist Party (HNP) has gained ground in recent elections, right-wing groups are resorting more and more to violence to cow "verligte" elements, especially academics, support for the Treurnicht "verkrampes" inside the Nationalist Party is growing — we have even been treated to the revivalism of the black-gowned "kappiekommando" harking back to the ideological and racial purity of the Great Trek.

Goodness knows, all the "concessions" and "reforms" of the Botha regime have been miserable enough. For all the talk of a "new deal", nothing has changed for the overwhelming majority of the oppressed black masses. The African majority still have to carry passes, are still subject to influx control and the brutality of the police, are still the victims of racial discrimination in every sphere of life. More than 3 million blacks are unemployed, and those that have jobs have seen their real incomes decline since the mid-1970s, despite South Africa's "boom" resulting from the high price of gold. When blacks protest against injustice they are arrested, banned and deported, beaten up or murdered in prison cells; the white-owned newspapers which attempt to provide some outlet for their grievances are suppressed.

"Give me six months" said Vorster a few years ago. "Change or die" said Botha on coming into office. But apart from words and promises, what have they done? Jacked up a few stooges like the Matanzima brothers, the Mangopes and their ilk; provided openings for a few businessmen to enrich

themselves by exploiting their fellow blacks; allowed a few blacks to be served in bars in "international" hotels; permitted a handful of blacks to play sport with whites. Yet even these cosmetic changes have proved too much for the "verkramptes". The Treurnicht clique openly reject them on principle. The white Mine Workers' Union threatens to go on strike if any further dilution of apartheid takes place.

We can say confidently that no blacks have been confused by the Botha strategy. You can't convince a hungry man without a job that he has a full stomach and a glorious future in the land of his birth to which the Prime Minister insists he does not belong. True, some blacks have been bought off by the offer of a safe and lucrative job without responsibility. But on the whole the black response to Botha has been unanimous. While there may be different methods of resistance, there is total rejection by blacks of the entire apartheid package, Bantustans and all, despite faked referendums and elections held at bayonet-point under a state of emergency. Even the stooges claim they are only using the apartheid machinery as a platform for change.

Utter Confusion

Where Botha has created ideological havoc, however, is amongst the whites, who under his leadership or lack of it have lost their sense of direction. Gone are the days of certainty under Verwoerd when everybody knew his place and everything was labelled and ticketed by divine prescription because the Prime Minister had a direct line to heaven. Today the white racists simply don't know where they are going. They ask themselves anxiously — are we moving forwards or backwards? Are we being offered the weakening or strengthening of apartheid? Are the whites in Namibia being sold down the river? Speaking in the no-confidence debate at the opening of the parliamentary session in January, Botha said "a new heaven" was hardly possible overnight. But what is heaven? Nobody can give a clear answer any more. Botha calls for collaboration and co-operation with neighbouring states — but does he mean Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique, whose people he is slaughtering indiscriminately, or Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda, whose people are being mercilessly exploited as usual? And how do you create a good relationship with the majority of your citizens when you refuse to accept that they are citizens at all?

Botha was challenged by opposition leader Dr F. van Zyl Slabbert: "Does the Prime Minister believe in a separate constitutional dispensation for whites, coloureds and Asians to that for Africans?" To which Botha replied: "Yes". But when Slabbert called on the Prime Minister to declare an intent to work for a system with equal citizenship for all, Botha turned the tables on him. If the national convention for which Slabbert was calling decided to recommend black majority rule for South Africa, would Dr Slabbert accept it? Dr Slabbert said the PFP's policy clearly stated it was opposed to black majority government.

Botha: "Would you, therefore, reject it?"

Slabbert: "Of course I would reject it."

This exchange reflects the ostrich-like mentality of the white racists who think that because they bury their heads in the sand nobody can notice the disarray in their ranks, the total failure of either the regime or its opponents to produce a workable programme for the development of the country. Botha claims he stands, as ever, for separate development. But in the same parliamentary debate the chairman of the government's Consolidation Committee, Mr Hennie van der Walt, said the geographical consolidation of the Bantustans was impossible and South Africa should forget about solutions based on drawing lines and borders. If one were honest, he said, it would have to be agreed that the exact number of Africans in South Africa today was unknown.

"The real answer lies in economic development not necessarily based on the policy of separate development. We have to accept that we can't have 10 or 20 separate economies here".

Confirmation of this approach was provided by Finance Minister Owen Horwood in an interview with a French business publication at the beginning of February.

"We are phasing out apartheid because it does not work. The plan to set up homelands for the various tribal groups has not proved economically viable."

Apartheid was not carved in stone, he said.

"Nothing remains static, not even South Africa. So, to meet our objectives of growth and reducing unemployment, the only conclusion is to link growth with the inclusion of blacks (Africans) and other groups in our skilled labour force with equal opportunity. Our goal is to bring our own black, Asian and Coloured people into the economy, into the society. We can no longer use them as a pool of unskilled labour to be called when we need them and sent home when we do not".

When news of this interview reached South Africa, an embarrassed Horwood emphatically denied it, though he had said nothing very different from the unreproved Hennie van der Walt. It is this Nationalist double-speak that is causing all the trouble. The Nationalist leaders want to eat their cake and have it, and everybody knows this is impossible. Apartheid cannot be reformed, only destroyed.

The Nationalist Party, like most nationalist parties, was formed to promote the interests of the Afrikaner bourgeoisie which has succeeded, by mobilising the power of the Afrikaner volk, in capturing an ever larger share of the South African market.

South Africa has seen in the recent years a continuing merger of Afrikaner and non-Afrikaner capital, and of South African and foreign capital, a steady increase in the activity, power and influence of the multinational corporations. One consequence of this has been the steady advancement of the economic position of the Afrikaner until today he enjoys parity with the English-speaking South African who dominated the economy in the earlier years of this century. By the year 2000 Afrikaner economic dominance will be firmly established. If it was Afrikaner deprivation which fuelled the Nationalist Party and brought it to power in 1948, it is paradoxically the triumph of the Afrikaner bourgeoisie which is undermining Nationalist Party unity today.

This is the real source of Botha's dilemma — that he has to try to serve two masters: 1. the South African and international bourgeoisie, who are not interested in apartheid, but want a relaxation of influx control, a greater mobility of labour, the training of Africans for skilled jobs, greater productivity etc. because this is the road to economic expansion and increased profits.

2. The white workers, farmers and Dutch Reformed churchgoers who comprise the bulk of Nationalist Party voters, and who cling to the traditional values, seeking their inspiration in the Great Trek and the old Boer Republics.

This is the reason why the Nationalist Party leadership speaks with two voices today, causing endless confusion and uncertainty among the white electorate. And it is in the hope of ending this confusion and consolidating his leadership that Botha is calling his election. The problem is that nobody knows what policies they are being asked to endorse: Botha's or Treurnicht's, verlig or verkramp? From this point of view the election will solve nothing, for neither can exist without the other within the framework of the Nationalist Party.

A Myth

For the majority of South Africans, who have no vote, the election makes no difference one way or the other. So long as white racist rule continues, verlig, verkramp or PFP, they will continue to suffer from discrimination and exploitation. The myth of the liberal economists that apartheid oppression would be destroyed by economic advance has been exploded by history. Despite unprecedented economic advance in the last 50 years, black living standards have been eroded, black oppression has been intensified, black unemployment is at an all-time peak, black resistance is more bitter than ever. And the Botha response is to intensify the persecution and terror at home and step up the aggression against the frontline states in an attempt to perpetuate white domination and privilege. It is significant that immediately after the murderous South African raid on Maputo last January in which SACTU leader William Khanyile and other comrades were massacred in cold blood, not a single voice of protest was to be heard from the white Parliament. On the contrary, all parties showered praise on the racist death squad. And similar squads are operating in Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia, trying to turn the whole of southern Africa into South Africa's back yard. In this campaign of naked terrorism and repression, the Botha regime enjoys the total support of Reagan, Thatcher and other western leaders who regard all movements of national liberation as their enemies. Indeed the advent of Reagan and Haig to power in the US has been interpreted by the Botha regime as a licence to kill and torture with impunity — to shoot first for no questions will be asked after.

Our struggle for national liberation has been internationalised with a vengeance. But at least our people are learning who are their friends and who their enemies. The coming period calls for intensified struggle and sacrifice on the part of all freedom fighters — to avenge our martyred dead, to wipe out the stain of Matola and Cassinga, to throw back the forces of the enemy, to win freedom and justice for all in a liberated South Africa. Let us draw encouragement from the confusion in which the racists find themselves. They have lost their way, but ours lies clear before us.

THE FIGHT FOR NAMIBIA

The Geneva conference on Namibia last January was called to discuss the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution No. 435 calling for a ceasefire, the restriction of South African and Namibian forces to a specified number of bases, the emplacement of a United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) to monitor the ceasefire, the repeal of all discriminatory laws and the release of all political prisoners precedent to the holding of free and fair elections for a constituent assembly, the entry into force of a new constitution drawn up by the assembly and the consequent achievement of independence of Namibia.

All the indications were that the groundwork had been laid for another Lancaster House conference, with pressure from the western powers on the one hand and the frontline states on the other hand guaranteeing that South Africa and SWAPO reached some form of agreement. What, then, went wrong? Why did the conference break down?

All parties are agreed that no blame can attach to SWAPO, and indeed not even South Africa tried to blame SWAPO for the failure to reach agreement. From the outset SWAPO declared its willingness to sign an immediate ceasefire and proceed to the rapid implementation of Resolution 435, and throughout the conference the SWAPO delegates behaved with dignity and restraint in the face of severe provocation and insult from the South Africans and their Namibian puppets.

South African refusal to sign a ceasefire was based on their allegation that the UN was not impartial because it recognised SWAPO as the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people. Even on this issue, SWAPO was prepared to give way, agreeing that once elections had been called, it would be placed in the same position as any other party. But South Africa still refused, and the conference broke up with no sign of a settlement in sight.

The position of DTA leader Dirk Mudge and his Namibian puppet allies can be disregarded. They are in positions of authority because of the presence of between 60,000 and 100,000 South African troops, without whose firepower to back them up they would have been swept away by SWAPO forces long ago. And it has been admitted on all sides that if "free and fair" elections were to be held in Namibia, SWAPO would win an overwhelming victory. At the time of the Geneva conference some of the western powers were advising South Africa to accept this possibility, and there were even significant elements inside Namibia advocating

compromise. As late as February this year, leaders of the Federal Party, the remnants of the old United Party, declared themselves in favour of Resolution 435, saying they "did not believe that SWAPO would necessarily win an election in the territory nor that, if it did, it would impose a Marxist dictatorship there". (*Rand Daily Mail* 7.2.1981.)

The Federal Party accused the South African Government of deliberately wrecking the Geneva conference, and said all the signs were that the Botha regime, while publicly declaring its willingness to adhere to Resolution 435 in principle, was preparing behind the scenes to abandon the settlement plan "against the wishes of most of the people there". Having just taken part, together with other "internal" Namibian parties (but excluding SWAPO) in talks with the Botha government in Cape Town, the Federal Party ought to know.

If South Africa ever intended to consider a compromise at Geneva, two things may have changed its mind:

1. The defeat of Mudge's Republican Party by the Nationalist Party in the "second tier" elections in Namibia last November — the Republican Party won only 7 of the 18 seats in the white Legislative Assembly which formerly ran the country. Botha obviously saw this as a sign of what might happen in South Africa itself, where he was coming under increasing fire from the right wing for "selling the whites down the river" because of his conduct of affairs in Namibia and his cosmetic "reforms" in South Africa itself.

2. The advent to power in the US of the Reagan administration, which immediately went on record in support of the white racists in South Africa, pledging aid in the fight against "terrorism" (which of course includes SWAPO and the ANC) and helping to funnel arms to UNITA, the real terrorists, in Angola. In the fight against national liberation, Botha and Reagan are full allies.

On the strength of this South Africa continues with its internal settlement plans, and on his return from the Cape Town talks Mudge was calling for the formation of a "South West African" government of national unity comprising the main political parties in the territory — to fight against SWAPO! In this context there is little likelihood of any settlement through another Geneva-type conference on Namibia until the balance of forces both in southern Africa and internationally has been radically altered. SWAPO and the front-line states are pressing for immediate sanctions against South Africa, but these will come up against a veto in the Security Council at least from the US, if not from Britain and

France as well. The main initiative, as President Sam Nujoma declared in his final address to the Geneva conference, must come from the Namibian people themselves.

“In the face of South Africa’s manifest intransigence and prevarications”, he declared, “the oppressed people of Namibia are left with no other alternative but to continue with the liberation struggle until final victory. . . We return to our operational bases to increase and intensify our efforts on all fronts of the struggle”.

For their part, the frontline states, Nigeria and the OAU declared in a joint statement after the Geneva conference:

“We are left with no other alternative but to support the escalation and intensification of the armed struggle heroically being waged by SWAPO. In this regard the OAU member states as a whole pledge their full backing. Africa pledges increased material and financial assistance to SWAPO until final victory and total liberation of Namibia”.

The ANC has likewise pledged its full support on behalf of the South African liberation movement.

COMMUNISM AND POLAND

We make no apology for including in this issue a number of items on the international situation — the advent of the Reagan administration to power in the US, the Vietnamese and Chinese revolutions, the Cuban Communist Party congress, the Polish crisis. What happens in the course of our struggle for liberation and socialism in South Africa will be determined not only by our own struggles but also by the developing power and strength of existing socialism and the progress of the anti-imperialist cause everywhere. As has been made clear in the speeches of Reagan and Haig since assuming office, the strengthening of the forces of imperialism, the hardening of their stance against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, brings in its train a tougher and more hostile attitude towards the liberation movements. Similarly, any weakening of the positions of socialism anywhere in the world weakens our own front.

Reagan talks of “linkage”, meaning that he proposes to relate US foreign

policy on any issue to the overriding conflict between the US and the Soviet Union. But this is not just a confrontation between the "two super-powers", as some like to describe it. The US is the spearhead and arsenal of the world forces of capitalism, imperialism and neo-colonialism fighting to hold back the forces of national liberation and socialism. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, is the sheet anchor of the world liberation front, the guarantor of the national independence of former colonies fighting to retain and extend their freedom from exploitation, the natural ally of all genuine movements of national liberation. And this is so, not merely because "the enemy of my enemy is my friend", which is an argument of sheer opportunism, but because the Soviet Union was the first country to smash the capitalist iron curtain, is the world's pioneer socialist state and is busy laying down the foundations for communism.

It is because the leading force in the Soviet Union is the Communist Party, heir to the fighting traditions of the Bolsheviks, that the Soviet Union takes the internationalist stand it does, supporting anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist forces everywhere because this is the inescapable logic of its Marxist ideology, which is based on proletarian internationalism.

It was this understanding of the vital importance of proletarian internationalism which inspired the founding members of our Communist Party when they broke away from the Labour Party in 1915 over the issue of the war. It is this same adherence to proletarian internationalism which guides our Party in its approach to world politics today. At a time when the forces of imperialism and counter-revolution are concentrating all their efforts on undermining and isolating the Soviet Union, causing division in the ranks of the international Communist movement, weakening the relationship between Communists and non-Communists in the anti-imperialist front, we consider it the duty of all true Communists to work to strengthen the bonds of international Communist unity, to stand by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, to refuse to allow narrow national self-interest to submerge the overriding claims of proletarian internationalism.

No question anywhere in the world can be considered in isolation from this general background, and it is from the class angle that we approach the crisis in Poland. Are the developments in Poland in recent months advancing or retarding the cause of socialism nationally and internationally? This is not any easy question to answer because the situation is extremely fluid and the forces of revolution and counter-revolution ebb and flow with every passing day. And let there be no doubt

that counter-revolutionary forces are active in Poland. In a speech at a meeting of party activists in Poland in January, Stanislaw Kania, first secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party, said:

"We have declared and we declare ourselves in favour of complete and constructive co-operation with the Solidarity trade union as a single whole and with its branch sections. But we must not lose sight of all the bad things that are being done on the basis of Solidarity. It is no secret that Solidarity has become an object for intensive penetration by open enemies of socialism, by persons who have confirmed their counter-revolutionary aims by their conduct on many occasions and have not concealed those aims.

"Dual power never has been and never could become the way of organising public life. Instead of dual power, there is room in Poland for the broad development of democracy, starting from the Parliament, to local People's Councils, down to all self-government and public organisations".

Nor is the party exempt from this cleansing process. To the extent that the party has deviated from the road of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian democracy, the Party itself has accepted part of the responsibility for the errors and shortcomings against which the workers themselves protested. But there is equally little doubt that part of the disruption has been caused by internationally inspired attempts to destabilise Poland, to detach Poland from the Warsaw Pact, to turn Poland back from the road to socialism and open the way for the restoration of capitalism or at any rate for the reincorporation of Poland in some non-socialist form into the camp of imperialism. No one should be under the delusion that the exaggerated and often hysterical western concern with Poland is motivated by any desire to smooth the road to socialism in that country.

If the Party can re-establish the confidence of the working masses of Poland and consolidate its working class base, the whole upsurge can yet turn out to the advantage of socialism, nationally and internationally. If, on the other hand, the process of confrontation escalates to the point where anarchy begins to hold sway and the danger arises of Poland becoming converted into a base for imperialism and counter-revolution in Eastern Europe, strong action will have to be taken to reassert the authority of working-class power. In his speech to the second congress of the Cuban Communist Party which we reprint in this issue, President Castro gave some indication of what this might involve.

Some Lessons

Communists everywhere will be examining the Polish crisis, seeking to learn from it lessons which might apply to the situation in their own country and from which the whole progressive world can benefit. Some of the most salient factors in the Polish crisis were discussed in a speech last September by the general secretary of the US Communist Party, Gus Hall, which we also reprint in this issue because the penetrating analysis he made retains its validity and relevance despite the changes which have since taken place.

No Marxist should be surprised by the fact that conflicts occur in societies in which Communist governments exercise power. Every socialist country has had to inherit from the past the burden of conditions and consciousness left over by the previous epoch, whether capitalist or feudal. Means of production can be nationalised overnight (and even this did not happen in Poland eg on the land, which is mostly still in private hands), but human consciousness, the ideological superstructure, is often very slow to change. In addition, every socialist country has had to fight its way out of the imperialist encirclement and entanglement which has previously enfolded it. International capitalism has consistently tried to hinder the development of socialist power and economic production by trade embargoes and boycotts, as well as physical and psychological warfare and subversion. Even today, we see the imperialist powers, spearheaded by the Reagan and Thatcher administrations, and aided by the Chinese hegemonists, threatening nuclear war, propping up fascist and militarist regimes and resorting to assassination, blackmail and terror against progressive forces everywhere in their desperate attempts to hold back the spread of socialism and national liberation.

But even the final establishment of communism on a world scale will not end the process of social change, only its form. Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*:

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles”.

Communism will put an end to the class conflicts and contradictions which have hitherto been the driving force behind social change, but new contradictions will arise. The synthesis which emerges from the resolution of the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat will in turn become the thesis of the new society which, by the inevitable process of historical and dialectical materialism, will “beget its own negation”. What the nature of this new contradiction will be which will drive forward

society under the conditions of socialism we do not yet know, but no socialist society can avoid or escape it. Indeed, it should be the object of Marxists to analyse, discover and assist the process of social change so as to make it as painless and productive as possible, bearing in mind that the ultimate aim of Marxists is to create a society of abundance in which it will be possible to embody the principle: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", for the common good of all humanity.

WE HAVE NOTHING TO CELEBRATE

The racist regime is planning countrywide celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the inauguration of the South African Republic on May 31, 1961. For the overwhelming majority of the population, there is nothing to celebrate.

The decision to inaugurate the Republic was based on a referendum called by Premier Verwoerd in 1960 as a device to enable the "volk" to recover from the trauma of the state of emergency which followed the Sharpeville shooting. Only whites were allowed to take part in the referendum, of course, but even then the voting was no display of white unity. In a 90 per cent poll, those voting for a republic totalled 850,458; those against, 775,878. According to the 1960 census, the total population of South Africa was just under 16 million. So by decision of just over 5% of the people, South Africa was turned into a Republic.

We have nothing against a republic in principle. In fact, we stand for a democratic people's republic, as outlined in our programme "The Road to South African Freedom". But we totally reject the fascist republic which was foisted on us by the Verwoerd regime, under which we have suffered the most appalling oppression and deprivation, and with which we are now at war. The South African Republic as it exists today must be destroyed root and branch.

We call upon all sections of the South African people to have nothing to do with the Republican celebrations in any shape or form. We repeat — for the overwhelming majority of the population, there is nothing to celebrate.

CORRECTION

In our last issue (No. 84, First Quarter 1981) we stated in the profile of Moses Mabhida, the newly appointed general secretary of the South African Communist Party, that "he is also a member of the Revolutionary Council which is directing the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the apartheid regime in South Africa and put an end to white domination and oppression once and for all".

It has been pointed out to us that this formulation gives the misleading impression that the Revolutionary Council is directing the struggle inside the country instead of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress. As a matter of fact, the Revolutionary Council is the sub-committee of the National Executive Committee.



WORKERS TAKE THE REVOLUTIONARY PATH

by R E Matajo

1980, the 25th anniversary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions and SACTU's declared "Year of the Worker", was an unprecedented year for our workers. We must take stock of 1980 so that we can make it a springboard for the 1980's.

The most significant feature of the past year has been the countrywide strikes: the wave of strikes in the motor industry at Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage; fish and canning workers at Saldanha Bay; textile workers in Natal; food and canning workers in Ceres, Kromriver, East London, Pietermaritzburg, Estcourt and elsewhere; dockworkers, building workers, meatworkers and garment workers in Cape Town; building workers, engineering workers, foodworkers, distributive trade and dairy workers, coal and gold miners in the Transvaal; African municipal workers in Johannesburg; black journalists in Cape Town and Johannesburg and workers at Secunda and Sasol; and engineering and sweet workers in East London. In Kroonstad 80 workers struck when police detained some of their fellow workers and refused to go back to work until they were released.

The abovementioned strikes are not all the strikes that took place — not all strikes are reported. The National Development and Management Foundation compiled a report which stated:

- a. There were 36 reported strikes in South Africa in 1979 involving about 21,000 workers.
- b. By the end of August 1980 the number of reported strikes was 61 involving about 95,000 workers.
- c. All but one of these strikes were illegal.
- d. Altogether 19 employee organisations were involved in the strikes. Of these 6 were registered, 7 were unregistered, 5 had applied for registration and 1 had received provisional registration.
- e. In nearly 5 per cent of the strikes wages were the major cause and in more than 25 per cent of the strikes more than one reason was given. About 15 per cent were solidarity strikes.¹

The workers' actions extended over the greater part of the urbanised and semiurbanised industrial sector of the economy, in all the big urban areas in every province and into semi-urban areas. An examination of the strikers' demands shows the main reasons for the stoppages as being:

- a. Wage demands and demands for improved conditions of employment.
- b. Recognition of workers' committees and their trade unions.
- c. Against victimisation, for reinstatement of workers' leaders and strikers.

These demands are not particularly new. What is new is the large number of strikes and the mass support the workers received from the people in the form of boycotting products at Fattis and Monis, red meat in the case of the meat workers' strike in Cape Town and the material support given to strikers in the form of food and cash to pay strike pay.

Strikes do not just happen, they are a last resort when workers get to the point where they say 'We are not going to take it anymore'. The strikes here show the workers' unity and solidarity in support of their demands. The strikes involved conflict with the state. It has always been a feature of strikes by African workers that the police use violence to force the strikers back to work. Workers were shot at, baton charged, killed and maimed, arrested under pass and other oppressive laws, banished to the homelands or other god-forsaken areas. Employers refused to negotiate with the unions and victimised strikers.

Some highlights of the past strikes

Commerce and industry in the Cape Peninsula were brought to a standstill on Monday and Tuesday 16th and 17th June when Black workers stayed at home in response to a call to observe June 16th and 17th as days of prayer in remembrance of those who died in June 1976 at Soweto and elsewhere.

Monday 16th was more like a Sunday morning. Streets were deserted and there were as many police about as there were pedestrians. Buses were empty, none of the taxis that had been conveying the bus-boycotters were operating, railway stations were deserted. Nyanga railway station is normally one of the busiest serving Mitchells Plain, Guguletu, Nyanga and Mannenburg.

A spokesman for one of the largest construction groups in the Cape said that sites could be described as 'idle — the stay away was almost total'. Mr Brian Macleod, Director of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce, said: "It was impossible to quantify the production loss during the two days' work boycott . . . many firms will have to work flat out over the next few days". Others estimated that between 80 and 90 per cent of the work force had stayed away.

These mass strikes are obviously not included in the National Development and Management Foundation report.

This mass action was linked with the school boycotts, the fight against rent increases and bus fare increases — the one set of activity fertilising and strengthening the other.

The Cape Town meat workers' strike

The Western Province General Workers' Union organised the workers employed at ten large and other small factories. In many of these factories there was 100% organisation and in no single factory less than 75%. The majority of the workers are African. The workers' grievances were presented to the managements by their elected committees. There were in some factories registered works and liaison committees but the workers ignored these committees and therefore many of the major meat factories were forced by the workers to recognise *their elected committees*.

Table Bay Cold Storage was asked by the Union in April to convene a meeting of all Table Bay workers and at this meeting they would be introduced to the workers' democratically elected committee of 6 representatives. Management convened this meeting but insisted that they would only recognise a Liaison Committee on which the workers would have four representatives and that the workers dissociate themselves from the Western Province General Workers' Union. The workers refused to accept the Liaison Committee and the management's conditions. The Director, a Mr Selzer, tore up the union letter in the presence of the workers.

The workers instructed the WPGWU to write a second letter to

management repeating their request and rejecting the conditions. Thereupon Mr Selzer sent a message via the foreman that they send the six workers to see him. The workers, fearing victimisation of their leaders, asked whether Mr Selzer's request meant that he recognised their unregistered committee and that he would no longer compel them to relinquish their union membership. He gave no reply.

On May 7th the workers reported to work dressed in their work clothes but refused to work until Mr Selzer spoke to them. Thereafter Mr Selzer and Department of Manpower Utilisation officials addressed the workers and insisted upon a Liaison Committee. The workers refused to accept their condition and were told that they should take their pay and sign off. They refused to accept their pay and left the factory. On the following day they returned to the factory and stated that they were willing to work immediately the management recognised their committee. Management again refused and the workers left the factory.

On Thursday May 8th the Joint Meat Workers' Committee representing 14 factories held a meeting and drew up a letter which expressed the concern of the meat workers for the plight of their fellow workers in the Table Bay Company, and informed management that workers in other factories would not be prepared to do the work of the Table Bay members for them. This letter was delivered to Table Bay and copies of the letter were taken by the factory representatives to their respective managements. The Table Bay workers returned on Monday morning to work. Mr Selzer refused to see them. There was a large police presence. Mr Selzer issued a press statement, reiterating his conditions and claiming the collective support of all meat employers for his stand.

The Cape Town Stevedores, members of the WPGWU, issued a statement that they would not be happy to load any export meat packed by the scab labour at Table Bay Cold Storage. The Union and workers pleaded for negotiation with Table Bay and other employers. Table Bay sent a messenger to the Committee saying that the workers were no longer employed. 750 meat workers, hearing of this, walked out of their firms in a one-day protest and solidarity demonstration. The employers locked them out and so the 12-week strike of the meat workers started.

The meat workers received the support of the Food and Canning Workers' Union, Cape Town Municipal Workers' Association, Western Province Motor Assembly Workers' Union, the National Union of Commercial and Allied Workers, MAWU, FOSATU, International Union of Food Workers, Dutch Federation of Trade Unions and the ICFTU as

well as religious and women's organisations.

The workers called for a boycott of red meat products which was immediately implemented in the African townships, and in the community financial support reached a high level. The state intervened on the side of the bosses – organisers of the WPGWU were detained and harassed in terms of section 22 of the General Laws Amendment Act. The government raised the floor price of meat by 25% thus assisting the meat bosses to withstand the strike and boycott. The regime took control of the strike in order to stop the bosses and workers from talking to each other “because it wishes to crush progressive democratic workers’ organisations”. ‘The ending of the meat strike is not a defeat but rather a retreat. The lessons of the strike will be the weapons for the future’.

Other Strikes

The African Municipal Workers’ strike in Johannesburg started on July 24th when the workers at the Orlando Power Station struck for higher wages. The Johannesburg City Council fired these workers and began ‘importing’ replacement labour from the homelands. At this point workers from other municipal departments began to down tools. Joseph Mavi – the President of the Black Municipality Workers’ Union (BMWU) – warned that a further 9,000 Johannesburg workers would join the strike.

The BMWU began organising only months before the strike. The union rose in rejection of the union of Johannesburg Municipal Workers – which the Black Municipal workers saw as a ‘stooge’ of the white trade union. This union hastily registered during the strike. The massive support for the BMWU is an outright rejection of attempts by the Johannesburg City Council to force ‘dummy organisations’ on the workers. The response to the BMWU’s call for a strike in sympathy with the Orlando workers brought within 4 days 10,000 municipal workers, at least two thirds of the City Council’s labour force, out on strike. The strikers came from the cleaning, transport, electricity, gas and water departments – almost all departments were affected.

The strikers’ demands were clearly stated – that their minimum weekly wage should be increased from R 33 to R 58 and that their union (not the stooge union) should be recognised by the Council. The Council’s reaction was brutal. It refused to negotiate with the union, dismissed strikers, sealed off the municipal compounds to non-residents so that union officials could not speak to the striking workers. On the 5th day the City Council representatives came to the compounds and called the strikers’

representatives to negotiate with them. The strikers remained solid and demanded that the council negotiate with their union the BMWU. The Johannesburg City Council, the richest in South Africa, refused and hired buses which under police escort transported the strikers back to the homelands. The police detained Joseph Mavi and other leaders and charged them under the security laws. The strikers were almost all contract labourers from the poorest areas in South Africa's homelands. The strikers demonstrated a militancy and readiness to sacrifice and a high organisational and political awareness to fight for democratic workers' organisations — a union of their own choice. The Black Municipality Workers' Union is reorganising and will emerge as a powerful force.

For the first time in its 15 year history the Argus owned newspaper the *Cape Herald* with a circulation of 69,000 failed to appear as a result of a strike after a breakdown in salary talks. Members of MWASA — Media Workers' Association of South Africa — declared their support for the strike. After 8 weeks of striking MWASA won an agreement which will allow it to organise all other categories of black media workers and an undertaking by management to take part in upgrading programmes for black journalists and a separate conciliation procedure — independent of that of the white journalists and the employers. This will bring MWASA in direct conflict with the SA Typographical Union (SATU) which at the end of 1979 obtained an exemption from the regime to enrol African workers as members of their union. The African workers in terms of SATU's constitution would not have the same membership rights, as SATU's constitution defines member's right according to income — ie a full member, a half member and a quarter member — a negation of trade union democracy.

The Pretoria regime, infuriated by MWASA's effective leadership, brutally closed down 4 Black newspapers on the day MWASA ended the 8 week strike and in an attempt to decapitate the leadership it banned and house arrested Mr Zwelakhe Sisulu, the President of MWASA and news editor of the *Sunday Post*; Mr Marimutha Subramony, BBC correspondent and National Vice-Chairman and Natal Regional Secretary of MWASA; and Mathatha Tsedu, secretary of MWASA's Northern Transvaal region. They are banned from entering schools, newspapers and factories, from attending gatherings and confined to their homes from 7 pm to 6 am on weekdays and over weekends and public holidays. They are to receive no visitors, may not leave their magisterial district or enter any African, Coloured or Indian area.²

A School of War

The massive strikes have exposed the inadequacies of the existing procedures for settling disputes, the workers' total rejection of the Works and Liaison Committee system and 'stooge unions', the employers' stubborn refusal to recognise the representative unions of the workers' choice and the regime's consistent opposition to African workers' needs, aspirations and their trade unions and on the other hand their support for the capitalists.

Lenin's observations on strikes remain true. He said:

'The struggle of factory workers against the employers inevitably turns into the struggle against the entire capitalist class, against the whole social order based on the exploitation of labour by capital'³

Furthermore:

'... a strike teaches workers to understand what the strength of the employers and what the strength of the workers consist in; it teaches them not to think of their own employers alone and not of their own immediate workmates alone, but of all employers, the whole class of capitalists and the whole class of workers. . .

'A strike, moreover, opens the eyes of the workers to the nature, not only of the capitalists, but of the government and the laws as well . . . strikes, therefore, teach the workers to unite; they show them that they can struggle against the capitalists only when they are united; strikes teach the workers to think of the whole working class against the whole class of factory owners and against the arbitrary police and government. This is the reason that socialists call strikes a 'school of war'. A school in which the workers learn to make war on their enemies for the liberation of their whole people, of all who labour, from the yoke of government officials, from the yoke of capital'.⁴

The composition of the strikers shows that the generation born after 1948 who carry around with them and in their hearts the burden of humiliation and oppression have been involved in the 1976/7 uprisings, are involved in the present school boycotts and strikes.

The salient variables in the Eastern Province Motor Industry strikes were the following:

'Of the Ford plants which struck, the average age of the striking workforce was significantly lower than that of the other plants which did not strike. Their educational level was significantly higher and their average length of service was shorter'.⁵

Our struggle is a hard one, but we are making progress. Not only are our people more determined, more alert, more revolutionary and more organised but our young students have a new spirit of confidence, self assertion and fearlessness. The roll of those killed in 76/77 has become an honoured roster of martyrs. The martyrs who fell in last year's scholar boycott battles are also regarded as martyrs. The school boycotts are not

merely demands for more books, more and better teachers, more and better schools but a battle against the whole present social system of robbery and oppression. The youth of 76/77 from Soweto, Guguletu, Port Elizabeth and elsewhere are today in the factories. Today's scholars are tomorrow's workers and they will participate in organising and developing a courageous leadership.

The regime's main target — the workers

The regime is notorious for its deception and hypocrisy. It has developed an enormous capacity to conceal its real aims behind fine words and promises of reform. It offers concessions which turn out to be snares.

If Koornhof says that he will strengthen the position of urban Africans we can be certain that his real aim is to deprive them of the meagre rights granted under existing oppressive laws. When Fanie Botha talks of a 'new deal' for Black workers we can be certain that his real aim is to tighten the chains of exploitation and oppression.

During this session of Parliament more legislation will be introduced. Its aim is to foist upon the African workers the control of capital over labour, part of the regime's 'total strategy'.

Both Koornhof and Botha have announced that they will introduce bills. Since copies of the bills are not yet available we must rely on press reports. Fanie Botha, Minister of Manpower Utilisation, held conferences with employers' organisations, TUCSA and the SA Confederation of Labour and later informed the press that his Labour Relations Amendment Bill will grant full union rights to all workers, allow mixed unions and introduce union 'autonomy'.

What does this mean? Under existing law all African workers may form or join registered unions provided that they are statutory 'employees', SA citizens, or citizens of a state which formerly belonged to the RSA. Ten lines in the Government Gazette last year put an end to discrimination against which radicals have protested since 1925. The discrimination was by way of exclusion — it excluded Africans, first those subject to the Native Labour Regulation Act, later all classes of Africans.⁶

By extending the definition to all South Africans the old discrimination falls away except in the case of Africans who are not citizens of a state that once formed part of the RSA. This definition excludes 'foreign Black contract workers', that is, migrant workers from independent states such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique. According to Botha, that discrimination will be removed. His Bill is to give all workers,

regardless of nationality, the right to join registered unions.

At present workers wishing to form racially integrated unions must have prior ministerial permission. That condition will fall away. So also will existing restrictions on the management and functioning of mixed unions. At present they must operate in a segregated manner — holding racially segregated meetings, forming racially segregated branches and having an all-White executive — unless they receive ministerial exemption.

Under the proposed changes such 'mixed' unions will be free to arrange their affairs as they wish — with or without segregation, according to Fanie Botha. These changes, he says, 'will encourage unregistered unions to apply for registration'. The reforms will also, he claims, silence sceptics and critics, both at home and abroad, who refuse to believe or accept the authenticity of the government's labour policy. The sharpness of the protests against the government's original proposals has compelled the racists to make 'concessions' such as we have been demanding for more than half a century, supported by the progressive working class in all countries.

But — the Bill negates all these concessions by the toughest ever provisions relating to strikes, granting the registrar the right to recommend the closing down of a registered trade union or Federation if they have acted 'unreasonably'. Furthermore it bars all unions from operating in the 'independent' homelands, bars all donations to unions without ministerial permission, denies unregistered unions the right to stop-orders and restricts association with political bodies, ie from assisting any group with political aims.

In a second Bill, the Manpower Training Bill, Section 31 makes it an offence for anyone except a registered union, registered union federation, employer organisation, industrial council or educational institution to conduct labour relations training at a 'private training centre' unless the centre is registered. Anyone who contravenes this stipulation would face a fine of up to R600.00 or one year's imprisonment or both.

As we have repeatedly stressed, strikes by African workers are to all intents and purposes always illegal. According to one researcher, out of 783 strikes by Africans in the last 8 years only one was held to be legal. There are no legal strikes by African workers under the existing law. The Bill does not change this position — what it does is introduce new penalties under a particularly vicious guise.

To make a strike legal a registered union will first have to hold a strike ballot, but in terms of the Bill the ballot must be supervised by someone

who is not a 'strike leader', ie, unions will be deprived of their right to organise and supervise strike ballots of their members. If there is no colour bar in the Bill these restrictions on the right to hold ballots will apply to all unions — white as well as black.

A Threat To All Workers

In other words the government under the guise of reform is introducing a new control that threatens the entire labour movement. The Bill is to isolate the unions from the neighbouring African states and the internal labour movement. Botha wants to prohibit them from having offices outside SA and from receiving outside financial aid to finance strikes. He declares that the government refuses to countenance foreign intervention in our affairs.

This barefaced impudence should be denounced by the OATU and by the international labour movement which for more than a century has recognised the principle that workers of all countries have a common interest and a common enemy.

The capitalist class is given a free hand to export capital for investment in South Africa. Multi-national companies dominate large sectors of the economy by means of foreign capital but the workers of Germany, Britain, France, Sweden, Holland, the socialist countries and the African continent will not be allowed to send money from their funds in support of South Africa's labour movement and its struggle against racism, apartheid and the domination of foreign capital.

A particularly vicious 'reform' is the proposal to enter into bilateral agreements with Black states in Southern Africa and the homelands under which contract workers engaged in illegal strikes will be deported immediately whether or not they are sacked by their employers. Botha has stated that any country or homeland which refused to sign would be excluded from South Africa's labour market. On the other hand any worker from one of these states who takes part in a so-called illegal strike will be excluded from the labour market. In a period of economic depression and enormous unemployment the threat to deprive Africans from the Bantustans or independent neighbouring African states is serious enough to deter many affected African workers from participating in a strike.

There is thus the danger that only 'qualified' African workers will be in a position to take strike action and will have to do so without the active support of their brothers and sisters who are 'unqualified'. Given the fact

that strikes are invariably illegal and that 'foreign' workers constitute a big proportion of the labour force, we must recognise that Botha's proposals strike a serious blow at the bargaining power of the working people by denying them the effective use of the strike weapon.

Earlier Botha accused certain unregistered trade unions of playing a leading role in the strikes. "You can rest assured", he said, "the Government is keeping a close watch and would not hesitate to act against these trade unions. There are two ways of putting them out of business: (One) by making registration compulsory; the other to implement a recommendation of the Wiehahn Commission and make it illegal for any employer to sign a Recognition Agreement with unregistered unions".

Bantustan governments are not likely to reject Pretoria's efforts to make them instruments of its repressive labour policies. Already Bantustan leaders are competing with one another for a share of the labour market — even to the extent of offering to supply workers at cut-throat prices. At least, this is what Sebe has in mind in his computerised labour scheme, which will identify every Ciskeian worker in terms of reliability and value to employers. In selecting workers for employment outside the Ciskei, the administration will give preference to those with a 'clean work record'. Workers said to be untrustworthy, irresponsible or undisciplined will be 'black-balled'.

There is no contradiction between Botha's plans for a docile acquiescent labour force which is bludgeoned into submissiveness by the threat of instant dismissal for daring to stand up for their rights, and Sebe's scheme for supplying screened, computerised workers with a guarantee of docility.

Koornhof's Bills

In a parallel attempt to weaken the African working class Piet Koornhof, Minister of Co-operation and Development, has given notice of an intention to introduce three bills which he claims will do away with the 'dompas' and make life easier for some blacks.

The Bills will divide the African working class into three categories. In amendments to 50 or so existing laws, the Bills will extend the 72 hours limit to 30 days. Africans from rural areas will be allowed, says Koornhof, to visit urban areas in the Republic of South Africa for that length of time without permission. The wives and children of 'qualified' workers will be able to live with their menfolk provided that approved 'accommodation' is available. There will be more freedom of movement for the 'qualified' ones in so far as they are allowed to live, work and move within a bigger 'control

area' than the municipal area to which they are at present confined.

The Bills will divide the African working class into three categories. The first category are those who qualify for residence in the RSA because they come under Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act or are resident in the rural areas as South African nationals (still 2,000,000 Africans on white farms). The second category are those who live in the Bantustans and who commute to and from the place of work, even if within a distance of 50km of the Bantustans. This is not a statutory category, but should be identified because of its social and economic significance. The third category consists of migrants who are employed often under contract in RSA and are absent from their homes in the Bantustans or independent African states for months at a time.

There are significant legal differences between the two main categories of 'qualified' and 'disqualified' residents. 'Qualified' residents are integrated socially as well as economically and they belong to communities within the industrial urban complex and are relatively secure against arbitrary expulsion. Farm workers with an established right of residence have a similar kind of security.

The regime wishes to stabilise their position and widen the gap between them and the migrant or contract workers. More than 200,000 migrant contract workers are employed in industry alone, exclusive of construction, transport, mines, farms and services. In current discussion, the 'qualified' category are often referred to as part of the so-called 'middle class', which is supposed to be a stabilising factor in the racist social order.

The Commuters

The commuters live in the homelands and therefore do not fall under the authority of the local administration in African townships in RSA. That is a major difference. They have no statutory claim to reside in RSA and in legal terms can be deprived of the right to work without legal redress. Commuters from the independent Bantustans (Bophuthatswana, Venda and Transkei) are 'non-South Africans' and require passports and work-permits to enter and take up jobs in the Republic of South Africa.

The Transkei has few commuters; Bophuthatswana on the other hand has many more commuters than migrant workers. Of all the Bantustans KwaZulu has the largest number and proportion of commuters in the total workforce. These differences are due mainly to geographical and historical factors. The Transkei supplies a large number of workers to the mines and because of the distance operates a migrant labour system that involves the

absence of men for long periods – often between 14 and 24 months at a time.

KwaZulu on the other hand is adjacent to big urban industrial concentrations in Durban and Pinetown. In fact KwaMashu and Umlazi, recently incorporated into KwaZulu, were previously townships in the Durban municipal area. Men and women who commute from these parts of KwaZulu travel to and from work exactly in the same way as they did before. Nothing has changed except a bureaucratic relabelling of the area and the imposed status of a Bantustan resident against the will of the people.

Although commuters are closer to 'qualified' persons than to migrants in terms of social conditions and life-styles, they are technically, that is under the racist laws, part of the 'foreign' labour force and therefore subject to the penalties and discrimination on them as 'non-South Africans'. It should be pointed out however that the position of both commuters and migrants from the 'dependent' Bantustans is uncertain. Those from KwaZulu, Lebowa, QwaQwa, Gazankulu, Ciskei and KwaNgwane are still technically South African nationals.

The preponderance of migrant workers over commuters or vice versa is not determined by the quality of independence. There are more migrants than commuters in the Transkei and Venda as well as non-independent Lebowa and Gazankulu. The opposite applies both to KwaZulu and to Bophuthatswana.

The maximum fines for persons who break the influx control laws are to be increased from R100.00 to R250.00 and/or 3 months imprisonment. Persons who accommodate such 'disqualified' people can be fined up to R500.00 or 6 months imprisonment, with additional penalties for a second offence committed within two years.

An employer of a 'disqualified' worker may be ordered to undergo imprisonment for up to six months on failure to pay a maximum fine of R500.00. In addition persons who harbour or give jobs to disqualified workers can be ordered to pay costs of repatriation to their homelands. Motor cars used in the transport of 'illegal' immigrants into the cities can be impounded on the second offence.

Koornhof announced that he will do away with the pass laws, yet the 'qualified' people must carry a document proving their right to be in the city. This document they have to produce on demand.

The Bills provide no guarantee that children born after the new law comes into force will have rights in the cities. Nor does it guarantee the

right of residence to persons who, while working and living legally, have not yet completed the 10 or 15 year requirement.

What kind of 'autonomy' is this when trade unions have no right to conduct strike ballots, when strikers are deported and dismissed from employment, when the regime not the trade unions control workers' training for workers' work, when trade unions have no right to participate in politics or raise funds to support strikers? All the provisions are not only tough and reactionary; they are a contravention of standards set by the ILO and a complete negation of trade union democracy.

Both Botha and Koornhof's Bills are aimed to elaborate the ruthless control which the racists have exercised over our people and constitute a severe attack on the organised and unorganised workers. The Pretoria regime continues to arrest and detain labour leaders and strikers. Comrade Oscar Mpetha, 71, is a diabetic. He is a veteran trade union leader of the Food and Canning workers and SACTU. He was detained on the 13th of August 1980 and only allowed to see his family in December. He is now in a prison hospital awaiting trial with 17 other young patriots in the Cape Town Supreme Court. Brigadier Sebe, of the Ciskei, carrying out the regime's dirty work, has arrested numerous trade unionists in East London. They are detained together with scores of other loyal and dedicated workers and trade union leaders.

As long as power is in the hands of the racists and the exploiting class, as long as workers are imprisoned, detained and driven into exile for daring to exercise rights which are taken for granted by workers in other capitalist countries, as long as our black people have no political rights — then Botha and Koornhof's 'reforms, change or new deals' are merely bluff aimed to confuse our friends abroad and our people at home.

Need For Solidarity Action

They will not succeed. Our workers and our people at home, our brothers and sisters in Africa and the international labour movement must be alerted to the dangers facing us. The past year has been one for the Mobilisation of Workers. We have seen positive action such as:

1. Workers were able to identify the enemy and strike blows at TUCSA and its affiliates the CMBU (Confederation of Metal and Building Unions) parallel, satellite, in-company unions, formed by TUCSA's affiliates and the CMBU with the employers' Liaison and Works Committees. Cape Town stevedores, Johannesburg African Municipal Workers, Motor Industry workers in Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and East London, African

transport workers in Port Elizabeth and many others have rejected parallel unions — protested, refused to join and gone on strike for unions of their own choice. These parallel — satellite — in-company unions were to play a crucial role in Botha's 'total strategy' of the capitalist control over labour.

2. The strikes have involved skilled and operative workers, migrant workers in the meat industry, Johannesburg City Council workers, farm workers, construction workers on the strategic Sasol and Secunda plants.

3. Trade union leaders of independent black unions have bypassed the industrial council system — the regime's approved machinery — in which trade unions have their regular contacts with employees on industrial councils and in which controls limit the action of workers and their trade unions. The machinery aims to dampen the militancy of black unions and keep them away from politics. The workers forced employers to make agreements by collective bargaining outside the council system. This was brought about by strong, militant and unified presence in the shops and factories. Some employers saw that the most important question is the representativeness of the union whether registered or not.

4. In spite of all obstacles independent black trade unions grew. It has been estimated that black trade union membership has risen by between 56 and 59% compared with constant membership in white and coloured unions in the last 5 years. In the past year more African workers were organised in existing unions and more unions were established — to an estimated African trade union membership of 150,000.

5. White workers' dilemma: all kinds of alternatives present themselves. One is the verkrampes who demand that African trade unions should not be recognised, that Africans should not be given vocational and technical training. Another is to emasculate and control the African trade unions through setting up parallel satellite stooge unions — this is the strategy of TUCSA and CBMU. The third is to open their doors to African workers in order to control them in this way. But there is a fourth alternative: white workers can recognise and respect African workers and enter into an alliance and work for a single strong trade union with joint democratically elected committees. Three trade unions representing shop workers have formed a multi-racial association to represent the interests of all races on matters of national concern. The Association of Distributive and Allied Workers Union will be composed of the Black Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union, the National Union of Distributive Workers and the National Union of Catering and Allied Workers for Coloured and Indian Workers.

This should be emulated by other unions – with Coloured, African and Indian members.

Great Progress

African trade unionism has made great progress in the 1970s. No longer do the racists talk, as did Ben Schoeman in 1953, of 'bleeding native trade unions to death'. That policy of repression and attempted isolation failed. The Wiehahn Commission admitted that unregistered trade unions flourished under conditions amounting to illegality. Therefore instead of trying the impossible it was expedient to grant recognition on such terms as would contain, muzzle and subdue African trade unions.

Every action produces a reaction. To match the gains are attempts to raise obstacles to progress. These are created by the regime in the form of restrictions on registration, penalties for non-registration, criminal action against 'unlawful strikes' and the persistent harassment by the police of militant leaders and workers who strike in defence of their right to organise unions of their own choice, against victimisation, for higher wages and improved conditions of work. These criminal penalties, detentions, bannings are imposed on activists in defiance of the promises of 'reform' intended to appease apartheid critics and the international community.

The major impediment to the growth of a militant movement willing and able to take its place in the vanguard of the National Democratic revolution comes from the division in the ranks of the working class, trade union fragmentation and a persistent failure to unite for the advancement of common interest against the common enemy. At the moment we have no fewer than five trade union federations for African workers, in addition to the TUCSA parallel-satellite unions. What are the sources of division?

Firstly, the regime and the employing class which foster reformism, collaboration, company unionism and make the registration of trade unions a device to exclude radical militancy.

Secondly, international agencies representing western monopoly capitalism, international social democracy and American imperialism. All these forces are determined to stop the forward movement of a radical, progressive trade unionism that embraces both political and economic objectives in its programme of action, the principles for which SACTU stands.

Thirdly, political immaturity, backwardness and even tribalism amongst some trade union leaders who seek to further their own interests at the expense of the working masses. Some of these leaders collaborate

with the bosses and government; some have become instruments of tribal chiefs in the Bantustans who manipulate Labour Bureaux and the pass system to enchain migrant workers and commuters who reside in the Bantustans.

We witness a growing interaction between these agents of apartheid, monopoly capitalism and tribal nationalism. They co-operate in attempting to produce a submissive, frightened body of wage workers who depend on passports, visas, work permits to obtain employment in the industrial urban centres and farming districts outside the Bantustans. These are formidable obstacles to unity.

The radical militant labour movement in alliance with the political organisation of the working class will overcome these obstacles by stepping up the level of ideological commitment, demonstrating the relations between the labour struggles and the movement for national liberation and providing concrete, correct leadership on immediate issues as they arise. And all the time the workers must be provided with the political perspective embodied in the programme of our party for bringing about fundamental social change in South Africa.

The objective conditions are excellent. Success depends on the ability of the movement to recognise and utilise the opportunities to their fullest extent.

In this year of 1981 — the 60th anniversary of our Party which has pioneered in organising African, Coloured, Indian and white workers — we are confident that we shall build a united trade union movement which will be in the vanguard to smash the apartheid regime, racism and capitalism.

References:

1. *The Star*, Johannesburg 25.11.80.
2. *The Star*, 30.12.80 and *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 11.1.81. 30-year-old Zwelake Sisulu is the latest victim of the regime in the Sisulu family. He was a child in 1954 when his father, Walter Max Sisulu, was placed under house arrest and was later incarcerated on Robben Island. His mother Albertina has been under house arrest since 1964 and his sister Lindiwe was detained and tortured for many months in 1976.
3. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 2 p. 107.
4. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 4 pp. 315-317.

THE REAGAN FOREIGN POLICY: CAN IT MAKE U.S. IMPERIALISM GREAT AGAIN?

by William Pomeroy

No election of a U.S. president in recent decades has been greeted with more foreboding internationally than that of Ronald Reagan, who now occupies what is reputed to be the most powerful seat of office in the capitalist west. The alarm comes from the kind of foreign policy aims that were voiced by Reagan and his aides as they worked their way to the White House and were installed in its pushbuttoned rooms of power.

In an election campaign that rang with jingoism, overlaid with the superior moral righteousness that has always accompanied imperial ambitions, it was proclaimed that a Reagan presidency would "make America great again" to enable it to uphold the "national interest" wherever that interest met challenge in the world. At the forefront of the Reagan proposals of renewal was a pledge for a massive increase in arms spending to an extent that could set off a renewed arms race and a return to the tensions of a cold war.

Even before President Reagan's inaugural day the outlines of a foreign policy were being projected in different parts of the world by advance

teams of the president's foreign policy advisors. In a visit to the Middle East, Henry Kissinger called for permanent U.S. military bases in the region. Another advisor, Ray Cline, touring South East Asia, spoke of making soundings in countries of that region for a storage base structure for a U.S. "rapid deployment force." For Central America it was freely predicted that the Reagan administration would intervene with the military bolstering of the regimes being swept away by broad people's revolutionary liberation movements. In southern Africa the crude wrecking of the Geneva United Nations-sponsored conference on Namibian independence by South Africa was traced in large part to the Botha regime's confidence in support for the apartheid state by the new incoming U.S. government.

Anticipations of a Reagan hard line toward relations with the Soviet Union were lent further credence by the remarks of the prospective Secretary of State, General Alexander Haig, to a Senate Committee. "Management of Soviet power," he said, would be his "fundamental task" and in carrying it out "the years immediately ahead will be unusually dangerous." It would be necessary, he said, for a "rather dramatic improvement" in U.S. military power before any SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) talks would be considered by the Reagan administration. Long before President-elect Reagan took his oath of office, NATO members in Western Europe had uneasy expectations of demands from Washington that they participate in the "dramatic" boost in arms spending.

These various foreshadowings of a more aggressive U.S. foreign policy need to be seen in connection with the tone of the chauvinism that permeated the 1980 U.S. election campaign. This was a tone not of pride in leadership of the "free world" or in enjoyment of the "American Century" or even in marching to "New Frontiers": it was a tone of national frustration, of wounded pride, of resented decline, of lament for lost prestige and leadership. The calls for renewal, for recovering the pre-eminent U.S. role in the world, for making America great "again" came from a sense of diminishing strength and dominance, a feeling accentuated by the concurrent humiliation of the "hostages" episode in Iran. A whipping up of such feelings among the electorate was required by U.S. imperialist interests that have run into opposition, problems and setbacks around the world and that want to restore the state of Pax Americana they once felt able to dictate to innumerable nations.

A Short Life

Historically speaking, the period of U.S. imperialist pre-eminence in the world has been comparatively brief. Its capitalist mastery of advanced production techniques, technology and sales methods was enhanced by certain unique advantages: the possession of immense natural resources within its own territorial boundaries, and through geographical reasons being able to emerge virtually unscathed as a creditor nation from two world wars that gravely weakened its imperialist rivals.

Unfortunately, the U.S. achieved its overall dominance, in the latter 1940s, at a time when two great world trends had developed to pose insurmountable challenges to imperialism. One of these, the most important, was the growth of the socialist system, the great competitor of capitalism, which paralleled the rise to dominance of U.S. imperialism. If U.S. supremacy had been fed by two world wars, these had also nourished the October Revolution in 1917 and the extension of socialism to eastern Europe and to parts of Asia in 1945.

The second great trend was the spread of national liberation that brought about the collapse of the colonial system of imperialism. U.S. super-dominance after World War II was paralleled by the rise of anti-imperialist struggles all over the colonial part of the world. At the moment when the U.S. was poised to take over the so-called spheres of influence of the other imperialist powers, successful struggles for independence and freedom swept these areas that embrace most of the world's population.

A third trend, with which U.S. imperialism had to cope, eventually emerged in the post-World War II period, to add to the two main challenges. This was the gradual revival of competing imperialist powers, especially Western Germany and Japan, to present rivalry to the U.S. trade and investment drive.

The history of U.S. foreign policy over the past 35 years is a history of attempts to deal with these three main trends or problems. In the course of it the U.S. has dotted the world thickly with its military bases, to an extent never dreamed by former colonial powers (2500 bases and installations in all), and has poured vast quantities of its accumulated wealth into arms production (a total of \$2185 billions from 1950 to 1980). Above all, U.S. foreign policy in that period has had militaristic features and the aim of attaining supremacy through absolute military power.

The Socialist Challenge

Primarily this has been directed against the foremost of the challenges with which U.S. imperialism was confronted – the countries that are building socialism, particularly the most powerful of them, the Soviet Union. The dominant theme in U.S. foreign policy has been anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism. It has been used to construct an enormous ring of military pacts and military bases around the Soviet Union, from NATO in Europe to CENTO in the Middle East to SEATO in South East Asia and on to the base and treaty structure with Japan and South Korea in north east Asia. This cordon, however, is but the forward part of a military strategy in which the main strike power lies well back, in the 9,200 nuclear warhead missiles, based half in the U.S., half in submarines, all targeted on the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. (In addition, 2,913 other nuclear warheads are similarly targeted from European NATO countries.)

The aggressive cordoning of socialism was accompanied by other aspects of cold war, including tight trade embargoes that were intended to strangle socialist economic development. Called “containment” in its initial stages of the late 1940s and early 1950s, this U.S.-devised policy was intended to be advanced to the “roll back” stage, in which counter-revolution would claw the newer socialist countries back to capitalism. A many-faceted campaign of subversion, to “free the captive nations,” was concentrated on the eastern European countries especially.

U.S. foreign policy suffered decisive setbacks in trying to destroy the socialist world trend. The initial U.S. monopoly on nuclear weapons was quickly broken by the Soviet Union, which then gradually built its military strength in all fields to equal that of the United States, a condition of “parity” that neutralised U.S. military power and forced U.S. imperialism to negotiate arms control treaties. The trade embargo was broken by the pressure of the economically-depressed capitalist allies of the U.S. which benefitted by trade with the large socialist markets, pressure joined in by U.S. trading interests themselves. “Containment” was breached by the victories of socialist-oriented revolutions in Latin America, Asia and Africa. “Roll back” was thrown back by the crushing of counter-revolutionary attempts in Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia. The defeat of the central driving theme in U.S. foreign policy was underlined by the signing of the Helsinki agreement on European security and cooperation in 1975.

National Liberation

In equal measure, the attempt by U.S. foreign policy to contend with the second major trend of challenge to imperialism has met with mounting frustration. The movements for independence and national liberation, reflecting varying degrees of anti-imperialism, have covered vast regions that contain the greater part of the world's minerals and other natural resources that are vital to modern economies. Seeking to maintain cheap and monopolistic control of these, U.S. imperialism has resorted to diverse forms of force and influence.

Between 1946 and 1980 U.S. armed force was employed 216 times in aggressive actions in the "third world" to check or suppress liberation movements. These included the major wars in Korea, where the U.S. was compelled to accept a stalemated situation of non-victory, and in Vietnam, where the U.S. suffered a disastrous and humiliating defeat. Failure in these two wars was a great traumatic experience for those in the U.S. who were indoctrinated in the imperialist superiority complex. In addition, large-scale U.S. military aid was given to unsuccessful French and British colonial wars in Asia and Africa and to the Portuguese colonial wars in Africa that resulted in sweeping victories for the liberation forces of Angola, Mozambique and Guine Bissau. Adding to these defeats was the shattering repulse of the CIO-organised Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

U.S. imperialist military power has thus failed to halt the national liberation trend, just as it has failed to halt the development of socialism. Two of the major U.S.-erected military blocs, CENTO and SEATO, which were aimed as much at holding down "third world" areas as at containing socialism, disintegrated due to their abandonment by the independent-minded regional members.

More successful than armed efforts at control, U.S. imperialism (as well as other imperialist powers) has utilised a network of neocolonial measures and techniques to retain economic domination, relying especially on partnership arrangements with native ruling classes. This system, too, however, has now come under strong opposition from almost all of the "third world" countries, united in the campaign for a "new international economic order" that would embody drastic changes in the existing neo-colonial relationships. Related to this trend has been the increasing assumption of control by the producer countries of their oil resources, particularly in the Middle East, moves that put a grip on the crucial energy source of the capitalist countries.

This potentially great upheaval in the "third world" has been featured

by an accompanying trend that has alarmed U.S. imperialism to an even greater extent. This is the development of revolutions of social emancipation that sweep away the ruling class forces on which imperialism has relied for its neo-colonial arrangements. Such revolutions as those in Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Nicaragua (and that threaten in all of Central America) are basic social revolutions paving the way to socialism.

Together, the trends of socialism and national liberation-social emancipation have increasingly swung the world's balance of forces against imperialism. As the dominant imperialist sector and as the acknowledged leader of the capitalist countries (the "west"), U.S. imperialism has been confronted, however, by a third significant trend: the tendency of the various capitalist powers to seek solution to their problems by pursuing their own national interests. Three main centres of rivalry — the U.S., the European Economic Community and Japan — have emerged to serve those interests, while within the EEC itself rivalries and independent paths have developed.

Imperialist Rivalry

In this trend, the phenomenon known as the uneven development of capitalism has reasserted itself. Both the EEC and Japan, subservient in the immediate post-World War II decades to the power of U.S. capital, are now outpacing the U.S. in many fields of production and trade. The U.S. share of total manufactured exports in the world fell from 21 per cent in 1960 to only 15 per cent in 1976. During the 1970s the U.S. lost its financial dominance, marked by the decline of the dollar, and the amount of the U.S. share of the world market shrank by 23 per cent. In 1979 the EEC outstripped the U.S. in total gross national product (GNP) for the first time. The U.S. home market itself has been widely and deeply penetrated by EEC and Japanese competitors, in important fields like steel and steel products, cars, ships, TV sets, calculating machines and others. This has been paralleled by the extensive penetration of EEC and Japanese capital into the U.S. economy, including the take-over of major industries and commercial channels.

On foreign policy questions the U.S. has found it increasingly difficult to align its capitalist allies, including within the NATO alliance, behind its demands and moves. Other NATO powers have refused to go along with the U.S. imperialist stance toward Iran or Arab oil producing countries and have openly differed with the U.S. on the Palestine question. The U.S. attempt to seize upon the Afghanistan problem as an excuse for rallying

the capitalist powers behind a trade embargo and other punitive steps against the Soviet Union failed to win real backing. U.S. pressure for all NATO members to boost their arms budgets by 3 per cent annually for five years has met with resistance and non-compliance. In general, the majority of capitalist powers are unwilling to follow the leadership of the U.S. in returning to its cold war-style anti-Soviet foreign policy of the past; they prefer to take advantage of peaceful economic relations with the socialist countries as a means of easing the grave economic crisis now besetting the capitalist system.

At this point in its history U.S. imperialism is faced with the increasingly worrying situation of having lost its dominant position in the world and of having to contend with these heavily adverse trends that plainly cannot be reversed and are likely to intensify. Indeed, by the mid-1970s U.S. imperialism felt itself compelled toward acceptance of the Soviet-advocated detente and of steps for control and diminishing of armaments. These implied the beginnings of reversal of three decades of militaristic foreign policy.

However, dreams of reversing the great historical trends of change in the world have instead continued to obsess aggressive sectors of U.S. imperialism. They were dominant in the Carter administration, elected in 1976, which had its chief foreign policy architect in the rabidly anti-Soviet Zbigniew Brzezinski. Elected on peace pledges to deceive American voters, the Carter administration plunged into the greatest increases in arms spending in U.S. history (standing at \$89.4 billion in 1976, these had risen to \$175 billion in Carter's last budget for 1981). This program was accompanied by a blocking of SALT II approval, a drive for the general boosting of NATO armaments, the campaign to station Cruise warheads provocatively in Western Europe, the great strengthening of a U.S. military presence in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea and the creation of a new base structure in the region to receive the proposed U.S. 110,000-strong "rapid deployment force" for upholding U.S. "national interests," and steps toward the creation of a Pacific Alliance extending from Japan through South East Asia to Australia and New Zealand.

The Carter foreign policy that had this re-emphasis on militarism and on endeavouring to gain military supremacy over the Soviet Union as its core adopted, at the same time, a position of unyielding opposition to "third world" demands for a "new international economic order." Its attitude toward change in the "third world" was reflected in steps to arm Somalia against Ethiopia, to support the Shah against the Iranian

revolution, to arm covertly resistance bands against the Afghanistan revolution and to organise international campaigns aimed at reversing it, to manoeuvre in support of South African retention of Namibia, and in general to oppose every positive act of national liberation and social emancipation in all parts of the world.

Besides these various moves to restore the postwar U.S. gendarme role internationally, the Carter administration introduced the beginnings of a military aid program for Maoist China and exhibited a tendency to "play the China card" against the Soviet Union. The outlines of a rough U.S.-China-Japan anti-Soviet alliance were suggested.

Policy Failures

The most significant aspect of the Carter administration has been that its display of resurgent aggressiveness failed to re-create the unchallenged leadership of U.S. imperialism in any important respect. On the contrary, the result was a further decline of U.S. leadership and of policy effectiveness, as seen in the failure to whip up support for anti-Soviet embargoes and boycotts (whether in trade or Olympic games), to dismantle detente, to intensify an arms drive among its allies, or to halt the liberation trend in Kampuchea, Iran, Zimbabwe, Namibia, or in the very frontyard of U.S. imperialism in Central America and the Caribbean.

These failures have been ascribed to the "style" of President Carter, the abrupt shifts in policy, the neglect of careful planning (as in the aborted attempt to rescue the "hostages" in Iran), the lack of foresight (as in the boomerang effect of the anti-Soviet grain embargo upon U.S. farmers), the go-it-alone tendency of not consulting NATO allies when taking steps to involve them, the self-evident contradiction of giving lip service to "human rights" while supporting a despot like the Shah of Iran or vetoing sanctions against apartheid South Africa. Ineffective "style" may have made good electoral propaganda against President Carter in the 1980 election, and enhanced a tough and forthright image for Ronald Reagan, but that was a surface issue masking the underlying deep contradictions of a U.S. imperialism attempting to go against or assert control over the main historical trends of the contemporary period.

The administration of President Ronald Reagan that assumed office on January 20, 1981 took command on a campaign tide of fairly xenophobic rhetoric about "making America great again" and about being able to do this through no other means than "because we are Americans." However, no clear programme for restoring the lost U.S. position of pre-eminence

has been visible through the rhetoric, at least in the early days of the new government. It is difficult not to conclude that for all its appearance of taking a new grip on things, the Reagan administration has nothing new to offer to improve the situation of U.S. imperialism except projection of a more confident-sounding and tough-talking "style."

No U.S. government in the contemporary period can ignore or escape the three main trends in the world that are confronting and constricting its foreign policy. Whatever its rhetoric or its twistings and turnings, the Reagan administration must come up against those trends.

A commitment to greater arms spending (suggestions of a 7 per cent rise in the already vast military budget have been made) and to suspending of SALT II treaty approval has been put forward as the Reagan approach to dealing with the Soviet Union. The rationale for this has been provided by General Haig who told the U.S. Senate Committee investigating his fitness as Secretary of State that "unchecked, the growth of Soviet military power must eventually paralyze western policy altogether."

In Haig's view, the aim of U.S. foreign policy in this area must be "the management of Soviet power" in such a way as to enable U.S. imperialism to function. Belligerent as the Reagan spokesmen often sound, it is doubtful if this means that the old cold war drive for a nuclear knock-out capacity against socialism could be seriously mounted. For one thing, the U.S. allies (NATO and Japan) have backed away from stepping up arms budgets that their crisis-hit economies cannot sustain. It was noticeable that both Secretary of State Haig and U.S. Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger, on taking office, modified earlier insistence on a 3 per cent NATO arms boost: "I don't believe in fixed percentages," said Weinberger while Haig (who as NATO Supreme Commander had forced through NATO the 3 percent programme) said that the U.S. should take a "balanced view" of its allies.

At the same time the U.S. has apparently come to the realisation that "the China card" that it had hoped to use as a military factor against the Soviet Union cannot be effectively played. Ray Cline, a leading Reagan advisor and former deputy director of intelligence for the CIA, wrote in a *New York Times* article on January 6, 1981 that "arming the massive but ill-equipped Chinese military forces would take billions of dollars and five to ten years before the Soviet Union would be in real jeopardy" (Cline's estimate was \$360 billion a year for several years) but then such a programme "would diminish American chances of maintaining a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union."

In these circumstances of being unable to prod its allies into confrontation positions at sufficient pace or strength, U.S. imperialism is prone to take "go it alone" steps. If its allies will not arm to the extent demanded, the U.S. is making it known that its own armed strength will be magnified accordingly.

The *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union that U.S. imperialism is likely to have in mind is to maintain the arms race and the military stalemate at a high enough level to absorb much of the Soviet economic growth capability and thereby curtail the attainment of economic supremacy of the socialist system. At the same time, while preventing the Soviet Union from paralysing imperialist operations, the U.S. will try to paralyse the Soviet ability to assist the national liberation and social emancipation process in the "third world."

Support For Racist S.A.

There are a number of signs that U.S. imperialism is preparing to meet the second main anti-imperialist world trend with an intensified "national interest" foreign policy. There has been a spate of reports, from U.S. Congressional committees and private policy study groups, on what is termed the crisis of strategic minerals. These reports stress that the U.S. has to import all but a tiny amount of the special minerals that are essential for advanced technology and sophisticated weaponry, including cobalt, chrome, vanadium, platinum, manganese, bauxite, as well as industrial diamonds and gold. Furthermore, in the case of 15 other important minerals, the U.S. has to import more than one-half of its needs.

As the reports emphasise, these minerals come from "third world" countries. Of these South Africa is considered the richest and most important source. An intensified effort to portray racist South Africa as an area of strategic importance to U.S. imperialism is implied in the policy reports. This lends significance to the known Reagan view on the need for improved friendly relations between the U.S. and South Africa, and to the statement by Reagan's Secretary of State Haig on the Namibian settlement talks in Geneva: "It is in our interests that the solution we find should not put into jeopardy the interests of those who share our values — above all, our interests in a broad strategic sense." The U.S. "rapid deployment force", begun by the Carter administration and to be enlarged under Reagan, is designed to "guard" the strategic mineral areas including the Middle East oil deposits that are considered vital to the U.S. "national

interest.” It has been known for some time that the U.S. strategic planning that gave birth to the “rapid deployment force” has included a military link with South Africa.

A foreign policy of “national interest” that is aimed at holding on to the raw material areas still under imperialist control or influence is also underlined by the declarations of President Reagan and some of his cabinet members on discarding the “human rights” stance taken by President Carter. Initiated as an anti-Soviet ploy, the “human rights” line entrapped Carter into giving at least lip-service to “human rights” in regard to a number of brutal regimes propped up by U.S. imperialism. President Reagan has deplored being put in such a situation. As General Haig has put it, there is a danger in “replacing friendly governments which incompletely satisfy our standards of democracy with hostile ones which are even less benign.” Such a formulation is an argument for the retention of the apartheid regime of South Africa as well as of the array of ruthless military or fascist regimes in Latin America (from which 70 percent of the strategic minerals taken out of its mines goes to the U.S.).

In its global view, U.S. imperialism sees itself as extremely vulnerable due to its reliance on strategic resources that are located for the most part in “unstable” countries of the “third world.” On the other hand, as a recent U.S. Congressional study pointed out, the Soviet Union “possesses immense reserves of every critical natural resource.” Obsessed by its rigid diagrammatic assessments of the contest between socialism and capitalism, U.S. policymaking looks upon the historic trend in the “third world” countries as part of the alleged Soviet drive to strangle the United States. Or, rather, that is how U.S. governments and particularly those who are voicing the outlook of the Reagan administration prefer to picture the situation. As an analysis produced by the Hoover Institution, one of the policy advisory centres serving the Reagan government, has concluded:

“Prudence and a respect for historical experience suggest that during the 1980s we make a determined effort to prevent the further spread of Soviet influence in areas where our interests are involved. We should not expect the regimes established by Cuban or Soviet arms to become independent or to sell us strategic minerals or oil in times of stress or conflict. The battle for global supremacy has been joined. It is a battle that we dare not lose.”

(The United States in the 1980s, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, California, 1980, p. 858)

The manner in which those engaged in policymaking in the Reagan administration depict the revolutions in Ethiopia and Afghanistan, and

the liberation movements in Namibia and other areas indicates that the U.S. has drawn an imperialist line to serve its "national interest." Every anti-imperialist struggle or revolution of social emancipation is to be viewed as "Soviet expansion" over the line. There is to be "linkage" between "third world" upheavals and U.S. relations with the Soviet Union. Each time the Soviet Union responds to the request of liberation forces or revolutionary governments for aid, it is to be branded as a violation of detente.

Frustration on All Fronts

This kind of foreign policy is not new for U.S. imperialism. It was the policy line of President Carter's chief advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and it has figured in one way or another as an excuse for the aggressive U.S. foreign policy adventures over the past 35 years. The Reagan administration has come into office, however, to serve the interests of a U.S. imperialism that, beset by the three main world trends that affect it, finds itself in increasingly desperate straits. Inhibited by the state of military parity or stalemate and by the world forces for peace and detente, it is unable to strike at its main adversary, the socialist system. Therefore, it hopes to strike at, intervene in, or actively support reactionary regimes or forces wherever "arcs of crisis" or "instability" occur in the "third world."

One of the ardent hopes of the policymakers around President Reagan is that the people of the United States have recovered from their "Vietnam trauma" and are ready to endorse further foreign excursions in "the battle for global supremacy." The jingoistic rhetoric of the Reagan drive to the White House was calculated to bury the memory of Vietnam. It is necessary to point out, however, that President Reagan was elected by barely 26 percent of the U.S. people, in an election in which 48 percent of eligible voters stayed away from the polls in disgust at both Carter and Reagan. At home, U.S. imperialist foreign policy has its feet made of clay.

More important, a U.S. foreign policy that strives to link the Soviet Union and other socialist countries with the liberation struggles of the "third world" is embarking on a risk to itself that it perhaps does not adequately foresee. It is contributing to the merging to a greater extent than ever of the two main world anti-imperialist trends. The unity of these trends has been developing in the past with historical inevitability. It is likely to be a much greater fact before the Reagan administration is very much older.

**60TH BIRTHDAY OF THE S.A. COMMUNIST
PARTY, JULY 30, 1981**

OUR NATIONAL STRUGGLE IN ITS INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

by Mde Ngentonga

The formation of the Communist Party of South Africa in 1921 was not an accident, not a "mistake of history" or the act of a few whites who were interested in introducing a "foreign ideology" into South Africa. It was a law-governed development, a conscious reaction to an international phenomenon which was engulfing the world.

True, there were national specifics, and in this article we shall attempt to analyse these national specifics in their international context. We are not dealing with the political class struggle nor are we concerned with the economic class struggle. In this article we shall attempt to deal with the ideological class struggle within the Communist Party and the theoretical questions which emanate from it or are connected with it. Our main concern is with the period up to the formation of the Communist Party in 1921 and the discussion and debate on the Black Republic slogan of the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Up to the Second World War South Africa was the only country in sub-Saharan Africa which had a Communist Party. We should remember the explanation in our programme that South Africa is not a colony in the

classical sense but a “colony of a special type” where the coloniser and the colonised are not spatially separated but live side by side.

This poses the serious task of constantly and consistently re-examining our methodological approach to the question and brings us to the inevitable conclusion that the history of the South African working class is the history of all “races” and ethnic groups of the country. There is *one* working class but it is *divided* along racial and ethnic lines. This division is not technical; it emanates from the fact that the South African “nation” is divided into an “oppressor nation”, the whites, and the “oppressed nation”, the blacks, and the workers as a result of the national question become divided into “workers of a colonising ruling nation” and “workers of an oppressed colonised nation”.

The determining factor about the South African working class is not that its members belong to different ethnic groups or “races” but that a section of the working class belongs to or has identified with the chauvinistic white ruling minority.

History of the S.A. Working Class

The history of the two sections of the South African working class, the black and the white, ran parallel. Though there were contradictions between them, there have been times of rapprochement, especially in the earlier period, between the revolutionary wing of the white workers and the mass of black workers. The degree and nature of exploitation of the workers may differ, but both white and black workers are exploited by the same exploiters. Yet for unity of action by the working class as a whole there were objective and subjective obstacles to overcome. There was the language problem and the artificially produced privileged position of the white workers and the resultant differing level of development and the weakness of the left and liberation movement, especially in the early days.

The discovery of diamonds and gold at the end of the 19th century meant the beginning of a capitalist economy and development in South Africa. It also meant that a stream of immigrants came from Europe, including Czarist Russia. They were different from their colonial predecessors in that most of them came as workers, some with democratic and revolutionary traditions derived from the organisation of trade unions and involvement in class and revolutionary struggle. Many of them brought socialist i.e. Marxist ideas into the country, where conditions, both objective and subjective, were ripe for them.

This could not be otherwise because the history of socialist thought

shows us that what we today call “scientific socialism” originated in Europe and spread to all countries of the world in the wake of the industrial revolution wherever a working class or forces ready to assimilate that ideology existed. Looked at from this aspect (and not from the simple angle of geographical boundaries) we can say that the real “foreign ideology” in Africa is not socialism but the bourgeois ideology of imperialism which was responsible for the conquest and enslavement of our people. Socialism is a tool, a weapon to enable our people to resist and fight back. Without socialism, the peoples of Africa would be ideologically defenceless against imperialism and neo-colonialism.

There is another aspect to this question, explained by Lenin. Speaking about the social forces that produced Marxism or were receptive to it in Europe, he said:

“The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. The founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. Similarly, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the labour movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary Socialist intelligentsia”.¹¹

After two decades of working class struggles, by the early 1920s the white workers were beginning to lose their former revolutionary spirit. They were ceasing to be an independent force and were becoming an appendage of the white chauvinistic bourgeoisie.

What about the black workers? A deeper examination of the genesis and history, structure and ideology, psychology and mentality of the black workers serves to locate and determine theoretically their historic place and mission in the struggle for national liberation. The colonial status of the black workers renders them a working class of an oppressed nation and therefore their struggle is closely linked with the struggle of their people for national liberation and self-determination.

There were specific disabilities and problems which affected this first generation of the African proletariat. The special structure of the South African national economy and the wage relations which have been caused and determined by it were some of the problems. By that we mean the gap between the wages of the masses of unskilled black workers and a small number of skilled white workers.

There was also the fact that the African workers had their roots in the countryside and this meant for them that their wages were an “additional”

income to a meagre harvest. The migrant labour system had catastrophic results on the peasant subsistence economy. The migrant labourer who was not qualified at all could not educate himself and without any political rights was a victim of unheard of exploitation and terrible diseases.

These conditions of insecure existence influenced the mentality and political consciousness of the African worker, especially when one considers the laws and social conventions which restrict the African worker in his freedom to choose his profession and the right to make use of a favourable labour market. We have in mind the forced introduction of tax, the pass system and land robbery which forced Africans into the diamond and gold mines.

Such was the situation when the Communist movement was born in South Africa.

The Emergence of Socialism

Towards the end of the 19th century new organisations emerged such as the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (1881), the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (1886), the South African Typographical Union (1889) etc. The white workers who were mainly artisans were determined to secure recognition of their status as craftsmen and concerned only with obtaining increased pay, common concessions such as paid leave and recognition of their unions. At that time Africans were employed in industry only as amateur labourers; thus most of them fell outside the scope of associations of craftsmen.

The predecessor of the South African Labour Party which was formed in the Cape in 1902 organised a big solidarity meeting on the occasion of the 1905 Russian Revolution. The South African Labour Party itself was formed in 1910. The Labour Party, which was affiliated to the Second International in 1913, had good relations with the International Socialist Bureau and supported the anti-war resolution of the Socialist Parties.

In the previous issue of this journal we dealt at length with the attitude of the Labour Party towards the war and the tensions which arose in the course of the debate on that — tensions which led to a split. For this reason we shall deal with other sources of tension within the Labour Party.

At the Stuttgart Congress in 1907 South Africa was represented by F.A.W. Lucas. In his speech Lucas supported international socialism but he said nothing about the need to organise black workers. This lack of consistency which was inherent in the white workers' movement led to a

sharpening of differences and contradictions within the Labour Party at the outbreak of the war. This explains why in 1915 the organ of the International Socialist League, *The International*, then edited by D. Ivon Jones in an editorial headlined "The Parting of the Ways", commented:

"An internationalism which does not concede the fullest rights which the native working class is capable of claiming will be a sham. One of the justifications for our withdrawal from the Labour Party is that it gives us untrammelled freedom to deal, regardless of political fortunes, with the great and fascinating problem of the native. If the League deals resolutely in consonance with socialist principles with the native question, it will succeed in shaking South African capitalism to its foundations. Then, and not till then, shall we be able to talk about the South African proletariat in our international relations. . ."²

The foresight of Jones and his colleagues and their ability to grasp at that early stage the fundamental problem facing the white labour movement was characteristic of the calibre of the new forces which were emerging and had formed themselves into the International Socialist League in 1915. In the two years up to the October Revolution they reorganised themselves, so sharpened their theoretical and ideological tools, that when the February Revolution took place in Russia they were able to respond to it positively, analysed it in the context of the world-wide transition from capitalism to socialism and characterised it as a milestone, a halfway station, to a socialist revolution.

Revolutionary Impact

The October Revolution had a great impact on the South African socialists. Even Edward Roux, who was no friend to the Soviet Union by the time he wrote the following passage, says:

"In 1917 came the Great Bolshevik Revolution. To me this proved conclusively that Jock Campbell, my dad and all the socialist writers I had read had been perfectly right. I made a map of the world, showing in red all the countries that had established Soviets — Russia, that noble expanse of territory, Hungary, Bavaria, North West Germany. I put red dots where revolutionary outbreaks had occurred — Winnipeg, Clydeside and later even Johannesburg itself. Our local Soviet was a committee of trade unionists set up during a tramway strike in 1919."³

Whilst *class consciousness* was growing amongst white workers, the scene in the black working class movement was characterised by growing *national consciousness*. It is true that African workers went on strike as far back as 1882, but one cannot but agree with Malapo and Ngotyana who correctly state:

“That African national aspirations have been a progressive and dynamic force in South Africa has long been recognised. What has not been sufficiently emphasised is that the processes of working class formation have, in the special conditions of our country, tended to enhance not so much class as national consciousness. Economic grievances that might have led to classical class struggles, including trade union action, produced instead a strong current of national feeling among Africans . . . This is not to say that working class consciousness with a socialist perspective among African workers ought to be underestimated . . . Yet it is national sentiment which runs most strongly among African workers, and with ample reason.”⁴

This dialectical contradiction within the South African labour movement was to be with us for many years after. All the same the developments within the white labour movement, the consistency of the socialists and the changing world situation led the socialists to join the Communist International (Comintern) in 1920 and a year later transform themselves into the Communist Party of South Africa. The young CPSA had tremendous problems and difficulties. Though these problems were national in form they were international in character. To explain this we shall again let Lenin speak on the significance of theory for the young Communist Party. He gives three reasons:

First, “Our Party is only in the process of formation, its features are only just becoming outlined, and it has not yet completely settled its reckoning with other tendencies in revolutionary thought which threatened to divert the movement from the proper path.”

Second, the movement is “essentially an international movement. This does not mean merely that we must combat national chauvinism. It means also that a movement that is starting in a young country can be successful only on the condition that it assimilates the experience of other countries. In order to assimilate this experience it is not sufficient merely to be acquainted with it, or simply to transcribe the latest resolutions. A critical attitude is required towards this experience, and ability to subject it to independent tests. Only those who realise how much the modern labour movement has grown in strength will understand what a reserve of theoretical (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to fulfil this task.”

“The third reason is that the national tasks of Russian Social Democracy are such as had never confronted any other Socialist Party in the world.”⁵

On the whole from 1921-1928 the CPSA followed these Leninist principles – though not without deviations here and there and this was perhaps conditioned by the fact that in those days not all the classics of Marxism-Leninism were translated and South Africa was in a sense an outpost from the revolutionary storms of Europe.

The Debate on the Black Republic

Towards the end of the 1920's the Party was making advances in every direction. In 1927 it left its headquarters at the Trades Hall in Johannesburg to open an office — the new headquarters — in 41a Fox Street, a mixed area. At the same time the Party organ, *Umsebenzi/The South African Worker*, was reorganised. It now contained articles in African languages — Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho; had African composers and was published by African workers. According to Roux it became “the first real Communist paper South Africa had seen”.

The Party night school for African workers continued to teach the three R's and politics. This attracted many African workers. In 1927 the Party had 200 members but by 1928 the membership had risen to 1,750, of whom 1,600 were Africans. This was the first generation of African communists. This rise in Party membership and growth of interest in the Party among African workers was due to many factors, including the growth in size and political maturity of the African working class. The adoption by Kadalie and the ICU of reactionary policies alienated the African workers, who were attracted by the correct policy of the Party.

There were also psychological factors. For example, the fact that a white communist lawyer like Bunting defended Africans in most cases pro deo, the fact that white communists were utterly dedicated to the Party and spent all their time and energy working for it, the fact that white communists were often mishandled by the police and persecuted by the government just as Africans were — all these factors had a psychological impact on our people. In addition the Communist Party was the only organisation in the country whose membership comprised people from all races and ethnic groups and people with different skin colours — this was the opposite of the race policies of the government. Even more important was the fact that all party members were equal — there was no preferential treatment, no colour bar, no paternalistic attitudes within the Party.

It was at this stage that the Comintern suggested that the Communist Party should advocate the slogan of a “Black Republic”. The various aspects of the trends in the debate on the black Republic slogan have been dealt with by H J and R E Simons, A Lerumo and B Bunting.⁶ Even before them Roux dealt with it, though his anti-Sovietism and hostile attitude towards the Comintern make him confuse the trees for the forest.⁷

There were many stages in the debate on this question. In 1927 La Guma had discussions with Bukharin in Moscow, but at a meeting of its Central Executive Committee on May 10, 1928, the Communist Party of

South Africa decided to oppose the slogan. The debate on the slogan continued at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in Moscow in 1928.⁷ After the Congress of the Comintern had adopted the slogan, debate on various aspects of it continued on South African soil. This debate can be divided into two stages, namely:

1. Between 1929-30 and 1933-34 the main struggle was for the acceptance of the Black Republic slogan, a period which coincided with Wolton's sectarian policy.

2. The second phase was after April 1933 when a conflict erupted between Bach and Kotane on the interpretation of the slogan.

Those in the Party leadership who were against the slogan tended to underestimate the national question and therefore the importance of the national liberation movement. They regarded the objectives of class struggle and the national liberation movement as identical and consequently denied the necessity of stages to socialism. In some quarters the revolutionary potential of the white workers was overestimated and it was feared that the slogan might result in problems between black and white workers. Objectively the denial of the existence of the national question in South Africa meant a wrong approach to the question of an anti-imperialist united front and a flexible tactic towards non-communist liberation fighters.

What the Black Republic slogan visualised was that white workers must include in their demands the question of national self-determination of Africans and other blacks because their national liberation would be a step towards the social and economic emancipation of the working class as a whole. The slogan did not mean merely giving blacks the same political rights as the white workers. On the contrary it meant that both black and white workers should be complete masters of the country and its destiny. In those days there was still hope that the white workers could play a positive role in the struggle.

But what was more important was that the Black Republic slogan focussed attention on the national liberation of the Africans and other nationally oppressed groups and spelt out the role of the black workers in an anti-colonial revolution. These principles have been incorporated in the basic documents of our movement today thanks to the assistance and guidance we received from the Comintern.

As for the Bach-Kotane conflict, the problem lay in Bach's sectarian and complete separation between the immediate goals of the CP and the ANC. Bach made no differentiation between a social and a socialist revolution.

Kotane on the other hand believed that the original resolution of the Comintern was correct in regard to the stages in the revolution and that the “bolshevisation” of the Party should mean an orientation based on the concrete reality obtaining in the country.

The discussion on the Black Republic was heated and tempers ran high. When one considers that the Black Republic slogan was based on Lenin’s theses on the national and colonial question at the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920 (“A copy of which was unfortunately not available to the Party in South Africa”⁸) it is understandable why things took such a course. But this does not explain the emergence of sectarianism and the ultra-left policies of Wolton and Bach in 1931-32 — years which Kotane called “years of destruction”.⁹

There was obviously a need to implement the Leninist policy on the national question within our Party and apply it to South African conditions, but there were also subjective problems of assessment and interpretation. The “left” tendency in the Party expressed itself in the characterisation of the party line as a “right” deviation. This assessment could not be correct because a “right” deviation on the colonial question means the denial of the leading role of the proletariat and the advocacy of a tailist policy behind the national bourgeoisie. Those sections of the Party leadership who opposed the Black Republic slogan were advocating the non-recognition of the national question and underestimating the significant role of other non-proletarian strata in the anti-colonial revolution — a left-wing deviation which Lenin criticised in his book *Left-Wing Communism — An Infantile Disorder*.

We mention these questions because they show that the history of the CPSA is not different from the history of other Parties in other parts of the world. The conditions and circumstances were different but in essence the problems were basically the same. This is of the utmost significance for revolutionary experience and practical training, as Lenin once said:

“In order to obtain the benefit of the experience of that movement, and to learn practical lessons from it, we must thoroughly understand the causes and significance of this or that shortcoming . . .

“Revolutionary experience and organisational skill are things that can be acquired provided the desire is there to acquire these qualities, provided the shortcomings are recognised — which in revolutionary activity is more than halfway towards removing them!”¹⁰

WHY I JOINED THE COMMUNIST PARTY

by **E. R. Braverman**

Prior to my arrival in South Africa I was a member of the illegal International Red Aid (MOPR in Russian) – an organisation in Latvia to which young and old belonged and which assisted political prisoners and their families. I also participated in illegal discussion groups which were organised for scholars and students. These discussion groups gave us basic Marxist education and an understanding of political economy and dialectical materialism. In addition to these discussion groups I participated in the weekly distribution of illegal leaflets and attended illegal mass meetings which were held over weekends in forests, on sand dunes and in selected factories. Our principal task was to spread Marxist thought in Secondary and Vocational Technical Institutions. We participated in demonstrations and in the legal mass activities of students, scholars and workers' organisations.

With this knowledge nurtured by dedicated teachers with a Marxist education and a sound understanding of the observation by Marx, that, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the

point however is to change it,' (+) together with a background of revolutionary work in the underground movement I naturally and without hesitation joined the Communist Party of South Africa. This I did within three days of my arrival on the 9th November 1929.

Thus there was no break in the continuity of my political development, understanding and work. From the articles in the Red International Labour Union (RILU) magazine and the Communist International magazine which were given to me by comrades prior to my departure from Latvia I had, as far as I could with the limited access to literature, prepared myself for the transition to a multi-racial type of society and obtained a general grasp of the repressive anti-working class content of the white racist regime.

The Communist Party in Cape Town though very small had representatives of all the population groups – African, Coloured Malay and White. All the members were between the ages of 30 and 40 but despite the fact that I was only 15 years old they accepted me. We hoped to attract young scholars and workers to build a Young Communist League. We started study classes which brought young Coloured scholars and workers to our movement. We sold the *South African Worker* and later helped to print and distribute the weekly party paper *Umsebenzi*. The selling of the paper in the working class areas such as District 6, the Harbour Area, Ndabeni and Langa was a new venture.

White Labour Policy

This was at the beginning of 1930. The Nat-Labour Pact government introduced the 'White' labour policy. African and Coloured workers were dismissed from the railways and public works to make way for unskilled Whites. The Africans who were dismissed were forced to go to the reserves – the present Bantustans. Thus the burden of unemployment was thrown on to the reserves. These were the hardships of the hungry 30's. But it was also the period of great activities. Our Party campaigned against the 'Pick-up-van', the Native Service Contract Act and other repressive laws. Campaigns were also organised for the right to work, for unemployment insurance and we held unemployed Councils. We never failed to tell workers that there is no unemployment in the first workers' Socialist country, the USSR.

(+) Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works (in 3 volumes), Vol 1, page 15. Progress Publishers. Moscow.

Workers were subject not only to ruthless exploitation as cheap labour but also to racial discrimination. Racial discrimination appeared to have the same kind of social origins as anti-Semitism in old Tzarist Russia and the surrounding Baltic states. As a member of a persecuted community I was very conscious of the social and psychological consequences of systematic and pervasive discrimination which in the South African society was even more grotesque and destructive than its equivalent in Eastern Europe. With a Marxist training I had no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that the root cause of inequality whether racial, national, religious or sexual was the exploitation of labour by capital and that therefore the solution lay in doing away with private ownership of the means of production.

It gave me satisfaction to translate these concepts into practical terms by organising workers to struggle for a living wage, to struggle against victimisation by the bosses and foremen, to struggle against racial discrimination, to struggle for the right to work and for democratic rights and to change their oppressive situation in favour of a life of freedom.

Apart from a small group of skilled workers the labour force was virtually unorganised. The two exceptions were the two Cape Town unions, the Cape Town Stevedoring Workers' Union and the Laundry Workers' Union. Both were remnants of the ICU with Comrade Shuba as their Secretary. I offered to assist Comrade Shuba in his office and as a result on Saturday afternoons and Sunday afternoons I would assist him, attend union meetings, assist in work such as the writing out of membership cards and record subscriptions in the membership book. Following this work Comrade Shuba asked me to take down complaints and speak at some union meetings. In addition to this work our time was taken up by selling *Umsebenzi* on Sunday mornings and attending the Party mass meeting at the foot of Adderley Street on Sunday nights.

The Party resolved to organise the unorganised. I devoted my time to organising Railway and Harbour workers, chemical shop assistants and milling and laundry workers. Eventually I extended my work to the organisation of food and canning workers. I participated in this work together with other members of the Communist Party, notably Comrade Shuba, Johnny Gomas, James la Guma, F C Welcome Msika and others. As an integral part of organising trade unions we ran political campaigns for homes, work and political rights and developed an understanding of socialist principles based on the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

The basic education given to cadres and their subsequent involvement in various organisations helped to build and continues to contribute to the consolidation of the struggle and the strengthening of the movement for a free and full life for our people in South Africa.



'THIS IS OUR VANGUARD, A VANGUARD OF COMMUNISTS'

2ND CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CUBA

Report by Alex La Guma in Havana

On the morning of 17 December 1980 the population of Cuba was greeted by a red banner-headline on the front page of *Granma*, organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba: '*Viva el comunismo!*' Under photographs of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the Cuban national heroes, Marti, Maceo, Gomez, Mella, Camillo and Che, it was announced that the Second Congress of the Communist Party was about to open that day.

So in the main hall of the Palace of Conventions which was first used for the 6th Summit of Non-Aligned Countries, 1,780 delegates assembled, elected at provincial assemblies, at Party conferences, in the armed forces and places of work. In addition there were fraternal delegations from 142 sister Parties, revolutionary movements, national democratic and progressive organisations from all over the world — from the socialist countries, Latin America and the Caribbean, Western Europe, North America and Asia. Africa was represented by delegations from such as the MPLA-Party of Labour, Ethiopia, FRELIMO, Algeria, Benin, Congo, Communist Party of Egypt, Mali, Polisario, Sao Tome and Principe,

Senegal, Sudan, Guinea, Zimbabwe, Zambia and others. South Africa was represented by Alfred Nzo, Secretary General of the ANC, and Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Moses Mabhida of the South African Communist Party.

As Fidel Castro himself said later, 'In fact there were times when it was hard to tell whether it was a Cuban congress or a congress of the world's revolutionary forces.'

At the time of the 1st Congress in 1975, Cuba was involved in helping Angola defend its territory from the north and south, above all against the threat of South African racist troops on Angolan soil. Later a similar situation rose when Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam requested aid to fight back the Somali invasion of the Ogaden. But it was not only in the form of military aid that Cuba's internationalism was being demonstrated. Above all, technical and scientific assistance and direct participation in constructive activities in friendly countries was the hallmark of Cuban solidarity. With the approach of the 2nd Congress, Cuba was collaborating in diverse ways with more than 37 countries and some 15,000 of her nationals were involved. Before and since then proletarian internationalism has been the banner of the Communist Party of Cuba.

It was in this spirit that the Second Congress of the Communist Party opened in Havana.

In the moving opening moments, the first Cuban cosmonaut, Colonel Arnaldo Tamayo, carried to the rostrum the national flag and the red flag of the Party which had gone with him into space. To the sound of the national anthem, amid stormy applause and jubilation, the Congress was opened. Making the formal announcement, Raul Castro, second secretary of the Party, said: 'On the day that marks the 150th anniversary of the death of Simon Bolivar, Liberator of America, we now begin the Second Congress.'

Sacred Duty

The main report to the Congress was made by Comrade Fidel Castro. In the words of Marcelino dos Santos of Mozambique, the report was 'a vivid, impressive X-ray picture of Cuba, showing where we came from, who we are and where we're headed. It is an analysis of the role of the revolutionary party, of the role and place of a Communist Party in the country and for a people making a revolution, conducting the state and society.'

Introducing his report, Fidel said, 'The strength of a small country such as Cuba is neither military nor economic, but moral.' The last country to

free itself from Spanish, the first country to free itself from Yankee imperialist domination, and the first country in the Latin American continent to take the road to socialism, 'everything in our way of life is new, and it has not been easy. We had to confront the most powerful imperialist country in the world just 90 miles from our coast, and fight against reactionary ideas that have existed for hundreds and even thousands of years and the bitter hatred of the exploiting classes. We had to stand up against isolation, hostility, threats, libel and an implacable campaign launched by the monopolies that control a large part of the world's mass media.'

To continue advancing Cuba had to defy attacks and even run the risk of being exterminated. 'Yet here we stand, 22 years after January 1, 1959. We have not retreated or made any concessions to imperialism. We have not renounced a single one of our ideas or revolutionary principles.'

Not everything they did had been wise, Castro said. Not all their decisions had been correct. In no revolutionary process have all actions and decisions been the right ones. But the stock of experience and revolutionary ideas which were inherited from Cuba's own history and that of mankind, was Cuba's most precious treasure. Through practice and example this stock could be added to. This was a sacred duty of all revolutionaries which demands the most rigorous criticism and self-criticism, and the most complete honesty.

Speaking and referring to all Communists everywhere, Fidel Castro said: 'Ever since the time of the Paris Commune real Communists have been noted for their heroism. In all history no one has excelled them in their capacity for self-sacrifice, spirit of solidarity, dedication, self-denial and readiness to give their lives for their cause. No other political idea in the course of development of human society has been taken up so strongly or elicited such selfless devotion as communism. The best and purest feelings of human beings have been expressed throughout the battles to do away with the age-old exploitation of man by man.

"Only the first Christians in the time of imperial and pagan Rome are comparable to Communists. Marx, Engels and Lenin were not bearers of mystical ideas, however, and their self-sacrificing followers did not seek their reward in another world. It is here on earth that man's future should be changed, and they were ready to face the cruellest repression and unhesitatingly give their lives to do this — that is, give everything in exchange for nothing themselves, but everything for others.

'... We cannot deny that anyone who struggles to obtain his

homeland's independence from colonial or neo-colonial power or for freedom from tyranny is a revolutionary, but there is only one higher way of being a revolutionary in today's world: that of being a Communist, because Communism embodies the idea of independence, freedom, true justice, equality among men, and what is more, internationalism — that is, brotherhood, solidarity, cooperation among all peoples and nations of the world. When the ideas of independence, freedom, equality, justice and fraternity among peoples and nations are combined, they are invincible.

'This is what we want to be: Communists. This is what we want to keep on being: Communists. This is our vanguard, a vanguard of Communists. This is our Congress: a Congress of Communists, backed by the people, a people of Communists. There has never existed, nor can there exist, any force in the world that can prevent this.'

Main Report

Fidel Castro, First Secretary of the party, proceeded to outline the record for the 1975-80 period, the goals and general guidelines for Cuba's future national and international policies.

It was pointed out that the 6 per cent annual growth rate proposed had not been achieved, but two-thirds of that goal had been realised. The admirable, heroic efforts that the working people and members of the Party had made, and their tremendous achievements in the hard and difficult years of the five mentioned, should not go unrecognised. Many capitalist countries — even developed ones with larger resources than those of Cuba — had been forced to retrench, cutting back production in some years, while their indices of inflation, unemployment and socio-economic crises rocketed. 'Our socialist country, with an underdeveloped economy, advanced in the sphere of material production and registered important social progress during this five year period.'

After surveying in detail developments in all branches of the economy and Cuban society in general, Fidel's report added:

"We are pleased to be able to state that, at the highest levels of the Party, the principles of collective leadership have been solidly applied. Both the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of our Party have met hundreds of times in the past few years, and the Central Committee has held its plenary sessions as scheduled. The most disparate international topics of a state and party nature have been analysed collectively. No important questions were decided in any other way. The rigour with which this essential principle of Marxism-Leninism was applied in our leadership

is truly exemplary and a source of pride. No manifestations of factionalism or exclusive groups appeared in our leadership, and the principles of Party democracy, democratic centralism and the most rigorous discipline govern all Party activities.”

Speaking critically of signs of flagging in the social awareness and the spirit of austerity and modesty which had been a characteristic of the revolutionary Cuban people, Fidel said that the worst enemy could not have done more damage. Was the Revolution beginning to degenerate on the imperialist enemy’s doorstep, as a softening up process became evident, in which some elements tended to let things slide? Perhaps it had been thought that with the institutionalisation of the country, socialist legality, the creation of People’s Power and the progressive implementation of economic programmes would in themselves perform miracles and that things were supposed to have got better automatically over the past Five Year period, without the basic efforts of man.

These questions were discussed openly, measures were taken and the pernicious tendencies began to be surmounted. This at the same time involved consistent ideological struggle.

‘Our people’s unanimous support for the struggle to achieve higher standards and against all signs of softness and accommodation shows how thoroughly our masses have absorbed the moral principles of the Revolution and demonstrates that, far from degenerating, our revolutionary process is growing stronger all the time,’ Castro asserted.

‘Our people’s communist and internationalist consciousness has undoubtedly been increased in recent years . . . Throughout the country, attitudes towards work, organisation, higher standards, combativity and revolutionary firmness are all at a much higher level. This is especially evident in our working class and has been brilliantly manifested by our intellectual workers as well. . . . and millions of our compatriots lead exemplary, genuinely proletarian, austere, collectivist, honest and disciplined lives.

‘This does not mean that we have always done the best possible political and ideological work or that we can cross our arms and say we have won the battle.’

Special Situation

It was necessary, said Fidel, to understand the special situation in which Cuba has been waging for over 20 years its confrontation with imperialism in the realm of ideas. ‘The existence just a few miles from our coast of the

richest, most aggressive capitalist country in the world, a paradise for individualism, gambling, drugs, prostitution and other alienating vices has forced us to respond courageously to this open and unending challenge.

‘The United States has always been the sworn enemy of our nation . . . After the triumph of the Revolution, the United States opened its doors to Cuban war criminals, torturers, embezzlers of public funds, plantation owners, real estate magnates, big businessmen and others of that ilk. At the same time it went to great lengths to rob us of our engineers, doctors, administrators, technicians and skilled workers.’

The US took advantage of its position as the world’s richest, most developed country with its much higher standard of living than Cuba, to try to bleed the country of her skilled personnel and thus try to destroy the revolutionary process, linking this policy to economic blockade, threats of aggression of all kinds.

‘The Revolution valiantly took up the challenge and permitted everyone who wanted to leave to do so . . . Millions of individuals, the vast majority of our people preferred to live here under economic blockade and the threat of annihilation rather than abandon their homeland. It was our socialist Revolution with its unselfish, heroic struggle, that forged our Cuban patriotic national spirit once and for all. A new generation of doctors, engineers, teachers and technicians has been trained in the years since the triumph of the Revolution, taking their place alongside the many intellectual workers who remained loyal to their homeland . . . Imperialism, however, has never stopped attacking our Cuban national spirit, constantly putting it to the test. . .

‘For these reasons, a bitter ideological struggle has been waged by our imperialist enemy and the Cuban revolution — a struggle that has been and will continue to be fought not only in the realm of revolutionary and political ideas, but in the sphere of our people’s patriotic national feelings. Imperialism refuses to resign itself to a revolutionary, socialist Cuba; a Cuba that has held out and gained prestige in its struggle against the Yankee giant; a Cuba in which patriotic feelings are deeper, more solid and more lasting than ever.’

Referring to the recent flight of lumpen and anti-social elements who were allowed to leave the country, Castro said. ‘This time they got our scum.’

In spite of the tremendous efforts the Revolution had made to promote socio-economic development — especially in education — some social disgrace from the past had still remained: a total lack of national feeling

on the part of some, combined with the fact that the socio-economic conditions in a developing country still produced some declassed, anti-social, lumpen elements that were receptive to imperialist enticements and ideas.

'The people's marches — an outpouring in response to acts of provocation — will go down in history. Never before have there been such huge mobilisations in our homeland. Once again (the enemy) underestimated our people's level of consciousness. The Revolution and the masses decided once and for all to take up the challenge . . . While Cuba made the cleanest sweep in its history, the masses were tempered and tremendously tempered in the struggle and their spirit of patriotism and the defence of the principles of socialism and proletarian internationalism were deepened. The struggle also boosted production and discipline and helped us find solutions for our internal weakness.'

It was pointed out that the people's repudiation of the scum also meant that they repudiated undisciplined behaviour, sponging, accommodation, negligence and other negative attitudes.

Ideological training

Mass ideological training, Fidel Castro told the Congress, especially the training of children and young people in the principles of socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism, required systematic work. ' . . . The principles of internationalism have been set forth broadly and consistently in our work of revolutionary orientation. We have made every effort to ensure that the true image of the Cuban revolution is projected abroad, explaining both our successes and shortcomings and difficulties and our socio-economic advances in building socialism. Our people's political understanding is impressive, and they are kept informed about the main aspects of the world situation. . . .

'Ideology is first of all consciousness; consciousness is revolutionary militant attitude, dignity, principles and morale. Ideology is also an effective weapon in opposing misconduct, weakness, privileges, immorality. For all revolutionaries ideological struggle is today in the forefront; is the first revolutionary trench.

'Socialism is a relatively new system in mankind's history, for it has only been in existence for a few decades. Right from the start it was opposed by imperialist threats, hostility, intervention and aggression. Fascism made a brutal effort to destroy the first socialist state only 24 years after it had been founded. The socialist camp was built on the rubble and ruins which

the Nazi hordes left behind them in the most devastated parts of Europe which were also the continent's least developed areas. It hasn't been easy and circumstances have hardly been propitious for spreading socialist ideas.

'Our enemy has used every means at its disposal to continue fighting socialism. On the military front it has forced the socialist countries to invest huge sums of money in defence. Politically it has made every effort to subvert, destabilise and discredit the socialist countries.

'This reality should not be underrated . . . Only by consistently applying the principles of Marxism-Leninism can we be strong, invulnerable, invincible.

'Ours is a state of workers who exercise revolutionary power. The Party and its members must always be solidly, closely and deeply linked to the masses. They must engage in rigorous criticism and self-criticism. They must not deviate from collective leadership, internal democracy, democratic centralism and the strictest discipline. They must lead a life of austerity and embody the spirit of self-sacrifice, unselfishness, selflessness, honesty, solidarity and heroism that should characterise every Communist.

'Every Communist should be a staunch fighter, convinced of the absolute justice of his cause; he should be studious, hard-working, demanding and deeply committed to his people. The Party exists through and for the people. Bureaucratic and petty bourgeois attitudes are completely alien to its principles. The strongest, closest ties should exist between the Party cadres and members and the people, mainly based on the example set by revolutionaries and the confidence inspired by their commitment to the people.

'We still have a long way to go and many problems to solve as we build socialism, but history has already shown that our ideas are far superior to and infinitely more humane than those of capitalism. The clock of history never turns back. Capitalism with all its egoism, crime and vice, will disappear, just as feudalism and slavery did; and even if one country should take a step backward, mankind never will.'

A friend of the Soviet Union

Dealing with Cuba's foreign policy, Fidel stated that while reviewing Cuba's attitude towards various international developments over the past five years and her relationship with the individual countries of the world, it

was not possible to refer to each and every one of the situations the country and government had faced. But one thing was clear. 'Cuba is and will continue being socialist. Cuba is and will continue being a friend of the Soviet Union and of all the socialist states. Cuba is and will continue being an internationalist country. Principles cannot be negotiated.'

Cuba believed that for the world it was an historical necessity that normal relations exist among countries, based upon mutual respect, on the acknowledgement of the sovereign right of everyone and of non-intervention. Cuba considered that the normalisation of its relations with the United States would improve the political climate in Latin America and the Caribbean and would contribute to world detente.

Events on the international scene confirmed the position taken at the 1st Congress — namely that detente was what the people wanted, that it was an essential condition for mankind's survival and that it was being constantly threatened by the most reactionary sectors of imperialism which simply would not accept it. But there was still a possibility of saving detente, even though it was in danger in the current difficult situation. That possibility was dependent, first of all, on the Soviet Union's firm and constant policy of peace, on the support the other socialist countries gave that policy and the backing it received from all other progressive forces. One essential element that no one could ignore was that the USSR was fully prepared to throw back any kind of attack aimed at its submission. A nuclear adventure against the Soviet Union would be suicidal for those who made the attempt. Even the most aggressive imperialists were aware of this.

Reagan election

Some time during the early days of Carter's administration there seemed to be a certain inclination among the leaders of the US along the path of negotiations. Carter had made some gesture towards Cuba: at the beginning of his term he cancelled spy flights, allowed US citizens to travel to Cuba and had proposed the creation of an Interests Section. Cuba had been receptive to these gestures, but in the end the reactionary ideas of some of his advisers prevailed over the less aggressive trends in the State Department, and the relations became tense once again.

Reagan's election had introduced an element of uncertainty — rather of danger — in US-Cuban relations. 'The intentions they have expressed are extremely reactionary and dangerous,' Fidel told the Congress. 'There is

no doubt that it (the election) has been a success for the extreme right in the politics of the United States. It is the duty of the peoples to be realistic, to have no illusions, and prepare themselves to staunchly oppose the policy announced by imperialism and by the reactionary group that has just come to power.'

Reagan and his advisers were trying to attain military superiority and negotiate with the socialist camp from a position of strength, but this idea was simply absurd. This would lead to an unbridled arms race in the midst of the worst international economic crisis the world has recently had to suffer. 'In our opinion Reagan will be unable to solve any of the main problems affecting the United States: inflation, unemployment, energy crisis, economic recession, vice, drugs, violence, crimes, corruption, and his ideas on foreign policy can endanger world peace. . .

'Reagan and his advisers have announced that they intend to establish an alliance with the rightist, reactionary and fascist forces in this continent. But the peoples of our America will never submit themselves to this ignominious subjugation. The workers, the peasants, the intellectuals, the students will know how to resist such a cruel fate. . .

'Reagan has said that in Vietnam the mistake was not making war but losing it. In Latin America the mistake of making war might represent a greater defeat than that of Vietnam, Who has told Mr. Reagan that making war means the right to win it?. . .

'If Yankee marines or intervention forces land in Central America, the people of the United States will again witness the painful scene of their soldiers' coffins arriving home. Those who go to kill Latin Americans will also have to resign themselves to die. The blame will fall on those who refuse to acknowledge the lessons of history and the irreversible changes that have taken place in our world. No one is threatening life in the United States, but no one will accept without a determined and heroic struggle the threat of the United States against our lives.'

Reagan and his advisers spoke of a military blockade of Cuba, under any pretext, even if, as they asserted, the Soviet Union were to carry out an action in any other part of the world. This was a cynical and repulsive thought, said Castro.

'Cuba will be ready to defend itself against any military blockade or imperialist Yankee invasion! In this country the struggle will not cease as long as one single patriot remains capable of fighting, and there are millions ready to do so to their last drop of blood.'

Party of the people

On the last day of the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, the citizens of the Havana provinces were again met with a red banner-headline: 'Everybody to the Plaza at 5 p.m.' Everybody went. A sea of people overflowed from the *Plaza de la Revolution* into the surrounding boulevards. The little national flags of the Lone Star, waved aloft, rippled like the breakers of the nearby Mexican Gulf.

The report delivered by Fidel Castro to the Congress had been unanimously adopted; the working committees had completed their work, dealing with amendments to the party statutes, resolutions on the future five-year plan, and other matters pertaining to Party work. The Central Committee had been elected, the Political Bureau and Secretariat confirmed. In this connection, Fidel told the crowd, 'The leadership of our Party was given a strong dose of worker cadres, a strong dose of women, and a strong dose of internationalist fighters.'

Addressing the tremendous crowd, Fidel, who had been unanimously re-elected First Secretary of the party, said that they had demonstrated in practice what had been said at the Congress about the Party's solid, profound and indestructible ties with the masses. 'Thus the great truth that the Party is the party of our people and that the Party exists through the people and for the people is hereby confirmed.'

Speaking with emotion about the presence and solidarity of foreign delegations, Fidel referred to those from Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and other Latin American revolutionaries; to 'our Angolan brothers and sisters, our Afghan brothers and sisters, our African brothers and sisters,' those from Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos, from the Communist Parties of Portugal and France, and 'We had the pleasure to hear, in the words of that hero of the cause of communism, Henry Winston (of the US Communist Party), the message from the most pure and most honest of the North American people.'

Dealing with the work of the Congress and the opinions expressed, Fidel stated: 'There are two basic conclusions we can draw from the Congress. One, the work, the efforts to boost production and services. . . The first thing we have to do is to tackle our difficulties head-on and devote ourselves to work, to the services. We must redouble our efforts, work more efficiently and be more demanding in agriculture, in school, in the hospitals, everywhere. In short, we must work more and better than ever before.

'Second, we must prepare ourselves to defend the country. In other

AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT:

by Vukani Mawethu

GUINEA BISSAU — BACKGROUND TO THE COUP

On November 14, 1980, the Government of President Luiz Cabral was overthrown in a coup when troops loyal to the Prime Minister, Major Joano Bernardo Vieira, took over key positions in the capital, Bissau, occupied the state radio station and ordered a curfew. In the first news conference following the coup, Guinea Bissau's new leader, Major Vieira, said:

"The fundamental causes of the events of November 14 were: the decline in the social and economic situation of the country; the deviation from the party line, most notably the progressive abandonment of the principles of democratic centralism and of criticism and self-criticism, the corruption of the meaning of unity between Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, and division among militants and within the leadership."

In other words the coup was staged in the name of Amilcar Cabral's policies and a return to the political programme of the third PAIGC congress of 1977 which, the new leadership maintains, has been betrayed by Luiz Cabral, the former President. If we are to go by the pronouncements of the new leaders, we may doubt whether the stories in

the bourgeois press about the antagonism between Guineans and Cape Verdeans within the PAIGC, about the end of the union with Cape Verde and about the abolition of the PAIGC in Guinea are well founded.

Roots of the Coup

Though information is limited to present a coherent picture and analysis, it is possible to identify some important areas of tension and these should be analysed in political rather than ethnic terms. But this does not minimise the ethnic factor. All we can say is that the ethnic factor, which is an aspect of the unsolved national question, has to be understood in its historical context.

There have always been Cape Verdeans in Guinea and a big number of Cape Verdeans are of Guinean extraction or origin. Population movement between the two countries is a common phenomenon. Before 1879 Guinea and Cape Verde were under a single colonial administration. Then the Cape Verdeans were granted the status of *assimilados* which in theory gave them the same rights and opportunities as the Portuguese. In Guinea it was not easy to acquire the status of *assimilados*: stringent educational and financial requirements had to be met. There was discrimination at school between Cape Verdeans and *non-assimilado* Guineans. The educated Cape Verdeans together with a small number of Guinean *assimilados* — by the 1960's less than one per cent of Guineans were *assimilados* — were posted in Guinea where they soon filled most of the middle and lower echelons of the civil service.

Not unlike the rest of Africa, it is within this group that anti-colonial sentiments grew and from this group nationalist leadership emerged. The PAIGC was formed in 1956 by Amilcar Cabral and his comrades.

One should remember that the effect of the war was to grossly inflate the size of the population especially in Bissau, the capital, which has today about 110,000 people — one sixth of the total population! This increased the number of civil servants required to administer a country in a state of war. A large proportion of these civil servants were Cape Verdeans. When the PAIGC took over in 1974/75 it needed qualified administrators. Most of these were obviously former collaborators, some of whom proved arrogant and inefficient and have thus been regarded by the population as opportunists with no strong allegiance to the PAIGC. Thus the "politics of Bissau" assumed a national character.

There were other forces at work such as PAIGC's political rivals, based on the Guinean community living in Senegal. These eventually coalesced

in FLING which articulated a “nationalist” message specifically excluding unity with Cape Verde. They did not succeed except partially in Bissau and perhaps among the colonial troops who fought with the Portuguese against the PAIGC.

Economic Problems

What about the economic situation to which Vieira alluded?

Throughout 1980, but more particularly during the weeks preceding the coup, food had become so scarce in Bissau (where nearly one sixth of the population lives) that desperate city dwellers would queue overnight in the hope of getting a few vegetables in the morning.

Rice — the basic foodstuff — was no longer available. Pre-war production of rice was estimated at 120,000 tonnes per annum which covered home consumption and allowed for some export. Despite the devastation of the war, the government had hoped to reach the pre-war production levels by 1977. At independence (1974) 30,000 tonnes per annum of rice had to be imported. By 1976 imports of rice had been reduced to 11,000 tonnes per annum as a result of several factors: prices paid to the producers had been raised substantially and seed had been distributed, a Rice Production Experimental Department had been set up, and assistance was provided for some agricultural workers.

Since 1977, however a period of severe drought prevailed and approximately 40-50,000 tonnes of rice per annum have had to be imported along with several thousand tonnes of maize. Today it is estimated that at least 70,000 tonnes of rice will have to be imported in order to feed the population. Since 1977 the production of groundnuts, the country's major export, has declined and agriculture in general is experiencing major difficulties.

Amilcar Cabral had made it clear that Guinea-Bissau's development would be based on agriculture. However, pressures of urbanisation, the need to improve the basic infrastructure and to develop some industry, led the government to neglect the problems of the countryside. Self-sufficiency could not be achieved and the conditions in the countryside worsened, partly because of the drought.

The problem of whether to concentrate on urban oriented industrial development or to devote the country's resources to modernisation of agriculture has always been a thorny issue in countries which have just liberated themselves from colonialism. Connected with this is the equally difficult question of distribution: in whose interest is (or who benefits from)

development as such? In Guinea Bissau there was a need for more modest (as contrasted with over-ambitious) and realistic projects and for greater emphasis on agricultural development.

What about the army?

The Guinean army is composed of people with a rural background, people with little experience of city life until independence. They fought bravely during the war and endured hardships; they were involved in the local party structures, hence they were self-confident and politically dedicated to the PAIGC. After independence, during the time of peace, the army had to be reduced and some returned to their villages or worked in cooperatives.

The attempt to meet the food crisis and to develop agriculture will require political will, technical expertise and continued aid from outside. The dependence on the army will inevitably lead the new government to allocate more resources to the armed forces. The continuous population increase in Bissau will swell the bureaucracy and will further stretch the country's resources. The lack of sufficient qualified manpower will compel the new regime to continue to rely on the very collaborators it is now accusing of corruption.

The assassination of Amilcar Cabral

In January 1973 Amilcar Cabral was assassinated by a Guinean member of the PAIGC apparently recruited by the Portuguese secret service to eliminate the PAIGC leadership and thus prevent the 1973 declaration of independence. The question of security within the PAIGC became a particularly sensitive issue. Amilcar Cabral is said to have been against political executions but his assassination under mysterious circumstances prompted a number of his colleagues to question this and the lack of security within the PAIGC. The ringleaders in the assassination of Cabral were executed. All the same, division on this question remained.

Perhaps Vieira had this point of avoiding political executions in mind — mass graves were “discovered” after the coup — when he talked of “returning to Amilcar Cabral's policy”. But why then was Antonio Buscardini, Director of Security, and Otto Schatt, a highly placed official in the PAIGC, killed during the coup and Rafael Barbosa released after the coup? Rafael Barbosa, 56, is one of the founders of the PAIGC of which he was president until 1964. He was tortured and imprisoned by the Portuguese for seven years but later he adopted an anti-PAIGC stance. He was then excluded from the PAIGC. At the instigation of General Spinoza,

he organised the assassination of Amilcar Cabral. He was sentenced to death in October 1976, but the sentence was commuted to fifteen years imprisonment. He was violently opposed to "Cape Verde Coloured supremacy".

The complaints about "lack of party democracy" and "democratic centralism" can tend to be subjective — if for example the President and the party curb or reduce the powers of the Prime Minister.

Elections had taken place in Guinea Bissau in 1972 and 1976 and were due soon. Amilcar Cabral was emphatic on the role of the country's elected bodies which were established as representative institutions with substantial power in the state apparatus.

True, there was a debate on the role and power of these institutions. But that debate is now closed because Vieira and his Revolutionary Council exercise absolute power, have dissolved the National Assembly, abolished the Presidential Council and dismissed a number of ministers. Luiz Cabral is under house arrest and the whereabouts of Jose Arango, the Executive Secretary of the PAIGC, are unknown. Aristides Pereira, the President of Cape Verde and Secretary-General of the PAIGC, and his deputy Luiz Cabral are to appear before court.

The question of democracy in Guinea Bissau cannot be divorced from the debate over the constitution. The issues at stake were that Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde were to have the same constitution so as to facilitate the process of integration. But in fact this did not work out. Two points seemed to have been controversial: first Cape Verde's constitution specified that the President must be a Cape Verdean and it abolished the death penalty. Second, the Guinean constitution had no such provision for a Guinean president and it maintained the death sentence and explicitly gave more powers to the president Luiz Cabral. The Guinean constitution gave rise to real and imagined fears of Cape Verdean domination in the person of Luiz Cabral who was already seen to have excessive powers. The debate on the constitution was protracted and at times bitter and Luiz Cabral was allegedly unwilling to allow any amendments or changes.

The Revolutionary Council

Major Vieira is the President of the new Revolutionary Council (or Council of Revolution) which has nine members: six army officers and three civilians. The Vice-president is the former Foreign Minister, Victor Saude Maria. The others are Commander Correia, former Veterans Minister; Iacia Camara, Buota N'Ambatcha, Joao Silva, Captain Beghatba Na

Beata, Manuel Saturnino, one-time ambassador to Cuba and the Soviet Union and also once a Minister of the Interior, and Samba Kamine Mane who was Minister of Natural Resources in the overthrown government. Four advisers to the Revolutionary Council were appointed: Victor Freire Monteiro (Governor of the Central Bank), Joseph Turpin (Secretary of State for Fisheries until the coup), Mario Cabral (who was responsible for rural development before the coup) and the Prosecutor-General, Cruz Pinto.

Major Vieira was the most senior Guinean in the army, in the government and PAIGC, and definitely one of the most popular former guerilla leaders. He became Prime Minister after the former Guinean Prime Minister, Francisco Mendes, a popular Guinean commander, was killed in a car crash in 1978.

These are the men who staged a coup, and these were among the causes of tension other than the alleged antagonism within the PAIGC and between Guineans and Cape Verdeans. These problems have an objective character and were not caused merely by Cabral's exercise of "dictatorial powers". They could have been solved democratically within the PAIGC but Vieira acted both unconstitutionally and outside the PAIGC tradition. He has opened the doors for further coups and has become more dependent on the army than on the party.

The ability of the new regime to re-establish democratic politics within the PAIGC will depend on allowing newly elected representative institutions their full role in the state, ruling by consensus rather than by repression and curbing the newly emerging central power and the role of the armed forces. But Vieira is at present faced with the problem of asserting his regime's legitimacy.

Western Sahara: Polisario's International Prestige

When in August 1979 a peace treaty between Polisario and Mauritania was reached with Mauritania renouncing all claims to Western Sahara, Morocco promptly occupied the hitherto Mauritanian sector, Tiris El-Gharbia, and renamed it Oued Ed-Dahab. The war itself started in October 1974.

Today the main theatres of war are in the desert fringes of Southern Morocco rather than in the Western Sahara itself. Polisario has been able

to concentrate on the Moroccan King Hassan's *Force Armée's Royales (FAR)*. By the end of 1979 Polisario had forced the FAR to evacuate their lost bases in the entire eastern part of the Saguia El-Hamra. Since Morocco's departure from Mahbes in October, 1979, the FAR have not held any fixed positions between Smara and the Algerian frontier. The Moroccan forces retreated to the few populated centres near the coast, notably the old Spanish capital El-Ayoune, the "holy city" of Smara (the territory's only precolonial city), the coastal settlement of Boujdour and the phosphate mines of Bou-Craa. Further south in Rio de Oro, the Moroccans have again been restricted to a handful of settlements, among them Guelta Zemmour and the one time capital of Tiris El-Gharbia, Dakhla. Even in Southern Morocco, numerous positions had to be abandoned by the FAR in 1979, most notably the base of Lebouirate, near Zaag, which was overrun by Polisario in August, 1979 in the course of a battle which proved one of the most disastrous for Morocco.

How could Polisario achieve such successes?

Polisario proved that it could strike at and even enter certain of the most heavily defended urban centres. The guerillas' ability to break their way into Tan-Tan, a provincial capital in southern Morocco, in January, 1979, and then into Smara the following October, was an especially bitter blow to Moroccan morale.

The Polisario fighters have obvious advantages: a greater commitment to their cause than their Moroccan adversaries; a keen nomadic sense of skills and techniques of desert warfare and of the terrain of the war zones; and flexibility in staging surprise attacks on an army essentially tied to fixed positions. The Polisario Front draws its recruits also from the historically nomadic, Hassaniya-speaking Saharawi people of Southern Morocco.

International Intrigues

The parties of the conflict — Morocco and Polisario — remain committed to completely antagonistic positions, making a peaceful settlement in the near future exceedingly difficult. Morocco is the culprit. Morocco refuses to entertain the idea of abandoning any of its "recuperated Saharan provinces" or even to talk to Polisario, which on the other hand insists on the total withdrawal of Moroccan forces from Western Sahara as a precondition for genuine self determination through a referendum.

The Western countries are playing a hesitant, if not negative role, in the Saharan conflict. Among Western nations, only Austria, Finland, Greece,

Sweden, Cyprus, Malta and Australia voted for the pro-Saharawi resolution adopted by 88 votes to 8 by the United Nations General Assembly on November 11, 1980. The United States, France, Spain etc. abstained. Despite this display of so-called neutrality, both France and the United States supply arms to Morocco for commercial gain and to support Hassan, a key Western ally. South Africa also supplies arms to Morocco.

Since the downfall of the Shah of Iran and Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua and the developments in Afghanistan, Washington has increased its determination to bolster the monarchy in Morocco, which not only guards the southern flank of the strategic straits of Gibraltar, but has also supported imperialist interests in Africa. Morocco flew troops to the Shaba province of Zaire in 1977 and 1978 and discreetly encouraged the "normalisation" of relations between Egypt and Israel, the so-called Camp David Accord. This military aid will most likely be increased by the Reagan administration.

But the problem facing both France and USA in this respect is Algeria's reaffirmed position that it will not negotiate with Morocco over the heads of the Saharawis. Algeria's oil and natural gas based economy offers far more than Morocco to western firms in the form of contracts. The significance of the Algerian government's role as mediator with Iran over the fate of the American hostages in Teheran compelled the Americans "not to get too deeply involved in this war", that is, to keep a low profile, albeit temporarily. Both Washington and Paris are pushing for some kind of "compromise settlement" to defuse the tension in the Maghreb and at the same time to allow Hassan some "breathing space".

Polisario's International Prestige

Polisario and its state, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, have been recognised by 45 countries from the so-called Third World. At a meeting in Tripoli on April 12-15, 1980, the Steadfastness Front of Arab States opposed to Egyptian-Israel contacts (Algeria, Libya, South Yemen, Syria and the PLO) announced a collective decision to recognise the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Later in the year, at the UN General Assembly, not one Arab state sided with Morocco in opposition to the pro-Saharawi resolution adopted on November 11.

At the OAU summit in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on July 1-4, 1980, 26 African states (out of 51) declared their recognition of the SADR and supported its admission as a full member state to the OAU under Article 28 of the Charter of the OAU which requires only a simple majority.

Morocco protested and threatened to quit the OAU. To avoid such a split the question of Western Sahara was handed over to the six African heads of state who make up the OAU ad hoc committee on Western Sahara which had been set up at the Khartoum summit in 1978. Their attempt at mediation, in Monrovia in December, 1979 had been undermined by Morocco's refusal to take part.

This growing international prestige of the Frente Popular para la Liberacion de Saguia El-Hamra y de Rio de Oro (Polisario) and its government, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, has been accompanied by a growing isolation of Morocco as underlined at the October 10, 1980 session of the Decolonisation Committee which adopted a strongly worded pro-Polisario resolution.

It is important to warn the enemies of African liberation that the "terrorists" of today are the rulers of tomorrow. The history of Polisario shows clearly that its international prestige grows in direct proportion to its struggles on the battlefield.

What has still to be done in Africa is to convince those few states which are still wavering on this issue or are under French or American pressure, to recognise the Polisario. In any case the outcome of the struggle in favour of Polisario will have repercussions in Morocco itself.



THE POLISH CRISIS

1. WHAT'S HAPPENING IN POLAND?

Speech by Gus Hall, general secretary of the CPUSA, delivered on September 17, 1980.

Before beginning, I would like to suggest that we all keep in mind that we are viewing the recent developments in Poland from afar and that this may colour our judgments. Not having the experience or responsibility of building socialism, our observations, therefore, must be considered in a sense as partisan observations from the sidelines.

It is necessary and important to discuss these developments because of the unprecedented efforts of U.S. and world capitalism to exploit these developments. The recent developments in Poland have become a focal point for all the anti-socialist forces in the United States and, for that matter, in the whole world.

These reactionary, anti-socialist elements are working overtime to convince people that the developments in Poland are proof positive that socialism does not and cannot work. They have seized upon the difficulties in Poland to "prove" that the socialist system has failed. And they are using every tactic, every variation of the Big Lie and every public outlet to peddle their vicious slander.

We are interested in Polish developments for the very opposite reasons. We know that the truth and real facts are proof that the problem does not lie in the socialist system itself. Rather, the problems are a result of some mistakes and weaknesses of the leadership, mistakes which are in a sense contrary to some of the principles of socialist development. The weaknesses and errors made by the Polish leadership are not weaknesses and errors which are inevitable in socialism. They are products of conditions unique to the construction of socialism in Poland.

A Historic Framework

To understand what happened in Poland it is necessary to first place the current developments in their proper perspective within a historic framework. No measurement of the quality of life in any society is possible without a consideration of the basic human rights enjoyed by the people.

In Poland, there is no unemployment. Every Polish citizen is constitutionally guaranteed a job of his or her own choosing, without fear of ever being jobless.

In Poland, there is equal pay for equal work and guaranteed equality of opportunity. This is one of the results of the elimination of the racism and especially anti-Semitism left from pre-socialist Poland.

Every Polish citizen is entitled to an old-age pension, to disability benefits, fully paid for by the government. Men can retire at 60 and women at 55.

Every Polish citizen has the right to an education, to complete medical and health care, fully paid for by the government.

Every Polish citizen has the right to housing costing no more than about 5 per cent of his or her income. There is no hunger, no poverty, no real slums.

These achievements must be seen within the framework that Poland was one of the countries almost completely destroyed during the Second World War. When the Nazis were defeated and driven out by the Soviet Red Army, Poland's industries, cities, towns and villages, hospitals, schools, farms and livestock had been devastated and their land lay in ruins.

After the war, the Polish people — minus the millions who were murdered and maimed by the Nazis — began heroically and resolutely to rebuild their country on a socialist foundation.

They began to build a modern socialist society in a backward, industrially retarded country inherited from capitalism and the remnants of feudalism.

Restricted by limited natural resources and burdened by the devastation of war, within a short span of 36 years the Polish people — with massive assistance from the Soviet Union — succeeded in building a developed socialist society.

Today Poland is a modern society with a highly productive material and technical base. Today's Poland has surpassed most of the old capitalist countries of the world in production and overall quality of life. It has built modern cities and towns, huge apartment complexes and industrial enterprises, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and dams. It has a modern power base and transport industry.

The problems and weaknesses in today's Poland — as in all socialist countries — must be viewed in the context that mature socialism has not yet reached its final stage. It is a social system in the process of development. In the building of a new socio-economic system there are always some elements of trial and error.

However, socialism in Poland has unique features, including unique weaknesses.

Socialism in Poland still faces severe problems, such as the collectivization of its agriculture. It must still resolve the question of church-state relations. And at its own level, Poland faces unique problems in the development of a higher level of socialist consciousness.

We shall discuss these in more detail later.

Thus, although a critical assessment is appropriate and necessary at this time, we should keep in mind that sometimes criticisms of specific weaknesses eclipse the great and unquestionable achievements in the course of socialist construction. To permit this to occur would be to aid the enemies of socialism, the enemies of socialist Poland.

A Strike Against Whom?

In discussing the strikes in Poland it is necessary to keep in mind that while the number of strikers was large and the strikes did create serious problems, the fact remains that the great majority of the 15-million-member Polish working class did not go on strike. The majority of Polish workers remained at their jobs, which tremendously limited the amount of economic damage and served to maintain internal peace.

We should note here that in a real sense any strike in a socialist society is a contradiction. Under normal circumstances a strike is not necessary because management and workers are on the same side. The means of production are publicly owned. They are the property of all the workers

and people. All production is for the common good and for the well-being of all. There are no private corporations and no private profits. There is no class contradiction between management and workers. All profits, all wealth produced go to advance the living standards and to satisfy the cultural and spiritual requirements of all the people.

So when there is a strike, in a sense workers are striking against themselves, against their own self-interests. When settlements are negotiated, the negotiations are not between adversaries but are discussions about mutual problems, mutual interest, mutual benefits and, therefore, mutual solutions.

When a strike does take place the basic cause is either a lack of understanding in management or a lack of socialist consciousness by the workers. In the Polish situation, it seems there was a lack of understanding by both sides.

What made the situation even more explosive was the lack of contact, the lack of communication with the workers on the part of the people in management, the party and trade union leaders. Because of this missing link corrective measures were not taken in time to prevent the explosions. Tensions and resentment had evidently built up for a period of time until — rightly or wrongly — the workers felt they had no other alternative but to take drastic and dramatic measures to call attention to their grievances.

The demand for independent trade unions must be seen in the context of the workers' frustration and loss of confidence in the established trade union leaders. It must also be seen in the context that they are not asking for trade unions independent of the socialist structure of Polish society. It is most important to take note of the fact that the strikers and strike leaders made it absolutely clear that they were not striking against the character and foundation of the socialist state. They were not denying or challenging in any way the leading role of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP). They were asking for redress of grievances within the existing socialist structure of Poland.

This was so despite the fact that anti-socialist elements, both internally and externally, were very busy indeed. These anti-socialist elements included the subversive activities of the CIA and the counter-revolutionary forces throughout the world, and especially those working out of West Germany.

These reactionary forces have a long-term strategy for destabilizing the socialist world, for pushing individual socialist countries off the socialist path and out of the socialist orbit. They have not given up on Poland or

any of the socialist countries. But they now think they have a foot inside Poland's door. So the counter-revolutionary, subversive efforts will continue and even escalate.

This is not to deny or in any way diminish the very real internal weaknesses and errors of the Polish leadership, and especially the trade union leadership, including the fact that the union leadership itself was often selected through undemocratic methods. However, we want to take note at this point that all the propaganda, the slander and falsehoods being spewed out in media headlines, by monopoly circles and their ideologues and by the AFL-CIO leadership cannot negate the progressive role of unions in Poland.

Hypocritical 'Friends of Poland'

It is difficult to compare unions and trade union rights in socialist countries with those in capitalist countries because American workers do not even dream of such extensive social rights. They could not even imagine their rights being upheld by laws.

As we know, workers in the United States must wage war with the monopoly corporations for even small benefits, for every improvement in their working conditions, for every advance in living standards, for every wage increase. American workers would not even entertain the thought of getting paid full wages while on strike, as the Polish workers were. U.S. workers are blocked, restricted and hamstrung by such anti-labor laws as the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin Acts, a multitude of right-to-work laws and every conceivable obstacle to union organizing and the right to strike.

The support of Polish strikers by monopoly circles, Carter and Reagan and the top union leadership is nothing but the height of hypocrisy. They have never supported strikes in the United States, or in any other capitalist country for that matter. But when strikes occur — as they rarely do — in socialist countries, they are the first to pick up the picket signs.

The anti-socialist forces cover up their real motives with hypocritical rhetoric about concern for the human and trade union rights of Polish workers. It is interesting that even the most reactionary forces find it necessary to hide their anti-socialist aims. It is a back-door admission that open anti-socialist criticism would not be welcomed by Polish workers.

Even Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, in his appeal to the AFL-CIO unions to set up a "Polish Workers' Aid Fund," felt compelled to defend the statements and actions of the AFL-CIO leadership: "The AFL-

CIO was not involved. . .in the strike by Polish workers.” And to cover up the anti-socialist aims of his appeal he even felt forced to disclaim any attack on Poland’s socialist system:

We are not interested in attacking, undermining or calling into question the economic system that prevails in any other country in this world, including Poland. . .whether it be capitalist, communist or whatever. And our quarrel, insofar as the AFL-CIO is concerned. . .does not relate in any way to such matters as who owns the tools and means of production. To us that is really irrelevant.

Kirkland claims that his only interest is in the “humanization of the system” which would “serve the cause of peace . . . detente . . . of normal, constructive relations between nations.”

If this is so, why then has the AFL-CIO leadership never in a generation supported any strikes in capitalist countries, including the United States? Why didn’t they appeal for strike funds for the workers of South Africa and Chile and, as a matter of fact, for workers right here, where workers have frequently been involved in long, hard strike battles — often without the help of strike funds? And since when has Lane Kirkland, one of the most outspoken advocates of bloated military budgets, war production and military superiority over the Soviet Union, become the spokesman for “peace, detente and normal, constructive relations between nations”? Support for policies of U.S. imperialist aggression cannot lead to “constructive relations between nations.”

The truth is that monopoly capital and its labor stooges will exploit every problem, every weakness, every mistake to undermine Poland’s socio-economic system, the political and social basis of Polish society.

The Sources of the Mistakes

What then is the truth about the real, underlying causes of the strikes and disturbances in Poland?

The fact is that there is no single cause. Each element in and of itself would not have caused the explosion. What brought it to a head was a coming together — the convergence — of a number of factors.

The causes are mostly internal domestic problems, but there are also some external factors. While there is no question that foreign counter-revolutionary forces were at work, basically the causes are internal.

The weakness and mistakes are not the product of any evil intent. In fact, the mistakes of Poland’s leadership flow from the very best of intentions. And interestingly enough, they are weaknesses that have

appeared in a number of socialist countries in the past.

The intent of the Polish leadership was and is to build a modern industrial economic base as fast as possible in order to raise the living standards and overall well-being of the people accordingly. There is nothing wrong with this motivation. It is most admirable. In fact, it is the ultimate and loftiest goal of every socialist society and every Communist Party.

However, such an approach and the accompanying policies and practices must not attempt to skip stages of reality, to ignore what is economically and socially realistic and possible. It does not matter how good the intentions are if they lead to policies that create instability and imbalances.

When the subjective factors override and dominate the estimate of objective reality, imbalances will necessarily follow. As a result of an unrealistic approach in Poland imbalance occurred between the rapidly increasing aspirations and expectations of the workers and people and the ability of the society's productive capacities to satisfy them. A distortion developed between the plans, designs and economic decisions and the ability of the economy to implement them.

An imbalance arose between the forced acceleration of economic growth and sweeping modernization of industry and the resources, funds and capabilities of the existing economic, scientific and technological base to carry them out. Concretely, how did these imbalances develop in Poland?

Especially after 1970, the Polish leadership instituted a massive drive for accelerated industrialization. This was based mainly on loans. Loans from the Soviet Union are granted at very low interest rates. But the loans from the banks in the United States, West Germany, Great Britain and France are short-term loans, with much higher interest rates.

The total debt owed to capitalist countries rose to over \$20 billion dollars. Just the interest on these loans was \$2 billion per year. Over one-third of Poland's income from exports went to pay interest on past loans. To get an idea of how the capitalist banks viewed and used these loans, let me quote from a recent *New York Times* article:

In a far-reaching action early last year (1979) the Polish government agreed to supply the Western banks with more economic data, and to provide it more rapidly, under confidence-building arrangements designed to keep the money flowing to insure repayment of loans. The more active monitoring has given the banks the opportunity to press their case for changes in the mix of Polish economic policy. Banks have been concerned for some time over the stress of the

Poles on policies such as food subsidies that lead toward higher consumption instead of increasing foreign exchange reserves . . . It could have been pressure from Western banks in the latest credit negotiations that led to the Polish decision to increase meat prices which in turn triggered the strikes.

It seems the stacking of loan on top of loan had a point of diminishing returns. An increasing percentage of the new loans went to pay for the interest on old loans.

Much of the loan money went for the import of grain and other food products and as payment for new industrial plants, tools, machinery and other means of production. It was intended that the huge new enterprises and industries would largely pay off these loans. However, many of these plants were not yet producing when payments became due.

Within a five-year period, from 1970 to 1975, Poland's investment in plants and machinery increased two and one-half times. It is now obvious that such a rapid pace of development was not a true reflection of the realities, the real possibilities and potentials of Poland.

One of the measures taken by the Polish government to help correct this situation was to withdraw government subsidies for meat products, which resulted in a rise in consumer prices. This was the immediate factor that triggered the strikes.

Within a 10-year period the wages of basic workers were increased by 109 per cent, while the productivity of the workers increased by 58 per cent. This increase in productivity was excellent. But it was not good enough to match the 109 per cent wage increase. Also, the wage increases were outpacing the consumer goods available at the market. Here again, good intentions were clearly the motivating force.

The wage increases were seen as material incentives. A socialist society needs a well-balanced mix of material and moral incentives. As the socialist personality develops the part played by moral incentives becomes an increasingly greater motivating force.

Balance Between Objective and Subjective

It is now clear that a socialist economy cannot function normally and efficiently for long with such imbalances. Wages and production, loans and production must be in balance. There cannot be a large discrepancy between consumer demand and the actual supply of goods. There must be a stable ratio between the accumulation fund — a fund that is necessary for payment of debts, expansion and modernization of industry, new construction and accumulation of necessary reserves — and the

consumption fund, the resources available to satisfy the material and cultural needs of the people in a given year.

In other words, there needs to be a rational way — based on a realistic, objective assessment — of combining the goal of improving living standards today with the goals of tomorrow, of balancing the supreme goal of satisfying more fully people's material and cultural requirements not only in the current fiscal year, but in the future. Thus, under socialism the supreme goal of social production must form an organic unit with the means available for its achievement.

At all times there need to be adequate methods of ensuring that the subjective factors do not override the objective economic conditions, those arising in the economy irrespective of human will.

Economic planning and management need to be based on an analysis of objective processes, trends and available possibilities for growth and expansion.

In order to accomplish this a socialist society needs mass participation in planning, management, administration and implementation at all levels. There must be constant discussion, consultation and exchanges, and above all there must be active participation of the workers at the factory level in the process of decision making. The workers must be deeply involved in deciding matters pertaining to management, improvement of working and living conditions, use of funds for both developing production and for social and cultural purposes and financial incentives. This is the deepest meaning of socialist democracy, of democratic centralism. This vital link was weak in Poland.

Some people ask: why did good intentions and the drive for maximum industrialization get out of touch with reality? One reason is lack of good, sound planning. Another is some wishful thinking translated into economic planning and decisions that could not be realistically implemented. In other words, subjective wishes outstripped objective possibilities. And much of the unrealistic good intentions were fed by feelings of unrealistic nationalism.

Additional factors that added to the negative developments in Poland were: severe droughts which led to lower than usual harvest yields; the problems in the import of raw materials and grain and the rise in prices for these items; the increasing price of oil Poland buys from the OPEC countries. The economic crises in the capitalist countries had a negative effect on Poland's export sales. These were all factors that converged to create the crisis in Poland.

The Need for Socialist Consciousness

These developments in turn brought to the surface many other bothersome questions which the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party is now looking into and discussing. This includes the problem of an over-reliance on material incentives and a tendency to leave advancement in the ideological arena to spontaneity.

It is true that the socialist economic system creates the material basis for how people will think. But socialist thinking does not then develop completely automatically or spontaneously. And of course ideological developments, in this case socialist consciousness, always lags behind developments in the economic arena.

In the period of building socialism material incentives necessarily play an important role. But they do not and cannot replace the need for constant and consistent education, the struggle in the ideological and political areas of life. Appeals to national pride are also not enough.

The experience of 60 years of building real socialism is witness to the fact that with the process of building the economic structure of socialism there must be some necessary parallel processes taking place. One of the most fundamental of these processes is the need for a constant struggle to draw ever greater numbers of the people into the planning, management and especially the governing and decision-making processes.

This must be done by way of constantly increasing the role and responsibilities of people's organizations, including and especially the trade unions. People in ever greater numbers must be drawn into the process of finding solutions to the problems in every area of life. They must be drawn in not merely for discussions, consultations and exchanges of opinion. They must become full partners, an integral component in the actual decision-making process. They must become part of the power structure and governing apparatus. It is a process of expanding the mass base of socialist democracy.

It seems there were some real weaknesses in this area in Poland. When there is an overemphasis on material incentives and weaknesses in the ideological struggle it will result in a lag in development of socialist consciousness.

The people must fully and deeply understand the difficulties and problems, and how and why they arise. They must know what the limits are in each stage of development. Only then will they be prepared and motivated to wholeheartedly fight for solutions and their implementation.

The development of socialist personality, based on socialist consciousness, takes place only as a result of continuing stubborn and relentless struggle. At no stage of socialism does such a personality emerge without an ideological struggle. Naturally, the socialist way of life, socialist consciousness, does not take shape overnight. Establishing a new way of life, new ways of thinking, involves a complex and lengthy struggle against old habits and traditions and the mentality inherited from the past.

The new society — the new socio-economic system based on public ownership and the social relations arising on this base (which eliminate the antagonism based on the irreconcilable interests of opposing, hostile classes) — lays the objective basis for socialist consciousness. It stimulates the birth of new ideas, new socialist relations.

Socialism lays the basis for new attitudes to labor and new moral ideals and goals. But these do not grow and develop without constant struggle, without cultivation on many levels.

The fact that some 70 per cent of the farms in Poland are still privately operated is not only a drag on agricultural production. It is also a drag on the development of socialist personality.

It seems obvious that material incentives, without a political and ideological struggle, will continue the very slow transition to collective and state farms, which is the only basis for modernization of a large-scale socialist agriculture.

Weaknesses in the ideological sphere create a vacuum which other ideologies rush to fill. This creates fertile soil for anti-socialist elements.

In Poland, the Catholic Church remains not only a religious, but also an ideological force. Its ideological influence will not diminish without a conscious struggle. The statement that the Party in Poland must reestablish a relationship of confidence in the PUWP is a most serious self-criticism. And of course there is the important question of why the people lost confidence in the first place. It will help, but a change in the leading personalities in and of itself will not result in reestablishing that confidence.

A socialist society has a distinct advantage in that it has the means and the structure to correct mistakes and recover from weaknesses. This is because the relationships among the workers, the Party, the trade unions and the government are not based on inherent contradictions, because they are not relationships between a worker and a boss and because their mutual self-interests are served by the continued building of socialist society.

What Next?

So the capitalist ideologues are whistling in the corporate graveyard if they think the workers and people of Poland are going to veer from the socialist path. Poland will make changes and correct any mistakes. But the one mistake it will never make is to reverse its socialist path of development.

There is no question that the strikes in Poland were negative developments. But they are being transformed into their opposite because the Party, the trade union leaders and the government are drawing the necessary conclusions.

Socialism will come out the winner!

2. ALTERNATIVES FOR THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

Extracts from report delivered by Fidel Castro, First Secretary of the Central Committee, to the 2nd Congress of the Cuban Communist Party on December 17, 1980.

There is no doubt that imperialism is once again trying to turn back the course of history and — with renewed aggressiveness — reassume its role as international gendarme and obstacle to the social and political changes that are taking place in the world.

This already tense and dangerous panorama was further intensified by the explosive situation in Poland. What happened there was partly a result of imperialism's subversive policy towards the socialist countries and its long-range design to penetrate, destabilize and wipe out socialism in Eastern Europe, thus weakening and isolating the USSR and, if possible, destroying socialism throughout the world.

Especially in Poland, imperialism is orchestrating a sinister act of provocation directed against the socialist camp. The success that reaction has had there is eloquent testimony to the fact that a revolutionary party in power cannot deviate from Marxist-Leninist principles, neglect ideological work and divorce itself from the masses; and, when the time for rectification comes, this should not be done on the basis of concessions to the class enemy either inside or outside the country.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE AND CHINESE REVOLUTIONS

by Van Tao

1 — During The National Democratic Revolution

During the years when the Communist Parties were founded in each country, Vietnam and China had the common characteristics of colonial and semi-feudal Far-eastern countries: a very small working class (about 0.5% of the population in China in 1921, over 1% in Vietnam in 1939): the Communist Party in each country had to work in a sea of individualistic backward peasants.

The fundamental problem was which class led the revolution — the working class or the peasantry — and on which position the Party should stand to carry out the revolution: on the working class or on the peasantry.

Since its foundation the Communist Party in Vietnam asserted itself as the political party of the working class in order to lead the revolution; it has remained true to the principles of Marxism-Leninism on proletarian revolution in the period of imperialism, following the slogan “Proletarians of the world and oppressed peoples, unite!”

The Party has resolutely upheld the banners of national independence and socialism, has stood closely united with the proletarian movement and

the oppressed nations throughout the world, has been guided in all its actions by Marxism-Leninism, has drawn the lessons of the experiences of the various proletarian movements in the world, especially the Great October Socialist Revolution so as to gradually take the Vietnamese revolution to complete victory.

On the contrary, the Chinese Communist Party, since it had been submitted to Maoist leadership, has promoted the peasantry and petty-bourgeois positions to lead the revolution gradually separating itself from the international communist and workers' movement and finally opposing it.

Mao Zedong wrote in his book "On New Democracy": "The politics of new democracy is essentially handing power to the peasants", and "the peasant force is the main force in the Chinese revolution"¹ In Vietnam the Communists clearly understood that it was necessary for Party members coming from petty bourgeois or intellectual backgrounds, etc., to steep themselves in the life of the proletariat if they wanted to train properly. This meant taking part in manual labour and living with industrial workers, in a word, to become industrial workers. The leaders of the revolutionary movement in China, on the other hand, always held that cadres should "xia feng", that is to go to the country to mix with poor landless peasants and learn from them and to become, not workers, but peasants in order to lead the proletarian revolution.

It is precisely owing to this erroneous view of the role of the masses and of the motive forces of the revolution that in 1927 when fiercely attacked by Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), they failed to build their forces on the spot within the masses, including the urban and rural population, both workers and peasants. Instead they had to carry out the Long March and take flight in search of a new base. This was an epic experience but at the same time a bitter historical defeat. They left with 300,000, but only 30,000 remained at the end of the long march. And this was due to the fact that they had failed to take the path of the masses drawn by Marxism-Leninism, they had failed to rely on the working class, to organize and educate the peasants under proletarian leadership.

In Vietnam, the repression exercised by the French colonialists was many times fiercer than that of the Jiang Jieshi clique. However, thanks to a correct working class line, the Party managed to mobilize the workers and peasants to fight side by side. Thus the party led the workers at Truong Thi, Ben Thuy (Nghe Tinh province) to join the struggle, it created a solid worker-peasant alliance placed under the leadership of the

working class. That is why when the revolutionary tide was at its lowest ebb, the Party was able to survive and fight in the very midst of the local population. During the hard period of white terror (1931-32) the Party held firmly to the aims of national independence and socialism. It never wavered or shifted to the peasant position, never gave up the ultimate goal — socialism. The Party's programme of action was drawn up in June 1932 when the Party was going through its hardest times. The programme still stressed: "The Indochinese workers and peasants, under the guidance of the Communist Party, will take up arms in insurrection to carry out the future tasks of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolutions, and together will advance resolutely towards socialism."

Although subjected to colonialist terror, the party of the Vietnamese working class did not seek refuge by conducting a long march. Instead, it had faith in the masses and restored the revolutionary bases among the masses, which resulted in a speedy recovery of the movement and a new revolutionary upsurge.

In the course of the armed struggle the Chinese revolutionary line consisted in extolling the role of armed violence, while overlooking the political struggle, and considering that revolutionary power is *born from the barrel of a gun*, and not from the revolutionary movement of the masses. They attributed all revolutionary gains to the armed struggle, considered the armed struggle as all-powerful. In organising the fighting forces, they also took the "peasant road", i.e. they relied on the countryside, and used the countryside to encircle the cities. Mao Zedong considered this to be an original revolutionary initiative in the new situation².

In carrying out their revolution the Vietnamese have learned from the experiences of the Chinese in the war of liberation, but our road was different. We built our armed forces from the mass movement organized by the Party. The *red self-defence units* born in 1930 were the offspring of the masses' revolutionary organizations, such as the Red Trade Unions, the Red Peasants' Association, the Communist Youth League, etc. They were the tools used by the Party to seize power, but revolutionary power was seized by the mass movement itself, under the leadership of the Party, through political and armed violence; it was by no means born from the barrel of a gun.

The development of the armed forces and the building of revolutionary power during the August Revolution in Vietnam were carried out in the following way. Out of the organizations making up the Viet Minh Front,

the Party selected the armed forces. The Party led the masses in co-ordinating the political struggle with the armed struggle to seize power. Revolutionary power, as built by the working class, in return makes use of the armed forces as an instrument of violence to consolidate itself.

In our fight we attach great importance not only to the armed struggle but also to political struggle: *co-ordination between political struggle and armed struggle*. As soon as the first revolutionary organisation — the Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Detachment — was set up, President Ho Chi Minh said: Its name is the Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Detachment, its primary purpose is *to concentrate on political struggle rather than an armed struggle* and then *to co-ordinate political struggle and armed struggle*. Although the revolutionary army consisted mainly of peasants, its political ideology, military style and military discipline had to conform to those of a proletarian army. In this way it could avoid adventurism, liberalism, indiscipline which are rampant in an army of peasants.

Concerning the revolutionary war, we did not simply rely on the countryside and use the countryside to encircle the cities, but agitated for both the cities and the countryside to rise up together. As a concrete example we can cite Viet Bac as a large base area of the August revolution. We also had a security zone on the outskirts of Hanoi and the town of Ha Dong, a combat zone in the mining area such as the Dong Trieu Fourth Combat Zone (Quang Ninh) and in the plains such as the Quynh Luu Combat Zone (Ninh Binh). The Vietnamese revolution evolved in the following way: *to go from partial insurrection to revolutionary war, to co-ordinate revolutionary war and partial insurrection leading to a general offensive and concerted uprisings*. Uprisings can be carried out wherever conditions permit, and it is not necessary to use the countryside to encircle the cities, or to rely on the peasants to liberate the workers as Chinese leaders think.

In proceeding from partial insurrections to a general uprising we brought into play the initiatives, the creativeness of the people throughout the country. This experience shed light on the path to follow in our recent struggle against US imperialism. While the Chinese leaders advised us to wage a *protracted war*, we opted for *concerted uprisings*. And when we had risen up and won initial victories they were frightened and advised us not to hit too hard because, in their opinion, US imperialism was stronger than us. They also said we should only use forces the size of a platoon or smaller to attack the enemy. But we had our own way to fight the enemy,

and won the war.

Because we attached great importance to both political struggle and armed struggle, to the workers and the peasants, because we knew how to bring into play the three strategic zones (the cities and the countryside, the plains and the mountain areas), we were able to carry out the strategy of *revolutionary offensive*, of attacking the enemy right from the outset.

When the US imperialists were defeated in their special war and sent their forces *en masse* into South Vietnam, and started a local war, the Chinese leaders advised us to adopt an adventurist military line: to draw the Americans to the North to defeat them. But we insisted on fighting and defeating the Americans in the South itself through revolutionary offensives. We did not simply start an armed struggle but also made use of all three “offensive spearheads”: political struggle, armed struggle and agitation in the ranks of the enemy. We were able to mobilize not only workers and peasants but also intellectuals, college and school students. The women, in particular the “long-haired army” as they were also called, dealt deadly political blows to the enemy.

The differences in the line and methods of struggle between Vietnam and China led to differences in building the forces of the revolutionary masses, in building the *National United Front*. The Chinese leaders overestimated the strength of the sea of peasants and overlooked the political struggle, and so did not see the need to build a *long term* national united front. It should be recalled that the period of the national United Front between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang was a very short one.

In Vietnam, as early as 1930 the Communist Party in accordance with the Comintern’s policy of anti-imperialist front, decided to build the Indochinese anti-imperialist Alliance, whose aim it was to “unite all the revolutionary anti-imperialist forces to overthrow imperialist rule, to win back complete independence for the Indochinese countries and support the liberation movement in the colonies and semi-colonies”³. Subsequently, other forms of national united front came into being in conformity with each revolutionary period; such as the Democratic Front in 1936-39, the Viet Minh Front in 1941-51, the Lien Viet Front in 1946-54, the Fatherland Front as from 1955, etc. Our fundamental line still consisted in basing ourselves on *worker-peasant alliance exclusively led by the working class* to rally all the patriotic forces in order to win back national independence and freedom. The policy of unity advocated by the Vietnamese Party is a lasting one, a consistent one, it conforms to both

reason and sentiment, it is a policy of unity based on struggle, love and a sincere desire to transform human beings.

Such a proletarian line in the building of our forces and in organising the struggle has helped us achieve a position of strength from which to make *continuous attacks*, to fight back the enemy step by step, to defeat him little by little until we achieve complete national liberation. During the war of resistance against the French colonialists we made continued attacks, combined national revolution with democratic revolution, in order to win victory in both. In the war of resistance against the US imperialists, we did not advocate waiting for the liberation of South Vietnam to build socialism throughout the country but held that “under all circumstances the North should be consolidated and advance toward socialism.”⁴

The Chinese revolution was victorious thanks to the favourable conditions created by the socialist camp which had become a world system. In those conditions any struggle for national salvation which can win the assistance of the world revolutionary movement, which can arouse the masses whose majority is composed of peasants, which can form the spearhead of an attack on the main enemy — the imperialists and their henchmen — is likely to achieve victory. The Chinese leaders were mistaken in relying too much on the peasants and overlooking the workers. But in the national democratic revolution such a blunder was not too serious since during that period the peasants made up the main force and were inspired by the land reform to take an active part in the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle. Not until the socialist revolution did it have serious consequences.

II — During The Socialist Revolution

In Vietnam, when the war of national liberation ended victoriously in 1954 in the North and in 1975 in the South, we relied on the workers to take over the factories in the cities.

In China, the liberation army was composed overwhelmingly of peasants armed with Mao Zedong's thoughts on the role of the peasantry, was entrusted with the task of controlling the cities. A military control was set up, and as a result the armed forces of peasants were used to control the workers in the cities. In 1958 Mao Zedong said: “We should propagate rural style and guerilla habits in the cities.”

Chinese workers do not account for a high proportion of the Communist Party's membership. According to a French document, at the 8th Congress

of the Chinese Communist Party (September 1956), out of 10,734,385 Party members there were only 1,502,814 workers, 1,253,223 intellectuals (in the broad sense); 7,414,459 were of peasant stock. The number of workers in the country increased fairly fast in the first years (1949: 3 million, and after the period of economic development 1949-57 it reached 24.6 million in 1958). And they were mostly workers of large-scale factories. However, in 1961-62 the Chinese leaders moved nearly 30 million urban inhabitants into the country with the aim of concentrating the work force, materials and money into agriculture, which they viewed as the most important branches of the national economy. The number of workers and government officials then decreased from 44 million in 1960, to 30 or 31 million in 1962 (factory workers from 22 million to 14.5 million, building workers from 6 million to 2 million). In 1966 the number of workers decreased again to 12 or 13 million.

The Chinese leaders hold that one can rely on the peasants to do everything, and pretend they “have surpassed Marx”. They even view that Marxism is a “European phenomenon”, that one should learn from its technique and analytical method and then “de-Europeanize it” and “sinify it”. Mao said at the 6th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (October 1938): “There is no abstract concept of Marxism, there is only concrete Marxism having a national form. To “sinify Marxism” — so to speak — means that in all its manifestations it must start from the characteristics of China and be applied in conformity with those characteristics.” At the Beidaihe Congress in summer 1958 Mao again said that “in the management of the State we should combine Marx and Qin Shi Huangdi (a Chinese emperor who ran the country by means of a barbarous dictatorship).

In Lenin’s view, the more backward a country is, the more historical detours it has to go through, the more difficulties it will meet in the transition from the capitalist relations to socialist relations. For besides the task of destroying the old regime, there is the more difficult task of organizing the new one. But the Chinese leaders hold that the more backward the economy, the easier the transition from capitalism to socialism is, because “the poorer they are, the more attached the people are to the revolution.”

They put forward adventurist policies, such as *building people’s communes*, which was to be the shortest and easiest way to communism. In fact, they were a form of rudimentary egalitarianism and ascetic socialism. They abolished rationing on daily necessities and adopted a system of free

supplies in order to impose an austere way of life. At the Beidaihe Conference Mao stated: "To adopt a system of free supplies, to put into practice a communist way of life means to oppose the Marxist way to the capitalist way." The Chinese leaders approved the initiative of abolishing payment of salary according to work done and bonuses, and considered that stressing material benefits was short-sighted individualism. This policy resulted in a reduction of production.

This petty-bourgeois adventurist line also manifested itself in the Great Leap Forward, the Steel and Iron Produced by All Movements. In 1958 two million rudimentary and Martin blast furnaces were built, at the cost of 3.8 million *renminbi* (Chinese currency). 80 million *tonnes* of coal were used to produce steel and pig iron (up to December 1958). However the 9 or 10 million *tonnes* of pig iron and over 4 million *tonnes* of steel produced were not usable.

Each one of the "three red banners" (general line, great leap forward and people's communes) was a hard blow dealt to the working class, the peasant-worker alliance and undermined social production. At the Lushan Conference in 1959 Mao admitted:

"I've made two mistakes: first, to appeal for massive production of steel and pig iron, second, to appeal for the building of people's communes. It seems that I am responsible for that." At the 9th plenum of the Party Central Committee (8th legislature) held in January 1961, Mao again admitted: "We were impatient with the transition period."

The failure of that policy led to deep rifts within the ranks of the Beijing ruling circles. Mao started the *cultural revolution* through which he extolled ascetic socialism, criticized the relatively easy life of those who relied on their labour to earn their living considering these people as having followed the capitalist path.

On 16 July 1966 Mao swam in the Yang-tse river. On 26 July 1966 Renmin Ribao urged the youth "to master the rules of the revolution in the storm of class struggle, to learn how to swim in class struggle." On 18 August 1966 a million red guards demonstrated. The number of red guards rapidly increased: 11 million college and school students and 50 million youth rose up to carry out the cultural revolution. It was in fact a move to overthrow Liu Shaoqi and consolidate Mao's position. This was a large-scale purge disguised under the theory of "continuing the revolution under the proletarian dictatorship." The period of "Great Chaos" lasted from 11 January 1966 to September 1967, but the consequences of the Cultural Revolution lasted longer. The damage done to China was

enormous.

In *Vietnam* things were quite different. The Vietnamese revolution continued to advance steadily. It always stood firm on the proletarian position, holding high the banners of national independence and socialism.

In 1954 the country was divided into two. The North was exhausted because of the war, but the Party was resolved to take it to socialism, on the basis of a Marxist analysis of problems and advantages. It applied objective laws creatively and guided the entire society to advance step by step without burning stages.

The three years from 1955 through 1957 were devoted to restoring and developing the economy and developing our culture, with the aim of reaching the 1939 level. In the rehabilitation of the economy we paid attention to the consolidation of the worker-peasant alliance, pressing for the recovery of both industry and agriculture. We never failed to strengthen the working class both in quality and in numbers. During those three years the number of factories increased from 31 (in 1955) to 150 (in 1957), the number of workers and public servants increased from 170,000 to 250,000. We emphasized ideological education, raised the cultural and technical level and upheld the role of the workers in State management. On 14 September 1957 the Law on Trade Unions was adopted by the National Assembly.

Once the economy had recovered, we started to solve the contradictions between the advanced revolutionary power on the one hand and the backward social and production relations on the other; the three-year plan (1958-1960) was drawn up. It was a plan aimed at transforming and developing the economy, developing culture, in order to transform in a socialist way all the elements of the national economy, the central task being the transformation of agriculture. In 1960, 85.8 per cent of peasant households, accounting for 58.1 per cent of the land, joined the agricultural cooperatives, 218,000 artisans out of 305,000 joined the handicrafts cooperatives and became engaged in collective production. All the bourgeois households in industry and trade entered the joint State-private enterprises, cooperatives or cooperative enterprises. The number of workers continued to grow. The number of enterprises increased from 150 in 1957 to 1,012 in 1969, the number of workers from 250,000 to 480,000. We opposed the ideas of "waiting for the South" and of "allowing capitalism a period of development in order to create the material and technical premises for socialism". etc. We did not allow subjectivism,

voluntarism and rightist errors to slow down the advance of the revolution.

Subsequently, we solved the contradictions between the advanced relations of production and the backward material and technical basis. The first Five-year-plan (1961-65) was aimed at industrialisation. While in China the order of precedence in the branches of the economy was: agriculture, light industry, heavy industry, we regarded industry as the basis for the development of the national economy, and followed the policy of “prioritizing the rational development of heavy industry on the basis of the development of agriculture and light industry”.

We consider the *scientific and technological revolution to be the linchpin* in solving the above-mentioned contradiction. Unlike the Chinese leaders who underestimate the role of intellectuals, we pay much attention to enlarging the body of scientific workers, technicians and skilled workers.

Taking the 1960 levels as units:

	1965	1969	1973
Scientific workers and technicians	5.5	9.5	15.5
– Graduates and post-graduates	5.4	10.7	20.6
– Secondary vocational education level	5.6	9.1	13.9
– Skilled workers	2.5	3.1	4.5

(Year-book of Statistics, 1974, p. 80)

Parallel to the revolution in relations of production and the scientific and technological revolution we are carrying out an ideological and cultural revolution, building the new social system, the new economy, the new culture, and the new people. Our cultural revolution consists in building a popular, national scientific, socialist culture, a culture of the people, for the people, with the aim of helping them to become their own collective masters with all the qualities of a socialist people, to inherit the fine traditions of the nation and stand united in mutual love and fidelity.

This is diametrically opposed to China’s cultural revolution. In China the cultural revolution and even “The criticize Lin Biao, criticize Confucius campaign” failed to wipe out the vestiges of Confucianism. Conversely, they consolidated bureaucratism, dictatorship, paternalism, which are the essence of Confucianism. In Vietnam, collective mastery means eradicating the vestiges of Confucianism, especially the “gang

chang” theory (old-style social relations in which the King, the father and the husband reign supreme respectively over their subjects, children and wives).

So far as *foreign relations* are concerned the difference between Vietnam and China is even more obvious.

Vietnam consistently upholds the principles of proletarian internationalism, maintains a policy of independence, sovereignty and international solidarity. We regard the socialist camp as the centre for unity and have contributed to stepping up the three currents of the world revolution: socialist revolution, the movement of national liberation, and the movement of struggle for democracy and peace in the capitalist countries.

China is carrying out a policy of great-power expansionism. The Beijing leaders hold that Leninism has fulfilled the historic mission of Marxism in the period of imperialism and that now Mao Zedong’s thought is Marxism-Leninism in the period of total collapse of imperialism. They deem that the centre of world revolution is shifting to the world of ex-colonies, to China.

In the relations between socialist countries they stress equality in order to compete with the Soviet Union. In 1965, they stated that they had the right to oppose the common resolutions of the 1957 and 1960 conferences of the Communist and Workers’ Parties which they had adopted. It has become increasingly clear that Mao’s statement “the East Wind Prevails over the West Wind” at the 1957 Conference of Communist and Workers’ Parties implied that the Chinese wind had prevailed over the Soviet wind, and not that socialism had prevailed over imperialism. When they said they opposed Soviet revisionism, they aimed at hegemonism among the socialist countries and the third world. In 1962 they held that there were only 5 socialist countries: China, Vietnam, Korea, Romania, and Albania. Between these 5 countries and the two super-powers, namely the Soviet Union and the United States, there were two buffer zones: the third world and the second world (Japan and Western Europe).

This is the source of the “three-worlds theory”. This theory was expressed by Deng Xiaoping in the two speeches he made at the United Nations General Assembly on 15 October 1971 and 10 April 1974: “The socialist camp continued to exist for some time after the Second World War, and no longer exists” and “the US and the Soviet Union make up the first world. The developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and a number of other zones belong to the third world. Those developed

countries which stand between the two above-mentioned worlds make up the second.”

The aim of the “three-worlds theory” is to erase socialism as a factor of world politics, a factor which determines the positioning of the main opposing camps in the world.

China has gone out of its way to court the United States and Japan, and volunteered its services as a counter-revolutionary shock force. It has made a volte-face in its relations with Vietnam; it has invaded Vietnam, then raised a hue and cry about “great hegemonism” and “small hegemonism”, and put an end to the treaty of mutual assistance signed with the Soviet Union.

What is particularly dangerous is that the Chinese are trying their best to make war propaganda, while Vietnam perseveres in its stand for peace. We would only resort to just wars to oppose unjust ones in order to defend our independence and preserve peace. The Chinese leaders say that war is “a normal phenomenon in the relations between two worlds, and that each generation must have its own war.” To them war is a means of carrying out their expansionist and hegemonistic designs.

The correct, just and creative policy followed by Vietnam, her absolute loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism is a mirror reflecting the road of betrayal followed by the Chinese ruling circle over the past few decades. This genuinely revolutionary line is also the fundamental guarantee of the Vietnamese people’s certain victory over the Chinese reactionaries if they recklessly start another war of aggression against Vietnam.

(After an article by Van Tao, published in the journal Nghien Cuu Lich Su — Historical Studies — No 1 and 3, 1980).

Notes

1. Mao Zedong’s Selected Works, Volume II, Beijing Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958, p. 546. (Translated from the Vietnamese).
2. Hongqi Review, 1977, No. 11, p. 16.
3. Party Documents (1930-45) Volume I, Hanoi, 1977, p. 143 (in Vietnamese).
4. Political Report at the 8th Plenum of the Party’s Central Committee (August 1955).

BOOK REVIEWS A

A LANDMARK OF TRADE UNION STRUGGLE

Organise . . . Or Starve, The History of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, by Ken Luckhardt and Brenda Wall, published by Lawrence and Wishart. Price £7.95 hardback, £3.50 paperback.

Organise or Starve is a book which has to be seriously read, thought about and discussed to be fully appreciated. It is a valuable storehouse of information for scholars, study groups and seminar contributions. A history of twenty five years of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) *Organise or Starve* is a story of the unvanquished. A tale of the continuing fight of the Black enslaved and dispossessed to liquidate the apartheid system and thereby bring an end to their brutal exploitation and grinding poverty.

As a component of the national and social liberation fight, headed by the African National Congress (ANC), SACTU is fully committed to all

aspects of the liberation struggle for the complete destruction of the racist-colonialist South African state. Up to 1964 when SACTU was forced to convert its work to underground activities (page 37) we witness the stirring struggles of the unvanquished in battle at the place of work, industrial actions, stay-at-home-calls, the Defiance Campaign, boycotts and demonstrations.

The formation of SACTU in 1955, as a result of the scuttling of the Trades and Labour Council (TLC) by the dominating white racist trade unions, meant a clean and complete break with the past. From then on the role and place of the revolutionary trade union organisation in the national and social liberation struggle was finally decided. However, at the beginning a certain tendency towards past thinking on the part of some progressive trade unionists, who had fought tooth and nail for trade union unity and to save the TLC, remained. A major factor in eliminating this tendency and facilitating the clean break with the past was the existence of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) founded in 1941. The CNETU was the seed from which SACTU grew.

At SACTU's inaugural conference some wished to call the new non-racial trade union co-ordinating body TLC (1955), the case put forward being that the new body would carry out the tasks of organisation, mobilisation and struggle which the former TLC refused to undertake. The majority favouring the name SACTU argued that there had to be consistency with the other partners in the Congress Alliance (page 98). The adoption of the name SACTU left no doubt as to where the new trade union organisation stood in relation to the national and social liberation struggle. When the CNETU was founded its purpose was to organise and mobilise the black workers which it regarded as a necessary step towards the creation of a truly non-racial co-ordinating body (page 61). Hence the practical and ideological basis on which SACTU could be built had already been laid.

Chapters 10 and 14 — "SACTU and the Congress Alliance" and "The History Updated" — should be taken together and are necessary reading for those seeking enlightenment on the tasks and place of the trade union organisation in our freedom fight. This is all the more important in view of the stepped-up actions of units of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the mounting industrial battles being waged under the banner, principles and spirit of SACTU — evidence that in its underground activities SACTU is very much alive and hitting hard.

The book records that by 1961 the liberation movement had come to the

realisation that armed force was necessary against the state (page 363) and only through a violent seizure of state power could the liberation of the people be guaranteed (page 456). Many SACTU militants became active members of Umkhonto we Sizwe units (page 421).

The book brings out very convincingly the power of international solidarity. It shows that solidarity is a two-way traffic, that it is given and taken for mutual support and advantage. Convincing evidence is provided of SACTU's internationalist outlook and details are given about solidarity actions of the South African workers with the struggles of working people in other countries on all continents. Proud of its historical affiliation to the World Federation of Trade Unions, the roots going back to the days of the CNETU, SACTU nevertheless rejects a narrow and isolationist attitude and has always sought support from all international federations and trade unions (page 381). SACTU is now broadly recognised as the representative of the South African workers, and can depend on the support and solidarity of trade unionists throughout the world (page 471).

Of great importance and making for exciting reading are the many actions taken by trade unionists in other countries in support of the struggle of the toiling South African masses. We read about goods destined for South Africa being "blacklisted" at the point of production, refusal to load ships departing for the land of apartheid, promoting the boycott of South African goods, actions demanding disinvestment in the apartheid state and economy, and much more besides. A really inspiring account.

As the countries of the socialist community of states have no dealings whatsoever with the criminal apartheid state, the solidarity actions of the trade union organisations in these countries take on another form. The nature of this support though briefly recorded is convincing and speaks for itself.

A word of criticism: it is not correct, as the authors claim, that in 1926, when the Communists were expelled from the ICU, "the majority of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) held firmly to the belief that the White working class would lead the revolution against capitalism in South Africa" (page 42), nor that the ICU "had been the only trade union to emphasise the organisation of the most exploited workers in South Africa" (page 43), nor that the Communist Party had made no efforts to organise African workers into trade unions before the 1930s and 1940s, as is implied in page 90, but contradicted by the authors' own evidence of Communist trade union work in the 1920s on page 49. Nor is it appropriate to speak of the Communist Party in its early years as being under "white domination"

(page 49), as though there were two classes of CP membership. From the time of the foundation of the International Socialist League in 1915, the necessity of bringing African workers into the Party on the basis of equal rights for all had been stressed as a major objective. The ISL had organised the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA) in 1917 and was conducting classes on the labour movement for African workers before the ICU was thought of. The 1921 manifesto of the CP stressed that "the main duty of the party and every member of it is to establish the widest and closest possible contact with workers of *all ranks and races*", pointing out that the "enlightenment and organisation" of the oppressed black masses was the one thing most feared by the ruling class. The draft programme adopted by the CP in 1924 "aims at forwarding the industrial organisation of ALL sections of the workers, especially those hitherto unorganised, with a view to their co-operation and ultimate consolidation in One Big Union on class lines, in the struggle against capitalism which divided they cannot sustain".

The authors continually, and correctly, stress the indivisibility of the national and class struggle in our country, but sometimes create the impression that they regard SACTU as the leading working-class force in the political as well as the industrial sphere. The nature of the alliance between SACTU and the ANC is frequently referred to, but the role and contribution of the Communist Party (as distinct from individual Communists) in the development of the trade union and liberation movement and as the leading organisation of the working class in the fight for socialism is not analysed.

Stressing the importance of linking economic with political struggle, the authors quote Lenin:

"The struggle of factory workers against the employers inevitably turns into the struggle against the entire capitalist class, against the whole social order based on the exploitation of labour by capital". (*Collected Works*, Vo. 2, p. 107.)

Perhaps they should have added that Lenin was advancing this argument in the course of outlining his draft and explanation of a programme for the Social Democratic Party, insisting that the working class could only be led correctly and successfully in the struggle against capitalism by a political party founded on the principles of Marxism and proletarian internationalism.

This is not by any means to diminish the achievements and importance of SACTU, meticulously and accurately documented by the authors, but

merely to place them in their proper context, an understanding of which is indispensable if final victory is to be won.

B.S.A.

CLEAN UP THE APARTHEID STABLES

Call Me Not A Man the stories of Mtutuzeli Matshoba. (Ravan Press, Johannesburg in association with Rex Collings, London, 1979)

Matshoba's stories erupt from the cancerous body of apartheid. Like angry boils they serve to alert one to the toxicity of the system. But diagnosing the malignancy is not his sole concern. The imperative need for a powerful cleansing agent is implicit in his writings.

He is crystal clear about his intentions. 'I want to reflect through my works life on my side of the fence, the black side,' he states in a short autobiographical introduction to this book.

Realism, not fantasy, is the hallmark of Matshoba's brand of fiction. Escapism is a path of communication he does not travel. The atrocity and anger of daily life under apartheid is the content of the landscape along his route. The condition and aspiration of the oppressed is Matshoba's inspiration.

His seven excursions take the reader into the crucial areas of black South African experience.

'My friend, the outcast' is a simple moving story of a family's eviction from their home in Soweto. 'Call me not a man' is about the degradation and humiliation of the pass laws. 'A glimpse of slavery' deals with black prisoners (mainly pass offenders) who are sold as slave labour to ruthless white farmers. Robben Island and its political prisoners, of whom one was Matshoba's younger brother, is the theme of 'A pilgrimage to the Isle of Makana'. The Bantustans and the migrant labour system are relentlessly dissected in 'Three Days in the Land of a Dying Illusion'.

Matshoba's deft feel for situation and for the common people is coupled with a skilful handling of dialogue and story structure and development. He asks his readers to understand that the situations he describes 'shaped the Steve Biko's and the Solomon Mahlangu's and the many others who came before and after them'. That constitutes sufficient recommendation to all concerned with the liberation of South Africa to read this book.

Scarlet Whitman

ON THE MURDER OF STEVE BIKO

Store Up The Anger by Wessel Ebersohn. Published by, Victor Gollancz, 1980. Price: £5.95

This is a novel which attempts to recreate the events surrounding the murder of Steve Biko. Its principal characters are Sam Bengu (read Steve Biko) and his torturers and ultimate killers, the South African secret police.

The literary merits of the novel are debatable, but it falls flat as a political novel. The author locates Sam Bengu's childhood in Sophiatown at about the time of the impending removals, but fails to capture the atmosphere of the place or the spirit of those times, its people, their hopes and fears, their style of life, their defiance scrawled on walls – "Ons dak nie, ons pola hier" ("We are not moving, we stay here.") or, "Luthuli leads".

At the same time, quite erroneously, the author hints at a division between property owners and tenants on the issue of the forced removals. In fact there was universal condemnation and defiance of the removals. Indeed a whole political campaign grew out of this, forcing the racist state to move in large numbers of police and soldiers, fully armed, on the day the first bulldozers razed Toby Street to the ground.

Cato Manor, the scene of Bengu's adulthood, is seen in the novel as just another African township with no character of its own. The famous Cato Manor uprising has very little to do with what actually happened – its causes and outcome are completely obscured.

Sam Bengu himself emerges as a leading figure in the "Convention" but the nature of the movement remains obscure. The political and psychological content of black consciousness is hardly touched by Bengu's wandering mind during interrogation and after the fatal attack which led to his death. The author has him thinking mostly about the love affair he was involved in before his arrest and, at times, the fate of his young son and wife.

Whilst the writer sticks closely to the actual course of arrest, detention, torture and finally, murder as established at the inquest, though not admitted by the police, the torturers themselves turn out to be rather characterless. He tries to penetrate the mind of the sadists, but does not succeed in creating credible characters. The thesis accounting for the

death of Biko is certainly plausible. The novel, however, does not in any way match the drama of the real occasion and its principle figures. Too bad, since Steve Biko's last days contain the essence of tragedy, for the man as much as the system which destroyed him.

T.S.

THE FIGHT FOR PERSONAL AND NATIONAL LIBERATION

Poppie by Elsa Joubert (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1980. 359 pages, £6.50)

Poppie is a novel about an African woman in present day South Africa. The book in its original Afrikaans version was published in 1978 and was a best seller in South Africa.

Poppie is an honest African woman, deeply attached to her family, with a relentless drive to ensure that her children are able to become educated. Her efforts to achieve this basic goal become a saga for this working woman who is harassed by the pass laws that determine her whole existence.

The response of Afrikaner South Africans to this book is probably due to the fact that at least some section of white South Africa wants to understand what is going on around them in the atmosphere of the revolutionary upheaval in our country and the growing momentum of the struggle for national liberation in the post-Soweto (1976) period.

Poppie's story spans the forty years of her life but it is also a larger history which encompasses her grandmother's and her mother's attitudes and values combining a complex cultural heritage with Christianity. Poppie's Christian lineage is in its third generation and also includes traditional customs that are revived and that at times seem abrasive and outmoded to her and her own family. Her husband, unlike her family who are city folk, is a man from the tribal lands, the former "Native Reserves" — rural black South Africa.

So the novel spans a time period well beyond Poppie's age. It is a time span that incorporates movement from an independent rural life to being farm workers and thereafter drawn into being wage earners in urban South

Africa. Wages are needed for the family to eat, be clothed, pay taxes and, above all, to ensure that the school fees can be paid since education for her children is her paramount striving.

Urbanisation for the black worker does not lead to a nuclear family. Cultural and family ties are retained and ensure survival for all members in spite of the gross underpayment of the vast majority of oppressed black workers.

At the age of 9 years, Poppie stops her schooling, although she herself thirsts for education, in order to take care of a new arrival, her brother Jakkie, whom she has to mother so that their mother can return to work for the family's sustenance.

In the interest of her own son's education, Poppie defers his initiation ceremony in spite of her husband's deep-seated wish to bring him to manhood by means of this essential act so that he may be accepted as a full member of society. For this son, Bonsile, the initiation ceremony takes place when he is in his early twenties, already an unmarried father.

The novel covers the family matrix — respect for elders and their designation as elder aunt, younger uncle, etc. After the birth of their son, Poppie no longer refers to her husband by name — he is Tata ka Bonsile — father of Bonsile. A poignant moment in the book is when Poppie, at a ceremonial feast, feels herself as Mama ka Thandi, Mama ka Nenvula, Mama ka Bonsile. This new woman suddenly asserts her status in this family matrix. She is not Poppie who has been shunted about under Section 10, who has converted tin shanties into homes, who has worked while haunted and in continual insecurity with further threats of removal because of the pass laws. Unaggressively she has elevated herself from being Poppie, this football in the hands of those administering South Africa's laws, to being the mother of her family whom both she and her husband have worked for, cared for, reared and educated.

Is it Poppie's maternal spirit, her Christianity, the flickers into the life and make-up of the black urban community, the callousness of the Swanepoels, or the account of the entire black people's reaction to the student uprisings that drew Afrikaner South Africans to this novel? Elsa Joubert has portrayed Poppie's struggle as a struggle of the human spirit, unspoilt by other facets of urban South African existence — garish neon lights and the concomitant fickleness of human spirit.

Possibly some of the experiences related in the book may require a South African experience for a reader to feel its full impact. How can an outsider properly comprehend Poppie's visits to the Pass Offices for her necessary

endorsement to remain and continue to work in the city — her battle with one department after another, sometimes for a three-month extension, sometimes monthly, sometimes only weekly? The precious stamp in her pass book gives her the right to remain in the city and work to feed and educate her children without fear of arrest. And what of the time factor, necessitating days of unpaid time off work to achieve this privilege?

Elsa Joubert has sketched this system and its atmosphere and brought the challenge that confronts white South Africa vividly into their very homes, where even to answer the front door is too much of a task for Mrs Swanepoel.

In the wake of the 1976 student uprisings in Soweto and throughout the country, the Christian woman, Poppie, mother, worker, black and oppressed, adds a new dimension to her personal philosophy as her brother Jakkie flees the country to avoid arrest for shooting a policeman, and her children are arrested and tortured by the police to give information. She accepts the inevitability of the resistance and the involvement in it of her loved ones. The book ends:

“If the Lord wanted Jakkie to go, it had to be so, she thought. And if my children had to be drawn into this thing, then that is what they were born to. And who can take from them their path to which they were born?”.

It is not only Poppie but also Elsa Joubert and, through her, the Afrikaner community and indeed all South Africans, white and black, who are being forced to accept the logic of the struggle that now engulfs the country.

LIBERAL MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT OUR REVOLUTION

Nelson Mandela, by Mary Benson. Panaf Books, London 1980

‘Nelson Mandela’ is of interest to South Africans and all those concerned with African liberation. The book provides a brief history of the liberation movement and this is well linked with Mandela’s personal contribution and his perspective on the events. We are told of the persecution and courage of his family, especially of his wife Winnie whose own political role is shown. Particular attention is devoted to some matters, such as ANC-CP

relations, and life on Robben Island up to June 1980. Throughout there is no lack of detail and anecdote.

The campaign for the release of Mandela and all political prisoners has become a mass movement inside and outside South Africa. It demands written material, committed and factual. The author is a friend of the liberation movement, has met many of those involved including Mandela, and has researched widely into South African history. However, she writes from outside the ANC. While mostly reliable with hard facts, when it comes to interpretation of our history, and the strategy and tactics of the ANC and MK, a few disturbing errors occur.

Some of these errors are hard to understand. The author gathers enough proof that MK rejects a policy of terrorism, but faced with the Silverton Bank 'hostage' incident, she hints at a shift of policy on this issue. She incorrectly states that the three ANC men involved, after receiving training, had 'returned on this mission'. To mention speculation that 'the men might be the prototype of future suicide squads prepared to sacrifice their lives for the cause' is not a service to their memory. The taking of a random group of civilians as hostage is in contradiction to the policies of the liberation movement; and it should be pointed out that the guerillas involved, faced with imminent capture, devised their own emergency plan and acted with great bravery and responsibility until they and two civilian women were killed by the brutal police attack which ensued.

The correct political and military line of the ANC and its allies is no fortuitous achievement. Many contradictory characters, many opportunists over the years of struggle have proved unable to accept or adjust to our hard-won revolutionary perspective. Some became outright counter-revolutionaries. Because of the ambiguous role such men have played, we would hesitate before uncritically extolling the contribution of Anton Lembede (for his true ideological role see *African Communist* No. 81) or Sobukwe. The author's historical judgements are often far from our own. By no means do we view the stirring 1967-68 Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns simply as a 'disaster'.

Similar judgements by the author abound. To call Poqo an 'offshoot of the PAC' can charitably be described as a simplification. And misleading is the statement that the ANC 'now (presumably since the 1969 Morogoro Conference — L) accepted members of all races', when this new decision incorporated only the minority of non-African revolutionaries outside the country. We are left wondering how reliable are some of the less easily confirmable events and episodes described.

For South African revolutionaries this book is somewhat disappointing. 'The struggle is my life' wrote Mandela, and the struggle does not easily match with the shape of a liberal conception of our history. Nevertheless, through its deep concern with their cause, the book should help the campaign for the release of all imprisoned anti-apartheid fighters.

L.

THE VOICE OF GUYANA

The Caribbean Revolution by Cheddi Jagan, Orbis Press Agency, Prague, 1979.

In the introduction of this book it is stated that:

"This collection of articles incisively reveals the ability of imperialism to adapt to international developments and to change the balance of forces; concomitantly, it illustrates the opportunism and lack of political clarity of many of the West Indian politicians." (p. 16)

These themes run throughout the book which is written by Dr Cheddi Jagan "Premier of Ghana from 1961-1964, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana, Honorary President of the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers' Union, the largest trade union in Guyana . . ." (p. 16)

These article which date back to 1945 demonstrate for the younger West Indians how the debate on the future of the Caribbean was waged and is still being waged. The book deals with the broader issues of the Caribbean reality.

For the independent African states the lessons of Guyana are extremely useful. Here is a "minority regime" using state power and parasitic bourgeoisie which in turn uses corruption, extravagance, racial and political discrimination and is without basic democracy at the trade union, industrial and central and local governmental levels, rapidly expanding the military bureaucratic apparatus "not so much to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity as to hold down the vast majority of the people and to deny them their fundamental rights . . . the army and the police are actively involved in tampering with the electoral process and in breaking strikes". (p. 161)

There is something international in these articles: they show the commonness of our struggle against the common enemy which is international imperialism. The speech of Cheddi Jagan at the Conference of the Communist Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Havana on June 9-13, 1975, is instructive. So is the Declaration of Communist Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (Havana, April 1977) and the Declaration of the Consultative Meeting of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Groups of English-Speaking Caribbean (1977). They demonstrate the political maturity of Marxist-Leninists in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This book is recommended to all fighters against neocolonialism and imperialism.

Solomzi ka Ntaba

AN UNRELIABLE ROAD MAP TO DEVELOPMENT

The Third World Tomorrow by Paul Harrison (Pelican Books, London £2.50).

Paul Harrison is a freelance journalist with an academic background who has specialised for some years in writing about the economic and social problems of "the Third World". There can be no doubt about the range of his knowledge. He has interesting case histories to report, relating to agriculture in Bali and Sri Lanka, housing in Peru, education in Ivory Coast, medicine in Bangladesh and many others. His general theme, for which there is some justification, is that in the early years after their independence, many ex-colonial nations pursued over-ambitious development schemes, with too much emphasis on the urban sector, on advanced industrial methods and on standards of housing, education and medical care derived from highly industrialised nations.

He accordingly praises unreservedly the more recent trend in United Nations development agencies and among the governments of some developing countries towards an emphasis on agriculture, on simple industrial processes ("appropriate technology") and on basic health and educational services, making use of unqualified volunteer assistants. He notes the fact that some people in developing countries view this latter

trend with some suspicion, on the ground that it is capable of leading, for their countries, to the acceptance of a permanent second-class status and the renunciation of all hopes of catching up with the industrial countries. For Mr Harrison, however, all such suspicions are foolish and unworthy. Even the strong resemblance which the Ivory Coast's new system of "practical" education for the peasantry bears to the theories behind "Bantu" education in South Africa arouses no suspicion in his mind.

Interesting though his facts and arguments are, Mr Harrison's ability to draw valid conclusions is highly questionable. His first great fault is that he carries to extremes the fashionable tendency to discuss "the Third World" as a homogeneous entity. One minute he is making the remarkable assertion that "pre-revolutionary China was a typical developing country". The next minute he is thirty years and ten thousand miles away, discussing some country whose history does not remotely resemble that of pre-revolutionary China, on the bland assumption that principles of general application to "the Third World" must automatically emerge.

His second and even greater fault is the standpoint of political agnosticism from which he approaches the whole subject. Not only does he fail to stress the crucial differences between capitalist and socialist patterns of development, he even goes so far as to claim that his conclusions are equally valid for capitalist and socialist countries. Given this approach, it is hardly surprising that China is the only socialist society whose experience he considers in any detail. Cuba, Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia are all conspicuous by their absence from the list of countries from which his examples are taken. His advocacy of certain Left solutions (e.g. radical land reform without compensation to the landlords) has no foundation in consistent theory and adds up to nothing more than a vaguely neo-Narodnik position.

Therefore the book, though valuable as a source of information about issues which have arisen in a number of countries, is a most unreliable guide towards solutions.

P.M.

THE POWER OF THE MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Outposts of Monopoly Capitalism by Ann Seidman and Neva Seidman Makgetla (Lawrence Hill & Co., Westport, Conn., and Zed Press, London, £4.50 (paperback) £15.95 (hardback)).

This is an expanded and updated sequel to the author's earlier work, *South Africa and US Multinational Corporations* (reviewed in *The African Communist* No 75, p. 103). Then, they dealt specifically with the triangular relationship between the South African ruling class, the American monopoly corporations and the US government. Now they have expanded their field of view to take in the roles of British, French, German, Japanese and other multinationals. As before, their book is packed with valuable facts and figures. It is indeed an encyclopaedia of that network of international business relationships by which the place of South Africa in the world capitalist system is determined.

There is first a general survey of the position of transnational corporations in modern capitalism and the motives which have led those corporations to become deeply involved in South Africa. Chapters are then devoted successively to the mining industry, to the great raw material processing monopolies, to heavy industry (with special reference to the motor and electrical industries), to oil and to banks and financial institutions. In each case, the companies mainly involved are named and many useful statistics are provided.

The result is an indispensable work of reference for anyone engaged in discussion of economic collaboration between the major capitalist powers and the apartheid regime. The manner in which the same monopoly corporations have behaved elsewhere in Africa is also brought out and the danger of economic domination by South Africa of the whole southern region of Africa is clearly described. The authors conclude with a much briefer but nevertheless acceptable account of the struggle to build socialism in Tanzania, Angola and Mozambique and the way in which the future of Southern Africa could be transformed if the non-capitalist path were chosen by all the countries concerned.

Regrettably, certain shortcomings must also be mentioned. The book has not been adequately proof-read. There are many mistakes in the names of companies, particularly French and German names. One or two

obvious errors in figures leave the reader wondering whether there may not be other, less obvious errors. Finally, this reviewer's paperback copy started falling to pieces within an hour of being opened.

P.M.

THE LIMITS OF THE LAW

Justice in South Africa by John D. Jackson, published by Pelican Books, London.

Mr Jackson's book is the brief professional autobiography of a liberal, criminal lawyer with a large practice among the black population of the Eastern Cape. The most interesting parts of it are his detailed accounts of cases in which he was involved — particularly his defences of young Africans who were prosecuted in their hundreds at the time of the student resistance in Port Elizabeth in the summer of 1977-78. He eventually found himself appearing in the makeshift magistrate's court at Algoa Park police station every day for five months.

Mr Jackson reveals himself as a warm-hearted, pugnacious, self-opinionated, excitable person inclined towards exaggeration. He obviously cared deeply about his black clients and the injustices which they suffer, but his political consciousness has never progressed beyond a general humanitarianism. He worked long hours, brought an essential service to his clients and often took cases free of charge, simply because he cared personally about the outcome.

Though he was able to make a comfortable living out of the South African legal system, his was a way of life full of difficulties and contradictions which, in his case as in so many others, ended in emigration. His involvement in political cases had made him many enemies in his profession. The Law Society launched proceedings against him, alleging contraventions of those professional rules which, being essentially intended for lawyers with a bourgeois clientele, are almost inevitably contravened by those with working-class practices. These proceedings had not yet reached a final conclusion when Mr Jackson, becoming aware that he was under surveillance by the security police, decided to leave South Africa.

The book has its less successful parts. A chapter is devoted to a list of oppressive statutes — a task which has been tackled more accurately, on more than one occasion, elsewhere. Mr Jackson's attempts to draw general conclusions about the South African judicial system are of limited interest and not always consistent from chapter to chapter. His personal experiences, however, constitute a part of the history of popular resistance in the Eastern Cape and he has done the people a service by publishing them.

P.M.

SHORTER NOTICES

Poets To The People, South African Freedom Poems, edited by Barry Feinberg, published by Heinemann Educational Books. Price £1.70

Strictly speaking, it is not correct to call this a second edition of the book of the same title which was issued in 1974 because its whole scope has been greatly enlarged. Where the first edition covered the work of ten poets, this edition contains contributions from 21, much of it reflecting the upsurge in national feeling surrounding the events of Soweto in 1976, the death of Steve Biko and the other trauma of recent years.

Reviewing the first edition in *The African Communist* No. 61, Gala had this to say:

“The importance of this collection of such poetry is also that it serves to illustrate that in times of severe repression poetry serves to express the feelings of the people and can also point towards their political goals. . . . The recent flow of militancy from South Africa's black oppressed, workers and students . . . has given rise to this poetic expression reflecting the upsurge before which the barriers of national oppression and apartheid which frustrate the spirit and deny cultural identity must finally sunder”.

White as well as black poets have contributed to this upsurge. The book is dedicated to South Africa's political prisoners and to the ANC and its allies, and all proceeds will go to the International Defence and Aid Fund for its continued work in Southern Africa.

Namibia, The Facts, published by the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, price £1.50.

With international attention increasingly focussed on Namibia as one of the last bastions of racism and imperialism in Southern Africa, this 100-page booklet will be of invaluable assistance to all interested in the cause of African liberation.

It is a mine of information — about the geography and natural resources of the territory, the size and groupings of population, the history pre- and post-colonial, the consolidation of apartheid under the South African mandate, the control of the economy, migrant labour, the denial of human rights, the birth of protest and the history of SWAPO, the beginning of armed struggle and the negotiations leading up to the Geneva conference, though the booklet was published before the conference took place. An appendix contains the inspiring court speech of Herman Toivo ja Toivo before he was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment under the Terrorism Act in January 1968.

Angola, Socialism at Birth, published by the Mozambique, Angola and Guine Information Centre, Price 50p

Reading this 34-page booklet on the pre- and post-independence struggle of the Angolan people, one is struck by wonder that the Angolan revolution has survived. That it has done so is thanks to the consistent and principled leadership provided by MPLA, which mobilised the people to defeat the Portuguese colonialists, the UNITA counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs, the US-backed South African invaders, the ultra-left adventurers headed by Nito Alves. Tribute is paid to the aid provided by Cuba, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

The booklet describes the almost superhuman efforts being made by the MPLA Workers' Party to repair the damage of the war and place the economy on a secure foundation — still with arms in their hands to beat off the attacks of the South Africans and their local stooges trying to turn Angola into a neo-colony. The Angolan government is firmly internationalist in its outlook, and President Jose Eduardo dos Santos follows in the footsteps of the great President Neto in affirming: "In Namibia and in South Africa lies the continuation of our struggle". In Angola SWAPO and the ANC have a firm friend and ally.

Facelift Apartheid South Africa After Soweto, by Judy Seidman, published by the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, price £1.20.

After surveying African reaction to the Botha regime's cosmetic reforms, the author concludes: "No solution can be accepted that does not give 'one man one vote'; or that does not enable the people to control their own destiny. A few extra privileges for a small segment of the population will not save South Africa's apartheid system. Nor, in the end, will the increasingly severe repression that accompanies the concessions".

Judy Seidman says that "the largest and most dangerous threat to (Botha's) plans to save South Africa comes of course from the growing resistance movements". By this she means the ANC and PAC, though what the PAC has done to deserve mention in this context she does not say.

