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Cover picture: 1983 May Day demonstration in Maputo (photo AIM)



EDITORIAL NOTES

HANDS OFF THE FRONTLINE STATES!

It is becoming clearer day by day that in its relations with neighbouring states, the Botha regime is following the example set for it by Israel in the Middle East and Reagan in Central America. All must be cowed into submission to the dictates of Pretoria, some by economic pressure and blackmail, some by outright military action. And everything that South Africa does or contemplates is justified in the name of anti-communism. "I'm an African, and I believe communism is bad for Africa", said Premier P.W. Botha in an interview with the *New York Times* last February. "If fellow Africans are threatened by the evils of communism, we shall assist them when our assistance is requested".

It is interesting to note whom Botha regards as "fellow Africans". Certainly not the governments of Angola or Mozambique or Lesotho or Zimbabwe or Zambia, which have not requested his assistance but whose territories his armed forces, sometimes with faces blackened to signify their Africanness, have invaded and ravaged. No, those to whose assistance Botha rushes are the bandit gangs of UNITA in Angola, the MNR in Mozambique, the LLA in Lesotho etc. — forces trained and equipped by South Africa to undertake acts of war and destabilisation in furtherance of the objectives of the apartheid regime. South Africa was willing to support any anti-communist guerrilla force in Southern Africa, said Botha.

The claim that South Africa is faced with a "total onslaught" from the forces of international communism and "Russian imperialism" is also without foundation. Those who fight against the South African regime are not foreigners but South Africans opposed to white minority rule and determined to achieve the national liberation of the oppressed black majority denied basic rights and opportunities in the land of their birth. Botha acknowledges no kinship with the members of the African National Congress, his own fellow-countrymen to whom he denies the right to vote. What sort of an African is this who treats the Africans of his own country as enemies, refuses them citizenship and forces them into exile or Bantustans? If Botha has a "total onslaught" on his hands, it is of his own making because, far from being an African, he is a white racist exclusivist who believes that capitalism is good for the white minority and the rest can go hang if they don't like it.

Nor is it only the ruling Nationalist Party that is to blame for the escalating danger of war in southern Africa. When in the foreign affairs debate in the House of Assembly last May Foreign Minister Botha threatened war against neighbouring states if they continued to "harbour guerrillas", he was backed up in his stand by the New Republic Party's foreign affairs spokesman Brian Page who said: "If any of our neighbours harbour enemies of this state who are committed to the overthrow of the legitimate regime, then they must accept the consequences, which will include pre-emptive strikes, hot pursuit and the rest. This is unavoidable and in our opinion does not constitute destabilisation".

In the debate on the defence vote in the same month, the Progressive Federal Party's Harry Schwartz called on the government to increase spending on military hardware to enable the army to carry out its task. He complained there was a lack of understanding in South Africa of the nature of the threat facing the country.

One month later the Chief of the SADF General Constand Viljoen, also in an interview with the *New York Times*, said South Africa was determined to deny the ANC "bases in all our neighbouring states, either through the cooperation of the states themselves, or by means of military action against their bases". It is in pursuit of this aggressive policy towards its own people and its neighbours that the South African regime has committed or masterminded murders and atrocities not only in Soweto and other Southern African townships but also in Maseru and Matola, throughout Southern Angola and northern Namibia, blockaded Lesotho, helped the attempted coup in the Seychelles and generally committed itself to the path of mayhem and destruction in the interests of maintaining white supremacy.

"We are faced with a racist, colonial, bellicose regime", Mozambique's President Samora Machel told the non-aligned summit meeting in New Delhi last March. "South Africa is the nazism of our time". He accused the Botha regime of recruiting "drug addicts, bandits, criminals and subversives" to destabilise the independent states of Africa opposed to Pretoria's policies. And those who may think these words extravagant should ponder recent reports that "the misuse of drugs, especially marijuana, is becoming more prevalent among young conscripts" (*Die Burger* June 11 and 13, 1983), as well as continual reports of assaults, rapes and murders perpetrated by the military in Namibia.

Danger of Invasion

Members of the liberation movement must face the implications of a change for the worse in South Africa's stance towards its neighbours. If an assassination attempt on an Israeli Ambassador in London could touch off the invasion of Lebanon with all its frightful consequences, what is to prevent Pretoria from following suit? It already occupies large areas of Angola without any word of protest from its western allies, indeed with their active connivance and support? Who can deter the racists from further acts of aggression including full-scale invasion which it indicates are already on its agenda?

It is to the credit of the frontline states that all without exception have insisted on the right to provide asylum for political refugees from South Africa. All reject and condemn apartheid. Many of them have only recently obtained their independence from the colonialists, and have been forced by South African aggression and destabilisation to spend millions on their armies instead of on education and production. Their

governments are unable to concentrate on the proper priorities for their respective countries. The Botha regime often points the finger of scorn at the frontline states, accusing their governments of mismanaging their economies, but fails to mention the millions of rands of damage and destruction which have been inflicted on them by its own forces and those of its agents and mercenaries in the pay of the colonialists. Every government in the frontline states has been faced since independence with war or the threat of war from South Africa. Not all have been able to demonstrate an equal measure of practical support for our liberation movement, but on the other hand not one has sold out to Pretoria despite the threats and the handsome bribes on offer. Some have made huge sacrifices of blood and treasure backing the ANC and SWAPO to the hilt.

The South African racists are determined not only to preserve their "way of life" but also to remain "a bastion of western civilisation" on the African continent. But their real aims stretch beyond this. They intend spreading their influence throughout Africa south of the Sahara. They aim to be the breadbasket and power-house for this great piece of territory, to establish the "constellation of states" which they will dominate politically and economically. In this aim they seek and receive the support of the main western states, especially the USA. They offer favourable trading terms to these capitalist countries and scare them with the communist bogey.

They succeed in this ploy because of the great investments which these countries have in South Africa and Namibia and because they fit into the strategy of the NATO forces in their warmongering against the socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union. Countries like the USA, West Germany, France and the UK say they cannot risk the strategic materials of Southern Africa falling into the hands of any but their chosen lackeys. With only the ANC in sight as a possible alternative government, they continue to fortify the present regime. This relationship will continue until such time as events overtake both the reactionary racists and their supporters like Reagan, Thatcher and all the other hypocritical leaders of the Western alliance.

What we can do

What can be done to counter the destabilising tactics of the Botha regime and its allies, to save the frontline states from racist aggression and intimidation? On the surface the racists seem in a position to exert almost unlimited military and economic pressure against their neighbours, but they have an Achilles' heel. They can never be certain of their rear. They

can only contemplate invasion of neighbouring countries if everything is quiet behind them at home. The time has come to ask whether we in the liberation movement cannot do more to relieve the pressure on the frontline states.

The brave and heroic forces of Umkhonto we Sizwe have more than excelled themselves, especially in the past few years. Sasol, Koeberg, Moroka and all the many other actions have been a saga of incredible blows against the racist regime, and those to come will be even more shattering. But, as ANC President Oliver Tambo pointed out in an interview with the official Mozambican news agency AIM at the end of July, the liberation movement would be making a terrible mistake if it relied on armed force alone. He stressed:

"In our situation we have to attach equal importance to organising the exploited workers. We operate on three fronts - the labour front and the front of mass popular actions as well as the front of armed actions".

The workers in highly industrialised South Africa were the most powerful element in the struggle, he said. It was no longer possible to separate trade union issues and the fight for national liberation.

The ANC proclaimed 1983 as the Year of Unity in Action, and great strides have been made in building unity on the labour front and the front of mass popular action inside South Africa in recent months. The decision taken at the conference in Johannesburg at the beginning of August to establish the United Democratic Front on a national basis has brought together the separate strands of opposition to the proposed new constitution which had emerged in the main centres of the country. The UDF, which unites people of all national groups at grassroots level, has called on all organisations to join in the fight for a programme of minimum demands for a future South Africa free of racism and oppression. Although the UDF is not formally committed to the Freedom Charter, its formation reflects the surge of support for the principles of the Charter which is now increasingly accepted as a realisable immediate alternative to the apartheid regime.

Similar attempts have been made to build unity on the trade union front. At a meeting in Athlone, Cape Town, last April, most of the major unions and federations representing workers in the independent trade union movement decided to establish a feasibility committee to discuss the formation of a new federation. Since then other union bodies have joined the feasibility committee, opening up the prospect of creating a single body to speak in the name of over 300,000 workers. The vital role which can be played by such a federation is discussed by R. S. Nyameko in an

article entitled "Workers' Militancy Demands Trade Union United Front" in this issue of *The African Communist*.

The struggle for unity in these fields is opposed not only by the government and its agents but also by a variety of divisive and ultra-left elements active amongst the oppressed who mouth false slogans about "purity" but who objectively aid the forces of oppression. Members of our liberation movement must be prepared to fight on two fronts to achieve the unity which is essential for victory. Our people should be left in no doubt that those who preach separateness, who frustrate unity in the fight against apartheid, are assisting in the implementation of the Botha regime's policy of "divide and rule". What is required to bring about a qualitative change in the situation at home is the channelling of the energy and militancy of the masses into properly directed and effective blows against the enemy's weak spots. The enemy has never been more divided and confused than at this moment, the people never more determined in their opposition to apartheid. What is demanded of us is the organisation and mobilisation of the majority of our population for decisive mass action in all three spheres indicated by President Tambo.

A pledge

President Tambo himself gave a pledge to bring this about in his address to the fourth congress of the Frelimo Party in Maputo last April. He said:

"Our bases are in South Africa itself, our bases are among the people of our country, in the cities, in the mountains, near to Koeberg nuclear power station in the Cape, a thousand miles from any border, near to the SASOL petrol tanks in the heart of the country, and, yes, right in Pretoria itself, close to the Voortrekkerhoogte military headquarters, which we have successfully shelled. The regime cannot find these bases. Therefore it invents mythical bases in neighbouring territories. For it is easier to massacre refugees in their beds or to send bandits to murder teachers and health workers in Juham than it is to stop the revolutionary process inside South Africa itself.

"This is why we have war in Southern Africa, and why we will never have peace in our zone as long as apartheid exists. And this is the greatest pledge we can make to the people of Mozambique, as represented here at this Congress: We will spare no effort to increase our blows against the apartheid system, to unite the broadest sections of the South African people in concerted action against it, and to destroy once and for all the most direct and pressing source of oppression and war in our zone".

We are all bound by this pledge and must act to fulfil it. We will continue to receive support from friends and allies in Africa and the rest of the world, but it is primarily to ourselves that we must look, not only for

our own liberation, but for the impetus to save the frontline states from attack and the whole of Southern Africa from the blight of war and indeed the whole of our African continent from the threat of nuclear blackmail.

FOR LAND, BREAD AND PEACE

Because the Soviet Union from time to time has a bad harvest and imports quantities of grain from other countries, Reagan and Thatcher and their ilk proclaim from the house-tops that socialism doesn't work because the Soviet government cannot feed its people. Well, the Soviet leadership frankly admits it has problems in agriculture and has adopted long-term measures to overcome them. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that nobody in the Soviet Union goes hungry, and that whatever is produced is distributed equitably among the whole population. The variety and quality of Soviet bread, for example, is unequalled in the world. And most of the imports are of grain for feeding cattle.

In an article on Soviet agriculture published in the London *Observer* on August 30, 1981, the 'dissident' Soviet sociologist Roy Medvedev and his brother Zhores Medvedev, a Soviet-trained biologist now living in London, who could hardly be described as apologists for the Soviet Union, wrote:

"The Soviet Union produces more than twice as much wheat as the United States, while total production of wheat, rye, rice, millet and buckwheat for human consumption is higher than that of America, Canada and Australia put together. The consumption of bread and other cereals is higher in the Soviet Union than anywhere else in the world. It is the average meat production of 132 lb. per person per year (much higher than in most countries) that creates serious problems."

The article pointed out that problems are also created by the Soviet policy of subsidising food prices. Retail prices of meat, milk and eggs had not changed since 1962 while bread costs were the same as in 1953. Pricing policies were related to production and adjustments would have to be made, said the article.

The Soviet Union is facing problems because food consumption per capita has increased enormously and the all-round standard of living is rising steadily. By contrast, the London *Times* on July 25, 1983, carried a

report from its correspondent in New York under the heading: "Soup Kitchen Queues Lengthen in America". We print the report in full because we consider it significant.

At a time when American farmers are growing so much food that the Government pays them to let fields lie fallow, it is reported that many Americans are going hungry.

Warehouses, grain stores and caves are filled with grain, milk, butter and cheese, and more than a third of all farmland has been taken out of production in an effort to reduce the brimming food stocks of the world's most abundant country.

Yet the US conference of mayors talks of the "prevalent and insidious problem of hunger". In increasing numbers the very poor are having to queue at soup kitchens and what are called hunger centres.

Mr. Leon Panetta, chairman of the House agriculture sub-committee on nutrition, says the use of soup kitchens has increased dramatically in the past two years, four and five-fold in some areas.

The spectacle of hungry Americans looking for food at distribution centres recalls an investigation by doctors in 1967 which revealed widespread malnutrition in the United States. The food stamps programme which resulted from that inquiry, effectively reduced hunger but then the Reagan Administration set out to tackle what it saw as abuse of the welfare programme.

Government spending on food assistance was cut from \$16b in 1981 to \$15.4b last year, although it is expected to go up next year.

The distribution of free cheese has been curtailed by the Government because it is felt that hand-outs are hitting the commercial market.

Until last March the state was giving 26,000 tons of cheese a month to the needy but that has now been roughly halved. The Government has 391,000 tons of surplus cheese in store and 211,000 tons of surplus butter.

Anti-poverty organisations say that cuts in food stamps and distribution are responsible for the soup kitchen queues. Thirty two million of the population of 233 million are graded as below the poverty line but the mayors say soup kitchens are not keeping pace with the hungry.

A Bill to increase the distribution of surplus food has been approved by the House of Representatives in spite of opposition by the Reagan Administration.

Reagan and Thatcher claim (falsely) that the Soviet Union cannot feed its people. But what can one say about capitalist America which has the ability to feed its people but refuses to do so because there is no profit in it?

The Marxist Analysis

Marx and Engels analysed this phenomenon in the *Communist Manifesto* which they published in 1848. They wrote:

"Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the

nether world whom he has called up by his spells. . . It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of over-production. . . The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones".

Who said Marx was out of date? Those words were true of the crisis of 1848 and are equally true of the 1983 crisis (euphemistically called a recession). The capitalism which produces the goods cannot deliver them. And on all sides we see the bourgeoisie of today attempting the same false solutions as in 1848 — Britain being de-industrialised by Thatcherist monetarism, the United States sending its forces to "protect its interests" in the Middle East and Central America. The great depression which started with the Wall Street crash in the United States in 1929 was not solved by Roosevelt's New Deal but by the second world war, which stimulated production with a guaranteed outlet and absorbed the vast army of the unemployed in the military machine and the armaments factories. Today the bourgeoisie is seeking the same militarist solution — hence the frantic drive by the US military-industrial establishment to create the atmosphere of panic and war which is conducive to their interests.

The danger is, that in this age of nuclear weapons, the solution sought by the bourgeoisie is likely to be the final one, leading to the destruction of civilisation as we know it and the possible obliteration of all human life from our planet. The fight for peace, which is at the same time a fight for social justice, is the most urgent task facing all humanity. The warmongers of capitalism must be halted in their tracks. The fruits of the earth and of man's labour must be made available to all the world's people. The exploitation and killing of man by man must be ended once and for all by the final elimination of the profit motive which is the source of the evil.

U.S. MARX CENTENARY CONFERENCE

A conference to commemorate the centenary of the death of Karl Marx was held in New York on March 19, 20 and 26 under the auspices of *Political Affairs*, the theoretical journal of the Communist Party of the United States. Distinguished representatives of the main currents of the revolutionary movement of our time were invited to deliver papers to the conference, among them Gus Hall, general secretary of the CPUSA and editor of *Political Affairs*; Timur Timofeev, director of the Institute of the World Working-Class Movement of the USSR Academy of Sciences; Hans-Joachim Radde, lecturer at the Institute of the World Working-Class Movement of the German Democratic Republic; Dr James Jackson, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States; and Moses Mabhida, general secretary of the South African Communist Party.

The Reagan Administration did everything in its power to disrupt the proceedings of the conference, which was planned to take place on March 19 and 20. Hans-Joachim Radde and a member of the Soviet delegation were denied visas to attend the conference, and the issue of a visa to Moses Mabhida was delayed so that by the time he was able to reach New York the conference was already over. In an unprecedented and heart-warming demonstration of solidarity, the conference was reconvened on March 26 and hundreds of delegates travelled from all over the United States to hear Moses Mabhida's address, which was received with acclamation.

Introducing discussion on the paper, Lou Diskin, secretary of the education department of the CPUSA, said:

Comrade Mabhida, in his paper, called himself "an heir to the legacy of Marxism-Leninism". Listening to his creative and crystal-clear presentation, I would say he is a most worthy heir. Both his presence and his paper add a large and significant political dimension to the *Political Affairs* symposium on the teachings of Karl Marx...

For underdeveloped Africa, socialist orientation is not an easy road, as Comrade Mabhida has illustrated, but the only correct one. Already about a dozen African states (the largest number on any continent) follow this path, embracing 25 per cent of the population and 30 per cent of the territory of the continent. The tremendous awakening of the peoples, the leap in the appeal of Marxist-Leninist ideas, the significant economic, social and political advancements in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, the Republic of Congo, Algeria and other African states dramatically illustrate that creative scientific socialism has a winning future on African soil.

In the immediate period, nothing would permit socialism in Africa to take a greater leap forward than the destruction of the fascist apartheid regime in South Africa. Racism arose with the profit system of capitalism and the ending of capitalism and the building of socialism will create all the favourable conditions for ending this monstrosity once and for all. The historical experience of the multinational, multiracial Soviet Union has given the world an example, a surety: if the correct Marxist-Leninist road is followed, this inhuman ideology and practice will disappear from the face of the earth.

Yet until that happy hour, Marxism demands day-to-day, hour-to-hour unrelenting struggle against every form, expression and act of racism. As Marx and Lenin regularly stressed — without this day-to-day struggle, the workers will not be ready for "the decisive hour". This means, among other tasks, that Marxists must strive with all their might to rally and unite all workers, all democrats, all decent people to reverse the Reagan Administration's open racist embrace of this vile South African bastion of fascism. This so-called "realistic strategy", or as Under Secretary of State for African Affairs Crocker calls it, "shared interests," are but phony euphemisms for an evil racist alliance against the interests of the working peoples of South Africa and the United States.

South Africa must be quarantined and the fight for mandatory sanctions in all fields of life against South Africa must proceed deeper and broader than ever before.

The road of revolutionary struggle is arduous and difficult for any people. But for the working people of South Africa, for our embattled Communist comrades in this tortured land, the battle has been and is especially bitter. The number of jailed, tortured and murdered is phenomenal. And there is still no end.

This afternoon we lower our own fighting Marxist-Leninist banner to honour their heroism, their precious memory. For our martyred South African comrades — Communist and non-Communist — we repeat with Marx his passionate sentiments about the Communards of Paris: they are "forever enshrined in the great heart of the working class." As for their torturers and murderers, we also cry out with Marx that "history has already nailed (them) to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them."

After the conference Moses Mabhida travelled to other cities in the United States to address public meetings under the auspices of the CPUSA.

MARX BELONGS TO EVERYONE

By MOSES MABHIDA
General Secretary of the South
African Communist Party

We in Africa are repeatedly told that Marxism is an 'imported' ideology, alien to our traditions and life-styles. These accusations naturally come from defenders of private ownership, production for profit, colonialism and the exploitation of the many by the few. Such critics of Marxism confine their attacks to the theory and practice of scientific socialism while shamelessly turning a blind eye on the ravages inflicted by agents of imperialism, settlers, missionaries, traders and officials who imposed their rapacious system by force and fraud on millions of peasants in Africa, Asia, America, Australia and Oceania.

We dismiss with contempt the charge that Communists preach and practise a foreign system of ideas, either in Africa or any other continent.

In truth, Marxism-Leninism, Scientific Socialism and Communism are different names for an identical body of knowledge that provides the only satisfactory explanation yet produced of social change, the transition from one social formation to another, the conditions that bring about each kind of transition, and the basic laws of social development.

Because of its universality, Marxism belongs to all peoples in no less a degree than the revolutions in science and technology that preceded and accompanied the industrial revolution of the 18th century.

The political consequences of the related structural changes were manifested in the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789 and the Great October Revolution of 1917.

The first of these great political upheavals established the legitimacy of armed struggle by colonised peoples for the right of self-determination and independence from foreign rule. The Declaration of Independence of 4th July 1776 is the common property of all humanity. So is the French Revolution which brought about a transfer of power from a semi-feudal aristocracy to the rising class of capitalists; the owners of banks, factories and joint-stock trading companies.

The third of these great political revolutions opened the way to the creation of a classless socialist society based on public ownership, a planned economy, equality of rights and treatment for all citizens without distinction of race, creed or sex, and fraternal solidarity through equal opportunities for development between persons of different nationalities and ethnic communities.

The Soviet Union's socialist community, as yet only in the first phase of growth towards a fully fledged Communist society, embodies the visions and hopes of enlightened people in all countries and at all times.

Karl Marx was as much a product of the American and French Revolutions as my generation of Africans is an inheritor of the Russian Revolution. He and his life-long associate Frederick Engels contributed the earliest class analysis of the bourgeois revolutions, wrote the Communist Manifesto of 1848, and laid the theoretical foundations of the proletarian revolution.

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, universally known as Lenin, the founder of Bolshevism and of the first socialist state, was a constant and diligent student of Marx and Engels. He carefully examined and absorbed the meaning of every line of their enormous literary output, applied their propositions to the imperialist stage of capitalism, the tactics and strategy of revolution and the construction of a socialist society.

Marx, born in 1818; died at the age of 65 in 1883, one hundred years ago. We have assembled here to pay homage and express our appreciation of a great genius whose unremitting study of the dynamics of the capitalist system of production revealed the secrets of its triumphs, crimes and downfall.

Lenin was born in 1870. He bridged the gap between Marx and Engels, the first scientific socialists, and the October Revolution which made possible the realisation of their aspirations for a new type of civilisation, one that would enable children, women and men to discover and develop their talents without discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, religion or nationality.

Marx, Engels and Lenin shared the promise that the world is one; all things have a common origin and are interrelated; and hence it is possible to develop a universal body of scientifically established propositions valid for the entire human race. For this reason I claim to be an heir to the legacy of Marxism-Leninism as much as any German, Russian, or Chinese. Marx belongs to us all.

Marx's contribution

Marx and Engels were distinguished scholars as well as active revolutionaries. They received a classical education, common to members of the affluent middle class, studied Hegelian philosophy and made themselves conversant with the main political and social trends of their times.

In Lenin's words, Marx was a genius who developed and synthesised the three major ideological currents of the 19th century: German classical philosophy, English political economy and French revolutionary socialism.

His overriding search was for a social formation that would enable people to realise their dream of achieving liberty with justice and equality. Unlike the French liberals whose doctrines dominated the intellectual climate of his age, he rejected the notion that such rights and claims could be achieved in a system characterised by private ownership, class divisions, exploitation of workers, and the sacrifice of the common good to individual profit making.

Only a planned socialist economy could emancipate the people from the fetters of poverty, ignorance, disease, unemployment and exploitation. His aim was to establish a science of society that would lay a solid foundation of principles and concepts for the socialist movement.

Sickness and death prevented him from completing his assignment but he left a series of blueprints on the theory of knowledge, social change, history, religion and above all capitalism. That indeed was his main task – to dissect and lay bare the laws of capitalist production, its polarisation of poverty and wealth, the causes of class conflict and reasons for social revolution.

Forward-looking Africans, intellectuals, workers and peasants throughout the Continent, are hungry for this store of scientific information about their world and how to change it. Like many others, I too turned to Marxism-Leninism for the theory and practice of revolutionary social change.

My Road to Marxism

A good way of assessing the impact of Marxism on poor nations and their countries – usually called developing, underdeveloped or even undeveloped – is to examine its influence on individuals. Forgive me for making myself the subject of a case study; after all, I ought to know myself better than anyone else!

Capitalist crisis and imperialist war were conspicuous in my social environment during my formative years and certainly influenced my journey to Marxism.

I was six years old when the great depression of the Hungry Thirties hit South Africa and 19 years when I joined the Communist Party in December 1942 at a highly critical stage in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet peoples against the Nazi invaders.

At that time the Party was trying to organise a popular front against fascist groups in South Africa and for defence of the Soviet Union in its desperate struggle for peace.

I served my apprenticeship in the Party and trade union movement during these stormy years. In study circles and by reading Marxist classics I gained an insight into the nature of capitalist exploitation, the relations between it and national oppression and the reasons for 'race' discrimination. My most important advance came from acceptance of the alliance between the Party and the African National Congress, between social revolution and national liberation, between socialism and majority rule.

Like other Party members I grappled with the concepts of historical materialism, dialectics, the labour theory of value, the origin and nature of socio-economic classes, the laws regulating the transitions from one kind of social formation to another, the principles of socialism and its history in the Soviet Union. This material was of enormous benefit to young African Marxists; it gave them a historical perspective from which to evaluate the quality of traditional African society and the damage inflicted on it by the agents of colonialism. Africans were able to see themselves as the victims of a great historical process of conquest, dispossession and exploitation, and to acquire understanding of the tasks to be undertaken in the struggle for liberation and social justice.

None of this newly acquired knowledge came easily. My parents were poor, of peasant stock but deprived of ancestral lands by the invading sugar barons who effectively controlled Natal. My mother, a devout Christian, died when I was five years old, leaving seven children to be

brought up by my father, a farm labourer and semi-skilled urbanised wage worker. He did his best to educate us but could provide the means for only four or five years of schooling. I managed to finish the primary school and then left school to work as an unskilled labourer at a variety of jobs.

Marx on Primitive Accumulation

My experience corresponded closely to lessons I learned from a study of the founders of scientific socialism. Allow me to dwell for a few minutes on the relevance of Marxist writings to the development of capitalism in South Africa. Marx's account of 'primitive accumulation', for instance, could be matched by the history of the Zulu, to which ethnic community I belong. In Natal, as in other provinces, one might observe the effects of expropriation of African land by white settlers and their governments who herded us into 'reserves' (nowadays called Bantustans or officially Homelands), forced us through taxes and recruiting agents to leave our villages for the labour market and work as migrants under contract for less than subsistence wages.

I cannot think of a more striking or accurate description of this process than Marx' brilliant generalisation in the first Volume of Capital, Part 8, Chapter 26:

"In the history of primitive accumulation, all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in course of formation; but above all, those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free 'unattached' proletarians on the labour-market. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process".

My father and his father were victims of this process in Natal after the defeat of the Zulu Empire at the hands of British regular troops in 1879. Zulu regiments, known as Impi, fought bravely with spears and clubs against troops armed with machine guns and long rifles, inflicting a notable defeat on the British in the famous battle at Isandlwana, but succumbed to the enemy's superior fire-power. That battle, however, earned them a mention in Frederick Engel's book on *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, first published in 1884.

In a chapter on the Iroquois, his model of what he called 'primitive communism' Engels claimed that the Zulus achieved what no European army could have done.

"Armed only with lances and spears, without any fire-arms, they advanced under a hail of bullets from breechloaders up to the bayonets of the English infantry — and threw them into confusion more than once, yes, even forced

them to retreat in spite of immense disparity of weapons, and in spite of the fact that they have no military service and don't know anything about drill".

Marx on Colonial Expansion through Conquest

In passages such as this Africans recognise themselves as victims of colonial conquest and imperialist greed. We learn that the development of the big capitalist powers takes place by means of the under-development of the poor peasant countries, that industrialised countries obtain the capital for industrialisation from the extraction of precious metals and tropical products in the colonies. Marx was one of the first scholars to establish links between colonial plunder and the industrial revolution. In *Capital*, Vol. I, Chapter 31 on the 'Genesis of the industrial capitalist', he spelled out the connection:

"The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the 'beginning' of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production... The different moments of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and England... These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g. the colonial system".

Citing the conclusions of various historians on the 'Christian colonial system', Marx noted that the history of the colonial administration of Holland — and Holland was the head capitalistic nation of the 17th century — "is one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre and meanness".

The Dutch East India Company, as is well known, imposed colonialism on South Africa in 1652 when it planted a settlement of Company servants and hangers-on at the Cape at the southernmost extremity of the Continent. The Company imported slaves from Africa and the East Indies, seized the land of the indigenous inhabitants, and set off a reign of wars, conquest and expropriation against the independent African states in the interior.

The descendants of the early settlers from Europe cling to the practice of an outmoded colonial system, involving gross racial segregation, discrimination and denial of human rights. It is against this system, known everywhere as apartheid, that the oppressed people have raised the banner of revolt in an armed struggle for independence from colonial rule and the right to self-determination.

At the present time more than 16 million Africans are confined by law to reservations covering only 13 per cent of the country's surface area. The reserves or Bantustans have been divided into 10 separate states with the intention of frustrating the African aim of uniting all national groups into a single people under a democratic constitution that will guarantee equality of rights and opportunities to all.

Loss of land and deprivation of rights are not peculiar to the colonised peoples of Africa. Did not the Indians of America, both North and South, suffer the same fate at the hands of foreign invaders? Are the Australian 'Black fellows' not victims of the same historical process? Colonialism was a world-wide phenomenon; its consequences continue to plague the liberated colonies. But where else can we find a true explanation of our problems and solution than in the writings of Marx and those who apply his method of analysis and basic concepts?

Studying the works of Marx we learnt that racism was not just an emotional aberration of white immigrants, it has its roots in the Capitalist and imperialist system of exploitation. The events in many parts of post-independent Africa have shown that black capitalists can be just as efficient at exploiting their people as their white neo-colonial partners.

The Crisis of Capitalism

I referred earlier to the great depression of the Hungry Thirties. In my country, as elsewhere, the depression gave rise to great unemployment, wage cuts and severe reductions in living standards of working people. The workers in South African industrial centres fought back under the leadership of the Party, only to be met with bullets and batons, deportations and detentions. One of our leaders, Johannes Nkosi, the Party branch secretary in Durban, was hacked to death at a mass rally held on 16 December 1930 in protest against wage cuts and pass laws.

We remember our martyred dead both to honour their memories and to remind ourselves that the present sufferings of Black workers in South Africa are due to the continuation of the violence perpetrated against them by the ruling class.

Once again capitalism is in the stranglehold of economic depression, one that is even more prolonged and severe than its predecessor of 50 years ago. South Africa, as part of the Capitalist World, is also facing unprecedented economic difficulties, but, as usual the main burden is being carried by the oppressed black masses.

Capitalism is on the verge of economic collapse. As in the 1930s powerful forces are at work looking for a way out through world war, even at the risk of nuclear annihilation. We have no reason to suppose that only a totalitarian state of the Nazi type can mobilise a population for such a war. It can be done also by a so-called democracy with absolute control over the mass media and a huge secret service such as the FBI and CIA constituted.

Secondly, for the sake of self-preservation and out of a sense of moral responsibility, the people who want peace must intensify their efforts to stop the arms race; force government to scale down the enormous stocks of weapons, and renounce war as a means of settling international disputes.

Ideological attacks on the Socialist world and the Soviet Union are a cover for imperialist greed, the search for markets, raw materials and profits. The movement for peace is necessary in our own interests and to protect socialism against those who wish to destroy it. Capitalist governments and their academic spokesmen may prefer to ignore or deride Marxism as they did a century ago. They cannot however ignore the socialist world. Its existence and growth are a practical demonstration of the validity of Marxist-Leninist theory. I shall therefore say something about the significance of the 1917 Revolution.

The Marxist word became flesh in the October Revolution. People who call themselves Marxists, non-Marxists, Trotskyists, Maoists or Euro-Communists spend more time in abusing the Soviet Union than in attacking their alleged opponent the capitalist system. That fratricidal war began during the Revolution when Mensheviks, Revisionists and the entire tribe of Social-Democrats repudiated the Bolsheviks in the name of individual liberty and human rights.

The only comment I wish to make is that socialists who reject the achievements of socialism in action can hardly expect to persuade people that their version of the new world will be better.

In global terms the Soviet Union has changed the balance of forces in favour of peace, the colonised, dispossessed and exploited. There is a direct connection between its emergence as a world power and the process of decolonisation that set in after the October Revolution and with renewed vigour after the defeat of Fascism in the Second World War.

Liberation would have come to colonised people through their own efforts in the natural course of historical development; but it came the sooner and more readily because of the stand taken by the Soviet Union against foreign domination, the colonial system and national oppression.

This is an area in which Lenin's influence was particularly important. He condemned, long before the October Revolution, all forms of colonial domination, identified it as a species of national oppression, and urged that the colonised, however poor and underdeveloped, had the same legitimate claim to self-determination and secession as any national minority in Europe.

The policy of the Soviet Union towards contemporary liberation movements is firmly rooted in principles formulated in conferences of the Second International during the first decade of this century and in Marx's famous formula: "The victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie is at the same time the signal for liberation for all oppressed nations".

The National Question

The Soviet Union is a multi-racial federation which survived the most severe test imaginable of an unparalleled armed invasion that resulted in the death of 20 million Soviet citizens and the destruction of social resources on an appalling scale.

The Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, meeting in March 1921, acknowledged that "The elimination of actual national inequality is a lengthy process involving a stubborn and persistent struggle against all survivals of national oppression and colonial slavery". The border regions, notably Turkestan, were in the position of colonies supplying raw materials for manufacture at the centre. This relationship was the basic cause of economic and national inequality.

It was the task of the Party 'to help the toiling masses of the non-Great Russian peoples to catch up with Central Russia, which is ahead of them'. Measures required for this purpose were specified and implemented in course of time. The Twelfth Congress resolved in April 1923 that though the equality of legal status of nations was a great achievement, it did not in itself solve the national problem of inherited inequalities. This could be eliminated 'only if real and prolonged assistance is given by the Russian proletariat to the backward people of the Union in the sphere of economic and cultural advancement'.

All forms of inequality between nationalities in the Soviet Union have been eliminated in accordance with these and subsequent decisions. Already in 1922, when the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics was established the claim could be made with justification that the integration of the national republics into the Union represented the concluding stage in the formation of a single multi-national State on the basis of equality

and voluntary consent. In the succeeding sixty years, the equality has become actual and manifest.

As Yuri Andropov remarked last December when celebrating the 60th anniversary of the birth of the USSR, 'History has fully borne out the theory of Marx and Lenin that the nationalities question can only be settled on a class basis. National discord and all forms of racial and national inequality and oppression receded into the past together with social antagonisms'.

Many countries in Africa are still plagued by inequalities and rivalries between ethnic communities. We can learn from Marxism-Leninism how to turn these diversities to good account by giving each community the opportunity to develop its language and culture within a single state system adhering to the principles of 'national in form, socialist in content'.

To achieve the goal of unity in diversity, however, Africa and other developing countries will have to liberate themselves from class divisions, exploitation and national oppression. This they cannot do unless they liberate themselves from the yoke of capitalism and imperialism.

Marxism in Africa

The prospect of achieving workers' power is still some distance away in most parts of Africa. Eighty per cent and more of the population are peasants; the working class is small and concentrated in a few industrial centres and port towns; workers are not organised in political parties; and only a handful of Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties have emerged.

To these objective obstacles must be added the enormous influence of colonial institutions on the constitutions, legislatures, administrative apparatus and economics of developing countries. They have been emancipated from colonialism only in a formal sense. Political power has been transferred; many of the external features of the culture are traditional; but the content continues to be colonial-capitalist.

Parties and governments are often dominated by the middle class of educated and professional people who enrich themselves by manipulating the state apparatus and large public corporations. These have taken the place of expatriate companies of the colonial era but continue to depend on and work with foreign capital represented by governments, international finance and multi-national conglomerates. This was the combination of interests that Lenin considered to be the driving force behind imperialist expansion. It persists, in spite of the formal, constitutional withdrawal of old-fashioned colonialism; and works closely in conjunction with an expanding indigenous bourgeoisie.

The emergence of a bourgeois class of collaborators sharpens the conflict of interests within the nation and accentuates the contradictions between workers, peasants and capitalists. Small but important groups of intellectuals have turned to Marxism for a theoretical understanding of class formation and the appropriate forms of struggle in defence of propertyless urban workers and poor peasants.

Twelve Marxist-Leninist Parties have taken shape in different countries of Africa. A minority of these are in power, constituting islands of socialism in an underdeveloped and technologically backward continent. But they are Marxist-Leninist in outlook and organisation; determined to solve the main problem of bringing about the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Marxism has come to stay in Africa. Its immediate future depends on the determination of the vanguard parties and scattered groups of intellectuals, workers and peasants throughout the continent who recognise that socialism alone provides a satisfactory and lasting solution to the continent's problems of ignorance, illiteracy, disease, poverty, technological backwardness and imperialist exploitation.

For us in Africa the writings of that great genius who died 100 years ago live on. Marx has a relevance which is not only theoretical; he has given us the tools without which we will not be able to construct a life of peace, freedom and socialism.

(See Editorial Notes — 'US Marx Centenary Conference'.)

WORKERS' MILITANCY DEMANDS TRADE UNION UNITED FRONT

By R.S. Nyameko

The past year continued the African workers' upsurge in trade union growth and strike action — both founded on the urgent needs of our workers, our people and our entire movement for liberation of our country.

All racist regimes in South Africa, irrespective of political complexion, and acting on behalf of the employing class, have sought to crush attempts by African workers to organise trade unions of their own choosing by using measures of repression, the shooting of strikers, detention, imprisonment, torture, murder, banning and exile of trade union leaders and militant workers.

All such measures of repression, coercion and intimidation failed to achieve their aim because of the determination of the African working class to defend itself against attacks by the racist regimes. We pay tribute to the working class leaders and organisers, many of whom were members of the Communist Party, for their dedicated, heroic struggles in the past 65 years. The movement suffered severe setbacks by reason of the bannings and removal of at least 150 dedicated and experienced trade union leaders under the Suppression of Communism Act.

We commend the courageous and persistent efforts of workers and organisers to fill this gap by producing new leaders and forming new unions.

The wave of strikes from 1973, the display of workers' power destroyed the facade of industrial peace. The regime's introduction of works councils and liaison committees was nullified. The workers declared clearly that these councils and committees cannot take the place of trade unions.

The unabated strikes, followed by the Soweto uprising of 1976, forced the regime to appoint the Wiehahn Commission.

The subsequent adoption of the Labour Relations Act of August 1981 reflects the significant advance made by the working class and liberation movement. For the first time in our country's history the racist regime has been forced to reverse a policy that has been in existence since the beginning of the century.

This policy was to exclude African workers from the collective bargaining system and discriminate against them in the labour market.

Race and class domination did not begin with apartheid. What the apartheid regime did was to intensify the basic components of the exploitative system and adjust it to changing economic conditions.

Monopoly capitalism is more responsive to changing conditions than is racist apartheid. The primary concern of capitalism is to maximise profits and for this purpose it wants to make the most economic and profitable use of labour resources. The Black workers demonstrated a determination and capacity to organise, and the international opposition to apartheid mobilised by our liberation movement became a significant factor in forcing capital to accept the inevitability of change in the labour market.

Every advance of our struggle towards liberation gives rise to manoeuvres and manipulations by the ruling class to weaken the struggle through reformism and class collaboration, both of which are encouraged by such institutions as trade union registration, industrial council participation, closed shop agreements and stop orders -- all contained in the Labour Relations Act. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 1983 (President's Council) ensures ultimate control by the white ruling party, with a new preamble which affirms commitment to freedom of worship, *anti-communism* and *private enterprise*.

We are confident that reformist tactics will be of no avail against a united, politically-conscious and militant working class which clearly understands its leading role in the struggle against class and race exploitation. The controls introduced to hamper the efforts of trade unions, both registered and unregistered, will fail to stop their progress towards emancipation.

Our trade union movement has sufficient experience to overcome the obstacles raised by such devices as registration, conciliation boards and industrial councils. These devices should not be allowed to constitute an impediment to unity on the basis of sound trade union policies and the best interests of the working class.

What the Figures Show

A glance at the recorded strikes (not all strikes are recorded) shows the increased upsurge in class consciousness.

In 1973 there were 370 strikes involving 98,000 workers. In 1974 there were 101 strikes involving more than 22,000 workers which caused the loss of 67,000 mandays. In 1979 there were 36 reported strikes in South Africa involving 21,000 workers.

By the end of August 1980 the number of reported strikes was 61 involving about 95,000 workers.

The National Manpower Commission Report tabled in Parliament on 25th May, 1982, stated that there were 342 strikes in 1981, nearly all of them illegal, involving nearly 93,000 workers, 93 per cent of them black. The worst post-war year was 1973, when there were 370 strikes involving 98,000 workers.

The Eastern Cape and the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area each accounted for more than 27 per cent of the strikes. Both areas are experiencing rapid unionisation of blacks, particularly in the metals and motor manufacturing industries. Forty-eight per cent of the strikes were about wages.

Despite the growing repression of 1981-1982, the regime has not had its own way. In 1982 more strikes took place according to the Department of Manpower figures.

The number of workers taking part in strikes, the number of mandays lost through them and the average length of strikes were all greater than in 1981.

The record-breaking strike figures reveal that there were 394 strikes last year, compared to 342 in 1981. A total of 141,570 workers (none of them white) took part in these strikes -- an increase of around 50,000 over 1981. More than 365,339 working days were lost through strikes and work stoppages -- a sharp increase over 1981's figure of 226,000. This means that on average around 1,000 workers were on strike each calendar day last year, most of them Africans.

The average length of strikes and stoppages, regarded by labour experts as a key indicator of strike activity, also increased slightly. While 2.44 man days were lost per striker in 1981, last year's figure was 2.58. Strikes by coloured and Asian workers accounted for just one-sixth of lost time. (1)

These strikes do not include the Day of Mourning called by the Food and Canning Workers' Union and the AFCWU (2) for Thursday 11th February to commemorate Neil Aggett's death. Despite short notice, this political strike was supported by FOSATU, SAAWU, CUSA, MACWUSA, GWU, GAWU and MWASA. (3) The workers were asked to wear black arm bands and stop work between 11.30 and 12 noon.

It was estimated that about 100,000 workers responded to the call in all the main industrial centres and in the fishing hamlets and small towns of the Cape Western Province.

Here are a few extracts of an assessment of this stoppage by branches of the AFCWU and FCWU from Cape Town to East London in the Cape Province, from Hout Bay to St. Helena Bay on the West Coast, at Industria, Isando and East Rand and Durban. (4)

"We saw the half-hour work-stoppage both as a commemoration of the death of our comrade and a warning to the authorities who are conducting their vendetta against the trade union movement. The workers responded to the call with great conviction and determination."

"At one factory, in a country town where workers are supposed to know their place, the workers were ready to ban all overtime work until the employers finally backed down and agreed to pay for the half-hour stoppage."

"All the workers participated, even those that aren't usually at union meetings. The committees and workers at each factory decided themselves how to use the half-hour, but in most cases there were tributes to Neil Aggett, some kind of a service, and singing. Some lorries stopped on the road at 11.30."

"The response of the progressive trade unions was that this time the State had gone 'too far'."

"In Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, unions described the stoppage as a 'complete success'."

"In East London about 6,500 workers downed tools for varying periods."

"In PWV area Pretoria, the West Rand, the Vaal area and Sasolburg more than 30,000 workers participated in the stoppage."

"The protest was well supported by organised workers in Maritzburg. An impressive 90% of the workers to whom the call for a stoppage was directed responded in a disciplined way to an issue of far-reaching significance."

"Despite considerable management intimidation there was a good response to the call for a stoppage in the Durban, Hammarsdale, Tongaat, Estcourt, Pinetown, Empangeni and Jacobs, Mooi River, Umbongintwini, Rosburgh areas."

The events of February 11 are of great significance in the history of labour organisation in our country. Organised labour in their respective unions stood together and put aside their differences over this issue. This unity of the trade union movement was a fitting tribute to Neil Aggett. It could also be the basis of further unity and cooperation of a more permanent kind in the future.

TUCSA Treachery

The events of February 11th also exposed the treacherous behaviour of TUCSA (Trade Union Council of SA). In the *Citizen* of Monday 15th February 1982, J.A. Grobbelaar, General Secretary of TUCSA said:

"TUCSA unhesitatingly distanced itself from any call for industrial action in connection with this specific tragic event. TUCSA did not believe in supporting negative actions which did not find favour with the workforce in general and which would only have the effect of discrediting all sections and elements of the labour force."

His statement was calculated to please the government. The 30-minute stoppage of work was the workers' expression of anger at the murder of a trade union leader. By 'distancing' itself TUCSA exposed its betrayal of trade union and working class solidarity. It revealed itself as the protector of white privilege.

The murder of Neil Aggett evoked the widest protest. The protesters included academics, scholars, students, liberals, national liberation forces and workers. Their indignation was echoed throughout the country and the world. Here was a medical man who without hope of material reward gave his time and services to the workers' cause, a medical man who broadened his professional feeling to the working class to include underpaid and victimised wage earners.

In this struggle we saw who is friend and who is foe.

The Commercial and Allied Workers' Union (CAWU) and the National Union of Distributive Workers (NUDW) both disaffiliated from TUCSA in protest against its stand. These unions are to be commended for the lead they have given to other unions affiliated to TUCSA.

Workers' militancy was also displayed in the strikes and demonstrations which eventually forced the government to withdraw its contentious draft Pension Bill. In terms of the Bill, employers would no longer be able to withdraw their pension benefits when leaving one job for another, only one third of the total pension could be taken out as a lump sum on retirement, and there were other restrictions which led the African workers to believe they were being robbed of the fruits of their labour, that money due to

them would never in fact be paid over. In addition the African workers were fed up because at no stage had they or their unions been consulted over the terms of the Bill.

By South African standards it is extraordinary that the regime should have scrapped a proposed Bill in the face of pressure from the African workers. Recent experiences have demonstrated that African trade unions have arrived and are here to stay. Hundreds of agreements have already been negotiated between unions and management, opening the way to collective bargaining and substantial benefits for the workers. Though recognition agreements vary considerably in form and content, they have common features. The emphasis is on building up and consolidating support, factory by factory. The union skills of factory representatives are being developed. The scope of union activity is also being broadened. Because loss of a job also means loss of residence rights for African workers in urban areas, the unions have demanded a say in the formulation of disciplinary, grievance and retrenchment procedures.

Yet in this field too TUCSA has 'distanced' itself from the workers and condemned the African workers' strikes and protests against the draft Pension Bill. TUCSA leaders have appealed to employers not to sign recognition agreements with African unions, to insist on the upholding of the traditional industrial council system and the closed shop, both of which preserve the privileges of the minority white workers. Anna Scheepers, the TUCSA President, warned businessmen "that they would reap 'bitter fruits' if they sowed further seeds of dissension in the life-and-death struggle between *traditional* (i.e. white dominated) unions and the new, more militant black union movement." (5)

The progressive black trade unions have exposed the myth spread by TUCSA and the racist regime that the black workers now enjoy "freedom of association" and that the wage gap between black and white workers has narrowed.

What kind of "freedom of association" do the workers enjoy when no fewer than 32 black trade union leaders have been detained in the last year (Thozamile Gqweta, SAAWU's president has been detained no less than nine times) -- and all of them tortured by South African security police and those of the Sebe regime in the Ciskei? When trade union offices are raided and trade union officials continuously harassed? Black miners who go on strike are still given bullets instead of bigger wages.

As far as the racial wage gap is concerned, the following is a table of average monthly wages in rands:

Mining Industry	Manufacturing Industry	Iron, Steel, Engineering & Metallurgical Industry
African	247	320
Coloured	446	504
Asian	680	567
White (6)	1332	1160

The black progressive trade unions therefore have a tremendous task to win true freedom of association, to step up the fight against the negative features of the Labour Relations Act, 1981, for an all-out attack on low wages, for homes, against mass removals, pass laws, influx control, for access to skilled work and for social and political rights.

During the past year many black unions have demonstrated their increasing level of political awareness. They have joined with community organisations to fight against increases in bus fares, rents, electricity charges and the general cost of living and called for the rejection of the President's Council and the new constitution and opposition to the Bantustan traitors and other collaborators.

Trade Union Unity

Steps have also been taken to build trade union unity. Following the first unity conference at Langa on August 8, 1981 (7), and building on the militancy of the workers shown over the Aggett murder and other issues, further unity conferences were held last year -- in April at Wilgespruit and in July at Port Elizabeth -- but the desired unity has still not been brought about.

On April 9 and 10 this year, several hundred delegates representing seven trade union groupings and over 200,000 workers -- almost the entire emerging mainly black trade union movement -- voted to set up a feasibility commission which has been entrusted with the task of forming a major new trade union federation.

The groupings, which agreed to work towards a new federation, were the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu), the General Workers' Union (GWU), the African Food and Canning Workers' Union (AFCWU) and the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU), the South African Allied Workers' Union (Saawu), the General and Allied Workers' Union (Gawu), the Cape Town Municipal Workers' Association and the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Ccawusa).

Union groupings which did not vote in favour of the federation were the Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa), the Motor Assembly and

Component Workers' Union (Macwusa), the Orange-Vaal General Workers' Union and the Municipal and General Workers' Union.

Early in May CUSA and MACWUSA announced their readiness to join the feasibility commission. Later Orange-Vaal GWU also joined. The commission met on July 2, reported progress and agreed to carry on with the work of uniting the black trade union movement. The aspirations and tasks of the April conference were expressed in the following statements:

Mrs. Emma Mashinini, general secretary of Ccawusa, said they were backing the new federation "to form a united front against capital and state repression."

Mr. Jan Theron, general secretary of the AFCWU and FCWU, said the formation of a federation was wanted by the unions' members. He said: "The time is long overdue for the formation of a new federation which can speak for the workers of this country and tackle the task of properly organising workers".

Communist Party policy

Our Party's policy on trade unionism has been formulated and presented consistently for more than 60 years. We communists work for maximum working class unity on a progressive anti-capitalist and anti-racist platform; reject syndicalism or craft unions and strongly support industrial unions which embrace all workers in a particular trade or industry; reject authoritarian or bureaucratic tendencies in trade unions and stand for workers' maximum participation in the management of trade unions.

In the South African context, the Party has always urged the adoption of an open door policy which accepts membership by workers of all races without discrimination. This is the basic principle laid down in the Party Programme of 1962 which attributes racial divisions in the working class to the conditions of capitalist exploitation and competition. The Programme insists that the fundamental interests of all South African workers, like those of workers everywhere, lie in unity.

At the same time our party calls upon the black workers to oppose incorporation into white-dominated 'non-racial' trade unions.

The first step is for black workers to organise themselves into strong viable unions in order to ensure in non-racial unions that the principle of democratic majority leadership is applied.

Our party welcomes in principle the moves towards the formation of a united trade union movement. Therefore it hails the recent unity meeting in Cape Town as well as the establishment of a feasibility commission to reconcile the different approaches to trade union unity.

We call upon the various trade unions to ensure that such a Federation is radical and democratic, serving the interests of the working people.

To facilitate the goal of one Federation, it is crucial to encourage general workers' unions gradually to phase themselves out and thus form industrial unions: that is, *one union for one industry*.

To generate a climate of unity and co-ordination, regular trade union meetings and continuous dialogue are needed to achieve joint action in tackling the burning issues affecting the workers e.g. retrenchment, unemployment, mass removals, President's Council and Koorhof genocide bills.

Though we oppose registration, industrial councils and closed-shop agreements, nevertheless these should not be obstacles to trade union unity and should never be elevated to the level of principles.

At this stage, we are of the view that affiliation to international trade union centres will be a divisive factor and therefore urge non-affiliation.

Although all these groupings are committed to the building of one trade union federation, there are still many obstacles — controversial issues, divisive influences, competition and rivalries among unions. All these must be discussed patiently in a frank and honest way. So much is at stake, so much to be gained by the formation of a single united trade union federation, that every effort must be made to remove all obstacles from the path of unity.

Above all a united trade union movement could tackle the huge task of organising the majority of our workers who are still unorganised — on the mines, in the railways and harbours and on the farms. We call on all trade union activists, members and supporters of the national liberation movement and progressive workers of all races to unite their forces in an assault on the bastions of white supremacy. Our demands are:

For the right to work.

Equal access to skilled work.

Higher wages and improved working and living conditions.

Removal of restrictions on movement and residence.

Decent housing for all workers and their families.

Removal of restrictions on the right to strike.

Abolition of undemocratic controls on trade unions and their leaders.

Close co-operation between trade unions and community organisations

expressing the will of the people and their determination to manage their own affairs without interference from the racist bureaucracy.

Full citizenship rights, one parliament and one country for all South Africans of all national groups. Votes for all.

References:

- (1) *Rand Daily Mail* 8.4.83.
- (2) African Food and Canning Workers' Union.
- (3) FOSATU Federation of South African Trade Unions; SAAWU South African Allied Workers' Union; CUSA Council of Unions of South Africa; MACWUSA Motor Assemblers and Components Workers' Union; GWU General and Allied Workers' Union; MWASA Media Workers' Association of South Africa.
- (4) See *South African Labour Bulletin* Vol. 1,7 No. 6 April 1982 pages 6-28.
- (5) *Cape Argus* 13.6.83.
- (6) In addition white miners receive all kinds of fringe benefits.
- (7) *The African Communist* No. 89, Second Quarter 1982 pp. 27-28.



**Defend the Fatherland! Overcome
underdevelopment! Build Socialism!**

**FRELIMO FIGHTS FOR THE
FUTURE OF MOZAMBIQUE**

The fourth congress of the Frelimo Party, Mozambique's Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, held in Maputo at the end of April, was an historic event, not only for the Mozambican people, but for all progressive and revolutionary forces in Southern Africa. It brought together 677 delegates from all parts of the country, 183 invited guests from various spheres of public life in Mozambique, and 145 foreign guests, representing 65 parties, liberation movements and solidarity organisations from no less than 54 different countries. The congress was conducted in a spirit of militant enthusiasm, open and uninhibited debate, and resolute determination to achieve the three objectives set out by the keynote slogans of the congress: Defend the fatherland! Overcome underdevelopment! Build socialism! Our special correspondent explains the background to and significance of the congress.

The first congress was the foundation of FRELIMO in 1962. The second congress in 1968 witnessed the decisive triumph of the revolutionary democratic line over narrow, reactionary, bourgeois and tribalist trends in

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