

what our READERS WRITE

YOU AND THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

Since its first publication, at the end of 1959, *The African Communist* has met with, and continues to find, a warm, indeed a glowing reception, not only in all parts of Africa, but in many other parts of the world. Articles from our magazine have been reprinted in British, Canadian and United States publications; they have been translated and published in Arabic, Russian, Chinese and other languages. The British monthly, *Marxism Today*, in its issue of April, 1962, says, "We would like warmly to greet and pay tribute to our colleague *The African Communist*," and proceeds to give its readers a detailed survey of the contents of our issue No. 8. In the same month, the French journal *Démocratie Nouvelle*, reprinting the article on South African racialism by Toussaint from our French-language special edition (of which more below), lists the contents of this edition and offers to make copies available to its readers on request.

For this continuing success we who, under severe difficulties, produce this journal owe most of all to you, our readers, who continue to write in from every part of Africa and many other parts of the world, encouraging and inspiring us in our work.

FROM ICELAND TO JAPAN

Naturally, most of our readers and correspondents are in Africa. But we are happy to know that our readers also live in other countries—some of them very far away indeed. What country could one imagine further away than Iceland! Yet reader Gisli Gunnarsson, of Reykjavik in that far-away country writes ordering four copies regularly "to begin with", and adds: "Please render my thanks to the brave sponsors of the magazine and my well-wishes for the future. Many people in Iceland are keenly interested in the struggle of the African people for freedom, and a Marxist analysis of this struggle would help them to increase their understanding." And another reader, Iwasaki Shigeo, writes in from another far corner of the world—from Japan.

Perhaps if more Japanese readers would see *The African Communist* they might put some pressure on their government to stop its disgraceful and humiliating trafficking with the South African

racialists—who, in return for a deal to buy South African pig-iron, have declared the Japanese “honorary Europeans”.

AFRICAN STUDENTS IN EUROPE

Our journal is also circulating more and more widely among African students in Europe. One student writes from *Italy*, enclosing a year's subscription, “with great happiness” and also enquiring about other publications “available of the South African Communist Party, and also of interest about East and Central Africa”.

From socialist *Czechoslovakia* another African student, Yaw Assiedu, writes:

“I just cannot express my appreciation of the socialist magazine *The African Communist* in words. It has certainly filled a vacuum which has existed far too long in Africa. As an African and as a socialist I must congratulate the South African Communist Party for this work. . . . My congratulations to you and all comrades for the fight for the freedom of the proletariat and for the liquidation of capitalism.”

And, from revolutionary *Cuba*, marching towards socialism—the brave pioneer of America—Comrade Ramon Calcines, of the Integrated Revolutionary Organisations, writes: “We have received *The African Communist* and you can be sure that we can use its excellent material to bring to the notice of our people. We are very much interested in the developments in Africa as seen from the viewpoint of the South African Communist Party.”

OUR FRENCH EDITION

The first special edition of *The African Communist* in French has clearly made an extremely favourable impression in French-speaking areas of Africa. Marcel Anoma of *Morocco* writes a warm letter “congratulating you on your excellent initiative in producing this in French. You will not be unaware that there is no equivalent of your journal in the French language and that few inhabitants of ‘Franco-phone’ Africa are capable of reading English. I understand your difficulties and therefore will not say that I am impatient to see your journal coming out regularly in French. But I can assure you that it would be a great thing for other than Marxists in our part of the world to be able to read such rich articles by Numadé, Toussaint and others. And for those who know nothing about Marxism because no one has yet told them anything about it, these articles will act as excellent teachers. There is no doubt about it at all that the French edition was an absolute necessity. You will understand

this if you could know of the success the special edition, which I have under my very eyes, is going to have.”

Our Moroccan comrade, to whom we express our cordial appreciation, also tells of the keen interest shown in our special edition by a friend in *Mali*:

“To say that he is very interested is putting it mildly, for since he has read it he dreams only of getting it into the hands of as many people in Mali as possible.”

Readers in Conakry (*Guinea*) and Caen (*France*) have also written to comment favourably on the French edition.

French-speaking readers will be glad to learn that we are now contemplating the production of another special edition in this language.

DISCUSSION GROUPS—AND REPRESSION

Readers in various parts of Africa are continuing to form *discussion groups* around *The African Communist* to study its contents and, in the light thereof to analyse problems and conditions in their own countries in the light of Marxist-Leninist theory. About twenty young people in Ibadan, *Nigeria*, have recently come together to form such a group. Clearly, there are a number of groups interested in Marxism which have been developing in various parts of this vast country, with its forty million inhabitants and urgent problems of the post-independence period. It would be an excellent thing if these several groups could come together to pool their resources and combine their efforts.

But the forces of reaction are more and more trying to attack *The African Communist* and prevent the spread of the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism.

Elsewhere in *Nigeria*, at Onitsha, a bookseller writes that the Roman Catholic Church is campaigning against our journal with threats of excommunication. One reader who bought it later returned it saying: “Our Rev. Father saw it and was annoyed with me and suspicious over my faithfulness in my religion. As I don’t want to be cast out that is why I return it.”

Elsewhere, especially in British colonies, active police repression and bans are operated against our journal and its readers. Comrade J. W. Musole, a devoted reader and president of the *Northern Rhodesian Socialist Movement*, was raided, all his documents seized, and himself forced to flee from the country, after being arrested. He is nevertheless in high spirits and determined to carry on. “I believe in what I’m struggling for,” he writes.

A reader in *Uganda* writes that he is constantly harassed by policemen who are looking for him—because of his selling *The African Communist*.

And in *Kenya*, despite an African “cabinet”, the British authorities’ ban on our magazine still persists—we hope not for much longer. Mr. Oginga Odinga, M.L.C., writes “with very best wishes” from Nairobi, that “you will be informed as soon as the prohibition of *The African Communist* is lifted in Kenya”.

A similar position seems to exist in *Nyasaland*, from where a reader writes: “Our government of Central Africa (chiefly White settlers) does not want these books to come to our attention and once they are found they are just being destroyed.”

INSPIRING

But despite all these difficulties *The African Communist* still finds its way into the hands of readers all over the Continent, even in the most dangerous circumstances. It is inspiring to know that here in the heart of Verwoerd’s Fascist Republic, enthusiastic readers are receiving our journal. Here are some of their comments:

“Despite the pressures the government of the Republic exerts and despite the limitations of freedom of speech and thought, we do manage to obtain political pamphlets and papers from all over Africa. Of these *The African Communist* is of the highest calibre and greatest value in education and enlightenment of the people. . . . Mayibuye i’Afrika!—Let Africa Return!” (D.K., a student.)

“I am a great reader of *The African Communist*. I can’t live without it. It is like gold.” (B.G., Cape Province.)

“*The African Communist* is a credit to our Party and our country.” (J.M., Johannesburg.)

We want, once again, to thank all those readers who have taken the trouble to write to us. We cannot print every letter, because we have not enough space, but we can assure you that we treasure every letter like something precious. We do not regard *The African Communist* just as something we have written and produced for you to read. It is a joint effort of readers and writers; of ourselves and yourselves. And we know very well that without you, our readers, our magazine could not have been successful, nor will it be successful in the future. Let us work together, then, to make this an even more powerful weapon for freedom, independence, unity and socialism in Africa.