

ABOUT US AND OUR READERS

The First Three Years

With this issue *The African Communist* enters its fourth year of publication. In our first issue—a small duplicated edition of a few hundred copies, whose circulation was confined almost exclusively to South Africa, we boldly announced our aim: to bring the inspiring truths and outlook of Marxism-Leninism to the people of all Africa, so long maintained as the “dark Continent” by the veil of ignorance and lies deliberately created by colonialism. “Africa,” we said, “needs Marxist ideas as dry and thirsty soil needs rain.” And during the past three years we have adhered steadfastly to our aim, to make this journal a pillar of African solidarity, a forum of Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our great Continent, to explain Communist theory and apply it creatively to the problems and challenges of the African Revolution.

The response from our readers, from African workers and revolutionary intellectuals in every corner of our Continent, has fully proved and justified what we said and believed. In almost every corner of Africa, East, West, North, South and Central, *The African Communist* is read and discussed. Our circulation has grown to nearly thirty times the original figure for the regular edition in English, and with the publication of our special edition of “Le Communiste Africain” in France we began to extend our readership to new areas where English is not spoken or read.

The readers of *The African Communist* do not merely read it and put it away. They pass it on to fellow-workers. They form groups of readers to discuss its contents, to further their studies of Marxism-Leninism, and to apply the lessons they have learnt to the creative solution of the problems of the countries in which they are living. Many such study-groups have been formed in different territories, and as we foresaw at the beginning, these groups are entering whole-heartedly into the struggles of their people against colonialism in all its forms, and forming the basis for great Communist Parties in many countries of Africa, advancing the cause of the African

working class and forming close and friendly alliance with our patriotic movements of national liberation.

A TRIBUTE FROM LESOTHO

A tribute to this pioneering role of the *African Communist* is contained in a message which we deeply treasure and are proud to print from the *Communist Party of Lesotho* (Basutoland). It reads as follows:

We must appreciate the amount of work you are doing for the future of mankind. Your distribution of the "African Communist", produced by the wonderful Marxist-Leninist Party of South Africa, under very difficult conditions in that country, is successfully uniting the liberatory forces in our great continent, Africa.

We are proud to say to other patriotic forces throughout our continent that had it not been for the thorough watering of this mountainous country of ours with such politically clean water as the "African Communist" and other Marxist literature, our formation of the workers' party would have been difficult indeed.

Workers of all lands unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains!

Many readers also send us interesting information about conditions in their own countries.

Also from Lesotho a young man who is hoping to study medicine points out the desperate shortage of medical facilities in his country. With one doctor for each of the nine districts each doctor averages about 95,555 potential patients, and one nurse for about 23,888. There is no research centre and no facilities for medical training. Money for overseas training, raised from taxation, is available for scholarships, but our correspondent, Mr. Latela 'Monahali, alleges that there is favouritism in awarding these; the first chance being given to the royalty, "then relatives of civil servants in that particular department".

THE OTHER AMERICA

Even beyond the borders of Africa, in many parts of the world, *The African Communist* is being read and making known the struggles and aspirations of the African people. In previous issues we have published letters from as far afield as Japan and Iceland, the Soviet Union and China, Britain, France, Italy and Cuba.

Recently, through our London agent, we received a message from a comrade in Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., which we found very moving. She writes:

I have just read, for the first time, the "African Communist" No. 9, and I can hardly express the excitement and enthusiasm I felt at reading this fine Marxist periodical.

Let me first offer my congratulations to the heroic and unswerving comrades of South Africa who, though living in an almost unimaginable state of inhuman treatment, continue to struggle militantly and to put out this valuable political document.

As a progressive young American and a student of Marxism, I feel a friendship and warmth towards the people of Africa in their struggle against imperialism and fight for national independence. Because their victory is a blow against the hateful giant of American imperialism and a benefit to all mankind. We in the United States, as I am sure you are all aware, are faced with the neo-Nazi McCarran Act, which is an affront to all the American people, not the communists alone. We are confident that in our country, just as the people of other countries are doing, the American people will defeat those powers that want to push us backward just as we are on the eve of a great day.

The "African Communist" has helped me to understand more the conditions of the people of Africa in their valiant struggles. Let me just add that the writing is not only correct in its analysis but makes very fine reading. Keep up the good work!

And another American reader, renewing his subscription, adds: *I don't want to miss a single copy of this fine magazine.*

An African student in California writes that our journal is "not only relevant to my field of study, but also extremely illuminating".

The picture which we in Africa have of the United States of America is not a pleasant one. It is an America intervening everywhere in Africa and throughout the world on the side of reaction and war, bribing our national and trade union leaders, spreading poisonous anti-Communist lies and propaganda, intriguing in the murder of Patrice Lumumba, propping up imperialism and colonialism everywhere, talking hypocritically about freedom and democracy while persecuting our brothers and sisters of African descent in the United States itself.

These letters show us that there is *another America* of brave working people who do not fear to speak out against imperialism and war in the citadel of reaction, in spite of the nightmare of fascist laws, spying and intimidation against the Left created by the millionaire rulers of the U.S.A.

SUPPRESSION BY COLONIALISTS

There is another side to the letters which we receive from Africa. A side that shows how the British and other colonialists ceaselessly try to suppress our journal, to victimise its readers, to prevent the people from learning the truth about Communism.

In *Rhodesia*, a socialist group formed to discuss our journal was raided; its leadership forced into exile.

From *Uganda*, a schoolgirl whose cousin was selling the *African Communist* writes that he has not come home: “. . . policemen are looking for him due to the fact that he is interested in communism.”

From *Bloemfontein* (South Africa): “Kindly stop sending the *African Communist* to ————. I understand he has fled. Police worry him.”

From *Grahamstown* (South Africa): “I do not know the whereabouts of ————. He disappeared at the end of April.”

Even in *Kenya*, which, on the verge of independence, has Africans occupying leading positions in Parliament and in the Cabinet (see the article in this issue), British colonial regulations banning the *African Communist* are still in force.

WILL NOT STOP US

However, not all the evil laws, persecutions and censorship of the colonialists and their allies and counterparts, the white supremacists of the Republic and Rhodesia, will stop the *African Communist* from spreading the truth; nor our readers finding ways of receiving, studying and passing on this magazine.

With every issue, new enthusiasts and militants come forward to help in this noble task.

Such a one is Ekpo B. Ekpo, of *Nigeria*. “It pleases me very much,” he writes, “to be one of the readers of this journal, and I promise to join hands with my friends fighting in South Africa, in East, North and West Africa, under the banner of Marxism. . . . We, the youth of Nigeria, still struggle against our common enemy, the imperialist, colonialist, capitalist. This is the final time for imperialism to be finished in Africa and Latin American countries. . . . Today in Nigeria we are half free. Politically there is still a struggle in my country, which is becoming an imperialist stronghold. . . . We shall win in this struggle. . . . There is no force on earth, no bomb, that can deter us from winning this struggle, this fight for freedom.”

The last letter we have space for this time comes from an African student in *France*. It reads (in translation from the French):

I am Cameroonian. Our people live, in actuality, under a regime of fascist dictatorship, under a shameful regime, under a regime of neo-colonialism supported by Ahijdo and others.

Through the medium of one of my compatriots I have read the "African Communist". I was immensely pleased to see Africans, armed with Marxist-Leninist ideology, showing up the falseness and inconsistency of imperialist arguments which are meant to keep Africa apart from the rest of the world. These imperialists and colonialists, fearful of the evolution and the reality of our continent, want to keep our people in slavery. But they are being battered by the wind of history. The fight is on. Our people will come out of it victorious.

OUR PLEDGE FOR THE FUTURE

It is well known that we of the South African Communist Party, who produce this journal, have no easy task. The fascist Verwoerd Government is the sworn enemy of Communism and the Communist Party. In this country our Party is illegal, and anyone found to be a member can be sent to prison for up to five years. Hundreds of Communists have been listed and banned, forbidden to join organisations or attend meetings, confined to particular parts of the country. Vicious new laws introduced this year threaten Communists with house arrest; savage penalties, even including the death sentence, have been laid down for political activities.

Nevertheless we are determined to continue and intensify our work of leading our people in the struggle for freedom and equality, of spreading the light of Marxist-Leninist understanding, because we are confident in the justice of our cause, the truth of what we have to say, and the confidence of ultimate victory.

We are determined, in particular, to build up *The African Communist* as a beacon of victory and a banner of anti-colonialist struggle and unity throughout our great Continent. We are happy with the progress we have made over the past three years, but we are not satisfied, and shall not be satisfied until we have multiplied the circulation of this journal many times, until we have constantly improved its contents and made it a still more effective educator, organiser and weapon of our people's struggle. And we pledge to you, our readers, that we shall spare no efforts, not even life itself, in this great task.

But in order to succeed, you too, our readers, must help us. You can help in many ways. This is what we ask you to do:

When you have finished reading this copy of *The African Communist*, do not throw it away. Pass it on to a friend or fellow-worker. (But if you are in a country where our journal is illegal, you must be careful of informers or police.)

Form groups of readers to discuss the contents of every issue, and other Marxist-Leninist literature. Such study groups can be very important. They should study the conditions in their own country, in the light of Communist theory. They should take part, as loyal members, in the national liberation struggle. They should work for the brotherly unity of *all Communists in each country*, preparing the way for the eventual formation of a *Communist Party* to advance the cause of the workers and help in building a united front of national liberation, comprising all parties and classes, and people of all patriotic views. An important task which can and should be undertaken by an *African Communist* study group is to prepare articles for this journal based upon a study and analysis of conditions *in their own country*, and the solutions proposed for its problems.

Become an agent to sell *The African Communist*, or get your local bookseller to stock it. (Special discounts for agents and sellers are available to cover expenses.)

Send us *donations*—your own and those collected or raised by friends—to help us build up and expand *The African Communist*. For example, we have plans to issue more publications, not only in English, but also in French, Swahili, Zulu and other languages of the African people. But to carry out these plans we need more money. It would help us very much, too, if agents and sellers would all pay promptly for copies they receive!

Although the South African Communist Party is publishing this journal we do not aim or seek to make it the journal of our Party alone. Already we have published articles by Algerian, Sudanese, Guinean, Tunisian, Basotho and Senegalese Communists, as well as contributions from comrades living outside Africa. We want to make it the voice of African Communists and patriots in every part of this continent; the voice of the African Revolution.

We call on you to help us in this tremendous task.