



WHAT OUR READERS WRITE

A MAGNIFICENT PUBLICATION

ONCE AGAIN WE have received a crop of letters from readers in various parts of the world stressing the important role that the African Communist is playing.

A reader in Wales writes:

'May I congratulate you on the publication of a magnificent publication. I can quite honestly state that it is the best Marxist periodical that I have come across in French, English or German. . . . In particular I liked "the Road to South African Freedom" which was superb and it did much to restore my confidence in the South African people after the depression which used to come over me when I read of each new draconic fascist measure and wondered why the devil they didn't emulate their Algerian and Angolan comrades.

'However, I now see that South Africa faces a particularly difficult situation. . . .

'I got a great thrill this summer when I walked into a shop in Paris and noticed, along with much other Marxist literature, a pile of "African Communists". I felt like buying them all but then I realized that by so doing I would be depriving other people of your excellent magazine. When a man came in and bought a copy, I felt like rushing up to him and hugging him. There was an unbelievable sense of comradeship. . . .'

A reader in Ghana writes:

'My respect for the editors and the movement which it (the African Communist) arises from are of the loftiest. . . . It seems to me that, as the struggle sharpens in South Africa, the South African Communists are rising to the occasion and this is reflected in the great dignity and depth of the contents, which each time seem to rise higher than before.'

Some of our readers experience difficulties in receiving the journal. A Mufulira reader encloses with his letter a notice he received from the

Department of Customs and Excise of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland informing him that 12 copies of the African Communist had been seized 'because there are reasonable grounds for believing that they are liable to forfeiture.'

This reader comments on the article written by Joseph W. Musole on 'Class Struggles in Zambia' published in our April-June issue. He says that Musole must first study the labour movement carefully before he writes such articles. In the reader's opinion the late Mr. Katilungu played a very important role in nursing the labour movement from its birth. He disagrees very strongly with the view expressed by Musole that Katilungu was a stooge. The reader also defends Mr. Chisata for not affiliating to the United Trade Union Congress some of whose leaders, he alleges, are using union funds for their personal benefit. Finally the same reader breaks a lance with B. Pela over his article on 'The One Party State in Africa' and says the African National Congress of Northern Rhodesia is by no means tribal but draws its support from all sections of the population, including the European section.

THE GREAT DEBATE

A reader in Cardiff, Wales, writes: 'In view of the alarming deterioration of relations between the two major socialist states in recent months, and of the vital importance of Communist international unity of purpose and action, may I ask you to make a public statement on the position of the South African Communist Party and of the African Communist with regard to such matters? I make this request because of the widespread doubt and confusion caused in national liberation circles by the present schemes in world Communism. Many sincere Marxist-Leninists have profound fraternal feelings and admiration for both their Soviet and Chinese comrades. The apparent need at present to choose sides seems invidious. . . .

'I am sure you will agree that lasting world peace and the ultimate success of world communism both depend upon the unity of the socialist camp. Such unity is therefore the most precious thing we possess. The gain of short-term and doubtfully-motivated agreements with the criminal Western leadership is a poor exchange for the loss of our fraternal solidarity and co-ordination of purpose. May our South African Party help to show a way back to complete understanding.'

In reply we can only say that we appreciate our correspondent's concern about the unhappy divisions in the socialist camp. The views of our journal, which naturally reflect those of the South African Communist Party, were last published in our editorial in Vol. 2 No. 3 (April-June) entitled 'The Things That Bind Us'. It is correct, as our correspondent points out, that the situation has taken a further and

alarming turn for the worse since then and the matter is at present being studied and discussed by our members and our Central Committee. As a democratic organization it would be invidious for our magazine as the voice of our Party to offer any public pronouncement until a conclusion has been reached. If we may appear slow about this it must not be forgotten that such discussion in the fascist conditions of terror now prevailing at home is a matter of great difficulty and danger. But we hope it will not take much longer.

Another Mufulira reader writes: 'I was recently handed a copy by a friend of your magazine the *African Communist*. After reading it, I found it very educative and of great value to people who are interested in African freedom'.

A Nigerian reader writes that he is ready and willing to co-operate with us 'so that we can direct communism and socialism in our new nation and throughout Africa'. Unfortunately, he is also having trouble with his mail because, as he says, 'our government is against my policy'. Even in so-called free Africa the imperialist philosophy of anti-Communism continues to flourish!

Letters of support and encouragement have also been received from a trade unionist in Australia and from an anti-colonialist study group in France.

WORKING CLASS PARTY

Finally a London reader questions the accuracy of the statement of the Central Committee published on page 14 of our April-June issue that 'the Communist Party is basically an organization of urban workers'. He feels that behind this estimation 'lies not only a certain under-estimation of the degree of class-consciousness that can exist throughout the world amongst agricultural, as well as amongst urban workers, but that it is likely to be particularly unfortunate, taking into account that it comes from almost the largest C.P. in the whole of Africa, where in spite of the existence of many towns there is a predominance of agricultural workers or semi-peasant—almost equally exploited—peoples'. This reader feels that the Communist Party in South Africa will find its staunchest recruits from amongst the millions of agricultural workers and that 'particularly in the rural areas these recruits will and must be the leaders of every protest and upheaval that are now piling up against unendurable oppression'. He feels that our under-estimation of the role of the peasantry can militate 'against the development of our only Party capable of leading all African exploited peoples to their full freedom'.

In reply we can only say that whether or not we have wrongly estimated the role of the peasantry, it is a fact that our party is basically an

organization of urban workers. It is perfectly true that the peoples living in the rural areas and in the reserves can play a revolutionary role in South Africa, and that no movement that does not take this into account can hope to mobilize the masses of the South African people for decisive political action. But this cannot alter the fact that our party has grown up mainly in the urban areas of South Africa, and that the majority of its members are urban workers. It is on the shoulders of the urban working class, therefore, that the burden of leadership rests.

MOSCOW READERS' PRAISE

A group of South African students in the Soviet Union write:

'Marx once wrote, "the communists have no interests different from those of the proletariat." We dare declare that the South African Communist Party has upheld that principle down to the letter. Indeed, the South African Communist Party has no interests different from those of the oppressed masses of South Africa. This has been abundantly demonstrated by the *African Communist*. Our friends from all over the world have called this journal "a brilliant periodical", "a fine publication", "a spearhead in Africa's fight for communism" and so on and so on. To us, the "African Communist" is a reference book. It fosters in our minds a scientific revolutionary way of thinking and indicates to us the best and effective way to creating a new and happy South Africa. To us it is a textbook on the importance of unity of the liberatory forces particularly at this critical moment in the history of South Africa. To us it is a textbook on the special type of colonialism which obtains in our country and the best way in which we can combat and liquidate it conclusively.

'We were particularly impressed by the programme of the South African Communist Party and we even wished we were at home to help distribute it in every nook and niche of South Africa.

'To other South African students abroad and at home, communists and non-communists alike, we say, make this journal your friend. You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have South Africa to gain.'