

The poetry chosen for this anthology is of a very high standard and it would appear that it is to Africa that we must look for the most creative writing in this field at present. Inspired perhaps by liberation, exile, captivity or self-assertion the poets represented here and other African poets lead the way in content and lyricism.

But the question of an essential African literary tradition remains unanswered by this book, for the influence on these writers of the events of the past twenty years has created a great diversity of style, interest and expression. The fact that all the poetry and prose is written in a European language obviously detracts from the purity of the subject and we will have to wait some time before the modern equivalent of the basic African literary tradition presents itself.

R.M.



## Some suggestions—and a reply

I FREQUENTLY READ your excellent publication, and always with interest. May I suggest a few improvements and make a few criticisms of a recent issue, in the hope that they will be received in the same constructive way as they are intended?

Although the journal is intended as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought, it lacks the debate in its pages which is so necessary if the forum is not simply to be a place of one-way transactions. History

shows that correct theoretical assessment is vitally necessary at each stage of the struggle if the correct tactics and strategy are to be found. Where is the fierce polemic and the subtle disputation of the South African movement? Much of it, of course, must take place behind closed doors. But surely there are areas where the editors can and should encourage the exchange of different views?

Perhaps the A.C. is trying to do too much. In providing an invaluable commentary on events on the rest of Africa, with an authoritative and informed perspective, it devotes too little of its attention to the domestic scene. Either the journal must grow larger, or it must split in two, one quarterly dealing with Africa and another, possible more frequent and less lengthy publication, dealing exclusively with South or Southern Africa. . . . Aside from the editorial notes and incidental matter in the book reviews, the balance of the material in recent issues seems to have allowed room for only one major article per issue on South Africa. Given the paucity of left-wing writing on the Republic, is this enough?

A.R., Capetown.

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We do not think it is correct that in a journal setting out to deal with all-African problems we devote too little space to our own country. We think an analysis of articles published over the past six years, and especially over the last two years, will show that both the editorial notes and special articles deal far more with Southern Africa than any other area. Indeed we regret that thus far we have been unable to deal adequately with a number of African countries on which, at present, our information is lacking. *The African Communist* has, from the start, endeavoured to be a journal about, and for, Africa, not just the South.

You suggest that what is really needed is not to change the character of the A.C. but to publish another journal of a different character (more frequent, less lengthy) in addition. We don't disagree with the suggestion (except that it isn't really a matter of 'splitting our journal into two', but of starting another one). But we do feel that this isn't a matter for our editorial board, which does the job it has been appointed to do, but for the political leadership as a whole.

Now, about the alleged lack of 'fierce polemic and subtle disputation of the South African movement'. We do not think that our movement is characterised by such sharp differences as would be reflected in the sort of debate you are asking for. Rather, as a result of many years of collective work and discussion, and also of the very acute stage our struggle has entered which has destroyed

many false conceptions and illusions, has our movement attained a great measure of unity. This is reflected in an absence of fundamental criticism of the programme and policy of the Party and its journal—at any rate in communications reaching our journal. We are fully prepared to publish points of difference. We are not at all minded to reject critical contributions, provided these raise in serious manner points of view differing from our own. We are not prepared to encourage polemics for the sake of polemics.

EDITOR.

## **From Kiev**

ALL SOUTH AFRICAN students in the Soviet Union receive your journal. For the first time here in Kiev we saw the last two copies of the journal being sold in street book shops. I learn Moscow and Leningrad long had the journal for sale. The journal is selling like hot cakes, not only among African students but also amongst Soviet citizens here.

The wish with all of us, I think, was to write articles. The obstacle is fear-complex. The standard of analysis in the journal scared us away from even trying. Since you are encouraging us to comment or contribute we shall do so.

Young South Africans this end send you all very warm comradely greetings.

*Mayibuyel, Kiev.*

## **The Cairo Seminar**

PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED my cheque for another year and a small financial contribution. Like many others for whom Africa is more than a place for exotic holidays, I particularly appreciated your report on the Cairo Seminar.

G.A.M., Birmingham.