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We Fight Ideas with Ideas

Our Heritage: The Legacy of Livingstone (Livie) Mqotsi

The oppressed must learn that their heritage, their political heroes are not only those that are *fèted* and lionised by the liberal media or the TV stations but also in the many undocumented shared histories of our communities.

On these days of Heritage Month, we are annually subjected to huge numbers of African National Congress (ANC) cadres whose virtues are extolled to conceal the inadequacies in the government's poor service delivery and failed policies.

Mqotsi was born on 18 April 1921. He was the son of a (CATA) and soon became an executive member.

peasant farmer in the district of Rabula, close to Keiskammahoek in the Eastern Cape. Mqotsi attended Paterson High School and was with Dennis Brutus in the same class from Gr. 8 (Std. 6) to Gr. 12 (Std 10). Both then went to Fort Hare where they obtained a B.A. and B.A. (Hons.) in 1947 and 1948.

After qualifying as a teacher, Mqotsi taught at Newell High School, Port Elizabeth until 1950, after which he lectured at Healdtown Training College. At university, Mqotsi met members of the All African Convention (AAC) and after completing his teacher's diploma, joined the Cape African Teachers' Association



Cde Mqotsi addressing the 1993 Mthatha Conference with the NUM president RO Dudley in the background

Mqotsi was at the forefront of the opposition by CATA to the Bantu Education Act that was enacted in 1953. Protests erupted countrywide to this Act. The nightmare persecution then began for Mqotsi. The state responded by dismissing more than 200 CATA members from teaching including the executive members, Cdes RS Canca, J Mkentane, LL Sihlali, T Honono, Mcitheka, Bransby Vusani and Livingstone Mqotsi.

By 1958, Mqotsi had obtained an M.A. Degree from the University of the Witwatersrand in Cultural Anthropology that included Psychology. After his dismissal from teaching, he

was offered a job at Fort Hare University. The job entailed that he conducts research at schools. The Native Education

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Department objected and he was dismissed as Research Fellow. He was then offered a job at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). His employment there lasted until the police sent a report to the head of the CSIR, and he was given a month's notice of dismissal. Rhodes University then offered him a job as Senior Research Officer. Once again, the officials of the Native Affairs Department objected to his appointment. He could thus not take the job. He was later employed by the Chamber of Mines but was dismissed when he suggested an improved system of labour relations.

Dr Verwoerd who had been in charge of Bantu Education had declared, "When I have control of Native Education, I will reform it so that Natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them." With Mqotsi's political beliefs, it thus became impossible to find a teaching job.

At the time, the Unity Movement started a newspaper in

East London. Mgotsi became editor of the monthly, *Ikwezi* Lomso (The Morning Star). Later Mootsi started a weekly newspaper as well, Indaba (East ZaseMonti London News), an isiXhosa/English publication. These two newspapers had a wide circulation and were very popular as Mgotsi lashed out against injustices against oppressed. Kaizer Matanzima came in for special attention, as did the other collaborators of the state. Several court cases were lodged against

Mqotsi by the agents of the state – all failed.

Eventually, Mqotsi was detained under the State of Emergency regulation that was promulgated in 1960 after the Sharpeville massacre. The Rule of Law was suspended and detentions without trial took place countrywide. Whilst Mqotsi was in detention, agents of the state undermined the work being done at the newspaper offices. After his release, he found that the printing press had been sold to offset costs

for housing the machines.

Louis Mtshizana, an attorney and a member of the Unity Movement, intervened and offered Mqotsi a job as an article clerk at his law firm. After completion of the articles, Mqotsi and Mtshizana built up the practice throughout SA and appeared in political trials all over the country.

Mqotsi and Mtshizana were later placed under five-year banning orders under the Suppression of Communism Act. During this period, they had to obtain permission from a magistrate to consult with each other. Mqotsi was later imprisoned for a period without trial and after his release, the Unity Movement advised him to leave the country.

Whilst Mqotsi was in exile in Zambia, the ANC entrusted him with the young Chris Hani who stayed with him for five years. The two were very close and as a mark of affection and respect, Hani gave Mqotsi the boots he had worn in the ill-fated Wankie Campaign and a volume of revolutionary poems. The boots and the volume of poems

are lodged at the Fort Hare Archives.

After his stint in Africa, he settled in the UK where he engaged in his first love, teaching. He at first taught at West Greenwich **Boys** High School (1970 – 1977) later became and headmaster at Catford Boys High School until his retirement in 1986



R.O. Dudley - the NUM president, Livie Mqotsi and June Udemans at RO's home

He officially joined

the New Unity Movement (NUM) as a member soon after its establishment in 1985. After 1994, he made regular visits to SA and attended several NUM Conferences.

During his time in exile, he continued to be a prolific writer. He contributed to numerous magazines, journals and newspapers. Some of his works include,

• being co-editor of the Unity Newsletter (1966 -

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1969) – a publication of the Unity Movement in exile;

- publishing articles in an East African publication,
 Frontline Worker;
- authoring numerous papers on the South African liberation struggle and writing numerous letters to the press and comrades in struggle;
- reworking a play in the late 1950s into a novel, *The House of Bondage* that was published in 1989;
- the sequel to his first novel, The Mind in Chains published in 2008
- an account of the liberation movements engaged in the struggle in SA, South African Liberation at the Crossroads.
- He published a third book, A Study of Ukuthwasa in 2008. This was reworked from his MA thesis.

Cde Livie Mqotsi next to the NUM president Basil Brown front left at the launch of the Border Branch. Mrs Iris Mqotsi in the middle of photo

The titles of the books give an insight into the content. Whilst novels (factions), the titles alone provide food for thought. The 'House of Bondage' as though we may be politically free but the vast majority of South Africans is in economic bondage. The 'Mind in Chains' evokes a common Unity Movement theme as the oppressed we are encouraged to free our minds from mental slavery. Probably the worst form of slavery where the oppressed policed themselves

Mqotsi was a fierce critic of the negotiated settlement at the World Trade Centre – CODESA 1 & 2, entered into between the ANC and its Alliance partners and the Apartheid regime as can be seen from some of his writings:

- ⇒ ANC's Constitutional Guidelines: Recipe for Betrayal. Frontline Worker August 1989, No.1
- ⇒ Non-Collaboration NOT Negotiations. Apdusa

Views, August 1990, Issue No. 34

- \Rightarrow A United Front of Struggle 1991
- ⇒ CODESA A Witch's Cauldron 1992
- He was equally critical of the democratic dispensation ushered in by 1994. He expressed his total abhorrence at the outcome in articles he wrote, namely

Tribalism: An Archaism and Divisive Myth -

Apdusa Views May 2004, No

• NEPAD "A Blueprint for Total Surrender. Apdusa Views September 2004, No 75

Livie Mqotsi has throughout his socially conscious and adult life been at the forefront of the struggle. At various times, he was secretary of the All African Convention (AAC); he became the Joint Secretary of the Unity Movement (NEUM) and the Gen-

eral Secretary of the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA).

After his return from exile in 2001, he was instrumental in the establishment of the New Unity Movement Branch in East London where he served the branch and the communities. He died at the age of 88 in full harness of war on 25 September 2009.

HERITAGE DAY - A DISTRACTION FOR THE RAINBOW NATION.

Heritage Day, in the words of Wikipedia, is a day when "South Africans are encouraged to celebrate their culture and the diversity of their beliefs and traditions, in the wider context of a nation that belongs to all its people." Laudable as this might sound, it is not without its ironies.

In the first place, "a nation that belongs to all its people" is a highly contestable notion. When more than 70 percent of private farmland belongs to 9 percent of the population, and 80 percent of total wealth is owned by 10 percent of the population, then who is trying to fool whom by asserting that the nation belongs to all of us?

Sceondly, while the ruling ANC government is keen to promote the idea of a "rainbow nation," it does not address in any meaningful way the fact that we – the working people of the country – are more united by our immiseration under the capitalist system which the ANC government so avidly champions, than we are divided by the separate identities which apartheid imposed on us, and which now the ANC continues to uphold and reinforce.

But these twin evils – capitalism and race – are two sides of the same coin. The history of South Africa is the history of racial capital, in terms of which ownership in the means of production was centralized in the hands of a European elite, underwritten by an indigenous class of enforcers armed with a battery of segregationist and apartheid laws.

1994 did not undo the disparities in wealth distribution caused by decades of segregation and apartheid. If anything, the post-1994 era worsened these disparities. Today, almost thirty years into the post-apartheid South Africa, as a nation, our socioeconomic stats make dreadful reading. Consider the following:

- The country's unemployment rate stands at 34.4 percent (44.4 percent if one considers the expanded definition). Almost half our adult population lives in poverty. According to the Department of Statistics, 49.2 percent of the population over the age of 18 falls below the upper-bound poverty line, which stands at an income level of R1183 per month.
- According to an article in Daily Maverick (21 June), informal settlements have grown from an estimated 300 in 1994 to 2,700 in 2020. "This is compounded," says the article, "by dramatic growth in backyarding and private rentals."
- According to Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga there are close to 4 000 pit latrines in public schools. HOW CAN WE SLEEP AT NIGHT KNOWING THIS???? In addition, there are 3 500 schools with water supply challenges.
- Virtually every sector where the state is responsible for catering to the needs of the public is in crisis healthcare, education, transport, crime-prevention.

Many underlying causes have been identified to explain the wave of unrest and looting in KZN and Gauteng during July this year: there can be no doubt that sheer poverty and deprivation would be a leading factor.

When one considers the role of capitalism in the creation and

reproduction of poverty among the masses of people whose role in the system is to produce the wealth expropriated by the owners of the means of production, one is inclined to focus mainly (if not exclusively) on the class of parasitic capitalists, both local and global. However, there is a considerable subspecies of beneficiary: and that is the non-producing layer of the political elite and their hangers-on in the state bureaucracy. The true total amount which has been siphoned off into the pockets of this class of criminal will probably never be known, but a recent study claimed that

"It is broadly estimated that there was a whopping R1.5 trillion lost to our country between just 2014 and 2019. This is not to mention that some of our elected leaders continue to steal from the poor, hungry, sick and dying," said University of the Free State chancellor and one of the Unite 4 Mzansi advocates, Bonang Mohale.

(Unite 4 Mzansi is an initiative led by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (Saica) and business leaders – commissioned by the Stellenbosch University's Centre for Complex Systems in Transition to analyse in much more depth how deep corruption runs in the country.)

These elected leaders and their cronies will be hoping that their terms in office will be rubber-stamped in the November municipal elections.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The left-wing opposition is seriously hamstrung by the current Covid-19-related regime forced upon us. But even without this, there remains the enormous unfinished task of bringing about the wide-scale unity of the oppressed. This is of paramount importance if we are to make any meaningful inroads into the state of oppression which engulfs us. We need to heed Trotsky's words – written more than 80 years ago, but a powerful guideline for our times:

The strategic task of the next period – a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization – consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, (italics in the original) stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.

A LUTA CONTINUA

THE JULY UNREST - WHAT IMPLICATIONS?

There continues to be speculation, analysis and debate around the possible causes of the upsurge in mass action in KZN and Gauteng in July. What accounts for the frenzied popular spree which involved many thousands of people over a period of just under two weeks, and which resulted in the loss of over 300 lives and in damage amounting to billions of rand?

How do we characterize this "mass action?" Was it pure anarchy? Rioting? Looting? An (attempted) insurrection? All of the above?

Who was involved – the working class? Sections of the (lower) middle class? Lumpen elements? All of the above?

Commentators on the centreright dismiss the incident as "mass criminality," and wag their fingers at the state for its perceived inability to prevent



Rioters being stopped by SAPS

and/or to suppress the "lawlessness" of it all. They also warn of the dire consequences this whole episode would have on our image as an investment destination. They cry crocodile tears at the loss of jobs and the dislocation in the lives of so many of the poorest people — including of those directly implicated in the "looting and burning."

A number of commentators regard it as no coincidence that the unrest occurred at the very time that Jacob Zuma was facing a spell behind bars. There appears to be ample proof of JZsympathisers using social media to applaud and stoke/provoke the unrest. A more sinister view is that there are elements cohering around an anti-Ramaphosa agenda, and that the unrest is indeed an attempt on their part to stoke either an all-out insurrection or at least to harm the president's image. This view locates the source of the problem within the ANC, averring that it is the ongoing factionalism within the party made manifest. In simple terms, there are seen to be two factions within the party - one committed to social democracy (the "Ramaphosa faction") and the other to Radical Economic Transformation (RET) (the "Zuma faction"). Critical conclusions which emerge from this view, are that the RET elements represent a revolt of the petitbourgeoisie, since neo-liberalism has not brought them the benefits which they consider their due, and secondly, the unrest must be seen as part of a broader process that started with the truckburning crisis which preceded it - in other words, it was not something isolated and spontaneous. If so, then we should expect further incidents of this kind. A warning issued by this analysis is that fascism is on the rise in South Africa, that the RET "forces" are a reactionary tendency which will play on the grievances of the working class in order to exploit those grievances: at the end of the day, the workers will do the work, and the petitbourgeois fomenters will walk off with the benefits.

Then there is the view (or perhaps more accurately, the perspective) that – without necessarily denying any of the dominant interpretations of the unrest – seeks to explore the implications for working class advancement or regression within the neoliberal

capitalist reality.

"Food riots" are definitely nothing new as an expression of revolt on the part of the poor, as history amply attests. So, the fact of pure and simple desperation should not be discounted. This is supported by the dismal stats around poverty, unemployment, homelessness, poor service delivery, et cetera which have dogged the lives of the masses for decades. So, if there are multiple causes which explain the unrest, then this would be a key one.

For the Left, key questions emerge.

Firstly, it would never be our strategy to "use" the workers as cannon fodder, to encourage them to hurl themselves into a raging fire with no prospect of advancing their cause or improving their plight within the system. In 1961, in his capacity as secretary of APDUSA, Livie Mqotsi issued a sober warning against precipitate mobilisation of the masses:

If this is not done, {i.e. a strategy, tactics to be implemented under the supervision of a unified command} anarchy will reign, with frustration, disillusionment and wastage of human life following in its trail. The population has indeed paid too dearly for the stunts and escapades so light-mindedly undertaken by individuals, where youngsters call out masses of unorganised people, only to lead them into a bloodbath. The attitude that the problem of liberation is simple is a most dangerous one. It is a simpleton, a half-wit, who oversimplifies the complex problem of liberation. They are the political gamblers who have not taken the trouble to work out the consequences of their costly actions. And it is the people who have to pay the price.

Do these "food riots" indicate that a "pre-revolutionary situation" has arisen? If seen as part of a pattern of resistance/insurrection going back across the years since 1994, then there would certainly be ample support for such a theory. Not only in South Africa, but across the world, the coronavirus pandemic has worsened an already-critical situation in the living standards of the oppressed majorities; the imperialist powers remain on a warfooting: their exit from Afghanistan merely signals the probability that they will open up new arenas of conflict; and the prognoses on global warming all point in one bleak direction.

According to Trotsky, a "pre-revolutionary situation" is one in which the objective situation is ripe for overthrow, but in which the masses and their leadership are not ready. It is a situation requiring "agitation, propaganda, and organisation."

Are we up for the task?



ON THE PASSING AWAY OF A COMRADE



1943 - 2021

At this time, when one hears of the loss of so many lives, it is truly heartsore to learn of the passing away of our comrade, Michael de Leeuw. Our sincere condolences go out to Libby, Tanya, Karen and Michelle and the grandchildren.

As an educator, Comrade Mike was first and foremost a Teachers' League of South Africa and a Unity Movement teacher. He believed

that his presence in the classroom was not to just slavishly dish up to his students what was written in the prescribed textbooks. When he started out as a teacher, it was at a time in the history of this country when the fascist jackboot of the state ensured that, at all costs, their ideology of a compartmentalised society based on so-called race, found expression in every aspect, nook and cranny of humanity. They saw education as part of a sick society which sought directly to poison the minds of the youth. Comrade Mike, in turn, was committed to the removal of all racism and ethnicism, as much from education as from society as a whole.

As a young teacher, Comrade Mike was absolutely opposed to the chains and shackles the education authorities forced teachers to place on the minds and spirit of pupils and students. He knew that the twin scourges of innumeracy and illiteracy provided the ruling class with the acquiescent minds required to carry out their schemes of segregation, oppression and exploitation. He thus endeavoured, always to remove barriers to educating our children, especially the obstacle of tuition fees which prevented so many from receiving a decent education.

Upon retirement, Comrade Mike left behind an education

system in crisis. Despite promises of "...the doors of education shall be open to all....", the current system is beset with overcrowded classrooms, mud schools, pit latrines and school fees that do not allow for equal access to quality education.

Comrade Mike de Leeuw was a member of the Northern Suburbs Branch of the New Unity Movement, where he sought to bring to fruition his belief in a non-racial, non-sexist and non-exploitative society. He joined us on many occasions in bringing our message to the oppressed via pamphleteering and organising mass meetings and protest actions. As a member of the Unity Movement's Publications Committee, he participated in the writing of articles for our regular publications, *The Worker* and *The Bulletin*.

Comrade Mike served the New Unity Movement in the position of national secretary. Fastidious in his approach, his diligence ensured that the Movement's records were up to date and its literature was in safe storage at his home. He unselfishly opened his home to the members of the organisation for meetings, conferences and functions where, also, his excellent catering skills were offered at no cost. The Unity Movement will always be thankful to Comrade Mike for his and his family's generous spirit.

We wish to thank the de Leeuw family for their support of Comrade Mike in his activities as a member of the organisation that he believed executed the struggle for emancipation from oppression and exploitation. We will remember him for his efforts in building our organisation and, above all, as a devoted husband, father and grandfather.

Sincere greetings

Mickey Titus

Secretary



NOT TO VOTE

IS A VOTE AGAINST
THE SYSTEM!

DO NOT VOTE

WHY WE BELIEVE THAT YOU SHOULD NOT REGISTER OR VOTE IN THE NOVEMBER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

The New Unity Movement calls on people to exercise their democratic right by NOT registering or voting in the municipal elections in November. As long as a government is dictated to by local capitalism and international imperialism, no change can be brought about by elections that will make life easier for the majority of people of South Africa.

This government may be in office but it is certainly not in power, as the real bosses are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WF) and capitalists countries. These powerful agencies and countries dictate how South Africa must be managed so that the capitalists can benefit. It is they that are responsible for the condition that we find ourselves in. The lack of jobs, housing, poor health services and education can be laid at their doorsteps, as much needed money that could be used on social services leave the country in the form of debt repayment and profits.

We are asking all citizens who love South Africa not to vote. This is not the South Africa we struggled for – colonialism, racism, oppression and exploitation are still alive.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION TODAY?

Crime!

- South Africa has become the crime capital of the world.
 Serious crime such as murder and rape goes unpunished by an impotent and corrupt police system.
- Every 32 seconds, a woman is raped in South Africa.
- South Africa has become the paradise for International syndicates blatantly in cahoots with the authorities.
- Vicious spiralling of crime and violence is threatening the very fibre of South African society.
- Daily life has become more unsafe for the most South Africans.

Standard of Living!

- People who suffer the most are the poor those who have a small income or no income at all, and for them there is no light at the end of the tunnel.
- Rapid rise in the prices of essential items has resulted in the poor not able to afford the basics.
- For a number of years, the difference between the rich and poor in South Africa is the highest in the world.

Unemployment!

- The official unemployment figure in South Africa is 34.4% (~8 million people), probably much higher in reality.
- Data gathered from 200 countries puts South Africa at the top for the highest number of unemployed youth. 74.5% of youth between 15 and 24 are unemployed.
- Workers are being sacked daily in the State and private sector.
- COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown continue to devastate the economy, entrenching extraordinarily high unemployment and poverty.
- Retrenchment is the greatest fear of workers today.
- Millions of people lose their jobs from one election to the next. Among them are teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants and workers who do not form part of the profit making schemes of the local and international masters.
- The loss of jobs, housing and inferior education and low wages are the main cause of crime, which has become uncontrollable. By-and-large, the millions who were economically "disadvantaged" in the apartheid days remain downtrodden in the 'new' South Africa.

Welfare!

Welfare grants are not in line with increased cost of living, continuing the increase in poverty levels of the majority of people.

13 Million South Africans have not bothered to register to vote. That is more than one in three persons eligible to VOTE

Education!

- ♦ Education has become a privilege real education can only be afforded by the rich.
- Overburdened citizens must subsidize our children's education when education is supposed to be free.
- The government is robbing the majority of our children of proper education and in the process destroying the country's economic and social future.
- Recent statistics show that more than 80 000 classrooms and 24 000 teachers are needed to normalise a shortage of educational facilities and staff.
- ♦ The Government has repeatedly failed from one election to the next to provide proper educational needs for the majority of our children.

Corruption and Nepotism!

- ◆ Corruption and nepotism in South Africa in government Departments, both at national and local levels, are rampant.
- Even now, corruption continues unabated. COVID-19-related procurement corruption worth R3 billion involves many national and provincial departments. Yet many implicated officials are not charged for any crime
- ♦ In many instances, this corruption is viewed to be justified by those believing that ex-liberation fighters are entitled to benefits.
- ♦ This is affecting directly on the poor especially where funds are misappropriated meant for the wellbeing of the people of the country.
- ♦ As with education, proper health care is only available to those who can afford it.
- The country has two "Systems of Health Care": One that caters for the rich and is administered by private Medical Aid schemes for those who can afford it.

A Public Health System, run by the State that does not even provide sufficient primary health care – hospitals are overcrowded, understaffed and under resourced.

Patients are dying at public hospitals while waiting to receive medical treatment.

Housing!

- Millions of people in South Africa live in shacks and are deprived of decent affordable housing.
- Pathetic dwellings are built that are also of an extremely poor and unhealthy standard.
- A minority of people live is leafy suburbs while the majority of oppressed people live in overcrowded, unhygienic, crime-ridden areas.

It is clear from the above that the government at all levels lacks both the will and intension to deliver on promises made during every election campaign. The bosses along with government are only interested in enriching themselves by grabbing the major share of the wealth produced by the workers. That is why there is not enough to meet the basic needs of all South Africans.

It does not matter which party stands for elections, it will **NEVER** be able to deliver on its promises of providing housing, jobs, healthcare, education and fighting crime. It will never achieve this as long as the money that should be spent on improving the lives of the people is controlled by, and going to the pockets of the minority. The minority is the very wealthy foreign and local bosses.

To vote for any party is therefore not the answer because none of them provides an alternative for a better South Africa. Our so-called democracy is a hoax. The New Unity Movement calls on all to reject and boycott the upcoming municipal elections in November and in so doing expose the fraud. We must continue with the struggle for a true democracy and true liberation by building the organisations of the people and building the unity of the nation. We must fight the system of exploitation and continued oppression

1. The New Unity Movement urges that

- * We must build a single, undivided, independent, non-racial and democratic SA free from foreign domination
- * The interest of the workers and the rural poor shall be paramount.
- * The land and its wealth belong to the people.
- * We must bring about a new society in which we will all be truly free.

"REAL VOTING IS ONLY POSSIBLE IN A NORMAL SOCIETY"

The Worker was produced by the Publications Collective of the New Unity Movement.

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