

SUPPORT FOR AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE THIRD WORLD

On the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic (G.D.R.) AFRICASIA is publishing a series of articles explaining that nation's policies, including its cooperative endeavours with the Third World countries. Founded on October 7, 1949, the G.D.R. is an industrialized, socialist state with a highly developed agriculture. Having a population of 16.7 million, it ranks among the ten most industrialized nations of the world. In accordance with its socialist system, industrial enterprises, banks, insurance companies, transport and other sectors of the economy are nationally owned. Farmers' cooperatives predominate in agriculture, which produces more than 90 percent of the country's food consumption. In domestic trade and service enterprises there are state, cooperative and private forms of ownership. Having emerged from the ruins of World War II, the G.D.R. places special emphasis on working to preserve world peace. In particular, it has taken a prominent position in support of the developing countries, expressing its solidarity with Third World peoples struggling for their national liberation, for their political, economic and cultural independence. The G.D.R. has given concrete proof of this commitment by its aid programmes in many developing countries.



By Erich Honecker

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In thirty-five years—indeed a short period in a people's history—the German Democratic Republic has become a thriving socialist country with a record of political stability, economic dynamism and world-wide recognition. Liberated from Nazism and rising from the ruins of World War II, its people seized the historic opportunity and began to build a state committed to peace and friendship among nations and to democracy and social progress.

We in the G.D.R. have definitely broken with a fateful past and opted for a new course, pursuing the progressive and revolutionary

traditions of the German people. For the first time on German soil there is a state which the people can rightly claim to be their own. Human well-being and the interests of the working people are its concern, and it gives full scope to all creative forces. With its highly developed economy, its modern education system and its rich national culture the German Democratic Republic holds a respected place in the world community.

The diligence and imagination of its people have produced economic and social gains which are certainly something to be proud

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Erich Honecker with leaders from Asia, Latin America and Africa (the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, President Daniel Ortega and President Mengistu Haile Mariam).

of. Never before in German history have living conditions improved so radically in the course of a few generations.

From the first day of its existence the German Democratic Republic has worked to fulfil the self-chosen mandate of its constitution: to pursue a policy of peace as state policy. It has played its part to ensure that no war will ever again start from German soil. Its consistent efforts have been aimed at disarmament, détente and peaceful coexistence, and against war and nuclear genocide. In this policy it has received support and solidarity from progressive and peace-loving forces throughout the world.

The people and the government of the G.D.R. share the conviction that the preservation of peace must be the overriding goal of all efforts so that the present and future generations will be assured of a happy future. In the current tense situation the G.D.R. is therefore working for developments to be redirected to a smooth track, and for a return to the détente which had a beneficial effect on the European climate in the 1970s.

As there is an inseparable connection between peace, disarmament and social progress, this policy coincides with the interests of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples which have won national independence and are aspiring to complete political, economic and cultural independence. They may always be sure of the German Democratic Republic's support and solidarity. Our state conducts its relations with the developing countries in keeping with the principles of full equality, respect for sovereignty, non-discrimination, mutual benefit, and non-interference in internal affairs.

We strongly endorse their demands for the eradication of all forms of colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and apartheid and of the abuse of economic relations for political pressure.

In the thirty-fifth year of the German Democratic Republic I am really pleased at this opportunity to extend my greetings and good wishes for a happy future to the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, assuring that we will at all times be a dependable ally in the common struggle for the preservation of peace and the defeat of all schemes against national freedom and independence.



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