

Inkani Books and the African Union Left Publishers. The Second Pan-Africa Newsletter (2023)



Ronnie Karsils speaking at the book launch of our *Ruth First: Selected Writings*, 4 May 2023. Credit: The Commune.

Dear friends,

Greetings from the desk of **Tricontinental Pan-Africa**.

Starting a publisher is like wrestling an octopus. There are so many aspects to consider: branding, distribution, printing, authors, marketing, rights, pricing, amongst others. We started **Inkani Books** in 2021 with a vision of texts that could intervene in discussions around the contemporary dilemmas of humanity, that engaged deeply with pan-African themes, Marxism, and struggles in the Global South. We wanted to make books people could gather around and learn from together. Spirited texts to inspire activists and movements

to mobilise in innovative ways. Literature that resurrected forgotten or maligned histories of contestations past that might arm peoples' organisations with creative ideas that enable us to better intervene in the present.

People are drawn to books not just as design objects or repositories for ideas but as generators of shared experiences. Done well, they have the power to energise community life and accelerate social change.



This month, Inkani Books released three books – *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983–1987*, *Will the Flower Slip Through the Asphalt: Writers Respond to Capitalist Climate Change*, and *Our Own Path to Socialism* by Hugo Chávez. We hope you will read and enjoy them. The latter two titles come to us courtesy of our publishing partners **Leftword Books** in India and **1804 Books** in New York.

Instead of a traditional business model of viewing all other publishers as competitors, we conceived of them differently, as allies, working with those who share common goals. We founded the African Union of Left Publishers, the regional iteration of the **International Union of Left Publishers**, an initiative to recover their radical histories, educate their members, and resource movements to produce their own literature to further their political aims.

Earlier in July, we met with some of our movement organisers to plan our initiatives for the rest of the year. We have a collaborative book coming out with **Socialist Movement of Ghana** called *The Revolutionary Thoughts of Kwame Nkrumah*, which collects some of the great Ghanaian statesman's best writing on neocolonialism, African unity, and economic development – texts that try to confront complexities with which African people continue to grapple.

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Are you a left social movement on the African continent who would like to strategise about how to innovate accessible low-cost political publishing? Or are you a publisher who wants to join the African Union of Left Publishers and work on books jointly alongside a community of passionate small publishers? Then drop me a line at efemia@thetricontinental.org.

Warmly,

Efemia



Efemia Chela

Efemia Chela is an editor and communications officer at Tricontinental Pan-Africa. Her research focuses on feminisms and LGBTQ+ activism in Africa. She manages publishing at Inkani Books.