

# AFRICA IN STRUGGLE

october 1975 no.1 30p



**smash the  
neo-colonial  
state!**

revolutionary  
marxist journal  
- black africa

*Martin C. Cook*

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# AFRICA IN STRUGGLE

## editorial

At the beginning of the sixties, imperialism managed to maintain its domination over Africa by stabilising neocolonial regimes. The formal political independence did not in any way challenge the capitalist structures of these regimes.

Today a new period has opened up as a result of successful liberation struggles throughout the Third World. The success of the Vietnamese revolution proves again that the forces of colonialism and imperialism are not invincible. The Vietnamese workers and peasants defeated first the French and then the American imperialists in the face of the most formidable weapons of destruction at the disposal of their enemies. They achieved their victory after thirty years of tenacious and bloody struggle.

The successful liberation struggles in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau dealt the first blow to imperialist strategy in Africa. The southern region of the continent remains the zone where decisive battles are taking place. The fall of Portuguese colonialism in this area and the unfolding of the socialist revolution in Angola poses new problems for the whole imperialist world. In Rhodesia Smith is fighting his last battle to preserve white supremacy; in South Africa black workers and students continue their struggle; Zambia, Ethiopia, Nigeria and many other African countries are also facing intense political and economic crises. Vorster's 'detente' is nothing but an imperialist manoeuvre to dissolve the liberation movements and to strengthen the South African state and the regimes of its neocolonial neighbours in preparation for the forthcoming struggles.

Neocolonial Africa, tied to the imperialist world economy has been hit by inflation and recession. Poverty, starvation, mass unemployment and repression are the day to day realities in these countries. The nationalist regimes, despite in some cases socialist rhetoric, are unable and unwilling to break from capitalism. In all these countries, mass movements are emerging on to the political scene: witness the recent strikes and political unrest in Angola, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Kenya. Yet, the African revolutionary vanguard is still very weak. The revolutionary process in Africa has suffered not only from the objective barrier; centuries of imperialist domination and the lack of a strong urban proletariat, but also from the degeneration of the Third Communist International. Stalinist betrayals have meant that for a whole historic period the African revolutionary vanguard has not been able to intervene effectively in the African class struggle; it has not been able to lead the mass movement in an anti-capitalist direction, and it has not been able to integrate itself within the traditions of the international working class movement.

The vital problem facing African revolutionary marxists is to formulate a programme for the emancipation of the African workers and peasants on a national and continental scale. Only by developing and testing revolutionary theory and in the practise of constructing revolutionary parties can this be achieved. The Fourth International and especially its African comrades are addressing themselves to this historical responsibility. In addition to solidarising with and popularising African struggles in Britain the British Section of the Fourth International ( the International Marxist Group) is producing a thrice yearly publication 'Africa in Stuggle' devoted to the problems of the African Revolution. Ideological clarity is essential in the building of vanguard organisations. 'Africa in Struggle' will not content itself to be a mere spectator or reporter of African events; it will attempt to provide analysis within the framework of revolutionary

marxism and aims to be a forum for all African socialist militants for discussion, debate and clarification.

For us the three main issues which must be constantly kept to the fore by African militants are;

1. Socialist revolution or revolution by stages?
2. The necessity of a Leninist vanguard party for the seizure of power.
3. Proletarian Internationalism or petit-bourgeois Pan-Africanism?

These issues are dealt with throughout the articles in the journal and in more detail in our article entitled 'Smash the Neocolonial State!'.

The comrades producing 'Africa in Struggle' hold regular discussion groups on themes of the African Revolution and are engaged in solidarity work in Britain today. Those wishing to participate in our discussions and activities and those wishing to contribute to 'Africa in Struggle' should write to:



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# INTERNATIONAL

A NEW ISSUE OF THE IMG'S  
 THEORETICAL JOURNAL

Mandel on  
**WORKERS' SELF MANAGEMENT**

**THE CLASS  
 STRUGGLE  
 IN EUROPE**



*THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND  
 THE BRITISH RULING CLASS*

**PORTUGAL-  
 ONE YEAR  
 OF TURMOIL**

**CHILE-THE  
 COUP AND  
 AFTER**

The Fourth International was created in 1938 after five years of preparatory work. Its founders had decided that the catastrophic defeat of the German working class, embodied in the victory of Hitler, had demonstrated that the Third International, created in 1919 in response to a call from the new Soviet Russian republic, had irreversibly degenerated.

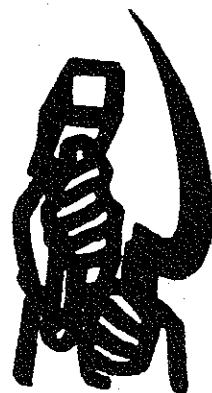
It was clear to the International Left Opposition — precursors of the Fourth International — that Stalin and other leaders of the Third International had refused to face up to the enormity of the defeat, and instead had tried to bureaucratically bluff their way through.

This assessment has been amply confirmed: time and time again, the stalinists have betrayed revolutionary struggles. *Spain* — 1936/39 where they acted as the butchers of the left; *France and Italy* — 1944/45 where they disarmed the partisans; *Sudan*, where after a mass upsurge they handed control over to Nimiery and Co., only to be massacred for their pains — these are just a few examples.

Today, standing firmly within the traditions of Leninism, the Fourth International is engaged in building an international revolutionary socialist party, based upon democratic centralism. It does this by building sections in individual countries which unite to work out an international revolutionary strategy.

**For International Revolution — against socialism in one country.** The Fourth International believes that because the world is an ensemble of economic, political and social processes, it can only be understood in international terms. Without this understanding, there cannot be successful revolution, the revolutionary process in any country

# The Fourth



# International

cannot be effective unless it is seen as an aspect of an international process. For this reason, the international revolutionary party which seeks to centralise the experience and understanding of all its sections is a vital instrument for successful revolution. Since the modern world is an integrated economic, political and social entity, socialism cannot be built in one country. Attempts to achieve this have led to terrible deformations and compromises with imperialism: It is the 'socialism in one country' strategy which is responsible for the 'peaceful co-existence', 'detente', etc., policies of the Russian and Chinese leaderships, and responsible for their anti-democratic internal regimes. Socialism in all countries will be built as part of a process of fighting for *international revolution!*

Unlike the so-called Marxist-Leninists, the Fourth International does not explain the opportunism and repressive nature of the Soviet Leadership in terms of personal degeneration (though this is present) but as a function of wrong attitudes to revolution, which in turn arises from this bureaucratic caste putting its own privileged positions above those of the world working class.

**Permanent Revolution — against revolution by stages.** The Fourth International sees capitalism as a social and economic formation that is completely reactionary. It can still — at least in the advanced capitalist countries — falteringly take the productive forces forward, but only at the expense of war, booms, slumps, crisis, and subjugation of workers and oppressed people. This means that capitalist forces cannot play a progressive role, the idea that there can be some progressive democratic (ie. non-socialist, and therefore capitalist) stage of revolution is false and utopian. On the contrary, the tasks which had historically been achieved by the revolutionary bourgeoisie, can today only be achieved as part of socialist revolution. This is strikingly confirmed in Africa where none of the new post-colonial regimes has been able to develop the productive forces, unify the country, establish basic democratic rights, etc. Only a socialist revolution could achieve such ends, and therefore start the process of ending the misery of the mass of people.

**For Working People's Democracy — against bureaucracy and elites.** The Fourth International traces its origins to a struggle in the Soviet Union which was inseparable from a fight for workers' democracy against bureaucratisation. It believes that a successful struggle against bureaucratic anti-democratic trends in the workers' and revolutionary movement is a prerequisite for successful and completed revolution. Therefore the Fourth International stands for: (1) Election and right of recall for all posts in the workers' and working people's movement; (2) The right to form tendencies in these organisations; (3) The freedom of the trade unions from state control; (4) Mass involvement in decision taking at all levels; and defence of all other democratic rights.

**For Total Liberation — against all oppression/exploitation.** The Fourth International does not limit itself to purely economic demands: it fights all forms of oppression/exploitation: racism, oppression of women, super-exploitation of the peasantry, discrimination against gays and other minority groups. It opposes the bureaucrats and sectarians who refuse to take up these struggles. This is because the Fourth International considers the liberation of

humanity to be a total process, and one based upon the self-activity of the masses. Without bringing the oppressed millions into the struggle there will be no socialist revolution; and indeed the imperialists recognise this in their use of the ideological backwardness on these questions to divide the working people.

**Against Popular Fronts – For Workers' United Front: the basis for the unity of all the oppressed.** By popular fronts we essentially mean blocs which seek to 'unite' antagonistic class forces. Historically, this has always meant a line of subordinating the working class to the bourgeoisie under the guise of 'national unity' – sadly we see many examples of this in Africa.

To the popular front, we counter-pose the *workers' united front*, by which we mean the unity of all workers' organisations around an action programme to meet the immediate needs of the class struggle. This in turn, acts as the leadeadership and nucleus of the unity of all the oppressed.

This means that the Fourth International rejects totally the Maoist theory of the 'bloc of four classes'. Ironically the Maoists themselves had to break with this policy in practice before they could make their revolution – the Chinese bourgeoisie in essence lining up with the Chiang Kai Shek.

**For the Revolutionary Road to Power – against the illusions of the peaceful road.** For the Fourth International the option of the revolutionary road is not that of preference but of scientific analysis. It is a lesson of history that the ruling classes do not give up without struggle, with the use of the state machinery – the army, etc. The apostles of the peaceful road leave the working class at the mercy of the exploiter and reinforce what is a basic pillar of bourgeois power: its monopoly of violence.

**Against Reformism – for the Method of Transitional Demands.** The Fourth International supports all the struggles for demands which assist the working people, but holds that a struggle for reforms alone is insufficient and self-defeating. To purely reformist demands (ie. demands entirely within the framework of capitalism) we counterpose a series of demands which, while taking the working class forward, develops and deepens its consciousness. Our method of the transitional programme flows from our understanding that revolution is not merely overthrowing the oppressor, it is also a process of transforming (by developing their political consciousness) the oppressed.

**Defence of the Workers' States.** Despite our criticisms of the leaderships of the so-called communist countries, the Fourth International stands for their unconditional defence against imperialism. We call these states 'deformed' or 'degenerated' workers' states. Workers' states because, despite their lack of democracy, the property relations they defend are of a socialist nature; deformed because they were born with defects – eg. lack of organs of workers' power degenerated because they once had these organs and lost them through bureaucratic degeneration.

This principled position has nothing to do with the Maoist theory of the 'socialist imperialist' nature of the Soviet Union. This theory confuses the undoubtedly treacherous policies of the leadership of the Soviet Union, with the state that they lead. If applied to trade unions, they should be against trade unions because they have an opportunist leadership! Despite their leaderships, destruction of the trade unions would be a crushing blow against the working class; so too would the destruction of the Soviet Union be a crushing blow to the interests of world revolution.

This policy of the Fourth International leads it to utterly condemn the line of the Soviet Union when it refused to defend People's China against US imperialism. In place of these devious policies, we stand for a united front of workers' state against imperialism, and for national liberation. If such a front had existed and spoken out in clear terms, the strangling of the Congo revolution (among many others) would not have taken place.

**For National Liberation, for the Socialist Revolution.** The Fourth International completely supports the struggle for national liberation and against all forms of neo-colonialist exploitation. We strive, in all countries to build solidarity in support of such struggles. Our record on Algeria, Vietnam and other countries speaks for itself. However we do not see this as an end of the process, but more as part (a key part) of the process of total liberation. This leads us to argue that each national liberation struggle should combine its anti-colonial tasks with a struggle for socialist revolution.

The most successful national liberation struggles have been those which have combined themselves with social revolution. To give just one example, the Vietnamese revolution has had such tenacity, staying power, etc., precisely because it combined the struggles against French, Japanese, French again and then US imperialism with land reform and the abolition of the biggest exploiting class in Vietnam. It was this fact which meant that the Vietnamese revolutionaries could count on the heroic and unstinting support of the working masses, of the countryside and town.

The application of this in Africa is all too clear. We believe that the success of the struggles of the people of Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau and the present struggles in Angola have elements in common (although not identical) with that of the Vietnamese. Unfortunately, there are far too many examples of attempts to wage 'pure' military or national struggles with the effect that the masses could not be won for the revolutionary process in a full manner.

In this short article we have tried to highlight aspects of the policies of the Fourth International and how they relate to Africa. We would add that the policies of the Fourth International are *not* abstract nor do they limit themselves to the writing of articles: we take our politics seriously – as is shown by the hundreds of Trotskyist victims of the class war.

During the Algerian war, the Fourth International was the only tendency on an international scale which seriously assisted the struggle of the FLN. This fact was recognised by the OAS, the Red Hand and imperialist governments – the former in their endeavours to assassinate our comrades; the latter when they arrested our comrades, including the then secretary of the Fourth International Michel Raptis. We are proud of this modest (due to seize) contribution to Algerian struggles – but only in the sense that the many new forces which have joined the Fourth International since the Algerian war will emulate that contribution.

\*\*\*

Today solidarity with the Angolan revolution is a key task for revolutionaries. Unlike petit-bourgeois intellectuals who fear to dirty themselves by taking sides, we solidarise with the MPLA despite our criticisms of its conduct of the struggle. In a confused and distorted manner it reflects the class struggle in the Angolan civil war by its relation with the new and militant industrial working class. On the contrary, the FNLA and UNITA reflect the interests of various imperialist forces. As on Algeria we shall give a good account of ourselves on Angola.

Peter Peterson



Angola represents an important prize for either the African revolution or neo-colonial reaction. The Angola economy is tied to its neighbouring countries, while its ethnic groups spill over the various borders. Its strategic position and economic potential make it vital to the interests of imperialism.

The events taking place in Angola today are causing tremors of alarm throughout the neo-colonial world of southern Africa. The neo-colonial world fears the effect of the development of the Angolan revolution on the stability of their own regimes; each has played its part in attempting to contain the eruption within the framework of the neo-colonial solution, or to direct intervention to impose such a solution. The Republic of South Africa also understands the dangers inherent in the Angolan situation which threatens the viability of its policy of 'detente' and which is causing rumblings among the black working masses within the Republic. The multi-national corporations have a direct interest in ensuring that they will be able to continue to extract the wealth of Angola. The 'loss' of Angola would upset the total balance of forces in southern Africa, which today allows imperialism to continue its exploitation of the region.

To this end, imperialist strategy has consistently been to try to limit the impact of decolonisation of the Portuguese colonies and thwart the dynamic of the popular mobilisations that have erupted out of the process; the aim has been to ensure a smooth transition of economic and political power to those forces integrated and based around South Africa.

Spinola's 'decolonisation' project had set out to do precisely that: it was hoped to achieve the transition by giving exclusive recognition to the rightist nationalist forces led by the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to form a coalition government with representatives of the colonial bourgeoisie and of the Lisbon government. The secret

talk at Cape Verde last year were part of this project to shunt aside the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

But by remaining intransigent on the principle of independence (and thus maintaining its base among the urban masses), and aided by the events in Portugal — the ousting of Spinoia — the MPLA was able to frustrate the plan. Above all else, the eruption of the Angolan working masses onto the political arena with workers' strikes and broad mobilisations in the urban centres, forced the Portuguese bourgeoisie to recognise the right of the Angolan people to independence.

The imperialist strategy thus partially frustrated, we saw a spectacular reconciliation of the three movements at Mombasa (Kenya) and an 'acceleration' of the decolonisation process; the Alvor accords were agreed, establishing the grounds for a quadripartite 'transitional' government involving MPLA, FNLA, UNITA, and the Lisbon government. Essentially this marked an attempt to defuse the revolutionary dynamic of the independence struggles by incorporating the the MPLA into the neo-colonial process of the Transitional Government. The central task of the transitional government was to prepare the neo-colonial juridico-political framework to guarantee that the transition to power would take place without any anti-capitalist mobilisation of any scope; the first measures taken by this government — banning of Popular assemblies, militarisation of ports etc. — clearly showed this to be so.

## amendments

However the widespread outbreaks of armed clashes, in which the popular militias (supporters of MPLA) mobilised to defend themselves against attacks from FNLA and from the white racist colons threatened to upset this 'peaceful' transition plan and necessitated the 'amending' of the Accords, ie. to provide powers to implement them. African diplomacy was again mobilised to act as intermediary, and a conference held at Nakuru (Kenya) between the three movements agreed to create an Angolan national army, disarm the civilians, and hold a census with a view to holding elections for a constituent assembly in October 1975. The plan to disarm the masses corresponded to FNLA and UNITA's desire to deal a death-blow to all the self-organised structures of the workers. That MPLA signed such a document clearly demonstrated the opportunist nature of its leadership — being prepared to cling to power at any cost.

But in spite of any 'wish' to disarm the masses, the plan proved to be ineffectual — the masses refused to give up their arms even in the face of pleas from the MPLA leadership. On the contrary, the launching of attacks on MPLA militants and selective workers' mobilisations (aimed at demoralising the masses) by the FNLA and UNITA met with widespread response from the workers who effectively drove both these forces out of Luanda, and brought the fragile structures of the transitional government crashing down, leaving the MPLA as the only remaining member of the government. In response to a huge demonstration calling for a 'peoples' government' following this victory, the MPLA nationalised the banks in Luanda, only to meet with an announcement from Lisbon re-asserting direct colonial authority!

Since then, the 'masks' have begun to fall, each force defining its position more clearly: at Lobito, a united front of FNLA and UNITA attempted, unsuccessfully, to rout the forces of the MPLA (it is worth noting that this 'unification' occurred at Lobito, the port through which 50 per cent of Zambia's copper is exported, and also provides southern Zaire with a route to the sea; the closure of this port throws a veritable spanner into the imperialist strategy for southern Africa — (see page 14). At the same time South African troops entered the Cunene basin region in the south — site of the hydro-electric project, and have now advanced to form a 'united front' with UNITA against the MPLA. In the north, the FNLA are again advancing on Luanda having received reinforcements from Mobutu of Zaire, and having recruited large numbers of the reactionary white colons still remaining in Angola. (UNITA, traditionally always popular amongst the white colons, has also benefited from the recruitment of these elements unwilling to leave their possessions and and privileged life.)

It is therefore clear that the class forces are now beginning to polarise in the civil war; on the one hand, the highly combative workers attempting to wage an anti-capitalist struggle under the sometimes inadequate leadership of the MPLA; and on the other, an ever growing monster consisting of reaction in various guises converging to ensure the survival of capitalism and oppression

## role of the troops

One of the characteristics of the present unfolding Portuguese revolution has been the rifts caused in the armed forces and the break up of its command structures. The troops in Angola have not been unaffected by this, and the last few months have seen a spate of demonstrations both in Angola and in Portugal of varying natures, but all testifying to this division and break-

up: in Angola, there have been demonstrations by soldiers demanding repatriation from an imperialist war that has, understandably, demoralised them and in which they have no wish to participate; at the same time, there have also been demonstrations in solidarity with the MPLA and coupled with this, similar demonstrations have occurred recently in Portugal — troops refusing to be sent out to Angola and solidarising with the MPLA.

No-one would deny that the Portuguese troops remain in essence an imperialist army, and any role they play as an army, while not being capable often of *effectively* carrying out imperialism's intentions for Angola, remains necessarily counter-revolutionary. This can be demonstrated if one examines their role in 'supervising' the exodus of FNLA and UNITA from Luanda, their 'escorting' of the colons from the country, and the protection of UNITA and the white colons around Nova Lisboa. It is clear, therefore, that these troops *must* be removed immediately. But we would say to those advanced elements in the army: **desert and join the MPLA!** And to the 'left' demogogy emanating from populist mouths in Portugal: **if you support the MPLA — prove it — withdraw your troops! Hand over your weapons and power to the MPLA! Sanction the decision of your militants to join the MPLA!** It is with such demands concerning the troops that it is possible to advance revolution in Angola.

## workers' mobilizations

Following the coup in Portugal (25 April, 1974), the 'liberalisation' in Angola was a signal for a workers' offensive: the combativity of the Angolan proletariat — long contained by colonial repression — exploded in many local strikes that clearly attested to the workers' desire to expel the fascist employers and put an end to capitalist super-exploitation. But the first significant victory of the Angolan proletariat over the stalling of the Portuguese government came with the near spontaneous response of the masses to the racist crimes committed by colonial reaction. The balance of forces between the labouring masses and the ruling class in the urban centres was suddenly transformed, enabling tens of thousands of workers to go through the experience of mobilisation and struggles. Through these mobilisations the workers gradually became familiar with forms of organisation and struggle wholly new to them, and these experiences of self-organisation manifested themselves through the formation of rank and file committees in the neighbourhoods and factories.

The transitional government's attempts to militarise factories 'falling into chaos and anarchy' met with a broad response from the workers in a demonstration of several thousands refusing 'to be treated as objects instruments of enrichment in a process of exploitation that remains unchanged'.

Through these experiences, and under the impetus of MPLA (tactically supporting these mobilisations) a trade-union movement took shape that will be an important factor in the future developments of the relationship of forces. Thus on 22 May 1975, a demonstration organised by U.N.T.A. (National Union of Angolan Workers), attended by hundreds of thousands of workers took place in solidarity with the MPLA, denouncing the reaction role of the FNLA.

The central question of the workers seizing power as a result of the present struggles has now been posed by the beginning of the emergence of a situation of dual-power — with the attempts to co-ordinate the rank and file committees for 'people's power'. But the mere reference to people's power with a relative imprecise class content is not sufficient to trace out the road to the seizure of power by the labouring masses.



22 November; Kinshasha — Mario Soares with Holden Roberto (FNLA), Savimbi (UNITA) and Chipenda (then in MPLA and now in FNLA)

## reaction

The reaction of the FNLA to the radicalisation of the urban proletariat was to launch a military offensive against both the workers' self-organisations and the



MPLA militants. Its role as the pawn of imperialism has been obvious in the aid it has recieved from Zaire (the bastion of capitalist investment in central Africa) and the relations it has established with the imperialist International Confederation of Free (sic) Trade Unions. Based upon the Bakongo ethnic group in the north, and fundamentally rightist and regionalist, this movement has recruited a genuine border army among the Angolan emigres in Zaire, and now coccupies northern Angola. It has asserted itself as the motor force of repression dealing successive blows against popular mobilisations to inflict significant defeats on the labouring masses. before independence. Far from reducing the workers' combativity, however, they permitted the strengthening of mobilisations and vigilance....a factor that lead to the eventual ousting of the FNLA and UNITA from Luanda.

Both these movements are now concentrating their energies on trying to defeat the MPLA, a task for which they can be assured unfailing support from the international bourgeoisie.

But for the international workers' movement, there is no alternative today but to support the Angolan revolution - which, in spite of its failings, means *solidarity with the MPLA!*

## ambiguous mpla

In the face of the radicalisation of the labouring masses, the response of the MPLA has been ambiguous and insufficient to trace out the road to real independence. It has essentially failed to grasp the importance of the emergence of a proletarian social force in the heart of the imperialist industrial apparatus, resulting in its inability to put forward responses in class terms or to go beyond its original multi-classist positions. Thus, for Augustino Neto, president of MPLA, 'people's power' means the power of 'all social layers of society', while the central function of independence is to make 'all social layers of society share power'. These frontist illusions are at the very heart of the political limitations of the MPLA.

A heterogeneous movement founded on the basis of the urban petty-bourgeoisie, the MPLA inherited the frontist and gradualist illusions characteristic of petty-bourgeois nationalism, illusions that were further reinforced by the Stalinist conceptions of the Angolan Communist nucleus. Nevertheless, its desire to put an 'end to exploitation of man by man' and to establish a 'democratic and popular regime' had a very precise class content in the urban centres: *an end to capitalist exploitation, and the power of workers and poor peasants!* Its frontist illusions have continually left it torn between collaboration with FNLA and UNITA at the top, and participation in the rank and file committees at the base where the dynamic of the struggles, sharpens the contradictions in the MPLA - tending to increase the leadership's independence from the rank and file militants.

## alternative

The most radicalised elements of the urban proletariat are assembled primarily in the rank and file committees of the MPLA and in U.N.T.A. and because of the position they occupy in the process of capitalist exploitation, this vanguard is the spearhead of the entire revolutionary process today. But these committees are locked in gradualist Maoist formulations and in tail-ending the MPLA leadership. Their political response is insufficient to lead to real independence permitting their total em-

ancipation with the end to capitalist rule - *the central question being posed by thousands of workers in their on-going struggles today.*

There are already elements in the MPLA aware of the stakes, who define themselves around a class struggle position, fighting for the emergence of an overall anti-capitalist alternative. Against the ambiguous response of the MPLA, they are developing propaganda for self-organisation and self-defence, popularising and giving militant support to the exemplary workers' strikes, denouncing the imperialist grip on the Angolan economy linking the struggle for independence to the struggle for social transformation and *socialist revolution.*

The evolution of the political situation in Angola will condition the future relationship of forces in southern Africa. A favourable outcome is vital for the success of all the other struggles taking place in southern Africa today, and for a united socialist Africa! It is therefore vital to launch an international solidarity movement that can be an important factor for the evolution of the balance of forces in Angola. Now more than ever must come a resounding cry from the international workers' movement:

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE MPLA!  
NO THE IMPERIALIST AND PRO IMPERIALIST  
INTERVENTION!  
PORTUGUESE TROOPS OUT! POWER TO THE  
MPLA!  
SOUTH AFRICAN AND ZAIROIS TROOPS OUT!**

# solidarity with the MPLA!

The Angola Solidarity Committee was launched on Friday 8 August 1975 with the aim of spreading information and organising support for the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola); Angola's only legitimate liberation movement.

The ASC is supported by the International Marxist Group, the International Socialists, the Young Communist League and Communist Party members. *et al*

Affiliation to the committee (inc. subscription to the bulletins) costs £1 for 6 months. Copies of the pamphlet; 10p, information and speakers are available from; Angola Solidarity Committee c/o Tony Gifford, 6, Bowden Street, London SE 11.

## Angola Solidarity Committee



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# ZAMBIA

## CRISIS FOR NEO-COLONIALISM!

The most spectacular and clearly noticeable effects of the world wide economic recession of the capitalist economies are to be seen in the highly industrialised countries. Here whole industries close down, huge plants lay off their entire work force, entire areas of the country become backwaters of economic depression. But if the recession's most dramatically visible effects are clearest in such areas it is not necessarily the case that its effects here are as statistically disastrous or as ultimately debilitating as imperialism's least developed client states.

In this respect the experience of Zambia over the past year is a microcosmic example of the fate of the entire neo-colonialist world – and particularly those sections which have a high degree of integration into and dependence upon the world economy. When the central economic activity in the money sector is the production of a single commodity which is exported into a volatile world market, the fate of the entire economy can depend absolutely directly on the state of the world economy as a whole. What is the nature of Zambia's dependence on copper?

(1) In 1974, 93 per cent of exports by value were of copper (note that this proportion remains exactly the same as that at the time of independence in 1964).

(2) In 1974 34 per cent of government revenue derived from direct 'mineral revenue' – ie. taxes on copper based on the selling price and profits accruing to the government through its ownership of 51 per cent of the shares of the copper producing companies. A further 33 per cent came from income tax. The average wage on the mines is nearly double that in the economy as a whole. It is safe to say therefore that government revenue direct from the mining sector was 45 per cent of the total.

(3) In 1974 34 per cent of Gross Domestic Product was produced by the copper mines.

These figures clearly illuminate the kind of economy which colonialism bequeathed to Zambia and which has remained basically unchanged since 1964. On one side there exists a highly mechanised highly productive mining sector where the level of capitalisation, of technique etc. is equal to that of similar industry anywhere in the world. Almost all other investment in the 'modern sector' of the economy is ancillary to this ie. it supplies either equipment for use in the mines or goods and services which are consumed by the mining population. On the other hand stands the subsistence agricultural sector which embraces the great mass of the population who enter the money economy only marginally. Occasionally they are able to produce saleable products which can provide cash for certain basic needs. But overall with an average income of £37.50 per annum they are of necessity almost totally outside the cash economy.

It can readily be seen that the effects of a slump in the price of copper on the world market can have immed-



ately disastrous effects for the Zambian economy. Such a slump of a sharper and more prolonged character than ever before is currently being experienced:

<i>Average price of copper on London Metal Exchange:</i>	
<i>January– August 1974:</i>	<i>1538 Kwacha per ton</i>
<i>January– August 1975:</i>	<i>813 Kwacha per ton</i>
<i>Total balance of payments surplus first five months of 1974:</i>	
	<i>296 million Kwacha</i>
<i>Total balance of payments deficit first five months of 1975:</i>	
	<i>70 million Kwacha</i>

Anyone following present trends in the capitalist economy world wide will recognise that these tendencies are unlikely to be reversed in the near future and that Zambia will be therefore certainly suffer from an acceleration of all the trends which are now beginning to be manifested.

The second factor contributory to Zambia's economic problems, once again essentially imported from the economies of the imperialist metropolises, is the inflation of prices of goods and services. Unfortunately government statistical services are, perhaps deliberately, always nearly six months behind in producing figures on prices. But the latest to hand show a rise of 3.3 per cent over the first two months of 1975 in the low income consumer price index. This equals an annual rate of 20 per cent. While this is not as high as in many parts of the industrialised capitalist world, it spells for the average Zambian worker a disastrous drop in living standards. By law negotiated wage rises are limited to 5 per cent per annum. The trades union movement is totally integrated into the

state machinery. Intra bureaucratic mobility is illustrated by the fact that every Minister of Labour since independence has been a former Trades Union functionary. The formation of new trades unions is forbidden without permission from the government. Strikes in a whole number of 'essential industries' are forbidden by law (something which, as we shall note later does not prevent their taking place but does act as a powerful deterrent to their organisation). Above all with a population growth rate of 3.5 per cent per annum and near static growth in the number of jobs, the mass of available labour exerts a constant threat to workers engaging in any form of industrial action.

At present, inevitably we are seeing the declaration of a whole number of redundancies. These are affecting particularly firms in the small scale manufacturing sector which are suffering from the cut down in import license issue consequent on massively reduced copper revenue. Most of Zambia's manufacturing industry depends almost entirely on imported components.

## workers' response

The area within which government moves most gingerly with regard to redundancy is the mines. Here a highly concentrated labour force (some mines like Nkana in Kitwe and Mufulira have up to 10,000 employees) possesses a long history of union organisation going back well before independence. Despite the fact that the MUZ (Mineworkers' Union of Zambia) is almost totally under government control it is not within the power of the bureaucrats to restrain the eruption of sporadic outbursts of discontent. In the past months there have been three strikes, all conducted totally without the union's branch structure. The first of these involved a large section of the labour force at the Broken Hill Lead and Zinc mine in Kabwe around demands for parity of wages with the copper mines. This was broken only by extensive police harassment and intimidation of strikers and their families in the mine townships.

In July the Copperbelt was suddenly hit by a dispute which showed the potential for rank and file action to outflank the union machinery. Simultaneously winding engine drivers, a very small section of the workforce, struck at every mine demanding implementation of a wage structure first laid down by a government commission in 1966 and still not effected! Clearly such an action could not have been initiated without considerable contact between its unofficial organisers right through the Copperbelt.

In August the majority of the 600 strong labour force at the Ndola Copper Refinery struck to protest the continued refusal of management to provide them with transport to and from work — a facility offered to employees in all the main mines. Incredibly this dispute was stated to have begun 17 years ago when the union first put in a request for this! Once again leadership lay in the hands of an informally organised grouping outside of the local union branch. The strikers eventually returned to work after a promise from the MUZ leadership to reopen negotiations on their behalf. But in doing so they stated their intention to resume the strike on September 1st were their demands to remain unmet

## 'long discussions'

This threat was sufficient to get management and the usually immobile MUZ leadership on the move and on 26 August it was announced that transport or transport allowances would finally be provided to all employees.

In a move aimed blatantly at propping up the fast declining image of the MUZ it was left to its officials to make the announcement that agreement had finally been reached after 'long discussion' at the Mining Joint Industrial Council. It will not however be lost on the majority of the strikers that their 17 year old dispute had had not been resolved through back breaking labour at the negotiating table but through their own direct action in bringing the refinery to a halt for a week.

These recent disputes all show that despite a traitorous leadership, the high level of unemployment and sustained government propaganda which seeks to discredit any working class action as treachery to the sacred cause of national development, the Zambian working class particularly on the mines, is capable of independent organisation of struggle. It was almost certainly the signs of growing discontent that led the President and Secretary General of the Zambia Congress of Trades Unions (ZCTU) Frederick Chiluba and Newstead Zimba, to make some mildly worded attacks on government policies at the end of July. To maintain some credibility with the working class they criticised the government's decision at that time to raise the prices of bread, cooking oil, flour and certain other essential commodities — but only on the grounds that such decisions should not be made without some prior consultation with trades union representatives. They were immediately subjected to an organised battery of ministerial attacks which culminated in a carefully prepared speech by Kaunda himself in which he outlined the government's conception of Trades Unions as organisations whose central function is to transmit government policy to the working class and to organise workers to increase productivity. The disarray produced by this presidential intervention was reflected at the recent ZCTU Executive meeting held in Kitwe. No official report has been issued but it appears that the main point of discussion was the proper response of the Trades Unions to the increasing spate of redundancies. According to the statements of some participants the discussions resulted in deadlock because 'many members were frightened by the recent warnings of President Kaunda to labour leaders' — frightened in particular no doubt by the threat posed to their own careers by even the mildest statements of dissent from government policies!

## buy off

The escalating industrial action in the crucial mining sector was primarily responsible for the announcement 29 August by Axon Soko, Minister of Mines and Industry of wage increases for all employees in the industry effective from 1 August. These ranged from 20 per cent for the lowest paid to 7 per cent for the highest paid. Government's anxiety to 'buy off' the miners in this way can only be explained by their recognition that the recent series of disputes might continue to escalate and that the militancy of this section of the labour force could begin to infect other sectors of the working class. It was much better to present such wage rises as an unsolicited 'gift' from 'Party and Government' than to be forced to concede them as a result of developing class struggles.

A second key reason for their announcement at this particular point in time was the simultaneous unveiling of the long awaited Mwanakatwe Commission report on civil service wages. While this did not propose the sort of massive rises characteristic of the Nigerian 'Udoji'<sup>1</sup> proposals, it did give a 36 per cent rise to the lowest paid

government employees. The simultaneous announcement of pay rises for the miners was designed to defuse the possibility of widespread demands for imitative rises.

The two pay increases described affect only 110,000 out of an estimated 380,000 strong workforce. But they are the most highly concentrated, crucial and well-organised. Attempts by workers in other sectors to seek rises along the same lines will be much more difficult to organise and to bring to a successful conclusion. The prospect for the majority of the working class therefore remains one of a continued battle against the effects of inflation and unemployment in which they will perhaps be assisted however by the example offered on the mines in recent months.



## Solution?

*What solution does the Zambian government offer to the current problems of the economy?* 'We have to understand', President Kaunda has said repeatedly in recent months, 'that we are a poor country'. Lost without trace are all the ambitious targets contained in the 2nd National Development Plan spanning the years 1972-76 of increasing wage employment by 100,000 principally through the expansion of the industrial sector. Instead the new emphasis of government economic policy is laid upon 'rural reconstruction'. But is this worthy goal to be achieved through a massive injection of capital and expertise into the peasant economy to enable it to develop beyond its present subsistence level? The budgeted figure for 1975 of 29 million Kwacha for 'Lands, Natural Resources, Rural Development and Tourism' out of a total expenditure of 515 million Kwacha give the clear answer to that question. The main part of state expenditure will continue to be used to subsidise the burgeoning state capitalist class which controls government and all major industry.

No, the government's only formula for 'rural reconstruction' is the expansion of Zambia's *rural subsistence sector*. And in pursuing this end it addresses itself above all the 'problem' created by the ever growing urban population which currently stands at 35 per cent of the total and threatens to be more than 40 per cent by 1980 on current trends.

In all the towns drives have been initiated by the ruling UNIP (United National Independence Party) organisation to 'round up' unemployed youth and herd them into 'Rural Reconstruction Camps'. Here they are to be settled upon hitherto uncultivated land, provided with

with virtually none of the necessary equipment and no wages whatsoever, subjected to the discipline of the army which has been seconded to this task, and forced to fend for themselves. While such moves currently affect the youth, a clear indication has already been given that they are slowly to be applied also to large numbers of wage earners who are likely to be declared redundant in the near future. At the UNIP National Council meeting at the beginning of July a resolution was passed which stated that: 'Appreciating that this (economic cutbacks) will mean a lot of re-organisation, probably resulting in redundancies (National Council) directs, as a measure of urgency, the government to see that all such workers as will be declared redundant should be drafted into the rural reconstruction programme and that workers so drafted will be helped to settle down on the land in their districts of origin'. Later the same resolution refers to the settlement of the unemployed 'in their home districts' where they will be directed to 'produce on the land'.

## Bantustans

The clear implication of such phraseology is that the urban worker is only a temporary resident of his/her place of work, whose home is in fact in a rural area. It will not be lost on readers that the use of such terminology is of course to be found in one other place in this part of the world - namely *South Africa*. There the very foundation of apartheid policy is that the African worker has no place of permanent residence except the 'reserve' or 'Bantustan'. The exigencies of their present economic plight have driven the Zambian ruling class into precisely imitating the methods of the white racists. The only difference is that this time we see an authoritarian policy of direction of labour based not upon colour of skin but upon social class and employment status.

Without doubt in this situation the coming period can see the opening of a series of initially fragmented struggles by sections of the working and unemployed population. Already large numbers of 'youth' have revolted against conditions in the Rural 'Concentration Camps' and deserted from them. When the government begins to carry out its declared intention of using similar tactics on redundant members of the working class who have at least some history of collective action with their fellow workers, the results are likely to be far more explosive.

The effects which we have detailed above of the latest recession in the world capitalist economy mark a key turning point in the short life of Zambia. The ruling clique which has got fat on the proceeds of its control over the state machinery is now faced for the first time with the need to deal heavy blows at the masses in order to secure its own position and the continuation of its parasitical existence as the mediator between world imperialism and the workers and peasants of the country. Recent moves which establish total government control over the mass media open a period in which more and more clearly repressive measures will undoubtedly be used to squash any threat of resistance. The extent to which this ruling class is able to carry out its present objectives and consolidate its own position will be determined by whether it will be possible for the ideas of revolutionists to gain even the most minimal implantation in an area where socialist organisation of any kind has no history whatsoever. This in turn will depend very largely on developments in neighbouring areas. It is crystal clear that there are few areas of the

world where any idea of socialism in one country is less realistic. *The socialist revolution which provides the only answer to the present problems of Zambia's labouring masses will be a product of and a part of a generalised upsurge of the present and worker populations of southern Africa as a whole.*

The Zambian ruling class is itself well aware that the spark which can ignite its own population into revolutionary action can most likely be provided by events in the white racist dominated part of the continent. This is precisely why it is currently engaged in that obsessive search for a Rhodesian 'settlement'.

John Blair

August 1975

1. 'Udoji Report' was a Nigerian government appointed commission dealing with civil service wages and conditions which reported earlier this year. After its recommendations for near 100 per cent increases for civil servants were accepted by the government a whole number of strikes broke out throughout the rest of Nigeria's wage employees demanding similar increases. This is described further in our article on Nigeria.

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## BOOKS

### IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

by Basil Davidson

Penguin African Library

price 90p

Subtitled 'Angola's People', the book is useful background reading necessary to understand the complex developments that are taking place today in Angola. Its strong points are that it provides, in a readable way, basic information about the ethnic groups still in existence in and around Angola, the history of the growth of Portuguese domination, and the consequences of these on the present day struggles for liberation.

The book is divided into four parts, the first two parts providing an excellent history of the region, the politics of underdevelopment, and the beginnings of national consciousness and struggle. The last two sections, however, are weak: Davidson is an uncritical supporter of the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), and as a consequence, the thoroughness with which he treats the first half of the book is somewhat lost in, at times, confusion of facts with opinion — to the detriment of a struggle of which he is a supporter. While correctly describing the regionalist character of the FNLA and its direct collusion with American imperialism and its puppet Mobutu of Zaire, Davidson's description of the movement tends to verge on hysterical loathe which tends to weaken his argument against the backward character of the FNLA. He dismisses the UNITA as 'little more than another distracting shadow' — which has been proved not to be the case if recent developments in Angola are anything to go by!

The biggest weakness in the book is Davidson's attitude to the MPLA: he gives unfailing support to the movement — leaving the reader with the impression that at last humanity has found the perfect 'revolutionary party'! Such a position weakens his entire argument for the MPLA, and derives from Davidson's obvious confusion about revolution: by no means does he support the reformist road, nor does he consider revolt as the way forward; but the leap forward to revolution, for Davidson, appears somewhat difficult... He goes to great lengths to describe how, since 1964, there has been an enormous boom of investment from the international monopolies and imperialist countries, how those interested in the status quo were no longer the Portuguese alone, but a conglomerate of world im-

perialism. His answer of 'kicking out the Portuguese' alone is, therefore, inadequate; neither does he emphasise the need to mount an anti-capitalist struggle (perhaps because the MPLA leadership does not), nor the role that the workers would have to play in such a struggle. Instead, he puts forward a confused argument for 'increased participation', destruction of 'elitism', and a united battle against imperialism!

Davidson even gives credence to Neto's statements that after independence the decision will be made whether to follow a socialist path or not! Fortunately, this decision has already been made by the urban proletariat and MPLA militants in Luanda: 'We refuse to be the instruments or objects of enrichment in a process of exploitation that remains unchanged!' This, clearly, is the only way to orient a struggle which MPLA'S founding document describes as 'anti-imperialist'. Linked into this confused analysis, is Davidson's view (and that of the MPLA) that the struggle in Angola is simply a national liberation struggle, within the confines of what he accurately describes as the artificial boundaries imposed on the region by imperialism, rather than part of the necessary socialist revolution that must free Africa from its stranglehold of underdevelopment.

Nevertheless, in spite of these serious weaknesses, the book provides useful background detail in a readable, though sometimes verbose, text, and in absence of any serious Marxist book analysing Angola, is essential reading for those involved in work in this field.

Julius Karanja

#### Other useful books on Angola:

D. Birmingham

Trade and Conflict in Angola; The Mbundu and their Neighbours under the Influence of the Portuguese 1483-1790. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966

J. Duffy

Portugal in Africa. Penguin Books, 1962

D.L. Wheeler and R. Pelissier,

Angola. New York, Praeger and London, Pall Mall, 1971.

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# the saga of detente, the play for time...

The unfolding saga of 'detente' in southern Africa took another step forward on 25 August. An enormous international fanfare of publicity greeted the opening of the Victoria Falls Conference on Rhodesia. The talks were held in a luxury railway coach lent for the occasion by South Africa railways and parked 400 feet above the Zambezi river at the centre of the bridge linking Zambia and Rhodesia. The whole affair was stage managed from beginning to end by the two men who had set up the talks — Kaunda of Zambia and Vorster of the Republic of South Africa. Indeed the fact that the talks took place at all was a result of the pressure which they had exerted upon their respective clients.

The participation of the Rhodesian government was secured only through Vorster's blackmail. Earlier this month Smith was summoned to Pretoria and returned after a few days with a new line on the long postponed constitutional conference. For eight months since the Lusaka agreement of December 1974 he had declared that such an event could not take place except that it was held in his capital of Salisbury and was preceded by a total ceasefire on the part of national guerrillas. In Pretoria he was told to drop these terms. Vorster backed up his position by announcing the total withdrawal of the more than 2,000 South African 'policemen' (anti-guerrilla specialists) who had been stationed in Rhodesia since 1967, playing a key role in anti-freedom fighter operations. In vain attempts to play to 'Verkramppte'<sup>1</sup> sentiment inside South Africa the move was justified as being made because the danger which they had been sent to combat no longer existed. (The original justification for their presence was the combined ANC-ZAPU operations launched with the professed aim of infiltrating into South Africa itself). Nobody was deceived by the explanation for a move which was clearly a transparent attempt to put pressure on Smith to open negotiations.

The need for Smith to play up to Vorster at this time was rendered more urgent by the independence of Mozambique. Certainly, despite the protestations of FRELIMO's leadership before June 25th that it would 'carry out its international obligations' over Rhodesia, the main part of the latter's trade continues to flow unimpeded along the railway from Umtali to the port of Beira. But there is an ever present threat that with the total breakdown of the present negotiations this link could be cut, throwing the entire weight and volume of Rhodesia's trade upon South Africa's already overburdened railway and ports systems.

But above all determining Smith's reversal of his position was his appreciation that the status of the



Taking a tip from the south?

300,000 strong white minority in Rhodesia has been changed overnight by the 1974 reversal of Portuguese colonial policy. Confronted with the certainty of black governments in Mozambique and Angola the previous South African policy for the creation of buffer states around the white 'laager' was rendered totally inoperable. From that time onwards Rhodesia became an expensive and embarrassing irrelevance to South Africa. The longer that there was no 'settlement' in that country, the longer that its black population were denied elementary democratic rights, the more likely it was that their struggle would have a contagious effect upon the black population of South Africa itself. This above all is the threat lurking in the background which determines Vorster's present strategy.

But if Vorster was the most important influence in forcing Smith's attendance at Victoria Falls, an equal part in setting up the conference must be ascribed to the Zambian government. The latter, despite its formal commitment to the elimination of the white supremacist regimes has had over the whole period since its independence an ambiguous attitude towards the struggles of the population of these areas. Above all this is determined by the fact that supposedly 'non capitalist' and 'humanist' Zambia remains in fact an integral part of the capitalist system. At the moment its very stability is threatened through the effects of the world wide recession of that economy (see page ). Most recently problems have been multiplied further by the events in Angola which have effectively closed the port of Lobito and the Bequela railway which in the recent past have been Zambia's most important avenue for imports and exports. Although it could not in any way solve the



fundamental problems which face the totally imbalanced economy of Zambia, a Rhodesian 'settlement' could provide a much needed breathing space of which the crucial components are three:

(i) A 'settlement' in Rhodesia would provide the long awaited opportunity to reopen the Beira rail link — Zambia's shortest route to the sea.

(ii) The success of the 'detente' exercise would mean the possibility of a full reopening of trade links with South Africa which would bring a big flood of essential goods at cheaper rates than they are currently being obtained from further afield.

(iii) In a more long term sense the Zambian government has a deep rooted and thoroughly justifiable fear of the implications for itself of the outbreak of full scale revolutionary struggle by the black masses of southern Africa — especially within South Africa itself. Because of the deep involvement of imperialism in that area it knows that such struggles cannot avoid being anti-capitalist in content from the word go. To that extent their outbreak would be as much a threat to the surrounding neo-colonialist regimes as it would to the structure of the apartheid state itself.

## accomplice

It is therefore no accident that Kaunda was the second principal accomplice in giving birth to the Victoria Falls conference.

Zambia's attempts to find a 'settlement' of the Rhodesian 'problem' date back at least a year. They reached an initial climax in the Lusaka talks held in early December 1974 where representatives of the Smith regime supposedly agreed to a constitutional conference with the Rhodesian nationalists. Since then the preparations for a 'settlement' have continued on the part of the Zambian government. Immediately after the conference in December Zambian intervention supported by Nyerere of Tanzania and Khama of Botswana, was central in securing the formation of a fusion of the four existing nationalist movements under the wing of Muzorewa's ANC (African National Council), the most reformist of all and the only one not hitherto committed to armed struggle. These 'friendly' leaders' ability to impose such a settlement rested essentially on their wielding the threat of total withdrawal of any form of support or bases from the guerilla movements.

Since then a series of actions have been taken by the Zambian government to demobilise the effective military wing of the Zimbabwean resistance. Most notable in this respect was the arrest in April (using the excuse of the murder of ZANU chairman Herbert Chitepo) of more than 60 leading militants of the most effective wing of the armed liberation movement. Fortunately the dynamic of the struggle inside Rhodesia itself appears to have continued unabated. The guerillas active in the North East have scored periodic successes right up to the present time against the Smith forces, despite the effective end of sustenance from what had previously been their key supply base. Their effectiveness is testified to by the increasingly urgent fashion in which Smith has been talking of the prosecution of the struggle in the 'war zone'. Especially indicative of their impact have been the mass desertions by hundreds of secondary students from boarding schools in the area to join the guerillas.

Against the background of this developing dynamic, the continual stress of the Zambian government on the need for negotiation and the jetting about the world en-

gaged in by Muzorewa were wearing just a little thin. In Lusaka in December it had been stated that Smith was being given three months to come up with an acceptable formula for a constitutional conference on the transition to majority rule. After nine months it was essential some results would be shown at the Victoria Falls 'indaba'<sup>2</sup> Needless to say the Zambian media had a field day in the build up period to the conference. 13 August saw its formal announcement, accompanied by the revealing statement that 'the governments of South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia have expressed their willingness to ensure that this agreement is implemented by the two parties concerned'.

## prayers

For ten days the Zambian population was barraged with press comment which referred to the impending 'breakthrough', the 'historic nature' of the settlement to be made, the 'dramatic setting' for the talks etc. Even before they had taken place they were described as as a 'victory' for the policies of Kenneth Kaunda who had promoted this 'historic compromise'. Sunday 24 August was even deemed a day of prayer in Zambia for the success of the talks! (Some cynics were suggesting that had they been believers they would have been in the churches for the whole 24 hours praying for their collapse!)

Now that the smoke has cleared, what did the 14½ hours of talks on Monday 25 August actually achieve? The answer appears to depend on who you are. For the two principals it was nothing. Immediately on his return to Salisbury on Monday night Smith went to Parliament to say that they had broken down as a result of the ANC's intransigence. Because of this he was intending, he said, to proceed with talks with the Council of Chiefs (a stooge government paid body) and 'other African organisations who had indicated interest'. On Friday 29 August he re-iterated this line stressing that he had no doubt any constitutional settlement reached as a result of this new charade would be 'endorsed by the governments of South Africa, Zambia and Britain as well as the UN'.

For Muzorewa and other ANC spokespersons the whole conference plan was similarly off. The stumbling block was that Smith had refused to allow immunity to ANC delegates under threat of arrest inside Rhodesia. This, said ANC, made it impossible for them to select a delegation which was fully representative for the proposed sub-committee meetings inside the country. For them too the proposed conference was therefore a non-starter.

## team managers

The only people who appeared to take a different view were the two team managers! For Vorster, on his arrival in Pretoria, it was 'so that certain hitches have occurred and that there are still certain problems which have yet to be ironed out'. Nonetheless he fully expected the talks to be reconvened shortly. For Kaunda 'we had a very useful start and I think we shall have a real chance to find a peaceful solution to the problems of southern Africa.... We hope that if this hitch is got rid of, that is the one of getting Mr Smith to accept the right of all ANC leaders to go back home and be part and parcel of the discussion, then the talks will start

in Salisbury'.

*What is really behind this double talk?*

1. At no stage since the beginning of the whole 'detente exercise' has it been possible to imagine that Smith will meekly hand over power to the African majority. His whole political base for the past ten years has been founded on intransigent opposition to any moves whatsoever in that direction. Even the half hearted gestures made in the recent past to please his South African sponsors have met a fierce reaction from amongst Rhodesia's Whites. A growing number are now turning to far-right organisations, in particular the recently established Southern Africa Solidarity Congress of Rhodesia.



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More than 1,000 whites attended a meeting in the first week of August which called for an end to detente. And SASCON's reaction to news of the Victoria Falls meeting was to denounce it as 'an open invitation to terrorism and treason.' It is politically impossible for Smith to move against this tide.

2. Vorster's international ambitions which see South Africa as the doyen of a sub-imperialism stretching up to the Equator and further, mean that he is desperately attempting to get Smith to agree to a compromise with ANC. But this does not mean that he is potentially capable of completely pulling out the rug from under white supremacy in Rhodesia. The only weapon Vorster possesses which can do that is the imposition of full and complete economic sanctions by South Africa. For the Nationalist government of the Union that move would be political suicide amongst its white electorate.

3. Therefore it is crystal clear that there is only one direction from which effective pressure can come to destroy the Rhodesian white minority regime: that is the escalation of armed struggle, which has continued sporadically for the past twelve years to levels which can totally smash the weak fabric of Smith's state. There is no doubt that the situation is now more objectively favourable than ever for the achievement of this end. The very turmoil of the past fifteen months of develop-

ments in southern Africa have roused the consciousness of the mass of the population to new heights of opposition to their oppressors. Unfortunately the ANC leadership, confronted with this situation, is paralysed with inaction. For months we have been told that the impending constitutional conference was a 'last ditch attempt at settlement' and that ANC was actively preparing the guerilla army which would move in in the event of its collapse. Now that the time, even by Muzorewa's long delayed terms, has come to launch massive attack they are totally silent on the subject. Why? It is basically because the leadership of ANC is deep in the pockets of the neo-colonialist African regimes — above all of Zambia.

For reasons which we have developed above the latter are as desperate as Vorster to avoid upsetting the delicate balance of imperialist dominated southern Africa. To reinforce their position they quite willingly resort to all manner of unprincipled and totally false formulations on the situation. At a stage managed UNIP demonstration on Rhodesia held in Lusaka on Saturday 30 August, Kaunda proclaimed 'Zambia will be destroyed and lose all that it has achieved since Independence unless a racial conflict in southern Africa is avoided by all means. We will lose all our development because we will be engrossed in the war'. Later he stated: 'If there is going to be a war that must only come after failing to reach a peaceful solution. If Zambia fails to secure a peaceful solution she will tell the world. Those involved are working on a programme to see that talks between the ANC and the rebel regime in Rhodesia succeed.'

By summoning up in this way the mirage of an all-consuming racial conflict as the inevitable result of the breakdown of the present negotiations Kaunda is engaging in a deliberate falsification whose function is to distract attention from his own treacherous role in demobilising the Zimbabwean liberation movements. If it is not possible to *convince* the populations of the virtues of a detente exercise which had led precisely nowhere in its one year duration, then we must *frighten* them into it with invocations of the horrors which will result from its failure. The use of arguments of this illusory kind is

in fact a welcome sign of the desperation which the detente manoeuvrers now find themselves in.

Now is the time when socialists world wide, and all supporters of the liberation of southern Africa from white racism should be countering such fake 'support' by organising the largest possible political and material support to the armed struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe.

**John Blair,**  
August 1975

1. 'Verkramppte'...Afrikaans literally 'warlike'. Used commonly to refer to right wingers who oppose any form of concessions to non whites. Those prepared to compromise are commonly referred to as 'Verligte'
2. 'Indaba' — gathering, meeting.

Nigeria

# JULY 29 COUP

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\* 'Unevenness, the most general law of the historical process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of combined development by which we mean a drawing together of the separate steps, an amalgam of the archaic with the more contemporary forms. Without this law, to be taken in the whole of its material content, it is impossible to understand the history of.....any country of the second, third or tenth cultural class.'

\* L.D. Trotsky  
\* History of the Russian Revolution Vol. 1.  
\* 1930

\* 'Finally we reaffirm this country's friendship with all countries. Foreign nationals living in Nigeria will be protected. Foreign investments will also be protected. The Government will honour all obligations entered into by the previous governments of the Federation. We will also give continued active support to the Organisation of African Unity, the United National Organisation and the Commonwealth.'

\* Brigadier Murtala M. Mohammed  
\* Nigerian Head of State  
\* 30 July 1975

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## BUSINESS AS USUAL

in June of this year Brian Silk corresponding with the *Financial Times* of London wrote: 'Nigeria has been subjected to more progress and prosperity in the Western manner than any other country in black Africa since it emerged from the civil war five years ago. It is sad to report that as a result of this advancement the country is having what appears to be a nervous breakdown.....After nine years of military government the reinstatement of democracy is overdue....General Gowon may not be a very old soldier but the time has come for him to fade away.' On July 29th Gowon did just that and was replaced by his old time rival the highly connected Northerner. Brigadier Murtala Mohammed.

In 1966 the choice of national leader to succeed the murdered Ibo General Ironsi had been between Gowon and Mohammed. Ironsi's coup earlier in 1966 marked the end of six years of civilian rule since Independence in 1960. This period was characterised by the irreconcilability of interests of the feudal oligarchy of the north and those of the business/political ruling classes of the south; a direct legacy of Lord Lugard, who acting in the interests of British Imperialism, created Nigeria as a single state in 1914, but left the traditional centralised political apparatus of the northern muslim emirs intact, using this apparatus to cream off the surplus value through taxation. In the south, capitalist commercial activities from the time of the slave trade onwards had fostered the emergence of an indigenous entrepreneurial class based mainly on the marketing of cash crops and commodity distribution. The traditional ruling apparatus of the south had been largely destroyed.

Ironsi attempted to impose national unification militarily by abolishing by decree the federation of Nigerian states. The abolition of the federation led immediately to widespread rioting and acts of violence

against the Ibo merchants and landlords in northern Nigeria, whom the oppressed, mainly rural, Hausa masses identified immediately as the exploiting class. The Ibo/Yoruba dominated fractions of the southern ruling class exercised what indigenous control there was over the economic life of Nigeria. In the south, the growth of capitalism had resulted in the growing proletarianisation and urbanisation of the population culminating in 1964 with a near general strike. The feudal rulers of the more populous North observed with horror the developments which, if repeated in 'their' areas, would mean the complete erosion of their power base amongst the rural peasantry who were unorganised and illiterate except for Koranic schooling. Hence the lack of a skilled labour force and the absence of substantial raw materials, excepting the cash crop ground-nuts, led to a lack of capitalist development in the north and a concentration of wealth in the south.

However the British had undertaken to 'protect' the 'majority of the population in the North and had written into the Independence constitution provisions which ensured a domination of the reac-

tionary northern rulers in the Federal Government, which no amount of alliances between sections of the southern ruling class (and sometimes with sections of the northern ruling class) could shake off. Political control of the state machine remained in feudal hands, few of the development projects outlined in the First National Development Plan of 1960-1968 were started, agricultural production had fallen by 1971 to 36 per cent of the 1960 level but most importantly the apparatus capable of exploiting the now confirmed vast reserves of high grade oil was precariously inefficient.

## Biafra

Nigeria now supplies the USA with one third of her imports and Britain with 16 per cent of imported crude oil. In 1966 it was essential to ensure that the exploitation of these reserves, away from the fractious Arab Gulf and nearer the imperialist markets, was not interrupted by domestic 'disturbances'. Ironsi's attempt to impose a politically stable state had led to spontaneous mass uprisings in the north which, exploited by the northern rulers, found tribal expression against the entrepreneurial Ibos. In an effort to contain the situation, Gowon, a 'neutral' from the Anga tribe which lives in the buffer belt between the Islamic North and the Christian south, was brought to power. In an attempt to satisfy all classes (a phenomenon termed 'bonapartism') Gowon declared a new 12 state Federation and other reforms. The ruling class of the newly created, oil rich, Biafra took this move to its extreme and declared Independence. The northern and south western sections of the ruling class united against the Ibo dominated Eastern ruling class and imposed the Nigerian Federation through a three year long civil war in the course of which the fragmented and weak organisations of the Nigerian working class were completely destroyed.

## nine point programme

Gowon may have been indifferent to the interests of pre-war neocolonial elite in Nigeria, but he certainly was not 'neutral' when it came to the defence and facilitation of imperial interests in West Africa. In 1970, seven months after the end of the war Gowon announced a 'Nine Point Programme' which was to have culminated in a return to a broad based 'democratically' elected civilian government after a transitional period of six years. Only the programme dealing with the reorganisation of the army was ever completed. The only part of this left to finish is the building of barracks for the whole 250,000 strong armed forces to live directly under the centralised command of the military rulers, not, as at present, scattered around in villages and small towns where they are subject to the mainstream peasant and working class movements.

When the petro nairas (1 ₦ = £0.70) began to materialise in the autumn of 1973 it was the military rulers and their associates, with control of the state apparatus, who branched out into new entrepreneurial ac-



Brigadier M. R. Mohammed

tivities creaming off millions through bribery and corruption. A post-war bourgeoisie had been created whose power Gowon refused to curb; to the intense displeasure of the pre-war Nigerian ruling class.

## ECOWAS

In the north the political power of the feudal oligarchy was limited by successive military decrees, the traditional business classes of Nigeria were not getting a big enough chunk of the oil cake and the struggling embryonic industrial bourgeoisie saw Gowon engineer treaties which enabled imperialism to outflank them entirely.

Gowon had been the leading protagonist of the trading agreement concluded at Lome early this year, which gave the imperialist powers of the EEC the right to exploit 'third world' countries. M. Cheysson on the EEC remarked, 'The only answer to our balance of payments deficit is that we enter into these new market, and the only place where these new markets can exist in the world is these developing countries.' Such a country is Nigeria; a state destined by imperialism to play the role of policeman (Nigeria has the largest army in black Africa) and sub-imperialist centre for that part of sub-Saharan Africa not controlled by the other sub-imperialist centre, South Africa. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) negotiated by Gowon and President Eyadema of Togo as a direct follow up of the signing of the Lome Agreement ties 15 West African states with a total population of 124 million to the economic expansion of Nigeria. These states will, through the introduction of a customs union, the abolition of restrictions of trade, free movement of people, services, and capital between member states and the harmonisation of all industrial, agricultural and economic policies become virtual Nigerian colonies dependent upon her for capital and cheap labour. Nigeria's industry, being almost totally import-substitution operations of the capitalist multinationals, and financial operations of which £600 million are tied up in the City of London, 240 million in the World Bank, 120 million in the International Monetary Fund and 50 million in the African Development Bank, are

## FOUNDER MEMBERS OF 'ECOWAS'

Mauritania	Ivory Coast
Senegal	Mali
The Gambia	Upper Volta
Guinea-Bissau	Ghana
Guinea	Togo
Sierra-Leone	Dahomey
Liberia	Niger
	Nigeria

already totally linked into the imperialist economy and subject to its fluctuations

Whilst the ruling classes of Nigeria fretted under the yoke of the Gowon administration, they had not been able to organise 'genuinely national political parties', 'prepare and adopt a new constitution', 'elect a democratic government' or 'to create more federal states', as promised under the nine point plan, the working class picked themselves up after the debacle of the civil war and started on their own process of 'reconstruction'. For them it was not important that the farcical 1973 'new census' had revealed several hundred persons per house in northern Kano and could therefore not be used as a reliable basis for a constitutional formula, or new system of revenue allocation, when housing and health facilities remained below the poverty datum levels. Living standards for the bulk of the working classes were equally dismal regardless of whether they were part of the 7 per cent of the population who 'got' 40 per cent of the total oil revenue in the southern rivers State or whether they were one of the 11 million people in northern Kano State who only got £25 million. 'Eradication of corruption', another plan in the nine point programme was not achieved by Gowon and has prudently not been stressed by Mohammed. However this ubiquitous feature of Nigerian life combined with the international crisis of capitalism, the jamming of Nigerian ports with consumer imports aimed at the petro-naira swollen Nigerian market, and the delays in getting import substitution industries such as the refining of petrol at the new plants at Warri and Kaduna off the ground, had led to an inflation rate running at about 20 per cent before 'Udoji'.

## Udoji Report

'The Public Service Review Commission' under the chairmanship of Chief Jerome Udoji announced on December 28th 1974 pay awards of up to 130 per cent for civil servants which the government backdated to April 1974. The Nigerian working classes had already had to suffer massive inflationary price increases prior to and in anticipation of the announcement of the Udoji awards. In NE State the price of yam, a basic foodstuff, had in December 1974 escalated to 70 Kobo (100 kobo=1 naira) when the basic daily minimum wage rate for unskilled workers was also 70 kobo. An explosion greeted the announcement of the Udoji awards. The Nigerian proletariat is small in comparison to the 70 per cent

of the population which comprises the peasantry and the percentage of the public service workers (10 per cent) within the proletariat is even smaller. Private sector workers immediately launched a nationwide campaign for wage parity with the public sector and for an immediate return to civilian government. In early 1975 the economic functioning of the foreign and the national bourgeoisies was crippled.

First to strike were the dockworkers of Lagos' jammed port Apapa who organised around the demand for a workers' docks management committee. The bank workers under Alhaji babs Animashaun struck demanding pay rises of 200 per cent backdated to 1973. Animashaun was immediately arrested under



the 1971 Trades Disputes Decree banning strikes and lockouts. A series of 'wildcat' strikes followed, members of the Petrol Haulage Workers Union stopped work, power workers struck and in Lagos water supply workers continued working to rule after 100 of their comrades had been snatched from the picket lines by armed soldiers during a strike. Doctors who were recipients under the Udoji scheme worked to rule for more pay and for increased expenditure on the health service which in Nigeria employs one doctor for every 30,000 people. Arrests of strike leaders and militants continued. In January five militants of the Anti-Poverty Movement of Nigeria (APOMON) were arrested for alleged subversive activities, on charges unspecified excepting the one of issuing a leaflet in solidarity with the railway workers demand for implementation of the five year old 'Ani' Pay Award. The five were still in jail in June of this year despite students swearing an affidavit ordering the inspector general of police to produce one of them, Madunagu, and to show why he is being detained.

The six Nigerian universities were closed by the authorities in February 1975 when students struck on the anniversary of the shooting of one of their numbers in 1970. They demanded the instant release of people detained without trial, a return to civilian rule in 1976 and an immediate decree against corruption with the penalisation of corrupt leaders.

Market women agitated for price control and better marketing facilities. Their position as both consumer and vendor in the Nigerian working class combined with their role as mother and wife within the family provided them with a unique role in the class struggle. The first lesson they learnt in this latest round of the class struggle, a lesson also learnt by Lagos and Ibadan



*'Business as usual'*

tenants, was not to put their faith in military decrees. Neither the Price Control Board set up this year, nor the Rent Control Decrees have succeeded in curbing inflationary prices and rents.

The government was forced to convene a meeting of the Nigerian Chambers of Commerce and the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association which was guarded by armed troops and police with riot shields. The Udoji Awards were extended to the private sector.

The working class had won an important battle and went on in the first half of 1975 to unite the five trade union centres, traditionally split through the efforts of the CIA through the AFL/CIO, Moscow, Britain, and the catholic church. Socialists and militants through the 'Workers' Unity Committee' have succeeded in uniting all these elements in the Nigerian Trade Union Federation. During the January strike wave embryonic 'Councils of Labour' were organised at grass roots level, but their structure floundered as their leaders were arrested. Nevertheless strikes have continued throughout this year. In Rivers State 15,000 teachers struck against poor working conditions and the non-payment of their May salaries. The working class mobilisations have had a resonance in the peasant movements. Peasant organisations around particular commodities, to get a better price for their product have been set up such as those of the coastal and riverine fishermen, the fish dealers, nomadic beef producers in the north have been struggling to preserve their rights of access to traditional cattle tracks and peasants employed in the timber trade are fighting for their livelihoods against concessions being granted to foreign enterprises.

The only raw material to have expanded in production recently is oil. In every other sphere of primary commodity production has decreased and the exodus of uneducated peasants to the towns has exacerbated unemployment. The demand of industry for skilled labour has meant that the government has had to organise a 'Universal Primary Education' programme to start in September 1976. The population of primary schools is expected to rise from 4.5 million to 18 million by 1981. However with 40 per cent of the population under 15 this still means that around 30 million children will never receive any education. Further there is still massive unemployment problems for both school leavers and graduates. When the government restricted employment in the Nigerian Youth Service Corps scheme to graduates only, there were immediate widespread demonstrations by other sections of the student population

whose 'unemployment problem' the scheme was intended to solve. However whilst the education service in Nigeria is run to requirements of the capitalist market it is unlikely to foresee any improvement.

General Gowon has not laid a firm foundation for the implementation of the U.P.E. programme, just as he had not fundamentally altered living standards on any score for the Nigerian working class and poor peasants. The immense wealth derived from the oil bonanza had remained concentrated in the pockets of the multinationals and a new military/entrepreneurial elite. Other ruling class pockets were deprived of the tinkle of oil cash didn't even have the prospect of political power as compensation. This combined with Gowon's failure to curb the growth and strengthening of working class organisations, hammered the final nails into the coffin of bonapartism. Gowon had satisfied nobody except the imperialists who would be unlikely to jeopardise their investments by coming to his rescue.

Mohammed came to power in a holding operation for the Nigerian ruling classes. He earned some immediate popularity by cancelling some of the most outrageous extravagances of the previous administration like the 'Black Arts Festival'. He annulled the 1973 census reverting to the 1963 figure of 56 million for planning purposes and sacked all officials, notably the state military governors who served under Gowon. The commitment of the new regime to the 3,000 million Third National Development Plan announced in March this year stands firm and at this juncture Mohammed has taken a pause to sit back and rethink his strategy.

The working class in Nigeria today can not afford to allow the new regime time to muster strength. Under the last wave of strikes the slogan was raised 'It's the workers' turn to govern'.

Central on the stage today is the question of government; who governs Nigeria in whose interests? The fragmented and weak bourgeois squabble for crumbs of the imperialist cake, they can not govern effectively. Only the united leadership of the Nigerian working class, in alliance with the peasantry is capable of achieving unity and democratic government and of going further to the socialist organisation of Nigerian society and moreover of leading other African states to a successful socialist revolution.

*( We wish to thank cde. Lulu of the Nigerian Socialist Group for information supplied in an interview during August 1975.)*



# smash the neo-colonial state!

The beginning of the sixties witnessed a new phase in the domination of Africa by the imperialist countries by the successful stabilisation of the neocolonial states. However it now seems far clearer that these states (in obedience of the capitalist mode of production) are undergoing a deep crisis due to the combined effect of the world wide crisis of imperialism and the inherent factors of decomposition in neocolonialism. The real contradictions which have been masked by the sham of formal 'independence' are now emerging into the limelight. Faced with the rise of colonial revolution the empirical solution of the European bourgeoisie was to disrupt the classical colonial economy. They had to remodel their exploitation according to the needs of present-day capitalism. Some colonial powers accomplished this operation, successfully at minimum cost. But a few, such as the Belgians discovered that inter-imperialist competition was intensified in the neocolonial arena, and discovered it at great personal cost.

Neocolonialism cannot be said to be the 'highest form of imperialist domination'. The transformation did not usher in a new era of bourgeois rule but appears in fact to have led to a far worse situation, in which the plunder of neocolonial countries assumed a qualitatively different form. At the same time the peril of revolution was averted. In this sense neocolonialism was not an objectively necessary form of domination. It represented above all the defeat of the African nationalist movements who were unable to make the struggle for liberation grow into a struggle against capitalism. It is precisely because the Portuguese bourgeoisie could not affect such a transformation that African Nationalism in the colonies soon went beyond the framework of the traditional reformist demands and methods of struggle. This is why today it has to confront the question of the anti-capitalist perspective of the struggle.

For those reasons the neo-colonial state apparatus was condemned from its very conception. It was not a historical stage that African society had to go through nor was it a necessary evil due to the backwardness of the African social formation. The neocolonial state was the reflection of the new balance of forces set up between the African masses and imperialism after twenty years of anti-colonial struggles. Secondly, it expressed the balance of forces between various imperialist countries. The backwardness in the African

social formation had assigned to the petit-bourgeoisie the indisputable role of leadership during the rise of the nationalist movement. Therefore the class nature of their organisations has quickly led to their coming back into the claws of imperialism. Though power was entrusted to the urban petit-bourgeoisie, at the end of the fifties, imperialism was cautious enough to test out its effectiveness and to eliminate beforehand its most radical elements. The weakness, perhaps indeed the absence of African capital during this period drove the imperialist countries to rely on this heterogeneous and unstable social layer. This phenomenon was so generalised that in many countries the only force of relatively cohesive bourgeois power was the army.

But 'economic development' in the framework of neocolonialism was to facilitate the rise of African small capital, particularly the petit-bourgeois elements tied or integrated to state power. Before independence, there were African capitalists in few African countries. In the seventies, there took place a rapid development of autonomous capital accumulation mainly originating from the spoils of neocolonial domination, thus giving such African capital its comprador nature.

The basic principle of every bourgeoisie is the drive for profit; so today these individuals are therefore seeking to interchange their masters and to take advantage of the contradictions between various imperialist powers in order to increase the crumbs left to them by imperialism. In any case, African capitalists are restricted to either marginal sectors of the economy or, in exceptional circumstance, participate as minorities in foreign enterprises. This practice fits effectively with the plans of the imperialists who are attempting to develop a stable bourgeois class in favour of total foreign domination. Within this general tendency of the modern development of the African social formation one must note that an important action of the bureaucratic petit-bourgeoisie in some countries is not in favour of primitive capital accumulation. And, often in these circumstances they can put a fight against the nascent bourgeoisie.

In other cases, one can find various sectors within the bourgeoisie vying for the internal market, or even fighting around long term perspectives in order to retain total control of the state. Finally, and related to this, one can observe a struggle between emergent or national petit-bourgeoisie and a foreign community which holds the monopoly of a dominant sector of the economy. The local petit-bourgeoisie then intends to usurp the place of the foreign one. To sum up, we can distinguish the conflicts within the neocolonial state apparatus at the present stage:

1. A conflict between various bourgeois fractions each hinging on various imperialist countries (eg. Nigeria);

This often implies a certain reserve of a section of the bourgeoisie vis-a-vis the mother country eg. the Malagasy Republic.

2. A conflict between the ossified bureaucratic petit-bourgeoisie and an authentic section of the bourgeoisie which has emerged in the recent period.
3. A conflict between native capital and a foreign community eg. Uganda, Senegal.
4. A conflict caused by the wish of an important section of the bureaucratic petit-bourgeoisie and the national capitalists to change their masters and to challenge the traditional rulers of cooperation with the metropolis.

But two things have to be kept in mind: on the one hand it is quite possible to find combined in the same country the accumulation of various contradictions: on the other hand the ethnic factor is very often a superficial expression of these conflicts in as much as it simply reflects the different positions occupied by these groups in their relationship to the capitalist market. We must also remember that the partial industrialisation effected during the neocolonial period has given rise to a young and stable proletariat in new economic sectors. This has altered to a large extent the social coordinates as they existed in Africa in the fifties. This modification, which most importantly expressed itself in the strike of the M'Bao Refineries in Senegal, deepens the crisis of the traditional structures; it also modifies in an indirect way the situation in the countryside and offer the vanguard new perspectives for intervention. Conversely, the evolution of the African social formation is leading to the emergence of a vanguard and weakens the propensities of traditional nationalism. This phenomenon was the result of the considerable weight on the petit-bourgeoisie after the second world war as against a semi-proletarian and unstable working class.

Thus, the crisis of neocolonialism, the conflicts within the state apparatus and the counter-effects of the evolution of the African social formation, are all closely linked with the serious economic crisis of Black Africa and the spectacular crash by some national economies.

## bonapartists

In such a period, therefore, it should be no surprise to see 'conflicts' taking place, when the revolt of the masses and violent clashes between the various bourgeois and petit-bourgeois fractions tend to overlap simultaneously. This explains why in a few countries one can find the emergence of regimes making use of a populist language or refined nationalism and constantly harping on the string of patriotism. This is of course done to pressurise imperialism whilst breaking the organisational autonomy of the masses. But these regimes are interludes, they represent at a given moment the balance of forces between the masses and imperialism, and between different bourgeois and petit-bourgeois fractions. This type of bonapartism is in no way similar to the Bonapartism of Sekou Toure's in 1960. History does not repeat itself in such exact patterns. The objective conditions which determine military reformism in Dahomy or in Malagasy Republic are very different from those which brought the left wing of the R.D.A.<sup>1</sup> to power. The social forces that are now involved are not the same; the inclinations to compromise with imperialism are stronger given the high level of militancy displayed by the masses. Hence the reason why they will last but for a time only to strengthen one

or the other of the two decisive classes; the working class and peasant masses or imperialism

The Masseur-Debat regime and that of N Gouabi in the Congo have been the first of the sort. As an expression of the contradictions of neocolonial Congo the nationalist fraction of the army elevated its demagoguery to the highest level of mystification. But this famous 'Popular Republic of Congo' never severed its links with the imperialist market. In fact the bonapartist nature of N'Gouabi lasted only during the period of instability between the masses and the right. So, when the Congolese bourgeoisie decided to strike a deep blow against the left of the P.C.T.<sup>2</sup>, the centrist current vanished into thin air. N'Gouabi became more a prisoner of the right, of Yhanbis and various other mercenaries. We shall bear in mind a few of the salient features from this episode: the presence of radical elements within the state apparatus and within the P.C.T., their consequent downfall and their pragmatic attempt to lead a revolutionary struggle today.

## tasks of vanguard

Such a new political situation in many African countries poses an essential problem for revolutionaries: *what is to be the practice of the vanguard? What should be the correct slogans and its attitude towards the neocolonial state?* For nationalist mystifications can have a strong influence on new vanguards still under the domination of nationalism. Indeed the M.F.M.<sup>3</sup> and Monima in the Malagasy Republic, the Patriotic Youth League in Dahomy and Diawara and his comrades all face this problem. Besides this is also a suitable arena for discussion to dispel once and for all any illusion in nationalism as an ideology and to explain that the socialist revolution shows the only way forward. Further we have to denounce the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies who support such regimes under the pretext of the 'national state'. In this, they reject the ABC of Leninism and stab the masses right in the back.



*Well should revolutionaries support these regimes or not? Should they join them? Should they play one fraction of the bourgeoisie against the other? Should they trust the anti-imperialism of some sections of the bourgeoisie?* Indeed the answers to these questions depend very much on the elucidation of two preliminary problems;

1. Is the socialist revolution possible in Africa?
2. Can the working masses be organised on a class programme?

Let us briefly go back to our starting point: the neocolonial state is the reflection of the balance of forces between the masses and imperialism as it was at the close of the sixties. As such it is the guardian of the global interests of capitalism both on a national and an international scale against the working class and the poor peasants. Therefore support of Ramanantsoa in the Malagasy Republic or participation in the N'Gouabi regime would mean accepting that the state loses its class nature by a putsch. But those who suggest such a practice do not go far enough. They



prefer to say rather that whilst retaining its bourgeois nature the particular regime offers new perspectives to 'serious anti-imperialists'. Thus we confront once more the theory of revolution by stages and the anti-imperialist national front.

It would be useful first to clarify the erroneous conception which some African comrades have as regards the theory of Trotskyists of the colonial revolution. *Is it true that because of its dependence on imperialism the national bourgeoisie is unable to oppose in any way imperialist domination?* This is obviously false. But the struggle against foreign economic domination is not an anti-capitalist struggle; it pertains to the bourgeois democratic revolution and does not involve any rupture with the capitalist mode of production. In fact anti-colonial struggles have demonstrated that a fight against foreign oppression can be waged by bourgeois layers (as the planters of the Ivory Coast did). Of course, new forms of oppression have emerged with formal independence. But the main lesson to be drawn from a decade of neo-colonialism is that the national bourgeoisie is unable to launch any process of industrialisation. Consequently, they are unable to create a local market and to achieve the longdrawn out process of forming a classical nation. Thus, Trotskyists do not deny the fact that in the imperialist epoch various national bourgeoisies can not initiate a struggle for some demands relevant to a bourgeois democratic revolution. On the contrary, on various occasions we have underlined that the beginning of these struggles was conducted under the leadership of the bourgeoisie or the petit-bourgeoisie.

But we are totally opposed to the myth which erects barriers between various revolutionary tasks converting them into historical stages. *The theory of permanent revolution is built on the law of uneven and combined development*, ie. the combination of tasks which the masses in a backward country are simultaneously faced with. This law of history results from what Lenin used to term the 'Higher Stage of Capitalism', that is, *the international domination of capital*. Now, the national bourgeoisie is tied to imperialism through the ramifications of the world market; it is also linked with the comprador bourgeoisie through the know of the local market. So when the peasant masses rise against the puppet state, against the usuries, against the comprador property owners, they attack also the invested capital of the national bourgeoisie. They thus create a revolutionary situation where the rule of all owning classes is severely challenged. So the peasant struggles contribute to the struggle of the proletariat against the private property of the national bourgeoisie itself. These are the lessons of April 1971 and May 1972 in the Malagasy Republic.

All this demonstrates how some bourgeois layers can initiate a struggle for certain demands of the bourgeois democratic revolution. But they cannot fulfill them entirely; for instance the agrarian question will remain untouched and neither will the severing of links with the world market, a necessary condition for a free national accumulation to be effected. Finally, and especially, due to its fear of the rise of the masses, and since the revolutionary process (albeit starting around nationalist demands) inevitably prompts the peasant and working masses to struggle for their own demands, the national bourgeoisie will inevitably join the camp of counter-revolution within a matter of seconds.

## choices..

Consequently there are two choices for any African country in the grips of a continued process of struggle by the masses and by a bourgeois fraction: *either* the victory of counter-revolution will prevail if the bourgeoisie remains at the leadership of this process in which case even the bourgeois democratic demands will not be fulfilled; *or* the proletariat and its revolutionary party will have to win the hegemony over the rural and urban petit-bourgeoisie. In the latter case the socialist revolution can triumph. *This means the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat allied with the poor peasantry, and the combination of the tasks of the democratic revolution, and the fulfillment of the essential tasks of the proletarian revolution.*

We therefore reject the separation between the stage of 'real independence' and the stage of 'socialism'. For all these tasks are mixed together by reason of the class reality and the balance of forces between the various classes in the countries under imperialist domination. We reject too the Menshevik and Stalinist theory of revolutionary stages, not only because the national bourgeoisie is unable to bring the anti-imperialist struggle to its conclusion; *but also because we refuse to postpone to a later date the uprising of the workers and peasants which will unavoidably take place on a class basis.*

For these reasons, then, it is wrong to present the Vietnamese or Cuban revolution as a 'struggle for national liberation'. Revolutionary marxists must see in these revolutions a typical combination of the struggle for national liberation, the agrarian revolution, democratic freedoms and the class interests of the proletariat. And this is regardless of the intentions of the leaderships as the struggle unfolds.

## the national question

*But does that imply the African Trotskyists disagree with all slogans on the National Question?* The answer is clearly: no. Indeed, Lenin and Trotsky have established a clear distinction between the right of nations to self determination and the principled opposition against petit-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalists. For in the epoch of imperialism, nationalism becomes reactionary as an ideology since it is opposed to the independent organisation of the working class necessary to win the specific class objectives of the proletariat and the poor peasantry, and also the international solidarity of workers all over the world. Indeed, class struggle politics reject the concepts of 'national solidarity' and the 'common national interest'. In the African countries petit-bourgeois nationalism is a narrow and restrictive substitute and hides the objective combination of national emancipation and social liberation. When bandied around by a Ramanantsoa or a N'Gouabi, it becomes a mystification in order to hinder the independent organisation of the working class. Yet between sectarianism and opportunism, revolutionary marxists should support the national struggle for the self determination of the masses together with all its linguistic, cultural and political demands; but at the same time bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalism should be denounced.

It is necessary also to distinguish the ex-Portuguese colonies and Southern Africa from the rest of the neo-colonial countries since foreign domination manifests itself differently in these two cases. But African na-

tionalism, whatever be its dimension does not fall outside the scope of history and must be looked at in terms of social forces. It is therefore necessary to show that to take up slogans against the neocolonial university (an example of cultural domination) is not contradictory to the struggle against petit-bourgeois nationalism, which often influences African students. Similarly one must show how agreement with the slogans for the independence of the people of Angola is not contradictory to polemics against the nationalist illusions of a section of the M.P.L.A. (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola). This explains why we denounce the cooperation treaties between France and the Malagasy Republic and demands that the French pull out of Diego whilst at the same time denouncing the regime of Ramanantsoa and the A.F.K.M.<sup>4</sup>

Once again it is immaterial whether these individuals succeed or fail in making Bigesand leave or severing colonial links with France. For more important is the capacity of the working and peasant masses to win struggles hinging on these national demands and also on the social ones. Why should we not do so when it is objectively possible to go beyond bourgeois democratic demands? In the present historical period, to stay within the limits of nationalist slogans represents an immense degree of danger of being absorbed back into neo-colonialism. National democratic demands must be raised in ones revolutionary propaganda. In the Malagasy Republic for example, faced with the danger of regionalist divisions because of the political confrontations between sections of the bourgeoisie one must advance a body of anti-capitalist slogans to unite the workers of the Plateau with those of the sea coast. One must also organise the self-defence of the workers against the fascist thugs controlled by Belaunay and Resampa.

## utopia

It is not true that nationalist demands can not be met by the bourgeoisie or even by imperialism. Some militants also propose a united front — under the pretext that N'Gouabi and co. will be outflanked. This is *sheer utopia*. It could have been possible if the working class had won political and organisational hegemony over a mass movement; that is, in the last analysis, if the Marxist revolutionary vanguard had won hegemony. But in the present conditions in Africa today, this would be naive triumphalism if one takes into account the tremendous weakness of the African vanguard. Further there is also a risk that the bourgeoisie and the petit-bourgeoisie will buy off the mass movements. The ways to achieve this are diverse. It can take the form of nationalisation without workers control thus allowing the bureaucratic petit-bourgeoisie to accumulate private capital e.g. Congo. It can also take the form of rupture of all links with French imperialism whilst wheeling and dealing with another imperialist country e.g. Dahomey.

But should revolutionaries consider these manoeuvres as a lesser evil? No! History has taught us that these victories of the mass movement do not last long. Too soon, these nationalist generalist and populist governments would launch an onslaught on the workers to stabilise bourgeois power. As for the workers, they see things differently and our nationalists of yesterday would soon join the side of reaction to quash popular unrest. Besides should they vacillate for any reason,

imperialism will just sweep them away to protect its long term interests before it is too late. Yet imperial-

ism can very well allow some regimes to undermine so some of its interests provided these reforms would guarantee social rest in the long run and the real economic links are maintained. Good examples of this are that of French imperialism in the Congo and US imperialism in Peru.

Let us then get rid, once and for all, of all illusions about national fronts, the anti-imperialist national bourgeoisie, or of critical support to a reformist military regime. A stop must be put to the myth of national homogeneity against imperialist penetration. On the contrary, the latter intensifies class struggles and deepens social differences. The national 'community' opposed to imperialism is a handful of local lackeys and a fairy-tale to trap nationalists from the petit-bourgeoisie. In fact this belief has been popularised by the Maoist concept of primary and secondary contradictions. And this very same concept led the Palestinian resistance to suffer the bloody defeat by the armies of their 'Arab Brothers'.

*It remains now to state precisely what are the tasks of revolutionaries.* Many militants agree in principle with the Trotskyist movement, but do not translate this agreement into practice. To many of these the cultural and political backwardness of African masses seem to pose an insoluble problem: how can one talk to an illiterate peasant about socialism? How to organise the struggle given the verocity of imperialist oppression? Two answers, each one related to the other must be given....*build the revolutionary vanguard party on the one hand, and on the other hand have a class programme equipped with slogans which can raise the level of the consciousness of the masses.* It is no easy task nor is it an intellectual exercise to structure the vanguard with a common theoretical framework. Indeed the conditions in which struggles are unfolding in the imperialist epoch, the need to provide a concrete answer to each concrete situation, the necessity to understand the dynamics of the political situation on the international plane in order to grasp the balance of forces, the duty to state very clearly ones position as regards the various tendencies in the international workers movement compel African revolutionary marxists, as all others, to start building as of now a vanguard organisation based on a clear and unambiguous programme. For no heterogeneous political formation can survive for more than a few months in the conditions of struggle in neo-colonial Africa. This incidentally explains why there is no national agreement against imperialism.

But it is useless to scream about division as some do, as soon as one of their own cadres expresses a precise point of view on some problem, especially if it is in the mass organisations like that of FEANF<sup>5</sup>. In fact the lack of a thorough debate caused by the explosive situation compells everybody to express their position clearly on strategy and tactics; this is absolutely necessary given the political context of Africa. Therefore, it is no surprise that the main tendencies of the workers movement appear again in these conditions. Nationalists, neo-Stalinists, and revolutionary marxists confront each other more and more. In order to structure the vanguard, revolutionary marxists must be able to intervene in the masses as a compact force without capitulating to the petit-

bourgeois or opportunist pressures resulting from economic and cultural oppression. In addition, revolutionary marxists must equip themselves with the methods of clandestine operations, link all the struggles together and prepare for the confrontation. A vanguard organisation must pledge itself to the building of the revolutionary party with an implantation in the masses. It must also assume the role of political and military leadership in the revolutionary period. If no distinction is drawn between a mass organisation and a vanguard one and if no strict procedure is observed about recruitment, the security of other militants will be very quickly endangered. So will the clarity of the political line. Opportunist deviations will also emerge very quickly. Indeed failure to organise the vanguard in a rigorous way and distinct from the mass movement befits only populists ("we trust the masses"). This betrays a total misunderstanding of the situation of these masses under imperialist domination. It is equivalent to 'prettyfying' the reality of the neocolonial situation.

Thus the vanguard properly organised must fulfill its key task before the pre-revolutionary crisis. It must raise the consciousness of the masses and educate the workers politically. Hence it is incorrect to say: "We cannot do anything because the masses do not understand us." For this would imply that the masses would gradually educate themselves and gradually grasp the necessity to struggle in order to join the vanguard. On the contrary, *the masses will never attain any revolutionary consciousness if the vanguard does not intervene in the class struggle.* This is a lesson from history about which Marx and Lenin had theorised a long time ago. Lenin in fact, polemicised against Kautsky when the latter failed to understand the need for revolutionary intervention. Lenin, on the other hand, understood how revolutionary initiative can alter the balance of forces. It is obvious that the global situation is determined by concrete objective conditions. But the task of the revolutionary party is *precisely to alter these conditions in favour of a proletarian revolution and not to adapt to the present situation.* This is the only way by which the party can avoid opportunism or adventurism and these are the two main dangers facing revolutionaries if they do not understand the relationship between the vanguard and the masses.

In these conditions it is imperative for African revolutionary Marxists to formulate a series of slogans which appeal to the masses at their present level of consciousness and which can lead them through struggles until they finally become aware of the need for proletarian revolution. Therefore a series of transitional slogans which include demands of a bourgeois democratic nature and also class demands will avoid isolation among the different sectors and will accelerate the growth of a revolutionary consciousness. Such a transitional programme will accentuate the mistrust of the masses of petit-bourgeois leaders and nationalist mystifications about the army. It will help to recruit the most radical elements from the working class, peasantry and the student milieu. It will help in the intervention in the villages by taking out the day to day problems of the African peasant. It will at the same time propel some revolutionary peasants to initiate a 'cultural revolution' by intervening around the programme.

By stating clearly that one is strictly towards a class society and that power should be handed over



to workers councils and to the peasants and that workers only should control the national economy in a democratic way, can only alienate petit-bourgeois nationalists from the vanguard. Who cares for these half-baked Kerenskys still dazzled by the classical European bourgeois state?

Today, the key problem is to transform the *subjective* factor and to level it with the *objective* ones which are keeping the African revolution in effervescence. The subjective factor is still very underdeveloped and was absent in May 1968 and May 1972 in the Malagasy Republic. For illusions in reformism, gradualism or nationalism will still retain some degree of strength so long as African revolutionaries have not displayed their efficiency and dedication.

In the present conjuncture under the combined upsurge of popular struggles and crisis within the neocolonial state apparatus, anti-imperialist militants run the danger of falling straight into the trap of rightist opportunism. For belief in the bourgeois democratic stage always ends up in implicitly or explicitly supporting a reformist military regime. This stagist conception of anti-imperialist struggle is the product of petit-bourgeois nationalism. Disregarding the political and national realities in the epoch of imperialism, the setting up of a bourgeois democratic state is looked upon as the conclusions of the struggle. Or, still it is the product of the Stalinist or neo-Stalinist theory according to which one should struggle for the stage of national democracy whilst socialism is postponed to to the Greek Calendar! In any case these two conceptions are often confused. In the PAIGC Senegal, for example, one can easily discern a neo-Stalinist approach on the part of the leadership whilst recruitment is affected largely on a nationalist basis. The slogans are sufficiently confusing so as to please everybody.

We are here concerned with military reformist regimes i.e. governments which are the outcome of an unstable situation within the native bourgeoisie and in their relationship with imperialism. Two examples will be very useful: Dahomey's revolutionary government and the N'Gouabi regime of the Congo. In both these cases, reformist myths exercise a strong pressure over radicalised elements. In fact it was stronger than any serious analysis on the neocolonial state apparatus and social formation could have anticipated.

On the 31 October 1972 the Ligue Nationale de la Jeunesse Patriotique (LNJP) wrote an open letter to the military revolutionary government which had just seized power in Dahomey. In its opening sentence the LNJP stated its conception of the Dahomayan social formation: "except for a few profiteers and businessmen grafted to the old regime in order to enrich themselves, the coup d'état of the 26 October was generally welcomed by the Dahomian public opinion. The proclamation and the formation of the new government were also welcomed. A 'handfull' of people as opposed to 'public' opinion! Once more we see the age old concept of 'whole nation' against imperialism. Are we quoting in good faith? Yes, for in the next page one can read this gem: 'there is one thing everybody can be sure of -- it is entirely up to you the government, to transform the power which was seized by arms into a broad popular power, into a really revolutionary force against which every foreign power and every imperialist country will be helpless.'

Is this nationalism or not? Yes, since this famous 'national' and democratic revolution that the LNJP calls for, will be created by a 'revolutionary council for national salvation' and by the 'political conference of the people'. The latter was set up by the military government and composed partly of delegates from mass organisations and partly of nominees from the army and police. Sincere militants who today are clinging to this caricature of 'anti-imperialist strategy' should quickly realise their mistake as they realise that they have to accommodate themselves to the bourgeois state apparatus and are forced into a course of ultra opportunism. If not it means that they are unable to understand the root causes of the regimes demagoguery.

As a second example we will consider the attitude of the left in the Congo towards the leadership of the PCT<sup>2</sup>. On the 2nd April 1972 we wrote the following in the Trotskyist magazine 'Quatriemme Internationale' about the strategy of Diawara and that of his comrades within the PCT: 'This reformist and gradualist strategy can not but lead to the same bloodbath as in Indonesia and in the Sudan. N'Gouabi has stepped in the shoes of Massemba Debat only in as much as he has favoured "normalisation". But he has gradually eliminated the Left. The latter sensing imminent defeat wanted to redress the situation by a putsch thus displaying their political desperation. To have hoped that the masses will politicise themselves when in fact their mobilisation was being made more difficult, means a failure to understand that the workers receive their best political education in the course of and by the struggles. The masses do not become anti-imperialist spontaneously. Revolutionary marxists must advance their struggle and base themselves on the day to day fight against the bosses...the politics of the Left were leading to an impasse. In failing to situate their own struggle alongside that of the revolutionaries in Cameroon the left of the PCT had a narrow nationalist outlook, it proved its reformism rather than Marxism/Leninism. In the Congo as anywhere else in Africa, *victory can only be achieved if one transcends the national boundaries erected by imperialism.*

A few weeks later a self-criticism of the militants of the M22 (Movement of the 22 February 1972) was being circulated around in the Congo. Interestingly enough one could read the same assessments; this is why the 22 February is the sanction of history for a

series of wrong and bloody actions taken paradoxically in the name of the "revolution", clear criticism is made of the loss of autonomy of the vanguard since 1943, of the lack of revolutionary work among the masses at the expense of support and later participation in state power.

There was also a criticism made of the subjectivism that led to the proclamation of socialism in 1964 at the PCT's congress and of the blanquism that led to the putsch. We are reminded that the Congolese state remains a bourgeois state and that the correct policy for the vanguard is to destroy it. The M22 comrades write the following: "The African state, in general, is often but a junior partner of the metropolitan capitalist state. It also at times pre-presents the peak of the representatives of tribal power. The question of the state apparatus is a key problem for all those who wish to fight against imperialism and for independence. When we analyse the downfall of N'Krumah in Ghana we realise that the greatest mistake of this great militant was not to have smashed the state apparatus. Africa has no other choice...integration (entryism) was nothing but the transfer of arms from revolution to counter-revolution; it was an act of liquidation. It means nothing to speak of the school of the people, of popular culture of a new type of army, of an independent economy, nothing will change as long as reaction wields, its most powerful weapon -- the state apparatus".

This was a rich balance sheet. Yet we do not think that the M22 represents African marxism for as we shall see later, many points still remain obscure in this self criticism, particularly the reasons for the defeat of April 1973. However Diawara's and his comrades self-criticism does constitute a new and sharp polemic on the nationalist government. Seen from this angle, we think that Diawara's switch to the guerilla warfare and the consequent regroupment of the urban movement especially in the high schools have infused the anti-imperialist movement with a new dynamism. Such a process is taking place when the reformist image of the regime is being eroded and giving way to a more classical reactionary police state.

We can not endorse totally the self criticism of the M22 comrades and regard them as having a clear political programme. We will not take up here every single ambiguity in their text. Yet one point has to be made. It concerns the three essential coordinates that the M22 proposes for an anti-imperialist struggle.

They are; (a) a proletarian organisation tied to the masses, (b) an army led by this organisation and (c) a united front of classes and revolutionary groups (anti-imperialist front). Somewhere else in their text the comrades add that the army is subordinate to the organisation. Nothing further is said about the organisation of the proletariat.

We are not claiming that the M22 has no opinion on this question. Yet it is significant that this point is not clearly explained when indeed the key problem is in fact the structuring of the vanguard, of its programmatic relationship to the masses. The self criticism played an important role in crystallising the urban movement; we realise that it was not meant as a programmatic declaration, however it is clear that even for the M22 it had more importance than a mere communiqué.

Accordingly we will point out one of its flaws. There is no theorisation of the process of building the party; instead we notice an empirical approach when this question is treated!

Secondly, is this "army led by the organisation" an armed wing of the organisation or an armed mass movement? These are not mere minor impressions. From Tchad to Erythrea, from the attempts of the PAI<sup>6</sup> at the beginning of the sixties to the Simbas in the Congo-Kinsasha, the question of revolutionary violence has been treated in different ways. Sometimes the consequence have been disastrous. In view of the lack of clarification on this point, we are afraid that the M22, though it quite correctly denounces Blanquism, has itself taken a blanquist line.

The last point is one the question of the united front of all classes, which is to be the anti-imperialist front. Such a formulation comes as a real surprise since it is not preceded by any analysis of the Congolese social formation. More surprising does it sound when we recall that participation in the Government and in the PCT was justified as a strategy in the name of the "anti-imperialist united front". Which then are the classes likely to participate in a united front led by the proletarian organisation? What is the necessity for this front? No answer is provided. Is it the myth of the national bourgeoisie which comes back through the window after having left through the door?

The daily experiences of the world revolution vindicate fully the theory of permanent revolution. Equally, experiences show that frontist strategies always end up in a bloodbath in favour of imperialism. Thus, many organisations, in their attempts to reconcile fire and water seek to theorise their practice whilst at the same time clinging to stalinist or traditional nationalist schemas. An example is the revolutionary committee of the UPC<sup>7</sup>, which claims to be the revolutionary party. Whilst stating clearly that the working class is the revolutionary class, they still call for the creation of an united front for the formation of a "provisional government based on popular and national unity following the negotiations between the UPC and other progressive forces". In another statement (12.4.72) they claim to strive towards a "new democracy".

### stalinism?

Do we then make a distinction between nationalism and stalinism? Why do we polemicise both against the PAI and the LNJP as they do not have the same history and the same strategy? The answer is simple: in the African reality there seems to be an implicit convergence of the gradualist stalinist concepts and the nationalist ones. For the stalinists, the main emphasis is to stick to the traditions of the last years of the Third International, which aimed at maintaining the status quo in the world. For the nationalists, the conclusion of the struggle should be a bourgeois state that represents the aspirations of the urban petit-bourgeoisie.

This programmatic affinity is centered around a whole series of vulgar nationalist concepts. That explains why neo-stalinists take up nationalist themes in an opportunistic manner. Did not the French Communist Party, greatly admired by the PAI, support for years the RDA and Houphet-Boigny? Does not the PCF still to-day support the AFFM<sup>8</sup> the representative of the Merinas bourgeoisie in the Malagasy Republic?

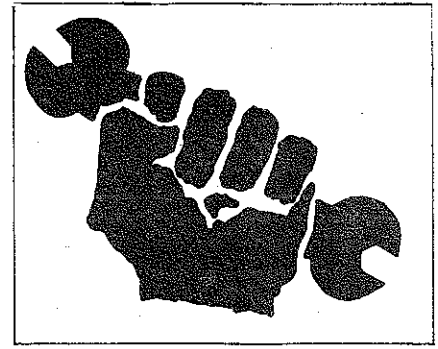
This is easily explicable. Given its incapacity to build a real African stalinist movement (which would have required an implantation in the African working class), stalinists have had to fall back on the notorious "anti-imperialist classes and layers". Yet, this does

not mean that the PAI is a classical stalinist organisation. It represents a junction where the foreign policy of the PCF and the interests of the urban nationalist layers meet.

We believe it extremely important to polemicise with organisations like the PAI and the LNJP. At a time when the African revolution is gaining its second momentum, we believe it to be our task to point out the choices involved. Are we all for the socialist revolution or for a caricature of revolution? In the years to come, the young African generation will be pre-occupied with the debate on the revolutionary strategy and the construction of a revolutionary party. At the end of this debate, the political arena in Africa must have undergone a profound change; *there must emerge in a few countries revolutionary organisations; they are indispensable for victory.*

But it would be utopian to expect "pure" revolutionary organisations, immune to deviations in a continent which has been for so long racked by imperialism, dominated by nationalism as the mobilising ideology of the mass movement. That is why the debate must continue, however sharp! The present period is a decisive one for the African Revolution. The solidarity and support of the European anti-imperialist movement must be assured. Yet, in the last analysis, only their day-to-day practice will distinguish authentic revolutionaries from the petit-bourgeoisie.

That is why we fraternally salute the struggle of the comrades of the MFM in Malagasy Republic. They identify themselves as participants "in the struggle for the construction of a State, an economy and a Society under the leadership of the revolutionary proletarian masses". These comrades publicly say: "It is up to the workers to decide the use and the distribution of the product of their labour. The revolutionary proletarian masses will lead the people of the Malagasy Republic in their revolution". The struggles that took place in 1971 and in 1972 are now beginning to bear their fruits. The MFM, which propagandises the necessity for the workers to take power, to expropriate both French and national capitalists, constitutes a revolutionary pole which contributes to the process of ideological clarification and of construction of the revolutionary party.



This article has attempted to deal with the petit-bourgeois military regimes of Africa and has at the same time taken up the debate between revolution by stages and socialist revolution. It has also taken up the organisational conclusions that flow from such a debate. Only if marxists acknowledge the actuality of the revolution as the determining tendency of the epoch will this debate be correctly decided.

This does not mean that we believe that seizure of state power is immediately on the agenda in every African country. But it does mean that all the work and the struggles of the vanguard must aim in this

direction since on the international level, the struggle between the world proletariat and the international bourgeoisie blocks out the possibility of any classical bourgeois democratic revolution. Contempt for marxist revolutionary theory breeds disastrous consequences. It leads inevitably to an abandonment of a proletarian outlook and ultra-opportunist practice.

### historical task

The new African revolutionary generation has an immense historical task. It has to confront the deep crisis of neocolonialism and the failures of all reformist experiences ranging from Tanzania to the Congo. It has to confront the betrayals both of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies. It must assume the task of building revolutionary parties that will lead the African masses to the seizure of state power and to the construction of a socialist society. It must denounce the nationalists and the stalinist who superimpose the myth of "The Nation" on the reality of social classes.

There cannot be any revolutionary movement without any revolutionary theory! In the coming years the African revolutionary marxists have to address them

selves to the following decisive tasks: to structure the vanguard forces, to provide them with a precise theoretical framework, to link it with the traditions of the world working class movement and to equip it with a series of slogans that advance the struggles of the workers and peasants.

We cannot afford any confusion on these questions. If we do we will miss what is most important: the increased possibility today of smashing the neocolonial state. a bourgeois state!

C. Gabriel



1. RDA.....Rassemblement Democratique African  
African Democratic Regroupment
2. PCT.....Parti Congolais du Travail  
Congolese Labour Party
3. MFM.....untranslatable into European languages  
means 'Power to the small ones'
4. AFKM...untranslatable Malagalese party (like MFM)
5. FEANF...Federation des etudiants noir en France  
Federation of Black African students in France
6. PAL.....Parti Africain pour l'indpendence  
African Party for Independence
7. UPC.....Union of the Peoples of Cameroon
8. AFFM...untranslatable Malagasy party like MFM

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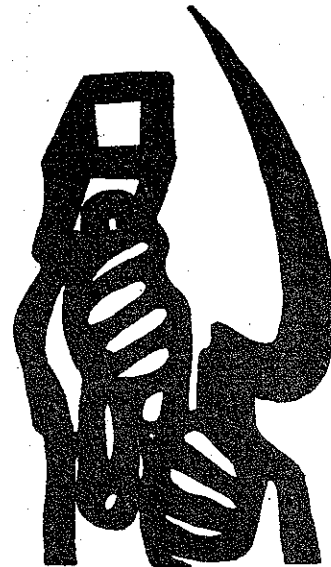
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# Text of Appeal Signed by LCR & Lotta Continua.

To soldiers, working people, revolutionary forces, and and progressives!

The Portuguese revolutionary process has reached a decisive point. The imperialist system, victim of the the general crisis of its mode of rule in the world, cannot tolerate the advance of the revolution to victory in Portugal. It cannot tolerate the system of capitalist exploitation and the power of the bourgeoisie being destroyed in Portugal, for that would mean a heavy defeat for imperialism, after the defeats inflicted by the extraordinary victory of the peoples of Indochina.

In the present phase, all the principal contradictions of the comination of imperialism are concentrating in Europe and in the Mediterranean zone. That is why the development of the revolution in Portugal -- which has its roots in particular in the liberation struggle of the peoples of the colonies -- finds the possibility of victory in the crisis that is racking this system of division and domination of the world, which assured stability in the West after the war.

Portugal poses the struggle for the right of peoples to decide their own destiny free of any economic, political, or military interference from imperialist powers as one of primary importance in Europe.

It is only in the workers struggles and in the deepening of the class struggle in Europe that the Portuguese revolution can find decisive support against any attempt at the normalisation that the bourgeoisie, national and international, wants to impose.

We also ask that internationalist solidarity with Portugal be developed along with the broadest possible mobilisations against all imperialist manoeuvres in Angola. The struggle for total liberation and for the victory of the only revolutionary and national force in Angola, the MPLA, must be developed parallel

with the internationalist commitment in support of the revolutionary struggle of the Portuguese people.

We also call upon all workers, soldiers, sailors, and revolutionary officers to make an effort to develop as rapidly as possible a broad mobilisation throughout Europe in support of the organs of popular power.

We cannot wait any longer! Portugal will not be the Chile of Europe!

— Against the imperialist encirclement and against the economic diplomatic, political, and military sabotage of Portugal, against NATO; against the provactions of the national and international bourgeoisie, which are trying to block the Portuguese revolutionary process, against the attacks on worker militants and organisations.

— For total support to the working class, to the proletariat, the soldiers, sailors, and revolutionary officers in the struggle against capitalism for people's power, proletarian democracy.

— For support to the workers' committees, soldiers committees, tenants committees, and peasant committees, bases of the future workers power.

— At the side of the Angolan people and its fighters of the MPLA in their offensive against the imperialist forces.

— The signing organisations call on the workers, youth, and soldiers, to participate in the international week of solidarity with the Portuguese revolution, September 21--28 (anniversary of the victory of the Portuguese revolutionary workers and soldiers against the first revenge attempt by the bourgeoisie led by Spinoia) and to make Saturday, 27 September, an international day of demonstrations in all the countries of Europe.

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