

The Student and Revolution

ZAPU

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What role do students play in revolutions, or, more specifically, what role can Zimbabwe students play in our revolution? There is no doubt that the students themselves, with their youthful enthusiasm and eager minds, can — as they have always done — give the most articulate answers themselves.

The first question, and unfortunately, not the easiest to answer, that every student should ask himself is; 'Am I a revolutionary or not?' We will only address this to those students who have decided that they are revolutionaries.

When you decide this, you lay on yourself a burden that cannot be waived aside at will. You cannot wait for a convenient time and place to put your revolutionary ideas into effect.

Every revolutionary must always keep in mind the maxim — *The duty of every revolutionary is to make revolution* — bequeathed to us by that great revolutionary: Che Guevara. Students are well organised in student movements. Here the revolutionary must make his revolution. A student movement has to be revolutionary, if revolutionary students have to belong to it.

For a revolutionary, revolution is not only part of life, but indeed the whole of life, and, as such, the revolutionary student movement becomes the fulcrum of the student's activities.

A revolutionary student movement cannot divorce itself from the revolutionary movement in pursuit of what the students naively call 'an independent line'.

In a country in revolution like Zimbabwe, the students cannot afford the luxury of divorcing the student movement from the revolutionary movement.

Being part of the revolutionary movement you are to direct and be directed by it. The natural ups and downs of revolution no longer become 'their problem', 'ZAPU's problem'.

You can make your maximum contribution only when you can say, 'this is my problem'. Everybody has too many problems of their own to be able to put maximum effort into the problems of their friends.

The perennial problem of students from Zimbabwe of what to do after graduation is automatically vanquished by their membership of the revolutionary student movement. When you are part of a revolution, the revolution absorbs you.

If a student finds himself in a quandary as to what to do after graduation when he knows that he is part of a revolutionary movement, then he must know there is something seriously wrong with his revolutionary principles.

It is most likely that those principles, other than anything else, need a close scrutiny.

The students are the intelligentsia of the revolution and we need them. But we need them only if they become revolutionary intellectuals.

The current thinking of students tends to regard education as the all-embracing panacea of all financial and social ills. In it they see themselves being pulled out of the common fate of ordinary men and assuming the role of directing the affairs of these ordinary men from above.

True as it might be that educated people may be more capable of leadership positions, we should be aware that leadership is a position of responsibility rather than a place of privilege. The correct leadership position is from in front and not from above.

The graduating student sees himself only as a member of the bureaucratic

revolutionaries — drawing up strategies for the fighting forces, and, in general, being the directing force of the revolution. This is both false and dangerous thinking.

A revolution cannot be directed from an armchair. A prerequisite for directing a revolution is to go through the crucible of revolution and thus be a revolutionary.

No amount of explications or explanations of revolution can make one really understand what it is all about. In the same manner you cannot drive a car safely, no matter how much time you spend studying, until you have had some practice — you cannot learn revolution from a book. Only out there, where you suffer all deprivations — and more — only out there, where the stakes are far too high for you to afford to lose and yet you are forever on the brink of losing: only there can you begin to know what it's all about. Only then are you seasoned enough to be called a revolutionary. Only then can we begin to understand Che: when loving life so much that you are ready to die for it; or what Frantz Fanon means by preferring victory to life.

There has been a growing tendency amongst our students to seek employment in some independent African countries or abroad on the pretext of gaining some experience for a later date when their skills will be in demand in Zimbabwe. Is it really possible that these students see no role that they can play in the struggle now? Or can there, indeed, be people who believe they stand above revolution?

We can only tell our brothers and sisters with this twisted thinking that Zimbabwe can never need them more than it needs them now.

This is Zimbabwe's hour of trial. A free Zimbabwe tomorrow will not allow today's deserters the chance to pollute and dilute her revolution. We have seen too much of that happening in independent Africa and other countries of the Third World and we are not letting the lesson go unnoticed.

To think about tomorrow's Zimbabwe and forget about today's struggle is, to say the least, acute imbecility.

Freedom is not given, it is wrested out of the powers-that-be. It is the duty of every Zimbabwean to participate fully.

The strength to endure the worst comes from the knowledge that our cause is right and noble. It is most unfortunate that there is still doubt in some people's minds as to what we are fighting for. It is true that we are fighting to kick the white foreign oppressors from our country, or, if need be, allow them to live in our country under our own conditions and bow to the complete wishes of the people of Zimbabwe. We should understand that ours is a social revolution and, in this day and age, any meaningful social revolution must be a socialist revolution. It is not sufficient for us to have an anti-imperialist front: we also have an anti-capitalist front. The ills of our society are closely connected with the unfair distribution of our country's material wealth.

When the foreigners go, we have make sure that the people shall be the masters of their own destiny and no chance should be left for the rise of another exploiting class.