

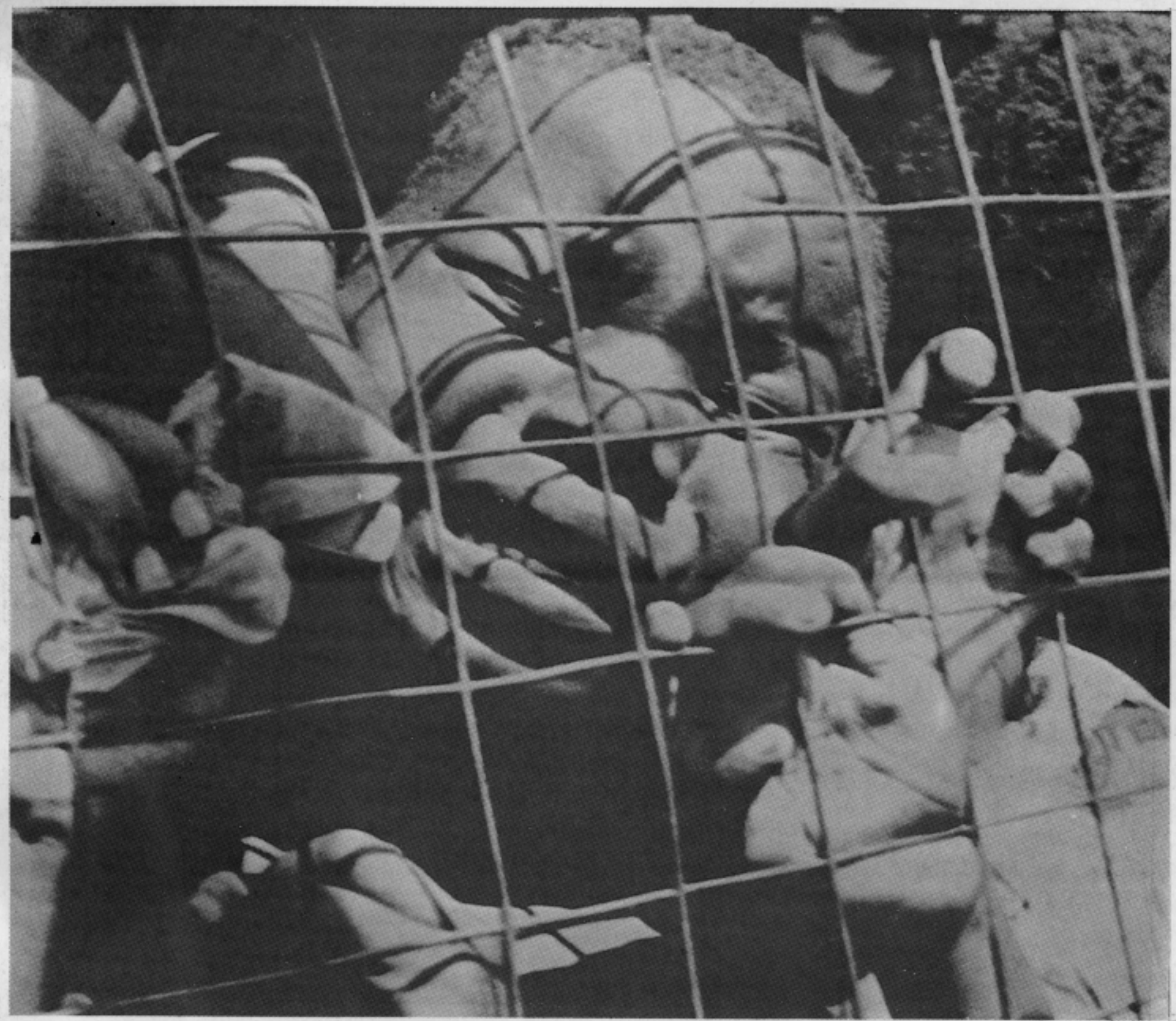
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FRANK TA

VOLUME 3

1989/90

PRETORIASTROIKA



Monday 12 February 1990: A child screams in pain as he is crushed against the fence at Orlando Stadium Soweto by the crowd which had gathered to wait for Nelson Mandela to address them.

Who Benefits?

DEDICATION

This issue is dedicated to Comrade Sonwabo "Paper" Ngxale, 1985-86 Regional Chairperson of AZAPO (Eastern Cape). Comrade Ngxale wrote as follows to *Frank Talk* on 7 July 1985 about the AZAPO-UDF clashes:

"The gravity of the situation cannot be recorded with a pencil but can only be understood when you live in constant fear of being executed. It can only be understood when one takes into account the loss of life and property accompanying the feud. What is left for you and I is to make the sacrifices of all those who paid the supreme price to see AZAPO surviving worthwhile."

"DEATH TO THE NATIONAL CONFUSION MOVEMENT!!!"

On 5 August 1986, Comrade Ngxale joined the ranks of those who paid that supreme price. While the circumstances of his death are a mad commentary on our imperial times, in his death he bequeaths a legacy to the living: we should never do to ourselves what the enemy would do to us. Death to the National Confusion Movement!!!

FRANK TALK is an annual journal published by the **FRANK TALK EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE** ("the EC").

is open to all those on the same side of the ramparts against settler colonialism, imperialism and reaction and who are committed to the realisation of an antiracist, socialist Azania.

promises to be the most ruthless dissector of the records of the Azanian people and their struggle for liberation.

is a forum for the exchange of views amongst the oppressed people in Azania.

makes known the views of the oppressed and exploited on matters affecting them in Azania.

contributes to the development of the **BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS** (BC) ideology in Azania.

evaluates relevant philosophical approaches to South Africa's problems.

gives critical support to the struggles of the oppressed and the exploited all over the world.

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

26 August 1989

Frank Talk has not appeared since September 1987 *inter alia* due to severe media restrictions, lack of financial support and lack of co-operation from numerous contributors. This publication, bumper issue though it is, has only been made financially feasible by our comrades in the Fingerprint Co-operative.

It is because of the very real problems that *Frank Talk* has experienced that the EC has agonized on the frequency of the publication and has decided to publish annually. We are quite sure that, after reading this issue of *Frank Talk*, you will agree that the publication is worth the wait!

The EC has been gratified by the tremendous response to the last issue in the form of letters to our "Frankly Speaking" column. Keep those letters rolling in – we enjoy the feedback!

The response to our request for financial aid was less than overwhelming. Comrades, we depend on you to keep the publication alive: we believe that you agree that it is worth keeping alive.

Flowing from the last Letter we wrote to you (12 September 1987), we wish to report that Comrade Patrick Moodly, our Resources Director, succeeded in his claim for damages against Vlok as a result of his unlawful arrest and detention. Our argument for the unbanning of *Azanian Focus* Volume 1 Number 5 was less successful, however: it was rejected by the Publications Appeal Board.

We are writing to you on Namibia Day, a day commemorated by Namibians ever since the burial of Chief Samuel Maharero – who led the Herero people during the Battle of Hamakari against the German colonialists – on 26 August 1923. By sheer historical coincidence, the first armed encounter between SWAPO and the South African colonialists took place at Omgulumbashe on Namibia Day 1966.

On 30 January 1976 (Resolution 385) and 29 September 1978 (Resolution 435), the UN adopted a neo-colonial recipe for the "resolution" of the Namibian problem. This was amplified by the "Principles concerning the Constituent Assembly and the Constitution of an Independent Namibia" adopted on 12 July 1982 and the "Agreement on the Electoral System" adopted on 29 November 1985. The 1982 agreement provides that "the primary responsibility for maintaining law and order in Namibia during the transition period shall rest with the existing police forces." The Resolutions and agreements are notoriously silent about the murderous SWATF and Koevoet forces, the status of Walvis Bay and South Africa's economic domination of Namibia.

In early 1981 a secret meeting was held between US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Dr Chester Crocker and South Africa's foreign minister, Pik Botha together with its defence minister, Magnus Malan. A US government "Memorandum of Conversation" was leaked to an anti-apartheid organisation a short while later.

It reads:

"Top US priority is to stop Soviet encroachment in Africa. US wants to work with SAG (South African Government), but ability to deal with Soviet presence severely impeded by Namibia . . ."

"Crocker addressed Botha's fears and concerns by first accepting the premise that Soviet domination is the danger. But US believes best way to avoid that danger is to get Namibia issue behind us. As long as issue subsists, we cannot reach a situation where US can engage with South Africa in security framework. If Namibia continues, it will open south/central Africa to the Soviets. Simmering conflict in Namibia is not acceptable. The ideas US has in mind don't include Soviets in Windhoek. We believe we can get the Soviets out of Angola, and provide a guarantee of security whether Nujoma wins or not."

Between October 1987 and June 1988, Africa witnessed the fiercest conventional battles fought on her soil since Erwin Rommel was defeated at El Amien.

During August 1987, MPLA forces launched a major assault against the city of Mavinga, a UNITA stronghold. Only a massive intervention by SADF saved UNITA. The MPLA forces retreated to Cuito Cuanavale. When SADF and UNITA launched a major assault on Cuito, Cuban forces intervened to save the MPLA from defeat. The attack on Cuito Cuanavale developed into a long siege. But SADF lost the battle and, for the first time ever, reported large numbers of casualties among its white troops. SADF was in such a desperate position that State President P W Botha had to fly to the war zone when its operational command broke down. The mystique of white superiority, interwoven as it is with South Africa's fetishism with weapons, received a crushing contemporary defeat.

In May 1988 a Soviet diplomat stationed in Angola said "We want to clean house. In the area of regional conflicts, we are in favour of political solutions." On 15 November 1988, South African, Angolan and Cuban officials meeting in Geneva reached agreement on the conditions for the withdrawal of Cuban soldiers from Namibia in the "Principles for a Peaceful Settlement in South-western Africa". The people of Namibia were excluded from agreements reached about their future.

Soviet moves in Angola and Namibia are part of the overall political and military adjustments that Gorbachev has been pushing internationally. This does *not* mean that the Soviets are pulling out of all the drawn-out conflicts they are involved in. Rather, they are trying to "clean house" in Angola and make a few tactical adjustments in order to strengthen their ability to contend with the rival Western empire.

For South Africa and the USA, Mavinga and Cuito Cuanavale also highlighted Napoleon's warning: "One can do anything with bayonets but sit on them." Erich Leistner in a paper presented at the Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung on the topic "Namibia between the need for development and independence" (28-30 November 1988) names some of these considerations:

- * a growing restiveness among white South Africans about the lengthening casualty lists from a distant war;
- * the costs of the conflict in Namibia at a time when fiscal constraints are imposing an ever-mounting burden on the South African public;
- * the South African Air Force's loss of air superiority over Angola;
- * the indications that the interim government of Namibia would probably not win the political fight against SWAPO;
- * the approaching end of the Reagan Administration in the USA, and the prospects of tighter sanctions under any possible successor; and
- * the Soviet Union's declared desire to settle regional conflicts through negotiations.

The US/South African manoeuvres are based on an attempt to take advantage of the Soviet Union's adjustments in order to push Western interests forward. They are giving nothing away in adopting the UN Plan: even if SWAPO manages to get a two thirds majority, Namibia will remain under firm Western control.

It is only the masses of people united in action and clear on their goal of creating a world without oppression and exploitation who can change the direction of history, who can rise above imperialist "deals" and "negotiated settlements" to real freedom!

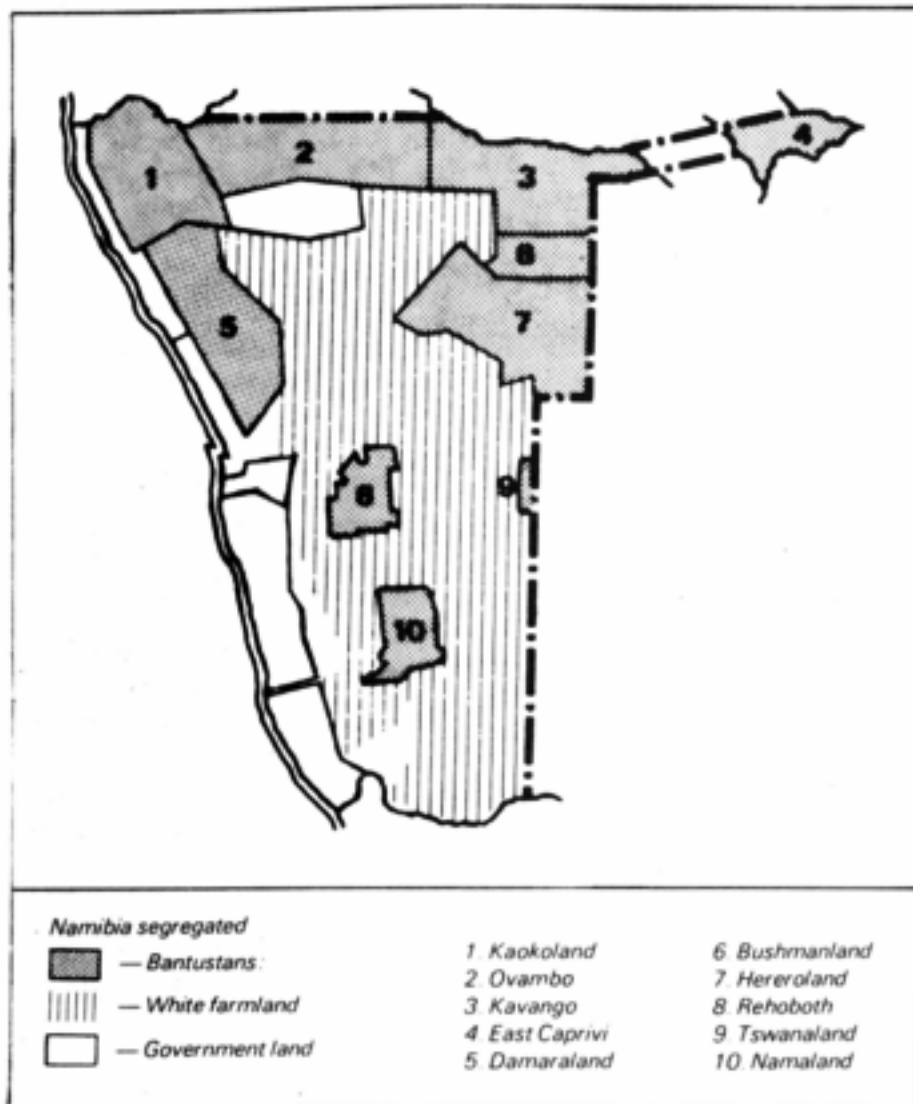
Yours for Azania
THE PUBLISHER

ABBREVIATIONS USED

AIDS Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ANC African National Congress of South Africa
ARDs Asbestos Related Diseases
AWB Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging
AZACCO Azanian Co-ordinating Committee
AZANLA Azanian National Liberation Army
AZANYU Azanian National Youth Unity
AZAPO Azanian People's Organisation
AZASM Azanian Student Movement
AZASO Azanian Student's Organisation
BAMCWU Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union
BAWU Black Allied Workers' Union
BC Black Consciousness
BCM Black Consciousness Movement
BCM(A) Black Consciousness Movement of Azania
BCCP Black Community Programmes
BGM Biennial General Meeting
BLA Black Lawyer's Association
BPC Black People's Convention
BSS Black Student's Society
BT Black Theology
CAL Cape Action League
CDF Conference for a Democratic Future
CCAWUSA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa
CIA Central Intelligence Agency
COMECON Council for Mutual economic Aid
COSATU Congress of South African Trade Unions
CP Conservative Party
CPP Convention People's Party
DCs Developing Countries
DKG Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwestafrika
DP Democratic Party
DTA Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
EC Editorial Collective
ECC End Conscription Campaign
FFF Five Freedoms Forum

FRELIMO Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
GATT General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
GEFCOR Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company
GNP Gross National Product
HNP Herstigte Nasionale Party
ICJ International Commission of Jurists
IDASA Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa
IMF International Monetary Fund
JLP Jamaican Labour Party
KOMSOMOL Communist Youth
LCDs Less Developed Countries
LRA Labour Relations Act
LRAA Labour Relations Amendment Act
MPLA Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MRC Medical Research Council
NACTU National Council of Trade Unions
Nadel National Association of Democratic Lawyers
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NAYO National Youth Organisation
NDM National Democratic Movement
NEP New Economic Policy
NF National Forum
NNF Namibia National Front
NP Nationalist Party
NPSL National Professional Soccer League
NSC National Sports Congress
NUSAS National Union of South African Students
OAU Organisation of African Unity
OPEC Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Companies
OPO Ovamboland People's Organisation
PAC Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
PAIGC African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
P.F. Patriotic Front
PCP Communist Party of Peru
PLAN People's Liberation Army of Namibia

PLO Palestine Liberation Organisation
PNC People's National Congress
PNP People's National Party
RTC Rio Tinto Zinc
SACC South African Council of Churches
SACOS South African Council on Sport
SADF South African Defence Force
SAIRR South African Institute of Race Relations
SALDRU South African Labour Development Research Unit
SALT Strategic Arms Limitations Talks
SANSCO South African National Students Congress
SARU South African Rugby Union
SASO South African Student's Organisation
SDI Strategic Defence Initiative
SWAPO South West African People's Organisation
SWATF South West African Territory Force
TB Tuberculosis
TUC Trade Union Congress
TLV Threshold Limitation Value
UDF United Democratic Front
UN United Nations
UNIA Universal Negro Improvement Association
UNTAG United Nations Transitional Assistance Group
UNITA National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
US(A) United States (of America)
USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UWCO United Womens' Congress
WPCOS Western Province Council on Sport
ZANLA Zimbabwean National Liberation Army
ZANU Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU Zimbabwe Africa People's Union
ZIPA Zimbabwe People's Army
ZIPRA Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army



**Chief Samuel Maharero
(1854 - 1923)**



October 1987. Plan Commander spells out details of South African Military vehicle captured at Okanghudi, northern Namibia.



Sweating it out: Martti Ahtisaari, UN special representative on Namibia arrives at Windhoek on March 31, 1989.

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Jay Naidoo, September 1989



Durban March, 22 September 1989

Friday 22 September 1989: A crowd of some 20 000 people marched through the streets of Durban and converged on the City Hall. Amongst the many flags, placards and banners displayed, one could not miss the backdrop when Jay Naidoo, the Secretary General of COSATU exhorted people to imbibe the new spirit of *glasnost* that "Comrade" Gorbachev has bequeathed to humanity. Unfurled there was a flag displaying the green, black and gold of the ANC and yet another flag which stood proudly yet silently, a flag whose simple message spells death to the forces of reaction. With a gold background and a five pointed red star, the words "REVOLUTION – THE HOPE OF THE HOPELESS" were emblazoned in black. Needless to say, this flag emanated from the BCM.

The "marches to freedom" mark the debut of the new South African State President, F W de Klerk. Somewhere amongst the flowers being handed out by the police force during the Johannesburg march (15 September 1989), people began to forget that

the occasion for the initial march in Cape Town (13 September 1989) was the cold-blooded murder of an unknown tally of Azanians on 6 September 1989. But it was not long before F W de Klerk brought everyone back to reality – with a jolt! At Pretoria on 23 September 1989, the fascist AWB held a rally chanting slogans such as "Hang Mandela!" and responded to a call to attack "baboons" ie Black onlookers. Instead of any action being taken against the AWB, hundreds of Black activists were arrested and a march by Black women to the Union Building was aborted by the police.

Buzzwords like "negotiations", "reconciliation", "justice", "dialogue", "minority rights", "guarantees" and "peace" abound in occupied Azania today – as also in occupied Palestine and occupied Eritrea. These buzzwords are uttered by agents of the ruling class, yet they attempt to obscure the simple truth that Azania was lost ON THE BATTLEFIELD and to divert our struggle in the direction that Chissano (now President of Mozam-

bique) announced that it belonged at the time the Nkomati Accords were signed – the direction of civil rights.

At a massive "Viva Namibia" Rally held on Namibia Day, 1989 (YMCA, Durban) Dr Aubrey Mokoape gave his working definition of "negotiated settlement" viz "to tie the oppressed people in knots until we don't know whether we are coming or going." He emphasized that talk of negotiated settlements only starts when "people's power is rising".

Mokoape said that while good leadership is necessary, leadership must at all times be accountable. Thus "if a leader makes an about turn, he turns alone." The two basic tenets for real struggle are to "banish fear" and to "learn what the other side is doing".

While the OAU, the UN and the Frontline States are quite free to give advice to the liberation movement in Azania, they must never be allowed to "dictate to us about our struggle."

In defining under what conditions it *might* be possible to talk to an

enemy, Mokoape spelt them out as follows:

1. the morale of the enemy must be at a low ebb with no motivation on their part to continue the fight,
2. there must be significant divisions in the ranks of the enemy (while there are superficial divisions between the HNP, AWB, CP, NP and DP, "one pities the poor white voter" because all these groupings are to the "right of centre", indeed "on the outer half of the right spectrum"),
3. the economy must be collapsing or must have collapsed,
4. the enemy's war machinery must be exhausted,
5. the enemy must be unable to govern in certain significant portions of the land which constitute "liberated zones" or "no go areas" and.
6. The initiative must rest decisively with the oppressed people.

Similarly, Mokoape defined the objective conditions which must exist amongst the oppressed people as well. These include:

1. the people must be highly organized, politicized and conscientized such that they are able to operate as single units,
2. there must be a significant amount of unity amongst the oppressed people such that they can act with purpose and act together. Work must be done now to prevent the tribal schisms and post-independence fratricide of tomorrow and
3. there must be a unified and *militant* political agenda which is fully publicized and well-known. No pussyfooting set of demands must be allowed.

Mokoape garnered two vital lessons from the Namibian experience: one is the determination of the masses to wage unrelenting struggle while the

other is that the imperialists will do their utmost to muddle up the path to genuine liberation.

We in *Frank Talk* wish to add that the position of the BCM on the National Convention is well documented, having been re-assessed after the signing of the Nkomati Accords. (see *National Forum* July 1984) The original AZAPO position (arrived at in 1980) was jettisoned at the 1984 Edendale Conference. Interestingly enough, the 1980 AZAPO position was eagerly snatched up by the Charterist Movement and barring the demand for the return of all occupied soil, it was adopted by them.

We also wish to place it on record that we do not accept the right of any component of the liberation movement to arrogate to itself the title of the sole and authentic "mass democratic movement."

Having said this, we commend the BCM for participating both in the various marches and in other initiatives. Some comrades do not like to dwell on difficulties, they prefer the luxury of "armchairology" thinly disguised as a policy of "non-collaboration" and "non-recognition". But difficulties are facts: we must recognize difficulties, analyze them and combat them. There are few straight roads in the world; we must be prepared to follow a road which twists and turns and not get things on the cheap. It must not be imagined that one glorious morning all the reactionaries will go down on their knees of their own accord. By uniting with the people in a common effort, we can certainly overcome all difficulties and win victory.

The greatest danger for a revolutionary movement – which was vividly illustrated by the 1984 Rand Revolt in Azania – is the failure to grasp and even recognize that a revolutionary situation is developing or has developed. Lenin's statement is still the beacon in this regard. A revolutionary situation exists, remarked Lenin, when:

1. the masses of people are unable and unwilling to go on living in



Dr. Aubrey Mokoape

the same old way,

2. the ruling classes find themselves unable to go on *ruling* in the same old way and
3. there is a *vanguard* with the ability, with the programme, with the ties with the masses and with the organisational as well as the ideological basis for making revolution.

What Azania is presently going through is intense imperialist manoeuvring. The article by Jeff Dumo Baqwa entitled "Containment of the Azanian Revolution" (pg. 15) exposes the grand scheme behind the promotion of the "negotiated settlement" idea. Our "For the Record" column brings you two documents, the one being the AZACCO Open Letter to the "Congress of the People" called by COSATU, while the other is the speech the BCM intended to deliver at the Workers' Summit which was restricted by Pretoria (26 Aug. 1989).

On 3 February 1985, *City Press* quoted an ANC spokesperson as saying "We have always been prepared to talk. Our willingness to talk is history itself. We only resorted to the armed struggle because we had nobody to talk to." The hoopla about the release of ANC political prisoners and the promotion of F W de Klerk as South Africa's Gorbachev fit into

QUOTE

Daring – the daring to seize the future out of the most tumultuous and wrenching conditions – must always be our credo.

the general project of containment of the revolution.

Talking about Gorbachev, Makhaye's article "Gorbachev – Soul of Capital Personified" contains many interesting insights and is particularly noteworthy for its analysis of the Soviet Union as a social-imperialist country. It comes as no surprise that Steven Friedman and Monty Narsoo report in *A New Mood in Moscow: Soviet Attitudes to South Africa* (SAIRR: 1989) that Soviet policies towards Pretoria "are no longer cast in stone" as "Moscow would support a settlement which did not install a socialist government, and which might well include guarantees for minorities". (pgs 26f)

Of course, the "new political thinking" in the Soviet Union is that Lenin's classification of wars for national liberation as "just wars" was "misleading" in the words of Dr Victor Kremenyuk, section head of the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of the US and Canada. Soviet policy now concentrates on Eastern Europe's integration into Western Europe to form "our common European home" extending from the "Atlantic to the Ural Mountains."

Challenging this pan-Europeanism, Pedro Hospital of Angola wrote as follows to the Soviet magazine *New Times*: "Why is it that the security of Europe – 'from the Atlantic to the Urals' – gets most of your attention? What about the rest of the world? Doesn't it exist at all? Or is it that the need for security in Asia, Africa and Latin America is less than in Europe? I do not think that the situation in these regions is any better. Who, for example, suffers and dies in the Iran-Iraq war? The citizens of NATO or the Warsaw Pact countries? But people are being killed there. Or doesn't the war industry of racist South Africa or Brazil play any role at all in the balance

of forces in the world?"

The waves of unrest in the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Latvia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia, Lithuania, Moldova, Estonia and Uzbekistan amongst others underline Russian chauvinism and domination over the Soviet Union and put *perestroika* into irreversible crisis.

Our analysis "Black Solidarity for a Socialist Azania – an Introduction" provoked intense debate, as is evident from our letters column and from Nkrumah's "Rejoinder to Rodney". We have pleasure in publishing Walter Rodney's piece "Marxism in Africa" and a refurbished version of Imrann Moosa's speech "One Base, Two Superstructures". Both articles seem to be undergirded by the belief that "There is no socialism after liberation: socialism is the process through which liberation is won" in Sivanandan's haunting phrase.

We are certain that you will agree that this issue contains a veritable treasure trove of ideas which ought to fuel debate for some time to come. There is Robert Fatton's Gramscian analysis of the pre-1977 BCM (pg. 39), Siphobuthelezi's argument that Resolution 435 guarantees that Namibia will remain a colony of South Africa and the

West (pg. 10), Gomolemo Moka'e's analysis of the anti-asbestos campaign (pg. 62), Fatima Meer's outline of the role of so-called "Indians" within the oppressed community, Patrick Moody's "Welcome to the *Shabab!*" and very provocative analyses which accompany various Position Papers: on BT (pg. 95), on the Azanian sports scene (pg. 85) and on Pan Africanism and BC (pg. 89). Our Bookshelf column is no less provocative: we have Nyide's analysis of ZANLA and Maoism (pg. 96), Thusi's analysis of Language Policy in a Free Azania (pg. 104) and Mafora's views on the new-look *Staffrider* (pg. 110). On language policy, Nomavenda Mathiane in *Frontline* Volume 9 Number 1 (September 1989) believes that "Whatever the rights and wrongs, the war is already won. English will be the undisputed *lingua franca* in South Africa within a few years, and many of us may still see the day when it becomes the home language of most of the population." (pg. 9)

A treat for our readers is the tribute to Martyr Peter Gabriel Tosh. Peter showed us that there is movement forward, but every step requires negotiating a minefield of contradictions. Peter's preferred mode of transportation was rather precarious – a tall unicycle! Peter rode it expertly – on stage, down hotel corridors and across bridges.

Above all, Peter taught us that daring – the daring to seize the future out of the most tumultuous and wrenching conditions – must always be our credo. ■



Constable David Botha: Johannesburg

VIVA NAMIBIA

by Siphon Buthelezi

Siphon Buthelezi; a member of the BCM(A) and a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe analyzes the "independence" offered by UN Resolution 435 and concludes that Namibia remains a colony of South Africa and the West.

"... The mass of the petty bourgeoisie will as long as possible remain hesitant, undecided and inactive, and then as soon as the issue has been decided, will seize victory for themselves, will call upon the workers to maintain tranquility and return to their work, will guard against so-called excesses and bar the Proletariat from the fruits of victory." [MARX AND ENGELS, London, 1850]

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The occupation of Namibia at the end of the 19th century took place at the threshold of a new epoch of monopoly capitalism, imperialism. Historically, German imperialism was a late-comer in the scramble for colonies. For a considerable period of time after imperialist Germany had formally declared a Protectorate (euphemism for 'colony') over Namibia in 1884, German capitalists displayed little interest in the new territory which their government had secured for them to exploit.

At first, the German imperialists left Namibia entirely in the hands of a monopoly company, the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwestafrika (DKG). The DKG, a joint stock company, was one of the early tools of primitive accumulation of capital, characterised by conquest, plunder and dispossession as well as the exploitation of the colonized population. In the case of Namibia this monopoly concern remained virtually inactive, as did the multitude of speculative 'concession' companies which mushroomed in the 1890s when the imperialist authorities lost patience and broke the DKG's monopoly.

The inactivity of the 'concession' companies prompted the colonial ad-

ministration itself to take a commanding role in creating a colonial economy. In a series of military campaigns (1890-96) it set up a network of army and police posts throughout the south and centre of the country up to the border of Ovamboland. It seized every possible pretext to expropriate land for settler farms. The colonial forces of repression were on hand to enforce every fraudulent land or trading deal as a motley collection of immigrants – subsidised settlers, ex-soldiers, traders and Boers – siphoned the economic lifeblood from the Herero and Nama people. In order to service its economic and military objectives, the German colonial administration built a network of roads, railways, harbours and communications.

The overall strategy of the German colonial regime was to reproduce German society in Africa by creating a colony of European settlement. Paul Rohrbach, chairperson of the Settlement in Commission, spelt out with brutal frankness its implications for the Namibian people:

"The decision to colonise in Southern Africa means nothing else than that the native tribes must withdraw from the lands on which they have pastured their cattle and so let the white man pasture his cattle on these selfsame lands. If the moral rights of this standpoint are questioned the answer is that for people of the cultural standard of the Southern African natives, the loss of their natural barbarism and the development of a class of workers in the service of and dependent on whites is above all a law of survival of the highest order."

By 1903, more than half the herds previously owned by the Herero people, who lived in the central areas of Namibia, had passed into the hands of the settlers. Many Africans, whose traditional means of production and livelihood had been ruthlessly undermined, were forced to take up wage labour for the colonists, usually on a temporary or migrant basis.



GENOCIDE

In January 1904, provoked by the continuing expropriation of their land – the principal means of production – the Herero rose against German colonialism. Lacking sophisticated and modern weaponry and unable to move quickly because of their large herds of cattle, the Namibians were defeated and driven eastwards into the waterless Kgalagadi desert.

In August, the Nama, who lived mainly in the south of the country, joined the anti-colonial war under the

leadership of Hendrik Witbooi. By adopting guerilla tactics, a Nama commando under Jacob Morenga was able to continue fighting until 1906.

The German colonial authorities, determined to wipe out resistance, resorted to genocide, poisoning waterholes and machine-gunning displaced people. Through such barbaric methods they reduced the population of central and southern Namibia by more than half. Survivors were forced into prison labour camps on the coast, where thousands more died. The societies in central and southern Namibia were devastated. Legislation was introduced depriving Africans of the right to own land or cattle.



COLONIAL EXPLOITATION

It nevertheless took the considerable resources of German colonialism in Namibia to subjugate the Herero and Nama, and the densely populated north was never conquered but left under the control of independent African kingdoms. Through economic coercion, the German colonialists were able to secure migrant labour from these areas. Between 1907 and 1910, the migrant labour force stood at 6 000.

Migrant workers were kept under severe control and isolated in barrack-like compounds. The exploitation of their labour power was maximised by keeping wages very low – in 1913 the wage bill of the diamond companies amounted to a mere 2 percent of the value of diamonds mined.

Workers on settler farms were kept in conditions of virtual slavery. They were unpaid, and a survey conducted in 1912 revealed that on most farms the food rationed to workers was inadequate to sustain them and their families. Settlers were legally empowered to administer corporal punishment to workers, who were often flogged to the point of death.

In 1913 the authorities began to set up 'reserves' on state-owned farms in order to restrict Namibians to small areas and to ensure a supply of labour.

By the time the imperialist war of 1914 to 1918 broke out, the basic structure of what has been called the 'apartheid system' in Namibia was already well established. The basic features of this harsh colonial system were to change little in the following decades.

SOUTH AFRICAN INVASION: THE NEW COLONIALISTS

In 1915 the South African colonial army invaded German South West Africa (Namibia) at the behest of British imperialism and the territory was placed under the control of a South African military governor.

At the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the colonies of defeated imperialist Germany were placed under the authority of Britain, France or their allies, under a mandate system administered by the League of Nations. "Full powers of administration and legislation" over Namibia, were conferred on the British crown, "for and on behalf of the Union of South Africa."

As German imperialist rule collapsed, South African colonization was opposed by Namibians. African leaders sent messages to the UN detailing

oppressive conditions and demanding that their country be granted its independence or placed under international control. In the 1950s the first Namibian representatives were able to speak to the UN and messages were smuggled out of the country by Andimba Toivo ja Toivo and other young leaders. In 1960 alone the UN received 120 messages and petitions.

To oppose South African colonialism and to advance the cause for independence, Namibians formed a number of political, cultural and student organisations, including the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO), which in 1960 was transformed into a fully fledged nationalist movement, SWAPO.

Membership of OPO grew rapidly when it launched a campaign against the new bantustan authorities. In Windhoek there were protests and boycotts against the forced removal of the African population to the ghetto townships of Katutura. These protests met with the wrath of the colonial police, who opened fire on demonstrators on 10 December 1959, killing at least 11 people and wounding 54.

THE ROAD TO ARMED STRUGGLE

This atrocity was a turning point in the Namibian independence struggle, galvanising the people into a wider unity and more militant action. In the face of continued South African repression and the Windhoek Massacre – Namibia's 'Sharpeville' – the leaders of the liberation movement like Sam Nujoma left the country to prepare for an armed struggle.

Meanwhile in 1960, in an effort to add pressure to UN demands to place Namibia under its trusteeship until its independence, the independent states of Ethiopia and Liberia took the issue of Namibia's independence to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague. After six years of argument the ICJ arrogantly declared that the two African countries had no legal basis to bring the case to it, and declined to rule on the issue.

The UN General Assembly, strengthened in its opposition to colonialism by the new membership of dozens of African and Asian states, also responded swiftly to the ICJ's failure to make a ruling. In October 1966 it passed a resolution terminating South Africa's mandate on the grounds that it had violated its provisions by imposing apartheid repression on the Namibian people. To administer Namibia and to prepare it for nationhood, the UN General Assembly established the Council for Namibia at its headquarters in New York.

In 1969 the UN Security Council affirmed the termination of South Africa's mandate and demanded its withdrawal from Namibia. In June 1971, the ICJ confirmed the UN's direct responsibility for Namibia. It also confirmed that South Africa's presence in Namibia was illegal and that it was obliged to end its occupation of the country. It stated that UN member states should refrain from any acts which would imply recognition of South Africa's administration or presence in Namibia.

The Court's decision precipitated mass resistance inside Namibia, leading to a general strike of contract workers at the end of 1971, and subsequent peasant uprisings in the north. These militant actions opened a new chapter in the history of the Namibian independence struggle.

THE INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE

For more than a century the gallant people of Namibia have struggled for their independence through various means: diplomatic, political and military. Initially SWAPO and other components of the liberation movement concentrated on diplomatic pressure and political mobilisation, but the armed liberation struggle was launched in 1966 to end South African colonial occupation.

The Namibian workers played the most significant part in the constitution of the liberation movement. The massive general strike of Namibian contract workers, launched in mid-

December 1971, consolidated the gains of this period of mass upsurge and propelled the liberation struggle irrevocably to a new and higher phase. This period of mass resistance transformed the character of the liberation movement in Namibia from sectional and localised resistance to sustained mass action on a national scale.

The guerilla struggle escalated rapidly during the 1970s, as a result of the workers' general strike and continued militant resistance and the peasant youth uprisings, which were a prominent feature of the period between 1971-2. The triumph of the Angolan revolution in 1974-5 opened up new possibilities for the armed struggle in Namibia, and the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) intensified its military actions in the northern parts of the country.

The South African regime responded with a campaign of terror in the north, and thousands of Namibians fled into Angola, and this in turn swelled the ranks of PLAN. Vastly outnumbered by the South African occupation forces and unable to establish major bases inside Namibia, PLAN was however able to expand its military campaign by using guerilla tactics and through local support from the people who supplied food, information and shelter.

Nonetheless, an assessment by South African military-intelligence officers in 1984 noted that SWAPO "has an intensive intelligence gathering network whereby the public, especially the hundreds of the *cuca* shops (trading stores) in Ovambo and Kavango, are involved and keep it informed as to the movement of the security forces."

Increased support for SWAPO inside Namibia in the 1970s and 1980s, when SWAPO openly operated inside the country, was paralleled by growing international pressure, with the UN pressing strongly for Namibian independence. In a pre-emptive move in September 1977 Pretoria installed an Administrator-General in Windhoek to supervise a Pretoria-controlled election. The Turnhalle Conference was dissolved, the par-

ticipating groups forming the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) for electoral purposes.

By the end of 1978 the DTA was installed in Windhoek, backed by the army, police and substantial funding by capitalist enterprises. It is this coalition of reactionary forces that the South African regime and its imperialist backers hoped to instal as a neo-colonial regime in November. This coalition has changed its robes many times since then but in essence remains a tool for neo-colonialism in Namibia.

NEO-COLONIAL RECIPE

It has taken ten full years for the UN to implement Resolution 435 of 1978. This Security Council Resolution specified a year-long independence process to be supervised by a specially established UN monitoring force known as the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG). This involved a process that is now well advanced:

- A ceasefire, the partial demobilisation of South African armed forces and restriction to base of both SWAPO and South African military forces;
- The repeal of all discrimination and politically restrictive legislation, the release of political prisoners and the return of exiles and refugees;
- National elections to a Constituent Assembly after a campaigning period;
- The adoption of an independent constitution.

South African military defeats in Angola by the combined forces of Angola, Cuba and SWAPO (PLAN), coupled with international pressures, led to a series of talks during 1988 between the Angolan and South African governments, with US and Cuban participation and the political support of the Soviet Union. Under discussion was the current process in which the withdrawal of

Cuban internationalist forces from the People's Republic of Angola would follow the implementation of Resolution 435 and the end of South African aggression. Agreement on these principles was reached in November 1988 and the UN plan for Namibian independence process was set in motion during 1989.

The conception, adoption and implementation of UN Resolution 435 has ushered in a wide ranging debate within the liberation movement in Southern Africa. The proletarian tendency in the movement considers Resolution 435 as a recipe for neo-colonialism in Namibia. *Neocolonialism can be defined as a system of economic, political, ideological, juridical, military, and other relations imposed by imperialism on the developing countries (DCs) in order to keep them within the framework of the international capitalist economic system.*

It is important to note here that there is no basic distinction between the "traditional" and "new" colonialism, for, as in the past, so today the leading role belongs to the capitalist monopolies; their basic strategic goals remain unchanged: *the imperialist exploitation of the developing countries and the urge to keep them within the world capitalist system!*

The urge to keep Namibia within the world capitalist system is evidenced by events which took place in the British imperialist capital, London, in June 1989. According to a London *Times* report, SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma held talks with British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe in London on 28 June. *The Times* diplomatic editor Andrew McEwen wrote: "Sir Geoffrey and Mr Christopher Patten, the Minister for Overseas Development, made it clear in separate talks that Britain wants close links with the Namibian Government he is expected to form." The report continues, "(Britain) also hopes Namibia will join the Commonwealth, and is ready to give it (SWAPO Government) development aid without pre-conditions."

As we all know, foreign monopoly

capital is the most important weapon for subordinating many developing countries to imperialist exploitation. The export of capital to these countries has increased as the export of state capital has assumed prime importance in the form of 'aid' and loans on specific conditions dictated by imperialism.

Imperialist 'aid' shows some division of functions between the imperialist states and the capitalist monopolies. Government funds, the bulk of which made up the 'aid' go to the DCs mainly for building up the production and social infrastructure: roads, ports, means of communication, schools, hospitals, and so on; thereby improving the conditions for subsequent activity by private capital. Consequently, the capitalist countries government 'aid' is in the nature of a battering-ram which creates a breach for profitable investments by private capitalist monopolies in the DCs. Hence, a 'mixed' economy in Namibia which allows the participation of private capital will open the floodgates for imperialist capital in the form of monopoly capital.

In political terms, neo-colonialism with its 'aid' system is designed to enhance imperialist influence in the DCs' domestic political life and in the sphere of international relations as a whole. Hence the wooing of Sir Geoffrey of imperialist Britain for an independent Namibia as part of the Commonwealth. As McEwen reported: "In short, Britain sees the country (Namibia) as a potential regional friend."

Indeed, if an independent Namibia becomes a "regional friend" of Britain, the British multinational corporation, Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) which dominates uranium mining in Namibia stands to gain more and more superprofits from its operations. So does Consolidated Goldfields which mines base metals, chiefly copper, lead and zinc, and is a British capitalist conglomerate.

The superprofits of South African and transnational corporation in Namibia and the prosperity of white farmers, businessmen and professionals all de-

pend on the exploitation of African labour power. It is this section of the population that bears the burden of capitalist exploitation. As was said earlier, the Namibian workers have played a vital role in the struggle against oppression and exploitation. In the Namibian political economy, the workers have always been potentially the most powerful of the revolutionary forces ranged against the form of exploitation which colonialism has safeguarded in Namibia, and there is widespread consciousness of this amongst the rank-and-file in the final analysis. Dialectically speaking, it is the proletariat in Namibia which has the potential of becoming a vanguard force against neo-colonialism in an independent Namibia. At a branch meeting in 1977, contract workers from Windhoek summed up the view of the working class in Namibia in these apt words:

"We, the workers of Namibia, we have to unite – all the workers in the country have to unite . . . If we cannot unite, then we will just continue to be exploited and oppressed.

"We also want to teach other workers that the capitalists are busy robbing our country of its resources. All the workers should know that foreign investors are taking what we are producing to their countries overseas. Because when those foreign investors—monopolies – came to our country, they didn't come with anything! The wealth they are taking they found here in Namibia. We are dissatisfied with the fact that our mineral resources and other wealth are being exported. They are squeezing our country dry . . . Therefore we workers feel that we have to unite so that we can take action to end the exploitation of man by man!" ■

STOP PRESS

On November 15, 1989 SWAPO won 384 567 of the total 670 830 votes, giving it 57,3% of the vote and 41 seats in the 72-seat Constituent Assembly. The Pretoria-backed DTA won 121 seats in the Constituent Assembly with its 191 532 votes.

Part 1

I am Azania
 Land of black folks
 Grain grown
 When stones were still
 as soft as butter
 I am Azania
 Land of Zanj
 Truth made redundant
 By the tyrant's Gag
 I am Azania
 I ran wild and free
 When dawns were young
 I mastered iron
 and I tamed iron
 Long before
 The steel-eyed plunderers came

Palabora
 Bambadymnalo
 And Mapungubwe
 Are my living testimony

I am Azania
 I've seen kingdoms rise
 And I have seen kingdoms fall
 I have seen Black Memphis
 not far away
 Carthage too
 And Meroe
 Kush
 Monomotapa
 Benin Ghana
 Timbuctu Songhai
 I have seen them all

I am Azania
 Land of black folks
 From the Persian Gulf
 Suleiman the trader
 Brought me his greetings
 "The land of Zanj is vast"
 Said he

My name entombed
 I once lived in
 The land of the Mau Mau
 Tanzania
 I nurtured
 When I waded knee deep
 In the islands of
 Pemba and Zanzibar
 Mozambique
 Also heard my freedom songs
 Songs only the free can sing

Part 2

I am Azania
 Once land of hospitality
 I flung my arms wide open
 To Captain Diaz and
 Vasco Da Gama
 For I thought them lost
 We sang and ate
 And danced and laughed
 for I had plenty to give
 And I knew not their designs
 Then one day
 One infamous day 1652
 The treacherous seas
 belched forth
 Three drunken ships at
 Table Bay
 Three drunken ships
 Which stunk of gunpowder
 and holy water
 Dromedaris
 Goede Hoop
 Dreiger
 Three drunken ships

As dusk was inching in
 We met
 bare as poverty
 Into our assegais
 My sons and daughters
 Fell too
 Bitten in the neck
 By the settlers' bullets
 Battles of yesteryear
 Are engraved in my memory
 I praise you
 Sons and daughters
 of Thaba Bosiu
 Isandalhwana
 Sandile's Kop
 Keisikama Hoek
 Blood River
 I praise you all

I am Azania
 Land of Black folks
 Grain grown
 When stones were still
 as soft as butter
 I am Azania
 Land of Zanj
 Truth made redundant
 By the tyrant's Gag

I am Azania
 I bend but do not break
 Cecil Rhodes
 Thought otherwise the
 bastard
 When he took my land
 My Gold

Part 3

I am Azania
 My name itself
 A platform, a programme
 I scatter the white mist
 over Kliptown
 I am Azania
 Mangaliso Sobukwe
 Heard my call
 It was at Sharpeville
 Sharpeville
 A name that blossoms
 Into the fervent hearts
 Of black folks

I am Azania
 The name reconciled
 With itself
 In the deeds of
 Bantu Biko
 Uncle Zeph Mothopeng

I am Azania
 The name wrapped
 in Soweto
 A forest of black fists
 Hammering
 The sultry air
 In Krugersdorp

I am Azania
 The name
 That rang loud and clear
 In Nyanga, Langa
 Guguletu

I am Azania
 Land of black folks
 Grain grown
 when stones were still
 as soft as butter

I am Azania
 Land of Zanj
 Truth made
 redundant

By the
 tyrant's Gag
 I am Azania
 Battered flesh
 Of Bantustans
 Sturdy voices
 Of Robben Island
 I am Azania
 The mine
 That ventilates back
 Its own breath
 Sweat
 Tears
 And Blood
 Trapped in gold particles

I am Azania
 Moan made murmur
 Murmur made cry
 Cry made Shriek
 Shriek drilling
 The settler's ear
 I am Azania
 The fierce black bull
 I am the black dot
 On the Boer's history
 books

I am Azania
 Land of black folks
 Grain grown
 when stones were still
 as soft as butter

I am Azania
 Land of Zanj
 Truth made redundant
 By the tyrant's Gag

I am Azania
 The pregnant woman
 Laid bare
 On a cold
 Concrete slab

I am Azania
 Black consciousness
 unbound
 Only the pure I take
 For I have no time
 For liberal hypocritical minds

I am Azania
 The meeting point of
 Gun, Pen
 Chisel, Brush
 Hammer and Hoe

Boer,
 I am Azania
 The land
 I am the whole land

I am Azania
 Land of black folks
 Grain grown
 When stones were still
 as soft as butter

I am Azania
 Land of Zanj
 Burning truth
 Charring the
 tyrant's gag
 I am Azania
 The truth made
 dream
 The dream made
 true

Izwe letu!

A. Sheikh

CONTAINMENT OF THE AZANIAN REVOLUTION



by DR JEFF DUMO BAQWA

Jeff Baqwa, once SASO's Director of Literary Projects and in exile, analyses the strategies being used to co-opt sections of the broad liberation movement into a massive betrayal of the Cause.

It is a known fact that in quite a few situations people have been involved in struggles for change with quite specific aims in terms of what they want to achieve. However, what has turned up in the end in these situations is something quite divorced from what was aimed at. In some cases "the something achieved" turned out to run decidedly counter to the interests of the broad struggling masses.

It is our fundamental duty to engage in a continued examination and analysis of the forces at play as we continue with our struggle. It is only in this manner that we can avoid whatever pitfalls crop up on the way.

PRESSURE

The significance of Azania to the international community is without question. To cite an aspect, the abundant presence of essential raw materials which are of vital importance for the advance of technology puts Azania at the centre in terms of relations with the international community. It is important to note that these relations have been determined through a very deliberate plan by the powers-that-be in Azania and the imperialist community. It is also important to note that the imperialist community brings immense pressure to bear towards the maintenance of these relations. The reason is simple: the advancement of technology has come to mean everything in terms of the advancement of western society.

The significance referred to here in relation to essential raw materials holds for large parts of Africa. Let us examine how relations have been maintained with those parts of Africa that are now independent. Through

this we want to show the form and the nature of pressure that has been brought to bear on independent Africa by imperialism.

DOLLAR IMPERIALISM

The turn in terms of relations to most parts of independent Africa came with World War II. Apart from the rumblings that had begun in Africa itself, we must look at the role of the United States of America in the whole scheme of things. After World War II, the USA emerged as the leading and most powerful country within the imperialist community. The country abounded in capital that it sought to invest elsewhere. The country desperately sought markets where it could dispose of its surplus wares. At this point, all colonised parts of the world were under strict control by their colonisers. Britain put up protective tariff barriers around its colonies to prevent the infusion of capital from other imperialist countries. France did the same: it was the order of the day. But then, World War II had depleted France and Britain of resources to maintain their colonies to a point where they had to turn to the USA for assistance. The USA was reluctant to help because it wanted the tariff barriers around the colonies to be broken.

This would open the colonies to USA capital. The USA was motivated by its own economic interests when it refused to help the colonising powers. However, when the USA took a stand that was pro-decolonisation to a point where the then Presi-

dent of the USA, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was projected as championing the rights of the colonised, some confusion was caused in the circles of those that were struggling for change in the colonies in relation to the interpretation of the stand of the USA vis-a-vis decolonisation.

DECOLONISATION

The political effort exerted by political organisations and liberation movements in Africa, the incursions carried out by guerilla units in a number of countries in Africa and the role of the USA in the decolonisation programme were the combination of forces that led to decolonisation. This is without doubt a very interesting combination!

The one crucial point that arose after the war was the control of finances. The Bretton Woods System gave the answer to this. According to the stated intention, this System would work towards the control of the world economy. The Bretton Woods System embodies the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These were, and still are, the organs that control the flow of finances between the former colonies and the imperialist community. It was this control that, in its very essence, ushered in the concept of neo-colonialism. This control does not only stop at finances. Its immediate corollary is the control of the distribution of technological know-how. Technological expertise is extended to the neo-colonies to enhance the produc-



De Klerk, Chikane, Tutu, Boesak: the open agenda

tive capacity of a given country, only to the point where production meets the interests of the country being given technological knowledge. The methods used in this control are multifarious. As an example, the imperialists send their trained manpower to the colonies and then employ a multitude of tricks and excuses to make it impossible to train an adequate number from the indigenous masses to take over and run any of the projects they operate in the neo-colonies. The control exerted by the Bretton Woods System and the vicious and strict control of technological know-how define and determine the extent and the nature of the hold the imperialist world has on the neo-colonies.

The October 1917 Revolution in the Soviet Union has had a deep and continuing impact on relations in the international community. This Revolution heralded the emergence of Socialism. This has led to conditions whereby the imperialist bloc has made it its duty to work out an elaborate strategy to fight the survival and any further emergence of socialism.

POST VIETNAM

The defeat of the USA in Vietnam had such an impact on the imperialist community that there was a significant change in the strategy towards containment of revolution. Declarations were heard at the Pentagon to the effect that the experience of Viet-

nam had proved the theory of "limited wars" untenable. It was through the tenets embodied in this theory that the USA reserved the right to intervene in any area where US interests were said to be threatened. Then the Pentagon set about working on a new approach. The strategy that emerged was as follows:-

- * The USA should not be seen to intervene in troubled areas any more. It should project its image as the leader of the "New Economic Order". It should be seen to be acting in "partnership" with all those it entered into agreements with. It should actively encourage "co-operation" with the "Third World". For this reason, it was decided that the USA must arm nations so that, inter alia, the nations concerned shall have the capability to protect the interests of the USA on its behalf in their specific areas. (Let it be stated that a given neo-colonial government would have to use these arms against its own people!)

- * The USA would have to develop its war machinery to a point where, if it became absolutely necessary for it to intervene, it would conduct a lightning operation: that means, it would strike and "destabilize" the concerned area and be back at base before anyone has time to react.

- * The USA would identify areas which it considers of strategic importance to it. *The USA declared that it would not move from these areas even if it meant World War III!* These areas

would be under special consideration in a sense where, among other things, they would be intensively armed and they would be under continued surveillance by the USA. Among the areas identified were Azania and Palestine ("Israel"). It should be noted that these two areas form the gateways into Africa and their control gives the controller immense possibilities in terms of access into Africa.

- * The USA would identify those areas which were of no serious strategic importance to it. In these areas, the USA would yield to the pressure of the Soviet Union if and when the Soviet Union chose to move into them. These areas would be considered "selective gifts" to the Soviet Union.

TAR BABY

Apart from the schemes worked out after Vietnam, there is a programme that has been worked out, independent of the Vietnam experience, for the spread of US influence. This was dubbed "Operation Tar Baby". This strategy was aimed at the control of the lives of the people in the neo-colonies. It was directed at political structures where politicians were bribed and bought. For governments that were considered important for this strategy but remained intransigent and did not yield to it, coups d'etat were arranged. The cases of Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and the former US President, Lyndon B Johnson are cases in point. Politicians who stood up in opposition in governments that were prepared to move along with the USA were eliminated. The strategy was aimed, quite decidedly, at the elimination of all opposition.

It was also directed at the educational structures and the media which influenced forms of behaviour, social patterns, cultural norms and value systems. The Peace Corps would be used as a bridgehead in the onslaught on educational structures. Students would be taught, among other things, about the greatness of the USA. The newspapers, radio stations and television networks would be brought

under the influence of this programme. This would be done simply by staffing them with manpower that identifies itself with the USA. This programme was also designed to use those areas where the USA was felt to be well-entrenched as forward bases, launching pads for further and continued onslaughts into neo-colonies. Our land, Azania, was one such area. It would be used to launch further inroads into the rest of Africa.

The shifts and changes in the imperialist strategy have taken very interesting forms. Whereas the imperialist community adopted a hostile attitude towards socialist organizations, there is very clear evidence of a shift in their approach. This came after the victories of FRELIMO, the MPLA and PAIGC. During the struggles of the courageous masses in these countries, the imperialists sent in their armies to "fight and destroy" the efforts of the people. They are still involved in programmes intended to "destabilise" the People's governments in these countries. However, a new dimension has emerged. The imperialists are no more waging wars of destruction only and in the single-minded fashion of the past. *There is an intensive drive to get socialist movements and parties to sit at the same table with imperialist governments.* This was evidenced in Zimbabwe and is being evidenced by the present approach to the liberation movements in Namibia and Azania.

The imperialists have also realized that through the hostilities that they have displayed heretofore, they removed the possibility of interacting with the People's governments when they took over. The idea now is to make friends and create an atmosphere that would make it possible to maintain their interests in the People's Republics, and also open the way to further negotiation and agreement.

These are the main areas to which the imperialist schemes direct themselves. They are the factors that lie at the root of these invitations. These invitations also serve the purpose of giving the imperialists a chance of studying the areas where liberation

struggles are going on. This they do by examining the various delegations they receive from the various movements and parties and scrutinising the information they give. Then they move on to use their findings in identifying the force that would best suit their schemes.

ANOINTED FORCES

The next stage is to create the kind of conditions that would make it most conducive for the chosen force to operate unhindered and unfettered. This assumes various forms. An intensive propaganda campaign is mounted to get the chosen force to be accepted by the international community as the only "authentic" force. All the organs under the control of imperialism are employed to orchestrate this phenomenon.

From this point, the imperialists move to eliminate or neutralise all other patriotic forces that are rightly involved in the struggle. Even the fascist regimes, against whom the people are engaged in battle, are made to work on preparing the ground for the ultimate negotiation with the "chosen ones."

PRINCIPLES

Let us draw our attention to some fundamental principles that guide the struggle. The right of the people to get involved in and contribute, in whatever manner, to the advancement of the struggle is inalienable. Further, as the struggle continues, it throws up new conditions from one phase to the other. These conditions do, from time to time, lead to the emergence of new leadership and organisational structures. Even during one specific phase, most of the time various organisational forms and multiple actions are manifest. The idea is to get them co-ordinated. It is in this co-ordination that efforts should be made to resolve political and ideological differences. One of the major factors in the development of organisations derives from their capability to involve themselves in ideological struggle to resolve the contradictions amongst the people

and refine programmes, strategy and tactics.

Organisations and structures are set up for the implementation of specific programmes. The structures are in themselves meaningless without these programmes. *Any fetishism that manifests itself in terms of the worship of an organisational structure resulting in a failure to criticize, shape and direct the organisation shows the backwardness and utter bankruptcy of that organisation.* An organisation shall always serve the people and not become the master of the people. An organisation shall, as a primary condition, reflect the conditions under which it operates. It shall emerge from the masses of the people, embody their interests and be accepted by the people as being of service to them, to their ultimate goals and aims. When an organisation does not rise to these conditions, it loses its legitimacy and meaningfulness.

IDEOLOGICAL DISTORTION

We shall now raise an issue which we believe is of utmost significance in this programme. The issue concerns the dilution of the militancy of the people and the distortion of their ideological foundation. We have already cited the fact that imperialists receive information from liberation movements. It must be pointed out that they also receive information about these movements from their own sources. This information is carefully doctored for two purposes. The first purpose is to further influence all and sundry to accept "the chosen force". The second is to dilute and distort the ideological foundation of the people.

The church plays a role in this scheme for reasons that should be quite clear in view of the role of the church in the whole programme of colonialism. A very pointed example is the case of the Justice and Reconciliation Committee of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). This Committee has found it its duty to set up a discussion group which examines nuances of the struggle including the

ideological base. This Committee has gone on an extensive examination of socialism in countries where it is practised. It has found that socialism is not the way to liberation because, as it states, socialism takes the freedom of the people away. This Committee puts up experts to deal with these questions and these come from liberal circles. The Committee keeps in touch with other church bodies in Europe and, we believe, elsewhere for the purpose, among other things, of exchanging information with these church groups about its "good work" among the people. For the work of this Committee to be properly understood it must be seen, and this is where it belongs, in the context of the dilution of the militancy of the patriotic forces and the distortion of the ideological questions.

We must develop a capability to cut through the nebulous facades that are presented to us. We must have an acute sense of detecting snares and threats that are laid in our way. We must break the manipulation of language apart. For instance the enemy substitutes the term "oppression" with the term "co-operation". He refers to the "exploited" as "partners". Regarding the neo-colonies, he has moved from "underdeveloped" to "developing countries" and then "Third World" and finally, at least for now, to "less developed countries" (LDC's). We must not stop at identifying the terms as wrong. The whole plot behind their promotion must be thoroughly exposed.

CULTURE

It is essential to cast a brief glance at our own historical experience in order to emphasize the consistency of imperialism. The operations of imperialism base themselves on physical conquests and the capture of the mind. The experience of colonialism demonstrates this quite apparently. When people were colonised, the first stage was military conquest. Then followed the rather subtle and rather pervasive phase. Here the enemy gets to work systematically destroying and distorting the historical roots and the cultural foundation of the people. The church and the school did and still do play a major role in this. When the

people shall have lost what is normally used as a yardstick for advancement and projection into the future, their historical experience; when a people shall have lost the norms, mores and value systems that guide them and serve as a basis for their identity, then the people shall be ready for the offering.

The emasculation relating to history and culture expresses itself in terms of a lack of confidence and a loss of a sense of self. People become reflections of foreign value systems. And added to this the insecurity caused among other things, by the lack of the barest means of subsistence and the absence of the opportunity to acquire these: add to this the fear caused by constant harassment in all forms imaginable and the equally constant parade of police and military might, then the picture of a caricature of Being living at the mercy of an uncompromising avarice of imperialism is complete. The removal of these factors forms an essential part of the struggle for liberation. This shall be done with a view to opening the Azanian community to the total forces that influence the development of man. It shall not be done such that the process turns into a worship of the vestiges of the past in a manner where the forces of advancement are closed off.

CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is the motive force that determines the involvement of the people in a struggle for change. Consciousness bases itself on the conditions under which the people live. It derives from the total experience of the people. Alienation from the actual objective condition and from the experience of the people removes the basis for the correct direction to liberation. Consciousness must, and this is a revolutionary imperative, derive from the factors cited. This opens latitude for the movement towards the laying down of a proper ideological foundation that will serve as a guide in the programme for change.

The involvement of the masses of the people is a fundamental factor in the programme for change. What we

need to examine closely is the nature of this involvement. Our struggle has gone through very interesting phases. When the enemy first arrived our forefathers engaged the invader in battle in defence of the land. Then came the phase of negotiation which passed over to protest politics. The adoption of armed struggle was the highest point in the movement through the phases. In the development of the struggle, we notice that there were phases where the masses of the people operated through instructions from the leadership. When the leadership was no more available, the masses could not move. The masses were not motivated by the kind of consciousness that derives from internalised revolutionary principles. The motivating factor was an external agency, in the absence of which no action could be undertaken. Let it be stated that the objective conditions themselves do create a basic awareness in the people in terms of the situation that confronts them. It is precisely on this phenomenon that movements must concentrate their energies by way of developing, shaping, channeling and transforming this awareness into consciousness.

SOCIALISM

In colonialism, settler-colonialism and neo-colonialism the essential characteristic of imperialism expresses itself in two forms. It is the negation of the



historical process and the cultural development of the dominated people. It is the usurpation of the freedom of development of the national productive forces. Our struggle, therefore, seeks to return the people to their own historical process and in this manner to history as such.

Our struggle is an effort to lay out the tenets that shall form the foundation for the development of the people's culture. It is an endeavour to free the productive forces from domination by imperialism. It embodies, at the same time, national liberation and social revolution. The analysis of history and the development of man has shown that freedom from imperialism leaves only one option. We shall free ourselves from imperialist domination only by following the road to socialism.

The colonial situation offers the petit bourgeoisie an opportunity of leading the struggle against foreign domination since by the nature of the objective and subjective condition of this

class (high level of education, political awareness, etc), it is the stratum which most rapidly becomes aware of the need for freedom from foreign domination. However, the petit bourgeoisie as a class that is not directly involved in the process of production, can never possess political control since this is based on the economic capacity of the ruling class. This assertion does not seek to undermine the revolutionary role played and still being played by individuals that come from the petit bourgeois class. It seeks to expose the fact that, and this has been proven historically, the petit bourgeoisie as a class does not and shall never have the capability to possess political control. In order to fulfil their role in the liberation struggle, the revolutionary petit bourgeoisie must be capable of committing suicide as a class in order to be reborn as a vanguard of the revolution identifying completely with the deepest aspirations of the people. To this extent the revolutionary petit bourgeoisie must strengthen revolutionary

consciousness. The revolutionary petit bourgeoisie must identify itself with the working class and promote the normal development of the revolutionary process. Our organisational structures must adapt themselves to this process. They must provide room for movement towards the establishment of a true vanguard of the revolution.

The emergence and survival of socialism demands the consolidation of the solidarity of all socialist and progressive forces. It is through this solidarity that we shall be able to defeat imperialism and thwart its schemes to destroy socialism. It is through this solidarity that we shall be able to create platforms and occasions where we shall examine and learn from the experiences and mistakes of comrades that have trodden this path. It is through this solidarity that we shall attain complete and genuine freedom and also contribute towards the closure of this historical phase where man exploits man. ■

KE BANA BA BO MANG?*

Black faces twisted with pain
Rosy red eyes fighting for protruberance
Through razor blade incisions
Dwarfed by swollen cheeks
Swollen brows
And extra large heads
And my question
KE BANA BA BO MANG?*

Their tongues glued to granite pallets
Awaiting efficient interrogators to dislodge
Who egocentrically grin with satisfaction as
'n Bietjie blood flows here
En 'n handjie vol tande also lost
And I want to know
KE BANA BA BO MANG?

Why allow them so much suffering
Their treason or blasphemy unknown
Meting out punishment in anticipation
Or is it retrospective uteristic victimisation
Which their persecution so urgently warrants?

Ke bana ba bo mang tragically facing harsh fate
Like little puppies born of a bitch

In this wealthy citadel of injustice
Let them suffer, let them take it
Being a fate of their own choice
Opting for the devilish and subservient black
Rejecting the privileged white
Whereas they could also have been yellow
Like the East

You insulted their dead bodies in Sharpeville
With your snobbish un-African capitalism
And still when Soweto spat fire
"Good shot" your drunken spirit shouted
Intrigued by the marksman's accuracy
Sies . . .

Every minute that they suffer
Your pre-occupation is gulping one more beer
Every day that they cry
Your concern is making it in time to the disco.
And I ask you

Ke bana ba bo mang
Who must be opposed, exiled discriminated against
Banned, banished, detained, tortured

And insulted . . . ?

Ke bana ba bo mang
Who must carry the nation's lot?
The world's evils
My poverty and your existence
Whilst you sit on your bloody warm buttocks
But now I know who they are
Having seen the bowels of Mother Afrika
Ripped apart with lightning fury
Exulting from the cracks and crevices

All ancestral greats
Makana, Chaka, Sekhukhuni, Moshoeshe,
Lembede, Biko, Sobukwe, Tiro, Mohapi, Pokela

All in unison crying
You are Afrika
Kill poverty and drown sufferings
Destroy oppression
and save the Nation
and save Afrika
and bring Azania
KE BANA BA AFRIKA! **

Anonymous

* Whose children are they?

** They are the children of Afrika.

PRETORIASTROIKA: WHO BENEFITS?

"It's not easy for us to sit down to negotiate. The problem is many of the youngsters are not really interested in the negotiations. In fact they've become a little bit angry. That is why I say that this chap De Klerk is moving too fast and can create problems for us. We want to educate our people. We want to have time to discuss this matter with them".

The speaker is Walter Sisulu, one of the ANC Seven who were released on October 15, 1989, in an interview reported by the Weekly Mail newspaper on January 26, 1990. His words assumed the ring of prophecy when De Klerk decisively terminated the protracted shadow-boxing between Pretoria and the ANC at 11h00 on Friday February 2, 1990.

Pre-Conditions

De Klerk went as far as meeting most of the "pre-conditions for negotiations" contained in the Harare Declaration: he legalized over 30 formerly banned and restricted organisations including the PAC, the ANC, the BPC and the SACP; he all but lifted the state of emergency and suspended all executions pending revision of the laws on capital punishment. In short, De Klerk turned the political clock back to immediately prior to the Sharpeville Massacre of March 21, 1960.

At 16h15 on Sunday February 11, 1990 de Klerk released Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela, a mortal whose stature had been made to

assume superhuman dimensions. He thus adroitly maintained the political initiative in Pretoria's hands and made a firm bid to divert the struggle for power and liberation into the politics of negotiation under settler colonial overlordship.

The result was predictable: liberation movements (conspicuously the ANC) were caught flat-footed and began making contradictory statements on a daily basis. The Nation was gripped by Mandelamania and many euphorically exclaimed that inkuleleko had come!

On "Network", a news programme run by South African Television, Nelson Mandela stated that negotiations meant compromise not on peripheral issues but on fundamental issues (February 15, 1990). The message was clear: there were no non-negotiables, not even our ownership of Azania!

The mantra of "negotiation pre-conditions", recited so religiously and at the cost of so many Black lives, sounded completely hollow as the pre-conditions were being met. As ANC Secretary-General Alfred Nzo announced on February 16, 1990 that the phase of "talks about talks" with Pretoria had begun (when, in fact, this process had begun as long ago as at least 1984), the "struggle" for a negotiated settlement stood exposed for what it is; capitulation, a sellout of our hopes, dreams and aspirations.

Nzo had already confessed that the ANC's position at any nego-

tiating table was a hopeless one at the ANC National Executive Committee meeting in Lusaka on 18 January 1990: "We must admit that we do not have the capacity within our country in fact to intensify the armed struggle in any meaningful way." So much for Mandela's "threat" in his letter to P W Botha: "The renunciation of violence by either the government or the ANC should not be a precondition but the result of negotiations." (circa January 1989)

Gorbachevism

Responding to the crowns falling in Eastern European state capitalist regimes- which lost the ANC and the SACP its major supporters- the SACP made its revisionism unmistakable in a draft position paper entitled "Has Socialism Failed?" by Joe Slovo. This pathetic paper repeats the tired position that the Eastern European revolts were revolts against Stalinism, (a position supported by F W de Klerk) and touts capitalism in the name of "thorough-going democratic socialism."

The Eastern European governments which have been toppled or reformed wore all fiercely anti-Stalinist and were all capitalist regimes. The crisis in Eastern Europe is really the crisis of Brezhnevism.

The so-called "demise of communism" is really revisionism becoming more openly bourgeois. "Democratic socialism" is a calculatingly eclectic rubric aimed at negating revolution and justifying

a "safe and peaceful" slide into counterfeit socialism- in reality, into capitalism. The SACP wants new faces, new forces in power along with the old ones but no revolutionary overturning of all existing relations and conditions. They want a socialism, even a Communism, with no mass revolutionary upheaval, no overturning of the bourgeoisie by the Proletariat, of the old by the new.

The SACP's "two-stage theory of revolution" has been supplanted by Gorbachev's "new thinking": no revolution at all! As Gorbachevism successfully disorientates liberation movements, let us remember that the Rand Revolt of 1984 and its aftermath saw the Black masses establishing their **own** mass movement and self-governing structures. The masses have given such an earthly quality to the idea of liberation that established political organisations have found themselves inadequate to the task of providing proper revolutionary leadership.

The East European revolts were **fine** for the Black Proletariat in Azania: we could only be elated at the magnificent rebellion against a stifling life under state-capitalism calling itself Socialism/Communism. We know that Gorbachev's "reforms" were designed to defuse the revolt, and we sincerely hope that the East European masses will complete the task of totally uprooting the oppressive and exploitative relations of the state-capitalist world.

The pull of Gorbachevism has thus far been successful in diverting the forces opposing state capitalism with disastrous consequences: witness how Solidamosc has assumed responsibility for the very Polish state it has been in revolt against for over three decades, how the Hungarian Federation of Young Demo-

crats (FIDESX) puts its stress on "parliamentary democracy predicated on a market economy", how the National Salvation government in Rumania tries to conceal its complicity in the atrocities of the pro-Western Ceausescu regime and how the Rumanian masses had again to storm the corridors of power on February 18, 1990, how East Germans who realized that the new Krenz regime was protecting and reorganizing Stasis (the State-Security Police) spontaneously took over the Stasis headquarters on January 15, 1990 and how the Czechoslovakian Communist Party's First Secretary Vasil Moko-vita boasts that the Party stands for "a multi-party system, democracy, free enterprise and progressive human values."

At the same time, Gorbachevism has fueled and intensified struggles for national self-determination dating back to the days of Tsarism- notably in the Baltic states and Soviet Central Asia- creating a very real prospect of the break-up of the USSR. With every passing day, Soviet social-imperialism sheds more of its "socialist" disguise and the nomenklatura reveal themselves to be no more than an upbeat version of the old, decrepit Russian Tsars.

Even as "Perestroika I" has failed and "Perestroika II" began with the surrender of the Soviet Communist Party's monopoly of power on February 5, 1990 it is manifest that Gorbachevism represents a worldwide retrogression whose most avid disciple is the fascist F W de Klerk with his policy of pretoriastroika.

The Road Ahead

As the Azanian masses create liberation with their own calloused hands, they must not shrink from venturing into untrodden paths.

They must not look for crutches simply because a new epigone is using the word "democracy" to mean more than one party and another is using the word "unity" to mean absorption into the ANC. We have seen how rapidly the world can change in the space of a month and how quickly power can shatter.

Pretoriastroika is an attempt to give the ghoul of apartheid-capitalism a human face: it is of benefit only to the ruling class and its imperialist backers. It has already succeeded in co-opting significant sections of the broad liberation movement who are terminally infected by the bug of capitulation.

We take inspiration from Joseph Stalin's words: "This cannot go on any longer! And only revolution can put a stop to it!" in his manifesto to the masses (October 1905). We believe that there is a revolutionary current with support and initiative among broad sections of the Azanian masses- in other words, that we have a revolutionary people.

It is in this context that the following response by a Weekly Mail reader to Sisulu's sentiments (quoted above) are remarkable apposite:

"Murphy Morobe is under the illusion that his organisation is responsible for 'generating' the 'mobilisation' which now needs to be converted into 'education' and is afraid that the UDF may not be able to control the Frankenstein which it has created. He should be worrying about something else."

"Even if the Frankenstein is controlled for now, it may spring back to life if material 'reality' does not change. And it may turn out to be as much trouble for an ANC government as it is for the present one, education or not."

- Weekly Mail February 9, 1990

GORBACHEV: SOUL OF CAPITAL PERSONIFIED

by Philani Socrates Makhaye

Philani Socrates Makhaye, a member of the BCM (Durban & Districts), explores why Mikhail Gorbachev is at once a mortal adversary and a blood brother of the West.

Mrs. Margret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, enthused when she saw Mikhail Gorbachev in London, December 1984: "I like him. We can do business together." The British press hailed Gorbachev as a "golden boy". *Sunday Times* extolled him to the skies: "A red star rises in the East." French President Mitterrand was equally impressed. He saw a Gorbachev with "a relaxed, resolute mind ...totally unpolemical". George Bush, now President of the United States of America, gave a rather ambiguous view of the Kremlin leader when he warned a West German politician in the White House about Gorbachev being an "impressive ideas salesman".

Maybe the Western world has finally found "a smart man in Moscow" with whom they can do business.

HIS BACKGROUND

In the Caucasus, in the District of Krasnogvardeysk lies the village of Privolnoye. Here, on March 2 1931, Sergei Andreevich Gorbachev and Maria Panteleeva gave birth to Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev. The father, Sergei Andreevich was an agricultural mechanic and later a frontline soldier in the Second World War. Unfortunately for the still sapling Gorbachev, his father could not live long enough to see his political career. He, like 20 million fellow soviet citizens, did not survive the Great Patriotic War.

The Gorbachev family is of Russian origin, having lived for an unknown period in the northern Caucasus, which was not part of old Russia. The people of Caucasus have preserved their traditional individuality and their opposition to being absorbed into the Russian fold. The

Germans briefly occupied Stavropol in 1942, dissolved a few collective farms and permitted private ownership of land, shops and cafes. However, this was to be reversed when Stalin led the Soviet Union to victory against the German fascists. By this time, Gorbachev was in his early teens.

He completed his upper school with a silver medal. At the age of 18 he received a "Red Banner of Labour Group" decoration.

At 19, on the recommendation of his municipality, he was sent to study law at the Lomonov State University in Moscow. Zdenek Mlynar, Gorbachev's fellow-student reminisces: "The day when we were studying collective farm law, Gorbachev explained to me how insignificant collective farm legislation was in day to day life and how important, on the other hand, was brute force, which alone secured working discipline on the collective farms". Perhaps Gorbachev had this in mind; "Socialism is not brute, it only becomes so when it is ensured".

In October 1952, he joined the Communist Party. Having graduated, he left Moscow in 1955 in the company of his wife Raisa Maksimovna Titorenko, an attractive graduate of Marxism-Leninism, for his rural village. He began his Party career in the Komsomol, the "communist" youth organisation. From this time onwards, Gorbachev, with the help of Raisa "the philosopher" experienced a dramatic upward trend of his politi-

cal career and experience. Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" cited at the Party Congress on February 25 1956, in which he pilloried Stalin's "crimes" found Gorbachev back in his native Stavropol, with his widowed mother.

THE PATH TO POWER

In July 1978 Gorbachev's patron, Fedor Kulakov committed suicide. At his funeral on July 19, 1978, Mikhail Gorbachev delivered his first speech in Red Square. Exciting speech indeed! He had to return to Moscow, four months later, to succeed Kulakov as Central Committee Secretary for Agriculture.

Who called Gorbachev to Moscow?—The names of two pundits come up—Mikhail Suslov and Yuri Andropov.

Suslov, the chief ideologist, who died in 1982, might have been attracted to young Gorbachev in as far as he could be an effective counterweight to Brezhnev's corrupt clique.

Andropov, a highly educated KGB chief, had personal contacts with both Gorbachev and his wife. They shared significant political ventures when Gorbachev was still Regional Party chief. Much more significant is that they both shared an interest in the "modernisation" of the Soviet Union. In this young man, Andropov saw a Soviet Union leader who will lead the country into the 21st century. It was this Gorbachev who was to say later, "Today they say, some with admiration and others with open

hostility, that we are a superpower!"

After Andropov's death on February 9, 1984 there were two candidates contending for office. There was young, bucolic Gorbachev, representing radical change in the Soviet system and there was also Brezhnev's old friend-Chernenko. After a considerably feeble reign by Chernenko, at 19:20 hours on March 10, 1985 ill Chernenko died. The next day, at the Plenum of the Central Committee meeting to elect the new General Secretary, only some 200 of the 300 representatives arrived in time. Some did not care to come. With enormous support from the KGB, Gorbachev was elected new General Secretary, unanimously indeed! In trying to persuade certain groups to support the election of Gorbachev, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko told them, "Comrades, this man has a nice smile but he has teeth of iron". Of course these teeth were soon to be seen in action when Gorbachev started securing his position silencing his opponents by massive purges, dismissals and "retirements."

BACKWARD MOBILITY IN THE SOVIET UNION

In chronicling the genesis of revisionism in the Soviet Union, let us cast our memories back to that "Secret Speech" by Nikita Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in Moscow on 14-25 February 1956. Khrushchev, as part of his "contributions to the development of Marxism" (sic!) maintained that socialism could be achieved through a "parliamentary road". This road had to prove itself in the lessons of history. This happened in the south-western part of South America.

In 1970, on the eve of the election of the Popular Unity government in Chile, headed by Salvador Allende, Fidel Castro wrote an article in a Chilean journal consecrating Chile as an example of the possibility of the electoral path to socialism. Although the Chilean masses were in a position to unleash their revolutionary

potential and to expose and depose comprador bourgeois rule in Chile, the revisionist Communist Party of Chile restrained them and even supported the armed forces in disarming the masses, and appealed to them not to use arms against the reactionary coup organisers who brought about a bloody end to Allende's rule. Allende's heed for this "theory" by Khrushchev resulted in his own rule being drowned in a pool of blood.

In the same address, Khrushchev declared a new policy of "peaceful-coexistence" with capitalist countries. The Communist Party was to seize to be the party of the proletariat and become the party of the "whole people". The dictatorship of the proletariat was attacked and castigated as "unnecessary" since the Soviet Union "no longer had antagonistic classes". The profitability index was reinstated as the major indicator in the planning of production in the Soviet Union. As Aleksei Nikolayevich Kosygin, when he was still General Secretary (1964-1980), noted in his 1965 speech,

..."(T)o orientate the enterprise towards efficiency, it would appear to be better to use profit index".

Classical bourgeois accounting! The Soviet new ruling class, from Khrushchev to Gorbachev, share the myth that profit is the best means of achieving maximum social good coupled with the illusion that the profitability index is necessarily incumbent as an indicator in any institution at the enterprise level, especially if the institution is "efficient".

One of the main ideological weapons



Gorbachev and Reagan at the 1987 Washington Summit.

used by Khrushchev to demoralize, demobilize and divide the masses was that much vaunted "goulash communism". By this Khrushchev meant that socialist countries were essentially highly developed "consumer societies" even exceeding such capitalist countries as the USA in this regard. The quest of the Soviet people to have more and better washing machines, refrigerators, television sets and blue jeans was put forward as a reason for the abandonment of class struggle. The ruling class promised to make these abundant and they predicted a USSR with a "good life". This would serve as proof that capitalism should be substituted by this "superior" system, "goulash communism".

PERESTROIKA: An exposé

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union saw Mikhail Gorbachev outlining the key elements of his policy of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *oruskoneriye* (acceleration) shortly after becoming General Secretary. The major target of *perestroika* is economic instability in the Soviet Union. "Basic Provisions for the Radical Restructuring of Economic Management" ratified by the June 1987

Plenum of the Central Committee is a drastic endeavour by Gorbachev and Co. to reshape the economy but it also touches on social and political matters as well. The meaning and objectives of *perestroika* could best be learnt from Gorbachev's own words and the actions of the whole ruling class. Changes that come with *perestroika* can be seen here:

"Many things are unusual in our country now: election of managers at enterprises and offices, multiple candidates for elections in some districts, joint ventures with foreign firms, self-financed factories and plants, state and collective farms, the lifting of restrictions on farms producing food products for enterprises and run by them, closure of non-paying plants and factories operating at a loss..."

With the same spirit he continues,

..."(E)nterprises must be put in such conditions as to encourage competition for the best satisfaction of consumer demands and employee's incomes must strictly depend on end production, on profits".

The profit index objectively unifies the results of sales efforts and cost reduction into a single indicator that can be compared across industries. This indicator can be applied if, and only if, it yields results compatible with the net laws of profitability.

Presently a large section of all investments in the Soviet Union come out of retained profits at the enterprise level. As long as capitalism reigns, Lenin pointed out, emphasizing particularly the features of capitalism in its imperialist stage, surplus profit will not be utilized to raise the standards of living of the masses or to overcome the gap between agriculture and industry but instead will be exported abroad, especially in backward countries, to gain superprofits. And this is precisely what the Soviet Union is doing, though its export of capital and wringing of superprofits often revolves around the sale of arms and /or takes the appearance of unequal trade (eg. India) and of "aid" (eg. Angola) and loans whose terms require the recipient to purchase Soviet goods at prices *well above* the world

market price. Capital is driven, in search of profits, to produce and reproduce itself as a social relation and does so as if it has no boundaries. It only tolerates production that is commensurate with the profitable employment of existing capital.

Surplus value, the product of capitalist production, regulates and dominates production in the Soviet Union. This is to show that there is a direct link between the profitability index and investment criteria. The overall thrust of all these various reforms in the Soviet Union has been to bring profit-and-loss accounting to the centre stage at the enterprise, production, associations and ministerial level.

Gorbachev has another target in mind, the management system. He says, "The management system which took shape in the forties and thirties began gradually to contradict the demands and conditions of economic progress. Its positive potential was exhausted. It become more and more of a hindrance, and gave rise to the braking mechanism which did us so much harm later."

"It was in these conditions that a prejudiced attitude to the role of commodity-money relations and the law of value under socialism developed and the claim was often made that they were opposite and alien to socialism. All this was combined with an underestimation of profit and loss accounting, and produced disarray in pricing, and a disregard for the circulation of money".

Of course, people *must* develop a prejudiced attitude towards commodity-money relations, and *must* have a disdain for profit and loss accounting. These are opposite and alien to the end goal of socialism. Supremacy of commodity-money relation means supremacy of the bour-

geoisie. The law of value basically presupposes profit as the motive force of production. A stand against these bourgeois determinants must be encouraged and strengthened. Why then is Gorbachev sobbing over this socialist stand of the Soviet masses? Isn't this a revelation?

Gorbachev insists that he has been helped by "Lenin's works, especially his last". He does not consider Lenin's analysis of imperialism, the state, the party, tasks of a revolution and Marxism as a whole. What he singles out is "Lenin's valuable ideas on management and self-management, profit and loss accounting, and the linking of public and personal interests". Gorbachev therefore tells us that he is a "Leninist". In fact Gorbachev kills Leninism in embrace.

During the early 1920's, after a revolution and three years of civil war and battles against 14 invading powers, at a time when large scale industry in the USSR had seized to exist, when peasants could not be persuaded to sell their crops because there was nothing for them to spend their money on, at a time when the only way of keeping everyone from starving was for the Red Army to go to the countryside and haul away the peasant's surplus food whether they liked it or not, Lenin, seeing the danger of a possible uprising, came



up with what became known as the New Economic Policy (NEP). He called this policy a "strategic retreat", a "reverting to capitalism to a certain extent". This was the only choice facing the ruling proletariat if it was to secure and strengthen its political power. NEP allowed a certain level of private ownership and unrestricted production in peasant families. The proletariat had to hire some former bourgeois factory owners and experts and functionaries because it had not yet had practical experience in certain fields of industry and government. The NEP was meant to curb a socio-economic sickness and was to be discouraged once the sickness was cured. What Lenin saw as a "retreat", Gorbachev sees as an absolute, a way to be followed by the Soviet Union, a "positive change".

GORBACHEV'S TARNISHED SOCIALISM

Shortly after Mikhail Gorbachev attained supreme authority as General Secretary, he made a symbolic choice. He set February 25 as the date for the opening of the 27th Party Congress in 1986. February 25 was the date on which Nikita Khrushchev poured slop on Stalin's political career, at the 20th Party Congress.

In his speech to the 2nd November 1987 meeting of the Central Committee, Gorbachev declared that the "guilt of Stalin and his entourage" is "enormous and unforgivable". What does Gorbachev consider Stalin guilty of? His criticism of Stalin in the realm of theory could not be more telling. In the same speech Gorbachev attacks what he terms Stalin's "erroneous theory of an aggravation of class struggle in the course of socialist construction." Gorbachev sees no need to sweep away the bourgeoisie under socialism. He is under no illusion:

"Socialism has a different criterion for distribution of social benefits: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work". There is no exploitation of man by man, no division into rich and poor, into millio-

naire and pauper, all nations are equal among equals, all people are guaranteed jobs. This is the embodiment of social justice under socialism".

Stalin started by committing the same mistake when in 1936 in his report "On the Draft Constitution of the USSR" he stated, "Thus the complete victory of the socialist system in all spheres of the national economy is now a fact --- It means that the exploitation of man by man has been abolished, eliminated ----- thus all the exploiting classes have now been eliminated". This led Stalin to the wrong conclusion as witnessed in his report to the 18th Congress in 1935:

"The feature that distinguishes Soviet society today from any capitalist society is that it no longer contains antagonistic hostile classes, that the exploiting classes have been eliminated while the workers, peasants and intellectuals who make up the Soviet society live and work in friendly collaboration".

In essence, Stalin one-sidedly emphasized the ownership system and failed to deal sufficiently and correctly with other aspects of the relations of production and the superstructure and their reaction to the ownership system. Stalin concluded that since ownership was well socialized, antagonistic classes and the internal basis for capitalist restoration had been eliminated. This Stalinist theory reduced capitalism to little more than the system of private ownership and the existence of antagonistic classes. Once political power is seized and a system of public ownership of the means of production applied, no thought is then given to a thoroughgoing socialist revolution (a revolution within a revolution) on the political and ideological fronts. Attention is only given to production and more production.

This theory of the productive forces seriously hampers the genuine tasks facing the proletariat in that it confines the proletariat to production and production alone. As a result whatever struggle the proletariat can wage, it will be nothing more than for

economic demands. Economism is therefore entrenched.

The other major weakness of this theory is that it is preoccupied with the economic base at the expense of the superstructure. There are a host of closely related positions that flow from this preoccupation: disregard for the masses as makers of history, reliance on planners, preoccupation with technology and expertise, confidence in hierarchy and one-man management, reliance on material incentives, and a total lack of interest in the transformation of an individual's world view. The end result becomes the growth of a powerful bureaucratic apparatus completely alienated from the masses.

During the latter part of his life, Stalin did begin to attempt to analyze some of the contradictions that still exist under socialism. This is especially so in his last work, "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR". Stalin here does lay stress on the fact that contradictions between the forces and relations of production *continue* to exist under socialism and that if not properly handled these contradictions could become antagonistic and even provide a basis for capitalist restoration or for bourgeois elements finding a breathing space to disturb socialist programmes. But still, he did not deal with the continuing contradiction between the base and the superstructure and did not point out that this contradiction constitutes a basic contradiction in a socialist society and also finds expression throughout socialism principally in the existence of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the struggle between them.

It is only during the last part of his reign that Stalin unleashed class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Mr Gorbachev attacks this very class struggle under socialism. He sees it as anarchic and unnecessary. We in the Black Consciousness Movement criticize Stalin for:-

1. failing to grasp and apply dialectical materialism in the understanding of the laws of class

struggle in a socialist society,

2. failing to recognize that after extensive collectivization of agriculture class struggle and the contradiction between the socialist and capitalist roads continues,
3. seeing no material base for capitalist restoration inside the Soviet Union but only seeing a threat of invasion by international capitalism,
4. seriously neglecting agriculture and peasant life and lopsidedly stressing heavy industry,
5. having a cynical internationalist policy (as can be seen in his attitude towards the Chinese Revolution),
6. giving supremacy to production rather than class/ideological struggle,
7. unrealistically prioritizing the economic base rather than the superstructure,
8. being a technocrat,
9. excessively suppressing and liquidating opponents in the purges of the 1930s

but nevertheless uphold Stalin from the slanders of Trotsky, Khrushchev and Gorbachev.

Gorbachev intends to model the most rancid features of capitalist societies. He says,

"The essence of what we plan to do throughout the country is to replace predominantly administrative methods with predominantly economic methods".

"If personal interests are disregarded, nothing will come of the effort, and society will only stand to loose"

"There are benefits for people in the sphere of production and culture. For instance, we take special care of our eminent scientists, academicians and writers."

Not surprisingly, *perestroika* has its greatest emphasis on the principle "From each according to his ability,

to each according to his work". This is sometimes called "bourgeois right". Gorbachev sees this principle as something whose scope is to be widened, entrenched and strengthened, not to be restricted bit by bit until the attainment of that supreme goal, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". The latter is completely pushed under the carpet!

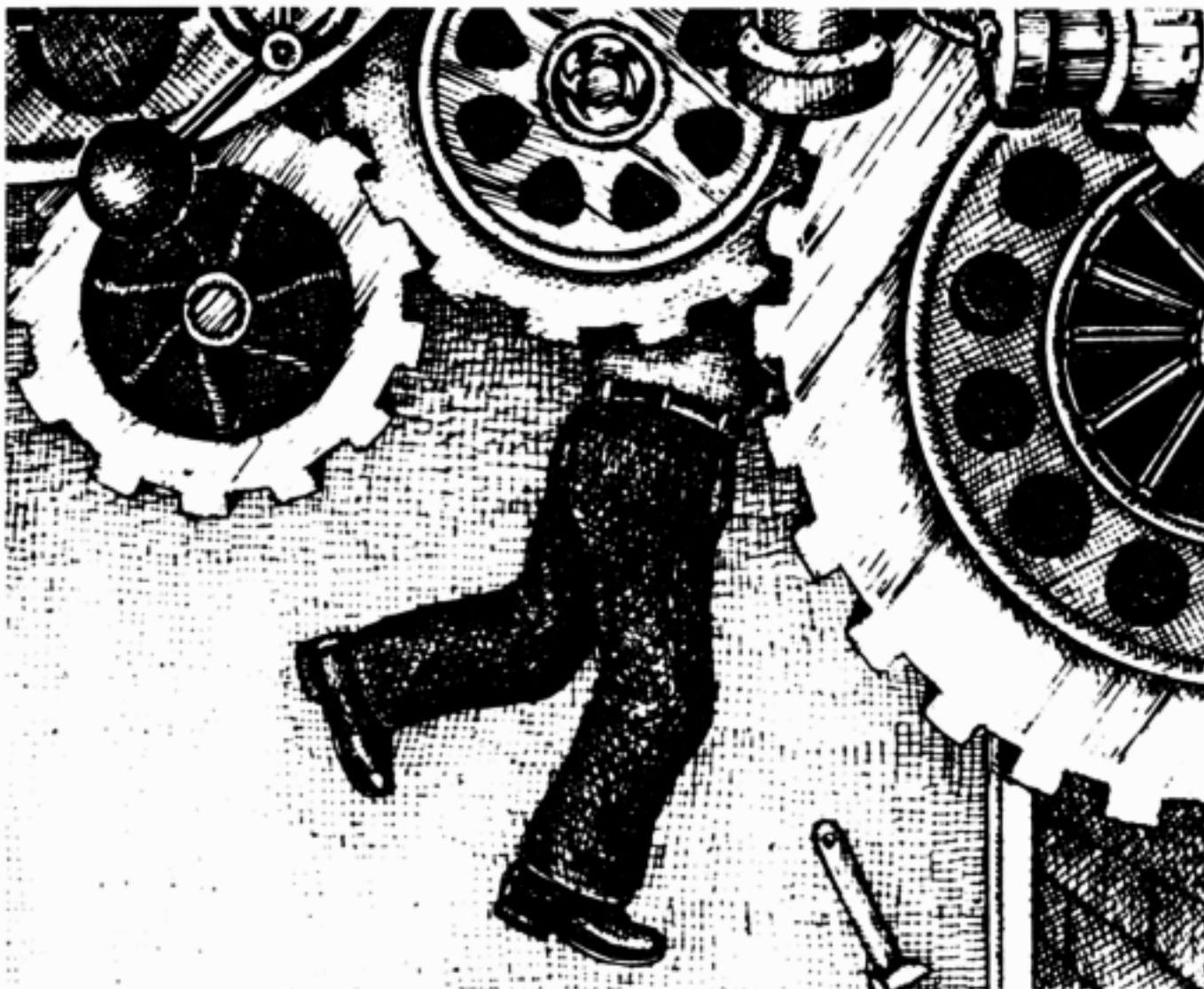
No wonder he complains so much about "wage-levelling". He sees pay according to work as supreme social justice.

That conservative shibboleth, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work" serves as a watchword for Gorbachev's labour policy. Like all other capitalists Gorbachev claims that labour is paid according to work performed. (Gorbachev earns 1500 roubles a month which is about R5 834, about seven times the average pay of a Soviet worker).

"What is the main short-coming of the old economic machinery?," Gorbachev asks. He then provides an answer, "It is above all the lack of inner stimuli for self-development". This inner stimulus is profits. He therefore concludes that this stimulus must become "a powerful lever, a motivating force for resourceful

quality performance". For the country not to "stand to loose" its people need "deserved" material incentives. No capitalist could say it better!

The idea of worker participation in the management of production occupies an important place in the new law on state enterprises adopted during June 1987 in the Soviet Union, which provides for the election of the managerial personnel by the members of the labour collective. Revisionists hail this as a broader campaign for *glasnost* (openness) and "democratization" throughout the Soviet society. In a further move to increase participation of the workers, a new institution called the labour collective council (*soviet trudonovo kollektiva*) has in the main been established. However, as should be expected, Soviet productive units were not transformed into centres of class struggle and relations between these units were not transformed in order to break down the relative separation of the workers from direct access to the means of production, distribution and exchange. Labour is still subordinated to strict hierarchical forms of authority, given incentives which amount to profit-sharing and the workers are consciously starved of information about national and world issues. Gor-



bachev boasts about this worker participation and also the existence of production committees in the Soviet Union. We hear much talk about labour enjoying rights of "having a say" in the affairs of production but no discussion of its right to run the whole state, enterprises, education, media and culture and transforming the whole world into its image! In fact this is its greatest right under revolutionary socialism.

No matter how cosy the new management system is, the point is once the production of surplus-value dominates social production, wage labour becomes a commodity. Once the urge to produce more becomes the requirement for maximization of profits with a minimum of capital invested in a particular labour process, once this characterizes planning, the producers become alienated, oppressed. Wage-labour thus become a *very dependent* commodity. This means that this labour power is controlled and utilized on an expanded basis to produce and reproduce relations which are alien to the working class. In your country, Mr. Gorbachev, labour is socially useful (and employable) only in so far as it is capable of producing surplus-value and meeting the demands of profitability. Worker participation in the echelons of management is perfunctory if the shop-floor worker is reduced to a propertyless proletarian-competing in the sale of his only commodity - his labour power - to keep life going.

What makes a society socialist is the fact that a proletarian line is overall in command, that society is on the socialist road, overcoming bourgeois relations, exposing and destroying capitalist roaders within it, and most important, functioning as a spring-board for socialist revolutions in other parts of the world.

On the question of women, Gorbachev sees the role of women in the society almost the same way as did the Tsars years before him. He says "... that is why we are now holding heated debates in the press, in public organisations, at work and at home, about the question of what we

should do to make it possible for women to return to their purely womanly mission". This "mission" is their role as mothers and homemakers. The heroic image of the Soviet women who gave their lives during the October Revolution in 1917 and were actively involved in the armed struggle and the revolution must now give way to Gorbachev's philistine "womanly mission!"

"... WE ARE A SUPERPOWER"

One of the reasons why Gorbachev cannot allow class struggle in a socialist society is that it will cause "lawlessness". He wants "peace" and "mutual understanding" between "groups". Substitute "classes" for groups. He writes, "There is no democracy, nor can there be, without *glasnost*. And there is no present-day socialism, nor can there be, without democracy. "More socialism means a more dynamic pace and creative endeavour, more organisation, law and order, more scientific methods and initiative in economic management, efficiency in administration, and a better and richer material life for the people".

What then is the definition of capitalism if this typifies socialism? Gorbachev seems to have a belief that whatever the USSR does merits being said to be in the name of socialism. Socialism is imbibed like high school civics and has been transformed from a philosophy of rebellion and conscious struggle for emancipation of the proletariat into a religion of the Soviet status quo. Gorbachev sees Hungary where enterprise targets are not even set centrally anymore --- or Rumania --- where even the pretence of a monopoly on foreign trade has been discarded -- and China post 1976 -- where private ownership and capitalist relations of production have been reintroduced on a grand scale --- as all "socialist" countries. Now that we have found the Rossetta stone for Gorbachev's language we may conclude that Hungary, Rumania and others are "socialist" because they are loyal members of the Soviet dominated COMECON and WARSAW

PACT.

Gorbachev, dispirited by the military's low key response to *perestroika* met senior military officers at Minsk and told them,

"We need energetic leaders who can command and communicate, people with initiative who are competent in their work".

Dmitriy Yazov replaced the aging Sergey Sokolov as USSR defence minister in May 1987. Not only is Yazov a nimble-minded militarist, he is an ardent supporter of *perestroika*.

Marshal Orgakov, a leading Soviet military spokesperson who is close to Gorbachev politically, argued that: "Nothing is more dependent on the state of the economy than the army. Weapons, supplies, tactics and even strategy depend on the level of production and the means of communication".

Again the same Orgakov confesses:

" In order to increase the military preparedness of the country, today as never before, it is necessary to co-ordinate mobilization and deployment of the armed forces".

The USSR has an undying revolutionary legacy. Gorbachev knows this very well. He therefore seeks to wear this legacy to serve his reactionary interests. He talks about goodness in Soviet history in that it "brought formerly backward Russia to the right place- the place the Soviet Union occupies in human progress". What place is that? Gorbachev enjoys this question. He arrogantly says: "Today they say, some with admiration and others with open hostility, that we are a superpower". He therefore leads the USSR in *behaving* like one. This takes him beyond Soviet borders to look for " areas of influence".

So desperate are the Soviets they now challenge America even in places long regarded as sacrosanct arenas of American influence. The Pacific has long been regarded as "an American lake". In the summer of 1986 Gorbachev announced in a speech given at the USSR's largest Pacific port, Vladivostok, that, "The

Soviet Union is also an Asian and Pacific country". This message was not lost to the ears of the rival US imperialists.

Soviet warships are teeming in the war-torn Persian Gulf with Gorbachev proclaiming the Soviet Union "the guarantor of Gulf security". The US is claiming the same status. The Soviets increased their military aid to North Korea and Vietnam, inaugurated diplomatic and commercial relations with certain Polynesian island states, moved to secure commercial ties with Saudi-Arabia and even ran Kuwaiti oil tankers under Soviet flags.

HOW NOT TO FREE THE LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES . . .

Gorbachev notes that the whole world needs restructuring. But this is not what he really means.

The first thing to point out is that the division of the world into oppressor and oppressed nations is not objectionable to Gorbachev. He only complains about a "widening rather than narrowing" gap between the two.

He declares that the USSR recognizes how important "the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, other Third World regions and also South Africa are for American and Western European economies, in particular as *raw material* sources. To cut those links is the *last thing* we want to do, and we have no desire to provoke ruptures in historically formed, mutual economic interests". He goes on to say they (the Soviets) "do not pursue goals inimical to Western interests". His sheer apologia is revealed here:

"While we do not approve the character of the current *relations* between the West and the developing countries, we do *not* urge that they be disrupted".

He therefore suggests "a new world economic order" that, he says, came out of a conversation with French President Mitterand: "If the enterprise is to function effectively, it is imperative that the employees incomes are

guaranteed, and, despite their low level, are able to enable them to restore their production capacities, maintain their health, upgrade their qualifications, and raise their children". He accuses the West of failing to understand this "simple truth".

Soviet dealings with dependant countries are by no means dissimilar. Soviet trade with LDCs expands Soviet industry in two ways:

1. By providing a market for Soviet machinery, and,
2. By providing (imported) raw materials for industry (including foodstuff for its workers in industry).

When the USSR imports raw materials from LDCs, it is able to reduce the more expensive expansion of domestic output of these raw materials. For instance the import of long staple cotton from Egypt and Sudan is less expensive than the construction of extensive irrigation systems in Soviet Central Asia. By exporting manufactured goods in return for raw material imports, the USSR is able to increase its rate of industrialization. A rapid pace of capital accumulation allows for the constant introduction of new technology. All these factors enable the USSR to become a world power while preserving (if not reinforcing) the subordinate role of the LDCs.

From 1956 on, the USSR has been extending credits on a large scale. According to US estimates, from 1955 through 1976 the USSR extended 11.8 billion dollars, over 95 percent of which was loans. Eastern European countries extended 6.4 billion dollars. 28 percent of Soviet aid has gone to Egypt and India. Another 43 per cent has gone to the Middle East, broadly defined (Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Syria and Turkey). 10



per cent has gone to sub-Saharan Africa, and 20 per cent to the rest of the world. The credits authorized in an aid agreement cannot be used until further agreements are signed. The Soviets must approve of each project for which the funds are to be used. The credits must be spent on goods purchased in the Soviet Union.

The above figures on Soviet "aid" do not include military aid. Soviet arms shipments to LDCs from 1967 until 1976 are estimated at 13 460 million dollars. From 1965 to 1974 Egypt purchased 2 400 million dollars, Syria and Iraq together bought 2 000 million dollars, and India purchased 1 300 million dollars. Soviet arms sales - often called Soviet military "aid" - are generally financed by ten-year credits (with at most a three year grace period) at 2 to 2 1/2 per cent interest. The prices paid by LDCs for Soviet arms are 40 to 50 per cent below Western prices. The USSR can import more valuable goods than it exports because the LDCs must pay interest demanded by Soviet loans



("aid"). Soviet arms shipments have been a large portion of total Soviet exports to the LDCs. The Soviet Union is exploiting the dependent countries need for defence for its own economic advantages. Most arms sales by both the West and the Soviets to the Third World countries are usually of older equipment and of old-fashioned calibre. As they accumulate profits from this trade, the Soviet leadership is able to purchase Western technology.

Some revisionists argue that since the Soviets do not export capital the way the West does, then it means the USSR is not imperialist. Let us look at this difference even more closely.

It is true that the Soviet Union does not follow the Western style of direct investment abroad, or at least, not as massively as the West does. Soviet "aid" could be repaid in kind through barter arrangements. In other words, the Soviet Union will lend money to help construct a factory and part of the output of that factory will then

have to return to the Soviet Union. There is no fundamental difference between payment in commodities and payment in money. In both cases value is being generated abroad and transferred back to the imperialist country in another form, but it is still extracted value, materialized as a commodity. However, this is not to say that the Soviet Union's overseas profits represent a large share of total profits. This is to say these profits play a prominent role within the operations of the decisive and leading units of Soviet finance capital. Some of the Soviet Union's major economic transactions depend on these overseas profits.

We must remember that the act of exporting capital always remains, in essence, exportation of a social relation. In the "Third World" countries this social relation plays a dual role:

1. it ensures continued relations between the imperialist and the dependent country,
2. it ossifies the ruling class of the dependent country.

Soviet-financed industrialization in the Third World serves in fact to expand capitalist relations of production: Soviet built factories expand wage labour employment (under conditions of intense exploitation) at the expense of sometimes preferable pre-capitalist modes of production. The aid that goes to the Third World governments goes straight to the coffers of the ruling class, never to the working classes. The governments of India, Egypt, Syria and other Soviet "aid" recipients are in the hands of the comprador bourgeoisie. Neo-colonialism therefore is the control of the economies of the "Third World" countries by imperialist powers, the tying of the comprador bourgeois classes to the apron strings of the international bourgeoisie.

Imperialism therefore is not an anachronistic government policy nor a cynical conspiracy against less developed countries by monopoly-capitalists nor is it a search of markets beyond one's borders. *Imperialism is rooted in the laws of motion of capital, in the nature of capital as a*

self-expanding value. It is that system of capital exportation which reinforces an unequal international division of labour in which a few countries dominate the world economy and the rest assume the role of being mere subordinates. Imperialism is capital in maximum mobility, swiftest production and reproduction of its family, emphasis and re-emphasis on itself as an expanding social relation, a relation that, through its own contradictions extends, reinforces and reveals itself to the proletariat as enemy number one, at home and abroad. In most cases, capital conditions behavioral patterns of the proletariat in the mother country and that of the dependent country (successfully or unsuccessfully). The proletariat of the mother country is largely embourgeoisified. Their standard of living is considerably higher than that of the dependent country. This split creates contradictions between members of the same family (the proletarian family). Capital, ever looking for more areas of influence, expands on an unlimited scale thereby heightening contradictions and crises in the whole world, giving fresh possibilities of world war. Gorbachev is very aware of this.

"We would not beg for peace"

"The fundamental principle of the new political outlook is very simple: nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political, economic, ideological or any other goals." Gorbachev therefore calls for peaceful-coexistence between countries. Yet even in Gorbachev's noisiest calls for peace the rivalry and tension between the American and Soviet imperialist blocs is audible.

Gorbachev accuses the US as prime perpetrators of armed conflict. He recalls the Tripoli incident: "In April 1986 American war planes bombed Tripoli, Benghazi and other facilities in Libyan territory." He accuses the government of the NATO countries for silently watching the developments and not doing anything to oppose this US action. Even worse is the fact that in the attack, "American war

planes took off from bases in Britain and flew through the air space of Western Europe." He then uses this attack as a yardstick, "And what if the American military takes a notion to punish one of the Warsaw Treaty countries by bombing it? What then? Act as if nothing happened? But this is war!" Should the US think the SOVIET UNION is powerless, this would be "wishful thinking." If the Soviet Union, when it was much weaker than now, was in a position to meet the challenges that it faced, then indeed "only a blind person would be unable to see that our capacity to maintain strong defences and simultaneously resolve social and other tasks has enormously increased."

A nuclear war would be a US fault. The US sets the tone for the arms race. The Soviet Union and the US are both signatories to the treaty banning nuclear tests. But the US "went on with a series of nuclear tests. Its spokesmen officially declared that it is Moscow's business whether to test nuclear charges or not. As far as the US was concerned the tests would continue without any let-up." Soviet strategists, Gorbachev included, consider the incineration of scores of millions through nuclear strikes and the use of other millions as cannon-fodder in the field as decisive. Soviet strategy implies a rearranged imperialist order.

It is true that in a world where socialist countries are threatened by nuclear-armed imperialist states, nuclear weapons would be a necessity. But the Soviet armed forces are guided by a weapons-first doctrine built around nuclear warheads. In fact, this doctrine alone is reason enough to condemn the Soviet military as imperialist.

What we are presented with is this: Bush and his NATO allies toy with grotesque notions of "limited" nuclear war and seek ways to surgically use their nuclear arsenals against their rivals, while limiting damage to their own imperialist homelands. Gorbachev and his Warsaw Pact allies announce that they will not play by such rules and insist that *their* preparations are to meet *any* nuclear exchange with all out and general nuclear bombardment of the planet!

It is the United States that started to pull out of the SALT-II Treaty, argues Gorbachev. This treaty was declared "dead". Then the Americans started to brainwash their citizens and the world's public in order to destroy the unlimited Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It is the US government administration that sees it fit to continue with the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). Gorbachev therefore says: "Yes, we are against SDI, because we are for complete elimination of nu-

clear weapons and because SDI makes the world ever more unstable". This parts the smile.

"They (the West) think that if the USSR is afraid of SDI it should be intimidated morally, economically, politically and militarily. This explains the great stress on SDI, the aim being to exhaust us".

Then comes the teeth. "We would not beg for peace. We had more than once responded to challenges and would do so again". What else can "respond to challenges" mean except waging and winning a war, coldly calculating how many millions of people can and must be incinerated and how much of the world must be laid to waste in order to grab a bigger share of the plunder?

He recalls: "The Soviet Union emerged from the Second World War in a very difficult condition. Nevertheless, we succeeded in restoring what had been destroyed, in building up our economic potential and in confidently tackling our defensive tasks. Is this not the lesson for the future?" Yes, it is Gorbachev. It is also a challenge to the international proletariat and the oppressed nations to rise up against both your imperialist bloc and the US bloc in order to free humanity from threats of nuclear war attacks and the destruction of every living soul on the planet, earth. ■



Welcome To The Shabab!

by Patrick Moodly

Danger and opportunity are inseparable. When the seas are turbulent, it is possible for a vessel seemingly vanished in the wave's trough to emerge at the crest of the next great swell.

While noting the overall international situation, the last conclusion for one to draw is that nothing remains but to wait for one's own small craft to be buffeted, swamped and sunk in the inevitable global storm.

The revolutionary struggle of the Palestinian people defies the attempts by armchair intellectuals to achieve a "realistic two-state" solution.

The historic role of the Palestinian and Azanian revolutions, both against settler-colonial states controlled by the USA, will vastly influence the whole world for decades to come.

From The River Jordan To The Sinai

About two years ago, the settler-colonial state of Israel seemed all powerful, and some dared say that the Palestinian "wild card" had been discarded from the Middle Eastern deck. Reactionary vultures of all stripes cackled over "the corpse of the Palestinian movement." Today Israel's godfathers in the USA openly worry about the stability and survival of this indispensable link in their empire!

About two years ago, the USA was congratulating itself that its Persian Gulf policy had brought success: long-sought open alliances with the Arab gulf states were jelling, and its expanded armada had established a

firm foothold in the area. The *intifaada* (uprising) has sent all the Arab states who work closely with the United States scrambling to establish their "anti-Israeli" credentials as they worry about the sparks from Palestine jumping to ignite the masses within their own borders.

About two years ago, the goal of liberating *all* of Palestine from Zionism and imperialism seemed like an old dream that was fading amidst cynical "realism". December 9, 1987 saw the Palestinian people rising up together in unprecedented unity.

The spectre of national liberation has re-emerged and it walks a flesh and blood- in the fiery new generation of the shabab (the Palesinian youth). It is breath-taking to see how much the shabab have accomplished in the struggle and sacrifice of the *intifaada* which blankets the whole ancient land of Palestine: from the River Jordan to the edges of Sinai's desert, throughout the impoverished towns and refugee camps of the Gaza Strip, in the crowded farm villages of the West Bank, in the Arab districts of East Jerusalem and amongst the so-called "Israeli Arabs" – those Palestinians who live within the "Green Line."

Concentration Point

The Middle East is the concentration point of complex and volatile contradictions. If the knot of contradictions in the Middle East point to World War III, the *intifaada* has put an exclamation mark on the revolutionary potential of the masses. It has demonstrated that Israel and its US

master are not omnipotent, they are giants with feet of clay.

History will record that the most important political victory won by the *shabab* is to show that revolution has a genuine chance of defeating imperialism and settler-colonialism.

An Israeli colonel, on patrol in a Gaza Strip refugee camp, finds himself shaken by Palestinian eyes: "Their eyes show hatred – no doubt. And it is a deep hatred. All the things they cannot say and all the things they feel inside of them, they put into their eyes and in how they look at you. You feel a hatred from them ..." To this soldier, armed to the teeth and backed by all the modern weaponry of a Western power, the fearlessness of the *shabab* is unnatural, unsettling and foreboding: "They are not afraid to look right at you," he complains to a reporter, as his patrol approaches a group of glaring Palestinian youths. "Sometimes you pass a school, and stone-throwing kids come out and you give them a daring, intimidating look. They stare right back at you and they give you the feeling that they have self-confidence." He adds that the *shabab* do not look at his automatic rifle with hatred but with covetousness. This too makes him uneasy.

Israel and the US have thrown everything at the *shabab* including genocidal military assaults on civilians, illegal detentions, demolitions of homes and deportations. Israeli Prime Minister Shamir vowed: "Israel will prevent in the most determined way any attempt to carry out any idea- to the extent that there are madmen who raise it – of establishing a Palestinian government. Such people will be met with an iron fist that will leave no

trace of their attempts.

But the situation "on the ground" is still being shaped by the Palestinian masses, meeting in the slums and fighting defiantly through the crooked streets.

Negotiated settlement

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has attempted to use the power of the *intifaada* to force the world powers towards an international conference, in the hope that Israeli occupation can come to a negotiated end. What this means is to install *another* form of reactionary armed control over Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza: either Jordan serving as the new gendarme or some collaborators ruling a mini-state bantustan on Israel's behalf.

On July 31, 1988 King Hussein of Jordan, an American puppet, announced that he would cut the "legal and administrative links" that have bound the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to his government. As a US State Department official explained: "Hussein is putting the PLO on the spot ... Eventually, he figures, the West Bank Palestinians will come to their senses and may decide that the ultimate solution is a confederation of the West Bank with Jordan."

A two-day general strike shut down the West Bank beginning on August 1, 1988 and an even bigger strike spread through the "occupied territories" on August 8, 1988 and again on August 14. Hussein's move fueled the determination and resolve of the *shabab*.

As the Gaza Strip shook with rebellion against the Israeli occupiers, the Palestine National Council, the "parliament in exile" of the PLO issued a symbolic "declaration of independence" for a Palestinian state (September 1988). This declaration is based on the 1947 UN Partition Plan, which divided Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The PNC calls for "peace negotiations"



based on UN resolutions on Palestine, specifically naming UN Resolution 242. Passed after the 1967 War, UN Resolution 242 implies the recognition of Israel as a legitimate state.

The PLO thus openly recognized Israel's "legitimacy" and called for a "mini-state" made up only of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Such a mini-state can mean no more than a *bantustan a la Transkei or Venda*. It would be stripped of any real political, economic and military independence and surrounded by armies from Israel and /or pro-West Arab states like Jordan and Egypt. The Soviet Union has indicated support for the recognition of Israel and the "mini-state" solution.

Boasted a high-ranking PLO official: "We are now concerned with gaining world support, and we cannot ignore international facts that have become realities." This talk of realism is PLO doublespeak for counter-revolution and defeatism.

The Battle of Karameh

During March 1968, the Battle of Karameh erupted when a small band of *fedayeen* successfully defended the guerrilla base of PLO at Karameh, Jordan against a vastly superior Israeli force. Karameh marked a phoenix-like rebirth of the Palestinian cause. In the weeks following March 21 1968 hundreds of thousands of people took down their posters of Nasser and replaced them with posters of the *fedayeen*, wrapped in *kaffiyehs*, guns in hand.

By 1974, however, official PLO policy (represented by Arafat's speech to the UN) had gone from an erroneous though in many respects still revolutionary-line, to a consolidated orientation of subordinating the armed struggle to deals and diplomatic manoeuvring with one or another imperialist. The role of armed action in PLO strategy was reduced to that of an "irritant" designed to constantly remind the Zionists that

"the Palestinian question will not go away" and that "a negotiated solution is unavoidable."

The impotence of this overall PLO strategy was never more starkly evident than in the decision to surrender and leave the city of Beirut under the "protection" of a US multinational task force rather than fighting the Battle of Beirut through (July 1982).

Welcome to The Shabab

In September 1988, a thirteen year old Palestinian girl at a summer camp in Libya told a reporter: "We must fight for all of Palestine." Her fifteen year old companion nodded in agreement: "Up to now, everything Chairman Arafat has done has been right. But the day he recognizes Israel is the day I will oppose him. I will win my state by fighting, not be recognition." Indeed, illusory schemes of a relatively cheap and painless road to liberation through brokered deals with "enlightened" or pragmatic great powers lead, not to victory, but to paralysis and disaster.

Welcome to this fierce new generation! With incredible courage and sacrifice, the *shabab* have placed themselves in the front ranks of the struggle against settler-colonialism and imperialism. Much will be demanded of them as we free Palestine ... and Azania!!! ■

REPORT OF A BANKRUPT

If you blow out the candles in my eyes,

If you freeze all the kisses on my lips,

If you fill my native air with lispng curses,

Or silence my anguish,

Forge my coin,

Uproot the smile from my children's faces.

If you raise a thousand walls,

And nail my eyes to humiliation,

Enemy of man,

I shall not compromise

And to the end

I shall fight.

Enemy of man

The signals are raised at the forts,

The air

Is thronged with beckonings,

I see the sails at the horizon

Striving,

Defying,

The sails of Ulysses are veering home

From the seas of the lost

The sun is rising,

Man is advancing,

And for his sake,

I swear

I shall not compromise

And to the end

I shall fight

I shall fight.

- Samir Al-Qassem

One Base, Two Superstructures

by IMRANN MOOSA

It may be assumed that the central point of BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS (BC) ideology is the hegemony of the Black working class but this is simply not true. and from this misconception, an opportunist distortion of BC might very easily arise.

Those who recognize *only* the hegemony of the Black working class are not yet thoroughgoing revolutionaries. They may well be found to be still within the straight-jacket of bourgeois ideology.

Only she or he is a thoroughgoing revolutionary who *extends* the recognition of the race/class struggle to the recognition of the Dictatorship of the Black Proletariat and of the necessity to continue the revolution under this Dictatorship through the long socialist transition period.

Revolutionary Consciousness

The fundamental right of the Black Proletariat is to rule. Without this, any prattle about the "rights of labour" is absolutely meaningless.

The crucial point, comrades, is that the struggle for scientific socialism is a struggle for the *conscious* control of society by the Black working class. The Black Proletariat *must* be aware and conscious of just what it is doing and the fact that its own rule is, from an historical standpoint, merely transitory. This is why socialism can never grow up spontaneously within capitalism as did capitalism within the bowels of feudal society.

And this is precisely why the gains of a socialist revolution can be so completely reversed that a capitalist restoration can be effected. We have seen this happen under Khrushchev in the Soviet Union: we have seen it recur under Deng Xiaoping in China.

This contribution is based on an address delivered to students at the University of the Western Cape on 27 July 1988 under the rubric "Black Solidarity for a Socialist Azania."



Today we see the capitalist road being faithfully followed in Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* and Deng's much-vaunted "economic reforms."

And the fact that the distance between capitalist roaders and fascist dictators is more apparent than real is forcefully illustrated in the 4 June 1989 massacre and its aftermath in Deng's China as also in Gorbachev's bloody suppression of revolt in the Soviet republics.

It is poetic justice that the Tiananmen Square Revolt in China occurred almost simultaneously with the Sino-Soviet summit and quite thoroughly eclipsed it.

In Tiananmen Square in 1966 Deng Xiaoping was paraded wearing a dunce cap by students as a result of his capitalist line expressed in his words "It doesn't matter if it's a white cat or a black cat, as long as it catches mice."

Until his death, Mao Tse Tung led the struggle against Deng and Co.'s attempts at capitalist restoration. Mao called Deng out: "This person does not grasp class struggle; he has never referred to this key link. Still his theme of 'white cat, black cat', making no distinction between imperialism and Marxism."

"He knows nothing of Marxism-Leninism; he represents the bourgeoisie. He said he would 'never reverse the verdict'. It can't be counted on." Prophetic words indeed!

Democracy

In many ways socialist society is not much different from capitalist society, especially as regards inequality among the people, the contradiction between mental and manual labour, between workers and peasants and between women and men, wage differentials, etc. This provides the basis for capitalist relations and bourgeois elements representing them to constantly emerge.

Under socialism, there can and must be full democracy for and increasing broad participation of the masses in all spheres of political, economic and social life. But the guarantee of such democracy is the exercise of dictatorship over the old exploiters and any new exploiters who arise from within socialist society and the ranks of the revolution itself.

Such a Dictatorship must, perforce, be an *all-round* one. The Black Proletariat needs must occupy the commanding heights of society. It must not only wield political power but must also control the economy, education, literature and art, the sciences, medicine – in short, all aspects of social life. Wherever the power of the Black Proletariat fails to reach, there the power of the oppressors will remain and thrive.

In dealing with the question of democracy, any purely formalistic approach can only end in promoting bourgeois democracy. The broad category "the masses" includes different classes; the masses are at all times divided into advanced, intermediate

and backward sections. Democracy has a definite class character!

Base and Superstructure

We know that the "superstructure" refers to all the factors that decide a people's idea of their social reality including the laws and the courts, the police and the army, the bureaucracy and the whole apparatus of government, ideology, values and morals, religion, philosophy, education, culture, etc. The superstructure generally rests upon and reinforces the economic base of a society.

Our starting point is the material world and the economic activity of people. Material conditions determine the activities, development and products of the human mind, and not the other way around. As Marx pointed out:

"In the social production of their existence, men enter into definite, necessary relations, which are independent of their will, namely, relations of production corresponding to a determinate stage of development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which there arises a legal and political superstructure and to which there correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life-process in general."

- *Preface and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*

Society and nature are in a constant process of change – not a cyclical change, coming out of the same way it began, but a process of spiral-like change progressing from the lower to the higher level and marked by leaps.

The development of human society is ultimately determined by the development of the basic forces which human beings have built up in their interaction with nature to produce what they need and want – in other words by the *productive forces* of society. The

productive forces consist of tools and human beings. But human beings are the principal factor: tools are created, used and renovated by people, science and technology are discovered by people.

In order to use the productive forces, people have to enter into certain relations with regard to the overall process of production in society. These are referred to as the *production relations* of a society.

As Marx said in the quotation above, these production relations constitute the economic structure of society or the *economic base*. Political power and dominant ideology, belonging as they do to the superstructure, are ultimately determined by the nature of the economic base which in turn is determined by the level of development of the productive forces.

To be sure, the superstructure reacts upon the base and influences it enormously. The relationship between the base and the superstructure may be seen as one in which the base is the principal or *determining factor* and the superstructure is the *initiating one* – they interpenetrate dialectically and are interdependent and retroactive.

The relationship between the superstructure and base is never rigid, static or one-way. The superstructure is not a passive effect of the base; there is a constant and dialectical interaction between them. It can – and does – happen that the superstructure becomes principal and decisive in determining the nature and development of the economic base.

Engels forcefully addressed this point:

"According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately determining factor* in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Neither Marx nor I have ever asserted more than this. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic factor is the *only determining one*, he transforms the proposition into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure – political forms of the class struggle and

its results, such as constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and especially the reflections of all these real struggles in the brains of the participants, political, legal, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas – also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases determine their *form* in particular. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent and neglect it), the economic movement is bound to assert itself."

- "Engels to Joseph Bloch in Koningsberg"

It was Mao Tse Tung who showed the decisive importance of continuously revolutionizing the superstructure as well as the economic base. He emphasized that under socialism the role of the superstructure assumes even greater importance and the struggle in the superstructure becomes even more acute and complex.

Mao underlined that transformation of the economic base does not *automatically* transform the superstructure: where the broom does not touch, the dust never vanishes of itself! He said: "Ideological and political work are the guarantee for accomplishing economic work and technical work, and they serve the economic base. Moreover, ideology and politics are the commander, the soul. If our ideological work and political work slacken just a little, economic work and technical work are bound to go astray."

Much as the bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie may retain or seize control in socialist society of certain units and departments in the economy, so also may they retain and seize control of certain parts of the superstructure, in particular of ideology.

It is in the superstructure that the counter-revolution by a new bourgeoisie under socialism is most likely to begin: here the superstructure

plays the decisive as well as the initiating role.

Occupied Azania

In occupied Azania, a corporate state maintained by surveillance and having all the trappings of capitalist democracy and capitalist culture co-exists with an authoritarian regime and gun law.

There are two superstructures to a single economic base in occupied Azania – one a Black superstructure and the other a white superstructure. This is brutally apparent in the large, airy buildings, well-kept gardens, tennis courts, golf courses, well-paved roads, lighted streets etc in the *herrenvolk* side of any South African city juxtaposed against the squalid hostels and matchbox houses, the dirt roads, the lack of sewerage disposal and other basic civic and civil amenities in the Black side.

The white superstructure undoubtedly exhibits all the trappings of capitalist democracy – including franchise, an elaborate network of rights and liberties, social and economic mobility and even a labour movement that represents the interests of the white labour aristocracy. The white working class, one third of whom are employed by the state, batters on the superexploitation of the Black workers: their standard of living and quality of life is comparable only to workers in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe and North America.

The Blacks, on the other hand, have no meaningful franchise (the franchise for the tri-racial Parliament or in various puppetstates amounts to nought), no representation, no real rights and liberties, no economic and social mobility (free settlement areas and open businesses in the Central Business District only underline this), no labour movement or political organisation that cannot be put down by the awesome power of the settler-colonial state, no education except gutter education, no law except naked police and judicial tyranny – no nothing!



Disorganic Development

The contradictions of the apartheid-capitalist system are sharpest where they exist in the raw – precisely in the Black superstructure. All the Gross National Product (GNP) the Black workers amass for this country leaves them poorer than before.

The Black working class produces what is of no real value to it and yet cannot buy what it produces – neither use value nor exchange value.

Unlike the white workers, how the Black workers produce bears no relation whatsoever to how they used to produce. They have not emerged into capitalist production but have been flung into it – into a technology and a labour process that reifies them and into social relations that violate their customs and their codes.

The Black workers toil in the factories, in town, to support their families, their extended families, in the bantustans – to contribute to the building of the local Zion Church "at home", to help get teachers for the school "at home", to sink a well there.

But the manner of toiling socializes the Black workers into individualism, nuclear families, consumer priorities, artefacts of capitalist culture. The two capitalist passions – *greed* for more and the *fear* of losing in the quest for more – obtrude the Black workers' consciousness.

The Black workers are caught between two modes, two sets of social relations, characterized by exchange value in the one and use value in the other – and the contradiction disorients them and removes them from the centre of their being. At each step they have to come to terms

with *their* alienation from the fruits of their labour and the parasitical character of the white ruling class.

Neither has the peasantry (there is no white peasantry at all in occupied Azania) escaped the capitalist mode. What it has done is to wrench them from their social relations and their relationship with the land. Within a single lifetime, they have had to exchange sons for tractors and tractors for petrochemicals. And these things too have taken them from themselves in space and in time.

Rural society in occupied Azania is characterized by a juxtaposition of modes of production undergoing complex mutations and possibly producing new totalities. Pre- and non-capitalist modes of production and the relations of exploitation which characterize such modes of production are vitally necessary for the apartheid-capitalist system. Apartheid-capitalism adapts various modes of production to its needs and even "refeudalizes" social relations. Overall apartheid-capitalism has a conserving as well as a dissolving effect on pre- and non-capitalist relations. Feudalism is most certainly a feature of both the base and the superstructures in occupied Azania.

The extended family in the bantustans (reserves) – by caring for the very young and very old, the sick and the labourer during times of rest, by providing education (for which Blacks must pay) to the young – relieves the capitalist sector and the state of some of the expense of carrying out and paying for these functions. At the same time, the reserves furnish capital with an optimal selection of workers to replenish a brutally driven and rapidly exhausted labour force.

Thus the reproduction of cheap labour power in occupied Azania depends on a symbiotic connection between capitalist forms on the one hand and pre- and non-capitalist forms on the other.

What happens to all the production from the land and from the factories?

Where does all the GNP go – except to the white settlers and their imper-

ialist backers?

What capitalist development has meant to the Black masses is production without any purpose but to eke out an existence, massive immiseration accompanied by a wholesale attack on their values, relationships and entire cultural fabric.

This development makes no sense at all for the masses, it has no bearing on their lives. It is not simply a distorted (incoherent) or disarticulated (extroverted) development – it is a *disorganic development* undergirded by the modalities of superexploitation. There is no doubt that the disorganic development spawned by apartheid-capitalism is in synch with the requirements of modern industrial growth and is an intergral and exacerbating element of the overall imperialist crisis.

For the white superstructure the economic, cultural and political aspects of capitalism have evolved gradually, organically and out of that superstructure's history.

Hence the white superstructure is modified with changes in the level of the productive forces and class struggle. It accords with the economic imperatives of imperialism: the economic network is overlaid by a vast structure of military, administrative and financial control.

The capitalist mode of production has been grafted on to the existing cultural and political order in the Black superstructure. Capitalism in the Black superstructure is not an organised body of connected, interdependent parts sharing a common life – it is not an organism.

Hence the Black superstructure is at odds with the capitalist economy, sets the economy at odds with itself and inhibits its free development. The economic system is at odds with the cultural and political institutions of the Black people: it is not mediated by culture or legitimated by politics as it is in white society.

In summary, then, although the South African economy is based on the capitalist mode, the superstructures bear no organic relationship to

it, they do not on the whole respond to the imperatives of the system.

The base and the superstructures do not complement and reinforce each other in occupied Azania. They are in fundamental conflict – and exploitation is naked, crude, unmediated, although fortified and prettified by the "happy products" of capitalist culture, capitalist homilies on "group and human rights" and on the "wonders" of Western civilization and increasingly desperate measures to "modernize" and "reform" the system of apartheid-capitalism while really intensifying superexploitation and plunder.

At a point, therefore, the political system – white racism – has to be extrapolated from the superstructures and made to serve as a cohesive and coercive – force to maintain the economic order of things. The contradiction between the base and the superstructures now resolves itself into one between the Pretoria regime and the Black people, with culture as a vital expression of the development from protest to resistance to rebellion to revolution.

Only changes in the Black superstructure are capable of releasing the economy into its own dynamic.

Mind you, the infrastructure (economic base) in occupied Azania is **secure**, *relatively speaking*. South Africa is definitely not a society in which ideology has ran amock and it is incredibly naïve to contend that the imperatives of capitalist industrialization will gobble up apartheid.

The economic, social and political control exercised over the Black majority flows from a specific model of capitalist accumulation which is inextricably bound up with the interests and imperatives of imperialist capital. In fact, the relationship between imperialism and racist South Africa is *itself a production relation*.

Culture in the Black superstructure differs as between the different modes of production but as Cabral says, it does have "a mass character." Cultural resistance takes on "new forms (political, economic, armed) in

order fully to contest foreign domination". (*Return to the Source*)

At the economic level, the different exploitations at the different modes confuse the formal lines of class struggle but the common denominators of political oppression make for a mass movement which in Marx's magnificent phrase will draw its poetry not from the past "but only from the future". (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*)

BC

Apartheid-capitalism has succeeded not only in dividing and separating the economic and cultural aspects of struggle – the standard of living and the quality of life – but also in concealing them from each other. In the process the economic aspect of struggle became the sole preserve of the working class while the cultural aspect became the preserve of the Black people – and the totality of struggle, its holism, was lost to view.

To build socialism the "lever" that makes possible the production, accumulation and utilization of the surplus cannot be commodity production and the law of value, but can only be ideological and political line – namely, BC!

While the march to the future is no unilinear advance, what is required in the first place is a revolution in the superstructures – which is the acquisition of state power by the Black working class. This constitutes only the very first step in its historic mission.

The Black working class must carry out a revolution in all spheres of the superstructures and the economic base to eradicate ideological influences, the force of habit and racist, racist and ethnic practices. Its success will hinge on a radical break with imperialism.

The transformation of the superstructures will require patient, constant and intense effort. This kind of effort in turn requires BC, which is the only ideology capable of introducing a new rationality in Azania. To re-emphasize: it is precisely in the arena of ideology that there will be long and



tortuous struggle, especially under socialism. And the most important productive force liberated by socialism . . . is people.

BC uncovers the essence of social relations that underlie various appearances and forms. It stands completely opposed to the policy of seeking an accommodation with reaction, of stopping the revolution in return for a few reforms or for positions in government.

BC stands for thoroughgoing revolution and those who see the "liberation struggle" as a means to obtain their share in the exploitation of the masses will forever view it as their mortal enemy.

BC is knowledge, recognition, foresight, common experience and perception, sensibility, alertness, mindfulness. It stirs the senses, the blood; it exposes and suggests; it will objectify, enrage, direct – to ever greater leaps forward until the abolition of classes, races and the state itself.

Comrades, there is nothing hard in this

world, *if we dare to scale the heights*. We must satisfy our burning desire to retain the freedom, the life-style and the dignity that we have carved out from the mosaic of our lives, out of the rubble of our civilization, out of the wilderness of unlove. ■

A Big Question Sonnet

**If death has no dominion over our souls,
then who shall dare to dominate the indomitable spirit of our resistance
in our struggle to break the knot of bondage?**

**Who has a finger gigantic enough to snuff the fireflame on the glowing tail
of a relentless firefly,
a torch of freedom in the darkness, flashing
in the infernal prison cells
where wailing children have their loins torn
to shreds by the wanton beast?
Who will avenge the loss of their innocence,
the tenderness of their bodies
the purity of their brave hearts?**

Oswald Mtshali

DESTROYING THE TADPOLE PHILOSOPHY

by **ROBERT FATTON JR.**

In this piece, Dr Robert Fatton Jr – the author of *Black Consciousness in South Africa: The Dialectics of Ideological Resistance to White Supremacy* (Albany: State University of New York Press: 1986) – analyses the Black Consciousness Movement in occupied Azania during the 1968–1977 period. Dr Fatton's distinctly Gramscian analysis is offered to you for criticism and debate.

The repression unleashed by the white state in the early 1960s against the nationalist movements of African liberation created a political vacuum. The banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1960 left the African population without any viable means of protest and internal opposition. This absence of challenge to apartheid profoundly shaped the political development of the mid-1960s. It provoked the ascendancy of a small class of white liberals bent on defending what it perceived to be the interests of a defenceless African population. It induced an African political opportunism manifested in the rise of a bantustan administrative elite. Finally, it permitted the consolidation of the repressive machinery of white supremacy.

Birth of BC

Yet it was clear that neither white liberals nor Bantustan leaders obtained the support of the African masses. Not surprisingly new forms of resistance emerged and crystallized in the Black Consciousness Movement. Indeed, by the end of the 1960s a new generation of Black youth began to articulate the necessity of an intellectual and psychological liberation from white-bourgeois hegemony. Blacks had reached a stage of crisis by discovering a series of existential anomalies which deviated from the expectations generated by white liberal discourse. The existential anomalies had reached such massive and egregious proportions that Blacks abandoned liberalism altogether. It was in this context that the Black Consciousness Movement was born.

What I seek to do today is to analyze the ideological development and radi-

calization of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) of South Africa, which emerged during the late 1960s with the formation of the South African Student's Organization (SASO) and crystallized in the Black People's Convention (BPC). The whole movement was eventually banned by the white minority regime in 1977 in the aftermath of the Soweto Rebellion of 1976. Nonetheless, several organizations rooted in the tradition of Black Consciousness such as the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and the National Forum (NF) crystallized in the late 1970s and early 1980s to fill the vacuum created by the banings.

Moral Anger

The ideological manifestations of the Black Consciousness Movement are essential to any understanding of contemporary South Africa, for the content of this consciousness will have a lasting and decisive impact on the unfolding political and revolutionary struggle, as well as on the institution of a racially liberated South Africa. Indeed, such consciousness is a source of moral anger and self-affirmation which embodies an ethical and political standard that condemns the existing social order and offers the vision of an alternative society. Without such consciousness the likelihood of a comprehensive and sustained African challenge to white supremacy is remote. Structural changes in South Africa hinge upon the erosion of the relative legitimacy of white

domination and on the defeat of the sense of inevitability supporting the exploitation of the Black people. For, as Barrington Moore has argued:

"People are evidently inclined to grant legitimacy to anything that is or seems inevitable no matter how painful it may be. Otherwise the pain might be intolerable. The conquest of this sense of inevitability is essential to the development of politically effective moral outrage. For this to happen, people must perceive and define their situation as the consequence of human injustice: a situation that they need not, cannot, and ought not to endure. By itself of course such a perception . . . is no guarantee of political and social changes to come. But without some very considerable surge of moral anger such changes do not occur."

The Black Consciousness Movement contributed to such a surge of moral anger; its radicalization became an indispensable spur to Black revolutionary activity. The development of Black Consciousness as a counter-consciousness, channeling the unified opposition of the Black population to the dominance of the white minority, became a fundamental and necessary ingredient in the process of challenging white supremacy. As long as the ideological terrain remains the uncontested territory of the racial myth, few if any structural transformations can be expected.

Prophetic Ideology

These structural transformations hinge upon the overall negation of the process of social reproduction. Initially such a negation assumes an ideological character which imparts a new moral and ethical vision of the feasible to the human subject. Hence, the importance of ideology cannot be minimized. While ideology may be functional to the exigencies of white supremacy, it need not be so. There may develop among the subordinate classes a counter-ideology, a prophetic ideology, which not only fails to correspond to these exigencies, but also contributes to the general dislocation of the social order. This general dislocation brought about by the convulsions of the ideological realm opens the avenues for profound structural transformation. This is not to say that white supremacy has no distinctive or limiting effect on the formation of this counter-ideology, but rather to maintain that in the revolutionizing of society, the counter-ideology of the subordinate classes weakens the power of the ruling class and propels society toward a revolutionary predicament.

Ideology in this sense must be considered as the expressive means through which men and women make their own history as conscious agents. This does not mean that ideology is completely independent from material conditions, but that it has an autonomy of its own which in turn conditions the historical transformation of society.

Developing Ideology

In this perspective, the study of Black Consciousness as a counter-ideology of resistance to white supremacy is essential to any understanding of contemporary South Africa. For this consciousness and the forms and shapes that it has assumed will eventually condition the future situation of Black women and men. The evolving nature of the Black Consciousness Movement will also impart a conciliatory or revolutionary, a peaceful or violent, a bourgeois or socialist dimension to the confrontation be-



tween Blacks and whites. By eschewing violence and emphasizing Black cultural and psychological emancipation from white hegemony – to the relative neglect of economic issues – the Black Consciousness Movement was *initially* the vehicle of a Black philosophy of pride and self-affirmation invigorated by an ethic of "Christian Liberation."

Thus, the Black Consciousness Movement embodied the ideals of Negritude and the Christian message of salvation – the beginnings of the Kingdom of God to be struggled for here on earth as well as enjoyed in Heaven. The Black Consciousness Movement opposed the white ascendancy of apartheid on a cultural plane and it stressed self-help and the encouragement of cultural organizations. However, it gradually developed an understanding of the material conditions of life, and as such the Movement became much more than a mere cultural renaissance. While Black Consciousness drew its early inspiration from both Negritude and Christianity, it came to recognize the phenomenon of class struggle and the fundamental role of man in abolishing oppressive social structures. While the degradation and dehumanization of the Black person by white racism generated a reactive African consciousness which asserted the intrinsic worth of Black people and Black culture, the social gospel of a radical Christianity – a theology of liberation – encouraged the tradition

of African communalism while identifying with the poor against the exploitative structures of apartheid.

Developing against both the structures of capitalist exploitation and the dehumanizing culture of white racism, the Black Consciousness Movement crystallized as a synthesis of class awareness and Black cultural assertiveness. The result was a revolutionary ideology deeply embedded in the prophetic Christian tradition. The ideology, however, with its emphasis on Black culture, identity and self-love, could not by itself destroy the system of entrenched white privilege. While psychological emancipation from white supremacy was a fundamental and necessary stage for political action, it could become an end in itself and develop into a poor substitute for revolutionary strategy.

Praxis

Black Consciousness, however, challenged the cultural hegemony of the white supremacist regime and it represented the ethico-political weapon of an oppressed class struggling to reaffirm its humanity through active participation in the demise of a racist and capitalist system. As such, Black Consciousness was a philosophy of praxis that attempted to eradicate from the Black intellect the inculcated submissiveness that contributed to its own enslavement. Not surprisingly, the Movement directed great attention to cultural and psychological is-

sues: it asserted that the liberation of the Black people would begin only when their mental constructs of their own inferiority ceased to guide their historical conduct. The Black revolution which the material structure made latent could only be activated by the transformation of the Black intellect. Thus, the revolution would occur only if the Black mind stripped itself from submission to white hegemony and erected on its own foundations the principles of the new moral order.

As Steve Biko, the father of the Black Consciousness Movement, explained:

"Black Consciousness is an attitude of mind and a way of life . . . Its essence is the realization by the Black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It is based on a self-examination which has ultimately led them to believe that by seeking to run away from themselves and emulate the white man, they are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them Black. This philosophy of Black Consciousness therefore expresses group pride and the determination of the Black to rise and attain the envisaged self . . . On his own . . . the Black man wishes to explore his surroundings and test his possibilities – in other words to make his freedom real by whatever means he deems fit. At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realization by Blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."

From Biko's perspective then, Black Consciousness and Black morality meant the realization of an understanding that the emancipation of Blacks and the liberation of society as a whole required the mental renaissance of the Black intellect. This understanding also meant the development of a Black political will which, if necessary, would generate a massive insurrection culminating in

the overthrow of white supremacy and the ushering in of Black hegemony.

The Black Consciousness Movement effected therefore a massive process of intellectual and moral reform. Such reform represented a profound cultural transformation whose objective was to change the masses' conception of life, politics, and economics. Accordingly, it sought to usher in a new social and moral vision and to restructure the role and place of the hitherto subordinate and dominant classes. Such massive transformation embodies what the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci called in a different context the "cathartic moment" of liberation. This is the moment when the "structure ceases to be an external force which crushes man, assimilates him to itself and makes him passive; and is transformed into a means of freedom, an instrument to create a new ethico-political form and a source of new initiatives."

New Hegemony

The "cathartic moment," however, is neither spontaneous nor mechanical; it requires the dissemination of a new hegemony and hence the emergence of a new intellectual elite. This elite constitutes the thinking and organizing group of intellectuals who articulate the programmatic aspirations of one of the fundamental classes of society. Accordingly, these intellectuals clarify the ideas and objectives of the class to which they are organically linked. They contribute to the transition of a class in itself into a class for itself. Therefore, the organic intellectuals generate a new and potentially revolutionary self-consciousness. Again, let me quote Gramsci:

"Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an "elite" of intellectuals. A human mass does not "distinguish" itself, does not become independent in its own right without in the widest sense, organising itself; and there is no organisation without intellectuals, that is without organisers and leaders, in other words, without the . . . existence of a group of people "specialised" in

conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas. But the process of creating intellectuals is long, difficult, full of contradictions, advances and retreats, dispersals and regroupings, in which the loyalty of the masses is often sorely tried."

It is this complex and difficult process of intellectual renewal and creativity which fundamentally characterized the Black Consciousness Movement. The youngsters who comprised the Movement represented the ascending organic intellectuals of the coming Black revolution.

Thus, it would be wrong to equate the Black Consciousness Movement with a mere cultural renaissance; it was indeed more than that. Black Consciousness recognized the centrality of the material conditions of existence and it was precisely because of these that it rejected collaboration with whites – however well intentioned they may have been. Because whites did not experience first-hand and could not 'feel' the predicament of being Black – not simply because of their pigmentation, but above all because of their exclusive and abusive bourgeois privileges – they could not join in the struggle of the Black masses. Being Black was not determined by colour alone; it was determined by the daily experience of enduring oppression as a class of exploited peasants and urban workers. A white could sympathize with a Black, yet economic advantages almost inexorably kept him white; as such, he remained at best a paternalistic reformer and at worst, a conscious exploiter.

In this perspective Black Consciousness rejected the multiracialist strategy advocated by the African National Congress. Black Consciousness perceived the idea of alliance and collaboration with whites as unrealistic and indeed impossible. Rejection of multiracialism, however, did not imply acceptance of the Africanism espoused by the Pan African Congress. Unlike Africanism which emphasized an exclusively African struggle against white supremacy, Black Consciousness went beyond the confines of race and Africanness.

The notion of 'Blackness' which decisively moulded the Movement's outlook, was embedded in both the consequences of being Black in a white supremacist state and the realities of material exploitation derived from a racial capitalism. As such, the concept 'Black' came to encompass all of the exploited, irrespective of their Africanness. Asians and "Coloureds" – people of mixed racial descent – were previously regarded with skepticism and ambiguity by the Africanists, but were fully integrated into the Black Consciousness Movement provided they accepted their Blackness. Moreover, the term 'Black' was not attributed to all Africans. In fact, the Movement reserved the pejorative term 'non-white' to define those Africans, Asians and "Coloureds" who collaborated with white authorities. Accordingly, the Black Consciousness Movement condemned the African bureaucratic elite of the bantustans for its incorporation into and acceptance of the political structure of apartheid.

Black Consciousness emphasized not merely race as a decisive factor in the struggle against white supremacy; it also stressed the interracial linkages preserving and enhancing the given racist reality. Thus, class as well as race occupied a privileged position in the BCM analysis of South African society. In this sense, the BCM departed from the purely racial attitude and strategy of Africanism. Being African was not a sufficient condition to qualify as a Black; to be Black implied a determined antagonism to apartheid and the political will to eradicate it.

Tadpole Philosophy

Thus, the economic structures of apartheid maintained white minority solidarity, and tended to divide Blacks into opposing but not necessarily antagonistic strata. In their endeavour to preserve their newly acquired status of wealth and power, Blacks of the urban petty bourgeoisie and especially those of the bantustan administrative elite, strove to become whites. Yet, always emasculated and rejected by white racists they degenerated into a particular hybrid – the 'non-white.' The non-whites emulated everything

white and repudiated everything Black. They were, to use Tawney's terminology, the "tadpoles" of history, for they thought that it was possible to:

" . . . reconcile themselves to the inconveniences of their position, by reflecting that, though most of them will live and die as tadpoles and nothing more, the more fortunate of the species will one day shed their tails, distend their mouths and stomachs, hop nimbly on to dry land, and croak addresses to their former friends on the virtues by means of which tadpoles of character and capacity can rise to be frogs . . . "

Obviously this concept represented a false conception of apartheid society, for to become a frog in contemporary South Africa the tadpole would have to be born white. The tadpole philosophy, however, sustained the belief in the possibility of material advancement through unfettered personal achievement – though it offered little of either. For a small Black elite, it provided a way out of the misery engendered by a racist capitalism. It did not matter that few Africans escaped from poverty; those who failed to do so had only themselves to blame. Deeply etched in the Black intellect, these myths helped to support and even legitimize economic disparities and white supremacy. No wonder that, bent as it was on transforming the social awareness of Black men and Black women, the movement sought to destroy the hegemony of this bourgeois tadpole philosophy.

Black Consciousness aimed at transforming the stultifying white colonial theology into a Black theology of liberation and, therefore, it attempted to instill in the Black intellect a radical ideology of hope – an ideology without which the recovery of Black self-respect and humanhood was impossible.

Ideology of Hope

This preoccupation with the creation of an ideology of hope from which a new Black culture would spring, ex-

plains the emphasis that the Movement placed on the solidarity of the oppressed. For, economic and political liberation, indeed Black liberation itself, required Black cultural hegemony. Black Consciousness sought to create a social order in which the Black way of life and thought would be dominant, a social order in which the Black concept of reality would be diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotation.

Hence, the goal of the Movement was the ultimate hegemony of Blackness as an ethico-political conception of liberation. As Biko recognized, the issue was not integration in the existing white-dominated system, but rather to revolutionize the system into a Black creation:

"Blacks no longer seek to reform the system because so doing implies acceptance of the major points around which the system revolves."

"Blacks are out to completely transform the system and to make of it what they wish. Such a major undertaking can only be realized in an atmosphere where people are convinced of the truth inherent in their stand. Liberation therefore, is of paramount importance in the concept of Black Consciousness, for we cannot be conscious of ourselves and yet remain in bondage."

Thus, Black Consciousness became a revolutionary theory. Its immediate task was to make possible the complete transformation of the white system and the liberation of the Black people. The problems involved in this restructuring of society as a whole were immensely complex, requiring much more than the mere negation of the negativities created by institutionalized racism. Black Consciousness was in fact the antithetical stage in the long and difficult process of dialectical liberation. As such it contradicted the thesis – white racism – and yet, it remained conditioned by white racism itself. This is why Bennie Khoapa understood the Movement

as a series of "transcendent negations":

"Paradoxically, a prerequisite for human solidarity is a feeling of non-solidarity with men who stand in the way of solidarity. Paradoxically, the oppressed can only bring about a future of universal brotherhood in proportion as they feel and exhibit group solidarity with the enemies of human solidarity . . . History has charged us with the cruel responsibility of going to the very gate of racism in order to destroy racism – to the gate not further."

Thus Black Consciousness was not merely an attempt at establishing a total cultural hegemony, it was also a radical cry for the transformation of the capitalist structures supporting apartheid. In addition, the Movement was a situational philosophy of praxis and as such subject to modification, progression, and retrogression. Finally, Black Consciousness entailed the necessary reaffirmation of the humanity of Black people and the indispensable rediscovery of the rich history of Africa.

Revolution

The hegemony of the white ruling class which installed into the Black mind a sense of inadequacy and inferiority had to be eliminated, and a new Black identity had to be constructed to take its place. A general political crisis had to be engineered to contest the foundation of white supremacy and ultimately to strip it of its aura of legitimacy. In this context, the first phase of the revolutionary emancipation of Black South Africans resided in the struggle for ideological hegemony; a struggle which had to erode the colonial mentality established by years of white domination and which had to usher in an entirely new system of beliefs. In a theoretical context, it is at this juncture that consciousness becomes a revolutionary force. In the words of Antonio Gramsci:

"Man is above all else mind, consciousness – that is, he is a product of history, not nature . . . Man has only been able to acquire a sense of

his worth bit by bit, in one sector of society after another . . . And such awareness was not generated out of brute physiological needs, but out of intelligent reasoning, first of all by a few and later by entire social classes who perceived the causes of certain social facts and understood that there might be ways of converting the structure of repression into one of rebellion and social reconstruction. This means that every revolution has been preceded by an intense labour of social criticism, of cultural penetration and diffusion."

Such an "intense labour of social criticism, of cultural penetration and diffusion" was precisely the task that the Black Consciousness Movement had set for itself. In doing so, it sparked the revolutionary awakening of the Black intellect and challenged the structures of apartheid. Accordingly, the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement indicated that white supremacy was showing signs of vulnerability and exhaustion, and it announced the coming emancipation and liberation of the African masses.

This coming liberation, however, will not constitute an easy process. On the contrary, in spite of its evident and mounting weaknesses, the white regime is still powerful enough to repress dissent and revolt. The future then appears to be full of promises of change, and drastic change, but it is also pregnant with danger and morbidity. Black forces, as of yet, lack the resources and organization to overthrow white supremacy, and simulta-

neously white supremacy no longer has the hegemony to impose its order on an increasingly militant Black opposition. This relative stalemate can only be temporary; in the not too distant future the stalemate will inevitably give way to some form of Black majority rule. Black South Africans will have to determine on their own whether such rule will be socialist or bourgeois, revolutionary or opportunistic, popular or elitist.

What seems certain, however, is that the travail of the BCM has contributed and continues to contribute to the awakening of a socialist, revolutionary, and popular consciousness. While there is no guarantee that such consciousness will result in the ultimate victory of socialism, there is the certainty that it will remain etched on the collective memory of Black South Africans, and thus that it will block the ascendancy of opportunistic and reactionary forces. There is also the certainty that Blacks are no longer prepared to stomach being the victims of apartheid, they are no longer prepared to remain passive, they have become angry and they seek with passion to end their misery. As William Butler Yeats put it: "All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born."

I am therefore afraid to conclude that violence will be the inevitable detour in the long and painful journey leading to African freedom. This is so because apartheid like slavery cannot be reformed, it can only be abolished, and abolished it will be. **Thank you.**



MARXISM IN AFRICA

by DR. WALTER RODNEY



INTRODUCTION

First of all we must understand the background for this kind of debate. When one is asked to speak on the relevance of Marxism to Africa at this particular point in time, one is being asked to involve oneself in a historical debate, an ongoing debate in this country, particularly among the Black population. It is a debate which has heightened over the last year and, from my own personal observations, is being waged in a large number of places across this country. Sometimes it appears in the guise of the so-called nationalist versus the marxist; sometimes it appears in the guise of those who claim to espouse a class position as opposed to those who claim to espouse a race position. Thus it would not be possible for us in a single session to enter into all the ramifications of that debate but it does form the background for our discussions.

It is an important debate, it is an important fact that such issues are being debated in this country today, just as they're being debated in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America and in many parts of the metropolitan world, in western Europe and in Japan, because the widespread nature of the debate and its intensity at this time is a reflection of the crisis in the capitalist-imperialist mode of production. Ideas and discussion do not just drop from the sky. It is not simply a plot on the part of certain individuals to engage others in a meaningless debate. Whatever the outcome of the debate, whatever the posture the different participants adopt, the very fact of the debate is representative of the crisis in capitalism and imperialism today and, as the crisis deepens,

The late Dr Walter Rodney was a highly qualified historian with an international reputation. An activist in his native Guyana and a member of its Working Peoples alliance against the People's National Congress (PNC) dictatorship of Forbes Burnham, he was murdered in 1980 by PNC thugs.

people find it more and more difficult to accept the old modes of thought which rationalize the system which is collapsing; hence the need to search for new directions and, quite clearly, Marxism and Scientific Socialism pose themselves as one of the most obvious of the available options.

The question is not new to Africa or to the Black people as a whole – that is perhaps essential to understand. Many of us have before raised the question of the relevance of Marxism to this or that. Its relevance to Europe; many European intellectuals debated its relevance to their own society. Its relevance to Asia was debated by Asians; and, to look at it geographically, its relevance to Latin America was debated by Latin Americans. Individuals have debated the relevance of Marxism to their own time. Was it relevant to the 19th century? If so, was it still relevant to the 20th century? One can debate its relevance to a given facet of the culture of a society, or to its law or culture as a whole. These are all issues that have been debated before and we should have some sense of history when we approach this question today, because with that sense of history we can ask, why is it that the question of the relevance of Marxism to society always crops up? And, a very brief answer. I would suggest that what is common to the abdication of the question is, first of all, a condition of crisis, a condition of struggle, a condition in which people are dissatisfied with the dominant mode of perceiving reality. At that point they ask about the relevance of Marxism.

More than that, the second condition is people do ask the question because of their own bourgeois framework. Because one starts out located within the dominant mode of reasoning, which is the mode of reasoning that supports capitalism and which we will call a bourgeois framework of perception, because one starts out that way, it becomes necessary to raise the question about the relevance of Marxism. After one is advanced, it is probably more accurate to raise the question of the relevance of bourgeois thought because the shoe would be on the other foot! But initially it is true that however much the bourgeoisie disagree, there is one common unifying strand to all bourgeois thought: they make common cause in questioning the relevance, the logic, and so on, of Marxist thought. And therefore, in a sense, unfortunately, when we ask that question, we are also fitting into that framework and pattern. We are also, in some way, still embedded to a greater or lesser extent in the framework of bourgeois thought, and from that framework we ask with a great degree of hesitancy and uncertainty, what is the relevance of Marxism.

It is particularly true in our parts of the world, that is, the English-speaking parts of the world, because the Anglo-American tradition is one of intense hostility philosophically speaking, towards Marxism, a hostility that manifests itself by trying to dissociate itself even from the study of Marxism. If you were to check on the continental tradition in Europe, you would find it is not the same. French, German and Belgian intellec-

tuals whatever their perspective, understand the importance of Marxism. They study it, they relate to it, they understand the body of thought which is called Marxism and they take a position vis-a-vis that body of thought. In the English tradition, which was also handed down to this part of the world, to the Caribbean, to many parts of Africa it is fashionable to disavow any knowledge of Marxism. It is fashionable to glory in one's ignorance, to say that we are against Marxism. When pressed about it one says but why bother to read it? It is obviously absurd. So one knows it is absurd without reading it and one doesn't read it because one knows it is absurd, and therefore one, as I said, glories in one's ignorance of the position. It is rather difficult to seriously address the question about the relevance of Marxism unless one does the basic minimum of accepting that one should attempt to enter into this full body of thought, because it is a tremendous body of literature and analysis, and from the outside as it were, it is extremely difficult, indeed, I would say it is pointless, strictly from the outside, without ever having moved towards trying to grapple with what it is, to ask what is its relevance is almost an unanswerable question, and I think in all modesty, those of us who come from a certain background, and we all come from that background, one of the first things we have to do is establish a basis of familiarity with the different intellectual traditions, and as we become familiar with them we can then be in a better position to evaluate Marxism's relevance or irrelevance as the case might be.

Now I will proceed on the assumption that what we are trying to discern in this discussion is whether the variants of time and place are relevant or, let me put it another way, whether the variants of time and place, make a difference to whether Marxism is relevant or not. In a sense we would almost have to assume its validity for the place in which it originated, western Europe. We don't have the time to deal with that in detail. But we can then ask, assuming that Marxism has a relevance, has a meaning, has an applicability to western Europe, or



had in the 19th century, to what extent does its validity extend geographically? To what extent does its validity extend across time? These are the two variables, time and place, and those can be translated to mean historical circumstances, time – and culture, which means the place, and what social and cultural conditions exist in each particular place. For us, to make it more precise, Black people, no doubt, well-meaning Black people, will ask the question whether an ideology which was historically generated within the culture of western Europe in the 19th century is, today, in the third quarter of the 20th century, still valid for another part of the world, namely Africa, or the Caribbean or Black people in this country; whether it is valid to other societies at other times? And this is the kind of formulation which I wish to present (for discussion).

THE METHODOLOGY OF MARXISM

I would suggest two basic reasons why I believe that Marxist thought, scientific socialist thought, would exist at different levels, at different times, in different places and retain its potential as a tool, as a set of conceptions which people should grasp. And the first is to look at Marxism as a methodology, because a methodology would, virtually by definition, be independent of time and place. You will use the methodology at any given time, at any given place. You may get different results, of course, but the methodology itself would be independent of time and place. And essentially, to engage in some rather truncated presentation of Marxism, inevitably oversimplifying, but nevertheless necessary in the context of limited time, I would suggest as one of the real bases of

Marxist thought that it starts from a perspective of man's relationship to the material world; and that Marxism, when it arose historically, consciously dissociated itself from and pitted itself against all other modes of perception which started with ideas, with concepts and with words (and adapted itself) to the material conditions and the social relations in society. This is the difference with which I will start. A methodology which begins its analysis of any society, of any situation, by seeking the relations which arise in production between men. There are a whole variety of things which flow from that: man's consciousness is formed in the intervention in nature; nature itself is humanized through its interaction with man's labour and man's labour produces a constant stream of technology which in turn creates other social changes. So this is the crux of the scientific socialist perception. A methodology that addresses itself to man's relationship in the process of production on the assumption, which I think is a valid assumption, that production is not merely the basis of man's existence, but the basis for defining man as a special kind of being with a certain consciousness. It is only through production that the human race differentiates itself from the rest of the primates and the rest of life.

What does it (Marxism) pose itself against? It poses itself against a number of hypotheses, a number of views of the world which start with words and concepts. For those who are familiar with Marx's own evolution, it is well known that he started by looking first at Hegel, a very plausible and perceptive analyst of the 19th century who was guilty in Marx's own estimation, of putting forward an entirely idealist position, one that placed ideas in the centre of the universe and saw the material world virtually deriving from those ideas. In thinking about this I felt that I wouldn't go into Hegel, I would go further than Hegel for a classic exposition of the idealist world view. I take it from the New Testament, the Book of John, where he stated: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. And the Word was God." That is the classic exposition of the idealist posi-

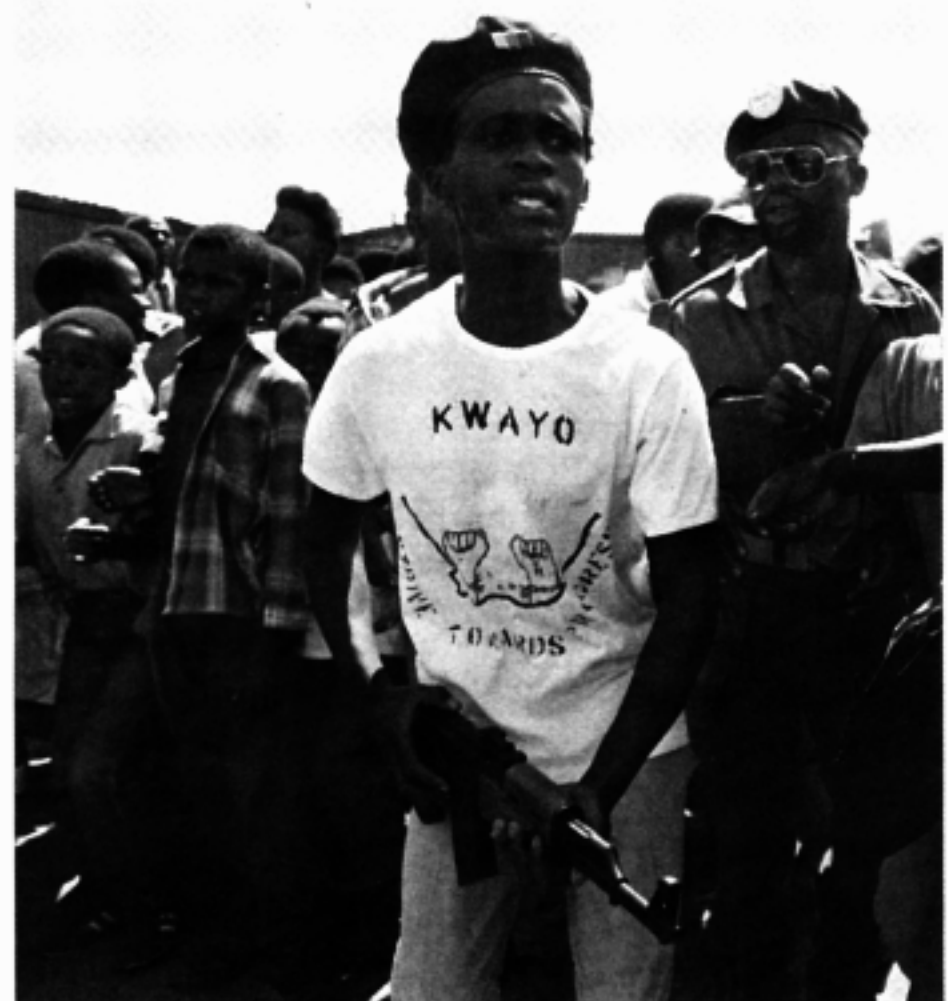
tion. You take every other thing from there: the Word was God! But we are suggesting that the word is itself an emanation from people's activity as they attempt to communicate with each other, as they develop social relations out of production, and that we shouldn't be mystified with words. Oh, naturally enough we will have to deal with concepts and with the force of consciousness which is a very powerful force which even some Marxists have been tempted to underestimate.

Now Marx, taking that broad framework of methodology, tried to apply it to western Europe. He applied it to a range of societies in different places and at different times but, he concentrated his attention to western Europe. If you examine the body of literature produced by Marx and Engels, you will find that they speak about slavery, about communal society, about feudalism, but by and large, they concentrate on capitalism. They hardly even talk about socialism. Marx's great contribution was his fantastic critique of an existing society, capitalist society. How did it come into being in a particular part of the world? The vast proportion of their literature concerns this question.

But, as I said when I talked about pre-capitalist society, especially feudalism, they talked about some other parts of the world. Occasionally Marx mentions the Asiatic mode of production. Occasionally he came across to look at the data concerning the United States. So he had something of a geographical span and a long time span. But it was so minimal in comparison with the bulk of his work that it is true that a lot of people have taken Marx's method and his conclusions and have seen them as one and the same

thing, that Marxism is not merely a certain methodology applied to western Europe, but that Marxism is itself an ideology about western Europe, about capitalism in the 19th century, and it cannot transcend those boundaries. When clearly Marx was doing the job he had to do, he was looking at his own society, he was doing it under some of the most adverse conditions, he was doing it by mastering bourgeois knowledge and putting it to the service of change and revolution. I would suggest, then, that the method was independent of time and place. It is implicit in Marx and it becomes explicit in post-Marxian development, using Marxian in the literal sense of the life of Marx himself. After Marx's death you will get the evolution or the development of scientific socialist thought with other individuals recognizing that the methodology can be applied, must be applied to a different time, must be applied to a different place.

Again, presenting our history in a very abbreviated form, we can look at Lenin, at his application of Marxist theory to Russian society. That is one of his principal contributions. The young Lenin, the first major thesis which he wrote was the *Development of Capitalism in Russia*. He



Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, exponent of African Socialism

had to deal with his own society. He had to take those formulations out of the specific cultural and historical context of western Europe and look at eastern Europe, at Russia which was evolving differently, and to apply it to his own society. This he did. He had at the same time to consider the time dimension. That in the 19th century Marx was writing about what has now come to be called the classic period of capitalism, the entrepreneurial version of capitalism, and by the latter 19th century this had given way to monopoly capitalism. It had given way to imperialism.

So Lenin had to deal with method by applying it to a new dimension in time. So he wrote about capitalism in its imperialist stage. So those are the two variants operating: the ideology, the methodology of it (we'll stick to the methodology for the time being) being applied to different societies at different times. Having made the point for Lenin, I hope it becomes clear for a number of people: Mao Tse Tung applying it to Chinese society which was a different society from Russian society. Understanding the inner dynamics of Chinese society, relating to the question of the peasantry in a different and more profound way than any previous writer because that was the nature of Chinese society and he had addressed himself to that. And finally for our purposes, the most important example, the example of Amilcar Cabral because he was dealing with Africa. Cabral, in one of his essays, the one entitled *The Weapon of Theory*, if I recall correctly, one of his most important essays, began by making it clear that the best he could do was to return to the basic methodology of Marx and Engels. But it was not possible for Cabral to begin the analysis of the history of Guinea-Bissau by saying: "I am going to look for classes," for example. He said, "If I say this I will be denying that my people have any history because I do not perceive classes for a long period in the genesis of my own people." Then he referred back to Marx's and Engel's classic statement that "the history of all existing societies is the history of class struggle." To which Engels had appended a note saying

that by "all history" we mean "all previously recorded history." It so happens that the history of the people of Guinea-Bissau has not been recorded and Cabral says, "I want to record that history. We will use the Marxian method. We will not be tied by the concept which arose historically in western Europe when Marx was studying that society."

Marx uses the method and he discerned the evolution of classes and of the phenomenon of classes itself as being a major determinant, the major determinant in western European history at a particular point in time. Cabral says we will begin at the beginning. We will not even concern ourselves initially with classes. We will simply look at men in the process of production. We will look at modes of production in the history of Guinea, and we will see how our society evolved. So without much of a fanfare he was showing the relevance of that methodology to African society. If, and when, in the history of Guinea-Bissau the aspect of class appears to have historical importance then Cabral dealt with it. Until such time, he simply stuck to the basis of Marxian methodology which was to look at Guinean people in the process of production, social formations, cultural formations which arose historically and the direction in which the society was tending.

In many respects, when we today ask the question about the relevance of Marxism to Black people, we have already reached a minority position, as it were. Many of those engaged in the debate present the debate as through Marxism is a European phenomenon and Black people responding to it must of necessity be alienated because the alienation of race must enter into the discussion. They seem not to take into account that already that methodology and that ideology have been utilized, internalized, domesticated in large parts of the world that are not European. That it is already the ideology of eight hundred million Chinese people; that it is already the ideology which guided the Vietnamese people to successful struggle and defeat of imperialism. That it is already the ideology which

allows North Korea to transform itself from a backward quasi-feudal, quasi-colonial terrain into an independent, industrial power. That it is already the ideology which has been adopted on the Latin American continent and that serves as the basis for development in the Republic of Cuba. That it is already the ideology which was used by Cabral, which was used by Samora Machel, which is in use in the African continent itself to underline and underscore struggle and the construction of a new society.

It cannot therefore be termed a European phenomenon and the onus will certainly be on those who argue that this phenomenon which has already universalized itself somehow is inapplicable to some Black people. The onus will be on those individuals, I suggest, to show some reason, perhaps genetic, why the genes of Black people reject this ideological position.

When we investigate and try to concentrate or keep central the concept of relevance, we must ask ourselves questions about the present. What kind of society do we live in today? What kind of societies do Black people live in today in different parts of the world? And while of course we as Black people in this country, in the Caribbean and in different parts of Africa have our own independent historical experience, one of the central facts is that we are all in one way or another, located within the capitalist system of production. The society about which Marx wrote, through a process of outgrowth, dominated Africa and the Americas in the era of mercantilism which was the period that capitalism was growing to maturity. It dominated these parts of the world. It created slave society in the Americas. Subsequent to the slave era, capitalism, even more powerful, was able to incorporate the whole world into a global network of production which derived from western Europe and North America, a system which had a metropolitan centre or set of metropolitan centres, and a separate set of peripheries, colonies and semi-colonies. So that we have all, historically, been incorporated within the capitalist system of produc-

tion, and that is another dimension of the relevance of Marxism.

Even without the translation in terms of time and place, it seems to me that if we have become part of the capitalist-imperialist world, then we owe it to ourselves to relate to, to follow, to understand and, to hopefully adopt and adapt a critique of that capitalist system because that is essentially what Marx's writing is about. He was criticising that capitalist system. He did it more effectively than any bourgeois writer, and if we want to understand the world in which we live, which is a world dominated by capitalism, then we must understand the centre of that system, the motor within that system, types of exploitation which are to be found within the capitalist mode of production. So that is yet another factor.

MARXISM AS REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY

My second (and I had originally suggested there were two basic things, and one was the methodology) consideration after methodology is to look at Marxism as a revolutionary ideology and as a class ideology. In class societies all ideologies are class ideologies. All ideologies derive from and support some particular class. So for all practical purposes we have grown up in capitalist society, and bourgeois ideology is dominant in our society. These institutions in which we function were created to serve the creation of ideas as commodities, ideas which will buttress the capitalist system. Now, I would suggest historically as Marx suggested himself, that the set of ideas we call scientific socialism arose within capitalist society to speak to the interest of the producers in that society, to speak to the interest of those who are exploited and expropriated, to speak to the interest of the oppressed, of the culturally alienated, and we must understand that of the two major sets of ideas before us, idealism and materialism, bourgeois philosophy and Marxist philosophy, that each of the two is representative of a particular class. I don't have the time to go into all the

historical roots of the formation of socialism, but, briefly, in the 19th century it was with the rise of capitalist society that conditions were created for the development of socialist ideas.

Out of the diverse and unsystematized socialist ideas, Marx was able to formulate a clear and systematic theory – scientific socialism. It had a particular class base and because it had this particular class base, it was revolutionary. It sought to transform and upend the relations in society. Bourgeois ideology is of necessity *status quo* preserving. It seeks to conserve, it seeks to buttress the given system of production, the relations which flow, the relations which flow from a certain system of production. A scientific socialist position remains revolutionary because it aims, consciously aims, at undermining that system of production and the political relations which flow from it. This is what I mean by revolutionary.

From time to time there are Marxists who have arisen, who have attempted to deny or denude Marxism of its revolutionary content. That is true. There are Marxists who have become legal or armchair Marxists, who would like to see Marxism as merely another variant of philosophy and who treat it in a very eclectic fashion as though one is free to draw from Marxism as one draws from Greek thought and its equivalents, without looking at the class base and without looking whether an ideology is supportive of the *status quo* or not.

Nevertheless, by and large, we can see Marxism and scientific socialism as subversive of and antithetical to the maintenance of the system of production in which we live. Because ideas, let me repeat, do not float in the sky, they do not float in the atmosphere, they are related to concrete relations of production. Bourgeois ideas derive



from bourgeois relations of production. They are intended to conserve and maintain those relations of production. Socialist ideas derive from the same production, but they derive from a different class interest and their aim is to overthrow that system of production.

AFRICA AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

There again I will suggest that African people, like other Third World people, have virtually a vested interest in scientific socialism because it offers itself to them as a weapon of theory. It offers itself to them as that tool, at the level of ideas, which will be utilized for dismantling the capitalist imperialist structure. This is its concern.

What I will attempt to deal with as best I can, are certain questions arising from individuals who might say yes to most of what I've said and then will ask the question, "Is there no other alternative? Is there no other ideological system which is neither capitalist not socialist, but is anti-capitalist, but addresses itself more humanely, if you like, to the interest of African people wherever they are?" These questions are worth looking into because there are Black people asking these questions and we have

to try and resolve them. My own formulation will be to suggest that we look at concrete examples of African or Black people who have attempted to devise systems which they consider to be non-capitalist and non-socialist. Systems they consider are valid alternatives to scientific socialism for the emancipation of African people.

In this regard we have a number of pan-Africanists, a number of African nationalists in Africa, in the Caribbean and in this country, who have taken that road. George Padmore did this at the end of his life, and made a sort of distinction, not a sort, he made a distinction between scientific socialism and pan-Africanism. He said this is the road we will follow: pan-Africanism. We do not want to go that road which is capitalist; we do not want to go the socialist road, we will derive for ourselves something that is pan-African.

In a sense Nkrumah followed up upon this and although at one time he called himself a Marxist, he always was careful to qualify this by saying that he was also a Protestant. He believed in Protestantism at the same time. So simultaneously he was trying to straddle two worlds; the world which says in the beginning was matter and the world which says in the beginning there was the word. And inevitably he fell between these two. It's impossible to straddle these two. But there he was, and we must grant his honesty and we must grant the honesty of many people who have attempted to do this impossible task and follow them to find out why they failed. They failed because their conception of what a variant different from bourgeois thought and different from socialist thought inevitably turned out to be merely another branch of bourgeois thought. And this was the problem, that bourgeois thought and indeed socialist thought, when we get down to it, can have a variety of developments or roads and aspects or paths. Bourgeois thought because of its whimsical nature and because of the way in which it promotes eccentrics, you can have any road in bourgeois thought because, after all, when you are not going any place you can choose any road!

So for bourgeois thought it was possible for these individuals to make what I consider to be a genuine attempt to break with the dominance of bourgeois thought and yet find in the final analysis that they have merely embraced another manifestation of that which they themselves at the outset had suggested that they were confronting.

There are a number of examples, some more apt than others. Some of the examples actually are Africans who I think, were blatantly dishonest from the beginning. I do think that most of the ideologues of African socialism claiming to find a third path are actually just cheap tricksters who are attempting to hoodwink the majority of the population. I don't think they're out to develop anything that addresses itself to the interests of the African people. But, nevertheless, it is part of the necessity of our times that our people no longer are willing to accept anything that is not put to them in the guise of socialism.

And therefore I shan't in fact go on to African socialism. What I'll do is take examples of those who were, in my opinion, being serious, being honest. And certainly Kwame Nkrumah was one of these. Nkrumah spent a number of years during the fifties and right up to when he was overthrown – that would cover at least ten years – in which he was searching for an ideology. He started out with this mixture of Marxism and Protestantism, he talked about pan-Africanism, he went to consciencism and then Nkrumahism, and, there was everything other than a straight understanding of socialism.

What were the actual consequences of this perception? That is what matters to us. Let us assume that he was searching for something African and that he was trying to avoid the trap of adopting something alien. What were the practical consequences of his attempt to dissociate himself from an international socialist tradition? We saw in Ghana that Nkrumah steadfastly refused to accept that there were classes, that there were class contradictions in Ghana, that these class contradictions were fundamen-

tal. For years Nkrumah went along with this mish-mash of philosophy, which took some socialist premises but in which he refused to pursue it to its logical conclusion, in which he would accept that one either had a capitalist system based upon the private ownership of the means of production and the alienation of the product of people's labour or one had an alternative system which was completely different and that there was no way of juxtaposing and mixing these two to create anything that was new and viable.

A most significant test of this position was when Nkrumah himself was overthrown! After he was overthrown, he lived in Guinea-Konakry and before he died he wrote a small text, *Class Struggle in Africa*. It is not the greatest philosophical treatise but it is historically important, because it is there Nkrumah himself in effect admits the consequences, the misleading consequences of an ideology which espoused an African cause, but which felt, for reasons which he did not understand, a historical necessity to separate itself from scientific socialism. It indicated quite clearly the disastrous consequences of that position. Because Nkrumah denied the existence of classes in Ghana until the petty bourgeoisie as a class overthrew him. And then, in Guinea, he said it was a terrible mistake. Yes, the petty bourgeoisie is a class with interests fundamentally opposed to workers and peasants in Africa. Yes, the class interests of the petty bourgeoisie are the same or at least are tied in with the class interests of international monopoly capital and therefore we have in Africa a class struggle within the African continent and a struggle against imperialism. And if we are to aim at transcending these contradictions, of bringing victory and emancipation to the working peoples, the producers of Africa, we will have to grapple with that ideology, which first of all recognizes and, challenges the existence of exploiting and oppressing classes.

It's a very important historical document. It is the closest that Nkrumah comes to a self-critique. It is the record of a genuine nationalist, African

nationalist who wandered for years with this assumption and feeling that somehow he must dissociate himself in one way or another, from scientific socialism because it originated outside the boundaries of his own society and he was afraid of its cultural implications. That is putting it in the most charitable way. But the fear is due, in fact, to aspects of bourgeois ideology. Due to the fact that he made a distinction between social theory and scientific theory, which is not a necessary distinction. That is the distinction which comes out of the history of bourgeois thought.

People seem to have no difficulty in deciding that they are going to use facets of the material culture that originated in the West, whether it originated in capitalist or socialist society. People have no difficulty relating to electricity but they say: "Marx and Engels, that's European!" They don't ask the question, "Was Edison a racist?" but they ask the question, "Was Marx a racist?" They genuinely believe that they are making a fundamental distinction, whereas, in fact, this is obscuring the totality of social development. And the natural sciences are not to be separated from the social sciences. Our interpretation of the social reality can similarly derive a certain historical law and hence scientific law of society which can be applied irrespective of its origin or its originators. Of course, it is true, and this is the most appropri-

ate note on which to end, that any ideology, when applied, must be applied with a thorough grasp of the internal realities of a given African society.

Marxism comes to the world as a historical fact, and it comes in a cultural nexus. If, for instance, Africans or, let us go back to Asians; when the Chinese first picked up the Marxist texts, they were European texts. They came loaded with conceptions of the historical development of Europe itself. So that method and factual data were interwoven obviously and the conclusions were in fact in a specific historical and cultural setting. It was the task of the Chinese to deal with that and to adapt it and to scrutinize it and see how it was applicable to their society. First and foremost to be scientific it meant having due regard for the specifics of Chinese historical and social development.

I have already cited Cabral in another context and he reappears in this context. The way in which he is at all times looking at the particularities of class development in contemporary Guinea-Bissau. Looking at the potential of classes in Guinea-Bissau at this point in time. And therefore he is of course, making sure that Marxism does not simply appear as the summation of other people's history, but appears as a living force within one's history. and this is a difficult transformation. This is the task of anybody who considers himself or herself a

Marxist. However, because it is fraught with so many difficulties and obstacles, many people take the easy route, which is to take it as a finished product rather than an ongoing special product which has to be adapted to their own society.

One finds that in looking at this Marxist theory, at its relevance to race, looking at the relevance of Marxist theory to national emancipation, we come up with a very important paradox. And it is this: that the nationalist, in the strict sense of the word, that is the petty bourgeois nationalist, who aims merely at the recovery of national independence in our epoch, is incapable of giving the peoples of the Caribbean any participation in liberal democracy. The petty-bourgeoisie cannot fulfill these historical tasks. For national liberation requires a socialist ideology. We cannot separate the two. Even for national liberation in Africa, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique very clearly demonstrated the necessity for an ideological development, for consciencization, as they say in Latin America and, the nationalist struggle was won because it came under the rubric of a scientific socialist perspective.

As Cabral said, "There may be revolutions which have had a revolutionary theory and which have failed. But there have certainly been no revolutions which have succeeded without a revolutionary theory." ■



REJOINDER TO DR WALTER RODNEY'S CRITICISM OF DR KWAME NKRUMAH

by GORKEH A GAMAL NKRUMAH

Gorkeh Gamal Nkrumah is a Research Fellow at the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies in Harare. He has penned this response to Walter Rodney's article "Marxism in Africa" (see page 44) which was quoted in *Frank Talk* Volume 2 at page 55.

"The immortal spirit of Nkrumah presides and will preside over the judgement of history in relation to this decisive stage in the lives of our people, in the lifelong struggle against imperialist domination for the true progress of our continent."¹ Amilcar Cabral.

"The most historic and dramatic political event . . . was Ghana's attainment of independence in 1957 under Dr Kwame Nkrumah, a champion of the total liberation of Africa, an ardent advocate of political unity and promoter of the African Personality . . . Nkrumah hosted in December 1958 the All-African People's Conference attended by several Heads of States and Government including leaders of nationalist organisations waging freedom struggles . . . AFRICA MUST BE FREE! said Nkrumah in 1957. AFRICA MUST BE TOTALLY FREE! We say in 1987".² Robert G. Mugabe.

Fitch Oppenheimer Scenario

Perhaps no personality in contemporary African history has ignited more contradictory judgements, and polarised observers and students of his career and works. Overlooking Kwame Nkrumah's attempt to replace the colonial relations of production in Ghana with socialism some critics of Nkrumah embarked on a path of distortion and peripheralisation of Ghana's first President's contribution to the African socialist revolutionary struggle.

Barely three months after the C.I.A. engineered coup d'etat which overthrew the Nkrumah government a book entitled "*Ghana: end of an illusion*" published in the U.S.A. and written by two American "leftists" namely Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer, supposedly criticising Nkrumah from the standpoint of "historical

materialism" appeared on bookshops and university libraries' shelves. This book formed the basis of the criticism of Nkrumah subsequently espoused by a group of Western and African self-styled "Marxist" academics. I am not about to name these academic celebrities, nor am I to list why and how they sustained a character assassination campaign so cantankerously. This issue is beyond the scope of this paper and is peripheral, given the objective here. Suffice it to say, from the outset, that it pains me to mention Dr Walter Rodney as one who, perhaps unwittingly, reiterated the Fitch and Oppenheimer scenario.

Nkrumaism

The idiosyncratic criticism of the aforementioned academic celebrities revolves around the misconceptions of what they perceive to constitute "Nkrumaism", supported by a misrepresentation of the facts. What is "Nkrumaism"? Why is Nkrumaism an unsettling presence as far as certain segments of the West's and Africa's "leftist" circles are concerned? Why is it that these self-confessed "progressives" do not focus on the tragic mutilation of the political and ideological structures Nkrumah so painstakingly nurtured as he began dismantling in successive steps the capitalist economic basis and colonial totality of relations of production that determined Ghana's neo-colonial superstructure and as yet still does?

Nkrumaism represents the coalescence of pan-Africanism and scientific socialism. Nkrumaism is not African Socialism.

Nkrumaism is a developing ideology as opposed to a definitive one. The cornerstones of Nkrumaism, however, are uncompromisingly static. The recognisable essence of Nkrumaism is so constituted as to be potentially capable of supporting, even supplementing Kwame Nkrumah's own crucial theoretical premise. As these identifying conceptual cornerstones must organise clarification of the impending discussion, I should state them here. The first Nkrumaist premise is the total liberation of Africa and Africans. On the eve of Ghana's independence Kwame Nkrumah declared that, "The Independence of Ghana is meaningless, unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa." It is clear from subsequent writings of Nkrumah in books such as his *Consciencism* (1962) and *Neo colonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism* (1964) that African liberation in its wider context is not restricted to the confines of political independence but comprises of African economic liberation from the West's neo-colonial exploitative stranglehold as well as African cultural liberation from European or Western ideological hegemony.

The second crucial objective or premise of Nkrumaism is the political unification of Africa as a prelude to Africa's economic integration. "It is time that we planned our economic and political development on a continental scale . . . such maximum development would ensure a rational utilisation of the material resources and human potential of our continent along the lines of an integrated economy, and within complementary sectors of production, eliminating all unnecessary form of competition, economic alienation and duplication" wrote Kwame Nkrumah.

mah.⁴ The creation of an Africa free of frontiers entails the cultivation of a growing sense of African solidarity transcending contemporary "national" boundaries designated by the European colonial powers late last century.

Last and not least is a commitment to scientific socialism. Historically the relation of Pan-Africanism to socialism has been uncharted and confused. Kwame Nkrumah was the earliest theoritian to establish the categorical imperative of wedding pan-Africanism to scientific socialism. Said Nkrumah: "At the core of the concept of African unity lies socialism and the socialist definition of the new African society. Socialism and African Unity are organically complementary".⁵

Rodney

Scientific socialism is an integral premise of Nkrumaism. Much of what follows is to elaborate why this is so. Particular reference will be given to Dr Rodney's allegations, which, perhaps, could be attributed to the paucity of evidence available to him. Dr. Rodney "describes how Nkrumah denied the existence of classes in Ghana until the petit bourgeoisie as a class overthrew him." He (Rodney) says that Nkrumah had wandered for years "with the assumption that he must disassociate himself from scientific socialism because it originated outside the boundaries of his own society and he was afraid of its cultural implications".⁶ These accusations are without foundation.

Kwame Nkrumah understood that for a revolution to end in socialism it has to be initiated and executed by socialists. At independence over three decades ago Ghana hardly had a "class" of revolutionary progressives among the proletariat and intelligentsia who systematically embarked on a concrete programme for the implementation of scientific socialism. Nkrumah knew that a political party is not founded on the basis of its official declarations. "The Party (CPP) has always proclaimed socialism as its objective. But socialism cannot be achieved without socialists", said he.

To proceed further on the question of Nkrumah's implementation of socio-economic policies determined by the principles of scientific socialism it is proper that we pause to review certain

concepts basic to a scientific socialist socio-analysis. Two concepts in particular are crucial to this discussion. The first is what in Marxist terminology is referred to as the "basis" that is to say the material conditions on the totality of relations of production. The basis is the mode of production or economic infrastructure specific to a historically determined stage or phase of social development. This economic basis by and large conditions, even stipulates the superstructure. The superstructure in Marxist parlance is the sum total of legal, ideological even cultural expressions and relations which are in turn embodied in cultural and public institutions and organisations, the judiciary, the executive powers or government, the administrative structures and military establishment. The state is the crucial organ of the superstructure.

The Ghanaian Revolution

Kwame Nkrumah's revolutionary experiment in Ghana was three-fold. Firstly, Nkrumah embarked on a progressive, systematic dismantlement of the colonially inherited economic basis of Ghana. "Under colonial rule, foreign monopoly interests had tied up our whole economy to suit themselves. We had not a single industry. Our economy was dependent on one cash crop, cocoa. Although our output of cocoa is the largest in the world, there was not a single cocoa processing factory". wrote Nkrumah.⁷ This was coupled with the deliberate policy for acceleration of economic growth, infrastructural development, and the socialist transformation of the Ghanaian economy.

Secondly, Nkrumah laid the foundation for the revolutionary transformation of the social stratum. In other words a social and ideological revolution. "... Thorough going machinery had been established for the political education of the masses so that our socialist objectives, and Ghana's role in the wider African revolution might be clearly understood. This was the purpose of the Young Pioneers (the youth organisation), the TUC educational programmes (for the politicisation of the proletariat), and the ideological institute of Winneba where cadres were being trained. It was to make possible the unfolding of the next phase of the Ghanaian

Revolution: the establishment of a socialist republic, the principle of which was enshrined in the 1961 constitution of the Republic of Ghana."⁸

Thirdly, Nkrumah was dedicated to transformation in the superstructure. He Africanised the institutions of the superstructure such as the judiciary and the military. To reflect his pan-African perspective he founded the Africa Affairs Secretariat and the Bureau of African Affairs. African revolutionaries and Freedom Fighters flocked to Accra, the Ghanaian capital where material, military and technical assistance was freely provided to assist the liberation movements. Nkrumah established a political legacy for the entire African continent, with his realisation that aping the bourgeois democracy of the former colonial powers was an alien contraption particularly unsuitable to the African socio-economic and political realities. From practical experience and given the machinations of international imperialism and the neo-colonial state of Africa, Nkrumah recognised at an early stage that the foreign superstructures of the West can never be successfully imposed on Africa and Africans. "A multi-party system introduced into Africa results in the perpetuation of feudalism, tribalism and regionalism and an inordinate power struggle and rivalry... But let me emphasise that a one-party system of government is an effective and safe instrument only when it operates in a socialist society. In other words, it must be a political expression of the will of the people as a whole. On the other hand, a one-party system of government in a neo-colonialist client state, subject to external pressures and control, can quickly develop into the most dangerous form of tyranny, despotism and oppression".⁹ declared Kwame Nkrumah.

Ghana's Political Economy

The two antithetical and antagonistic classes of contemporary neo-colonial Africa are the exploiter or oppressor class allied to international capital and buttressed by the cultural, ideological and military hegemony of the West, on the one hand, and the exploited or oppressed classes on the other. The first includes in its ranks the European settler or expatriate bourgeoisie, the by and large "nou-

veau riche" African bourgeoisie and increasingly the upper echelons of the bureaucracy and comprador classes. Their ideology reflects European and especially American bourgeois ideological hegemony as well as their own class interests and class consciousness, namely elitism, individualism and liberalism. The exploited classes comprise the peasantry, the proletariat, the lumpen proletariat and the lower echelons of the urban salariat. The petty bourgeoisie while progressive during the independence and liberation struggles largely attempts to reconcile irreconcilable ideologies in contemporary Africa. Frustrated by racism and colonialism the African petty bourgeois class was one of the most vociferous anti-colonial classes and was therefore incorporated into the nationalist liberation movements. After independence its reactionary ideological essence revealed it as a comprador class.

The question then is did Nkrumah, either intentionally or inadvertently, hold back the course of revolutionary social development and the socialist transformation of Ghana? Was the Nkrumah Government an instrument of maintaining the domination of the exploiter and oppressor classes? It is my contention that he did not.

The Nkrumah Government was the first in sub-Saharan Africa to launch a nationalisation process. British mining enterprises were largely nationalised. The state monopoly on foreign trade, which was previously exclusively a domain of foreign concerns, was established. The decade of the 1950's from when Ghana became a self-governing colony in 1951 to the early 1960's when Ghana was a socialist-oriented republic, was characterised by rapid economic expansion. The overall development strategy was characterised by a major investment effort in manufacturing industry and infrastructure. The 10 percent of public expenditure devoted to productive investments in 1951-59 increased to 37 percent in 1963-64. The Volta dam in Akosombo to supply cheap energy, and a new deep-water harbour, the largest artificial harbour in Africa, were constructed. Roads and airports were also developed. Recorded employment grew at the high rate of 6.5 percent, during that time.



A conscious effort was made by the Nkrumah government to reduce dependence on the West. There was substantial import substitution of a wide range of consumer goods. The ratio of imported consumer goods to private consumption was 32.2 in 1960 and only 15.5 in 1966. The ratio of manufacturing value added to imports rose from 14.5 in 1960 to 32.2 in 1966. The Economic Surveys Industrial Statistics revealed that between 1958 and 1969 the percentage of consumer goods (durables and non-durables) in imports decreased from 54.5 percent to 30.2 percent. Similarly the percentage of consumer durables in the gross manufacturing output was increased from 0.8 in 1958 to 20.3 in 1969.

Socialist Transformation

One important feature of this rapid industrialisation strategy was the wide-ranging state participation in the development process. Most of the new factories were either state-run enterprises or co-operatives. Between 1962 and 1966 the per-

centage of gross manufacturing output dominated by foreign concerns dropped from 63.2 to 48.3. Similarly the percentage of industrial gross output controlled by Ghanaian private capital dropped from 13.0 to 9.7. The percentage of industrial gross output controlled by the Ghanaian state sector increased from 11.8 to 19.5 in the four years preceding the 1966 coup d'etat which overthrew the Nkrumah Government. The socialist orientation of the economic policies of the Nkrumah Government took a decisively anti-capitalist tenor.

This strategy of socialist transformation of the Ghanaian economy through the rapid development of both the state and co-operative sectors especially during the early 1960's meant that the closing years of the CPP government were a very difficult period for private sector development. Indeed in a speech delivered in 1964 by President Nkrumah to launch the seven year development plan (1963/64 to 1969/70) he stated that: "We would be hampering our advance to socialism if we were to encourage the growth of private capitalism in our midst".

Adhering to socialist transformation in all spheres the Nkrumah Government took the unprecedented step in Africa of making all education free from primary through secondary to university levels. Two more universities were created in addition to the expansion of the university college set up in the closing years of the colonial era. After independence Nkrumah made sure that all pupils in primary and students in secondary schools received textbooks supplied free of charge. In the ten years after independence the enrolment of primary school pupils, secondary school students and university students increased by 211.9 percent, 437.8 percent and 478.8 percent respectively. Similarly there were rapid improvements in health services and health infrastructure. The number of hospital beds rose by 160 percent between 1951 and 1961 while the number of doctors and dentists increased by 220.5 percent during that decade.

Pan Africanism and Scientific Socialism

It is clear therefore that Kwame Nkrumah, contrary to Dr Rodney's opinion, was not wandering in an ideological wilderness, "searching for an ideology", but that Nkrumah laid the foundation for economic and social reconstruction based on the principles of scientific socialism. He also initiated the revolutionary transformation of social relations. He nurtured the cultivation of a radical transformation of the economic basis and accordingly the corresponding transformation of the superstructure. When one considers Nkrumah's leadership one recollects Antonio Gramsci's (the pre World War Two Italian Communist leader) regarding another maligned leadership: "This leadership was not "abstract"; it neither consisted in mechanically repeating scientific or theoretical formulae, nor did it confuse politics, *real action*, with theoretical disquisition. It applied itself to real men, formed in specific historical relations, with specific feelings, outlooks, fragmentary conceptions of the world etc., which were the result of "spontaneous" combinations of a given situation of material production with the "fortuitous" agglomeration within it of disparate social elements".¹⁰

The works of Kwame Nkrumah repre-

sented a coalescence of certain premises the sum total of which is an ideology of Pan-African political, economic and cultural emancipation, African political unification and economic integration, and socialist transformation. His political career epitomised an ideology calculated to accelerate the historical processes common to all mankind, yet specific to the African neo-colonial capitalist socio-economic formation. Nkrumaism gave eloquent expression to the spontaneous sentiments, often passionately ingrained in the social psychology of Africans such as a conviction in the fundamental sanctity of the ideal of African unity, as opposed to nineteenth century European designated nationalisms, ethnic and linguistic even politico-religious loyalties. Nkrumah was the consolidator of aspirations instinctively discernible by the African masses as desirable, as progressive such as the still powerful rallying cry of AFRICA FOR THE AFRICANS. This aspect of the African masses' social psychology is the legacy of years of European domination, exploitation and oppression, racialism, colonialism and contemporary neo-colonialism. It is almost a religiosity in its vehemence and cannot be ignored. There is no fundamental asymmetry between pan-Africanism and scientific socialism.

African Socialism

Kwame Nkrumah was the first pan-African activist and theoretician to denounce "African Socialism" which is a utopian socialism glorifying the African past. "The phrase African socialism seems to espouse the view that the traditional African society was a classless society imbued with the spirit of humanism and to express nostalgia for the spirit. Such a conception of socialism makes a fetish of communal African society . . . All available evidence from the history of Africa, up to the eve of European colonisation, shows that African society was neither classless nor devoid of a social hierarchy",¹¹ said Kwame Nkrumah. The major proponents of "African Socialism" were former Senegalese and Tanzanian Presidents Leopold Sedar Senghor and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere respectively. Kwame Nkrumah was never an advocate of African socialism. In his book *Consciencism* Nkrumah stated categorically the crucial importance of scientific socialism as the

essential and logical development from Africa's socio-political and neo-colonial economic heritage.

Kwame Nkrumah's political thought and career was characterised by continuity and consistency. It exemplified a progressive revolutionary continuum. In his book *Neo-colonialism: The Last State of Imperialism* Nkrumah exposed the workings of the multinational corporations and their efforts "to halt socialist advance" in Africa. This book was written in 1965 while Nkrumah was still in office. His exposure of the machinations of imperialism and international capital was far more systematic and in-depth than any other African leader at the time.

Nkrumah focussed attention on the Oppenheimer capitalist empire operating through its various components, the Anglo-American Corporation and De Beers. Is it a coincidence that that empire's namesake Mary Oppenheimer published with Bob Fitch the book that was to emerge as the "bible" of Nkrumah's allegedly "Marxian" critics? It is crucial for African Marxists to note who masterminded that blueprint for confusion. It is sad that Dr Walter Rodney's criticism of Kwame Nkrumah and the vilification of the West's gutter press and bogus "Marxists" appear analogous. ■

Footnotes

1. Amilcar Cabral *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings* London, 1980 p.155
2. Robert G. Mugabe; *Africa Day Speech*, 1987
3. Kwame Nkrumah; *Midnight speech*; given at Ghana Independence, 5th-6th March, 1957, Accra, Ghana
4. Kwame Nkrumah; *Africa must unite*, London, 1963, p.52
5. Kwame Nkrumah; *Handbook of Revolutionary Welfare*, London, 1968, p.28
6. *Frank Talk*, September 1987 issue, p.55
7. Kwame Nkrumah; *Dark days in Ghana*, London, 1967 p.49
8. Kwame Nkrumah; *Revolutionary Path*, London, 1972, p.384
9. Kwame Nkrumah; *Revolutionary Path*, London, 1972, p.372
10. Alistair Davidson; *Antonio Gramsci: Towards an intellectual biography*, London, 1977, p.159
11. Kwame Nkrumah, "African socialism revisited:" *African forum* Vol 1, No 3, London, 1966

INDENTURED LABOUR AND GROUP FORMATIONS IN APARTHEID SOCIETY



By Fatima Meer

Professor Meer addresses the rôle of "Indians" as part and parcel of the Black community.

The vast majority of Indians in South Africa are landless, semi-skilled and unskilled workers and, as such, take their place alongside Africans and Coloureds, not only as the working class of the country, but also as the disenfranchised and oppressed. They have shared this position for over a hundred years; yet it is only in the last forty that they have moved towards some sense of "class" consciousness, and only in the last thirty engaged in common economic and political action. What are the factors that have delayed their coming together and continued, to some measure, to inhibit this solidarity? The answer, at the general level, lies within the mode of apartheid production, in the forces it generates to manipulate attitudes and control social formations; more specifically, it is contained in the resultant dynamics of Afro-Asian relations. An important and neglected feature of these dynamics is the system of indentured labour which spawned the Indian South African.

Indentured labour was introduced into Natal in 1860, a quarter of a century after it had been imported into Mauritius on almost the very day that the last slave, having completed the five-year apprenticeship which marked the transition from emancipation to slavery, fled the plantation. Why did Natal, teeming with an indigenous Black population, import labour? Why did the Indians succumb to being indentured?

The colonial explanation (reiterated by its scholars) for importing 'coolies' to Natal was the unwillingness of the 'kaffir' to work – he was regarded as spoilt, both by his polygamous habits and by the land settlement made upon him by a dotting British government. In fact, those reserves could only accommodate a third of the entire African population and were specially designed to push them on to the labour market. Sufficient evidence exists to show that when Natal was anxiously

negotiating for indentured labour, the African, pressurised by scarcity of land and by taxes, was being remarkably industrious in the white sector of the colony, performing all the required tasks, both menial and skilled. Thus a local magistrate observed in 1852:

"On a farm he does almost everything – he herds the cattle, milks the cows, churns the butter, loads it on the wagons, the oxen of which he inspan and leads. He cuts wood, and thatch, digs sluits, and cooks. There is little that I ever saw a farmer do, but ride about the country. In the town, there are some familiar cases in which kaffir labour is employed to a ridiculous extent: for in what quarter of the globe would male adults be found performing the offices of nurses to infants and children or as laundresses of female apparel."¹

So the problem was not a lack of labour, but a lack of abundant cheap labour, particularly in the labour-intensive area of industrial agriculture. The white colonists, accustomed to slaves and to semi-slave labour of the Blacks whose land they had appropriated, expected to pay virtually no wages. During

the middle of the last century, Africans still retained some land and some cattle. The mode of migrant labour was still in its embryonic stage – the bureaucracy which would control its movement and violate its value was yet to develop. Africans were relatively free to negotiate their terms, and rather than part with their labour for nothing, or lose most of its value to the hirer, preferred to live on what remained of their productive resources. However, indentured labour weakened the bargaining power of the Natal Africans in the mid-nineteenth century, accelerated their alienation from their means of production – particularly their livestock which, in the absence of wages, they were forced to transform into tax money and transfer to the white sector – stalled their industrial-



"Indian" workers. . . moving towards Black worker consciousness.

ization and urbanization and facilitated their conversion into a labour reserve.

Indentured labour became increasingly indispensable to the colonial economy of Natal in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The indentured could be worked up to fourteen hours a day, with the pitiful wages further reduced through excessive fines for minor transgressions. Well after the discovery of gold and diamonds and general industrial development in the country had pushed unskilled wage rates to £3-£4 per month, Natal continued to have cheap labour, still only paying between 10 shillings and £1 a month for men and 5 shillings for women, a fair proportion of whom were skilled. So precious was this favoured labour position that it was one of the factors that blocked Natal from moving towards Union in 1909.

Indenturing continued until 1911, when it was stopped by spirited Indian agitation, supported by enlightened British interest. By that time, 152 184 Indians had been imported to the country (62 per cent men, 25 per cent women and 13 per cent children) and the Indian population in the colony exceeded the white by 3.2 per cent.

The meaning of indenture for the Indian

INDIANS had been driven into indenture by the colonisation of their own country. Their world collapsed about 1837 when the *zamindaris*, upon whom they had leaned for respite from taxes in lean years, small loans and, above all, justice, disappeared and were replaced by the British, absentee landlords and prohibitive money-lenders. In Bihar, the United Province and Madras the position was further aggravated by massive famines. And these regions became the suppliers of indentured labour which mushroomed on the ashes of slavery. As far as tropical agriculture was concerned, the slaves had been emancipated at the wrong time, just when it was evolving a new phase in production and marketing. Had the system of indenture not come to the rescue, the planters would have been forced to meet the wage demands of the ex-slaves.

Instead – and unwittingly – *the indentured workers were forced into becoming the international scabs of the nineteenth century.*

From the point of view of the planter, indenture was even better than slavery because it was cheaper. Enthused the Company of Gillanders and Arbuthnot: "Their cost is not half that of the slaves".² And indeed it wasn't. The price of a slave at the time of emancipation was between £200-£250 for an average life span of ten years, the first three of which were of low productivity because the slave was put out to season to restore his strength. An indentured worker cost the planter £55 for ten years, inclusive of wages, commissions and passage.³

Some did manage to flee indenture and set themselves up on their own account – as small shopkeepers and hawkers, trading with the local Africans and supplying the planters with their coolie rations; as peasant farmers, cultivating small plots, for subsistence and sale, of the poorer lands, leased and sometimes bought from private white owners at three and four times the going price; as skilled artisans, setting up workshops, usually in carpentry, which in a few cases developed into factories. They were joined by the 'passengers', Gujerati peasants who, by paying their own passages, entered the country as free immigrants. They came mainly between 1875 and 1897, at which date their entry into the colony was restricted (to be finally abolished in 1913).

Thus, by 1885 the Indian occupational structure had become somewhat elaborated. While over 95% remained a working class of indentured and reindentured labourers, tightly controlled by laws which entitled their employers to exploit them to the hilt, there was a small but growing *petit bourgeoisie*, made up of both the 'passengers' and the ex-indentured. There was, however, no class divisions; the division was on the basis of the *jaati*, endogamy, which cut across economic and occupational lines.

The plantation, in fact, was not conducive to group formations. The planter was afraid that these would develop into labour solidarities, and workers were forbidden by law to be seen in corporate

bodies. But for all that, residential groupings on regional and linguistic bases occurred even on the 'coolie' lines, reconstructing the traditional *jaatis* – endogamies.

The relationship between these endogamies was friendly and co-operative, which is usually the case in *jaati* – structured societies. This interdependence was probably even more pronounced among the indentured due to the relatively high proportion of mixed marriages (ie. between endogamies), occasioned by the restrictive quota of women (25% of the men). In Natal, one-fifth of the marriages registered between 1873 and 1886 were mixed.¹² By the end of the century, however, exogamous marriages had declined considerably and the endogamy *jaati* had emerged as the fundamental social formation outside the family.

Nevertheless, a distinction of status emerged early on between the 'passengers' and the indentured workers, the residue of which exists to this day. There were substantial linguistic, religious, educational and economic differences between the two groups. The 'passengers' had independent means at home, had come to Natal of their own free will and were more used to business than the ex-indentured. Between 1870 and 1885, the number of shops owned by Gujeratis rose from one to forty in Durban, while the number of shops owned by the ex-indentured rose only from eleven to twenty-six.¹³

There were, of course, also differences within the indentured, as between North Indian and South Indian, but these did not take on a class form. The distinction between the Gujerati 'passengers' and the indentured workers teetered on the verge of doing so. This became particularly apparent when the Gujeratis attempted to distance themselves from the majority of the Indians, in an attempt to escape their indignities, by setting themselves up as 'Arab'. Had the white colonists accepted them as such, the Gujeratis may well have been co-opted into the white class; but, far from considering this, the whites saw them, above all, as the main threat to white domination: "We are convinced that much of the insecurity existing in the minds of European colonists against the whole Indian population of the

colony has been excited by the undoubted ability of the arab traders to compete with European merchants."¹⁴

The emergent Indian 'bourgeoisie' had to be curbed, and the position of the Indian fixed to that of the unskilled workers. This was the essence of white domination. It could not be shared with the colonised, either African, Asian, or those Blacks that the whites helped to procreate, the Coloureds. With this in view, white Natal united against the Indians as a class: "In no colony . . . in South Africa is the colour line drawn deeper than in the case of Natal . . . the Blacks are ten to one at least . . . and yet this vast native population is kept in order . . . why? Because the white rules by prestige."

The issue was economic, the dividing line race. All Indians, whatever their status, came in for simultaneous legislative attack. Immigration of free Indians and the issue of licences for trade purposes was restricted, and Indians of indentured origin because liable to a poll tax of £3 (males from the age of 16, females at 12) if they did not re-indenture or return to India. The Indian community responded as one. The two sectors coalesced and recognised their mutual interest. The 'passengers' had no option but to identify with the indentured. The indentured accepted the 'passengers' because they needed the capital and the expertise they brought to the 'struggle'. In claiming the 'passengers', the indentured claimed a share of their wealth and insisted that it be used to build the necessary infrastructure of educational, religious, welfare and other institutions necessary for Indian advancement. This came relatively easily to the Muslims, who were obliged by their religion to spend two-and-a-half per cent of their capital assets on charities.

There is little doubt that the 'bourgeoisie', drawn from both the 'passengers' and the ex-indentured, hastened the conflict between the Indians and their white masters. Their expectations were higher, and under the leadership of Gandhi the necessary ignition was effected. The resultant political formation of an 'Indian class', which occurred between 1894, with the founding of the Natal Indian Congress, and 1913, the launching of the second passive resistance movement and the massive strike of Indian workers

which virtually stopped industry in Natal, was remarkably strong. The technique was passive resistance, the aim to expose the injustice and immorality of the racist legislation against Indians; and in this, the struggle succeeded, even though few real changes occurred in objective conditions. Most important, the Indian workers had confronted their white masters on a political plane. The issue had not remained confined to small disputes about small modifications of highly exploitative wages. It had been pushed to a moral demand, for a moral share in the whole system. The 'indentured mentality' in the labour situation ended. From that point on, the Indian was no longer a preferential labour commodity and ceased, in that context, to threaten the African.

Jaati and caste

It has often been said that Indians are too caste-contained to be able to relate to other South Africans, and that they are as contemptuous of the Africans as the high castes among them are of the low castes. But the concept of caste as popularly understood in European circles is not that of the Indians – Indians remain proud

of their *jaati*, but *jaati* is not synonymous with caste. Nor does such a view take account of the aspects of *jaati* – the emphasis on communal support and solidarity – that came to the fore in the South African context. The indentured workers, brutally uprooted from their native land, were yet, in a sense, never utterly bereft. There was still *jaati*, the sacred repository of their culture, within which they could preserve a sense of self and community – a defence against their double colonisation.

Jaati has been distorted into caste by British administrators and European scholars and, as such, projected as a heredity trap, condemning its victims to social and occupational immobility. It has been rejected as anti-democracy, anti-Christianity and anti-all the fundamental tenets of the equality and brotherhood of man. It is highly unlikely that this distortion was a result of a colossal misunderstanding, but rather that it was motivated by the dominator's need to justify the exploitation of the dominated. It was the *jaati*, with its elements of local (village-based) and family-based solidarity, not the armies of the *maharajahs* and the *nawabs*, that



remained impregnable to British domination. And so the *jaati* became the target of a psychological war to relieve the guilt of racism itself, since the latter, by comparison, was so much more preferable, even liberatory.

The Indian experiences *jaati* as a personal and social identity, as the closest social formation holding person, family and community together. The *jaati* is the group within which marriages are arranged, wedding feasts shared, funerals attended, rituals performed. Others may be invited, *jaati* members have a right. Academics have distilled hierarchy out of *jaati* and transcribed *that* into caste.¹⁶ The Indian mind has almost a mythical notion of two extreme points, Brahmin and Harijan, within which thousands of *jaatis* are contained, but it resists attempts to place these in a sort of hierarchy.¹⁷ Such a placing would have little, if any, relevance in a feudal society where people have to do more or less the same work in order to subsist, or in an industrial economy where hundreds of *jaatis* coexisting in a *common* society bring their labour in *common* to a *common* market.

The components of a *jaati* constellation are neither political nor economic, nor do they exist for the exploitative gain of the one over the other. A *jaati* may have its preferred traditional occupation, but it does not constrain occupational choice or mobility – as is shown in British census data compiled since the eighteenth century, which record the highest caste, the 'Brahmins', plying occupations varying from trading to menial agricultural labour, incidentally explaining the fair proportion of Brahmins among the indentured. Ghurye explains that trading, agriculture, labouring and military service were regarded as everybody's occupations; that it was in officiating over rituals alone that the Brahmins had a monopoly, and even that was challenged in a part of Madras where artisans claimed ascendancy over the Brahmins.¹⁸

Jaati has also been deprecated as a divisive and anti-nationalistic force. Yet the records show that villages resisted powerful attacks upon them because of the facility with which their '*jaati*' components combined to offer common defence. Ghurye states:

"The various castes, in so far as they contributed their respective services towards the common life of the village, were welded together and interdependent for the purpose of civic life. Interdependence of caste was such a deep rooted principle that it prevented other exclusive aspects, inherent in the system, from getting the better of the idea of a common civic goal and human sympathy for co-residents and hardening into caste-spirit or caste-patriotism."¹⁹

Jaati consciousness, thus, is not only mutually supportive but also prepares its members to co-ordinate with others in a community of interests.²⁰ Had it been personally and communally destructive, it would have been quickly shed by those degraded by it, particularly the indentured, who were drawn from a very depressed sector of Indian society. The very fact of its restructuring suggests its positive value.

Jaati is the web of privacy within which Indians learn and maintain their identity. Just as each has *jaati*-communal privacy, so have others, but the privacy of none is more precious or more fundamental than that of the other. Indians understand very well the need to maintain respectable and respecting distances, but at the same time they know the value and the necessity for forming larger fraternities when faced with a common danger. So *jaati* consciousness does not undercut 'class consciousness'; in fact, it facilitates such consciousness, having already laid the basis for it in its control of preoccupation with personal status problems.

It is not so-called caste that inhibits Indian assimilation or Afro-Indian solidarity – the inhibitor is white domination, which feeds on Black fragmentation.

Toward a Black class

WHATEVER the Africans' perception of Indian indentured workers was in 1860, included in it must have been the suspicion, if not the knowledge, that they had been brought in by the white colonist to replace the Africans and to be used against them in ways perhaps not immediately understood. It was in the interest of the white colonist to fan any hostility, for any consolidation of interest between

the two labour contingents would have been fatal in a situation where the ratio between white and Black was already in the region of 1:10. Consequently, *Indians and Africans were separated from each other, and in separation, projected as dangerous to each other.* They were at the same time kept within 'viewing' distance of each other, so that they could be constantly reminded of their strange and different ways. There was the use of African 'whipping boys' on the estates, and the sentencing of a transgressing 'coolie' to the 'kaffir' barracks where he could be terrorised and ridiculed as the master intended; there was the appointment of an Indian overseer over African mill-hands and the use of African police to suppress Indian strikes; and running through it all, constantly reinforced, was the use of stereotypes calculated to present each with an adverse image of the other. Such stereotypes were fabricated, in the first instance, for the peace of mind of the whites themselves, to relieve them of Christian guilt for the humanity they degraded. The degradation was intrinsic to the race – one did not provide latrines for 'coolies', "because they had difficulty in carrying out the latrine systems," it would "only concentrate their filth which at present is diffused."²¹ Even a liberal-minded white scholar, writing seventy years later, sympathised with the planters who had to contend with 'inveterate shirkers', with a people possessed with a high degree of "stupidity, illiteracy, susceptibility to rumours and colossal ignorance."²²

Up to the Second World War, Indians followed the political orientation established by Gandhi, which was that the South African government through its subsidiary, Natal, had a treaty obligation with the government of India to accord Indians full and equal citizenship rights in the country, and should be coerced into doing so through the moral pressure of passive resistance. Thus, politically, the issue of discrimination against the Indians was separated from that of the other two Black groups and there was a great reliance on India and on representatives of the two governments getting together and sorting things out. There was, however, progressive disillusionment with the role of the Indian Agent General, who represented India in South Africa, and a

growing awareness that the Indians did not in fact have a different case from other oppressed 'non-whites'. For example, when in 1932 the Natal Indian Congress resolved to launch a further passive resistance campaign, *Indian Views*, one of the then two Indian newspapers, commented in an editorial: "Success of passive resistance presupposes existence in the enemy of a measure of the milk of human love, of human decency . . . The Pirows, the Malans and the back-veld, back-benchers are by no means handicapped with a superabundance of these commodities." Instead, it proposed Afro-Indian solidarity:

"To Britain we say may the curse of an oppressed people drag you to your doom. To India - spare us your sympathy, your delegations and your Round Table conferences, to ourselves - purge yourself of every iota of the snobbery that keeps you aloof from the native African - turn native. In this country you are nothing more and nothing less than the native. Thicker than ties of blood are the ties of slavery - one common destiny, one common tyrant, one common hell of tyranny ordains that the two of you shall merge and give battle to the oppressor as one."²³

There was considerable thinking along these lines in the Indian community. Student and worker talk shops had emerged - the Non-European United Front and the Communist Party began making radical incisions into traditional political thinking. The escalation of industry in Durban, where half the Indian population is concentrated, resulted in the rapid movement of Africans into the urban areas, and in the absence of housing or public squatting land, they began living with Indians, as tenants or sub-tenants, but effectively as neighbours. There were tensions, but above all, there was improved understanding and relationships. Most important of all, Africans, debarred from trade union rights, were being drawn into Indian trade unions and gaining from both their experience and the success of their negotiations with the employers. Many of the new trade union organisers were drawn from the radicalised Non-European United Front and the Nationalist Bloc within the Indian Congress.

In 1946, the Anti-Asiatic Land Act was passed, segregating Indians into ghettos. The Nationalist Bloc captured political leadership of the Indian Congress and launched the third massive passive resistance campaign against the United Party government. The timing was internationally opportune, and the campaign exploded racial discrimination in South Africa into a world problem. For all the strength and self-confidence it engendered, Indians realised that their 'class formation', to be truly effective, had to include the other Black oppressed groups.

The realisation had come none too soon. The whites had sustained a vicious campaign for the repatriation and, failing that,

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the segregation of the Indians for almost half a century. As early as 1896, whites had gathered together their "Zulu" domestics and employees and marched them to the docks to repel the new Indian arrivals, among whom was Gandhi. The campaign had been pushed to a new peak during the 1948 elections, when many candidates used extreme anti-Indian tirades to get into parliament. *The Indian was projected as the scapegoat in popular opinion and it was easy to unleash African frustrations - already at flash point due to intolerable slum conditions, scarcity, high prices and low wages - on to them.* And then, in January 1949, Africans carried out a violent attack against Indians on the streets of Durban.

At the same time, Africans and Indians were living cordially in mixed neighbourhoods and the attack came not from the Indians' African neighbours (who, indeed, as inquest records show, attempted to protect the Indians), but mainly from the dock workers. Single men, imprisoned in compounds at the end of each day's work and housed some eight miles away from the nearest Black neighbourhood, they had virtually no social contact with the

Indians. Armies of men, formed in the labour compounds, were allowed to leave their work and to march unrestrained through Durban, attacking and looting, while the police did little to hinder them. Was there, perhaps a connection between the police inactivity and one politician's (earlier) public statement? Said Senator Peterson: "Personally, I would like to solve the Indian problem by shooting them, but a man cannot lay himself open to a charge of murder . . ."²⁴ Had he, and others like him, taken advantage of the late afternoon scuffle and fanned it into a conflagration?

The Commission of Inquiry, subsequently established, was boycotted by the accredited African and Indian organisations - the Indian and African Congresses - represented jointly by a common council, the trade unions and the combined Native Location Advisory Board - they realised it would be racist in orientation. Not unexpectedly, the commission did not confirm the organised nature of the violence - but it did recognise the relations between the two groups had been cordial before the outburst. That cordiality continued as the Indian and African congresses reaffirmed, in joint statements, that "There was no movement afoot of Africans against Indians, that Africans as a whole were not hostile against Indians as a whole," that there were Africans who had in fact "sacrificed their lives for Indians."²⁵

The riots brought the two Congresses to a sharp realisation that matters had been left to run an unguided course for too long. And it was with the fourth and largest passive resistance campaign that the alliances which already had been forged between the African and Indian congresses took a far more meaningful momentum. In January 1952, Dr Moroka and Walter Sisulu agreed to inaugurate a campaign for the repeal of six unjust laws - the Pass Laws, the Stock Limitation Acts, the Bantu Authorities Act, the Group Areas Act, the Voters Representative Act and the Suppression of Communism Act. In June 1952, the Port Elizabeth Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign began, in which 52 people were arrested, among them Nelson Mandela. Some three years later, (March 1955) the

South African Congress of Trade Unions came into existence, with around 20 000 members. Durban became one of its strongholds, with joint Indian and African involvement. The Nationalist Government responded quickly to the Congress Alliance and by 1960 had banned both the political and trade union congresses.

In the '70s, Black Consciousness which partnered the Congress in formal opposition politics outside the system of apartheid emerged as the most powerful challenge to white domination and had a significant effect on consolidating a Black class consciousness. Unlike the Congress Movement, which had worked through "racially" affiliated organisations, the Black Consciousness bodies – the South African Students Organisation (SASO), the Black People's Convention (BPC), the Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU), the Black Community Programmes (BCP) – were completely integrated. A large number of other supportive bodies, youth, women, cultural, church, theatre, etc., intensified and spread Black solidarity throughout the country. *The massive Durban strikes of the '70s' were reported as African strikes; in fact, they involved a high level of Indian participation, reflecting a Black rather than an African consciousness.*²⁶

Today, the bulwarks of white domination are the homelands and the group areas, and they are also its nemesis. Created to fragment Black solidarity, they are concentrations of irrepressible Black frustrations which must burst the dykes. Ironically, the security and longevity of apartheid lies not so much in the South African police, but in the black government appointees who "govern" the Black people and who are projected through an elaborate system of government-controlled media as representatives of their peoples. Take the Kwa Zulu leader, who operates not only through the Kwa Zulu Legislative Assembly but through a second front, the tribally based Inkatha, and has, unsuccessfully, tried to develop a third, the Black Alliance, of Africans and Indians and Coloureds. The intention is to give him a credibility beyond that of the government imposed homeland administration. Inkatha, however, predictably

operates as a reactionary tribal force, ultimately servicing white domination.

But little of this appears to deter the "liberal" establishments, both local and international, from anchoring their hopes in the Kwa Zulu leader. He continues to be seen as a bastion of enlightened capitalism in the face of excessive radicalism. That any radicalising twist given to black apartheid institutions should come from Natal (where Kwa Zulu is geographically located) is no accident. It is a reflection of Afro-Indian tangle that has characterised Natal and made each indispensable to the other. However, it is inconceivable that tribal formations can contribute to Black solidarity, they can only sponsor tribalism, inhibit Black class consciousness and

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... (The Black Consciousness position ... uses race, not to dominate, but to liberate the country from race.

preserve white domination, as they are intended to do. The government thus gives large latitude to anti-apartheid rhetoric within tribal formations, to give them credibility and to confuse the Black masses. The banning of practically all Black Consciousness organisations in 1977 left the "tribalists" in almost complete control, but *there is far more to Black Consciousness than audible articulations – there is the whole grinding experience of unfreedom in a social climate which has become highly sensitive to freedom.*

The present political onslaught on the government is at least two-pronged from the United Democratic Front and the National Forum. The 80s saw the emergence of a considerably strengthened Natal Indian Congress and the re-emergence of the Transvaal Indian Congress, which have made common cause with a large number of Coloured and African communities, religious and labour organisations, under the umbrella of the United Democratic Front; while the National Forum is a regrouping of Black Consciousness movements.

Conclusion

THE system of indentured labour based the economy of Natal on slavery and depressed Black wage rates. The effect of this survives to this day and Natal continues to have the lowest Black wage rate in the Republic. More important, the system laid the basis for economic competition within the labour ranks between indentured Indians and "free" African workers, the potential conflict being aggravated by cultural differences. Employers, anxious to counteract the emergence of labour solidarity between the two labour contingents, exploited the situation further through segregation and projection of adverse stereotypes of each to the other, finally provoking the 1949 riots. Progressive urbanisation, on the other hand, identified Afro-Indian interests, and from the end of the Second World War, these began to be expressed in common industrial and political action, laying the basis for common consciousness. Homeland and township governments, and the prevailing repression of all Black Consciousness, is a direct response to that "class" consciousness.

The introduction of indentured labour in 1860, and the position of the two labour contingents against each other, complicated the line of conflict between Black labour and white capital. Marxist theorists have looked for and found white workers and black bourgeoisie and have, on the basis of this, conceptualised a class rather than a race conflict in South Africa. In South Africa, class and race have become exactly superimposed upon each other, so that race is class in the sense that access to resources is finally determined by race. It is precisely because the line of conflict is between two races that any expectation of any evolutionary solution within the apartheid system of white polity ultimately sharing resources equitably with the disenfranchised or under-franchised Blacks, is futile. This is the relevance of the Black Consciousness position which uses race, not to dominate, but to liberate the country from race. It must, by the sheer size of the oppressed race, also go a long way towards liberating the country from the domination of resources by a class.

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13. *Ibid*, p.84.
14. *Ibid*, p.74.
15. 'The Chinese Labour Question', *Handy Notes Imperial South Africa Association*, n d, pp.16f.
16. See, for example, the contributions to A Reuck and J Knight, *Caste and Race*, London 1967.
17. The official British censor, John Fryer, looked for a hierarchy of castes in 1670 and did not find it: "As the society now stands . . . the place due to each community is not easily distinguishable, nor is any common principle of precedence recognized by the people themselves by

which to grade the castes. Excepting the Brahmin at one end and the admittedly degraded castes like the Haleyas at the other the members of a large proportion of the intermediate castes think, or profess to think, that their caste is better than their neighbours' and should be ranked accordingly."

Martin, commenting on the 1901 Mysore census, reported: "The people who assisted me in making up this account, could not with certainty refer each caste to its class, for they never had bestowed pains to enquire concerning the various claims of such low persons." (G S Ghurye, *Caste and Class in India*, Bombay, 1956.)

18. G S Ghurye, *Caste, Class and Occupation*, Bombay, 1961, p.13.
19. *Ibid*, p.25.
20. Sir Charles Metcalfe, in his evidence to the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company in 1832, stated: "The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything that they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last within themselves where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution . . . but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves: . . . if a country remains for a series of years the scene of continued pillage and massacre, so that the villages cannot be inhabited, the scattered villagers nevertheless return whenever the power of peaceable possession revives. A generation may pass

away but the succeeding generation will return. The sons will take the places of their fathers, the same site for the villagers, the same position for the houses, the same lands will be occupied by the descendants of those who were driven out when the village was depopulated; and it is not a trifling matter that will drive them out, for they will often maintain their post through times of disturbance and convulsion, and acquire strength sufficient to resist pillage and oppression with success . . . all action in union with a common interest as regards the Government, and adjusting their own separate interests among themselves according to established usage" (Ghurye, 1956, *op cit*, pp. 24-5.)

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Commemoration service in Merebank, Durban for guerillas killed in the 1982 Maputo Raid.

Thirty years of silent murder . . . the Asbestos tragedy

by DR GOMOLEMO MOKAE



A senior management official at a South African asbestos mine made the following remark about Black miners: "They are like plastic syringes. You use them and when they are damaged you throw them back to the homelands."

The South African mining industry certainly has no regard for Black life. Quite knowledgeable of the deleterious effects of asbestos exposure on one's health it deliberately exposed countless Black mineworkers and their families – men, women and children – to this so-called "magic mineral".

Internationally, confirmed employer knowledge about the dangers of asbestos dates back to the late 1800s.

In 1949, Dr G W H Scheepers, an American physician, described conditions in South Africa's asbestos mines. He wrote as follows in the annals of the New York Academy of Science: "I found young children trampling down fluffy amosite (brown) asbestos."

"X-rays revealed several to have asbestosis with cor pulmonale (failure of the right side of the heart) before the age of twelve."

"Why Dr Sluis-Cremer (a prominent South African medical researcher) did not see them ten years later is fairly evident. There was probably not one of them still alive."

"In the valley where the mill was located, asbestos dust rolled through like the morning mist. Even the food in the local hotel was gritty with dust." ("Health danger was ignored by prospectors in 'asbestos rush': *The Star*: 23 August 1984)

Murder

We can therefore safely say that the industry knew of the dangers of asbestos

dust since at least the late fifties, but despite this, chose to subordinate worker's health to capitalistic "ideals". To it maximizing profit is more important than people's health – especially if those people happen to be Black.

In a presidential address to the National Anti-Asbestos Conference called by the BLACK ALLIED MINING AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS' UNION (BAMCWU) and held on 29 May - 1 June 1985, Letsatsi Mosala summed up the position: "We believe that more than thirty years ravage of Asbestos-Related Diseases (ARDs) has not been given the attention it deserves by those in authority. We are convinced that the non-protection of Black workers from occupational diseases is a deliberate act in line with the exploitation, oppression and human degradation of Black people. The system of exploitation and oppression in this country does not care about the conditions under which Black workers slave for its maintenance."

In residential areas near asbestos mines such as Mmafele, Bewaarskloof, Penge and Kromellenboog asbestos dumps

were left uncovered. In some cases, Black children unwittingly played with the dangerous mineral from the dumps. The coalition of the government and the mining magnates could not be bothered to cover the dumps up.

Carolyn Dempster describes the result: "(W)hen the wind blows the blue dust swirls innocuously through the narrow valleys of this hilly region, spills over on the roads and is ground to a finer fibre powder by bare feet or car tyres – making it more lethal." ("SA could face asbestos scandal involving 500 000 people": *The Star*: 15 August 1984)

Some villagers, ignorant of the hazards of asbestos, built schools and houses out of asbestos mud obtained from the dumps. Wrote *The Star* on 25 August 1984: "The sprawling township (of Mmafele) is experiencing a building boom, with bright blue houses mushrooming throughout the valley. A new and sophisticated touch lies in the plastering of the houses with asbestos fibre, leaving a smooth finish which can be painted if the homeowner so wishes."

The government obviously did not view this in a serious light. The only step it took to curb this was to issue an order prohibiting the making of bricks by the villagers from asbestos (note how the real criminals, the mine bosses, are not legislated against!).

In an incredibly cynical statement, the Government Mining Engineer's office said that it would not prosecute these brickmakers. Commented *The Star* in an editorial entitled "Dumps of Death" on 20 September 1984: "We would think not! . . . The hapless brickmakers, many of whom will die from ARDs, were 'let off' because they acted out of ignorance. The ones who did not act in ignorance were the mines. They knew the risks . . . Seeing the GME brought up the question of prosecuting somebody, what about the mines? Why have they not been prosecuted? . . ."

In terms of the Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act of 1965, no mine owner may leave or transfer his mine without ensuring that it and the dumps do not pose an environmental hazard. There is ample evidence that this has not been done and that the mine owners have never been prosecuted. ("Bewaarskloof blues can carry you away:" *The Star*: 23 August 1984).

Letsatsi Mosala finds this negligence infuriating: "A question can be asked why leave kids to be exposed to these killer dumps, but of course the answer is only too obvious. After all, it is Black kids, and if birth control methods don't work, if police bullets don't work, use the undetected method of murder, which will not invite condemnation and the wrath of the international community."

Cover-up

The white government and the asbestos industry have inexorably tried to underplay the seriousness of asbestos exposure. In September 1969, Carel de Wet, then Minister of Health, told the public that the "so-called dangerous effects" of asbestos on the human body were greatly exaggerated, based on insufficient knowledge or misrepresentations, and calculated to cause sensation.

In 1977, the then Minister of Mines, Fanie Botha, was quoted as saying: "The results of the stricter, more modern and

effective dust-control measures and technological aids will become apparent in ten or more years time." He predicted that South Africa would see a considerable drop in the cases of lung disease linked to asbestos exposure.

There has even been a cover-up operation in the form of suppression of results of crucial scientific research. This research linked asbestos exposure to lung cancer. Details of this cover-up were given in the noted international science journal *New Scientist* in its 22 April 1982 issue:

"In June 1978 South Africa's mining companies were presented with something of a problem. Dr Leslie Irwig, a researcher at the National Research Institute of Occupational Diseases (since re-named the National Centre for Occupational Health), decided that on a forthcoming visit to New York he would read not one, but two papers to a scientific conference on the control of environmental hazards, organised by the New York Academy of Sciences."

Dr Irwig's first paper, the *New Scientist* stated, was on the risks workers in South Africa's blue and brown asbestos mines face of developing the debilitating lung disease, asbestosis. *New Scientist* attested that the paper reached "the entirely uncontroversial" conclusion that when it comes to causing asbestosis, the risks from blue and brown asbestos are more or less the same.

"The other paper Irwig proposed to read was more of a hot potato. Called 'Mortality from Asbestos Related Disease in South Africa', this paper mentioned the word cancer and, on the basis of careful analysis of available data, concluded that people living in asbestos-producing areas (but not necessarily working in the asbestos industry) died more often than usual from cancer," said the *New Scientist*.

This reputed science journal then went on



Letsatsi Mosala (left) and Mbulelo Rakwena (right) at the Anti-Asbestos Conference.

to reveal the connivance of the Department of Health, the mining industry, the South African Medical Research Council (MRC) and the National Centre for Occupational Health in the suppression of Dr Irwig's papers.

However, the above is not an isolated incident. The Johannesburg daily, *The Star* also exposed a similar, but more sinister cover-up: "When the first direct links between asbestos dust and the fatal lung cancer, mesothelioma, were established as long ago as 1958, it is alleged that the asbestos industry stepped in to sponsor medical research – and that the findings of the report were held back from the public for at least three years." (Carolyn Dempster: "Asbestos Hazards 'Covered up' claims Surgeon": *The Star*: 31 October 1983)

Quoting "a Johannesburg surgeon involved in mesothelioma research at the time" – whose name could not be published for professional reasons – *The Star* forwarded the reasons for the asbestos industry's involvement in medical research and holding back the report "for at least three years."

These were, among others:

- (a) to "buy" time to improve asbestos dust controls on the mines and avoid a major scandal,

- (b) to keep the public at large in the dark as to the hazards of exposure to asbestos dust, and because
- (c) "hundreds of South Africans with mesothelioma who could not provide proof of any direct contact with the asbestos mining industry were unable to claim compensation. Mesothelioma was only added to the scheduled industrial diseases of the Workmen's Compensation Act in 1979."

The industry adopted the American system of the Threshold Limit Value (TLV)* as an index of safety. This system was aptly described by James Keogh: "If you poison your boss a little bit each day it is called murder; if your boss poisons you a little each day it is called TLV".

It may be added that it is commonplace for ARDs to be misdiagnosed as tuberculosis (TB) in South Africa.

BAMCWU has initiated a concerted effort to lift this heavy asbestos veil. The Union launched its Anti-Asbestos Campaign on 13 October 1984.

ARDs

There are six forms of asbestos fibres, of which the main types are: chrysotile (white), crocidolite (blue) and amosite (brown). Inhalation of dust from all these three main types of fibres is associated with asbestosis, a chronic disease of the lung which invariably leads to gross respiratory disability. Asbestosis is a disease of occupational or para-occupational exposure only.

There is also a causal rather than casual relationship between exposure to asbestos dust and two forms of lung cancer. They are mesothelioma, a fatal cancer of the outer lining of the lung and bronchogenic carcinoma, a cancer of the lung pipes (bronchii) which is really an advanced stage of asbestosis. The incidence of mesothelioma is more environmental than occupational: it can be contracted even after a day of contact with asbestos.

Asbestos dust exposure can either be environmental or industrial. This means that it is not only workers in the asbestos industry who stand the risk of developing the above three ARDs, but also people residing near these industries.

In warning about the Northern Cape's "killer towns", one of the original group of doctors which researched mesothelioma remarked: "Every person who lives, or who has lived, in Kuruman and Prieska is a potential mesothelioma victim. There are thousands who have lived in Kuruman who have died, and will die, because of exposure to asbestos." (Carolyn Dempster: "Doctor warns of Cape's killer towns": *The Star*: 31 October 1983).

It is their insidious nature that makes ARDs particularly dreaded: the clinical signs of ARDs or related diseases may develop many years after exposure to asbestos had ceased – in some instances as long as fifty years later.

The December 1982 edition of the *South African Medical Journal* contained an article which asserted: "As the current standard in South Africa is in the range well known from the USA and UK data to be associated with significant ARDs, and the lag period between asbestos exposure and the onset of the disease is as long as 50 years, it can be confidently predicted that we in South Africa will continue to see ARDs in abundance over the next half-century."

The "magic mineral", "wonder mineral" and "miracle rock", as asbestos has variously been labelled, is widely used in industries such as those involved in the manufacture of textiles, insulation material, roofing and cars. It runs like a common thread between these multiple industries.

There is a proliferating international campaign against the use of this "ravaging lung monster in its three shades" (with apologies to Letsatsi Mosala). Its use has been banned in Sweden, Norway and Holland.

South Africa

The general tendency in South Africa has been to "regulate" the amount of exposure to asbestos dust rather than to totally ban it. Given that South Africa is the world's third largest producer of asbestos (after the USSR and Canada), having asbestos mines which are functioning both in the Northern Transvaal and the North Western Cape, it is not hard to find the reasons for Pretoria's reluctance to ban asbestos.

South Africa is one of the world's largest producers of blue asbestos (considered by some to be the most hazardous of the six types of asbestos fibres) and is the world's sole producer of brown asbestos.

Predictably, because of its vested interest in the longevity of apartheid-capitalism, the white government has constantly turned a blind eye to those sections of the asbestos industry which overshoot the legal limit of asbestos exposure.

In August 1984 a Johannesburg daily uncovered the failure of the authorities to charge Penge mine for overshooting the exposure limit: "Penge asbestos mine-workers have been exposed to high and illegal levels of hazardous asbestos dust since 1976, yet the mine has not been charged with contravention of regulations by (the) Government Engineer." (Carolyn Dempster: "Penge not charged for illegal fibre levels": *The Star*: 17 August 1984)

The newspaper disclosed that it had acquired, among others documents, an inspection report by one JHE Celliers, a district inspector for the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs. The report was dated 8 November 1983.

Dempster revealed: "Just two months prior to the inspection, the mine's ventilation officer recorded spot fibre samples of 134 f/ml (fibres per millilitre) and 130 f/ml in particularly dusty areas of the mine mill – 65 times higher than the limit. The information is contained in an internal dust report." These dust reports were dated 28-29 September 1983. (See Philip van Niekerk's article in the *Rand Daily Mail* dated 8 August 1984)

Until the end of 1983, the limit was 5 f/ml: it was reduced to 2 f/ml in 1984. In 1987, the limit was lowered to 1 f/ml with both the Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company (Gefco) and Msauli Aspes Beperk saying that they are committed to this limit. Gefco (responsible for the mining of blue and brown asbestos) and Msauli (responsible for mining white asbestos) are both subsidiaries of Gencor.

Notwithstanding this revelation of illegal high exposure, dating back to 1976, RSJ du Toit, a government mining engineer, had the guts to state the "conditions in the asbestos mines of South Africa are under effective control." He said this, and much more, in his letter to "The British Society

for Social Responsibility in Science, Work Hazards Group," dated 13 October 1977.

Pat Hart, the executive chairman of Gefco and Msauli, makes the following confession: "In 1977 the dust level at Penge was 45 fibres a millilitre of air. Ten years before it had been 65 f/ml and in the fifties the count was in the hundreds." ("Mine says critics simplify issues": *City Press*: 9 July 1989) Hart proudly adds that "the dust level at Penge stands at an average of 1,2 f/ml . . ." - above the present statutory limit!

Hart maintains: "Far from being 'death traps', Penge and the other asbestos mines are safe, productive work-places in areas where there are very few other employment opportunities. No doubt there is still room for improvement . . ."

It is such irregularities which prompted BAMCWU to campaign for the closing of the asbestos mines, not the regulation of exposure. The racist government and the moneyocratic mine bosses cannot be relied upon to regulate their self-set exposure limit.

BAMCWU

BAMCWU's Motsomi Mokhine remarked in his input paper to the Union's anti-Asbestos Conference: "This state-employer alliance was . . . demonstrated in 1983 when the state and Gencor (a mining company) released public figures denoting that thirteen workers contracted ARDs at the Penge mine, whereas the mine manager's internal report circulated among shareholders said there were seventy nine."

The very same Penge mine has been a battleground between the mining magnates and BAMCWU. On 2 July 1984, about 1 700 Black workers at this mine went on strike over a least three issues, viz.:-

- (a) a pay increase to at least R10,00 a shift;
- (b) recognition of their union, BAMCWU; and
- (c) health and safety.

The strike brought the disparity in the compensation paid out for occupational diseases on the mines to the fore.

It is not surprising to find that white workers - those labour aristocrats who benefit so much from apartheid-capitalism - have majestic remuneration from the Workmen's Compensation Fund. They receive a lump sum payment of R24,000, plus R400 per month pension for life. Black workers receive a meagre lump sum payment of R1 790, with no pension whatsoever. This is so despite the greater risk they run of contracting occupational diseases.

The Penge strike epitomized this disparity, since there had been extensive reports in the media of the high incidence of ARDs (referred to as "gas" by the workers) among Black workers at the mine.

The Penge mine management was intransigent. It would not listen to the worker's grievances. On 10 July 1984 the 1 700 workers were dismissed. But they refused to leave their compounds, still entertaining the hope that management would talk to them. This was not to be. Instead, a new "dispute" was created - a unique situation where striking workers refused to leave their compounds.

Management took the matter to court - to get the workers evicted - and, on 25 July 1984 the Supreme Court ruled against the workers and their union. BAMCWU was ordered to pay the costs. This significantly stretched the limited resources of the union since it also had to offer relief services to the workers.

Perhaps it is worth noting that the very same Penge company that refused workers reasonable salary increases had made a R25-million pre-tax profit in 1983, which was a 25% increase on pre-tax profits for the previous year.

AZAPO

BAMCWU's Mbulelo Rakwena remarks that Penge was the first asbestos mine which BAMCWU organised and "We



The late Dr Abubaker Asvat.

found it odd that so many of our members were complaining of chest diseases. Some were being laid off as a result of these problems. Because of concern over the problem, the union commissioned AZAPO's health secretariat to conduct research into the usual chest complaints."

"It then emerged that we were dealing with ARDs. The hospital had told our membership that they had TB but, when the results of the research were presented, it emerged that we were dealing with a much bigger problem."

"Only then did the union expand its horizons. We started looking into the asbestos problem locally and internationally. We also started to inform our membership of the submissions made by the doctors and our own study."

Rakwena emphasizes that the campaign has since been taken to the North Western Cape and that BAMCWU is consulting with community-based organisations in heightening awareness about ARDs. He adds: "Written information should be made available but we are dealing with communities where we still have to use a lot of oral communication."

Interim Measures

Despite BAMCWU's undisputed successes in its campaign, the resilience of

the mining bosses is all too apparent.

The Union's determination as reflected in the following words of Mokhine is equally apparent: "... (L)et us note that workers constitute the largest group that relates to asbestos mining and product manufacturing. They also constitute the largest group without a direct say in the volume, usage and control of asbestos. It stands to reason therefore that all decisions pertaining to their health in these industries must be made with their consent... Let me hasten to add... that as has been demonstrated by members of our Union, workers feel that all forms of asbestos, both commercial and non-commercial, are carcinogenic and only a total ban on its use will ensure complete protection against its carcinogenic effect."

The primary focus of the BAMCWU campaign is made clear in their Position Paper on Asbestos adopted on 11 October 1984: "... (O)ur campaign shall not be geared at petitioning the government and mining houses. It shall be geared at alerting the entire community to the dangers they are subjected... It shall be geared at making the entire rural masses aware of looming death as a result of the system's intransigence... Our campaign shall be effected in the compounds, in the villages, in the offices, in the streets, in the townships. We shall pamphleteer, picket, lobby and hold mass meetings..."

The preparedness of the capitalists to minimize exposure of the workers to this dangerous mineral, let alone close the mines, is doubtful. World production of asbestos has increased from 675 000 tons in 1940 to well over 5 million tons today.

In an editorial entitled "A quality of horror" the *Rand Daily Mail* commented on 6

August 1984: "... (I)t is a basic function of government to take steps to neutralize these major health hazards. This extends to ensuring that private enterprise, in its search for profit, is not allowed to inflict damage and death to the community."

AZAPO's former Secretary for Health, the late Dr Abubaker Asvat, proposed the following interim measures as a prelude to the closure of the asbestos mines:

- (a) reducing the size of permissible fibre to 1 f/ml;
- (b) disposal of the dumps;
- (c) proper work clothes and respirators for workers;
- (d) improved living conditions for workers;
- (e) compensation for Black workers suffering from "gas" to be increased to a lump sum payment of R15 000 plus a monthly pension;
- (f) regular and efficient medical supervision of all workers.

BAMCWU's strategies include the commissioning of surveys (with the full utilization of professional services whether legal, engineering, medical or scientific), the training of shop stewards in health and safety, entering into health and safety agreements with management whenever possible, demanding information about work hazards and their prevention, appointing physicians to give second opinions, thereby gaining access to company medical files, representing workers at fatal accident enquiries and demanding representation on the Workman's Compensation Commission.

While most of the AZAPO-BAMCWU interim demands remain unaddressed, some of them have been acceded to - asbestos dumps are being covered, the

size of permissible fibre has been reduced to that recommended and stricter regulations for asbestos mines have been passed.

The use of synthetic fibres such as glass-wool and ceramic fibres such as rockwool as substitutes for asbestos in building and insulation, motor cars, furniture and packaging is on the increase. On pages 319 ff of his book *Asbestos: Medical and Legal Aspects*, Barry I Castleman (who was refused a visa by the South African authorities to attend and address BAMCWU's National Anti-Asbestos Conference) lists a variety of asbestos substitutes.

Everite, South Africa's leading maker of asbestos cement products, announced that it would replace asbestos with natural organic fibre (cellulose) in all building materials which formerly contained asbestos, except asbestos cement piping. Everite's parent company is the Swiss firm of Eternit. (*The Star* 21 August 1987)

Socialism

It is sobering to note that the ancient Greeks used asbestos to produce a wrapping for bodies which were to be cremated so that the ashes could be retained!

The World Health Organisation has defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease and infirmity." Clearly only people themselves can decide when this definition is fulfilled. This means that society must be controlled from the bottom up by the Black working class.

Despite the emphasis on worker representation, worker-generated information and worker initiative in the resolution of problems by BAMCWU and AZAPO, we will not fully begin to eradicate the health hazards of asbestos until we have a socialist society - one that puts health before wealth. To modify some famous words: "BLACK WORKERS OF AZANIA UNITE! YOU HAVE YOUR HEALTH TO WIN!" ■

* The TLV is the total value of airborne concentrations of substances which represent conditions under which it is believed that nearly all workers may be repeatedly exposed day after day without adverse effect.



AZANIA SALUTES TOSH!

by Frank Talk Staff Writers

MARK OF THE BEAST

*"I see the mark of the beast on their ugly faces,
I see them congregating in evil places,
Me say me know dem a wicked Lordy Lordy,
Me know dem a wicked"*

So wrote Winston Hubert McIntosh, known to us as PETER TOSH, in 1975. He wrote these lines after being beaten with a rifle butt, his ribs broken by policeman who broke into his house while he was having a party. He was handcuffed to a stretcher for hours before the police allowed him to be treated.

The police successfully delivered a message to the masses in this 1975 incident: any militant youth, even a star, could be laid flat by the state.

Tosh's reply, almost as soon as he was on his feet, was to pen "Mark of the Beast" and show how brutally clear he was about the implacable nature of the enemy. He also released his now famous anthem for ganja, "Legalize It". These sides were immediately banned from Jamaican radio and became instant hits.

Others felt the mark of the beast as well. In 1976, two days before Bob Marley and the Wailers agreed to perform in a "Smile Jamaica" concert, seven gunmen went out to his house and shot up the place wounding several people including Bob, whom they were apparently intending to murder.

Bob had been under heavy pressure to do the show by the government of Michael Manley's People's National Party (PNP) and Manley had scheduled his bid for re-election two weeks after the concert.

Edward Seaga's (widely known as "CIAga") Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) was blamed for the shooting, but all indicators are that the PNP actually collaborated as well. For instance, PNP soldiers guarding Bob's home mysteriously disappeared minutes before the ambush. And not surprisingly, Yankee imperialism had its grubby hands in the incident: at the retreat Bob was secreted to by the Manley government after the shooting, one of the few people allowed in as "film crew" turned out to be Carl Colby, the son of the then-CIA director William Colby.

Two years later in 1978, a "Peace Concert" was held in Kingston to seal a truce between the PNP-JLP gangs. In "Peace Treaty" on the *Mama Afrika* album, Tosh commented on the concert in his usual acerbic style:

*"When they signed the peace treaty
I told them it wouldn't worky-worky...
Now this one have a gun
And that one have a gun...
All who signed the peace treaty
Now resting in peace in the cemetery."*

The subject matter of this song contains history, but it also presents a broader insight: namely, that an exploding contradiction (such as a society engulfed in intense civil conflict between competing ruling powers) cannot be resolved by cynical - or even earnest - calls for peace (shades of Pietermaritzburg!). Thinking it's so is disarming, and a mistake generally restricted to the masses: "Because of the words, I say, innocent people shouldna dead."

Tosh himself performed at the concert and took the opportunity in front of a crowd of 3 000 to dress down the entire Jamaican ruling elite, Manley and CIAga included, who fidgeted



in the front rows while Tosh lectured on the iniquities of the political "shitstem", smoking an outlawed cigar-size spliff.

The Peace Concert was widely hailed at the time as a great success - at the end of the evening, Bob had actually brought together CIAga and Manley for a handshake in front of all of Jamaica. But this was a cruel joke even as it was occurring. In the next period the gang wars continued, and all but one of those who helped to put the concert together - Bob Marley, Jacob Miller, and the leaders of the rival JLP and PNP gangs, Claudie Massop and Bucky Marshall - met untimely deaths.

Within a month of the concert, the Beast once again sunk its teeth into Tosh. He was attacked on the street by police and once again assaulted.

Mikey Chung gave this account: "I was standing with him smoking a spliff by my car in Kingston when a cop came up and accosted him, saying 'Give me dis'. We thought that he was joking, cops do that down there sometimes for a spliff. Peter laughed, said 'No!' The cop attacked him, then squad cars pulled up, cops got out and started beating on him, took out their guns, beat him on his

head right out there on the street, then hauled him down to the police station and beat him almost to death down there."

A British reporter later queried Tosh: "You really think they meant to kill you?" In a prophetic reply, Tosh said: "If you got eight to ten guys beating the inside of you whole with wood and iron and destructive elements for over an hour what the do you think they intend to do??! What do they think I was made of? Wood or stone? They got orders to do that seen? Cos of the thing I think I talk, like what I talk at the Peace Concert to Government ministers and so on which them don't like. The police take upon their head to show that is wrong, wrong speaking on behalf of poor people, people who have been humiliated on behalf of the system... Well, I have to speak out against that and if I wasn't using my guitar and my lips in records I would be using some other heavy things to fight against a system that tends to fight against me." Reporter: "What other things?" Tosh: "Any other things! Flashing lightning, thundering gun, rolling earthquake, anything! Because the shitstem that, it just tends to incriminate the youth illegally; a youth who just comes out of school and doesn't know anything but because him poor and living in the ghetto and wear little tear up pants they come and stand him up against the streetside and humiliate him. And maybe he's thinking how he can get the next meal legally, without incriminating himself, where him gonna get a job, where him gonna get some rest tonight, and they just brutalize him and lock him up in jail. And many youths die under similar circumstances that they even try to kill me."

Peter was once arrested in Miami airport, accused of "impersonating Peter Tosh." In West Germany, the government warned him if he sang "Legalize it" the dates would be cancelled and he'd be financially responsible and put in jail (reportedly the first such government censorship threat since Hitler); he sang the song anyway the last night, spliff in hand.

At a 1984 concert in Swaziland,

thousands of people who had travelled long distances to get to the concert were left at the gate unable to enter. In the middle of the concert Peter called a "musician's strike", saying: "Calling all promoters, a cyaam (can't) ah stage, it sound like no sense that the people outside cannot afford to pay to come in, and they're standing out there just getting the fragrance of the music." He left the stage, returning ten minutes later to denounce the bankruptcy of the Swaziland regime! "It sound to me like I'm down in North Carolina or down in Texas. I and I don't come to support this ancient 15th century colonialism which depresses I and I integrity, I dignity... I want to know if the promoter open the gates YET!" The gates were opened.

Shortly before his murder, Peter released the politically provocative album *No Nuclear War* and a world tour was planned. The tracks on *No Nuclear War* include "Vampire" and "Fight Apartheid."

Tosh was asked by a reporter from *Reggae Beat*, "In the song, 'Vampire', who is the vampire?" and he replied: "Well, you know of them. They are the ones who suck the blood of the innocent ones. Invisible vampires, because according to technology, vampires don't come out and bite your neck anymore. They cause a plane to crash or something destructive to happen that blood have to spill and those invisible vampires will still get their meals. It shall be eradicated."

On the eve of the tenth anniversary of the death of Bantu Steve Biko, a stunned and outraged Azania heard that the Vampire had martyred Peter Tosh.*

Peter's martyrdom brought back the words he uttered when an interviewer told him in 1983 "You are considered to be a controversial person". Peter interrupted, "So was Jesus! I man get a job fe do, and I have to do it with the method I know, the tools at my disposal. Dem say I aggressive, but Jesus did gentle and dem get rid of him so who am I that they should not try to crucify."

"Investigate reporting" has not exact-

ly flowered about the execution of Peter Tosh, but this much can be pieced together from newspaper accounts and eyewitnesses:

One of the reasons why Tosh was in Jamaica on September 11, 1987 was to attend a court hearing in a civil claim he had launched against the government which had been repeatedly adjourned. This claim arose out of an incident with a customs officer at the Kingston airport early in 1987. A fight broke out over a customs matter and Tosh's pregnant wife was beaten, causing her to miscarry.

The night of the killing, Peter was at his home in Barbican, a hilly suburb of Kingston, with his wife Marlene and three friends. At about 20h00 the dogs barked, announcing visitors at the gate outside. Michael Robinson, a craft worker and friend of Tosh, went down to check and discovered Dennis Lobban (also known as "Leppo"), an occasional visitor and friend of Tosh and two other men in business suits.

They were led past the dogs, and once upstairs the three men demanded money of Tosh. When they drew guns, Tosh laughed at them. At some point, radio disc jockey "Free-I" and his wife walked in on the hold-up. Peter Tosh was beaten and pistol-whipped. Eventually all were forced at gunpoint to lie face down on the floor, and the gunmen proceeded to shoot everyone in the head. After shooting Peter, one was heard to say to the other, "Are you sure he's dead?" Then they shot him twice again.



Kingston, Jamaica.

Marlene said that she and the others survived headshot wounds by playing dead in the darkened house. After a brief ransacking, the killers left everyone for dead and escaped into the night on motorcycles of a type only available to the Jamaican police and political-party hitmen.

Peter was dead ten minutes later after being taken to the hospital by neighbours. An herbal healer and friend, Wilton "Doc" Brown, died instantly, and Free-I (Jeff Dixon) died several days later. The survivors of the assault were Santa Davis (the drummer in Peter's last band), Yvonne Dixon, Michael Robinson and Marlene Tosh.

Initially, the official story was that Tosh was killed in a random robbery attempt. Almost no one took this seriously. Literally everyone in Jamaica knew Peter, and any shooting had to be a very deliberate act. This story sounded even more ridiculous when two weeks after the execution, Marlene Tosh was shot on the street by unknown assailants as she was returning home. She was unharmed.

Eventually the Jamaican police announced that they were "working on the premise that (the murders) were the result of a feud between some of the victims and the gunmen."

Within hours of the murder, the identity of at least one of the killers, Leppo, was broadly known on the streets of Jamaica. For several years, Leppo had been in General Penitentiary. The government had recently paroled him from a life sentence, and on his release he turned up at Peter's place. Peter gave him money to help get him on his feet, as he often did for people who came to him in distress.

Rumours abound concerning this man, including the story that Peter and Leppo were arrested years ago at a roadblock by policeman who found a gun in their car. As the story goes, Leppo went to prison, and Peter was to take care of his family financially.

One must keep in mind that Peter was not one to duck and cover from the authorities, nor beg protection

from anyone. This rumour has done little to dispel widely held suspicions that "higher authorities" were ultimately responsible for the execution of Peter Tosh.

It was quite clear that there would be no safe haven for Leppo among the people. He turned himself in to the authorities in the next week; other suspects were arrested and later released. The word on the streets is that Leppo's business-suited accomplices were hired guns who probably immediately escaped to Miami.

After the Tosh murder, there was an increase of incidents of armed hold-up, dozen of break-ins and shake-downs of reggae musicians. Still more have been threatened. Leppo himself is rumoured to have been involved in more than one of these assaults. More ominous still, in the Jamaican community in Brooklyn, New York, two reggae artists were shot dead gangster-style in December 1987: Alton Irie, a DJ and Lui Lepke, a DJ/singer.

Tosh's execution occurred as Jamaica lurched into election time, a time traditionally marked by bloody gang warfare between the PNP and the JLP.

Tosh's whole *persona* rested on his refusal to be a doormat for anyone—in fact he was the one musician who steadfastly refused to have dealings with any of the Jamaican politicians.

CIAGA's featured comment to Tosh's murder was: "The shooting points to the need for intensifying the drive against the criminal element in our midst. "This in a country where there were 217 reported cases of people killed by the police in 1986 and which has one of the largest death row populations *per capita* in the world! And Manley chimed in: "This is a blot of shame on all Jamaicans..."

The upshot of Peter's murder is that the authorities are rid of a longtime enemy, and in his death they have a pretence to turn up the heat in laying down "heavy manners" on the masses.

Tosh's funeral was held in the Na-

tional Arena in Kingston. The roads from Kingston to Savanna-la-Mar were lined with people as the procession made its way to the burial site at Peter's mother's home.

And in occupied Azania, we were forcefully reminded of Mongane Serote's message about Bra Steve in the poem "Time has Run Out" as we commemorated the tenth anniversary of Steve's murder by the Vampire:

*"the bright eye of the night keeps whispering
when it paves and pages the clouds
it is knowledgeable about hideous nights
when it winks and keeps winking
like that
it is like a breathing burning wood—
i feel looked at
walking and silent like this in the night
in this strange land which mutes
screams."*

GET UP, STAND UP

On 9 October 1944, Peter Tosh was born in the aftermath of the 1938 Uprising and calls for self-determination from Britain.

The island of Jamaica in the West Indies was ruled by Spanish invaders between 1509 and 1655. These Spaniards exterminated the indigenous Arawak population and gradually introduced slaves from Africa.

In 1655 Jamaica became the first colony to be captured by a formal British expedition and in 1660 the British colonialists expelled the Spaniards. After an outbreak at Morant Bay in 1865 when nineteen whites were killed, a crown colony form of government was introduced in 1866 with only the Governor having real executive and legislative power.

In post-slavery Jamaica a strict racial hierarchy operated. Power was vested in the whites; their economic domination over Black Labour was attributed to some innate superiority of the white skin. Below the British planters were the urban Portuguese and Spanish Jews, and the energetic "mulattoes".

Paradoxically the "mulattoes", while challenging white hegemony, served also as the transmission belts for the values of the mother country.

A wide gulf separated the leisure of the Great Houses from the tea-meetings and "nine nights" of the poor. A social system based on gradations of colour and texture of hair was consolidated by the system of formal education, which ensured that only the children of the well-to-do had access to a set of systematic ideas. Through the medium of the English language the school system provided the early foundation for a layer of teachers, actors, farmers, lawyers, preachers and shopkeepers who serviced the plantation economy.

Even in their language the colonialists and their aspirants were to be distinguished from the working masses. Coming from differing African nations, the slaves had brought with them a cultural and linguistic diversity. This was reflected in a language which all Europeans, in their inability to understand it, denigrated as Pidgin English. In using and developing this language as a form of protest, the poor Blacks had to depend on the Bible as their only source of ideas. Yet, it was to this very Bible that the slavers resorted for justification for the place of Black people on earth. Characteristically, the institutions and religious expression of the poor took different forms from those of the established churches.

Thus it was not accidental that the Morant Bay revolt was led by a lay Baptist preacher, Paul Bogle.

As from 1884, "representative government" was restored in stages and in 1944 a House of Representatives elected by universal suffrage was introduced.

In the depressions and economic crises of the 1930's the conditions of the Jamaican poor were serious indeed. Threats and force had to be used on the workers - banana loaders worked in a line and were whipped with sticks if they broke the line. On top of this coercion the workers had to endure low pay, bad housing, malnutrition and disease. On the sugar

estates the workers were effectively slaves to the owners, unable to leave because of their poverty, nakedness and deprivation.

Organisations sprang up under these objective conditions among all classes of Blacks: from citizens' associations and welfare groups, like that of Norman Manley and Edna Swithenbank, to trade unions and friendly societies arising out of the ranks of the most exploited.

The weakest in terms of financial resources were the trade unions and friendly societies. Thus the educated and up-and-coming Blacks, in joining the workers' organisations, were able to restrain them with their reformism.

The violent and largely spontaneous uprisings of the poor in 1938, with armed confrontations in every parish, dominated Jamaican society between March and April. The petit bourgeoisie especially Norman Manley, before they understood the full significance of what was happening, still treated the poor with derision.

When the smoke of the rifles had dispersed and the weeping for the dead had ceased, the colonialists praised Manley. As the Governor put it:

"Perhaps no man on the island did more to re-establish confidence and restrict the growth of the disturbances than N W Manley KC who came forward almost immediately after the beginning of the disturbances. Employers had someone with whom to negotiate, who understood the conditions on the island and who knew what demands could be reasonably made and what could not. We think his services to the community as a whole were invaluable."

The Governor, of course, was refer-



ring to the white community. The mass struggles had threatened the whole plantation economy. And, in creating the PNP in 1938, Manley took advantage of, and reaped the benefit from, these mass struggles. The creation of a two-party democratic system in Jamaica grew out of the resistance of the masses over the period 1938-1962.

Sir Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley were engaged in strong competition which divided the working class with political warfare and escalating violence since 1949. Bustamante imprinted his authoritarian stamp on trade unionism in Jamaica by organizing workers under the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union and its political party, the JLP.

In 1949, Manley expelled the left from the PNP in the wake of McCarthyite anti-communist hysteria. He brought in his son Michael from abroad to organize the PNP's faction of the working class under the National Workers Union.

In 1959 Jamaica introduced full internal self-government and Norman Manley of the PNP became premier. On August 6, 1960 Jamaica became independent with full dominion status within the Commonwealth.

Jamaican society moved from formal colonialism to constitutional independence on the pretentious motto "out of many, one people." Such a myth of race harmony belied the lop-

sidedness of the economy and the unequal division of the social product.

As Jamaica lurched from British crown colony to US neo-colony, the island's local bourgeoisie got a lift as they hitched themselves to this new capital and the freshly-stirred waves of nationalism that surged up off the "independence" celebration of 1962. They had a new style of rule, and a greater freedom and necessity to promote and especially to try to gain control of a "national" culture.

In the late 1950's the Jamaican countryside was getting ripped apart by American capital more intensively than almost any other Caribbean island.

Major American and Canadian aluminum companies appropriated huge areas of land from the peasants (eventually owning 1/3 of all land area in Jamaica) and left gaping strip-mined valleys of the burning red dirt all over the Jamaican hills. More people were forced off the land with the stagnation of the British sugar plantations, as well as the growth of tourism. They flocked to Kingston to survive, pitching tin shacks on a reclaimed garbage dump in the harbour. Today a third of Jamaica's population live in Kingston, and a third of Kingston live in the slums. There were a few jobs on the docks and in some US plants, but for most the pickings were slim and many kept going.

A system of out-migration to find employment has been the only avenue by which the poor could escape the social decay of underdevelopment. In the 1950's and 1960's one eighth of the population emigrated. Today only about 62% of the world's Jamaicans actually live on the island.

Jamaica exhibited the outward appearance of prosperity, with its supermarket chains, traffic jams and resort hotels, but at the same time units of housing for the vast majority of the population were decreasing and more people were going without proper clothing. The state published glowing figures showing increases in the gross domestic product, yet the population in the slums of western

Kingston increased and unemployment rose to more than 25% of the productive labour force. By 1969 Jamaica was listed as having the most unequal distribution of income of any country in the world - truly a "black man's hell in a white man's paradise" as reggae artist Gregory Isaacs would sing it.

On top of the economic unevenness between town and country was added the factor of the tourist industry. Political careerists perpetuated racial stereotypes of the Jamaican masses as a happy-go-lucky people, in a hot-house effort to organize recreation for the metropolitan bourgeoisie.

Public policy was influenced by the desire to provide the economic infrastructure (electricity, water, roads) and the correct hospitality (a smiling populace) in order to give the proper welcome to tourists. Incredible images of an island in the sun, its people romantically poor, were backed up by advertisements in the *New York Times* - Rent a Villa, Rent a Car, Rent a Nanny.

North American gangsters, posing as tourists, were given tax-free holidays so that they could exploit and expropriate small farmers. The continuities between slavery and neo-colonialism were expressed in the take-over of the Rose Hall Great House (where so many slaves had died) in St James by a questionable US-funded hotel and real estate development company.

Elections since 1967 have been marred by warfare between the JLP and the PNP gangs (possees).

There are some tacit (and open) agreements between the JLP and PNP to at least keep their political gang violence out of the tourist areas.

In 1972, Michael Manley (the son of Norman Manley) became premier: he based his campaign on the "politics of participation" and maintained strong ties with Cuba.

Manley's PNP is a "socialist" outfit which ruled with an iron fist for eight years. Manley is a bourgeois careerist who has long vacillated between support for the USA and the USSR.

Michael Manley surrounded himself with known gunmen such as Burry Boy and Feathermop and cleverly orchestrated various strategies to suppress, undermine or rob Rasta culture of its significance. He exploited the spiritual and metaphysical content of Rastafari by likening himself to the biblical Joshua, and equating his rival, Shearer to the Pharaoh. He called his African walking stick a rod of correction and claimed it had been given to him by Haile Selassie. Co-option of Rasta here reached its apogee.

The falling wage rate and the increased accumulation of the few was compounded under Manley by unprecedented levels of thuggery. By 1976 the political culture had become so debased that gunmen were burning out the homes of political opponents-children were even thrown back into the fires. The conjunction of the PNP waste of resources, the attempted US destabilisation of Jamaica and pressure from the IMF resulted in greater impoverishment- to get hold of basic food items was a major task. By 1979 the "democratic socialists" had buckled under the IMF.

Manley's rule showed how Jamaica's neo-colonial status allowed:

- (a) the middle classes to expand by providing greater patronage and more "jobs for the boys";
- (b) a ruling party to ground and mediate between the classes as if they were "brothers" and
- (c) his ilk to talk more flashily and crassly about bringing "socialism" without revolution.

At the same time, however, the ruling classes found themselves exposed, showing hands grimy with rip-offs, riches and betrayals as never before. No longer are they mere servants of capitalism (petit bourgeois compradors): they are now a national bourgeoisie in their own right and possibly, using the "Opec model", on the international scene. Certainly the Jamaican leaders and ruling classes are more than prepared to knife each other in the back for a fast buck, even at the risk of new sub-imperialist dominance by the "big" Latin American capitalists. On February 9, 1989 Mi-

chael Manley, now a chastened social democrat, again became premier.

In 1980 Edward CIAga of the JLP became premier. In 1981 CIAga severed diplomatic ties with Cuba.

There is more than symbolic significance to the story of the son of a white Jamaican ruling class family who was born in the US, graduated from Harvard (and not Britain's Oxford) in the late 1950's and returned home to Jamaica to do anthropological work among the peasants, investigating folk practices such as *obeah* and musical traditions associated with the Pukkumina religion. He soon moved to Kingston, set up a small recording company to document this culture, then turned his attention to the music scene in the West Kingston ghettos and became one of Jamaica's first record producers. This young music entrepreneur was none other than CIAga.

When he entered politics in 1959, CIAga secured a constituency in one of the toughest new ghettos in West Kingston with his musical credentials, and introduced guns onto the street along with systematic gangster-style violence to force "loyalty" among this angry and volatile section of the population. He also put to full use his earlier study of peasant religious practices and superstitions in his slogans and political rallies. CIAga is known internationally for his mafiosa-style services to the US bourgeoisie - which has continually maneuvered for a tighter hold of its "backyard lake". He was publicly denounced for running guns for the CIA into Jamaica in the late 1960's.

American troops regularly train in the hills of Jamaica, American naval vessels compete for space with luxury liners in Jamaica's ports and have been on hand in spades during past elections.

It should be clear that to talk of scientific socialism in the Caribbean is no small matter. What are the resources of land, labour, market, trade, defence that are to be the basis of socialist production? Aimè Cèsaire could almost despair when he described the Caribbean as islands that

are scars upon the water islands that are evidence of wounds crumbed islands formless islands islands that are waste paper torn up and strewn upon the water islands that are broken blades driven into the flaming sword of the sun

But despair is unnecessary: an alternative network of social relations is at hand, a network of relations through which it becomes possible to advance the material and social development of humanity in a way and to a degree precluded by capitalism.

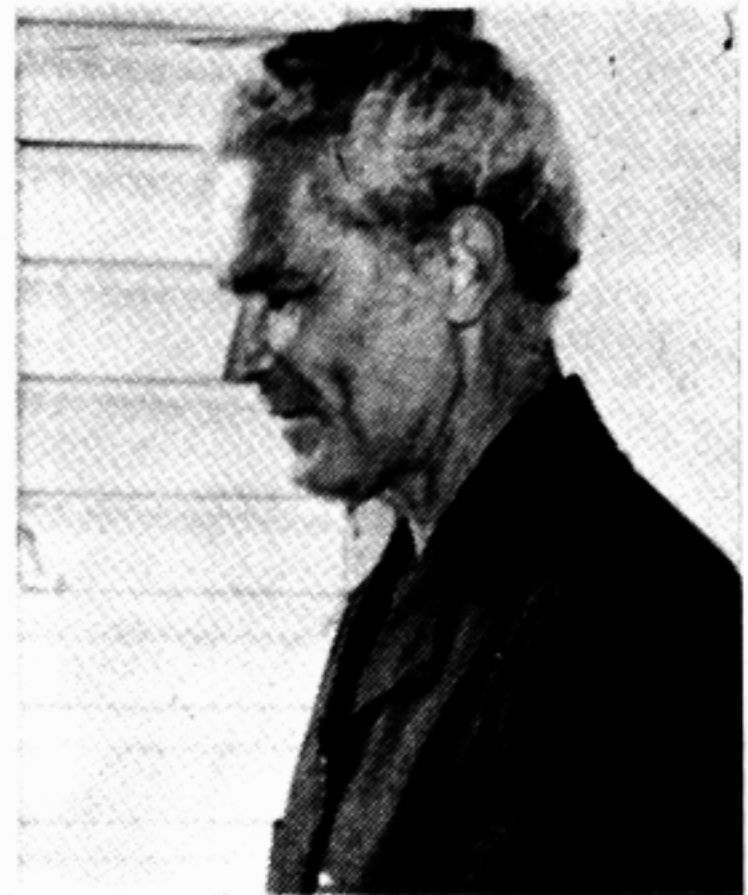
To summarise Michael Thelwell's novel *The Harder They Come*, Ivan, a Kingston "rude boy" (ghetto youth in and around the Jamaican music scene) tries to visit his family's home in the mountains after several years of living in the city:

"Nothing was familiar...Bush-bush full up everywhere. But...Dis couldn't be the right place after all? Right down dere should be the tin roof. You mean say bush-bush grow up, cover it?..."

"There was no evidence of the passage of his generations, the ancestors whose intelligence, industry and skill had created a self-sufficient homestead there. None - at all"

His grandmother who had raised him up there had died several years earlier; his mother was back down in Kingston working at starvation pay as a washerwoman; his uncles were long gone off the land and had met their ends all over the globe. One died in World War II fighting for the British; another went to cut cane in Cuba and was never heard from again; another was serving a life sentence in the Kingston penitentiary for killing his wife.

"Ah shoulda did stay an' tek care of de place, he thought. The worst



insult that people has was sneering, 'Cho, you no come from nowhe'... He wanted to go get a machete, to cut a path to the graves and clear the bush away. But...what de raas is de use... What's the fucken use? He felt empty, and frightened, futile, miserable, and very alone. He would never, he swore, come back ever.

He continued down the road to the former house of Maas' Nattie the man who had raised him like a father, and discovered that two American tourists had taken over the backyard and were lazily smoking ganja and sunbathing, stark naked. Ivan watched while one of them tried to milk a male goat, then jumped on his motorbike in disgust and sped over the mountains and through the foothills choked with bauxite dust, back down to Kingston.

From that moment on, he refused to look back, and with nothing to lose, he shot cops and sang his way to fame and notoriety. He was an outlaw, and a fearless hero to those being ground up in this new urban "promised land" - a concrete jungle where you couldn't even find a clean glass of water, let alone a day's work. It is in the context of Ivan's story that we can better appreciate what is easily Tosh's anthem, "Get Up, Stand Up":

*"And now you see the light
We gonna stand up for our rights*

Come on
 Get Up, stand up
 Don't let them push you 'round
 Stand up for your rights
 Brother
 Get up, stand up
 Be brave now
 Don't give up the fight
 I say
 Get up Stand up
 Stand Up for Your Rights
 Don't let them hold you down
 Get Up Stand Up
 Don't give up the fight"

(Marley/Tosh, 1978)

STEPPIN' RAZOR ...DANGEROUS

Sometime in the late 1950's transistor radios began to appear on the streets of Kingston, Jamaica. On clear evenings when the wind was blowing from the north, the thousands of people who were then streaming in from the mountains could pick up the rhythm and blues (r&b) and early rock 'n roll of Fats Domino, Sam Cooke, Brook Benton, the Drifters and Chuck Berry from US radio stations in nearby New Orleans and Miami.

Youth like Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff and Peter Tosh, themselves recently arrived from the country to the shantytowns of West Kingston, tuned in.

So did the local mento musicians who would soon merge their Jamaican-style calypso with the r&b sound, along with strains of gospel, jazz, Latin riffs from nearby islands, and the African rhythms of the Rasta Burru drummers. The new hybrid became ska - a speedy dance music with a wicked back beat. The originators of this sound included the Skatallites, made up of the cream of Jamaica's jazz men who had grown tired of answering tourists' requested for "Yellow Bird" and bastardised calypso on the hotel circuit. Ska has been described as a "very small connection that's glowing red-hot" between "two extremely heavy cultures" - Africa and North America.

For years very little of this music was allowed on Jamaican radio, but

meanwhile it pulsed through the nation as people danced to the rolling "sound systems" -trucks stacked with monster speakers and manned by maniac 'deejays who waged a rowdy war among themselves to be the first to spin a new single. The sound systems were people's institutions where the Rasta culture of resistance was developed without restraint. Competition among the legendary DJ's was ferocious, each one vying for the attention of the crowd who demanded the hottest and newest releases from the US.

When, in the early 1960's, this pop music became slick and soft and could not satisfy the demanding appetites of Jamaican youth, DJ's like Coxsone Dodd and Duke Reid opened recording studios, and produced ska, later rock steady and finally reggae.

These musical forms challenged the dominance of white American music-Neil Sedaka, Doris Day, Elvis Presley-that had hitherto been so relentlessly plugged and marked a crucial break with the sex and romance themes of this commercial white music. Despite their element of spiritual deliverance, the music of Rasta was pregnant with social criticism.

Beginning in 1963, an historic collaboration took place in Coxsone's Studio One between the Skatallites and the Wailers (including Bob Marley and Peter Tosh) who were one of the expert harmony groups then springing up in the government yards (housing projects) among the toughest youth in Kingston. The astonishing music that issued from these sessions would soon put the new generation of rude boys like Ivan on the stage for the first time.

*Jail house keeps empty
 Rudie gets healthy
 Baton sticks get shorter
 Rudie gets taller
 ...Can't fight against the youth/
 Cause it's wrong
 Prediction
 Them people a-going wild
 Dem a rude rude people
 What has been hidden
 From the 'wise' and the polluted
 Will be revealed*

*in the heat of the summer sun
 Oh Rudie, be wise....'*

"Jailhouse (aka "Rudie")

The Wailers c. 1965

Rarely has a song so captured the brooding and insolent confidence of youth coming of age in an uninhabitable place which is itself "new", but already a virtual bomb-site. The musical response at the end of each line came like a threat and a statement of fact- sung in the sweetest of harmonies.

One of Peter Tosh's earliest works "I'm the toughest" (cut originally to a ska beat) virtually canonized the swagger of the Kingston rude boy in the mid-60's. For the people, ska was created by Black musicians and composed exclusively by poor Black musicians.

This type of thing was not at all what the local bourgeoisie had in mind for their "post-Independence" Jamaican culture, and all along the way they tried to redirect it- with CIAGA often as pointman. At first the Skatallites were ridiculed for playing "bongo" music, but as early as 1964, CIAGA, as Minister of Development, tried to take over ska, introducing it at the New York World's Fair with a hand-picked delegation of musicians, passing over the universally-acknowledged rude boy originators. These youth had already become even more outlawed because of their association with Rastafarian musicians who were neither respectable nor willing to be hired thugs for either the PNP or the JLP gangs. The offi-



cial policy on these unruly "seeds": "Kill it, before they grow..." as one famous song would put it.

But in the next few years, as ska slowed down into the "rock steady" style and finally around 1967-68 reggae, the music became thoroughly dominated by the rude boys. The music took over the sound system dances and jukeboxes, selling huge numbers of singles- but all the while it was almost completely banned from the radio. The national culture was definitely splitting into two, with polite society (to say nothing of the tourist board!) properly horrified at these rebels wearing their hair in thick "natty" dreadlocks (long, thick curls) who were also beginning to gain a little notoriety internationally as well.

Browsing through bins of old reggae singles, one is struck by a common graphic theme- a clenched fist in several variations- with label names to match. The influence of Black Consciousness was decidedly unforeign in Kingston.

While reggae, like any musical form, has also produced its share of insipid love songs and boring pop re-makes throughout its history, what is striking is that the best reggae musicians (and the pioneers on this side of reggae history are Bob Marley, Bunny Wailer and Peter Tosh) have always considered themselves "warriors against Babylon", as they refer to the oppressive and exploitative system. And the sound of the music has from the beginning attracted the ears of thousands of youth like Ivan who know from tortuous experience that there is no going back to "simpler times."

1983: Peter Tosh cuts a version of Chuck Berry's rock & roll classic "Johnny B Goode", the story of a feisty country boy they can't keep down on the farm- this time he's on his way to becoming a reggae star in the city. The tune is exuberant, words hardly changed, just the places ...and the sound. There's a menacing rumble bubbling up this time around. You hear it in the chunka-chunka rhythm and cascading bass line, in those synthesised keyboards that

swoop down like a flock of ravens- and there's that wild guitar wail first brought to life in the post-Berry era by the "star bways" living in some far northern cities, most notably Jimi Hendrix.

1984: It was seven in the morning and the sun was just peeking above the sea in Montego Bay, Jamaica. A crowd of several thousand Jamaicans, Americans and assorted international travellers were assembled before the empty stage at the water's edge. They had spent four days at this World Music Festival- the finale promised to be worth waiting for.

Dreadlocked Jamaicans began moving up towards the stage chanting "Teacher, teacher..." The musicians took their places, the groove set in, and a deep and familiar baritone sang out from backstage:

*"Steppin 'razor/
Better watch your step/
I'm dangerous, dangerous."*

Peter Tosh strode in, elegant and menacing in white martial arts gear. A roar went up. As he stalked the stage, brandishing a curved scabbard, light broke and a rainbow suddenly materialized behind him. There were ahs, cheers and laughter. He ended the song and went into a rap.

It was an angry lecture to the Jamaican authorities to start playing more reggae on the radio, to stop harassing the people for smoking ganja: "Everytime I drive ten yards Babylon try stop you! What kind of ting is dat? And in this twenty first century they lock you up for a spliff." As he moved back into the music, the crowd broke into a spontaneous "We want the truth...we want the truth!" The set ended with a hypnotic twenty-minute rendition of "Get up, stand up!" the sun dancing brightly now with a jubilant crowd singing along with their anthem.

Tosh was well-known for his real-life ferocity against the powers-that-be, and any feckless representatives of the authorities (he used to swing a machete in the face of reporters he didn't like, just for fun).



What made Tosh so threatening to some people and so immensely entertaining to others, was his music and performance. When he took the stage you came face to face with the "arrogant" Blackman who made no apologies to the oppressor: one simply cannot imagine Tosh in a white suit graciously serving drinks poolside!

In "Glass House" on *Mama Afrika* Tosh reserved the Golden Rule (a toughened up version) for relations among the "brethren": "Harm no man, let no man harm you." But there's merciless ridicule for all the "baldheads" and "ghosts" of the world who think they're safe and secure in their glittering glasshouse empires "built on lies and illusions"- when all the while "the truth is showing" to "those who keeps it a-going" and who might be getting some ideas about shattering this house of glass with some well-placed stones of their own.

Tosh's "Steppin' Razor" provided the backdrop for one of the unforgettable sequences in reggae cinema history, the gathering of dreads from all corners of Kingston as they embark on an anti-Babylon caper in the film *Rockers*.

Peter once described himself as "optimistic". This is usually the sentiment either of blind pollyannas or people who have some sense of what they are up against and are rising to meet it. Peter clearly fell into the latter

category; there is a charging high spirit to his music which seems devoted to popping certain illusions of the oppressed. As he said in 1976: "You see they have removed the chains from off our feet and hands and have placed them on our minds, so there are many things that we have to unlearn in order to be free".

While Peter laboured under certain illusions of his own, he remained, until his death, a militant seeker and fighter for the Black cause whose art was always worthy of that cause.

Peter's music stands as living testament that the Yankee imperialists, with all their well-laid plans and years of hegemony in the world, are still constantly being beat at their own game.

Culture from America, both what's helpful to the oppressed and especially what isn't, gets beamed out to all points of the empire and beyond, with the hope of spawning simple-minded sycophants of everyting Yankee.

Instead, they've been met with the blistering reply of those they oppress, who have more than once transformed these sounds into new art forms- in the case of reggae, creating music as untamed and inspiring as much of the early r&b and rock 'n roll, and even fiercer to match the intensified heat of the teeming ghettos thrown up on this colonized island.

Reggae music has infiltrated the repertoire of millions of enemies of this world system in literally every part of the globe- from the bazaars of Morocco to the remote deserts of Mali to Japan to Poland- itself a phenomenon only possible in this era of imperialist development, which, lopsided as it is, knits the world tighter than ever before.

When reggae gets carried around the planet to places where there are only batteries to power the rare tape recorder, it is beyond doubt that a very deep chord has been struck among the masses.

No artist of the stature of Peter Tosh could exist outside the swirl of con-

troversy, and among reggae fans and critics this extended to tempestuous debate over his style of music. The tired bromide "gone commercial" got trotted out here usually in reference to Tosh's habit of incorporating funk, soca, blues, disco and especially rock into his brand of reggae, which some condemned as "abandoning the roots." When this came out of the mouths of certain American and British pop critics ("The music has lost its simplicity and raw power that were its most attractive quality"), it sounded like a scolding for overstepping the bounds of some notion of "third world sensibility"- and, rephrased, might well have read "What's become of our noble savage?"

First of all, it can be categorically stated that a Tosh concert was indeed a riotous celebration of music from around the globe, rooted in the Kingston sound. The texture was dense, the arrangements full, the tempo hot. Like any artist with vision and curiosity in these times, Peter Tosh inevitably heard many voices, both from his "roots" and from people singing around the world - and his music reflected this experience and evolved: "As long as instruments exist, they must be used in music, and you must know how to use the music so that it does not dilute the roots of your music, seen?"

It was this approach that cleared the decks for many true masterpieces - as well as contributed to Tosh's vast popularity internationally. As Tosh's audience broadened out, and had come to include some people whose idea of liberation did not extend much past "Legalize it" (marijuana), Tosh was accused by some of becoming 'white-washed'. Apparently these days it is the fate of any artist with something profound to say that the minute they create art of such universal beauty and depth that it attracts a large and contradictory audience, they will face charges of "treason" even (and in some cases especially) from the very folks who are most dramatically represented in the art, and have every reason to defend such artists.

For all his ferocity Peter was also a very funny and whimsical man. In one

evening, he might show up on stage playing his famous guitar shaped like an M-16, then disappear and a moment later ride in on a unicycle. He had a way of redesigning vocabulary, sometimes patching in folk proverbs and Biblical references to punch up the real meaning of things for the sufferers: there is the "shitstem" and the "downpressors".

Mikey Chung remembers: "Peter was very spontaneous. Things just happened. He worked best on stage with no rehearsal. When we recorded you had to catch him the first time around, or you're late. Word Sound and Power with me and Sly and Robbie and Robbie Lynn, we were a very tight band, a studio band so we could go on the road and just jam, different every night. This was the best way - Peter was real lay back, always trying to make us laugh on stage, in the bus, telling stories. Those times were good."

Peter used to keep birds at his home in Jamaica - some were wild ones that he had caught by hand. And he was known to laugh about how one day he would really surprise people - like the tales told by African slaves about the ones with secret wings who flew to freedom. And people would say: "Look at that Peter Tosh now - he's flying!"

Peter Tosh demonstrated to a lot of people the worthlessness of living on your knees - if you hold your head up and look Babylon in the eye, you can often make him blink. And while there's no flying back to the past, the future and the whole world beckons. **IF ALL THOSE STEPPIN' RAZORS DECIDE TO COME TOGETHER WE JUST MIGHT SOAR!!!**

THE ROOT IS THERE

"You can cut down the tree,
But you'll never,
You'll never succeed,
Cause- The root is there,

And you cannot get rid of
All of I and I now..."

- "The Root is There"
(Mighty Diamonds)

It may strike some revolutionaries as peculiar, or even unbelievable, that some of the most rebellious people in the cultural arena on the planet today read the Bible for daily guidance and regard a now-dead despotic Ethiopian ruler as leader and holy man.

That this is the case reveals something about our moment in history: the world at a treacherous pass, the way forward not very clear... many roads of resistance are taken.

The doctrine of Peter Tosh was the Rastafarian religion.

The system of out-migration in Jamaica served to bring new ideas to the society and, by the turn of the century, Jamaicans were learning more and more about the resistance of African leaders to the partition of Africa.

The exploits of Shaka Zulu, the Abyssinian defeat of the Italians in 1896 and the resistance of King Ja Ja of Opobo to the British grabbed the imagination of and inspired Black people in Jamaica.

Ja Ja himself, risen from the ranks of African traders, had by 1873 driven away all British traders from Calabar, a central trading point in West Africa. By 1881 he had taken full control of the lucrative trade in palm oil and threatened British plans to annex the West African coast from Lagos to the Cameroons. Ja Ja was ultimately defeated only by British treachery – the offer of a false peace treaty thorough which he was tricked and deported to St Vincent in the eastern Caribbean.

Ja Ja's struggle began a legend throughout the Caribbean, and his martial (and marital) exploits were celebrated and transmitted in calypso.

The defeat of the Italians in 1896 was also etched into popular consciousness: white people had failed to subdue one of the only independent African societies.

That the independence of Ethiopia should stand as symbol of African resistance was hardly unique to Jamaica. Ethiopianism and the independence of the Ethiopian Orthodox

Church had its origins in occupied Azania in the 1870's where Black people set up their own churches.

The Pan Africanist call of "Africa for the Africans" rang from the white highlands to the gold mines of Johannesburg. One of those who heard this rallying call was Marcus Garvey, one of the 126 000 workers who between 1902 and 1919 escaped the drudgery and abysmally low wages in Jamaica and migrated to Britain.



Bob Marley.

Garvey organized the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in the US: the UNIA cemented the bonds of racial consciousness as an important component of class consciousness. Garvey and the UNIA stood in direct confrontation with capital, hence the *Negro World* was banned, UNIA's mushrooming economic enterprises were economically sabotaged, and Marcus Garvey was first incarcerated and then deported from the US in 1927.

Garvey returned to the poverty-stricken society that was Jamaica with a call for the poor to struggle and free themselves and channeled organised opposition and resistance into the People's Political Party. The Party called for self-government and for breaking with the fawning imitation of everything British.

To many workers and farmers Garvey was a prophet, one of whose important prophecies concerned the crowning of a Black King in Africa. When in 1930 Rastafari, son of Ras Makonnen of Harar, was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia, as Haile Selassie, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of Judah, those for whom the Bible held all the answers concluded that the Emperor was literally and biblically King of Kings.

The crowning of Selassie came as a welcome diversion from the constant reminder of the white King George and his wife whose portraits were on the walls of all public buildings.

The fusion of the Bible, where the works of Ja were praised in the Psalms, with the exploits of King Ja Ja, the message of Garvey and the crowning of the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah was to provide the framework for a new deification, replacing the white god in heaven and his white representatives in Buckingham Palace with a Black king and a god held to have been prophesied in the Book of Revelations in the New Testament.

Leonard Howell, Archibald Dunkley and Joseph Hibbert were the first Rastafarians. Howell was incarcerated for two years for selling pictures of Selassie. Howell and Dunkley were both subsequently sentenced to imprisonment in mental institutions for their continuing cultural resistance.

This was the colonial answer to the Black Consciousness of Rastafari.

To compound the "insanity", the men began to wear their hair like the Masai warriors of East Africa and called themselves locksmen or Nyamen. In a society where Black women spent hours straightening their hair with hot combs (*fryhead*), where Black girls were given white dolls and where schoolchildren instantly recreated a white image when called upon to draw a picture, the first Rastafarians were branded as violent criminals whose communes could be raided with impunity in the search for ganja.

Workers throughout the Black world

opposed the fascist invasion of Abyssinia in 1935. The Rastafari raised funds, wrote to newspapers and called meetings to oppose fascism. The Ethiopian ruling class sought to mobilize this favourable international response via an organisation called the Ethiopian World Federation.

Evidence of the callous neglect of the Ethiopian peasants led Garvey to write in the *Blackman* in 1936: "Mussolini of Italy has conquered Haile Selassie of Abyssinia, but he has not conquered the Abyssinians or Abyssinia. The Emperor of Abyssinia allowed himself to be conquered by playing white, by trusting white advisors and by relying on white governments including the white League of Nations..."

Garvey foresaw that, if Selassie on his return did not end the exploitation of his own people, he would be swept away by them: "As far as we can see the Emperor's term of usefulness is at an end for the present in Ethiopia. Abyssinia must be saved by the Abyssinian youth." Forty years later the contradiction of feeding meat to lions while people starved culminated in the slavemaster Selassie's overthrow and thrust Ethiopia into a long class struggle. It was this type of foresight, derived from a revolutionary perspective, which led many Jamaicans to regard Garvey as a prophet, a perspective whose continued relevance is evidenced in the words of the reggae group Burning Spear: "Marcus Garvey's words come to pass, can't get no food to eat, can't get no money to spend."

The Rastafarian movement can be compared to the movement of the Jewish people at the time the Book of Revelations was written ie circa 60 AD. This book of the New Testament, often quoted by Rastas, predicted the destruction of the Roman Empire and reflected the position of the Jewish people then – a people sorely oppressed but in many ways marginal to the Empire.

Similarly, the Rastafarian movement today to a significant degree finds its basis among sections of society that

have been reduced to a largely marginal existence by the workings of imperialism – particularly peasants driven off the land in Jamaica into the cities, or even into other countries such as imperial Britain or the USA, finding themselves in a declassed or semi-declassed situation.

The development of the Jamaican Proletariat has been severely stunted by imperialism, confined largely to miners and workers in the tourist industry or government – many of whom are *relatively* well off. Both the JLP and the PNP were strong in the miners' unions while Rastafarianism grew up among the landless peasants forced to hustle in the city.

Rasta groups sprang up all over Jamaica: they had no clear central institution. The democratic and free-wheeling nature of the movement had the major deficiency that anti-social elements could take on the physical appearance of the brethren while carrying out acts of intimidation against the working class.

In 1960, Ronald Henry repaired to the hills and issued a call for Jamaicans to rise up against JLP/PNP manipulation. A joint police-military operation brought this revolt to grief.

In April 1963, Rastafarians insisted on their right to pass over the land, in protest against the segregation of the Jamaican north coast. In the violence that ensued, eight people were killed. The demonstration had been organised by a group of young men, former students of Cornwall College, one of the more pro-British schools both in terms of its curriculum and staff, who had totally rejected their miseducation.

The state's response was simple and brutal: on the morning of 10 April 1963 all Rastafari in Jamaica were made subject to arrest. Troops had licence to shoot those who resisted. These draconian measures were reinforced by a hysterical press campaign on ganja, claiming that its users were prone to violence – a campaign which legitimated continuing police raids on Rastafari settlements and the arrest of hundreds of Jamaicans under the dangerous drugs law. Brethren were

further humiliated by being forced to have their locks shorn.

By 1960 Norman Manley had commissioned the first report on Rastafari – the first of many documents which sought to stereotype the people's culture as millenarian and 'cultist'. This approach appealed to those who had been lobotomised by their Oxford or Cambridge miseducations.

This disparaging attitude was profoundly altered by the visit of Haile Selassie to Jamaica in 1966. A barrage of studies promoting the religious and metaphysical aspects of Rastafari followed. Young brethren who declared "I and I no ina politricks" were encouraged and religious groups such as the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Twelve Tribes of Israel became "respectable organisations."

The work of Rex Nettleford in *Mirror, Mirror* and Leonard Barnett in *The Rastafarians* has given the lead to the crude interpretation of the brethren as "escapists", drug smokers and revivalists, or as forming some deviant sub-culture.

The response of Jamaica's ruling class to Rastafarianism provides a vivid example of the *ad hoc* sophistication of neo-colonial politics in the Caribbean. In the early days, the state characterized them and treated them as lunatics and criminals. In its first panic it institutionalized, brutalized and murdered Rastas. But then it studied them, cleansed the Rasta public image and, with university cultural reports, attempted to co-opt and woo them. This certainly did not succeed in subverting the emergence of the ideology, but it has definitely diverted its development.

The work of Walter Rodney in the gullies of Jamaica was a direct continuation of Marcus Garvey's, but using the tools of historical materialist analysis. Rodney talked to and grounded with the Rastas: he elucidated, informed and strengthened the progressive content of Rastafari.

After attending the historic Black Writers Conference in Montreal during October 1968, Rodney was

barred from returning to Jamaica by the Shearer regime: Michael Manley of the PNP never raised a murmur over this ban and once in power, he maintained it.

The big-time herb dealers imported guns and supplied them to street gangs (known as "possess"). A culture of violence in essential contradiction to Rastafari was used as a political tool as was the systematic introduction of hard drugs into Jamaica.

Not only has this imperialist contribution made certain broken elements in the population act in even more desperate ways, it has opened up the reggae scene to manipulation by international gangster rings who both collude with and compete for control of the *sub rosa* market with various bourgeoisies internationally.

Despite this, by the mid-1970's Rasta had become in many ways the culture of the masses. Everyday church-goers spoke of the liberation of Africa and denounced the eating of the pig. Rastafari taught the people about *Ital* food, condemning the high levels of chemicals used in food processing and promoting self-sufficiency.

Rasta challenged the colour-class gradations of the social hierarchy and opposed the distinction between town and country. It spread throughout the eastern Caribbean: the Dreads of Dominica were a variant of Rasta which, since it emerged after Selassie's fall from power, did not have to deal with the issue of his deification.

In 1975 the Dominican leadership passed a law entitling every citizen to shoot on sight any suspected Dreads found on their property. Desmond Trotter was framed and given a death sentence for murdering a white tourist: Trotter was the leader of the Dreads.

In Grenada over 400 Rasta were involved in the People's Liberation Army of the New Jewel Movement which overthrew the Eric Gairy dictatorship. Imperialism sought to mobilize backward elements using Rasta under Ras Nna.

From Fort de France to Paris, from Kingston to Brixton, Afro-Caribbean youth, alienated and oppressed by the racism and imperialism of societies that bred the Nazis, don the red, gold and green as the symbolic identification with Rastafari.

Rastas are united in their need to assert their own culture, their own Black dignity. As Amilcar Cabral said: "The value of culture as an element of resistance to foreign domination lies in the fact that culture is the vigorous manifestation on the ideological plane of the physical and historical reality of that society that is dominated or to be dominated. Culture is simultaneously the fruit of a people's history and a determinant of history, by the positive and negative influence it exerts on the evolution of relationships between man and his environment, among men or groups of men within a society, as well as differing societies. (from "National Liberation and Culture" in *Return to the Source* New York, 1972).

To see the Rastafari world view as limited to some religious proclivity is to ignore the vitality of the culture in Jamaica, in the eastern Caribbean and in the metropolitan cities where the children of Black immigrants are alienated from the servile culture of consumption.

The struggles of Black people inevitably appear in an intensely cultural form because the social formation in which their distinct political traditions are now manifest has constructed the arena of politics on ground overshadowed by centuries of metropolitan capitalist development, thereby denying them recognition as legitimate politics. Blacks conduct a class struggle *in and through* race. The BC of race and class cannot be empirically separated. The class character of Black struggles is not a result of the fact that Blacks are predominantly proletarian, though this is true. Classes are not static or continuous subjects of history, they are made and remade in continual struggle.



Haile Selassie.

It is only the heresy of economism which stipulates that the relations of commodity production alone determine class relations. The struggle for hegemony cannot be reduced to economic determinations or vulgarised to refer to solely cultural phenomena, and class analysis cannot be restricted to those positioned in the immediate processes of production.

Indeed, avowed Rastas maintain that all Black people are Rasta whether they realize it or not, pointing to Rastafarianism being a distinct expression of the contradiction between Black people and the power bloc (Babylon). Certainly, Rastafarianism is an authentic oppressed class ideology, the property of the oppressed masses of the Caribbean. To preoccupy oneself with Rasta's negative paradoxes is to blind oneself to the fact that there was *no other way* for an oppressed ideology to emerge among people who were left to fend for themselves and build their own livelihood.

Rasta's sharing of linguistic devices and political concepts marks the limits of a community bonded by a particular conceptualisation of "the people". The confrontation in style which has developed where open signification of dreadness transforms the unacceptable attribute of Blackness into a source of collective strength and inspiration acts as a focal point for dread and baldhead alike.

Rastafarianism and reggae music arose among people who were well

aware that they were suffering from the blows of a very long stick, but doubted that this monster could be taken down by the forces of this world alone. It all surfaced on a cusp of history – a time in Jamaica when, as a Tolstoyan character once put it, "everything has been turned upside down and is only just taking shape again."

Leo Tolstoy, the novelist, wrote during an earlier upheaval in peasant life – in Russia in the late 1800's. On his death V.I. Lenin commented: "His heated, passionate and often ruthlessly sharp protest against the state and the official church that was in alliance with the police conveys the sentiments of the primitive peasant democratic masses among whom centuries of serfdom, official tyranny and robbery, and of church Jesuitism, deception and chicanery had piled up mountains of anger and hatred."

"By studying the literary works of Tolstoy the Russian working class will learn to know its enemies better, but in examining the doctrine of Tolstoy, the whole Russian people will have to understand where their own weakness lies, the weakness which did not allow them to carry the cause of their emancipation to its conclusion. This must be understood in order to go forward."

Peter Tosh and other great reggae musicians have also created startlingly beautiful art which rages against four hundred (400) years of slavery and the draconian new order of the neo-colonial US master and their dogs in Jamaica. At the same time, their doctrine, like Tolstoy's, holds tight to and even resurrects certain traditions and mystical trappings from the past in an attempt to explain and do battle against the savage assaults of this modern world.

This contradictory position leads the Rastas on the one hand to throw out the basic Christian pie-in-the-sky-when-you-die routine, while demanding and fighting for Black redemption here on earth (an advance, too, over Tolstoy's ultimate goal of transcending the horrors of the material world). The anthem ringing in this new creed, by Tosh and Marley, today

stands with perhaps a handful of songs which have been taken as their own by rebels around the world and stands as ample warning not to underestimate the degree of political transformation represented by Rastafarianism:

*"Most people think that great good
will come from the skies
Take away everything, and make
everybody feel high.
But if you know what life is worth
You will look for yours on earth.
And now we see the light
We're gonna stand up for our
rights."*

–"Get Up, Stand Up"
(1978)

Rastafarianism had no patience with Christian promises of the good life when you're dead and gone. If the times were "dread", the possibility of overthrowing the whole order was also alive in the world, if presently out of reach. The denial of God flowing from the belief that "God is I and I and has always been" are the kindling of the process in which: "The criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law, and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics." (Jerry Hirsch "To 'unfrock the Charlatans'" *Saga Race Relations Abstracts* Volume 6 Number 2, 1981)

Taking the circumstances of the 1930's with the complete blocking of socialist thought from the colonies, Rastafarianism is a profound and forward-looking response to the sickness of colonialism.

In the established Christian churches God the Father is white, God the Son-Jesus- is white, the angels were white, the Holy Ghost was white- and Lucifer, of course, was black, being the embodiment of evil.

Those who preached the divinity of Ras Tafari were rejecting the link between Christianity and whiteness, and were inexorably breaking with the philistine white West Indian society, thus linking their cultural and spiritual roots with Ethiopia and Africa. As a first step, this was undoubtedly progressive.

African traditions do not recognize the separation of politics from other spheres of life. Armand Mattelart, quoted by Jon Frappier in 'Chase goes to Harlem: financing black capitalism' *Monthly Review* (Volume 28, Number 11: 1977), reminds us that: "Acquiring and developing class consciousness does not mean obligatory boredom. It is a question of transforming what used to be used exclusively for pleasure and leisure into a means of instruction."

The negative paradox about Rastafari lies in the fact that using the past to overturn the present can mire one in the swamps of "anciency". Rastafarianism is bound to rely on mysticism and non-scientific explanations which blind one's origin and to some degree one's destiny to a Creator and his emissaries on the planet earth.

Rastafari culture remains, however, an indelible link between the resistance of the Maroons, the Pan-Africanist appeal of Marcus Garvey, the materialist and historical analysis of Walter Rodney and the defiance of reggae. The cultural resistance of Rasta remains an integral part of the struggle against imperialism and commodity fetishism, which attempts to reduce human beings to zombies.

I'M THE TOUGHEST

In the chorus of "Maga Dog", Tosh makes a powerful statement on the folly of not kicking an enemy when he's down:

*"You sorry for Maga Dog/
Him turn round bite you
You jump out the frying pan, you
know,
You jump in the fire, yeah..."*

But the lyrics of the same song pack a reactionary diatribe on a particular "enemy" – a woman and her "ways".

It is on the Woman Question that the negative and positive aspects of elements within Rastafari culture emerge most sharply. The Rastafarians generally uphold peasant customs regarding the woman as childbearer and obedient mate.

In Kingston, less than a quarter of the mothers are legally married, but pressures are so intense in the ghetto that a whole vocabulary has sprung up to describe the most common familial relations: "baby-mother" or "baby-father" referring to the parent. And conversation is littered with expressions like "He bred her," "He control her," "He rule her," to describe "normal" love relations.

To be sure, Rasta men were the first to denounce *fryhead* women and those aspects of capitalist society which led to the alienation and self-hatred of Black women. Many Rasta brethren and sisters grew up in the hills where the exploits and leadership of Nanny, Harriet Tubman, Angela Davis and Josina Machel are retold.

These brethren denounce the Anglo-American culture which glorifies sex, violence and the insecurity of those who make sex a commodity. As Black men, the brethren were the children of those whose mothers had suffered sexual abuse, they understood that sexual coercion was an essential element of the social relations between masters and slaves.

Rastafarianism "honours" the woman as a "queen" but attempts to maintain male hegemony in the household. To quote Tosh: "Don't come tell me say you are equal to me cause it's impossible until you have two seeds and a wood... A woman keeps the house clean, make the food nice and do these things a woman must do. Seen. But it's how the world makes it today, my dear, in this western hemisphere. Ministers of these shitstems design it that the woman see herself as the dominant figure. Everytime seen... The man have to swear blind that he will have to do such and such... until death do us part... See when you talk about the Rastaman, it is like going in the jungle and seeing the lion. The lion is the king of the jungle. All other animals are under him. Well it is like seeing the Rastaman, the king of man. And can you imagine the king of man must have one little piece of woman."

The Jamaican state, with its Bureau of Women Affairs under the Prime

Minister's office, discussed woman as an undifferentiated mass, without class differences. Sister Beverley (Manley's wife) was elevated as the leader of Black women in Jamaica when she and her class employ poor Black women as house servants.

Middle-class feminist slogans and generalisations about the Rasta do not touch the lives of these Black working class women who have to be liberated from the drudgery of carrying water on their heads, who have to fend for their youths, whose "baby father" is a migrant labourer.

But the barbaric legacy of feudalism inherent in Tosh's words, slicked up with Old Testament dicta and enshrined as part of the "African tradition", represents the opposite of a "righteous rebellion" against the "Western Ministers" and in fact can only help to keep them in power.

While it would be completely wrong to confuse Tosh and other Rastas with the *real* maga dogs, Rastamen need to be liberated from the mythology about women and the vestiges of inequalities in the family.

The byzantine sentiments expressed by Tosh and other Rastamen on the Women Question need to go under the wrecking ball in order to go forward.

This "weakness" among the oppressed once again underlines Marx's comment: "Everything that exists has this much worth, that it will perish."

BURY THE SHITSTEM

The Jamaican "left" and right are popularly considered to be limited to pedagogic "do-gooders" or US lackey dictators, both of whom enforce neo-colonial rule ultimately through terror.

It is in this context that people have been forced to look elsewhere for their radical spokespersons and ultimately for real revolutionary leadership.

Tosh and other reggae musicians were "recruited" to fill the vacuum, and their songs, performances, inter-



views, and lives are scrutinized by the people as though they were the works of political leaders.

This has made for headaches all around.

While of course all art has political content, and all artists objectively represent different classes on stage – and artists of the calibre of Tosh represented quite a fierce section of the masses internationally – this still begs the question.

In order to "bury the shitstem" the people need revolutionary leadership which artists (who have another job to do) can never wholly or mainly provide. Artists as *artists* are simply not equipped to lead the revolutionary movement. The demand that they do so only undermines the process by which actual revolutionary leadership is developed, and simultaneously drags down their art to the level of tedious pedagogy: people need real propaganda and agitation on the political problems of the world, and instead get an article set to music.

Art fulfills a different human requirement from political education. Marley put it best: "These songs, people understand them, or they cyann (can't) understand them, but ya have fe sing them just the same. What the people want is the *beauties*, mon."

In Jamaica, however, the situation is further complicated by the fact that many reggae musicians are also looked upon as *spiritual* guardians, and their art as spreading the mess-

age of "Jah" to people cast out of their African homeland. Tosh: "The singers and players of instruments are the only true prophets in this time".

This confluence of contradictions was epitomized by Tosh when, after the Uprising of West Indians and punks in Brixton, England in 1981, some baiting fool of a music critic asked him if he thought his music "encouraged violence with its militant image". Tosh shouted back, "Militant? Me don't join the army, I'm missionary, not a military. When you're talking about military you're associating me with guns and missiles and those kinda things... when you call me, you must say missionary, 'cause I deal with righteousness."

This is no plea for pacifism: Tosh is simply laying claim to being a teacher and preacher who believes that the movement that will "bury the shit-stem" is a spiritual one: "No politician can stop the prophecy, they all die at 78."

The contradiction cuts both ways. Under pressure to "lead a movement" or at least to be "more" than an artist, Tosh and other reggae musicians have nonetheless created soaring works of art.

How can this be? Part of the answer lies in the fact that the very strivings of these musicians for something better than more ackee and breadfruit have had the effect of lifting the music out of the boring and depressing litany of complaints and "explanations" so typical of "protest music" internationally. At its best, reggae music represents a rejection of this degraded brand of art and the contemptible welfare worker politics which inform it. Tosh: "They know I don't support politricks and games, because I have bigger aims, hopes and aspirations."

But if the sights of many reggae musicians go beyond the "fussing and fighting" of Jamaican bourgeois politicking, they still largely figure in the class struggle there exactly because they command battalions among the masses on the basis of their political and spiritual authority.

Reggae musicians are caught in the see-sawing grip of a ruling class which must try to associate itself with the Rasta movement, emphasizing only its nationalistic aspects, but simultaneously must try to co-opt or annihilate its most radical expressions, particularly as the society gets stretched to its economic and political breaking point.

The international press and even the international music press does not usually find the harassment, detentions, bannings of music or outright murder of reggae musicians "newsworthy". As Bob Marley said in 1972: "These things are heavier than anyone can understand. People that are not involved don't know it..."

The ruling class hypocritically claims artists like Marley and Tosh as "national treasures" but their only hope in doing this is to reduce these artists and their powerful messages to mere icons and to protect themselves from the wrath of the masses for their role in snuffing these artists out.

RISE UP, FALLEN FIGHTERS

"... rise up fallen fighters
unfetter the stars
dance with the universe
& make it ours
oh, make it/ make it ours
oh, make it/ make it ours..."

— Ntozake Shange
"From Okra to Greens"

Tosh's *Equal Rights* album cover wryly depicts that the spirit of those who refuse to back down simply cannot be suppressed: it depicts a Tosh profile in rude boy welder glasses, repeated over and over.

Back in 1976, Tosh put it this way: "So all o' my tune dem is just reality. If is not me feel it is me bredda a feel it. And I am my bredda's keeper. Me 'ave fe think fe whole heap o' thousands o' people. So when you see I mek a tune, man, is just action and reaction. Reality".

Closing the book on reggae music is

manifestly absurd. G. Piekhanov, when he was still a Marxist, commented in 1898: "A given trend in art may remain without any remarkable expression if an unfavourable combination of circumstances carries away, one after another, several talented people who might have given it expression. But the premature death of such talented people can prevent the artistic expression of this trend only if it is too shallow to produce new talent. However, the depth of any given trend in literature and art is determined by its importance for the class or stratum whose tastes it expresses, and by the social role played by that class or stratum; here too, in the last analysis, everything depends upon the course of social development and on the relation of social forces". (*The Role of the Individual in History*)

It is a sure bet that Tosh and the rest of the reggae greats, the "creation rockers" will find their way into the hearts and cassette players of the Ivans of Azania and the world, right on through to when the "right time" really does come, and when we can give meaning to the lyrics of "Where you gonna run":

"Where you gonna run/Where you gonna hide?
Who you trying to seek? What you tryin to find?
We're all in this race, everybody,
trying to keep the pace
You can't get away, there is no escape."

The power of Tosh's music flows in the final analysis from the understanding that there is no painless movement forward, and no way out either — not in some mythical afterlife, not in phoney promises offered up by "Babylon" to keep us shuffling in deadly confusion, and not even in Afrika — Peter always paid tribute to the African struggle (witness "Fight Apartheid") but never called upon Blacks to retreat to Afrika.

The spirit of Tosh will walk into the future, the Azanian people and their allies on this planet will see to that. We have work to do bury this shit-stem, and we will do it. ■

SACOS vs NSC

by Mncedisi Mbilini



After serving five years imprisonment on Robben Island, Mncedisi Mbilini served as Regional Organiser for AZAPO in the Eastern Cape and Border between 1984-1986. He is currently General Secretary of the Advice Centres Association as also of the Springbok Roses Rugby Football Club, a Saru affiliate. He is the President of the Frontier Soccer Union and the Secretary of the BCM (Queenstown chapter).

There has been a palace revolt within the ranks of the SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL ON SPORT (Sacos was founded in Durban during March 1973), which has long enjoyed the status of being the "sports wing of the liberation movement." The revolt has been spearheaded by those within Sacos who owe their political allegiance to the United Democratic Front (UDF) and has resulted in the queer phenomenon of many Sacos officials holding dual membership – both to Sacos and the UDF-inclined National Sports Congress (NSC).

Self-Proclaimed Sub-Committee

The Chairperson of the Western Cape Interim Committee of the NSC, Ngconde Balfour (who also happens to be the Vice-President of the Western Province Council on Sport (Wepcos) maintains that the NSC "has always been like a sub-committee of Sacos." (*South* September 14 - 20, 1989) While insisting that Sacos must align itself to the UDF, Balfour argues that the NSC "will never ban nor exclude anyone from the oppressed masses, irrespective of their affiliation or ideology."

But Balfour wields a big stick against Sacos, too: "If they abandon us and we have no option but to go on our own we will take the majority of Sacos sport-people with us." The NSC is a self-proclaimed "extension of Sacos" aimed at penetrating "the townships" and bringing "codes there into the fold of Sacos," elaborates the ANC. (*The New African* 24 April 1989)

The only differences between the NSC and Sacos which have hitherto surfaced revolve around Sacos's stated policy of non-sectarianism and the application of its Double Standards Resolution.

Double Standards Resolution

The Double Standards Resolution was first proposed in April 1977. At Sacos's third BGM at the Muslim Assembly Hall in Cape Town on 1-2 September 1979, an addendum was made to this Resolution. The Double Standards Resolution reads as follows:

"No member of Sacos shall in any way condone, encourage, foster or advocate racialism or discrimination in any form and no individual associated with Sacos or its members shall in any way condone, encourage, foster or advocate, racialism of discrimination in any way whatsoever, and for the purposes of this clause, the participation in, association with or support of all forms of government bodies designed to entrench and/or promote the separateness of people via bodies such as the Coloured Persons' Representative Council, the South African Indian Council, Local Affairs Committees, Community Councils, Management Committees and the like, or any successors thereto, shall be deemed to condone or encourage or foster or advocate – racialism and discrimination."

In a paper entitled "Double Standards: A New Dimension" (*Black Students Society Sports Special*: May 1981: BSS (University of Natal (Durban)), Reginald Feldman classifies "the enemy" targetted by Sacos as:

- (a) the known collaborators who had built up records of opportunism over the years in the fields of sports and politics,
- (b) unfortunate people who suffered from the slave mentality and believed in white superiority and non-white (sic!) inferiority,
- (c) social and political parasites who

- enjoyed white status in one season only to return to the non-racial fold the next where they would enjoy the meagre facilities that had been bitterly fought for by the committed,
- (d) out-and-out rascals who blatantly advanced their careers and filled their pockets by encouraging multi-nationalism and promoting and perpetuating it (3)

The significance of the Double Standards Resolution for Feldman is that "the commitment to non-racialism" became "a formal, written one and the incorporation of the double standards clause in the constitution of non-racial sports bodies meant that non-racialism had now, as it were, become law in non-racial sports bodies, it become truly constitutional which the dictionary defines as 'in accordance with, acting under, or abiding by, the fundamental laws governing a state, nation, society or other organized group: secured from, or controlled by, such laws.'" (3-4)

There is no doubt that the Double Standards Resolution includes a very healthy commitment to anti-collaboration and has aided in maintaining Sacos on a relatively even keel. Sacos has done pioneering work in the field of the sports struggle and in the Isolation Campaign and its efforts and contribution can never be disregarded or minimized.

Sportsapartheid

In 1981 Dr Joe Variava, then AZAPO's Secretary for Sport, delivered a paper at an AZAPO Congress calling on Sacos to draw the logical inference from its slogan "no normal sport in an abnormal society" viz that there can never be non-racial sport in a racist society. Sacos considers non-racialism to be both its goal and

"equally important, the means to attain it." ("The S. African Council of Sport" *Sacos Sport* Volume 2, September 1982, p8)

Sacos seems bent on seeing the race problem in our land as merely a matter of defective interpersonal relations. Hence the solution that Sacos posits is one of improving "race relations" viz non-racialism. But racism (as against racialism) is not simply a matter of individual prejudices and attitudes and therefore a moral failing: racism has come to inhere in the very institutions and structures of this society, it has percolated into the various aspects, spheres, working structures and institutions of society. As the WCC's Consultation on Racism, held at Notting Hill in May 1969, put it: "racist ideologies and propaganda are developed and disseminated as tools in economic, political and military struggles for power." It is therefore imperative that the liberal concentration on improving race relations at an individual level not detract from the acquisition of social, economic, political and cultural power by the masses. *Non-racialism is unadulterated liberal cant: anti-racism offers the only meaningful solution.*

The Sacos emphasis on what it laconically termed "sportsapartheid" made Sacos both unable and unwilling to come to terms with the race/class divide in Azanian society. Instead, Sacos spokesperson were heard to equate Reservoir Hills (a plush residential area in Durban designated for "Indian" occupation) with Kwa-Mashu (a Durban ghetto designated for "African" occupation), while trotting out the excuse that "the permit system" made it impossible for Sacos to organize sporting codes in "African" areas.

A demonstration of Sacos's undialectical approach and complete disregard for mobilization in the "African" townships and bantustans was its inability to deal with the 1982 Rebel Soccer tour. AZAPO scuttled this tour by persuading teams then participating in the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL) to refuse to play against the tourists. Sacos

used the Double Standards Resolution to maintain its distance from this strategy (one cannot dirty one's hands talking to Thabe's teams!), yet it commented:

"The obvious and logical next step is for the sportsmen of Soweto to join hands

existence." (Feldman op cit 6) On Biko Day 1982 at a Sacos General Meeting held in Port Elizabeth, the current President of Sacos, Joe Ebrahim remarked:

"It is important . . . to make our sportspersons aware that the time when we shall have to make a decision on whether sports is all-important is rapidly diminishing. Our discussion should centre around the stage at which we have to cease playing sport . . ."

Joe Ebrahim makes a distinction between principles, strategies and tactics in a paper entitled "Sacos Policy-Principles, Strategy & Tactics" (*BSS Sports Special* op cit 10): "A principle is an axiom ie a self-evident truth . . . (A) principle is inviolable and unchangeable. A tactic on the other hand is a method which is employed to attain a particular object or reach a specified goal. It may, therefore, be a method or a procedure with which we are to promote a specific principle or oppose the implementation of some scheme or another . . .

(O)ur principles will determine the tactics we employ and not the obverse." (12) "Strategies are deployed as the principal means of realizing long-term objectives, which constitute an organisation's principles," adds the Lot 14 Bus Passengers' Interim Committee in a pamphlet entitled "Death to Ethnic Sports!"

Ebrahim's statement (quoted above) betrays an inability to understand the role of sport and culture within the context of the national liberation struggle. Suffice it to say that the entire Isolation Campaign seems designed to isolate both white South Africa and the nascent Azania. The oppressed do not need to isolate themselves - their strategy must be to isolate the oppressor! Sacos has skewed its strategies towards "sacrifice" and self-immolation in a manner which defies the definitions Ebrahim so eloquently quotes.

Overall it must be emphasized that Sacos belongs to the oppressed and exploited people. Any change in policies and direction must occur within Sacos itself: after all, if Sacos is under attack, it is our duty to uphold and defend it.



with all non-racial sportsmen in the struggle to bring about a truly non-racial set-up in this country in a truly non-racial democracy." ("Soweto bursts the bubble of Rebel Sports Tours" *Sacos Sport* Volume 2 September 1982 p5)

Ever since the 1981 AZAPO Congress, AZAPO requested meetings with the Sacos executive and had made it quite clear that Sacos's policies - non-racialism, the Double Standards Resolution, the bar on international hotels, etc. needed explanation and scrutiny in democratic debate. In the wake of the rebel soccer tour, Sacos reciprocated AZAPO's invitation. That AZAPO succeeded in influencing Sacos policies is clear from an appraisal of the documents of the 1983 Sacos "Sport and Liberation" Conference, all of which emphasize the hegemony of the Black working class in the liberation movement.

" . . . To Cease Playing Sport "

The overall thrust of Sacos policy is to destroy the system's grand design to use sport "as a lightning conductor to divert the thoughts of the masses from their miserable

A Disruptive Faction

The NSC has grouped itself into nothing but a disruptive faction hellbent on dragging Sacos into the Charterist camp. The oppressed and exploited are all too familiar with these manoeuvrings. Some examples:

1. The Azanian Student's Organisation (Azaso) (later renamed South African National Students Congress (Sansco)), a student body formed by AZAPO, switched its ideological stance to non-racialism in 1981 and its then President addressed the Congress of the National Union of South African Students (Nusas), thus reversing years of struggle started by Biko and others in SASO.
2. Most affiliates of COSATU have literally had the Kliptown Charter foisted onto them, without any explanation as to what the Charter's contents are.
3. The Media Worker's Association of South Africa (Mwasa) and the Commercial Catering and Allied Worker's Union of South Africa

(Ccawusa) have been similarly riven, with those insisting on the "Charterist" road constituting the minority in both instances.

4. The majority in the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (Nadel) moved into the Black Lawyer's Association (BLA) as a direct result of sectarianism.

It is quite clear that the NSC's orientation is that of collaborating with racist sports bodies and sneaking racist South Africa back into international sport. John Perlman, in an article entitled "Victory thrill as soccer unity talks hurdle the obstacles" (*Weekly Mail* September 15 to 21, 1989) proposes the following "summarised scenario": "... (U)nity first, development programmes to balance up inequalities in facilities and resources second, gradual re-admission to international sport third. "Feldmans warning resonates:

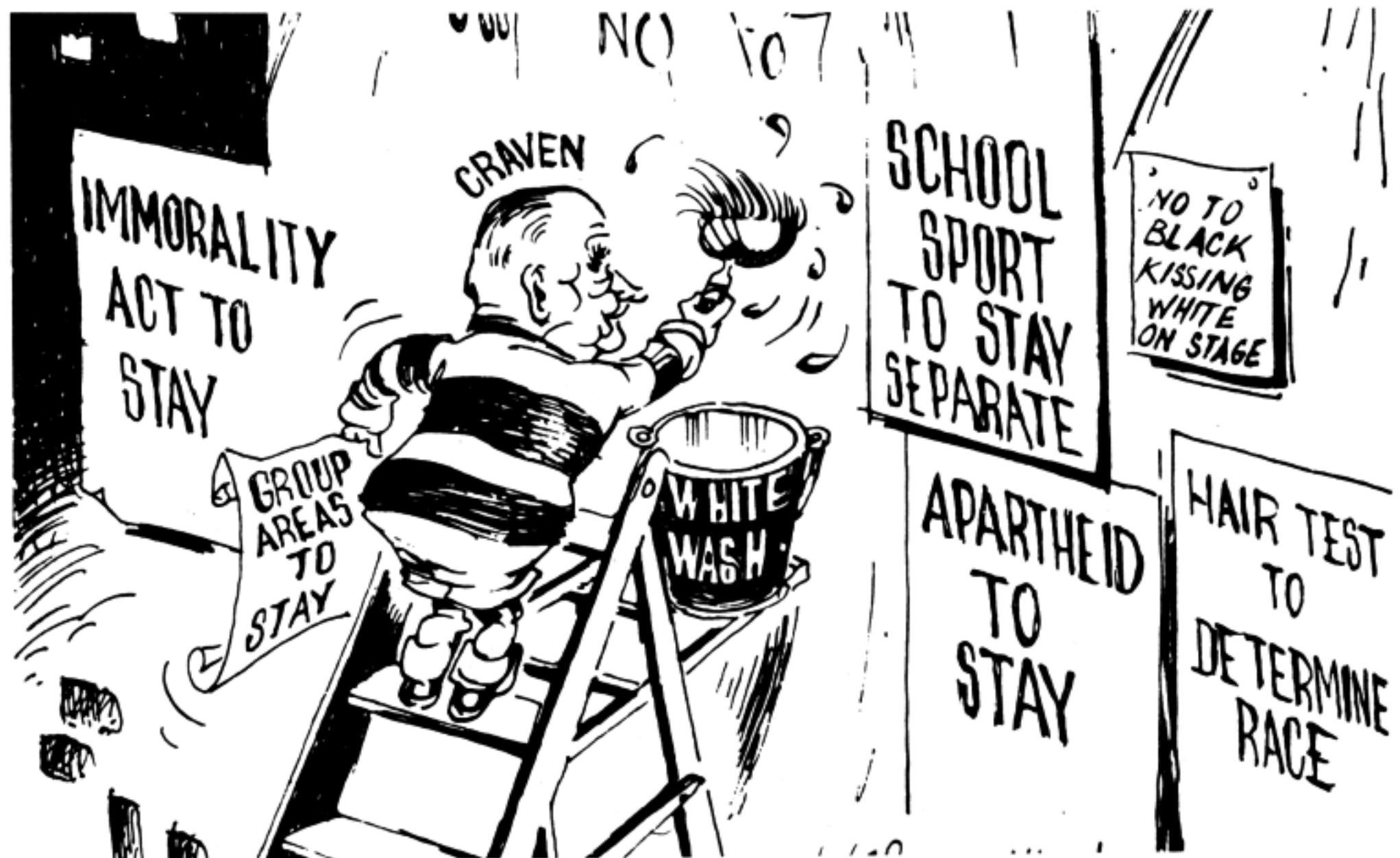
"Most of us will, I am sure, find it very strange that certain persons of influence should find it appropriate at this time of increasing isolation of South Africa to suggest a national convention of sport-

smen which will fly in the face of all attempts to isolate the country, which will negate all efforts to increase the pressure on the privileged sportsmen and which will bring us to the negotiating table where the only result can be a watering down of our demands and a compromise which will set our progress back decades." (8)

The Solution

The real problem is the ideology and the whole set of values that are enforced in South African society in general and in sport in particular.

The solution to the sports impasse is contained in the ideology of BC and is elaborated on in the Draft Position Paper on the Azanian Sports Manifesto which we present to you for comment, criticism and debate. The BCM has concentrated on the correct strategy of operating within Sacos: our task must be build Sacos under the hegemony of the Black working class and to reflect the contents and direction of the Azanian Sports Manifesto within Sacos and in all our sporting and cultural organisations. ■



Palace revolt within SACOS.

DRAFT POSITION PAPER ON THE AZANIAN SPORTS MANIFESTO

This Position Paper was arrived at by the Black Consciousness Movement (Durban and Districts) on February 18, 1989.

NOTING that the resistance of the dispossessed masses of occupied Azania (i.e. racist South Africa) has always taken intensely cultural forms,

AND NOTING FURTHER that sport is merely a part of culture, a part which provides a "value receptacle" for dominant social values – for qualities such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, mental and physical fitness, perseverance, patriarchy, etc,

AND REALIZING that sport is a vital component of the developing Azanian culture – a culture which fosters and strengthens the daring to break convention and the breaking of new ground,

AND NOTING the heroic sacrifices and achievements of Black sportspersons both in the national and the international arena and the promotion of the slogan "There can be no normal sport in an abnormal society",

AND EMPHASIZING that the slogan "no normal sport in an abnormal society" inexorably leads to the correct position that there can be no "non-racial sport" in a racist society,

AND UNDERLINING that the notion of "non-racial sport" is intimately linked to the notion of "multi-national/multi-racial/ethnic" sport,

AND UNDERSTANDING that sport currently represents the desperate hopes of millions of Azanians to escape from a lifetime of poverty, degradation, humiliation and exploitation – a hope which the very workings of apartheid-capitalism cruelly frustrates and dashes,

AND ESCHEWING the proclivity of

organisations engaged in the sports struggle to concentrate on the international arena and the Isolation Campaign to the exclusion of the mobilization and organization of Black sportspersons as part and parcel of the liberation movement,

WE HEREBY RESOLVE THAT:

1. Black sportspersons in occupied Azania be organized in all-Black leagues and codes at all levels-district, provincial, national, all-African and international,
2. Black Consciousness – with its anti-racist and scientific socialist content – offers the only programme capable of linking sport to the overall liberation thrust,
3. Consistent and principled struggle be conducted against the interlinked and misleading concepts of non-racialism, multi-racialism, multi-national sport and ethnicity in sport,
4. The concept of Blackness as a uniting force among the oppressed, underpinned by the hegemony of the Black working class, is the principal weapon in the mobilization and organisation of Black sportspersons,
5. The Isolation Campaign means the isolation of *white* South Africa and implies the maximum development of the nascent Azania, else the oppressed and exploited will isolate themselves needlessly and fruitlessly,
6. Sport must be broadly organized among the Black masses and equally among Black women and men,
7. Facilities must be built and located throughout the Black

ghettos, commencing with the upgrading of existing facilities and the construction of new facilities in the areas which are most dilapidated with inadequate (if any) sportsgrounds, playgrounds, parks and recreation centres,

8. Co-operation and the learning of skills and innovations from each other be emphasized in sport, while friendly competition be given second place, enabling the masses to participate broadly thus contributing to their overall health and recreation,
9. Mass participation will be centred in the sportgrounds and playgrounds and not in the professional arena: it is in the playgrounds and sportsgrounds that the creativity of the Black masses in sports activity will be unleashed and further developed,
10. For a period of time, the Azanian state will retain, sponsor and subsidize national sports teams and even professional sportspersons but this will be given second place in terms of resources allocated and attention devoted,
11. There will be criticism and struggle against the "professional mentality", the notion that those engaged in sport as a more or less full time pursuit and subsidized to one degree or another in order to be able to do so, somehow deserve a superior social position,
12. The control of sport by capitalists and the prostitution of sport to private profit and the treatment of sportspersons as merely a means to that end will be abolished along with reactionary practices and relations e.g. the absolute authority of

coaches and sports administrators, etc.,

13. The differences between full time professional sports persons and the masses of people will be narrowed step by step: professionals will be involved in productive labour and political and ideological struggle together with the masses and will play an active role in assisting the development of mass sports activities throughout so-

ciety and in taking part in these activities together with the masses as well,

14. The Azanian state will eliminate poverty and oppression and transform all spheres, including sport, into vehicles through which the millions formerly oppressed can unite and struggle to realize their higher interests and advance humanity as a whole,

15. The Black Proletariat will develop sport to promote its outlook and values and the social and political relationships that serve its revolutionary interests,

16. The Azanian state will foster and strengthen the unity and solidarity between the masses of people in Azania, in Africa and internationally. ■

COSATU - NACOS SPORTS RALLY



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SAWCO T-SHIRTS

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CAPTION: Natal council on sport (NACOS) in palace revolt within SACOS

A MAN DIED

A Man Died
the day the dum-dum bullets
slugged into the unsuspecting backs
of defenceless men and women
in the scorching sun.

A Man Died
at Sharpeville and in Langa
when he saw black skin
ripped apart and turn
into rivulets of red
which later
coagulated
into mounds of
accusations
dark and omin-
ous.

A Man Died
when those
bullets cut
through blue,
black flesh
opening it like
ripe old pome-
granates
scattering red
droplets
all over the
earth.

A Man Died
long before the
cancer
slipped past his
defences
and started ea-
ting up his
lungs

A Man Died
KUKUZA KU-
KANXELE
in the blood red
sun

A Man Lived
when the ululations
and resounding "Ngawethu's"
spelt out poignantly
the certitude of freedom
in the African sun.

A Man Lives
His name was Mangaliso
in the Southern sun
KUKUZA KUKANXELE!!!*
KUKUZA KUKANXELE!!!

Vernie A February



Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe.

When I Die

*(a poem Sobukwe might have writ-
ten)*

When I die
may my funeral (like my life) be pol-
itical
and serve the struggle
may my people
use my coffin as a platform
to raise the banner

When I die
may my body be
used
to awaken the
indifferent and
complacent tribe
my eyes, to trace
dreams and
hopes
shattered by in-
justice
my ears be used
as drums
to recall the cries
of the dispos-
sessed and
downtrodden

When I die
may fiery
speeches and
freedom songs
replace passive
hymns
may the Green
and Gold and
Black
fly at every
mountain

May my loved
ones take up the
torch
and destroy the
lies

written into our history
so that a new Brotherhood may
emerge
to embrace our land

When I die
may some poet
write of the agony
and deep pain
that followed my days
and the inhumanity
of my captivity

Muhammad Omarruddin

"AFRICAN" vs "BLACK"?

by VANESCO MAFORA

On February 26, 1978 Comrade Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, also known as "the Professor" and "the Defier of the Undeafable", passed away. The Soweto Action Committee, then the torchbearer of BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS (BC), organized Sobukwe's funeral.

The then Chairperson of the Soweto Action Committee, Ishmael Mkhabela, made the following prophecy at this funeral:

"Sobukwe's death could be a signal of the beginning of a chapter."

With the benefit of hindsight, we can confidently assert that Mkhabela was absolutely correct.

The immediate aftermath of the Prof's burial was the launch of a new political organisation expounding the ideology of BC. This was the AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION.

Historical organisations were jolted by the pathbreaking role of the Black consciousness Movement: all their excuses about the impossibility of "above-ground" mobilization were finally shattered on the streets of Soweto in 1976. No organisation remained untouched by BC ideology: in fact, BC cadres streamed into all the historical organisations in exile.

Within the country, Charterists felt the need either to woo the BCM or to create their own organisations by wooing away the membership of the BCM. When it became obvious that AZAPO was determined to retain its organisational independence, Charterist organisations mushroomed across the country and liberalism breathed easily again.

At the NACTU Congress held on 6-7 August 1988, the term "Black" in the NACTU constitution was replaced by the term "African". Tensions became apparent within the "Azania School", with people defining themselves as BC or Pan-Africanist.

The reasons given for the change from "Black" to "African" are pathetic in the extreme, with some even accusing BC of being racist in its outlook and in particular

in its exclusion of whites from its ranks.

The term "Black" is not an invention of the BCM: it finds expression in the 1959 Africanist Manifesto and the constitution of the Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU) – a youth organisation aligning itself with the Pan Africanist Movement (PAM) as well.

While it is true that it was the BCM which gave a crisp definition to the term "Black", the term itself emerged from mass struggles against racism. "Black" emerged as its own *self-identity and not from any Congress resolution. It represents the self-consciousness of a racially oppressed people. Black is beautiful! Black is revolutionary!*

The flimsy attempt to de-emphasize Black and the race/class struggle has the same compromising effect that the usage of "non-European" and "non-white" had some years ago. It minimizes our long, continuing mass struggle to finish the Azanian revolution.

In this last decade of the 20th century, the Black revolution remains unfinished. Thus to replace Black as an expression of the universal of freedom with African defined as a "ready-made" universal of culture is a flight from the harsh Azanian reality.

To be sure, any attempt to render "Black" against "African" amounts to a distortion of pan-Africanism itself. Both in the BCM and the PAM there are elements who are actively attempting to sabotage the inexorable synthesis of the pan-Africanist and BC ideologies which is referred to in the *Position Paper* (see pg. 89). We call Prof as our witness:

". . . In every struggle, whether national or class, the masses do not fight an abstraction. They do not hate oppression or capitalism. They concretise these and hate the oppressor, be he the Governor-General or a colonial power, the landlord or the factory-owner or, in South Africa, the white man. But they hate these groups because they associate them with their oppression! Remove the association and you remove the hatred . . . (It is plain dishonesty to say I hate the sjam-

bok and not the one who wields it."

– "Future of the Africanist Movement", *The Africanist*, January 1959

Lest there be any doubt, BC's position is that biologically speaking, "races" do not exist. Hence BC states, as does Pan-Africanism, that there is ONLY ONE RACE viz THE HUMAN RACE. Nevertheless, BC – like Pan-Africanism – points out that people are divided into oppressors and oppressed, colonizers and colonized etc and, in this context, race exists as a political concept.

There is no doubt that the primitive nature of the debate on the concepts "Black" and "African" fails to recognize that these terms are in no way irreconcilable and that both terms belong to our rich tapestry of struggle.

In an interview held during March 1989, a leader of the PAC told *International Viewpoint*:

"What I'm trying to explain is that the revival of the PAC's activities, of pan-Africanism, was hindered first by the banings and the punishments, and secondly by following BCM ideology, thinking that it was a PAC ideology . . ." ("The fall and rise of the Pan Africanist Congress" IV No 165, June 12, 1989 at 23).

The launch of PAM occurred at Soweto on 2-3 December 1989. We earnestly hope that the long overdue synthesis between Pan Africanism and BC becomes top priority on the liberation agenda. The Azania School needs to close ranks now as never before.

We believe that there is a dire need to enter the debate about the alleged differences between Pan Africanism and BC to clarify and refine the ideological issues. We believe that the *Position Paper* helps in doing this and, while we are aware that its contents will be controversial, we hope that it stimulates sharp debate and struggle on an ideological plane rather than the banal argument more suited to a children's playground which runs "My organisation/ideology is better/older than yours, so there!" ■

DRAFT POSITION PAPER ON THE IDEOLOGIES OF PAN AFRICANISM AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AS THEY HAVE DEVELOPED IN OCCUPIED AZANIA (i.e. SOUTH AFRICA)

This Position Paper was arrived at by the Durban and Districts chapter of the Black Consciousness Movement after a seminar held on 25 February 1989.

NOTING that for a people to survive in struggle it must be on their own terms,

AND THEREFORE NOTING that the correct theoretical, philosophical and ideological constructs emanate from the people's collective wisdom which is a synthesis of their culture and their real experience of struggle,

AND EMPHASIZING that both Pan Africanism and BC are developmental ideologies in that they do not prescribe the relationship of people to the world step by breathtaking step but rather take as their departure point the concrete experience of people in struggle and their shared past,

AND EMPHASIZING FURTHER that the shared past is the basis of consciousness, of knowing, of being,

AND ASSERTING that Pan Africanism and BC emerged at distinct moments in the history of occupied Azania and have therefore assumed disparate organisational forms culminating in exile in the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and the re-grouping of BC organisations banned in 1977 as the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCM(A)),

AND UNDERLINING that the Sharpeville Uprising of 1960 organised by the PAC marked a firm transition from the politics of protest to those of resistance while the Soweto Uprising of 1976 organised by the BCM marked a transition from the politics of resistance to those of rebellion;

AND UNDERLINING FURTHER that the extent to which both spontaneous resistance and fierce, unending rebellion

is transformed into conscious and thoroughgoing revolution will determine whether we merely rattle the chains of our oppression or shatter them completely;

AND NOTING that in 1960 and 1976 respectively the PAC and BCM demonstrated their firm roots in the consciousness of the oppressed masses and showed decisively that they represent a single historical continuity,

AND NOTING WITH ALARM AND DEEP CONCERN developments within the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (Nactu) resulting in squabbles about the use of the terms "African" and "Black" respectively (Congress on 6-7 August 1988) and the attendance of "BC unions" at the Worker's Summit (March 4-5 1989),

WE HEREBY BRING the following evidence to show that BC and Pan Africanism constitute part of a single ideological family:-

- (a) It was the BCM which popularised the annual commemoration of the Sharpeville Uprising as Heroes' Day on the 21st March;
- (b) both Pan Africanism and BC emphasize the National Question and the Land Question and delineate the repossession of occupied soil as a key component of their programmes;
- (c) both ideologies stand pointedly and vehemently opposed to the liberal and reformist position of the Kliptown Charter (sometimes referred to as the "Freedom" Charter);
- (d) it was the BCM which popularised in mass struggle the name "Azania" adopted by the PAC in exile;
- (e) the concept of the African Personality and the basis of the PAC's Status Campaign outlined in 1959 reached their apogee in BC's emphasis on psychological emancipation, Black Self Pride,

Self Affirmation and Self Reliance in the 1970s and 1980s;

- (f) the position of scientific socialism – currently shared by both ideologies – developed out of rather nebulous economic policies which were *progressive* in their time, place and context viz African Socialism adopted by the PAC in 1959 and Black Communalism adopted by the Black People's Convention in 1975;
- (g) BC's emphasis on the hegemony of the Black Working Class takes Sobukwe's emphasis on class differences (eg. the "Indian" merchant class as against the working class) to its logical conclusion;
- (h) both BC and Pan Africanism share a policy of non- or anti-collaboration with the oppressors and their political instruments and both ideologies reject white tutelage in the struggles of the oppressed;
- (i) both ideologies emphasize the cultural dimensions of struggle and reject all value systems which seek to make the dispossessed foreigners in the land of their birth;
- (j) the emphasis on African Theology and the role of the churches in the 1950s saw a systematic exposition of Black Theology and the role of the churches, mosques and temples in the 1970s and 1980s;
- (k) Raboroko's proposed use of Swahili *alternatively* a synthetic all-inclusive African language called "Siafurika" was not developed further by BC, but saw an emphasis at the 1987 Congress of the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) on the use of African languages rather than the foreign English medium;
- (l) both ideologies regard the strategy of white exclusion as pivotal to their programmes;

- (m) both ideologies reject the very concept of protection of minority rights as profoundly undemocratic;
- (n) both ideologies regard self-determination and the mapping of their own destinies by the oppressed and the exploited as being pivotal to genuine liberation and resist the interference and domination by missionaries, liberals, "radicals" or progressive-democrats.

WE BELIEVE FURTHER that the alleged differences between Pan Africanism and BC are in no way irreconcilable and for this proposition we bring the following evidence:

- (a) The definition of *Black* as all those who are oppressed politically, exploited economically and discriminated against socially and who identify as a unit in the struggle for liberation and the definition of *African* as one who owes his or her *only* loyalty to Afrika and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority are both definitions which emphasize the oppressed and the exploited and their interests as having primacy in the struggle, and they both have arguable advantages viz:
 - (i) *Black* is a term capable of fostering identification with struggles of people of colour beyond the shores of Africa;
 - (ii) *Black* consists of two prongs viz the reality of oppression and liberatory consciousness and hence encapsulates a political strategy which excludes all members of the ruling class and collaborators therewith. It captures 2 cardinal principles of BC viz the unity of the oppressed and anti-collaboration;
 - (iii) The concept of Blackness at a practical political level aids in the simplification of the conflict from a series of many skirmishes to the battle perceived as a total confrontation between the oppressors (whites) and the oppressed (Blacks);

- (iv) The word *African* reflects a sharp definition of the National Question which sees the indigenous African as the core of the Azanian nation, with the other Black groups being appendaged to this core and forces a choice – either with the African majority or with the settler minority;
- (v) The term *African* positively defines an emerging nation and identifies with the rest of Africa, rejecting the geographical boundaries imposed by colonialism and neo-colonialism;
- (vi) In terms of a political programme, the definition of *African* is posited by an emphasis on the axiom "One race, the human race", and, therefore, on anti-racism;
- (vii) The term *Black* specifically excludes white participation. Since the excision of whites is also central to the Pan Africanist programme, the definition of *Black* is reflective of a clear cut approach which takes Pan Africanism to its logical end;
- (b) The PAC emerged from the well of the African National Congress (ANC) and upholds the 1949 Programme of Action which the ANC deviated from in 1955 with its adoption of the Kliptown Charter. BC emerged out of the palpable political vacuum caused by the post – Sharpeville paralysis. BC as an ideology combines the best in the historical tradition of the ANC and the basic tenets of Pan Africanism and has developed beyond these into an oppressed class ideology;
- (c) The idea of a United States of Africa – from Cape to Cairo and from Morocco to Madagascar – which seems with hindsight to be naively idealistic was hardly so at a time when country after country was gaining political independence from the colonialists in a veritable tidal wave from north to south. No liberation movement can neglect the fact that Azania is a vital part of Africa and her liberation is crucial to the achieve-

ment of the Pan Africanist ideal which ideal is not at all inconsistent with the unity of the oppressed and exploited internationally;

- (d) The PAC emphasised charismatic leadership while BC strongly eschews the growth of personality cults. While Pan Africanism and the early BCM placed much faith in spontaneity, BC since the 1980s emphasises vanguard leadership. The kernel of both programmes lies, however, in the mobilization of the masses and in their revolutionary potential.

WE HEREBY RESOLVE THAT:

- (a) a closed national seminar be called to thrash out both the ideological and strategic differences within the "Azania School";
- (b) a United Front of the Pan Africanist and BC Movements is critically and vitally necessary;
- (c) it is elemental to both the Pan Africanist and BC ideologies that the economic and cultural aspects of struggle – the standard of living and the quality of life – are interdependent and retroactive;
- (d) it is vitally necessary to resist the transubstantiation of Black history to European radical theory and to expose the failed efforts to render the historical being of Black people into a construct of historical materialism, to reduce our existence to merely an antagonism to capitalist organization. It is only the Azania School which can do this;
- (e) Intensive and extensive studies of the life and works of Anton Lembede, Ashby Peter Mda, Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, Bantu Steve Biko, Ongopotse Abraham Ramothibi Tiro, Mthuli ka Shezi and other Azanian luminaries be piloted as a priority;
- (f) the Pan Africanist analysis of the National and Land Questions and the BC analysis of the Social Question need to be more cohesively and systematically interwoven so that the common banner slogan "One People in One Azania, One Nation" is maintained and developed;
- (g) Seminal ideas such as the inexor-

able synthesis of Pan Africanism with BC must not be smothered by pettiness, point-scoring and the endeavour to create fiefdoms on foundations of sand;

(h) the interests of the toiling masses

and their righteous struggle against settler colonialism and imperialism are paramount and vision, purposefulness and an ability to create *praxis* are urgently required from the national

leadership of the Azania School.

TOGETHER WE STRIVE, TOGETHER WE TOIL, TO ACHIEVE ONE PEOPLE IN ONE AZANIA, ONE NATION ■

I WILL ONLY VOTE IN A FREE AZANIA



BLACK THEOLOGY REVISITED:

by ITUMELENG JERRY MOSALA

Scientists of religion in general and sociologists of religion in particular are in agreement that all religions reflect social-cultural concerns of people at different levels of historical development. To use common sociological language, religion is as much a dependant as an independant social variable.

Relativity

Apart from anything else this way of looking at religion is important for re-introducing a historical perspective in the study and understanding of religion. *It is thus no longer scientifically admissible to speak of any religious tradition as the supreme means through which the supreme uncontested God revealed itself.* We are, therefore, at last able to speak of the only non-ideological relativity in respect of both God and religion, namely historical relativity.

Armed with this thorough-going historical perspective on the nature of and origins of all religions, one is able to de-ideologise and expose the true character of the clash between colonial and indigenous religion in South Africa for in this clash is embodied not only the conflict between two religious outlooks, but, more fundamentally, the collision between two historically different social systems: pre-capitalist African social formations and Western Capitalist social formations. Any attempt, therefore, to understand the dissonance between African religions and Christianity must start with an analysis of these two social systems.

From Communal to Tributary Formations

By the time of conquest from the 17th century onwards, African so-

cieties had developed from communal to tributary social formations. As communal formations they had been characterised by the communal ownership of the fundamental means of production: land and cattle. Ideologically these organisations were reinforced by a highly pervasive ancestor cult reflecting the relatively low level of the forces of production. In other words the African forefathers and foremothers were the key to unravelling the mysteries and resolving the conflicts of the natural world which sometimes acted in a hostile manner to African producers of the communal society. Science was ideological and to a large extent religious. The purpose was, however, the same as in all societies, namely the harnessing of natural forces in order to meet all-round human needs.

The relative success of communal producers in taming nature, coupled with differences in physical capabilities and geographical placements, as well as historical struggles between groups resulted in the production and control of surplus products which in turn made possible the development of internal differentiations within this society. It is difficult to say with precision when this transition occurred. Nevertheless, the outcome was tributary social systems with chiefs and the royal nobility as the ruling classes of the new society. The fundamental characteristic of this stage of development was the extraction of tribute in the form of brisket of slaughtered and hunted animals, labour rent on the royal fields, as well as the sole control of the allocation of land by the chief and of stray cattle (*matimela*) and therefore of his advantaged ability to practise the system of *mafisa* (loan cattle).

It is important, however, to remember that the communal system existed



for a long time in articulation with the tributary system. That is to say, notwithstanding the economic and social divisions created by the tributary organisation, the values and norms of the communal system prevailed alongside the new arrangements. It would be deceptive, though, to imagine that they persisted unchanged by the new conditions, even if it was only in form and function. Hence in this society, the father of the household surrendered his priestly and herbalist roles to the chief or royal appointees. The household ancestors also became subordinate to the royal ancestors.

The above brief details are being spelled out in order first, to avoid romanticism about the nature of the society that colonial capitalism conquered, and second, in order to explain the social-historical reasons for the conflict between indigenous people and colonial foreigners. One more point needs to be made about tributary African societies, therefore, before the conflict with colonial society can be addressed: while the chief's position of power derived from his appropriation of tribute, the system, by virtue of its articulation with the communal one, was counterbalanced by a complicated network of redistribution of the surplus. In times of famine and poor harvest, for in-

stance, the chief's granary would be the source of food for those affected, and his cattle would be used to implement the *mafisa* system. Hence the saying: *Kgosi ke kgosi ka batho* (A Chief is a chief only because of the people).

The point being made, therefore, is that on the one hand the danger to romanticise by viewing African pre-capitalist societies as internally undifferentiated should be avoided, and on the other hand the fact should not be lost sight of that notwithstanding these divisions African producers prior to colonialism had access to the fundamental means of production: land and cattle.

African religion, therefore, was shaped by the material conditions and relations of this society, and functioned as a cultural-ideological tool in the process of producing and reproducing African societies. In this regard it is not in principle different from any other religion in the world. The difference is in the fact that it is connected with the African social-historical reality.

Christianity

It is not necessary to go into the same kind of detail with regard to Western Christianity. Suffice it to point out that the latter is historically traceable in its Catholic version to its co-optation by the state during the reign of Emperor Constantine in the 4th century, and in its Protestant variation to the rise of bourgeois capitalist society in the 16th century. *In both versions it has functioned as a cultural-ideological tool for the production and reproduction of European feudal and capitalist social relations.*

Thus the attempt to implant Christianity among the indigenous Black people from the 17th century onwards, was more than an attempt to win religious converts; it was an effort to transform, by dismantling, African societies. Both the missionaries and the indigenous people knew this. It was for this reason that the conflict took the form of a military-political struggle. That struggle has been a protracted one. It never ceased.

Black theology is an attempt to theorise that struggle from a position of commitment to the Black side of the conflict that has its roots in the 17th century.

Western Theology

White Western theology as practised both in the West and in the colonies has more than validated the assertion that in every epoch the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling classes. Protestant theology in particular has served, consciously or unconsciously, as the ideological justification of capitalist relations of production and distribution. This point has been made and demonstrated before and does not need to be laboured here. Suffice it to indicate that its emphasis on the fundamental corruptibility of humans and its location of heaven outside history have worked well to mystify exploitative social relations of production and to postpone the demand for justice to an unknown future. Even when an attempt was made to make the gospel relevant to the needs of people in the present, capitalist society could not be transcended, either in thought or in practice. This becomes crystal clear when one looks at the limitations of the "secularisation" theologians of the 1960's, who identified theological relevance with resignation to capitalist technology and industrialisation. From these attempts emerged Theologies of Development which were commensurate with neo-colonial developmentalist policies championed by imperialist countries in the 1960's.

Liberation Theology

As a response, first, to the inherent failure of the Development programmes, and second, to the accompanying hollowness of the theologies of development, Latin Americans opted for a theology of liberation.

Their argument was simple if poignantly clear: the underdevelopment of the underdeveloped countries is causally related to the development of developed countries. The logical outcome of this analysis was that libera-

tion and not development was the solution to the problems of the exploited masses of Latin America. This analysis of the Latin American reality led to the exposure of the inherent inapplicability of white Western theology in any of its forms, whether conservative or progressive. What was needed was a theology that emerges from the experience of the struggle of the poor peasants and working class masses of Latin America.

The theology of liberation, therefore, had to make a complete break with white theology. Nothing short of this would qualify their theology as a tool of the struggle in the liberation process which was already underway.

BT and BC

In South Africa, where a qualitatively different set of material and social conditions existed, Black theologians in response to these determinate historical conditions, evolved a Black Theology of liberation. This theology, like the Latin American theology of liberation, is based on an analysis of the reality of Black experiences and struggles in South Africa. It is not the outcome of philosophical speculation by a privileged minority. It is rather the result of objective historical circumstances.

Black Theology as a theological expression and theorisation of the Black struggle for liberation cannot be understood outside the context of the Black Consciousness philosophy. This latter phenomenon is itself the product of an accurate analysis of the Black experience within the wider social-material reality of South Africa.

Black theology seeks to reflect theologically on the nature of Black oppression and exploitation in order to arm the new Black subjects that Black Consciousness creates with an awareness of the theological validity of the struggle for liberation. There is again no need to belabour the point here. Black Theology apologises to no one for its existence. It owes its allegiance to the oppressed and exploited people only, no one else.

Reality

It is important, however, to respond even if only briefly, to some of the challenges that the ideological climate in the country today has created.

Recently it has been implied, and in some quarters asserted that the use of class tools to analyse society necessitate the irrelevance of Black Theology. Apart from the racist arrogance of this claim, Black Theology's response is that the onus is with those who assert this to demonstrate its irrelevance. More importantly, though, Black Theology argues that being a committed theorisation of reality from the Black experience, its lifespan is inextricably bound up with this reality.

Black theology insists also that racism as a socio-political structure must be distinguished from racialism which refers only to attitudes of people about other people. It thus refuses to separate oppression from exploitation, arguing that the former

is indispensable for the successful execution of the latter. It is idealist to imagine that exploitation can be sustained without oppression. Thus in the South African context, racism as an oppressive structure is the soul of capitalist exploitation. To assert the contrary is to be ahistorical.

The historical self-manifestation of capitalism in this country has been from the beginning racist. For this reason, Black Theology's anti-racist struggle is inseparable from its anti-capitalist struggle which is unthinkable without its anti-racist struggle.

Abstract class struggles against abstract capitalism is not part of Black Theology's brief. For Black Theology class is race and race is class in this context. This reality remains despite mystifications from the racist left about the creation of a Black middle class.

Dependencies of all kinds are rejected by Black Theology, whether they be political, social, economic, or even theoretical-intellectual ones. It is clear

that dependencies constitute the basis of oppression and exploitation. "It is therefore important to point out that class analysis as a theoretical tool does not create the experience of class oppression and exploitation."

Thus Black oppressed and exploited classes know their experience and they know that it is articulated through a racist political structure.

There is, therefore no turning back from the anti-racist, anti-capitalist struggle of Black Theology, despite challenges from the right and the "left."

One may end appropriately by stating in characteristic Biblical fashion that "Not everyone who says liberation, liberation, wants to bring about a just society". Black people will have to rely on themselves *only* to bring this about. The struggle that Black Theology is waging is an anti-racist, anti-capitalist struggle. Black Theology will not be co-opted or made to be defunct as long as the material reality that gave birth to it persists. ■



POSITION PAPER ON "BLACK THEOLOGY REVISITED"

A group of revolutionaries met at Inchanga on 5 September 1987 and interrogated whether a true Black Theology existed in occupied Azania. This Position Paper is the result of their deliberations.

REALIZING THAT Black Theology (BT) developed in the crucible of the Black people's struggle against oppression, exploitation and dehumanisation and constitutes an attempt to radically re-define the traditional religious message which belongs to the ideological arsenal of the oppressors;

AND REALIZING FURTHER that there is a deliberate attempt to sap Blackness out of BT and to deflect it into reformist and reactionary channels as evidenced by the Kairos Document prepared on 13th September 1985;

AND BEING WELL AWARE that this attempt to pervert Black Theology is motivated by the deepening struggles since the historic events of the Rand Revolt of September 3rd, 1984 and aims only to create a complacent, Church-going "black" Christian community (see the Preface to the Second Edition of the Kairos Document);

AND NOTING THAT:

1. There is no theology which is ideologically harmless;
2. Western theology is a product of imperialism and a tool of ideological control over the masses which becomes an opiate;
3. The initiative in developing BT has been surrendered to revisionists who have blindly accepted (a la Kairos's "prophetic theology" or "people's theology") the Bible as the word of God by listening

to the eloquent voices of the ruling classes in the Bible rather than the suppressed voices of the oppressed and the exploited;

4. We have the stirrings of a true BT in the use of materialist tools of analysis which take a positive stand for the oppressed and against the oppressor;
5. All attempts to define BT have hitherto easily fallen into the imperialist trap of defining religion as *ipso facto* Christian religion and therefore ignoring and subverting the religions of the colonized people;
6. There is a dire need to develop Black content and thought in the Islamic, Hindu and other religions in occupied Azania as there is a consistent attempt to de-politicize religion both by the ruling class and by the priesthood;
7. The Western Cape Uprising of 1985 showed the potential for the Black voice asserting itself in an Islam which has been misused particularly by the "Indian" merchant class in occupied Azania;
8. The concept of *Jihad* as articulated by the following Quranic verse:
"Oh you who believe, wherever there is tumult and oppression rise up against it (with your hand) until there is no more."
was taken up by the masses in revolutionary action in the 1985 Western Cape Uprising and was a slap in the face for the *mullahs* (i.e. the Muslim clergy);
9. The *Hijra* being a journey to close ranks in order to fight the common enemy combined with *Jihad* (i.e. righteous war) is the theological justification for BC from an Islamic perspective;



10. Materialist tools of analysis have been positively used by Muslim scholars such as the late Dr Ali Shariati.

WE HEREBY RESOLVE THAT:

1. Materialist tools of analysis be used to develop BT into a potent and vibrant revolutionary force;
2. All attempts to depoliticize religion by elevating it above the unfolding struggles of the masses must be exposed and eliminated;
3. The Kairos Document and its "prophetic theology" must be exposed as part of a scheme to engineer a negotiated solution with the powers-that-be and to dilute the militancy of the masses;
4. The priority is to make BT a material force rather than an opiate. ■



LEARNING WARFARE BY MAKING WARFARE

MAO TSE-TUNG AND CHIMURENGA by Paresh Pandya (Johannesburg, Skotaville Publishers, 1988) Available from Skotaville Publishers, P.O. Box 32483, Braamfontein. Telephone: (011) 339-1871, 272 pp, softcover, R25,35

THIS work was originally presented to the University of South Africa (Unisa) in 1986 in fulfilment of a Master of Arts Degree in Strategic Studies.

The Objective

Pandya summarizes his objective in the following words:

"The reason for this book was to investigate whether the change in *status quo* that brought ZANU into power can be solely attributed to Mao Tse-Tung's theory of insurgency," (pg. 228)

with the rider that:

". . . (L)essons or conclusions applicable to a similar situation in South Africa might be found to emerge as a by-product of research." (pg.9)

The following disclaimer is made:

"This book is not aimed at determining how successful or well the war was fought, it does not seek to examine the problems encountered by the participants, for example, the problems of opposition by ZAPU, of support from the USSR favouring ZAPU, of the impact of the war's being carried into Mozambique, of the difficulties caused by fluctuations in the international relations of Mozambique or of ZANU itself." (pgs. 230-1)

This Review

I aim to evaluate Pandya's study in the light of Mao's analysis and basic line and theory on the question of warfare and the actual application thereof (if any) by ZANLA.

I shall first present Pandya's version of Mao's theory and his version of ZANLA'S application thereof. *This does not mean that I agree that Pandya's arguments are correct, either in whole or in part. Not at all!*

As a departure point to this subject, Mao remarks in his analysis "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War" penned during December 1936:

"The laws of war are a problem which anyone directing a war must study and solve.

"The laws of revolutionary war are a problem which anyone directing a revolutionary war must study and solve."

"The laws of China's revolutionary war are a problem which anyone directing China's revolutionary war must study and solve."

It is fundamentally incorrect to transplant Mao's analysis holus-bolus to the situation in Zimbabwe or to any other situation for this would amount to "cutting the feet to fit the shoes." War and its laws are developmental.

The concrete application of Mao's military science to strategy, campaigns and tactics requires:

- (a) studying lessons, paid for in blood, which are a heritage of past wars, and
- (b) testing these lessons against our

own experience, assimilating what is useful, rejecting what is useless and adding what is specifically our own.

(December 1936)

Mao's "Three-Phased Model"

Pandya's central thesis is that Mao's strategy of guerilla warfare is a three-phased one comprising:

Phase I: Strategic defensive in which "organisation, consolidation and preservation of base areas situated in isolated and difficult terrain" occurs. During this phase, "guerrillas are recruited, organised and trained to carry out agitation and to do propaganda work." (pg. 19)

Mao's emphasis was on people's war. Said he: ". . . (W)eapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor: it is people, not things that are decisive . . ." (pg. 22) The guerrilla army has to make do with meagre resources and store its caches in inaccessible, far off and uninhabited regions.

Mao emphasized that self-defence units should be formed amongst the masses to provide logistical and other support to the guerrillas. These self-defence units must be given military training.

Pandya says that Mao favoured the development of separate political and military hierarchies (pg. 223) He argues further that Mao recommended that politicization and mobilization occur via the implementation of a code of behaviour, by way of articles, pamphlets and other literature includ-

ing inspiring poetry and by way of political meetings. The use of traditional cultural methods was emphasized and the cause of "any local discontent" was exploited "to its fullest potential to create political awareness." (pg. 153)

Phase II: Strategic offensive in which "terrorist acts of sabotage and assassination of collaborators takes place. Attacks are also made on isolated and vulnerable military and police outposts." (pg. 23) Pandya adds: "According to Mao, the level of success in carrying out any attack is largely determined by the following factors: pre-attack preparation, the level of secrecy maintained prior to and after the attack, and the actions taken by the combat unit after the attack." In other words, the key to success lies in the element of surprise.

Phase III: Mobile warfare which Pandya describes as the phase of "decision or destruction," when "the 'enemy's' destruction takes place by conventional military operations or settlement through decision and negotiation." (pg. 24) Pandya adds: "Mao lays down two main conditions for the transformation of combat units engaged in guerrilla war into the regular army fighting a conventional war. They are: firstly, increasing the number of combatants and secondly, improving the quality of their fighting."

Foreign aid and assistance: Pandya maintains that this element is crucial to Mao's entire strategy: "It is apparent that no liberation movement can successfully achieve its objective if it does not receive the required aid, assistance and support from the international community." (pgs. 26-27)

Pandya stresses that Mao's prescriptive model, while designed specifically for Chinese conditions, reveal "an almost complete blueprint for insurgency by a nationalist movement which:

- is suppressed by the incumbent government,
- is seeking to represent and gain the support of a large proportion of the rural population,



- is militarily and materially inferior to the incumbent government,
- is receiving no significant attention and support for its cause,
- is seeking to gain political power." (pg. 27)

ZANLA and Mao

Pandya contends that ZANLA originally employed a Guevarist approach, but had to seriously reconsider this after the sporadic and ineffective nature of the operations following upon and including the Battle of Sinoia on 28 April 1966 became apparent. (pgs. 161 and 221)

By the end of 1972, says Pandya, ZANU was able to establish political cells in Zimbabwe. By mid-1978, the Tribal Trust lands became secure base areas for ZANLA. ZANLA largely depended on rear bases outside the borders of Zimbabwe viz bases in Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania.

Pandya is unable to define what a liberated zone referred to, quoting both ZANLA's definition and that of the Rhodesian Security Forces. What is clear, however, is that ZANLA did not claim to have total administrative and military control over any part of Zimbabwe *by day!*

Nevertheless, Pandya equates the ZANLA-defined liberated zones to Mao's "base areas" and traces the choice of terrain (areas covered with high mountains and large rivers) as also the fact that ZANLA chose the rainy season to launch its attacks di-

rectly to Mao's prescriptions.

Pandya admits that ZANU had little or no success in mobilizing the so-called "Indian" and "Coloured" sections of the Black population. He also strongly contends that ZANLA guerrillas were recruited from refugees to Mozambique and Zambia: "The reason for such a large percentage of rural peasants being recruited was mainly because they were ground between two millstones – the military and the police on the one side and the ZANLA forces on the other side." (pg. 85) (emphasis added).

The author's contention is that the preponderance of rural peasants in ZANU's ranks shows a direct application of Maoist military strategy. He describes the complementary role of the young apprentice militants, the *mujibas* and their female equivalents of all ages, the *chimbwidows* who:

- "...- Acted as liaison between the population and the combat units.
- Acted as liaison between combat units.
- Provided information and assistance to the guerrillas.
- Provided logistical and other assistance." (pg. 95)

and informed people of *pungwes* (political meetings). *Chimbwidows* also specifically provided food for and washed the clothes of the guerrillas and acted as singers and dancers at *pungwes*. (pgs. 100-101) Pandya concludes that the role of the *mujibas*

and the *chimbwidows* corresponded exactly to that of Mao's self-defence units, even though they were untrained militarily. (pg. 224)

Pandya argues that ZANLA instructors trained in the People's Republic of China were imbued with Mao Tse Tung Thought. The application of Maoist strategy within ZANLA, Pandya maintains, is apparent in:-

- (a) the ZANLA Code of Behaviour which was a verbatim adoption of Mao's three rules of discipline and nine points of attention,
- (b) the use of chiefs to supply food, shelter and intelligence to the guerrillas as well as the use of missionaries,
- (c) the employment of spirit mediums who supported ZANU as virtual military and political advisors and who were a powerful magnet for recruitment,
- (d) the issue of Mao's *Red Book* to ZANLA guerrillas for their personal use,
- (e) the distribution of publications such as *Zimbabwe News* and *Chimurenga News* by these guerrillas to the Zimbabwean people,
- (f) the fact that guerrillas carried medical supplies for the populace,
- (g) the employment of *chimurenga* and freedom songs to make people aware of their oppression and exploitation,
- (h) the use of *pungwes* to conscientize people and terrorize them especially via people's courts which punished "collaborators" by sentencing them to death or amputating them (see pg. 149),
- (i) the use of radio facilities provided by Mozambique,
- (j) the use of *chimurenga* names i.e. *noms de guerre* (such as Yeukai Chimurenga= You must never forget the revolutionary line) by the guerrillas,
- (k) the concentration by ZANU's external wing on mobilizing international support (including the isolation of the Smith regime) and on obtaining sanctuary, economic and material aid, cash grants and recognition,
- (l) the separation of the military and the political wings of ZANU with overall command in the hands of



- the Revolutionary Council or Dare-Re-Chimurenga (later the Central Committee),
- (m) the popularization by the internal wing of ZANU of the leadership of Robert Gabriel Mugabe which was instrumental in bringing him to power,
- (n) the fact that targets for guerrilla attacks, usually unpopular farmers were decided on in consultation with the local peasants,
- (o) the effective use of the surprise element to create confusion and uncertainty among the government forces, thus affecting their morale,
- (p) the use of unsophisticated weaponry such as landmines, dynamite and grenades,
- (q) the equality between male and female ZANLA guerrillas with regard to programme of training and opportunity to rise in rank.

Pandya concludes that ZANLA applied Mao's strategies on a virtual point-by-point basis with regard to Phase I of *chimurenga* and substantially adhered to Mao's model with regard to Phase II. Pandya is at pains to explain that these two phases coincided and overlapped.

As regards Phase III, Pandya argues that while the Rhodesian security forces had smaller numbers than ZANLA and were unable to sustain a conventional campaign, "(t)he ZANLA Forces were . . . neither prepared, nor could have withstood a mobile conventional attack from the Rhodesian Security Forces in 1979

when the hostilities ended, or at any other time before that date. However, it is clear that should either party have initiated a conventional attack, ZANLA Forces would certainly have fared second best." (pg. 187)

The eventual outcome of Phase I and II was the negotiated settlement or National Convention at Lancaster House fashioned by the West collaborating with the Frontline states.

A Perversion of Mao's Theory

It is instructive to note that Paresh Pandya devotes roughly 5,1% of his study to Mao's Theory of Insurgency. Almost 41,5% of the study concentrates on Phase I of Mao's alleged strategy as applied by ZANLA, 6,9% on Phase II, 3,3% on Phase III and 10,4% on Foreign Aid.

Pandya makes Freudian slips which are indicative of both his class and national outlook. Not least of these is the total distortion and perversion of Mao's systematic and comprehensive military line. Readers will note the use of terms such as "terrorist acts" - Mao's principled opposition to terrorism is legendary - to describe Phase II.

Equally revealing are the following excerpts:

"(The rural peasants in protected villages) began to perceive the government as their enemy, which sometimes the authorities unfortu-

nately confirmed by some of their poor arrangements, lack of planning and slipshod approaches to the villages," (emphasis added) and

"The isolation of the rural population from the guerrillas failed as a solution to insurgency in Rhodesia. Instead it only provided ZANU and ZANLA with another method to mobilize 'the masses', but a true and lasting solution should have been timely political changes." (pg. 153)

Pandya's exposition of Maoist military doctrine is absolutely jejune, concentrating as it does on trivia. Pandya attempts to reduce Mao's military thought to a "shopping list" and then ticks off the items available in *chimurenga* which bear a crude resemblance to the Chinese experience of guerrilla warfare, with a passing reference to the specificity of conditions in Zimbabwe (hence the employment of the spirit mediums and the missionaries, for instance).

But a cursory examination of the Pandya "shopping list" reveals that the items listed are of the essence of *any* and *every* sort of guerrilla warfare – these items are not specifically Maoist at all!

It is impossible to understand Mao's military line without understanding and applying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. As Mao said in his December 1936 piece on "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War":-

"The naked eye is not enough, we must have the aid of the telescope and the microscope. The Marxist method is our telescope and microscope in political and military matters."

Mao brilliantly applied materialist dialectics to the question of warfare and the development of revolutionary strategy for warfare in China. Listen:

"In war, offensive and defence, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all mutually contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence, and this constitutes the totality

of a war, pushes its development forward and solves its problems." ("On Contradiction", August 1937)

For Mao, the chief method was "to learn warfare through warfare . . . A revolutionary war is a mass undertaking; it is often not a matter of first learning and then doing, but of doing and then learning, for doing is itself learning."

Pandya uses the terms "liberation movement" and "Party" interchangeably but this is incorrect. Herbert Ushewokunze (presently Zimbabwe's Minister of Political Affairs) who recently announced that "Even dreaming of socialism is a non-starter . . . We won't see true socialism here. Nor will our children" (see "Investment code brings ideological dilemma" *The Natal Mercury* 10 July 1989) grasped this distinction:

"(M)ass parties cannot articulate a coherent ideology because they have to accommodate so many interests. A party joined by former tribalists, racists and regionalists must compromise its socialist position if it has to retain these new members . . ." (*An Agenda for Zimbabwe* 1984 pg. 5)

Gloss

Pandya glosses over important details. Mao argued that the Party, provided it had the correct ideological and strategic orientation, must command the gun and not the other way round. The entire development and independence of ZIPA (formed in 1975 to unite ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas) and their correct opposition to the capitulationist line which began to assume sway in ZANU rates not even a footnote in what purports to be a serious academic study.

ZANU went through a period of turmoil and sharp ideological struggle. The development of the armed struggle produced a revolutionary headquarters in ZANU. This headquarters rejected the Lusaka Agreement of 7 December 1974. The murder of Herbert Chitepo during March 1975 followed the Nhari Revolt in ZANU and provided Zambia with an excuse to clamp down on ZANU's revolutionary headquarters.

The ZANLA-ZIPRA alliance broke down in 1976 when Nkomo negotiated with Smith. While the alliance lasted, however, there were serious differences over military strategy. The Soviet-trained ZIPA forces favoured operating as a regular army with sophisticated weaponry. As a ZANLA/ZIPRA commander pointed out: "We needed rifles, they wanted tanks." (*Africa Confidential* Volume 17 Number 17, 1976) They paid scant attention to mobilization and consolidation of the masses, relying on spectacular – and symbolic – military operations.

ZIPA rejected the Anglo-American Kissinger Plan (September 1976) as an imperialist plot "intended to sabotage our revolution." (quoted by Andre Ascrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution that lost its way?* Zed Books 1983 at 105) At about the time the Patriotic Front (PF) was formed i.e. 9 October 1976, Dzinare Machingura, ZIPA's Deputy Political Commissar, gave this explanation as to why ZIPA resisted control by the politicians:

"ZIPA is an army in the traditional sense of the word. But ZIPA is a unique and revolutionary army in the sense that it has a strategic role of transforming itself into a political movement. The ZIPA structure accommodates the shouldering of both the military and the political tasks of the revolution."

– quoted by Ascrow at 100

The existence of ZIPA as a separate factor was vital in preventing capitulation at the Geneva Conference. In order to absorb ZIPA into ZANU, Mugabe formed a politico-military pact with Tongogara. When ZIPA accused the ZANU leadership of lack of contact with cadres in the field, of Mugabe's lack of military knowledge and of being responsible for the Chimoiio camp massacre by Rhodesian troops in November 1977, Mugabe and Tongogara sought the help of the Frontline states in removing and liquidating ZIPA's leadership.

There was a significant difference between ZIPA and ZANU: ZIPA believed that victory could only be

achieved via the armed struggle while the Mugabe leadership regarded armed struggle as necessary to create the climate for negotiations and as a bargaining chip to break down the intransigence of the white settlers.

In early 1977, ZIPA guerrillas and leaders were systematically detained in Mozambique or murdered there. This cleared the path for Tongogara to become ZANLA's Chief of Defence. At the Chimoio Congress, ZANU established that the military should accept the decisions of the political Central Committee.

Similar waves of arrests followed in January 1978 during the Gumbo Revolt when ZANLA guerrillas opposed ZANU's lack of political unity with ZAPU. David Martin and Phyllis Johnson in their book *The Struggle for Zimbabwe* Ravan Press 1981 at 275 submit that Gumbo and his followers aimed at seizing power in ZANU in order to absorb ZANU into ZAPU.

Capitulation

The widespread discontent in ZANLA and amongst the Zimbabwean masses over the sellout at Lancaster House also does not merit even a footnote in Pandya's study. As *Newsweek* 7 January 1980 reported at page 16:

"In one grisly and perhaps prophetic incident last week, a squad of guerrillas murdered a school-teacher in front of his pupils, and left behind a note reading 'Down with the cease-fire. Forward with the war.'"

This discontent saw a wave of strikes in Zimbabwe after *uhuru* and manifested itself again on 18 July 1989 with clashes between the army and students at the University of Zimbabwe (*Daily News* 19 July 1989). For those who imagine that Mao opposed strikes, we need only remind them that Mao himself proposed that the right to strike be included in the new Constitution of the People's Republic of China in January 1975.

Mao waged relentless struggle against the reactionary "theory of the produc-

tive forces", struggling for the correct line viz. "grasp revolution, promote production." The following words by Zimbabwe's first Labour Minister, Kumbirai Kangai represent precisely the line that Mao strived to combat:

"The relationship between the workers and management should be like one big family. You have to respect them as workers and they have to respect you as the management."

- *The Herald* 26 May 1980

A ZANU supporter observed that: "It is impossible to construct socialism on the superstructure of capitalism." (quoted by Ascrow at 173)

For those who support and propagate capitulation, Mao gave sage advice on October 12, 1942 in "The Turning Point in World War II":

"All those who take a pessimistic view of the world situation should change their point of view."

(Are you listening, capitulationists in occupied Azania?) He expanded on this in "The Present Situation and our Tasks" on December 25, 1947:

"Our Party waged a resolute struggle against such impotent and degenerate ideas (as capitulation), which run counter to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, resolutely carried out its political line of 'developing the progressive forces, winning over the middle forces and isolating the die-hard forces' and resolutely expanded the Liberated Areas and the People's Liberation Army."

Imperialist strategy was always dictated by the need to maintain capitalist social relations in Zimbabwe. By the mid-1970s this required a process of "decolonization" which would preserve the rule of capital.

ZANU completely failed to identify imperialism as its number one enemy and propagated the myth that Britain was the legitimate (sic!) colonial



power. Its strategy was thus aimed at reform and despite the Maoist rhetoric (which guaranteed it the support of both the Zimbabwean proletariat and peasantry) its capitulation at Lancaster House was the logical outcome of its history and petit-bourgeois degeneration.

Both before and after "independence", ZANU insisted that the Lancaster House deal was in the interests of the Zimbabwean masses. Tongogara "regarded Lancaster House as a kind of 'second front' brought about by the people of Zimbabwe and their liberation forces . . ." (Martin & Johnson *op cit* at 319)! ZANU not only welcomed Western imperialism as a progressive (sic!) force, it ensconced Zimbabwe firmly in the Western camp.

The national liberation struggle in Zimbabwe was not carried out on an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist basis. The aim of the petit bourgeois leadership was not to overthrow capitalist relations but to remove the discriminatory structures of settler society which hindered its advancement as a social group. As Rockefeller puts it:

"The more I have seen of countries which are allegedly Marxist in Africa, the more I have the feeling it is more labels and trappings than reality."

- quoted by Ascrow at 190

Pandya neglects to inform us that a critical reason for ZANU agreeing to

join the Patriotic Front was its hope that it would receive arms and ammunition from the Soviet social-imperialists. (*The Herald* 16 November 1980)

War is the highest stage of struggle

For Mao, war is the highest stage of struggle and the purpose of the proletariat in waging war is to defeat imperialism and reaction and advance society to a stage wherein war would be eliminated with the elimination of classes and the state. Indeed, ZANU even failed to identify the proletariat as the leading force in Zimbabwe, ignoring Mao's warning that "In this era, any revolutionary war will definitely end in defeat if it lacks, or runs counter to, the leadership of the proletariat and the Communist Party." (December 1936)

Note that Mao specifically included class-conscious workers both in the Communist Party and the Red Army. He warned against the hegemony of the petit bourgeoisie (in particular, the peasantry) rather than the leadership of the proletariat in the revolutionary movement.

It is absurd to call any strategy Maoist if it makes guerrilla warfare primary and regular warfare supplementary. As Mao emphasized:

"Unless we understand this, unless we recognize that regular warfare will decide the final outcome of the war, and unless we pay attention to building a regular army and to studying and directing regular warfare, we shall be unable to defeat Japan." ("Problems of War and Strategy" November 6, 1938)

It is necessary for guerrilla units to undergo steeling and gradually transform themselves into regular forces: in this way guerrilla warfare develops into mobile warfare.

No magic short cuts

The fact that the Zimbabwean war was aborted before it even reached the scale of genuine people's war makes it anything but a protracted war. To quote Mao: "There is no

magic short-cut" ("On Protracted War" May 1938).

Instead of following Mao's prescriptions, Mugabe chose to co-opt General Walls in his team and assign him the task of integrating ZANLA and ZIPRA with the Rhodesian army. The Rhodesian army which included notorious units such as the Selous and Grey Scouts and the Rhodesian Light Infantry was composed of the worst detritus from failed empires around the world as well as the most ruthless of local elements. At any rate, to integrate a settler army with an alleged people's army can only be aimed at demobilizing the people's army in the interests of imperialism.

A true Maoist would defeat, disintegrate and win over part of the imperialist army, smash and punish the private reactionary armies and shatter and destroy their police forces and punish them for their crimes. For at least nine years, the Mugabe government suppressed information about an industrial incinerator at Chikurubi (just east of Harare), made by the macro-Burn Company of Johannesburg, which was used to cremate the corpses of untold numbers of Zimbabweans executed during *chimurenga*. (*Weekly Mail* July 28-August 3, 1989).

In the base areas and throughout the country, it is vital for a revolutionary Party to share weal and woe with the masses. ZANLA largely relied on *mujibas* and *chimbwidows* and did not trust the masses: its *pungwes* gave only the most rudimentary political education and its use of the spirit mediums was not directed at raising peasant consciousness to genuine revolutionary consciousness.

Terence Ranger in *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe* Zimbabwe Publishing House 1985 quotes a ZANLA guerrilla on the level of political education at *pungwes*:

"We did not talk to the peasants about socialism. Ah, no, we couldn't do that. The peasantry are very conservative and even today they know nothing about socialism. We had to teach them first about the evil deeds

and oppression of the regime and how we had tried to talk to the whites but failed, so that we had to take up arms." (at 178)

Peasant religion formed an indispensable part of the composite ideology of *chimurenga* and focussed strongly on the Land Question. It is clear that sustained effort was required to create conscious beings who see themselves as their own liberators and need no ancestral spirits, gods or goddesses to "liberate" them.

ZANU's guerrilla ideology was expressed only via the Shona tradition and culture, helping to alienate the Ndebele people and to reinforce ethnicity. As Ranger puts it: "The ZANLA guerrillas were not sufficiently flexible to adapt the composite ideology which served them so well throughout two thirds of the country." (at 216)

To wage a true people's war, ZANLA and ZANU needed nothing less than the full mobilization of the Zimbabwean Nation. That they failed to achieve this is apparent even in their inability to make good their promise of disrupting the election charade which brought Bishop Abel Muzorewa to office during April 1979, taking intimidation by the Rhodesian forces fully into account. ZANLA's successes in surprise attacks and evasions shows the durability of Mao's prescriptions: ZANLA did not utilize these in any thoroughgoing manner, however.

To compare bases in neighbouring states to the base areas established by Mao within the borders of China itself is ridiculous. So is the comparison between ZANLA's self-proclaimed "liberated zones" and Mao's base areas. At a minimum, a base area is under the complete control of the revolutionary army. The potential existed to create true liberated zones when the infrastructure of the settler regime began collapsing completely – about the time of Lancaster House!

War of Attrition and Annihilation

What Pandya glibly refers to as Phase

I and Phase II requires at the least an assessment of whether ZANLA employed the sixteen-character formula viz "The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue." (December 1936)

In a settler colonial situation such as Zimbabwe's was it is necessary to constantly lure the enemy in deep, surround it with the masses, cut off its forces into various parts and annihilate it. Guerrilla war combines a war of attrition with a war of annihilation. The formula is "strategy, one against ten; tactics, ten against one."

Mao emphasized that in both regular and guerrilla warfare it is necessary to stress the principles of fighting battles of quick decision, of concentrating a big force to strike as a small section of the enemy forces and to annihilate the enemy forces piece by piece, thus through a protracted process carrying out a war of attrition against the enemy until it is weakened to the point where the final *coup de grace* can be delivered to it.

From a long-term point of view, the Rhodesian Security Forces were severely overextended and suffered from a shortage of troops. In these circumstances, guidance is available from Mao's telegram, "The Concept of Operations for the Northwest War Theatre" issued during April 1947. As Mao stressed therein, it is imperative when circumstances are favourable to keep the enemy on the run, tire it out, wear it down, reduce it to extreme fatigue and conditions of starvation and then launch the offensive to destroy it.

As the Lancaster House conference got underway, the war in Zimbabwe raged more fiercely than at any other time since the fighting began.

Pandya's Agenda

Mao emphasized that the enemy's knowledge of the overall strategy and tactics of the People's Army could not save it because "... our strategy and tactics are based on a people's war; no army opposed to the people can use our strategy and tactics."



In 1953, at the conclusion of the war to resist US aggression in Korea, Mao declared: "Our experience is that reliance on the people together with a fairly correct leadership enables us to defeat a better-equipped enemy with our inferior equipment." ("Speech at the Lushan Conference")

As for Pandya's over-emphasis on foreign aid and assistance, it needs to be stated that Mao's lasting emphasis is that people, not foreign aid or sophisticated weaponry are decisive in any war. Pandya fails to analyze ZANU's struggle to achieve recognition in the face of the stranglehold exercised by ZAPU in league with the ANC of South Africa and the Soviet Union. Mao would have had no truck with the interference and petty hegemony exercised by such forces and the Frontline states on the pattern and pace of Zimbabwe's national liberation struggle.

Mao could well have been talking about Pandya when he commented: "Epistemologically speaking, the source of all erroneous views on war lies in idealist and mechanistic tendencies on the question." (May 1938)

Not that Pandya has no agenda: he most certainly has! On page 230 of his book, Pandya attempts to draw the lessons of the Zimbabwean experience for occupied Azania. He advises that:

1. There should be no procrastination towards achieving a political solution, else "the 'hearts and

minds' of the people" will be lost and there will be widespread insurgency;

2. The political solution must consist of reforms; and
3. In arriving at the political solution, "it is vital that the authorities work and consult with all the parties concerned."

High Tide of Revolution

That advice such as Pandya's is being taken seriously and that a complete betrayal of the masses figures prominently on the Azanian agenda is obvious. But, to quote Mao, there will "soon be a high tide of revolution" both in Azania and in Zimbabwe. Listen to Mao's explanation:

"But when I say that there will soon be a high tide of revolution in China, I am emphatically not speaking of something which in the words of some people 'is possibly coming', something illusory, unattainable and devoid of significance for action. It is like a ship far out at sea whose mast-head can already be seen from the shore; it is like the morning sun in the east whose shimmering rays are visible from a high mountain top; it is like a child about to be born moving restlessly in its mother's womb."

- *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* edited by a Commission of the CPSU(B), New York, 1939 at page 275

I remember trudging through the streets of Zimbabwe during the fifth

anniversary celebrations of Zimbabwe's "independence" when an Azanian exile exclaimed: "What Zimbabwe desperately needs is Black Consciousness." I wonder if all those who are indulging in "waiting for Mugabe" fantasies – the latest of whom are Colin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe in their *Zimbabwe: Politics, Economics and Society* Pinter Publishers, London 1989 – do not have a clammy sense of *déjà vu*. Remember "waiting for Nyerere?"

A rigorous and correct application of Mao's political and military line can be seen in the activities the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), referred to in the media as The Shining Path or *Sendero Luminoso*. The PCP proclaims:

"Comrade Mao teaches us that there is only one way to seize political power: revolutionary violence. The theory of seizing power by the peaceful road is wrong, impracticable and revisionist. Revolution is the overthrow of one class by another and the

old classes will never give up their political power voluntarily, not even in the worst crisis. The only way to deal with them is to sweep them away through revolutionary war, by means of revolutionary armed force. We should keep this *universally valid* principle in mind."

"We should also keep in mind one of Marx's great teachings: 'Once the banner of revolution is raised, it cannot be lowered again.'"

"This means that the armed struggle must be organized and persisted in. In order to launch the people's war in Peru the Communist Party of Peru made the great decision *never* to lay down its arms until communism is reached."

- from the "Worldwide Campaign Speech to Support the People's War in Peru", 1986, emphasis added

Recommendation

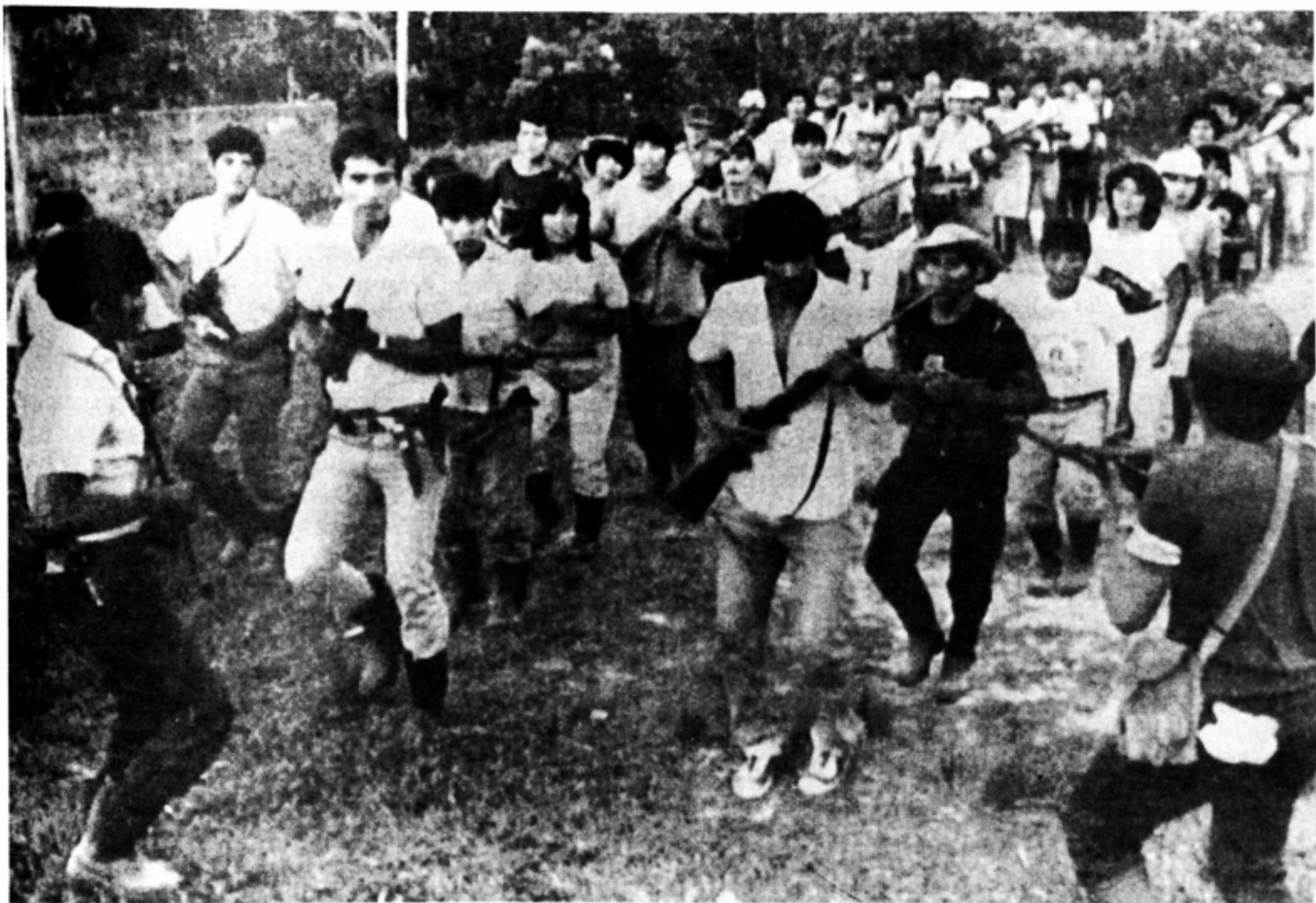
Pandya has certainly chosen an exciting aspect of *chimurenga* to analyze

but he fails to do justice to his task. His study is useful, however, for the data collected within its pages, not least of which is a handy set of diagrams, tables and photographs.

The printer's gremlin has not spared Pandya. The most glaring error is the ambiguity of the word "they" in the sentence "As a result one finds it very difficult to determine whether *they* were really liberated zones, that is, zones under ZANLA occupation and rule" (pg. 57). Other errors are the mis-spellings of "suite" for "suit" on page 61 line 4 and of "sprinter" for "splinter" on page 191 line 6.

The reader is advised to read Pandya's book against Mao Tse Tung's actual works and ZANU/ZANLA's actual performance. If the reader is unable to obtain Mao's works and read widely on the Zimbabwean revolution, this book is *not* recommended. ■

- Nhlanhla Nyide



Young PCP guerrillas in training.

LANGUAGE POLICY IN A FREE AZANIA

DECOLONISING THE MIND: The Politics of Language in African Literature by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (London, James Currey Ltd, 1986), 114 pp, R29,95 + R3,89 GST. Available from DAVID PHILIP PUBLISHER (PTY) LTD, PO Box 408, Claremont, 7735, Telephone 021-644136

LANGUAGE POLICY AND NATIONAL UNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA/AZANIA: An Essay by Neville Alexander (Cape Town, Buchu Books, 1989), 85 pp, R12,00 + R1,56 GST. Available from BUCHU BOOKS, PO Box 2580, Cape Town, 8000, Telephone 021-453786

NGUGI expresses the hope that the issues he raises in *Decolonising the Mind* will find echoes in our hearts. I make bold to say that the issues he raises must tug at the chords of every Black heart, that *Decolonising the Mind* is a journey that dispossessed people everywhere must undertake in their individual and collective sojourns to recover their birthrights, so that they can sleep not to dream "but dream to change the world." (pg. 3)

The Cultural Bomb

Ngugi's approach to the "study of African realities" is avowedly anti-imperialistic. He says in the "Introduction" to this book:

"Any blow against imperialism, no matter the ethnic and regional origins of the blow, is a victory for all anti-imperialistic elements in all the nationalities. The sum total of all these blows no matter what their weight, size, scale, location in time and space makes the national heritage." (pg. 2)

Imperialism is no mere slogan, says Ngugi:

"It is real, it is palpable in content and form and in its methods and effects . . . Imperialism is total: it has econ-

omic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the people of the world today. It could even lead to holocaust." (*Ibid*)

From the very onset, we are exposed to Ngugi's analysis of contending social forces. His book is one that is born of the day-to-day struggles of African people, more specifically the working people (the peasantry and proletariat) against the "weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism" against their "collective defiance" viz. "the cultural bomb"



Dr Neville Alexander

(pg. 3):

"The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves."

The net results of the cultural bomb are "despair, despondency and a collective death-wish" which allows colonialism to thrive.

Language has a Dual Character

In the cultural arena, Ngugi sees real revolution as possible if the indigenous languages regain ascendancy and assume command of everyday interaction and relations between people. He elaborately shows how any language has a dual character – as a means of communication and as a

carrier of culture.

Language as communication has three elements, viz.:

- (a) the language of real life ie the relations people enter into in the labour process,
- (b) speech ie communication in production,
- (c) written signs.

Similarly, language as culture also has three elements, viz:

- (a) as a product and a reflection of human beings communicating with one another in the very struggle to create wealth and to control it,
- (b) as an image-forming agent,
- (c) as a distinguishing feature of a culture which has its peculiar history and tradition.

Language as communication and culture is the quintessence of human beingness:

"Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings" (pg.16)

and the capacity to "order sounds in a manner that makes for mutual comprehension between human beings is universal." (pg.15)

Europeanizing Afrika

Despite the crisis of identity of the vacillating African petit bourgeoisie who produced literature in European languages "as if there had never been literature in African languages," African languages simply "refused to die". The peasantry "saw no contradiction between speaking their own mother-tongues and belonging to a larger national or continental geography", they had "no complexes about their languages and the cultures they carried!". (pgs. 22-23)

To those who argue that that the unity of the African people requires the use of one or another foreign language – whether English, French, German or Portuguese – as *lingue franche* Ngugi has a question:

"(B)y our continuing to write in foreign languages, paying homage to them, are we not on the cultural level continuing that neo-colonial slavish and cringing spirit? What is the difference between a politician who says Africa cannot do without imperialism and the writer who says that Africa cannot do without European languages?" (pg. 26)

Ngugi makes the forceful point that literature in foreign languages can never constitute African literature!

The domination of Black languages by European languages bolsters and buttresses the political and economic marauding of Africa and the entire Black world by imperialism. It subjects the very language of real life to foreign domination. Ngugi declares:

"The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to the entire universe. Hence language has always been at the heart of the two contending social forces in Africa of the twentieth century." (ie imperialism and the resistance) (pg. 4)

Ngugi seeks to initiate a break with this prevailing trend of Europeanizing Afrika. He says:

"This book, *Decolonising the Mind*, is my farewell to English as a vehicle for any of my writings. From now on, it is Gikuyu and KiSwahili all the way. However, I hope that through the age old medium of translation I shall be able to continue dialogue with all." (pg. xiv)

After all, Afrika "needs back its economy, its politics, its culture, its languages and all its patriotic writers." (pg. xii, emphasis mine)

Writing in African languages amounts to targeting the social force that stands diametrically opposed to imperialism viz the working masses. It amounts to writing in the languages

of resistance, rebellion and revolution and reducing the role of foreign languages to international communication. Writing in foreign languages means that the working people whose struggles feed the writer's work will never read it.

Nairobi and Kamiriithu

An important landmark in Ngugi's growth was the 1974 Nairobi conference on the teaching of African literature in schools. A working committee drafted recommendations on policy and on syllabi in accordance with the Conference resolution that the Eurocentric language and literature syllabi be overhauled. Says Ngugi:

"All in all, the report is shot through and through with a consciousness that literature is a powerful instrument in evolving the cultural ethos of a people." (pg. 99)

Decisive in Ngugi's "epistemological break" with his past praxis in the area of fiction and theatre was his participation in the activities of the Kamiriithu Community Education and Cultural Centre since 1976:

"The process . . . was one of continuous learning. Learning of our history. Learning of what obtains in factories. Learning of what goes on in farms and plantations. Learning our language, for the peasants were essentially the guardians of the language through years of use." (pg. 45)

Ngugi's abandonment of English as the vehicle of his ideas represents the climax of his own long struggle against the oppressive and dehumanising neo-colonial reality he saw around him, the climax of his long "quest for relevance" as an African writer.

Since 1977 when Ngugi penned *Petals of Blood*, he has written many works in Gikuyu which have been translated *inter alia* into English. There is no way that the non-Gikuyu/KiSwahili-speaking world will be deprived of Ngugi's creativity and genius.

A Welcome Decision!

Ngugi's decision is a bold one which must be applauded and emulated. Ngugi does not argue that writing in Black languages *per se* will bring about a Black cultural renaissance: such writing must carry the content of the people's anti-imperialist struggles to liberate their productive forces from foreign control.

The spirit which Ngugi displays reminds us of that which underlies the following quotations, the first from a rather unlikely source:

"The language of the oppressor in the mouth of the oppressed is the language of slaves." (Johannes Hendricus Brand, the President of the Orange Free State Republic, commenting on the Anglicization policy imposed on the Boers. This quotation was often used by participants in the Soweto Uprising to reject the imposition of Afrikaans on Black schoolchildren!) and

"(D)ecolonization is always a violent phenomenon . . . Its unusual importance is that it constitutes, from the very first day, the minimum demands of the colonized. To tell the truth, the proof of success lies in a whole social structure being changed from the bottom up. The extraordinary importance of this change is that it is willed, called for, demanded. The need for this change exists in crude state, impetuous and compelling, in the consciousness and in the lives of the men and women who are colonized. But the possibility of this change is equally experienced in the form of a terrifying future in the consciousness of another 'species' of men and women: the colonizers." (Frantz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth*)

The Second Severing of the Umbilical Cord

One is struck by the fact that for the Black intelligentsia, there are two moments in their lives when their umbilical cords are severed – the first at birth and the second with the adoption of the colonizer's language. The process of alienation could not be

more complete.

Ngugi is at pains to emphasize that how we view ourselves and our environment is dependent "on where we stand in relationship to imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial stages . . ." (pg. 88) This quotation acts as a foil for locating the views propounded by Alexander in his essay.

The Scorpion

Alexander tackles the question of language from the standpoint that for a new society to emerge, all inequalities between and amongst people must be destroyed. He says:

". . . (A)ll these different 'questions' are part and parcel of one overriding question, viz., how do we abolish social inequality based on colour, class, religious beliefs, sex, language group or any other basis?" (pg. 7)

Alexander stresses that in spite of diverse interpretations and ideological trends in the struggle in Azania, all participants are agreed that they are "trying to bring about national unity." He adds:

". . . (W)e are trying to encourage all our people to become conscious of the fact that they belong to one South African/Azania nation." (*Ibid*)

Building a nation means ". . . fighting against racism and against ethnic divisions or ethnic consciousness." (pg. 8)

In his advocacy of "nation-building", Alexander insists that the difference between advocates of non-racialism and those of anti-racism are inconsequential since "being non-racial or anti-racist means being *for* something." Alexander's preoccupation with superficial unity (leading to monstrosities like "South Africa/Azania" and "non-racialism/anti-racism") leads to his glossing over the very real ideological struggle being waged around the concepts of anti-racism and non-racialism. Non-racialism simply means the non-existence of racist attitudes or tendencies: it does not mean opposition to racism (let alone racism) at all. Anti-racism means active opposition to an



all-pervading system which allows one group to subjugate another using the concept of "race". Anti-racism encapsulates non-racialism.

Alexander's departure point is that "if we want to fight against racial prejudice and racism, then we have, among other things, to break down the language barriers." (pg. 10) He then sets out to show how English and Afrikaans became dominant over other languages in occupied Azania, maintaining that this language policy accords with the "economic and political domination of the white minority in this country." (*Ibid*) Thus "the oppressed people have to forge weapons out of the same materials so that they can defend themselves and break the domination of the ruling group." (pg. 11)

Alexander's departure point smacks of a "take-whatever-you-can-from-the-system-to-destroy-it" syndrome. The expectation is that the scorpion will sting itself to death. But this is dangerous, because the scorpion might well turn on us! Says Ngugi about this very attitude:

"The classes fighting against imperialism . . . have to confront this threat with the higher and more creative culture of resolute struggle. These classes have to wield even more firmly the weapons of the struggle contained in their cultures." (pg. 3)

Cultural Imperialism

Alexander's outline of the British policy on the language question notes:

"By the middle 1870's the Chief Justice, J.H. de Villiers, could tell an audience that although the time is still far distant when the inhabitants of this colony will speak and acknowledge one common mother-tongue, it would come at last, and when it does come, the language of Great Britain will also be the language of South Africa." (pg. 16)

Alexander sketches the cultural imperialism perpetrated by Westerners in occupied Azania very clearly:

"Their (individual missionaries) avowed aim was to assimilate their 'wards' into the 'Western Christian Civilization' which they genuinely believed was superior to anything that Africans had ever produced." (pg. 17) and

"For the colonised people themselves, this (British language policy) meant that English language and English cultural traits acquired an economic and social value that was treasured above all else while their own languages and many of their cultural traits were devalued and often despised. A typical colonised mind or slave mentality became one of the most potent weapons of colonial pol-

icy, a programme built into the consciousness of black people (and of many whites) that ensured that the *status quo* was, by and large, accepted as good and just. All that one had to do was to climb up the socio-economic ladder which stood ready for every competent, abstinent and disciplined person to mount. If one had these attributes and was able to communicate in English, then – in the mythology of colour-blind individual rights – the sky was the limit!" (pg. 20)

For Alexander,

"South Africa . . . is a country where African, European and Asian cultural traditions have intersected for some three centuries and more and in which an emerging national culture is being carried and given expression to by means of many different languages." (pg. 48)

This is a fallacy: it was *inter alia* through the subjugation of African and Asian (ie Black) cultural traditions that white people ascended to the position of domination and control. The struggle taking place in the linguistic arena is merely a part of a struggle which includes Black people's quest for true humanity as a vital ingredient.

The "intersection" Alexander refers to presupposes mutual intermingling of cultures devoid of struggles for domination. This cultural miscegenation and bastardization suggests that white dominant culture is not an imposition on Black culture. This position actually negates struggle in the cultural terrain. Advocates of this position attempt to defeat the need for solidarity, the awareness of identity, the strengthening of the "we" versus "them" attitude. This, in short, amounts to assimilation and ultimately to CAPITULATION!

Alexander correctly states:

"In the emergent Azanian/South African nation, the interests of the majority, i.e., of the black workers, are and should be paramount and we should, therefore, base our language policies at all levels of our society on this fact." (pg. 52)

He promptly somersaults, however:

". . . (T)he most appropriate scenario appears to be one which assumes that English will be the *lingua franca* of a liberated Azania, regardless of the socio-economic system that will prevail." (pg. 53)

Alexander is careful about how he words his suggestion:

"What would appear to be a most likely scenario is one where English is universally accepted as an official language together with other languages, which would enjoy official status on a regional basis, depending on the initial concentration of mother tongue speakers of the respective languages." (pg. 54 – emphasis mine)

Lingua franca cum Linking Language

As in his ambivalence about "South Africa" or "Azania", "non-racialism" or "anti-racism", Alexander refers to English as both a *lingua franca* and a "linking language". He strongly suggests that there emerge a Standardised Nguni and Standardised Sotho which "need not lead to the disappearance of Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Siswati, Sipeedi and Tswana and their dialects." (pg. 64)

The fact of the matter is that the majority of the people ie the Black working class and the peasantry do not understand English. Is Alexander's policy not strenuous and burdensome for the universal class? Alexander joins the imperialists in subordinating the people's languages to the colonizer's language – English. Note how Alexander betrays his lack of commitment to the socialist revolution by postulating his policy "regardless of the socio-economic system that will prevail." WE say that the Dictatorship of the Black Proletariat will prevail. What is the use of going the whole hog to formulate a language policy if we do not know the nature of the society we are designing it for?

Alexander blandly asserts:

". . . (D)espite the problematizing of the idea of English as the linking language in South Africa, most pro-

gressive people accept that between now and liberation we have to promote this solution." (pg. 59)

But Alexander is not seriously suggesting that English provides merely a stopgap solution. He is saying that no matter what English has to be the *lingua franca*:

"We have to understand that unless the vast majority of the South African population are organically motivated to learn and use English for the conduct of their affairs, English will become or remain, as in so many African and Asian countries, the language of the privileged neo-colonialist middle class." (pg. 60)

Hence Alexander says: ". . . (I)t is more than likely that another *lingua franca* may eventually displace English in this for internal purposes" (pg. 61 – emphasis mine). He nowhere says that attempts have to be made to make this materialize. Instead, his proposal amounts to enshrining and popularizing English and making its position unassailable:

"All that can be said with some certainty is that we have to begin *today* to produce a generation of highly skilled, well-trained language teachers. In particular, we need to insist on a few specialist English teachers being employed in every primary school in South Africa." (pgs. 66-67, emphasis in original)

At the conference on Language and Struggle held on 28-29 April 1989 at the University of Natal (Durban) Alexander remarked:

"In future . . . the role of *lingua franca* will become *exclusively* that of the English language, and Afrikaans, Nguni and Sotho will play, at least initially, a socially less important role except in those regions where mother-tongue speakers of these languages predominate."

– "So what about Afrikaans?" *Language Projects Review* Volume 4 Number 2 (July 1989) at 16

No cogent argument is presented as to why English – and not Afrikaans which Alexander admits is spoken and understood by more people in

occupied Azania than English – ought to be the *lingua franca* or even the linking language. While both English and Afrikaans are languages used to entrench oppression, Afrikaans is a language which belongs to the Black people and must be repossessed by them.

The idea of standardizing the Nguni and Sotho languages is an excellent one and work must begin now to:

1. achieve and popularize their standardization,
2. have literary works flower in the people's languages,
3. develop a technical lexicon for the people's languages.

Joseph Tubiana in an article "The Linguistic Approach to Self-Determination" in *Nationalism & Self Determination in the Horn of Africa* (edited by I.M. Lewis, Ithaca Press, London, 1983) sets out to demonstrate the interests served by the choice of an official language:

"The choice of this language (ie official language) is entirely the decision of the state and the choice is based purely on the convenience, needs and interests of the continuity of the state. The impartial observer would note that the individual who challenges the choice of official language has automatically challenged the structure of the state, and has sought to change this in seeking to change the choice of language . . ." (pgs. 24-5)

Alexander's proposals will perpetuate the colonization of Black people in the linguistic arena.

The nub of Tubiana's article is the declaration:

"In effect language is one of the elements constituting a culture yet at the same time it embodies the entire culture . . . all that threatens the language threatens the culture as a whole." (pg. 27)

The Somali Experience

Alexander's problem with the people's languages is that they:

". . . do not have enough literature and lack an adequate technical vocabulary for the teaching of most natural science and mathematical subjects above certain standards." (pg. 66)

This argument, puerile and ideologically loaded as it is, is ripped apart by a study of the Somali experience. Within a short time, Somali became an official national language and displaced both English and Italian. In an article entitled "Language, National Consciousness and Identity – the Somali Experience", Hussein M. Adams says:

"The modernized Somali language reaches its peak of succinctness and precision in the field of science and mathematics." (Lewis ed. at pg. 35) and

"Even before the advent of written Somali, Somali broadcasters pioneered the expression of new concepts and ideas while avoiding foreign borrowings as far as possible." (pg. 33)

Surely the same can be done in occupied Azania. One good example is the coining of *ngculaza* which is the Zulu equivalent for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and *ngqalasizinda* which means infrastructure by Thokozani M.E. Nene, an announcer for Radio Zulu.

Explaining how the Somali vocabulary developed to meet modern needs, Adam mentions four methods:

1. utilizing the wide range and subtle distinctions potentially existing in everyday speech.
2. drawing upon traditional and archaic vocabulary to provide words and expressions to meet changing needs.
3. employing old roots from both the general everyday speech and the more specialized vocabulary, to form new words.
4. borrowing words from Arabic, Italian and English. (pg. 34)

In Somalia, public life is run and regulated through the medium of Somali. With regard to education, Adam says:

"Lower level training programmes utilize Somali to a considerable extent. Middle level training programmes often use Somali lectures and also training material in foreign languages (English or Italian). In higher level training programmes (as well as in university education) foreign languages are still used, sometimes with interpretation into Somali depending on the background of the students involved." (pg. 36)

Adam emphasizes that:

"The writing and modernizing of Somali has made the Somalis a people who constitute a society with rapidly developing means of communication. It has also assisted in narrowing the gaps between Somali dialects by providing one main 'Standard Dialect' in all mass media (radio and press) and in books and publications for the schools and for literacy campaigns. This represents the attainment of one of the long-frustrated objectives of the self-determination struggle." (pg. 40)

Our Language Policy: Some Thoughts

The Somali experience proves that what Alexander regards as an inhibiting factor regarding the use of the people's languages in occupied Azania is no more than an excuse for not developing and elevating them to national and even international importance. Failure to do this would be an abrogation of our revolutionary responsibilities.

The number of languages spoken in occupied Azania and the variations of dialects within each language make the construction of a language policy a mammoth but immensely challenging task. There is no excuse for footling and doing a shoddy job of this task.

"The Gadfly" writing in *Umtapo Focus* argues that the use of English as a *lingua franca* prevents ethnic squabbles and the fostering of divisions within the Black community. This is preposterous indeed! As Chairman Mao emphasized, "of all things in the world, human beings are

the most precious. With the masses, every kind of miracle under the sun can be performed."

Formulating a language policy is an integral part of the unfolding day-to-day struggles for national liberation and social emancipation. The transition from capitalism to socialism is not a logical and predestined consequence: it requires the injection of revolutionary consciousness. The masses of people must deliberately take their fate and future in their own hands.

The language policy for a free Azania has to be adroitly designed such that it does not antagonize and polarize the masses but instead treats them with reverence and love. The departure point of the language policy is "POLITICS IN COMMAND." This – and nothing else – provides the guarantee that the language policy will develop and flower within anti-ethnic and anti-racist contours. People will, as the result of a painstaking conscientization programme, transcend ethnic consciousness and achieve Black Consciousness.

An interim solution, therefore, is to make one each of the major Nguni languages (isiZulu and isiXhosa) and Sotho languages (Southern sotho and SiPedi) a national official language. English should also be made a national official language, primarily for international communication. English ought to play only a secondary role in national and social intercourse in Azania, and curriculae should provide for all three national languages to be studied at school.

The reason why English rather than Afrikaans should be a national official language lies in the historical proficiency of the British at colonialism. Afrikaans, being a language developed by Black people and one which dislodged High Dutch as a spoken and written language, is in the peculiar position of being a major indigenous language outside the Nguni and Sotho group but it requires

conscious application to re-direct decades of ruling class intervention, adoption and theft of this people's language. Achmat Davids observes that Afrikaans as a spoken language was used for comic effect in the 1830's by journalists such as C.E. Boniface, A.G. Bain and L.H. Meurant who acknowledged it to be the language of the "non-whites" (sic!). He outlines how the slaves and political exiles from south-East Asia (subsequently known as the "Cape Malays") used the Arabic script for the communication of Dutch and how these publications were the beginning of Afrikaans literature. He says:

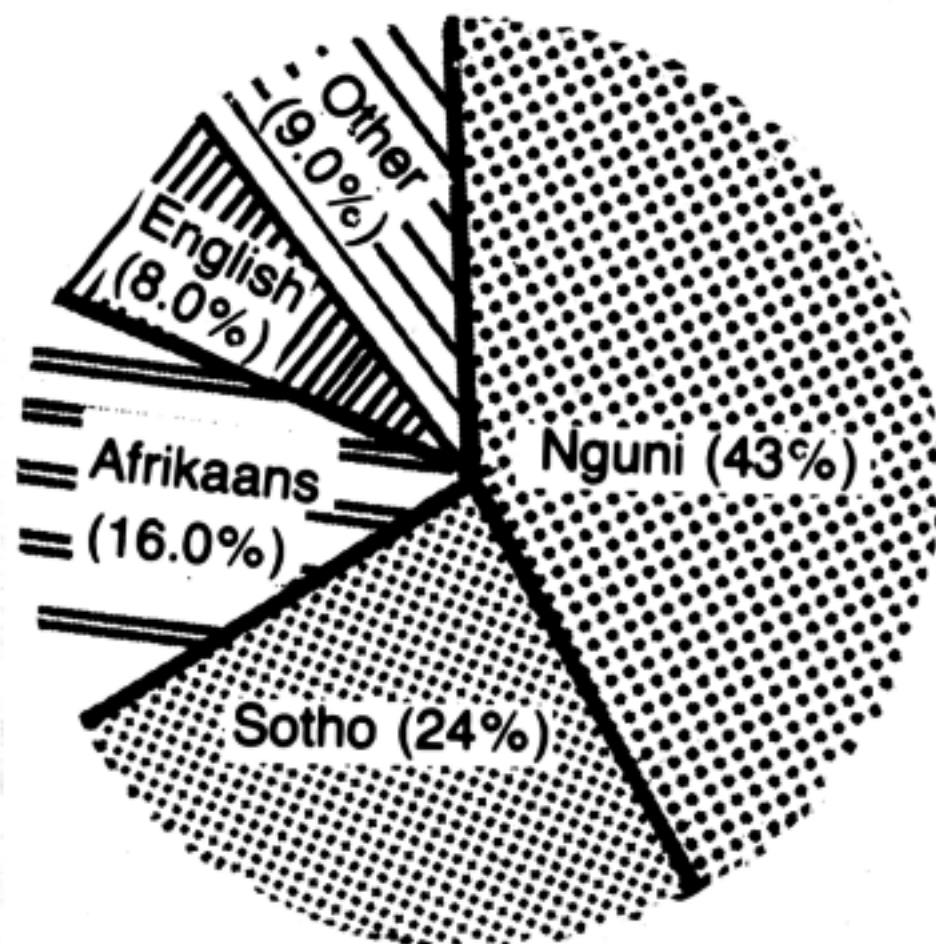
"It is, therefore, not mere coincidence that the grammatical structure of Afrikaans is closer to Malay than to Nederlands."

(See 'Arabic used to convey Afrikaans' *Muslim Views* December 1988 and 'Muslim Contribution to Afrikaans' *Muslim Views* January-February 1989)

In the longer term, the standardization of Nguni and Sotho must be regarded as priority number one for our language policy. This standardization does not mean the eclipse of any of the Nguni or Sotho languages: on the contrary, the standardization is designed precisely so that the different languages can thrive and grow. One must agree with Alexander when he says that it is desirable that we are able to be proficient in most of the languages spoken in Azania.

Recommendation

Both books are recommended:



Ngugi's book is a must for reading, re-reading and re-reading yet again. It is an uplifting and challenging work, demanding a commitment:

"To turn the struggles into common experience and Justice into a passion." (pg. 105)

Alexander's essay needs to be approached with caution and his suggestions evaluated with a critical and discerning eye, for his views are a reflection of the existence of the sub-culture described by Aimé Césaire in his address to the Congress of Black Writers and Artists, Paris, 1956:

"Wherever colonisation is a fact, the indigenous culture begins to rot. And among the ruins something begins to be born which is not a culture but a kind of sub-culture, a sub-culture which is condemned to exist on the margin allowed by European culture. This then becomes the province of a few men, the elite, who find themselves placed in the most artificial conditions, deprived of any revivifying contact with the masses of the people."

– Sibusiso ka Thusi

RIDING STAFF

TEN YEARS OF STAFFRIDER

1978-1988 edited by Andries Walter Oliphant and Ivan Vladislavic (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1988), 448 pp, R24,95 + R3,24 GST. Available from Ravan Press, P O Box 31134, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2017. Telephone: (011) 4033925-9

STAFFRIDER Volume 7 Number 1 – current: A quarterly magazine edited by Andries Walter Oliphant and published by Ravan Press at R3,95 + R0,26 GST.

A collection of the covers of the very first volumes of *Staffrider* appears on page 11 of this commemorative anthology. These covers visually capture the leitmotif of the *Staffrider* which so readily nestled in and gave vibrancy to Azanian culture.

Leitmotif

The cover of the first issue captures "a youth in black silhouette shown in the process of clearing – arms stretched out to balance, legs bent for landing – a formidable, high, wire-netted barricade topped by thorn-like projections and by strands of barbed wire. Behind the barricade is a still, black mass of figures, where the individual shapes of people are blurred into the dark, continuous entity, although a strong sunlight streaming across from the right highlights the contours of some heads, shoulders and sides." (Michael Vaughan "Literature and Populism in South Africa: Reflections on the Ideology of *Staffrider*" in Georg M. Gugelberger (ed) *Marxism and African Literature* James Currey Ltd 1985 at 209) The back cover of Volume 1 Number 1 shows the youth jumping clear.

These photographs are from a collection by the late Ralph Ndawo. The fact that the crowd and the barrier depicted are at an NPSL soccer match in the ghetto underlines the universality of oppression and exploitation and the youth's clearing of the



barricade underlines the struggle for liberation.

The image on the cover of Volume 1 Number 3 depicts a crowd at a railway station. The image of the inveterate traveller and the corollary that the Black people are a *travelling* population is a recurrent image in the early *Staffrider*. The very title of the magazine derives from this image – it is a reference to Magawulana riding trains "without a ticket" and living dangerously. *Magawulana* by K.F.S. Ntuli appears as a "novel in progress" in the first issue:

"The boy had instinctively warmed to this character of the back-streets. Liso felt instinctively that only good could come from this man. He of the checked woollen cap, the faded denim trousers, the canvas shoes which showed the toes and the shirt the original colour of which was now impossible to tell, due to long use and its state of cleanliness. He of the red, fearful, jumping eyes. The one who knew how to get onto trains without a ticket; he who could discourse for hours upon the virtues of keeping your eyes open. The one who would give you the best advice on how to avoid trouble. He introduced himself as Magawulana. Whether it was the first name or the surname you did not know, and you instinctively knew you were not supposed to ask. This one knew how to bruise the law and how to avoid its consequential retaliation.

He was the maestro; Machiavelli re-born. He was truly master of any situation. You knew he would champion the ship; you knew where your place was with him. In any situation you had to take the back seat and he would drive, for, you see, difficult situations were his speciality. Only practical experience can give these qualities to any man, and experience was what Magawulana certainly had."

The leitmotif of *Staffrider* established in these early editions was to locate itself in the concrete experience of the Black people with all its grind and grime and to emerge victorious. Both the youth clearing the barricade and Magawulana are characters "of the people", both of them are absolutely unencumbered by any sort of wealth or possessions. And both the youth and Magawulana represent a conscious, creative energy at one with the masses. As Mthobeni Mutloatse puts it in "*Ngwana wa Azania: A Film Concept*":

"This child of bastardised society and bastard people-in-high-office and colour-obsession and paranoid of communism and humanism, shall break through and snap the chain of repression with its bare hands, and this child, with its rotten background and slightly bleak future shall however liberate this nuclear crazy world with Nkulunkulu's greatest gift to man: *ubuntu*." (pg. 61)

It may be added that Vaughan's ob-

jection that the *Staffrider* figure is "found in juxtaposition to images of the people, the masses, the suffering and oppressed multitudes, the community – rather than in juxtaposition to images of class-defined collectivities" (Vaughan *op cit* 209) and that the figure deifies "individual agency in the 'imaginative' genres of *Staffrider* literature" (Vaughan *op cit* 211) is difficult to take seriously. The Black proletarian nature of the original *Staffrider* cannot simply be determined by the objective class membership (*viz* lumpen proletariat) of the *Staffrider* figure – even Vaughan has to admit that the class partisanship of the *Staffrider* figure was decidedly Black proletarian, even that the same persons may at different times be "workers" and "staffriders" (Vaughan *op cit* 210f). To argue that the *Staffrider* figure had to don a hard hat and overalls and carry a spanner in order for *Staffrider* to be kosher is ludicrous in the extreme.

BC

Staffrider emerged in the aftermath of the Soweto Rebellion when the Black Consciousness Movement was severely proscribed. It was immediately adopted by people precisely because it grounded itself in the BC ideology. The BCM has always attributed a central place to the development of Azanian culture and *Staffrider* represented the Movement defying the 19 October 1977 bannings: it represented the BCM's resilience and its *locus* in the consciousness of oppressed people. It also represented the simplicity and the complexity of BC's ethos. Ideologically, *Staffrider* shows a profound appreciation of the dialectic between the struggle for national liberation and that for socialism.

Staffrider succeeded in getting various township cultural groups to make contributions and it did not reject these contributions on the basis of Eurocentric "literary standards". The result was a magnificent pot-pourri of stories, novellae, documentary photography, poetry, essays, art, reviews and interviews.

No wonder, then, that each issue of

Staffrider was eagerly awaited and snatched up by a voracious reading public. *Staffrider* had a knack of defying preconceived notions about our "illiteracy", "laziness" and "backwardness". We were proud of *Staffrider* – it was *ons eie skelmpie!* (See "About *Staffrider*": "A staffrider is, let's face it, a *skelm* of sorts. Like Hermes or Mercury – the messenger of the gods in classical mythology – he is almost certainly as light-fingered as he is fleet-footed. A skilful entertainer, a bringer of messages, a useful person but . . . slightly disreputable . . .").

Non-Racialism

Predictably, liberalism – hugely inspired by the state's massive crackdown on the BCM – launched a concerted campaign to deflect the direction of *Staffrider* and Ravan Press which published it. Christopher van Wyk and Fhazel Johennesse found themselves unhappy with *Staffrider's* "relatively uncritical" and "loose" editorial policy (See Christopher van Wyk "Staffrider and the Politics of Culture" pg 165 ff). They launched *Wietie* in 1980, a magazine whose life-span proved ephemeral. By 1983 as a result of sharp struggle within *Staffrider's* informal "editorial collective" and within Ravan Press itself, *Staffrider* got its first editor in Christopher van Wyk. Van Wyk, while insisting that he subscribed to BC in the early days, betrays his real motives:

"A non-racial attitude was beginning to take shape in the country. At that stage the magazine published an overwhelming number of black contributors and I felt that the non-racial perspective required a greater openness to all South African writers."

It is obvious that van Wyk never understood the ABC of BC. In a land where the overwhelming majority happen to be Black, it can only be the crudest racism which dictates that a magazine's content is "unbalanced" if it reflects this demographic reality. White racism is at one level a matter of choice, at another a matter of privilege, but at *all* levels an exercise in oppression.

Ravan Press also lost Mthobeni Mutloatse, "the one person without whom there would have been no *Staffrider*." (Mike Kirkwood "Remembering *Staffrider*" at page 5). Mutloatse and others channeled their not inconsiderable energies into Skotaville Publishers, an independent publishing house under firm Black control. Skotaville derives its name from T D Mveli Skota, who made the call in his report as Secretary General of the ANC for "a monster Conclave" to be summonsed for Black people "from Cape to Cairo . . . to take immediate action" to "avoid perpetual slavery of the very worst type." (Circa January 1930, Document 48h in Volume 4 of *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964* edited by Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M Carter and published by the Hoover Institution)

Given the change in the direction of both the magazine and Ravan Press which Ravan's catalogue for 1985 described as reflecting "contemporary developments, such as the rise of the trade union movement and the establishment of broad, non-racial political organisations", *Staffrider* lost its soul-force and broad appeal. That is why Andries Walter Oliphant, yet another "former" BC activist, was called in to become editor in 1987. As Kaizer Nyatumba reports in "A 'skelm' of Sorts' *Tribute* September 1989 page 111: "Oliphant said there was a feeling at Ravan Press in 1987 that the direction of the magazine had changed and its quality had deteriorated. He said attempts to improve the quality of the magazine did not succeed because there was 'not sufficient critical writing being made available to both writers and the readers to make critical criteria visible.'"

Whitewash

Oliphant, too, is a born-again non-racialist. But he goes further than van Wyk – who is candidly worried about "how the current movement with its non-racial perspective will crystallize in imaginative writing" (pg. 170). Oliphant attempts to re-write history by saying that *Staffrider* never reflected a BC perspective! The only evidence

he brings for this proposition is that the magazine was "at no stage exclusively black in either its contributions or its readership." (pg. 167) Once again, a grasp of the ABC of BC will reveal its strong anti-racist thrust which simply refuses to pigeon-hole people into ethnic or racial categories. **"Black" and "white" are political definitions, they bear no relation to race in any ethnographic sense or even colour in any literal sense.** That the editors of the "new-look" *Staffrider* have a crude tribalistic approach becomes obvious when one realizes that an attempt is made to include as many white (defined in terms of South Africa's Population Registration Act) writers as possible in this anthology.

Liberalism manifests itself in a profoundly a-historical approach and in a blatant attempt to re-write contemporary history. Hence in the first issue edited by Oliphant (who has also given *Staffrider* a new book-sized format, just to "register clearly in the readers' minds that there was a change" Nyatumba *op cit* 111) he editorializes: "(W)hat immediately strikes one, even at a cursory overview, is the responsiveness of the magazine to the populist movement

which began to reassert itself in the political and cultural domains, after the period of dormancy and reorganization that followed the large-scale repression of the sixties." (Volume 7 Number 1 1988 at pg. 3) The result is that the new-look *Staffrider* appeals only to the trendy literati – it is "the refrigerated food of bourgeois culture", to borrow from Mafika Pascal Gwala in an interview with *Staffrider* (Volume 8 Number 1 1989).

Struggle in the ideological realm, especially in literature and art, is crucial. Revolutionary literature and art must create a variety of characters out of real life and help the masses to propel history forward.

It is time for real Black artists to stand up and be counted. In Desiree Barnwell's inimitable words:

"Will the real black people please stand:
Those fearless of the unconventional,
Moved towards their own blackness,
Prone to influence and set trends,
Schooled in *their* times and folkways,
Dedicated to worthwhile endeavours,
Attentive to meaningful expression."

What about a regular forum for Black artists, Skotaville Publishers?

What about reclaiming *Staffrider* and writing its true history?

Recommendation

This anthology is useful in bringing together some of *Staffrider's* best published works (although it must be stressed that many mediocre works have been included in this anthology and many great works have been excluded – banned for BLACKNESS!) and in providing a cumulative index for Volumes 1-6. It is also challenging in that it brings acute focus to bear on the whitewashing of our cultural heritage. As a Black writer wrote to his nephew:

"I said that it was intended that you should perish in the ghetto, perish by never being allowed to go behind the white man's definitions, by never to recognize that we are Black in senses we give to Blackness, instead of senses they give to Blackness. And so, since we are upsetting the applecart of cosy white thought about Blackness, these people who believed that your imprisonment made them safe are losing their grasp of reality."

– Vanesco Mafora



Frankly Speaking . . .

*Brickbats and Bouquets

Frank Talk is a very good, unusual journal, which I don't always agree with, but always enjoy. Here is my subscription and a donation to help you continue.

LUMKE MAGAZI

Bede, Queenstown

The political stance of the BCM leads logically to anti-Sovietism. This means that the BCM has no firm allies internationally and is driven straight into a political desert, and ends up as a bunch of political grasshoppers.

BARNEY DHLWATI

Mlungisi Township, Queenstown

When is your next *Frank Talk* coming out – I've been keenly waiting since February 1988!

MICHAEL THEMBA

Glen Residence, Rosebank, Cape Town

Find enclosed herein postal orders for the 1989 subscription and a donation for the wonderful work.

THOMAS MBOBO

Galeshewe, Kimberley

*Biko Lives!

Your lead article in *Frank Talk* Volume 2 was devastating. I made a copy of it and pasted it up on the bulletin board at work with a note: "READ THIS – IT COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE."

MABANDLA NTOMBODIDI

KwaZakhele, Port Elizabeth

*Principle or Strategy?

In the Editorial of *Frank Talk* Volume 2 you refer to the "principle" of non-

collaboration. The Azanian People's Manifesto also makes "anti-collaboration" a principle. This is an ultra-leftist and dangerous idea. It is possible to use state structures without collaborating: as Lenin says the struggle is not advanced by abstract principles but by an assessment of the concrete conditions facing the working class and their resultant state of consciousness.

KEABLE MOTSHABI

Mamelodi, Pretoria

* Dictatorship of the Black Proletariat

While I was visiting a friend in Mafeking I came across the article "Black Solidarity for a Socialist Azania – an Introduction". I read a few paragraphs and said "This is for me". I spent – and still spend – a long time reading and re-reading this article paragraph by paragraph. Your Staff Writers' views on BC are like a jewel of thought. I am looking forward to the next *Frank Talk*.

REFILOE MOTAUNG

Pomolong Location, QwaQwa

The word "dictatorship" began as a reference to the *dictatura* of the ancient Roman Republic, a constitutional institution which provided for an emergency exercise of power by a trusted citizen for temporary and limited purposes, for six months at the most. Its aim was to preserve the republican *status quo*, it was conceived to be a bulwark in defence of the republic against a foreign foe or internal subversion. Its modern analogue is the institution of martial law or state of siege.

When Marx employed the term "dictatorship", then, the modern aura which makes "dictatorship" a dirty word did not exist. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" refers only to the *rule* of the proletariat as a class.

At the end of the nineteenth century the old and new meanings of "dictatorship" were jostling and overlapping. It was the international campaign against the new Soviet state which fixed the meaning of dictatorship as something anti-democratic, the opposite of control by popular sovereignty.

In no time at all, the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" became a terminological football to be kicked about in the political war over a much more important question: the destiny and character of the Russian Revolution and the workers' Soviet government it had ushered into existence.

While everyone pretended to be debating the meaning of Marx's revolutionary socialism or communism, none of the polemicists were much concerned with what Marx had been talking about when he first wrote the term "dictatorship" down in 1850.

Under Stalin the term "dictatorship" was transmogrified into *nothing* but a code word for a totalitarian dictatorship over the people; it was finally eviscerated of all revolutionary-democratic content. The term "dictatorship of the proletariat" is now only a bureaucratic watchword, and your "Dictatorship of the Black Proletariat" is merely in the same tradition of gutting socialism of its organic enrootment in the mass of people.

JEAN PAUL GAISCOIGNE

Paris, France

In promoting the racial division of the working class, Black Consciousness acts in league with the fascist state. Your article "Black Solidarity for a Socialist Azania: an Introduction" (*Frank Talk* Volume 2) reveals a distorted subjective interpretation of objective reality, arguing that the racial consciousness of the white working class deprives them of their proletarian status.

There is no room in Marxism at all for this argument, based on the inevitability of a certain unchanging consciousness as it is, especially when it comes to the Proletariat which must perform its historic role.

The working class in Azania do not need to be told about their role in creating the wealth of the country – they do that every day. The history of the white workers must be re-written to show how the white working class was duped into believing that it had a vested interest in the white state, white civilization and culture and in the preservation of the white race.

To conscientize, politicize and mobilize Black workers is necessary: to do the same for white workers is urgent. To propagate racist theories is objectively to aid imperialism.

EMILE BEUKES

Kuils River, Cape Town

I was disappointed by the lack of emphasis on the peasantry in your article "Black Solidarity for a Socialist Azania – an Introduction." The agrarian question is an urgent task of the national democratic revolution and one of the ways of denying the necessity for the national democratic revolution is by denying the very existence of the peasantry.

It is no wonder that imperialist-sponsored research organisations like SALDRU (South African Labour and Development Research Unit) at the University of Cape Town have gone to great lengths to prove that no peasantry exists in Azania.

I would like to see a firm commitment to the national democratic revolution. Trotskyism sees only the socialist revolution without the democratic stage. And it is Trotskyism which wants the revolution "to vegetate in its own contradictions and rot away while waiting for the world revolution." (Stalin *Problems of Leninism* Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976, page 126)

IGNATIUS LEKULENI

Sedibeng, Tembisa

Given the clear strategic importance and social power of South Africa's black workers, it did not surprise me that your article "Black Solidarity for a Socialist Azania: An Introduction" paid lip service to the "hegemony of the Black working class."

While the ANC wants to give South African imperialists a democratic facelift, AZAPO wishes to displace the Oppenheimers with a petty bourgeois elite that aspires to exploit its own proletariat.

We believe that a civil war fought on a purely white vs. black, national basis in South Africa will be a disaster for the oppressed. A Leninist-Trotskyist party in South Africa must be built in irreconcilable struggle against every kind of nationalism and popular-frontism.

A worker's revolution in South Africa will be the motor force for the liberation of the desperately impoverished black masses throughout Africa. The internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard must overcome the tremendous political backwardness of the black proletariat which is in inverse relation to its political power. Forward to a multi-racial revolutionary workers party which will reforge the Fourth International!

FRED LUCY

Ann Arbor, USA

Your article "Black Solidarity for a Socialist Azania – an Introduction" posits a naive and essentially authoritarian philosophy of vanguardism. Black Consciousness has nothing in common with the mechanistic "dia-mat" (dialectical materialism) presented in your analysis.

Against the force of the South African state, BC placed the force of a liberatory idea – the creative subjectivity of the Black masses. Far from a psychological exercise, Biko and the founding fathers of BC were speaking of the liberation of the whole person,

a "quest for a new humanity" where the Black person would no longer be thought of as "an extension of a broom or some additional leverage to some machine."

A section of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* was particularly attractive to early BC intellectuals. In Chapter Five, Fanon takes an excerpt from Sartre's *Orphee Noir* which speaks of Black as particular and class as universal. "In fact Negritude appears as a minor term of dialectical progression," writes Sartre. Fanon replied: "I felt that I had been robbed of my last chance . . . He was reminding me that my blackness was only a minor term. In all truth I tell you, my shoulders slipped out of the framework of the world, my feet could no longer feel the touch of the ground. Without a Negro past, without a Negro future, it was impossible for



Тов. Ленин ОЧИЩАЕТ ЗЕМЛЮ ОТ НЕЧИСТИ.

me to live my Negrohood. Not yet white, no longer wholly black, I was damned."

Biko sought a continuation of Fanon's dialectic in South Africa. Your approach, rather than working on the ground set by Biko, tries to engraft the "materialism" of "scientific socialism" into the "idealism" of BC. You simply make class and race synonymous and garnish this with Marxian phraseology.

For you, Black is the substance rather than the subject of revolution. What began as a very new revolutionary

idea in the early 1970s is reduced to little more than an application of Lenin's analysis of Russia in 1902. In *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon says about your vanguard party: "The single party is the modern form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, unmasked, unpainted, unscrupulous and cynical . . . The party leaders behave like common sergeant-majors, frequently reminding the people of the need for 'silence in the ranks' . . . 'Leader': the word comes from the English verb 'to lead', but a frequent French translation is 'to drive'. The driver, the shepherd of the people, no longer exists today. The people are no longer a herd, they do not need to be driven."

The critique of those who have left the BCM that BC is just a passing stage has been taken on board by you when you say that you have passed the "earlier stage" of BC by adding to the philosophy the language of "scientific socialism." BC desperately needs to find a bridge to Marx's humanism: this will help work out the race/class dialectic and the relationship between consciousness and organisation.

RENDANE MADABA

Sibasa, Venda

* For the Record

Taking the cue from your correspondent John Mbeki (*Frank Talk* Volume 2 pg. 51), I would like to reveal the Book of Tutu. Tutu has always insinuated himself within the ranks of the struggle against apartheid, loudly advertising himself as a leading "critic of the government" and "voice of the opposition". But from this position he has always fought desperately to try to put a strait-jacket on the mass struggle and to prevent explosive confrontations with the state or its agents.

Tutu trotted out his credentials as political fireman before the Eloff Commission: "We have been accused of fomenting unrest. We must point out that . . . the Church will always confront evil to work for real reconciliation. But has the Commission ig-

nored the fact that we served as mediator helping to end a long drawn out strike in Cape Town? Have they forgotten my intervention to try to save the life of a policeman at Mr Mxenge's funeral in King Williams Town? Have they forgotten how I tried to stop stone-throwing at Regina Mundi last year? . . . Have they forgotten our attempts to bring peace on the black university campuses and in black schools? . . ." (1983)

The apartheid rulers and the Western imperialists have not ignored Tutu's qualities or his deeds. Official attacks on Tutu serve to keep him on a leash and also to give him "credentials" as an anti-apartheid leader. Their reward for services rendered for Western imperialism was to award Tutu the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo in 1984 – a prize not awarded for services to humanity.

In 1976, Tutu wrote as follows to Prime Minister John Vorster: ". . . I am writing to you, Sir, because I know you to be a loving and caring father and husband, a doting grandfather who has experienced the joys and anguish of family life, its laughter and gaiety, its sorrows and pangs . . . In short I am writing to you as one human person to another human person, gloriously created in the image of the self-same God . . ."

After several windy pages in this vein, Tutu continues: "I write to you, Sir, because, like you, I am deeply committed to real reconciliation with justice for all, and to peaceful change to a more just and open South Africa in which the wonderful riches of our country will be shared more equitably." Tutu tells Vorster of his personal experience with "violence" in black-ruled countries of Africa and insists that he and blacks as a whole "don't want that at all." He explains: ". . . We are aware that politics is the art of the possible. We are ready to accept some meaningful signs . . ."

Just a month after Tutu's letter, the humanoid monster Vorster ordered his thugs to fire into the crowd of youth rebelling in the streets in the Soweto uprisings.

Tutu speaks for the thin film of "non-

whites" who have managed to attain education, position and some economic sops. Apartheid, from the viewpoint of this stratum of people, is an obstacle to their advancement. They chafe under its restrictions and long to feel that burden lift.

At the same time, however, they are genuinely horrified at the prospect of unrestrained black masses shattering the system – in that direction, they see only utter chaos and possible destruction of their puny privileges.

Fear of political forces on all sides, dread of the future and a fervent wish to be rescued somehow from this position – these are the moods that characterize this stratum and define the politics of Archbishop Tutu. He moans that he feels "strangled" from both sides but when push comes to shove he always acts to save the ruling class and to further tighten the noose around the masses.

Tutu's 1976 letter asked Vorster to call a "national convention" made up of leaders of various communities to work towards a compromise political solution, as well as to accept "the urban black as a permanent inhabitant of what is wrongfully called white South Africa" and to repeal the pass laws. This essentially calls for dismantling the formal laws of apartheid and giving the aspirant black bourgeoisie their "fair share" of wealth and power. Tutu also appeals to the rulers to grant him more political chips to work with so he can shore up his rapidly eroding "moderating" influence among sections of the masses and thus help to head off a "disaster". Revolution would be tragic for Tutu and all other reactionaries and lackies.

MOSES NKADIMENG

Lenyenye, Pietersburg

I cannot understand how the BCM can associate with someone like Dr Neville Alexander. Writing as No Sizwe in *One Azania, One Nation* (Zed Press, London, 1979), Alexander says the following about the BCM at pages 130-1, note 79:

". . . (T)he (Black Consciousness)

Movement has served as the happy hunting-ground for all manner of bourgeois opportunism and imperialist machinations. This can only be explained as the result of contradictions arising from the class position of the leadership of the movement and the essentially gradualist strategic conceptions of the dominant tendency until mid-1977. Community projects (such as clinics, hospitals, factories) were organised – with abundant and continuous financial assistance from capitalist-imperialist sources of both South African and other Western origin – in order to ‘conscientise’ the oppressed people and make them ‘self-reliant’. The reformist, accommodationist dangers of such a strategy are all too clear. It is in fact a replica of what the Afrikaans petty-bourgeoisie did with their Reddingsdaadbond and other mutual-aid organisations, except that they used a language-cum-colour criterion, whereas the Black Consciousness Movement uses as its criterion the fact of ‘blackness’. Potentially, the strategy would lead to a similar accommodation with the capitalist system as in the case of the Afrikaner sectionalists. Consider the following statement made by one of the founders of the BCM in South Africa: ‘We need to take another look at how best to use our economic power, little as it seems. We must seriously examine the possibility of establishing business co-operatives whose interests shall be ploughed back into community development programmes. We should think along such lines as the “buy black” campaign once suggested in Johannesburg and establish our own banks for the benefit of the community. Organisational development amongst blacks has only been low because we allowed it. Now that we are aware we are on our own it, is more than a duty to fulfil these needs. (Steve Biko ‘Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity’ in Mokgethi Motlhabi (ed.), *Essays in Black Theology* (University Christian Movement, Johannesburg, 1972), p.26. The uncanny echo of the Afrikaner sectionalist movement is too distinct to be missed . . .”

With friends like Neville . . .

PULENG MOETI

Bochabelo Location, Bloemfontein

* The National Question

A major task of the national struggle is to return Azania to the indigenous African people. The African people comprise the overwhelming majority in Azania and is the vanguard force for national liberation. It is their political destiny which is the key aspect of the national struggle.



African is a definite entity while Black is merely a reaction to the concept of white as it relates to the history of our political oppression. Black does have political value: it helps in instilling pride and dignity into our people and in incorporating the so-called Coloured and Asian peoples with the Africans. The Black Consciousness Movement has done a magnificent job in bringing the three groups together on a realistic political basis, something that no other political organisation has been able to attain.

The language of multi-racialism and non-racialism tends to reject the reality of the African entity in the name of non-racial and human values. This is a distortion. The African peoples have been occupying the country for thousands of years. They have a distinct culture, history and tradition, all of which have been denied and negated by the colonialists. Therefore

we are engaged in a national struggle to put right these historical crimes committed against our people.

Living in an African country everybody, whatever his nationality, is an African. And while the vast and overwhelming African majority is brutally oppressed the duty of everybody is to identify with the struggle. That is the highest political morality in Azania today.

The liberation of all in our country is related to the political and social emancipation of the African peoples.

The oppressed African nation is the main force and vehicle of change. And while the oppressed African people repossess their country and assert their leading imprint in all aspects of Azanian life, at the same time they will incorporate all that is best from other civilisations and cultures. In other words Africanism is not only an assertion of the legitimate political, social and cultural rights of the oppressed African nation it incorporates other human values. That is why Sobukwe stated that in Azania it is very possible for a white person to become the Prime Minister of the country. But he will do so as an African living in an African country.

The concept of Blackness can incorporate Africanism. Certainly the BCM has done so. It observes Heroes' Day which was inaugurated by the PAC. The BCM adherent very often thinks as an Africanist. And leads the Indian and so-called Coloured members in the same direction. The BCM takes up very firm anti-colonial positions with regard to the national struggle. But its Africanism needs to be more specifically spelt out.

DABI MAISELA

Harare, Zimbabwe

Too many elements of the leadership of our struggle continue to believe that we are fighting a colonial regime, that South Africa is a colonial country. Even though they often say that the whites will stay on in the

country after liberation, they also see these whites as or behave as though the whites are still "settlers" and "colonialists". If we are really fighting a colonial regime, then we can assume that the general features of anti-colonial wars will apply to our situation. We can among other things assume that decolonisation is inevitable, the colonialists will withdraw to their mother country or countries, colonial authority will transfer power to the anti-colonial forces through a negotiated settlement and a "sole and authentic representative" organisation will unite the nation against the colonial forces.

The reality is that the original settler population cut their links with Europe in the sense that they themselves became "Africans". They became in effect like any other conquering group that imposes itself on and adapts itself to the foreign environment, a ruling caste. We are dealing with a native ruling class (of European origin), not with a foreign ruling group. We are not, in short, dealing with a colonial situation any more. South Africa was the first African colony of Europe to be decolonised via a "negotiated settlement".

South African capitalism has developed along its own peculiar path as a secondary imperialism in league with other imperialisms. While the land question continues to be a central concern of many of the people and the liberation movement, the question of wage exploitation is the main social question in South Africa. The Primary contradiction (not only objectively but in the subjective consciousness of the masses) is that between capital and labour and not between an oppressing white settler-colonial class and an oppressed class of black helots. This latter is a pertinent contradiction, but a secondary one nonetheless. Of course, the fact that this exploitative relationship is experienced in the form of racial discrimination and racial oppression means that a nationalist response remains the dominant consciousness among black people.

It is for the reasons outlined above that I believe your analysis "Black

Solidarity' for a Socialist Azania – an Introduction" is way off beam!

EUGENE SPECKMAN

Eldorado Park, Johannesburg

In the spirit of Pan-Africanism and anti-imperialism we must struggle against the global tyrants of America (Nato) and Russia (the Warsaw Pact). We must also constantly struggle against Marxist (Leninist, Maoist) organisations who want us to subordinate the national liberation struggle to the class struggle. In the case of self-determination of Black people, it is the white "left" who want to determine Black liberation. The Marxists want to pay lip service to the National Question, but in reality they want a national question without nationalism. We must understand Marxism did not create national liberation struggles – national oppression did.

I am we,

KENNY ANDERSON

Pontiac Black Activists League, USA

(Letter shortened – EC)

The attempt that the National Forum makes to merge the working class struggle with the national liberation struggle is sectarianism *par excellence*. It leads to the rejection of the national democratic stage of our struggle, the trivialisation of the National Question and a refusal to move from abstract theory or abstract intellectualism to concrete and living reality. There is a lot that is assumed without being worked for.

The National Forum fails to see the colonial nature of the apartheid state and therefore rejects the idea that the struggle is in essence a national liberation struggle.

Different ethnic groups amongst the nationally oppressed react differently to the separation and hierarchy of racial oppression. We must build up a truly united struggle against national oppression, starting from the realities of separation. Unity has to be built, it has to be fought for.

The vehement critics of ethnicity should remember that Marx showed in 1866 that nihilistic rejection of nationalities could lead to recognition and acceptance of the nationalism of the oppressors. Thus it comes as no surprise that the Forum displays the very ethnicity which it denounces in the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses when it says that whites must work in their own communities.

BILLY SINGH

Toronto, Canada

I was impressed by the clarity of your analysis on South Africa's political economy in "Black Solidarity for a Socialist Azania – an Introduction". You explode the myth that South Africa is some sort of independent formation from which imperialism benefits and underline that *South Africa is part of the apparatus of world imperialism*.

South Africa as a political and economic entity represents an historically specific variant of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism has at least the following key characteristics:

These colonies were found on a series of brutal campaigns and wars to wrest control of land and resources from the indigenous population and required the continuous dispossession and fragmentation of these populations.

Economically, the settler society rested on an alliance between settler capital and foreign capital. Within the colony, a relatively advanced class formation arose on the basis of an emergent capitalist mode of production, dominating and structuring less developed subsistence economies to meet its interests.

Socially, there arose a community of interests within the settler populations. That is to say, social antagonisms among whites were conditioned by and subordinated to the more fundamental antagonism between the settler community and the indigenous populations it subjugated.

The settler state displays extreme rigidity. On the one hand, this is the product of an almost permanent state

of siege vis-a-vis the dominated populations. On the other hand, it is the product of the strategic importance of the settler colony to the metropolitan powers. Secondly, the relative weight of the settler community and its capacity to accumulate wealth creates the possibility of conflict with its metropolitan backer, whose perspective is global rather than regional. Suspicions of betrayal reinforce state rigidity.

Capitalism is no pure economic phenomenon: it is profoundly conditioned by political and ideological structures.

OLABIMTAN AYODEJI

Lagos, Nigeria

*** Black Theology**

The article "Black Theology – Opiate or Material Force?" critically alludes to the theological stances of Reverend Alan Boesak and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. This criticism is all very well, but it worries me that your contributor chooses to remain anonymous "for professional reasons". It seems to me that this is a cloak for sheer self-interest to be protected. Your contributor should not display such cowardice: it makes it difficult for readers to take the views expressed in the article seriously.

STANLEY NTWASA (Rev)

Dobsonville, Johannesburg

Black Theology must promote god-building, god-worship and god-fear. Therefore, it cannot serve revolution: the fetters of capitalism were forged in the anvil of the "opium of the masses" by the missionaries, the god-builders.

All god-building is the fond self-contemplation of the thick-witted philistine, the frail man in the street. It is the dreamy self-humiliation of the vulgar petty bourgeoisie exhausted and in despair.

MAUREEN NKOSI

Thabong, Welkom

The article "Black Theology – Opiate or Material Force?" in *Frank Talk* Volume 2 wrongly suggests that "(i)t

is to be unpardonably revisionist for Black theologians to assume the ability to seize the ideological weapon of the imperialists and unleash with the same the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed." (pg. 39)

The oppressed cannot be deprived of their liberating religious faith and religious thought is not the exclusive possession of the ruling class. The message of the exodus, the story of the cross, and the victory of the risen Christ over the forces of evil are potent forces in their own right, but proclaimed by the oppressed in a situation of crisis they can become such that the gates of hell cannot prevail against them.

While past history weighted on all individuals and social institutions and the church is no exception, churches too can be reborn even when they are grown old (John 3:4).

Leadership of the calibre of Dr Alan Boesak and Archbishop Desmond Tutu who are willing and able to act ecumenically and corporately in opposing the state constitute a major sign of hope within the institutional churches. There is a battle for the soul of the church being waged between the oppressor and the oppressed in South Africa. The revolutionary role of the church depends less on the conscious intentions of religious groups than it does on the objective social conditions in which the message of the church is proclaimed.

MONWABISI MTSHISELWA

KwaNobuhle, Uitenhage

In reading the piece "Black Theology – Opiate or Material Force?" I was strongly reminded of Jean Meslier (1664-1729), a Catholic priest who expressed his strongest wish as abolishing injustice and wretchedness from the world by the expedient (in his own words) of "hanging and

strangling with the bowels of the priests all the nobles and rulers of the earth"!

Meslier advocated atheism as the only outlook consistent with the interests of the majority of mankind in its struggle against the lust for domination of the unscrupulous few. His *Testament* is a compendium of the historical, exegetical, textual and logical objections concerning the essentials of the Christian creed.

Isn't it time that BT followed the atheist priest?

MICHAEL MORRIS

New York, USA

To bring about real and complete liberation from exploitation and oppression, it is necessary to bring



about liberation without gods-liberation from the need to obscure what the world is really about or to seek consolation from a life of seemingly senseless suffering and anguish.

Every religion in the world believes that every other religion is superstition. And they are all correct!

GISELLE DALAIS

Claremont, Cape Town

*** "Miss USSR"**

Did you see the reports and watch the snippets on SATV about the "Miss

USSR" beauty contest in Russia? I always knew this was where *perestroika* was leading (Gorbachev says as much in his book). It shows how male-dominated the Komsomol (sponsor of the pageant, also known as the Young Communist League) is. It's infuriating.

ADELAIDE GUMEDE
Claremont, Durban

* Food as a Political Weapon

Food is a political weapon – Thatcher's crocodile tears for the Ethiopians will not cover the fact that she is implicated in the deaths of millions as she has used those deaths to score political points and starve those peoples into submission. So-called "aid" is a political weapon. Not only is it too little, too late, but it has

many strings attached. Millions starve the world over whilst it is profitable to let food rot in the "food mountains" of the European Economic Community. This present world order is not only "degenerate", it has a passion for death and starvation. It must be annihilated.

DAVID BLACKBEARD
Bristol, England



FOR THE RECORD

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ORGANISERS OF THE "CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE".

COMPATRIOTS

On or about 28 August 1988, we read with interest that you were planning a "Congress of the People" and that you had invited a host of organisations including ourselves. We were surprised because we had not received such an invitation.

On 4 September 1988 two delegates representing the CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE Unions (COSATU), Mr Sidney Mofumadi and Mr Frank Meintjies met a delegation from the AZANIAN CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE. The two gentlemen explained that COSATU was not responsible for the media reports and had intended to consult fully with all organisations. They assured us that the only aim of the conference was to show united opposition to the repression unleashed by "the government," in particular the attempt to hold municipal elections after banning 18 people's organisations.

The AZACCO delegation at this meeting expressed disquiet about the following issues:-

- (a) The fact that the organizers belonged to only one political grouping viz the Charterists and jealously excluded all other political groupings from the Organizing Committee,
- (b) The fact that plans were at such an advanced stage and the meeting was scheduled for 24th September 1988 not allowing consultation with membership and between organisations to occur at all. We were presented with a *fait accompli*.
- (c) The invitation extended to a mixed bag of groupings some of whom were not in existence eg. "Free State women"(?), "Rural

AZACCO sent this Open Letter to COSATU on 19 September 1988. The "Congress of the People" was banned by Pretoria.

On 9 December 1989, a one-day conference, jointly convened by AZAPO and the UDF and dubbed the "Conference for a Democratic future", was held at the University of the Witswatersrand. The CDF failed to attract other major tendencies in the liberation movement. It also failed to arrive at any binding decisions whatsoever, despite an attempt to force the Harare Declaration (adopted by the OAU Heads of State on August 21, 1989) down the throats of delegates by employing undemocratic practices throughout the Conference.

areas"(?), Non-racial democratic organisation (?) and in the same breath, excluded hundreds of organisations eg. the AZANIAN STUDENT'S MOVEMENT (AZASM) and the CAPE ACTION LEAGUE (CAL).

- (d) The invitation extended to groupings working within the system eg. the Inyandza Cultural group, the Seposongwe and PPP parties of Bophuthatswana, the DPP of Transkei and the NDM of Wynand Malan. The BCM's rejection of participation in government-created institutions is non-negotiable.
- (e) The invitation extended to liberal groups whose constituencies have never been the oppressed and exploited viz the ECC, the FFF, IDASA and NUSAS. While the work done by some of these groups - in particular the ECC - is to be lauded, the solution has to be hammered out in the first instance by these who are oppressed and exploited.
- (f) The allocation of delegates leaves much to be desired. The non-racial democratic movement, whatever that means, has been given 50 delegates while we were given only 15. The affiliates of the non-racial democratic movement have been granted further delegates such as SANSCO and

NUSAS, sharing 30 delegates, FEDTRAW 4, UWCO 4 and NAYO 13 and a blanket 100 for regional structures in civic politics.

The meeting closed with AZACCO agreeing to consult with its constituents and allies and report back.

After considering the contents of the written invitations and after a thoroughgoing consultation, we feel compelled to place things in perspective. We shall proceed to do so:

(1) *Negotiated Settlements*

We believe that the struggle is for repossession of occupied land.

Calls for 'negotiated settlements' are by their definition, calls by imperialism to broker a "solution" which will result in it retaining a stranglehold in our beloved country. We have already seen in Nigeria, in India, in Kenya - indeed all over the formerly colonized world - that imperialists are only too eager to grant "political power" while retaining economic power in their hands. Neo-colonial solutions are not what the toiling masses in occupied Azania desire - we want total liberation, we want complete control of our individual and collective destinies.

The lessons we have learnt from our neighbour, Zimbabwe, speak elo-

quently of the pitfalls in negotiated settlements. Zimbabwe finds itself still trying to recover from the "settlement" dictated at Lancaster House. We are determined that Azania will not fall into this debilitating trap.

Any definition of "the struggle" which omits the role of the imperialists in this land is a definition which is a lie or a half-truth. And we are all aware that half-truths are worse than lies.

(2) Democracy

It is a gross over – simplification to prattle that the struggle in this land is merely for democracy. Democracy means the dictatorship of the ruling class and is a political system well-suited to capitalist society.

We have all heard that the USA is the model for democracy – a country which props up the Pretoria regime, which oppresses, exploits and dehumanises the majority of its own inhabitants, which is an imperialist power *par excellence*.

We believe that the struggle is for socialism – that only socialism guarantees democracy for the masses of people while retaining dictatorship over oppressors and exploiters of whatever guise.

In this country, we have a class society sensitized by a form of racism so intense that it extends to the slightest nuance in skin-colour.

Any "solution" which seeks democracy in the existing system is a call to reform. And the organisers of the "Congress of the People" revealingly say the following about the coming municipal elections: [ie on October 26, 1988-EC]

"The elections come in the wake of a major crackdown on the democratic movement and the banning of 18 organisations... (T)he elections is (sic) an attempt to sidestep the most pressing issue: the demand for political rights at central government level."

We can only infer that if the 18 organisations were not banned, there would be no need for the "Congress of the People" – because we would be

participating in the elections and in Botha's "4th chamber"! We strongly believe that the masses have shown unequivocally that they reject any participation in the system – and definitely that they reject the "allies" of the conference organisers viz Inyandza, Seposengwe, DPP and PPP.

We say that any definition of the problem in our country which avoids mentioning capitalism clearly intends a form of democracy which will halt on the flip side of socialism.

We may add that the organising of the Conference reveals all forms of undemocratic practices: There was no consultation with organisations invited, the invitation was extended at the last moment and with non-disclosure of vital information, and the list of invitees included some of the most anti-democratic groupings known – including these who actively oil the wheels of the apartheid/capitalist machinery.

(3) Apartheid

We believe that the words of Steve Biko should be our watchword:

"The greatest mistake we have made is to regard all these who oppose apartheid as our allies."

We believe that the struggle against apartheid is only the departure point for our liberatory efforts.

We are not fighting merely to live in the same areas as whites or to share the same toilet seats. We are fighting for the total transformation of this iniquitous and inhuman system.

The misrepresentation of the nature of the struggle in the "Congress of the People" invitation is a matter for intense and lively political discussion.

We believe that the demand for "One person One vote", while necessary, is supply NOT ENOUGH. Majority rule has to go hand in glove with socialism.

We realize that the chequered history of the liberation struggle has given rise to various strands in the broad liberation movement – in particular Black Consciousness, Pan-Africanism, Charterism. Hence any attempt to forge unity has to be done in consultation with all organisations on the ground. And it must be actuated by the spirit of non-sectarianism, a spirit whereby we agree to respect each other's differences, a spirit by which we agree to march under different banners but to strike together.

The lessons of 1985-1988 culminating in the tragedy of Pietermaritzburg underline the importance of this delicate process: after all, it is only the ruling class which benefits from our disunity as a liberation movement and as a people.

We believe that Azania is destined to become one under the leadership of the Black working class and that she will indeed become one. And we believe that the setbacks we have experienced are due to the misdirection of Azania's revolutionary elements.

We appreciate and commend COSATU for the bold step it has taken in trying to bring the oppressed and exploited together to determine their destiny. But the points raised above and the unfair allocation of delegates unfortunately leaves us with no choice but to refrain from participating in this Congress. ■





MESSAGE FROM THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT (BCM) TO THE WORKERS' SUMMIT HELD ON 26 AUGUST 1989

COMRADES:

This Workers' Summit comes at a crucial juncture in the history of Southern Africa and it is therefore appropriate that it coincides with Namibia Day. We in the BCM urge that the sights and sounds of solidarity with the Namibian struggle take shape here and ring out across the globe.

The heroic rebellion of the Azanian people during 1984-1986 has forced the Pretoria regime to adopt the language of liberalism (or "reform") while tightening the noose of repression. Hence we have witnessed the Labour Relations Amendment Act (LRAA) which attempts to wrench the law at a stroke into a new pattern and to regulate and police the Black union movement. Hence the elaborate plans for privatisation and de-regulation and the near-permanent state of emergency. Hence the report by the South African Law Commission whose "Bill of Rights" does no more than entrench the existing system root and branch.

Comrades, liberalism is being used to contain the Azanian revolution. Anyone who sees an ally in liberalism is making a fundamental error about the nature of our enemy. Suffice it to say that the centre of liberalism in South Africa is made up not of petty bourgeois democrats but of real capitalists.

The system restricted the Workers' Summit held on 26 August 1989. This message was to be delivered by Nkosi Patrick Molala, the AZAPO President.

It is with this backdrop in mind that the BCM wishes to reiterate that its guiding principle is the hegemony of the Black working class within the national liberation movement. In occupied Azania the Black Proletariat numbers in the millions, in the world as a whole the Proletariat number in the hundreds of millions.

We believe that the Black Proletariat is the pivot of the liberation movement because it can only end its own exploitation by ending **all** exploitation. Only the Black Proletariat has an interest in and the power to make the Azanian Revolution a reality.

We cannot over-emphasize that without the right to rule, any prattle about the "rights of labour" is absolutely meaningless! This is the cold truth . . . let us make it the liberating truth!!

There is no doubt that the union movement is destined to make great strides in its historical campaign against the LRAA. And there is no doubt that the Black working class is destined to play its historical role as the creator of an anti-racist, socialist Azania. More than that, the Proletariat and oppressed people all over the globe need to lock hands across con-

tinents to see to it that the "earth shall rise on new foundations."

In many ways, the LRAA provides an acid test for the union movement. We are required to exploit our *independent* mobilizing potential and make the LRAA unworkable!

We in the BCM wish to make the following suggestions regarding the campaign against the LRAA:

1. Calls for spectacular "stayaways" (whether beginning on the 1st or 11th Sept. 1989) fail to take into account that the Black working class has been on the receiving end of renewed repression and tyranny and is just beginning to muster strength. We suggest that the most organized plants undertake industrial action first and that those who have been temporarily disorganized use the time to prepare for action. Industrial action can therefore take the form of sustained and prolonged waves. However, we do not disfavour a complete stayaway on Tuesday and Wednesday the 5th and 6th of September with lunch-time placard demonstrations and other creative actions starting from the 1st September.

2. Joint Regional Campaign Committees of all unions participating in the anti-LRAA campaign must be established and must be guided by principled unity. The substratum of principles must include anti-imperialism, anti-racism and anti-sexism and must be guided by the policy of anti-collaboration. Any opportunist alliances with government stooges or those involved in the bantustan or tricameral system (including the Democratic Party, Inkatha, Inyandza, etc) or white liberal factions (including the Black Sash, Idasa, etc) amounts to a betrayal of the liberation struggle. To falter here is to blunder at a crucial point because of which the Black working class will never be able either to rediscover revolutionary greatness in itself or to win new energy from the connections newly entered into, until all classes with which it contended in 1652, 1832, 1960, 1976 and 1984 themselves lie prostrate beside it.

3. It is tactically urgent for unions to negotiate Recognition Agreements with employers and to be careful that these Recognition Agreements really reflect the interests of workers in the "collective bargaining" relationship. Where Recognition Agreements already exist, a critical re-appraisal of them is a necessity.

Unions ought to work towards the implementation of these collective contracts rather than continue working within the framework of the LRAA. We believe there is unexplored potential in Recognition Agreements which potential must be fully exploited.

We would like to address the argument that the union movement as *the union movement* can provide the political lead to free occupied Azania.

We must decide whether we are building a labour movement or a liberation movement. If we are building a labour movement, however militantly we go about it and however much we attach and tack on militant slogans and pro-

paganda, we will ultimately create a reformist movement.

A liberation movement on the other hand includes economic demands as part of its overall process and overall character, but as a very definitely subordinate part of it.

We can learn from Lenin in this regard:-

"If we begin with the solid foundation of a strong organisation of revolutionaries, we can ensure the stability of the movement as a whole and carry out the aims both of (socialism) and of trade unionism proper. If, however, we begin with a broad worker's organisation, which is supposedly most 'accessible' to the masses (but which is actually most accessible to the police), we shall achieve neither the one aim or the other; we shall not eliminate our rule-of-thumb methods, and, because we remain scattered and our forces are constantly broken up by the police, we shall only make trade unions . . . the more accessible to the masses."

What is required for REVOLUTION is bold, decisive national leadership. A revolutionary leadership has to link up the struggles and sacrifices of today – those struggles for a living wage, for better and humane living conditions, for proper health care, for better housing and an improved quality of life, for proper education, etc. – with the the goal of building a new world, a world where class, colour or gender is not made the basis of a person's worth, a world without exploitation and oppression.

Genuine revolutionaries do not use the struggle of the masses as negotiating chips with the enemy nor do they seek to replace the existing authorities just to sit on the same old system of exploitation.

A call for a negotiated settlement with the excuse that it offers a way to broaden out democratic possibilities is palpably in the air. It comes in the wake of renewed and bitter mass struggles which are rumbling in full rage and fury and seeks to dilute these struggles from their aim of smashing white rule and carrying out a national

and democratic revolution to free Azania of imperialism and its local props. It is a response to imperialist manoeuvres: after all, the futures of Namibia and Angola were negotiated with everyone except the Nambian and Angolan people themselves. Similar manoeuvres are evident in occupied Palestine and occupied Eritrea.

The Black working class must take the lead in making all these schemes of "working within the system" non-starters. A negotiated settlement will be nothing less than CAPITULATION: it is imperialism's way of buying time until the 21st Century.

There is no logic in representing the oppressed by trying to be the "State President" of the very system that oppresses them. That's like representing fish by trying to be "President" of the sharks that eat them!

It is high time that the world be wrested from the hands of the imperialists and reactionaries who now run it. Their rule means continued misery for the immense majority of people throughout the globe. And despite their talk of peace and understanding, the real danger still exists that the imperialists will launch a Third World War. Only the revolutionary struggle of the Proletariat and its allies can change this state of affairs and unlock the doors to the future.

Whether a new stage in the struggle will be born in the tempest challenging the outmoded order in South Africa or whether this upsurge becomes a bloody and tragic loss for the world's people depends, comrades, on all of us who know what it is to suffer scorn and be beaten down, all of us who long to dig existing society's grave.

Either we belong to the trend towards World War III or the trend towards thoroughgoing Revolution. Put differently: either we work towards a horrible end or we end the horror once and for all.

Amandla ba Sebenzi!

Izwe Lethu I Afrika!

One People One Azania One Nation! ■

CALLING ALL AZANIANS!

On this 1st day of January, 1990 the Frank talk Editorial Collective offers this draft Declaration, forged through painstaking, comprehensive discussions and principled struggle, to the Azanian people for careful study, intensive deliberation and vigorous application.

Preamble

There is no doubt that Azania is poised on the threshold of momentous events during the last decade of the 20th Century. We, the Azanian people, are confronted with the extremely serious responsibility of further unifying our ranks and preparing for the tremendous challenges and critical battles shaping up ahead. We are fully conscious of the tasks expected of us and are proud to accept and act in accordance with our historic responsibility.

The World Situation

At the current conjuncture, national developments have never been more profoundly affected by developments on a world scale. The contradictions between various imperialist powers, the contradictions between imperialism and the oppressed peoples and nations and the contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the imperialist countries are accentuating rapidly.

We are witnessing how the post World War II "division of the world" is coming apart at the seams. We have seen Black people rising up in Miami, USA (January 1989) and we have seen the Siberian coal miners rising up in Novokuznetsk, USSR (July, 1989). We have watched the troops of "Emperor" George Bush invading Panama (December 1989) to bring their disobedient former hitman, Manuel Noriega in line and we recognize that "Emperor" Mikhail Gorbachev is attempting to suppress the struggle for national self-determination in the

Soviet republics. Righteous rebellion against social-imperialism and various state capitalist bourgeoisies has gripped Eastern Europe and the *intifaada* (uprising) of the Palestinian people continues unabated.

Mao tse Tung's statement "Either revolution will prevent war, or war will give rise to revolution" takes on urgent importance as the rivalry between the two imperialist blocs led by the USA and the USSR respectively expresses itself on an unprecedented scale.

The meaning of taking responsibility for the future of humanity is to meet the challenge of making and accelerating revolution and under all circumstances seeing the struggle through to the abolition of imperialism and all systems based on exploitation and enforced by murder and destruction.

Southern Africa

While we are fully conscious of the many differences between Southern Africa in the 1990's and Western Europe in the 1870's we nevertheless call to attention the similarities between Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, his role in the "Unification of Germany" and the establishment of South Africa's hegemony over Southern Africa.

Bismarck, acting in the interests of German capitalism, united various feudal principalities into a single German nation. P W Botha and his successor, F W de Klerk, acting in the interests of Western imperialism, are completing the task of integrating the entire sub-continent of Southern Africa into a single economic entity. The Nkomati Accords and other similar non-aggression pacts, the regular raids into "independent" neighbouring states, the sponsorship and deployment of counter-revolutionary forces and the sabotage of the beginnings made by the Southern African

Development Co-ordination Conference all show how Southern Africa's geo-political map is being re-drawn with quicksilver rapidity.

On 25 June 1975 the People's Republic of Mozambique was born. At Nkomatipoort on 16th March 1984 Mozambique capitulated to racist South Africa when she signed "The Agreement on Non-Aggression and Good Neighbourliness." In 1989 Mozambique dropped all pretences of following a socialist path.

On 11 November 1975, the Portuguese flag was lowered in Luanda. What replaced Portugal in Angola was not an independent and liberated society. The MPLA government which took office during February 1976 has presided over a society which makes for a case study in Soviet neo-colonialism.

The "negotiated settlement" arrived at at Lancaster House in 1979 saw the Zimbabwean revolution being seriously compromised.

The installation of an "independent" Namibian government on a pattern and pace determined by South Africa, the USA and the USSR with the neo-colonial trappings of Resolution 435 and the 1982 Agreements show the dangers of revolutionary vigilance being abandoned for diplomatic adventurism.

In the final analysis, the question of true self-determination for the peoples of Southern Africa is inextricably bound up with the making and sustaining of revolution in occupied Azania itself.

Azania

The *pretoriastroika* being promoted by F W de Klerk is premised on the "release, unban, dismantle, negotiate" framework - *release* political prisoners, *unban* banned organisations, *dismantle* repressive apartheid laws and *negotiate* with those claiming to represent the Black majority. It

is no coincidence that the grand design of *pretoriastroika* overlaps exactly with the Harare Declaration adopted by the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa on 21 August 1989.

It is no coincidence either that the Harare Declaration makes the absurd call for *the Pretoria regime* – the custodians of the apartheid-capitalist system – to join in the noble effort to end the apartheid system" (sic!) at point 11.0. Far from realizing the ANC's professed goal of seizing the "initiative" from the enemy (Report on consultation between the ANC, the UDF and COSATU – 6 June 1989), the Harare Declaration places the initiative squarely with the Pretoria regime.

Even the South African Law Commission's Working Paper on Group and Human Rights – which unequivocally calls for the consolidation of the *status quo* – falls far to the left of the Harare Declaration when it insists that the statute book be "purged" of all "provisions inconsistent with the bill of rights" (14.69 on Page 442). The Harare Declaration merely calls for Pretoria to repeal all legislation "designed to circumscribe political activity" (at 19.4).

The revealing language of the Harare Declaration dilutes our consistently stated goal of achieving a unitary state – it merely calls for a "united" state (at 16.1), quite clearly aiming at the retention of the bantustan human dumping grounds. No wonder that the concept of an "anti-apartheid bantustan" (sic!) – with Transkei and KaNgwane being held up as shining examples – is actively being promoted.

Like its fount, the Lusaka Manifesto adopted by the OAU Heads of State during September 1969, the Harare Declaration makes a fetish of "international support and aid". We must insist that the struggle must be executed and directed by the Azanian masses and be informed by the interests of the Black Proletariat.

As much as the Lusaka Manifesto recommends the protection of the "rights" of the white minority (at point 9), the Harare Declaration seeks to protect the interests of the white set-

tlers as against those of the dispossessed. The ANC's Constitutional Guidelines – presented at Lusaka during March 1988 – amount to no more than a re-hash of the hopelessly flawed Kliptown Charter adopted on 26 June 1955.

While the Kliptown Charter subordinates the interests of the masses to those of the white ruling class, another pernicious tendency exists of denying and negating the struggle for national liberation by promoting the idea of a single "socialist" revolution. This latter tendency usually concentrates on the day-to-day struggles of the Black workers and an overall worship of the "average" worker. While it is impossible to build a revolutionary movement and lead it to victory without paying attention to the battles for daily existence of the masses, such work must always be conducted in such a way as to facilitate the moving of the masses to revolutionary positions.

We therefore have no hesitation in declaring that:

- (a) *The Lusaka Manifesto and the Harare Declaration amount to a betrayal of our long, arduous struggle for total liberation;*
- (b) *As much as the efforts of international agencies and governments is appreciated, we – the Azanian people – reserve the sole right to determine the agenda and direction of our liberation struggle including the role and limits of foreign aid and support;*
- (c) *The democratic ethos – with the principle of accountability and report-back firmly in place – demands that we thoroughly peruse and deliberate upon all documents issued in our name and we reject with contempt ANY attempt to fob off such documents as representative of our aspirations without the democratic process running its full course;*
- (d) *Abbreviated conferences which are preceded by no consultation about the agenda and documents to be presented, procedure to be adopted and formula for representativeness amount to stunts which the liberation*

struggle can do without;

- (e) *The Conference for a Democratic Future held on 9 December 1989 – while it must be criticized in the terms of paragraph (d) above – nevertheless firmly exploded the myth of numerical superiority propagated by the UDF/COSATU alliance;*
- (f) *A sustained effort at uniting all organisations opposed to the negotiated settlement option for immediate and unrelenting action is a categorical imperative;*
- (g) *It is essential that the achievement of the maximum unity of the oppressed be achieved and that a political situation is created wherein centralism and democracy, discipline and freedom and unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness are combined;*
- (h) *The establishment of a true revolutionary press which arms the masses with an all-round view of society and the world is of the highest priority;*
- (i) *The elaboration of the basic points outlined in the Azanian People's Manifesto with due regard to the immediate national democratic tasks of the revolution must be crystallized and popularized post-haste;*
- (j) *The key to achieving national liberation is the independent role of the Black Proletariat and its ability to establish its hegemony in the liberation struggle;*
- (k) *Widespread political education must be disseminated and the theoretical and ideological level of the masses raised with awareness of the dangers and consequences of an imperialist war;*
- (l) *Our revolutionary vigilance must be sharpened and our political, organisational and ideological readiness to achieve – and maintain – genuine liberation must be maximized.*

Afterword

Revolution is the only solution.

Do we really dare make revolution? We dare not fail to make it! ■



West Rand Development Board Police, 1985.



Victims of the Queenstown shooting on November 17, 1985 being buried in Mlungisi Township, Queenstown on December 7, 1985.



August 1989: Burning barricade in Thornton Road, Cape Town.



11 August 1985: Teargas fired at youths stoning delivery vehicles in Hanover Park on the Cape Flats.



6 September 1989: Police disperse youth with teargas and buckshot in Steenberg outside Cape Town.



6 September 1989: Police and Black youth wage pitched battles in Manenberg Township near Cape Town.



Mrs Hilda Levy (right), mother of 13 year old Ricardo Levy who was shot dead by the South African Police.

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