

SOLIDARITY

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**Black Consciousness
Movement of Azania**

No. 8 Fourth Quarter 1981

● **Black Nationalism and the
Class Struggle in South Africa**

● **The Military Situation in
El Salvador**

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CLOSURE OF OUR OFFICE

Our readers and supporters are asked to note that we are closing our office in London, our only office, on 23 March 1982.

The closure has serious consequences for Solidarity which has been produced at little cost to us thanks to the voluntary labour of our members and the availability of an office. Without office space in which to paste, print, collate and bind it will not be easy for us to bring out Solidarity as regularly as we would like.

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BLACK NATIONALISM AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICE

Who are the main antagonists of the capitalist class? Is it the white working class, or is it the more economically and politically oppressed and numerically more substantial black working class? asks Matano Nshumi. On the core of the problem that class precedes race, there is general agreement but the controversy arises when it is claimed that class consciousness is colour-blind. The claim amounts to an acquiescence with bourgeois ideology.

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THE MILITARY SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR

The transcript of a talk by Ruben Zamora given in London on October 31st. Zamora is a member of the Political-Diplomatic Commission of the FMLN-FDR, the body responsible for developing international support for the Salvadorean struggle. We are grateful to the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign for permission to reproduce the text.

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In Action We Are United

In a remarkable display of solidarity the oppressed people of South Africa carried out a most successful boycott of the South African Indian Council — the SAIC.

The SAIC is part of the ethnic machinery of the apartheid system: a dummy Council for this group and another for that group of the oppressed. It is a system which bypasses the people's demand and struggle for full democratic participation in the highest organs of the state. It is a system which, contrary to our oneness as an oppressed majority, is designed to impose upon us separate ethnic identities in order to divide and make us amenable to racist rule by a white minority. To this system the people have again said NO in no uncertain terms.

From the moment in 1978 when the Government scrapped a thoroughly discredited council whose members it nominated and announced the formation of an elected council, the oppressed people through all their popularly based organizations — the Anti-SAIC Committee, Natal Indian Congress, AZAPO, Committee of Ten, Solidarity Front, COSAS and AZASO — came together and together sent out a call for the

elections to the SAIC to be boycotted. At the heart of the movement to boycott the SAIC were the black consciousness organisations. According to one observer writing in a South African journal:

"The influence of the black consciousness position, which had as a principle plank in its programme the non-participation in state-created, ethnically separate bodies, accentuated the conventional position of progressive opposition groups — non-participation in and boycott of Bantu Administrations, Urban Bantu Councils, Coloured Representative Council (CRC), SAIC and other similar bodies."

From 1978 to 4 November 1982, the date of the elections, the call to boycott was actively sustained by one of the most intensive and vigorous campaigns at mass mobilisation. It was a campaign in which all the popular opposition movements acted in unity regardless of ideological differences and thereby enabled all the oppressed people to be involved in the boycott regardless of whether they had a "vote" or not in terms of the statutory ethnic definitions of the white

minority government. Therein lies the significance of the boycott of the SAIC: an action of the black oppressed in their entirety and not only of the group for whom the Government had intended the SAIC.

To have participated — as some friends of the liberation movements had counselled — would have been a betrayal of the other sections of the oppressed who in 1976 forced the resignation of the dummy Soweto Urban Bantu Council



and followed in 1977 by heavily boycotting the elections to the Soweto Community Council which drew a poll of 6 per cent, and in 1980 forced the "Coloured Representative" Council to close shop.

Indeed, it must have been these precedents of successful boycotts which Zakariah Yacoob, a member of the Natal Anti-SAIC Committee, had in mind when he declared that "participation would be betraying our African brothers and sisters and our Coloured brothers and sisters". These words and the campaign they accompanied did not go unheeded. The elections were a massive flop in which only 10½ percent voted. The low poll is a registration by a section of the oppressed of their vehement reject-

ion of any deal, sham or not, which sets them apart from and divides them against other sections of the oppressed.

The successful action against the SAIC elections, taking place at the end of 1981, climaxed a year in which unity in action was the keynote on several issues and several fronts of the struggle. Thus all the people and their popular organisations stood together to boycott the "Republic" festivities, FOSATU and the unaffiliated-independent unregistered trade unions supported by all the people's organisations stood together in the boycott of the Colgate-Rowntree consumer goods, and all the people's organisations paid homage to Joe Gcabi and the heroes of Matola both murdered by the South African Government.

The campaign and boycott against the SAIC and the other campaigns of 1981 are showing the way forward: only through unity in action will we overthrow the white minority Government and its system of oppression and exploitation.



Demand the Release of Khotso Seatlholo

Khotso Seatlholo, 25, was detained in June 1981 and brought before a Johannesburg court in early December. He is charged, inter alia, with

- engaging in "terrorist" activity and belonging to the banned Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC);
- forming the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO);
- recruiting members to SAYRCO;
- making contact with other organisations inside South Africa;
- undermining "law and order" through armed resistance.

In August 1976 Khotso was elected President of the SSRC which was then leading the massive revolt of the Soweto students against the compulsory learning of Afrikaans in schools. Together with many other activists of the Soweto Revolt he was forced to leave South Africa. In exile he co-founded SAYRCO and was its first elected President.

Despite the risk involved, Khotso returned to South Africa just before the 5th anniversary of the Soweto Revolt. According to the Government he and others distributed leaflets in Soweto on 16 June and called the oppressed to

"organise and act against the enemy. He was arrested during this visit to Soweto.



The trial of Khotso Seatlholo and others with whom he was arrested is set to begin on 8 February 1982.

Solidarity movements and their supporters everywhere are asked to demand that the charges against Khotso and others be unconditionally dropped and that they be immediately released from detention.

Book Review

MIND YOUR COLOUR: THE 'COLOURED' STEREOTYPE IN SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

Vernie A. February

London & Boston: Kegan Paul International Ltd., 1981. 248 pages. £10.50.

Very few people in the world today feel a greater need to reinterpret themselves to the world, to strip their image of all the derogatory remarks and insults that have been made against them and to arrest the further erosion of their culture (and humanity) by the 'dominant' and largely superimposed culture in their land, than the disadvantaged and oppressed people of South Africa. Whereas in the rest of Africa concepts like Negritude, which sought to inject some pride in being Black, are largely dated, Blacks in South Africa continue to feel the need to make a common onslaught on all those notions which denigrate their culture and debase them as Black People. Scholarship by Black South Africans is aimed at self-definition, at ensuring that the tools of interpretation and analysis on matters affecting them as Blacks do not remain the monopoly of aliens or outsiders, no matter how friendly dis-

posed or benevolent such spokesmen may be. The great pioneering work in this direction was Ezekiel Mphahlele's *The African Image* (London: Faber, 1962. 2nd Edition 1974). Dr February's work is modelled after Mphahlele's book. He does for the 'Coloured' (people of mixed race) community what Mphahlele has done for the indigenous Africans of non-Khoisan descent, that is, the group linguists and anthropologists usually describe as the 'Bantu-speaking people'.

"This book is essentially about stereotypes as found in the literature and culture of South Africa," February declares in his Preface. It deals specifically with those people referred to in the South African racial legislation as 'Coloureds'. February's primary purpose is to show how the 'Coloured' character in White South African fiction is stigmatized. His chief objection to this phenomenon is political. But then only those who live in an imaginary world or have been severely alienated persist in seeing literature in South Africa as being divorced from politics. "The stereotype facilitates the task of the power-holder and makes it possible to stipulate a code of conduct for the blacks on the basis

of characteristics imputed to them by whites," February states in Fanonesque terms.

As in Mphahlele's treatment of 'Literary Images' in *The African Image*, February's book divides into two sections. Chapters 1-4 deal with white images of 'Coloureds' in the writings of English — and Afrikaans — speaking writers, and Chapter 7 reverts to white portraits of 'Coloureds', in fiction by Afrikaans writers of the 'Sestigers' movement. February exposes white prejudices against the 'Coloureds' projected in the unflattering portraits of 'Coloured' characters in the fiction of these writers from the earliest period of Dutch-Afrikaans literature, which begins in 1832 with the publication of E.C. Boniface's play, *De Temperanitisten*. He also berates English writers, even those of Sarah Gertrude Millin's stature, for propagating the same stereotypes as their Afrikaans counterparts. The 'Coloured' character in the work of these English writers of ostensibly liberal inclinations remains "care-free, comical, witty, loud-mouthed, fond of liquor, and prone to fighting easily". At best, these English writers evince an attitude of benevolent neglect, so that Olive Schreiner is taken to task because even in her great novel, *The Story of an African Farm*, "the black and coloured people of Africa who were with her from birth and far outnumbered the white are not naturally and immediately in it".

February's most interesting chapter on White images is the one which deals with the Afrikaans writers' movement of the 1960s, the 'Sestigers'. Widely hailed as "writers who open the portals of Afrikanerdom by touching upon such issues as the oppression of the blacks and the hypocrisy of Afrikanerdom in respect of sex and religion", in February's penetrating analysis the 'Sestigers' are reduced to little more than what

Mphahlele describes as 'one-eyed Dickensian' authors. February alleges that in their work their chief orientation remains Afrikaner, with the Blacks featuring only as stereotypes. His discussion of Breyten Breytenbach and Andre Brink, two leading lights in the movement, is most revealing. He reminds the reader that Breytenbach, political 'revolutionary' and radical writer, actually recanted all his previous views when brought to trial for treason. As Adam Small once commented during Breytenbach's trial on the latter's tarnished image as a revolutionary and committed writer, "How many of the verses can still . . . remain standing after what Breytenbach has said in court?" Even Breytenbach had to acknowledge this in court in his final plea, which ended in a rather pathetic *mea culpa*. Equally interesting is Andre Brink's case whose novel, *Kennis van die aand* (translated by the author himself as *Looking on Darkness*. 1974), gained the dubious distinction of being the first novel by an Afrikaner writer in Afrikaans to be listed as 'undesirable' in terms of South Africa's rigid censorship laws. Brink depicts the Afrikaner as cruel and oppressive, their religion as bigotry. His 'Coloured' portraits, though sympathetically drawn, are never free from the conscious desire to be white. They are never themselves but what the Afrikaner intellectual *thinks* they should be. However, February misses an opportunity to drive his point home by omitting at this stage any reference to that other doyen of White liberals, Athol Fugard, especially in a play like *Statements on the Act of Immorality*.

While the polemical dimension is excellently handled, February's discussion of the White writers largely falls short on literary analysis. His criticism of most of the White writers dealt with in his work is dismissive (admittedly for the

correct political reasons), rather than expository. February's declared purpose is, of course, to show 'Coloured' stereotypes in the work of these writers. But in doing so he lumps all the writers together. We fail to see their work as individualized artistic creations, which are presumably unequal in their literary merit and achievement. Perhaps a small price to pay for the more urgent task of liberating Black people in South Africa, as much from their physical as from their mental shackles!

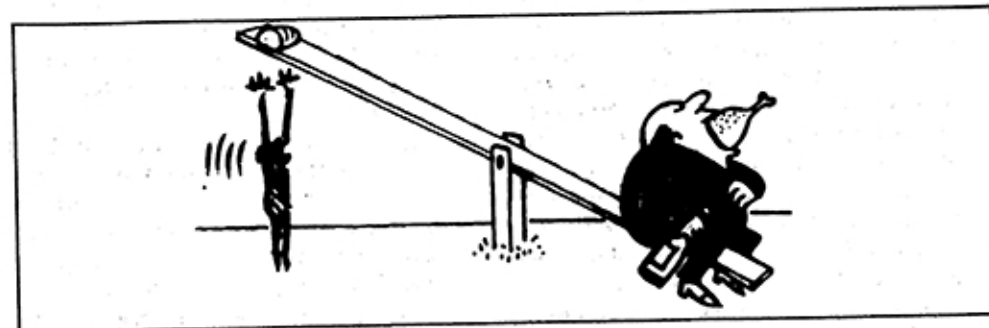
Most impressive in February's work is the facility with which he draws from Dutch, English, Afrikaans and other sources, and the comparative picture he draws of 'creolized' people, whether in the East and West Indies or in South Africa. "The comparative treatment of the subject served to provide further illuminating insights into the whole process of stigmatization," he declares.

The remaining four chapters deal with 'Coloured' writing. February observes that the over-riding tone in such literature is the 'Coloured' people's rejection of the roles ascribed to them by Whites, even in Adam Small's often denigrated work which is sometimes inaccurately

faulted for projecting an Uncle Tom image. On Black writing February's leverage comes simultaneously from a standpoint that invokes universalist standards and from a standpoint inside the energy system of the culture to which he belongs. His judgements in this section are correspondingly well balanced and his insights deeply penetrating. However, there are a few serious omissions. His study of the 'Coloured' poets ignores all the Black Consciousness poets of 'Coloured' extraction represented in James Matthews' anthology, *Black Voices Shout* (1974). Also there is no mention of Bessie Head, Africa's leading female novelist and probably rivalled only by Peter Abrahams and Alex La Guma as the leading 'Coloured' novelists South Africa has produced, in whose work the 'Coloured' character looms so large.

February's book ends with two valuable appendices: one on the pioneer 'Coloured' politician, Dr. Abdurahaman, and the other on South Africa's English pioneer poet, Thomas Pringle. The book is an important contribution to the growing corpus of critical literature in Africa by the Africans themselves.

MBULELO VIZIKHUNGO MZAMANE



Black Nationalism and the Class Struggle in South Africa

Matano Nshumi

The problem in South Africa is frequently cited in terms of minority rule. "Majority rule does not exist in South Africa" is the immediate response one gets from any informed person on the question. This is also the case in the responses from people who have been well schooled in the ways of the West, and who can stand out with moral indignation to protest the evils of Apartheid as the worst scourge to befall mankind. This is all justifiable and in-keeping with the facts, and it is alright so long as the responses are not used to sanctify seemingly lesser evils that still abound. After all, since the appearance of the institution of State in the course of human history, majority rule has faded away into the realm of the pre-historic past speculated upon by anthropologists. Given this situation then what tenability does majority rule have? Does it have any substance as a political question? In terms of comparisons between different democratic processes the answer is yes.

The most common argument advocating majority rule in South Africa bases itself on the western democracy model using a nominally 'universal' franchise, not of course without constricting conditions of western acculturation. The African experience of this has been the ONE MAN ONE VOTE interpretation that was effective in outsting the small over-represented settler leverage in the now flag-independent states. Other arguments consider the options of democratic practice not offered by the West; the traditional rule and government by participation as in African custom is an example.

It is obvious that these kinds of debate reduce the question of majority rule into an exercise of quantitative comparisons between different 'democratic' methods, and do not bring out the conditions that gave rise to the question.

Firstly the absence of majority rule implies minority rule. There exists a minority government in control of State. In addition that minority is white hence

affording itself the designation 'white minority'. This condition is a direct outcome of South Africa's colonial history, whereby a substantial landed immigrant or settler population from Europe was handed the reigns of power. Without asserting that all whites form this oligarchy, it is still valid to delineate the excluded majority mainly by the indigenous population which outnumbers the whites five to one.



In its attempt to maintain privilege and control the white minority regime enacts and enforces brazenly oppressive legislation against the majority, this being done over and above their total exclusion from the political process. In their struggle for control the majority thus fights not as a numerical majority, but as a segment that is oppressed. It is precisely this oppression that spurs them to struggle for liberation, rather than their plainly superior head count.

In South Africa the majority has called for a change in the political formula for over sixty years, to no avail. It has reached the stage where it has been forced to the ultimate political means, armed struggle. This should be borne in mind when considering the outlook of the South African majority. The day of addressing itself to the logic of the oppressor has gone. The only deliberations or articulations now worthy of attention are those addressing the problems of paving the way towards liberation and armed struggle. It should be no surprise then that many outlooks, philosophies, revolutionary theories and methodologies are being considered and adapted, and especially those that have proven themselves in other national liberation struggles of our time.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MAJORITY

Knowing that the majority in South Africa can be delineated by ethnicity or race, the largest group in it is the Africans. These are the peoples who had to be subdued militarily before the colonial minority could assume power. It is without exception that from the Khutu people of the Cape to the far reaches of the North African coastline, colonial aggression was met with determined resistance.

In all cases of colonial resistance the native populations utilised their armies against aggressor armies. For this to happen one must realise that the African societies had to have mature state machineries to take care of such contingencies. This implies the existence of hierarchy of permanent nature. Does this mean that there were classes in traditional Africa? Yes this has to be so although they were not necessarily antagonistic. The common tendency is to mis-associate classes in general with classes

that exist in contemporary nation-states under capitalism, which classes are antagonistic in nature. The result of the error is the popular assertion that Africa had a classless society. A discussion on this issue is beyond the scope of this paper since it involves detailed analysis of African communities.

The chieftainship was always close to the daily dealings of the community, and was easily accessible to the people. This fact lends credence to the claim of participatory democracy in the traditional setting. The chief's position was prestigious, hence it is not unexpected that struggles for the seat existed at various junctures. The more permanent institution that sanctioned chiefs was the council of elders. This was the highest body in the community and it had full powers: legislative, judiciary and executive, although it left daily government to its selected chief.

The advent of colonialism severely circumscribed the discretion of the African political institutions. After consolidation of colonial power chiefs were usually banished from their domain, and allowed back only as compromised figureheads that would answer to the colonial master. The colonial authorities would normally leave the chieftainships to conduct their affairs undisturbed, so long as their scope remained parochial and tribal. Once their dealings assumed supratribal dimensions the colonial authorities wasted no time in putting an end to such activities. With few exceptions, the white state body was rarely called upon to exercise its powers, although whenever it did so, the mass unrest that followed had to be concealed under such labels as 'tribal wars' of the Transkei and the like. Nevertheless this colonial policy has served the architects of Apartheid adequately in that traditionalist or tribal politics are still viewed by many to have feasible potency in the

politics of contemporary South Africa.

Colonial domination affected the African people in a number of ways. Firstly it eroded the traditional cohesion. Initially Africans were lost from the traditional setting into servitude under white plantation owners. Later when mining came about Africans were also to become the main source of labour. The chiefs were manipulated in various ways into becoming agents for such recruitment. The most common way was the imposition of monetary tax to be collected through the chiefs.

As Africans were being driven into this new socioeconomic system, the element of western culture also entered their reality. The strongest carriers of it were the missionaries of religion and education, committed to undo the 'pagan savagery' of the African, to transform him into a meek god fearing subject of the Crown. The parochial word of god was distributed to everybody but universal knowledge to a few, and then only elementary education. Higher education when provided went first to chiefly circles, and as a result of this, most of the first generation of the professional class came from the traditional elite.

This elite learned its lesson on the western universal well, for it refused to return to ethnic parochialism. All through the Nineteenth century this new dynamic and politically motivated class continued to move towards a national outlook which finally materialised in the formation of the African National (Native) Congress (ANC) in 1912. Right from the outset, the political emergence of Africans at a national level was for the purpose of offsetting their political circumvention that the colonial powers designed.

On account of the cultural outlook instilled in them by their conquerors, the articulation of their political aspirations took forms originating from the

ruling classes of the west. Initially the dominant reasoning was that of equality in the eyes of the lord, being the god-given right to strive for equality on earth. This god-fearing approach held sway up until the second world war. Realisation that meekness brought no blessings, and the experience of anticolonial struggle in Asia triggered the replacement of clerical reasoning with the posture of defiance. The new argument called for familiar but questionable birth rights to liberty, freedom, justice and human dignity. Their pronouncements did not advocate violent means of attaining these ends, but the intransigence and violent reaction of the white state was to later plummet the nationalists into adopting violent means of struggle. However, the demands were to remain 'respectable' in that they did not threaten private property.

Other segments of the oppressed majority include the Coloured and Asians. These groups have also been excluded from the political process, only to a lesser degree than Africans. Their many aspirations are thus covered by the aspirations of the African nationalists who we shall consider alone in more detail. It is appropriate to note that the oppressed segments now prefer the single designation BLACK as a singular identity, as opposed to other divisive designations prescribed by the state.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY

The economy of South Africa has a lot to do with why South Africa, an indeed all colonised lands were so pliable for colonial and imperialist designs. The pre-colonial stage was basically agrarian, with livestock accounting for most of the existing surplus. This livestock turned out to be crucial to the survival of the frontier settlers. First it eased the difficulty of

establishing the provision station at the Cape through the acquisition of cattle at very unequal exchange rates. Secondly in their continued expansion into the interior, cattle raiding was their only livelihood and means of stock building.

The first economic stage in colonial times was agrarian. In the usual colonial tradition the Dutch East India Company held monopoly of exporting all agricultural products from the Cape. Given their livestock acquisitions for instance, the resulting trade was highly profitable and the Company had to police this lucrative monopoly. This form of export goods was later succeeded by products from Boer plantations cultivated by African slave labour. The Dutch in Netherlands were not to enjoy this monopoly for long because the turn of the Nineteenth century saw the British finally take over mercantile imperialist control from the Dutch. British attempts at dominating colonialism had spanned over one century and the defeat of the Dutch navy by the British during the American War of Independence opened their way to Africa and the East.

Beginning in 1867 mining appeared on the economic scene. Diamonds were discovered in Orange Free State and gold in Transvaal five years later. From these highly profitable minerals a significant amount of capital accumulation became possible, allowing for the introduction of manufacturing.

Manufacture thus began after the turn of the Twentieth century. The first steel production began in 1911, and the new 'Union' government started the large-scale Iron and Steel Corporation in 1928. The mid 1900's marked the beginning of the joint mining/manufacturing stage of the South African economy.

The present economic system in South Africa can be described by what Dependence Theory advocates call 'semi-industrial polarised accumulation'. This

system is characterised by the role of providing raw materials and minerals to the industrial centers of Western Europe and America. It is typified by negative income distribution (their term for the lowering of workers' wages for redistribution among a select 'middle class'). In South Africa that middle class is the immigrant population of white 'artisans', overseers and managers. The purpose of the negative income distribution is supposedly to boost backward linkages, which means encourage the purchase of high technology appliances by this class, hence stimulating industrial development. In South Africa, economic planners have been debating the issue of African wages and even by the early 1970's, the common argument in support of maintaining the low wage ceiling was that Africans would consume only low technology products like food and clothing, and would thus not encourage industrial development. This example demonstrates the awareness of these white economic planners that Africans are poor and hungry. It contradicts their propaganda that Africans in South Africa enjoy the highest living standards in Africa. They conjure up such measures as the number of telephones per capita and conclude that Africans are outdoing their kin in the rest of the continent. Such conclusions are cheap apologetics because prior to the arrival of the whites, Africans did not go hungry in the name of telephones per capita.

This form of economy is considered polarised because it straddles the classical underdevelopment types like India and Nigeria, and the dominion types like Canada and Australia. The underdevelopment types are characterised by the absence of competitive technology, and are used for the extraction of natural resources at highly unequal exchange rates. In Dominion types on the other hand, the indigenous populations are

removed from mineral rich areas by immigrants and oftentimes get exterminated as in Australia. Viewed from such a perspective two handicaps become apparent for the natives of South Africa. Firstly they will be evicted from their land to make way for mineral exploitation and secondly they will be deliberately impoverished through the negative income distribution. The second handicap will of course be over and above the much heralded exploitation of their power as with the rest of the international proletariat. Evidence of these characteristics abounds in South Africa where Capital has a specialised form.



Capital there has refined itself to pay for labour power an amount prescribed by one's origin. This racist economy is a continuation of colonial aggression on the indigenous peoples, conducted by Western corporations. This is a systematic banishment of Africans from their land into parched, infertile, and unproductive labour-reserve bantustans, only to be pooled back into sub-human unisexual migrant labour incarceration by Capital, for incomes that fail to sustain their families. This is by far the dirtiest trick Capital has played in its history: artificially altering the social environment of labour into one of low precapitalist productivity thus lengthening its socially necessary labour time. By then employing such labour on advanced technology, a rate of surplus value many times the

value of that which could be extracted from labour living under normal conditions is achieved. To guarantee the existence of this barbaric profitmaking machine, imperialism has sanctioned the resident whites to formulate a myriad of oppressive legislations against the Africans, enforced by a racist, fascist police state.

CLASS ANALYSIS

For the sake of brevity, only the main economic classes will be considered. Capitalism is the dominant mode of production in South Africa. Although remnants of other modes of production still exist in the country (precapitalist agriculture and traditional African systems), these have almost totally succumbed to capitalism and a run-down of the classes engaged in capitalist production will suffice here.

Primarily there is the *bourgeoisie* that is based in London and New York. This class runs the mining and manufacturing industry in the country. In general, its operations in South Africa are integrated to those in the parent country. For instance, automobile assembly plants are directly dependent on parts from the mother country. Business is good for these transnational corporations, where in some sectors rates of return as high as 250% still comprise safe investments whereas in the mother country 40% would be considered risky. Annual dividends on South African investments in general exceed 100%. Obviously with such profits it is in the interests of this class to see to the continued oppression of Africans. Also within this class is the landed bourgeoisie, whose operations are limited to the South African sphere of economic influence. It originates from the big landowners of precapitalist agriculture and it operates in the food pro-

cessing industry and state regulated corporations. In the private sector this segment has less access to advancing technologies, hence is always less competitive than its transnational counterparts. This gives grounds to some minor contradictions which contribute to continuing Afrikaaner nationalism. In the state regulated industry this group has inter-governmental channels for improving its technology. The armaments industry is best example of a truce between this Afrikaaner and Uitlander, where taxpayers in the Uitlander's fatherland are used to assist the Afrikaaner in controlling unrest.

Second in this economic class hierarchy is the *petty bourgeoisie*. Unlike the entirely caucasian bourgeoisie this class has sprinklings of Asian and African members. Just as in early capitalism this class is under the perpetual threat of being thrown back into the lost of the toiling masses. This is especially so for the few African and Indian members who are continually under assault from racist legislation that throws them into the lower classes. Typically was legislation of the Group Areas Act which robbed Indians of land they held title to and evicted them from thriving commercial areas. Such downfalls of this class are a constant motivation for vocal political discontent, as can be observed by the sudden upsurge of Indian congress politics in the wake of the Group Areas Act. The law leaves them no room for reinvestment of profit and it ends up as conspicuous consumption, the only remaining means of expressing their stunted social importance. Insignificant as the black petty bourgeoisie may be in the economy it still plays an important role in the superstructure, as the 'tycoons' that Africans are to emulate and aspire to become. In this role the media is effective in making them more apparent than they are in reality, and if

Africans saw their paltry worth when compared to the bourgeoisie it would do much to kill the myth that Africans are making it.

Finally, we have the *working class* comprising approximately one million whites and eight million blacks. A good position of the black workers are under that pernicious migrant labour system. Of the remaining black workers only a small portion has unrecognised unions. On the contrary, the white workers are fully unionised, and their unions have been instrumental in keeping blacks in the lowest rungs of labour, paying the lowest wages possible. They colluded with colonial aggression by forming themselves into a white racist guild determined to prevent development of black skilled labour in exchange for racist privilege from Capital. In other words the white working class has cushioned itself in material comforts and is unlikely to stir up class consciousness to share its material comforts with black workers. This is no mere speculation: they proved it in 1922 and they continue to confirm it now, when they go on strike against encroachment by blacks. It is enough to say that the white working class is so imbued with racist thinking that it has consistently voted in the most unabashedly racist and fascist party — the Nationalist Party — for more than thirty years, on account of that party ensuring no encroachment by black labour into their privileged positions in industry. As for the claims about the revolutionary potential of the 'exploited' white working class, it is awkward enough to expect any class to give up its material well-being voluntarily, but it is utterly ridiculous to expect that same class to voluntarily risk its physical existence in violent struggle for the purpose of giving up its material comforts.

POLITICS OF THE OPPRESSED MAJORITY

In all three (African, Asian and Coloured) underprivileged ethnic groups we have noted that the most vocal in political dissent are from or allied to the petty bourgeoisie class. These are the small businessmen, small landowners, self-employed professionals like lawyers, doctors, clerics, and the general intelligentsia, including students. This group of people has been the articulator of resistance politics. Resistance politics commonly referred to as congress politics historically began with the appeal to participate in the political and economic life of the country, and reached the final stage of declaring armed struggle against the intransigent white power structure. Here again, we shall deal mainly with African nationalist politics.

From the outset African nationalist politics was carried out by the emerging educated elite. We noted that this elite spoke only in terms of the god-given or universal rights to equality, freedom and justice. Between 1912 and 1945 the ANC was guided mainly by clerical principles, and that phase came to an end when the intellectual and more militant Youth League took over in 1945. The ANC then adopted defiance programs which the white state power suppressed with callous brutality in spite of their non-violent nature.

By the late 1950's an Africanist voice emerged from the ranks of African nationalists. This group gave the nationalist goal of eradicating foreign occupation precedence over the attainment of universal rights for all as was the articulation of the ANC up until then. This break from the western 'oneness of humanity' propaganda was the main distinction between them and the ANC leadership.

Concomitant with this was the concern about the disproportionate organisational influence whites had in congress politics, and their dissatisfaction with the state of affairs led to formation of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1959. It should be noted that the revolutionary capability of the PAC did not differ from that of the ANC since its ranks were drawn from the same social strata. Even more critical was the inability of the PAC to break away from western organisational methods.

The formation of PAC catalysed political events nevertheless. In addition to the readiness of the masses to act, a new element of party one-upmanship spurred congress politics into the final antipass and pass burning campaigns ending with initiation of the Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo operations that were lethally stopped by the state. That phase of congress politics can be paraphrased as the "burial of congress politics into the 'deep underground' and the emergence to 'above ground' of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS)". Much has been said of the robustness and vitality of life underground but since the underground is by definition imperceptible to the ordinary eye, observations here will be limited to the cognizable above-surface activities only.

In the African political spectrum there was also the traditionalist platform, in which the state permitted only parochial tribal interests. Some chiefs challenged that restriction, and notable was the late Chief Albert Luthuli who carried ANC responsibilities at a time when he was still an elected chief. The outcome was his being stripped of his powers as chief of his people by the Native Affairs Department of the state. Other chiefs found it more advantageous to collude with Apartheid and to operate on the Bantustan platform. One such case was Chief

Gatsha Buthelezi, who was and still is given considerable latitude by the state, to solicit tribal politics beyond the prescribed Bantustan boundaries. One can speculate about the silent blessings that Gatsha's politic receives, but it is easier to see that his machinations serve to entrench Apartheid.

The banning of the congress parties in the early sixties did not stop the movement towards national liberation. A qualitative development inside the country matured Black Consciousness as a political national consciousness. This consciousness identified as 'black', all oppressed nationalities of South Africa. It was first and foremost politically motivated but its early articulations were not free from clerical overtones. This was a direct result of the sponsorship initially afforded it by clerical organisations, and it is no accident that there were weak but audible allusions towards conciliation, non-violence, and peaceful

change in the early pronouncements. There were justifications of expedience and survival on the part of the actual proponents of black consciousness to use the language of non-violence, and it would have been a fulfilling victory for the apologists of the system had the movement not shown its full potency. From the university campuses the movement went into the community as solidarity organisations and as community programs. This organisational approach reached the masses effectively, raising their consciousness to unheard of levels, sending white supremacy into a panic. The frantic reaction of the white oligarchy was to use feverishly desperate violence against 'anything that moved'. After more than two years of wholesale murderings, arrest and torture, the spectre of black liberation remained unmoved.

SOCIALIST POLITICS

As may be expected, capitalism emigrated to South Africa with its inherent killer germ, Socialism.

Socialist politics in South Africa very much suffered the vicissitudes of international socialist politics of the turn of the century. Of the various existing parties of that period, the Labour Party of South Africa was the main affiliate of the Second International. During that time this party along with the rest of the Second International in other countries turned right wing over the issues of World War I. Members of the International abandoned international proletarian interests for 'defence of fatherland' patriotism.

The collapse of the Second International was followed by the formulation and formation of the Third International by V.I. Lenin. On the South African front, left wingers of the Labour Party were purged, and they formed the International Socialist League which was central in organising other leftists around Lenin's 'Twenty-one Conditions' for the formation of a communist party under the Third International. Formation and affiliation was completed in 1921.

Since before the formation of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), the radical outlook of the left had been a minority voice in labour organisations. Union organisers were more disposed towards 'respectable' non-revolutionary economism. Hence in the period of and after the formation of the CPSA, the left wing continued to become more isolated from the white dominated right wing unions.

Firstly during the anti-African strike by white labour in 1922, the CPSA was trapped between two irreconcilable poles. The mineowners began replacing expensive white labour with cheap black labour, and the white unions went on

strike. The CPSA in a wierd interpretation of proletarian solidarity decided to support the strike, but it also wished for the recognition of Africans in the union. This sitting on the fence posture could not lead to much. The statement it produced supporting the strike action (hence alienating Africans) and then calling for recognition of Africans (negating the strike action) could not conceivably win support in an arena of polarised race politics.

In the sixty years of CPSA existence in South Africa, this has been the most unchanging factor in socialist politics. The fact that socialist parties were immigrant organisations in a country with a colonial problem of immigrant domination: how could the immigrant 'revolutionaries' expect to lead any change, when with colonial reverence they continued the colonial tradition of deciding matters for the indigenous people? That after more than fifty years of organisation the highest echelons of the CPSA were still white dominated? In the early years of the CPSA the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) also took the CPSA to task on the Native Question. "The natives must play a dominant role" was the ECCI theme in 1928, but the CPSA never acted wholeheartedly on the directive. The CPSA widened its membership drive, but quickly turned the new African recruits onto the ANC: an expedient move for today's pragmatic but unprincipled politics of alliance. Was it also to avert the 'black threat' within CPSA ranks, one can ask?

In 1926 CPSA members were expelled from the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), a strong black union. In the following years the CPSA lost its remaining links with it, partially a result of 'economism' of the ICU organisers. Notwithstanding that, the overall reason for the falling out have

still to be explained fully for it is not reasonable to not expect economism in labour unions. After losing audience in both black and white unions the only remaining strategy of survival for the CPSA was through congress alliance politics. Their main target was naturally the ANC and they strove to influence the nationalists into accepting all racial groupings of South Africa into the congress scheme. In this the CPSA was highly successful because it used patronage on the ANC leadership. The ANC was vulnerable to such tactics owing to its class orientation and owing to the organisational principles and methodology that leadership had adopted wholesale from the practice of western ruling classes.

It is especially ironic that the so-called party of the working class should take refuge in such an alliance of dependence. The result of this alliance was first, complicity in delaying the resolution of colonial contradictions and second, postponement of its proletarian duty to the black working class. Prevention of the indigenous people from ridding themselves of colonial subordination was all done under a thick cloud of rhetoric. Whether it was to discredit PAC or the group of eight (both being Africanists from ANC ranks), they were attacked with plausibly consistent ferocity and thanks to the Moscow leverage of influence, the CPSA has quietened all Africanist aspirations of ANC's organisational leadership. In its quest for political survival the CPSA has paid little attention to the indistinguishable class origins of ANC, PAC and the group of eight.

On the postponement of its revolutionary duty the CPSA has shied away from firmly standing behind the main antagonists of imperialism — the black working class. For the sake of 'alliance' it has failed to announce a principled stance in regard to the Freedom Charter.

I suppose it has wisely left that matter to the class struggle, which it gracefully evades. Fortunately for all parties concerned the curtain of history is falling over this act, and a revolutionary tide from within the country is rapidly making the machinations of exile politics obsolete and irrelevant to the ultimate objectives of the struggle.

THE CLASS VERSUS RACE QUESTION

It is worthwhile to consider the question that underlies the protracted ideological impasse observed above. It is especially instructive to consider the various leftist interpretations of the South African problem. The core of the question is whether class precedes race in South Africa, and the political implications of the answer. There is general agreement that in South Africa, *the class question precedes the race question*. The controversy begins with political interpretation of this analysis.

To begin with the above assertion is cognitive. It is objective knowledge gained from the history of human interaction. Its truth holds in South Africa as it does in other countries. While we are still in the realm of the cognitive let us make note that nowhere in this assertion is mutual exclusion implied, though it suits some socialist circles to add the arbitrary mutual exclusion condition to the assertion. They expound that class is devoid of race and race is devoid of class, and that accepting the assertion means to preach colourless class consciousness. It also means condemning plain colour consciousness wherever it appears, and to oppose colour-conscious class consciousness whenever the time for that comes. This is all well and good for those who wish to invoke such conditions to arrive at their desired conclusions. It will do well

to remember that in ideology a scientific truth will be viewed either through a distorted reactionary interpretation, or through its progressive cognitive interpretation. We shall not question the obvious motives of the people behind either interpretation and promptly turn to the realm of ideology and social psychology to uncover the class struggle for the purpose of determining the progressive interpretation.

Ideology is subjective but it is the necessary condition for realising the class struggle. We have to know the conflicting ideologies before we can judge any interpretation. First what is the ideology of the bourgeoisie? The popular expression of bourgeois ideology is "... human liberty, human freedom, human rights, human dignity, human equality, . . . regardless of colour, race or creed, . . . under a free modern democracy, . . ." and so on. Naturally the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie only enjoys these 'universal' freedoms in a tangible manner but it is cautious enough to be discreet, hence one is constantly reminded of the 'universality' to the point of indoctrination.

In the colonised lands the bourgeois discretions could not be obscured easily, leaving the bourgeoisie open to ideological attack. Even the underprivileged colonised elite was forced to abandon its sweet-sounding 'human' categories after realising that the categories did not apply to it. In most colonies the bourgeoisie delayed disaster by the neo-colonial solution of flag independence. In more valuable colonies it could not afford to do so, hence it intensified contradictions in the relations of production by imposing its chosen 'democracy' or caretaker over the populations.

In South Africa the caretakers are white, and the contradictions in the relations of production manifest themselves through bare-faced white supre-

mist, fascist forms of organisation. With outrageous comedy the caretakers still struggle to be identified with bourgeois ideals through Apartheid propaganda of 'freedom to tribal identity and pursuit of happiness in the Bantustans'. Their actual ideology is plain and simple 'white supremacy'. In the mean time another stratum among caretakers continues to be given increasing vocal support by the bourgeoisie. This is the so-called white liberal segment. Owing to the untenability of its ideas for the extraction of superprofits, it is unlikely that this group will be given any power by the bourgeoisie, except maybe as an eleventh hour measure to postpone doom. This group advocates the neat 'universal human' ideals. Its echoes are heard the world over about its crusade to avert a "ghastly race war", and its vision of the only hope lying in a South Africa with "rights for all, both black and white". For the Rhodesian counterpart of this segment in the face of impending victory for the African nationalists its rights to the pursuit of happiness twisted and turned into guarantees of white minority rights. It demanded minority rights even before majority rights were realised; lacking a sense of elegance, to say the least!

What on the other hand is the ideology of the oppressed classes? Their ideology will necessarily be suppressed in the existing South African superstructure, and we shall have to sound it out through the spectre that haunts the ruling classes. We will also approximate it from the social psychology of the masses, this being that element of social consciousness that invests heavily in progressive ideology. No matter what stratum of the ruling classes, there is one and only one spectre haunting it. This is the 'black threat', the rising 'black tide', 'loss of modern civilisation', etc. This is a fear of a takeover by the African people, and is so ingrained in their psyche that it

exists in their folklore as the ever-lurking evil. It is this evil entity in the ideology of the ruling classes that points towards the ideology of the oppressed masses. Here are two examples: "South Africa must protect western civilisation". Stripped down, this propaganda says that western bourgeois rights and white supremacy have to be protected, obviously from the black masses. "South Africa, the last bastion of democracy and christianity in Africa bitterly opposes communism" — here again the last white stronghold in Africa will protect the bourgeois state apparatus against blacks and a proletarian takeover. These bourgeois apologists clearly spell out the proletarian and popular democratic nature of the ideology of the masses. What is most intriguing in their propaganda is their refusal to separate 'black agitators' from 'communist inspiration'. It is an unwitting affirmation of the racial character of the class struggle in South Africa from the most unlikely of sources.

Let us now turn to the social psychology of the oppressed masses which should contribute strongly to ideology. In the area of psychology, even bourgeois analysts have acknowledged the psychological revolution that occurred with the advent of black consciousness. Black consciousness had spiritual elements also. It rededicated faith not only for blacks but for all humanity. In this it sensed the universality of exploitation under capitalism, hence it did not exclude other nationalities wherever they may be. It took an active stance towards the consolidation of independent black churches. These were the religious institutions in the African community which retained African spiritual practice, and the move of black consciousness towards embracing them was the realisation of their power in restoring a national sense of adequacy that colonialism deliberately undermined. Along with the above were

the elements of national identity. Children for example were then being named almost exclusively by indigenous names. Looking at these examples, one sees subjective rejections of all institutions imposed by the coloniser, and a solidarity with all oppressed people. These are spiritual reflections of black consciousness as a popular national consciousness; a manifestation of the class struggle.

The political ideology could not be given full expression in South Africa. Even within the black consciousness movement there have been concrete conditions that have prevented its expression, over and above suppression by the state. The ideological stagnation of existing congress missions outside the country made synthesis of such ideology impossible. Lack of articulation did not mean absence though. One only needs to look at the nature of the initial student uprisings to understand the political outlook of black consciousness. There were the uncrystallised, almost humanistic references to the dangers of Capital and exploitation of man by man. There were also the more visible national democratic aspects akin to the national liberation movement as a whole.

Given this spectrum of opposed ideologies we return to the original question; where does colourblind class consciousness fit? This question has to be answered if one is considering the concrete conditions in South Africa. When used as a thwart to black national independence in the course of defining and realising the struggle, such colourblind class consciousness cannot be a cognitive progressive interpretation of the assertion: class precedes race. In fact that interpretation amounts to reactionary concert with bourgeois ideology, by frustrating the course of historical development. From an analytical standpoint, it purports class consciousness devoid of the South

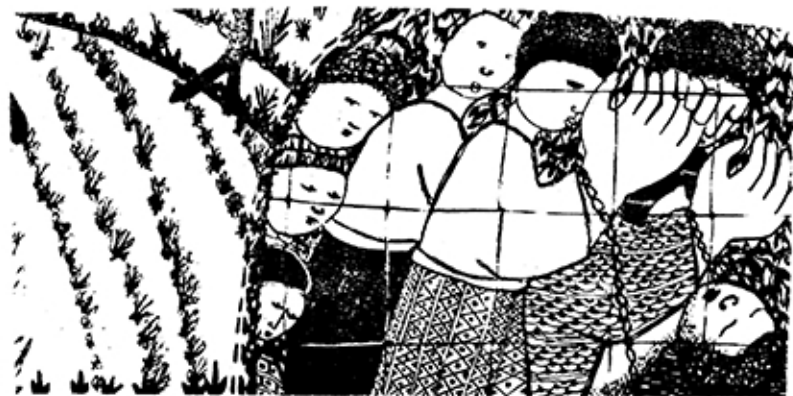
African reality, hence it is worthless.

Its reactionary aspects have to be guarded against though, so it is worth

identifying the noises that these socialist circles make. "Whites are people too", "There is a white working class too", "All South Africans are exploited", etc., Other times they stop being defensive and they assume the offensive against the 'black threat'. "Race nationalism negates the class struggle", "Race advocates black capitalism" (almost a "only whites must control political change" slip). Black capitalism in South Africa? How is it possible to have a bourgeois democratic revolution in the age of capitalist imperialism? Lenin pointed out the contrary more than seventy years ago, yet some of his political descendents invoke fear-rousing catchwords such as 'black capitalism' in their moments of desperation, while trying to thwart the uncompromising advance of the rule of the oppressed majority. Their desperation leads them to actually forget their 'two-stage' revolution which supposedly begins with a bourgeois democratic first stage. What bourgeoisie

should lead that first stage of their theory, white capitalists? I quote their theory only to illustrate the lack of adherence to their very own principles.

The question can be asked again, who are the main antagonists of the capitalist class? Is it the white working class, or is it the more economically and politically oppressed and numerically more substantial black working class? The simple objective and obvious answer will not be heard from them and when forthcoming, it will not be firm. It is naive to expect to hear any such answer from such immigrant quarters. Whether it is the white radicals, revolutionaries, intellectuals, liberals, missionaries, philanthropists, or any of their 'well-meaning' kin, their response will be the same. Just as imperialism instilled inferiority in the colonised native's mind, so also it affected the colonising nationalities with innate presumption over others. This is so with exception, and even the true to faith immigrant 'revolutionaries' have been infected. The ideas of people will not change, but with the real living nightmare of revolution, in the actual redefinition of social relations.



The Military Situation in El Salvador

Ruben Zamora

In the first place greetings from the Salvadorean people, from the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and from the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR). I want to talk about two aspects of the situation in El Salvador, firstly about the state of the war and secondly regarding the political settlement proposed by the FMLN-FDR.

In the first place the war that our organisation is developing together with the Salvadorean people, has certain specific characteristics that makes it very different from other revolutionary wars that have been fought in other parts of the world, particularly in the Third World. El Salvador is a small country of about 9,000 square kilometers, about the size of Wales, and with a large population of five million people. This means that in El Salvador there is no jungle, no mountains with virgin forest, in which a guerrilla force could hide and from where they could develop the fight against the enemy garrisons in the cities. The country has a good system of roads and the countryside is densely populated.

A second distinguishing characteristic is that we don't have, unfortunately, a safe rearguard. That is to say that there is

no friendly country bordering El Salvador that could provide us with a rearguard. El Salvador has frontiers with two countries: Guatemala to the north and Honduras to the north and east. Both countries are military dictatorships. You know of course about the military dictatorship in Guatemala, which is as savage as the military dictatorship in El Salvador. In this respect then our military struggle differs from many such struggles,



such as in Africa. Our freedom fighters, our guerrillas, have had no places outside the country where they could hide, store material, generally ease the logistic problems of the war. These two factors then, make the Salvadorean war very different.

We can divide the development of the armed struggle in our country into two big stages. The first running from 1970 until the end of 1980 during which the balance of military forces between the military regime and the popular forces

was completely in the favour of the regime. Therefore our forces had to use only irregular warfare, that is typical guerrilla warfare. This means not confronting the enemy in force and on the contrary keeping small units of guerrillas constantly moving, attacking the enemy by surprise and retreating, attacking and retreating. That was the situation in El Salvador until December last year.

In January this year, at the beginning of the January General Offensive, the fundamental objective, the fundamental goal to be achieved was precisely to pass from that previous stage of the war to a second or new stage of the war. In this new stage we started to combine irregular and regular forms of warfare, and to achieve this we needed a rearguard.

Without a rearguard it would be impossible to continue with the war. So this was the fundamental objective of the January General Offensive: to create areas under the political and military control of the FMLN. This means to create our own military rearguard inside the country, because we had no possibility outside the country. And we achieved this in January. A generalised offensive was launched throughout the country in order to tie down the enemy forces, to keep them fixed in different places, which allowed us to develop our rearguard, the areas under the FMLN's political and military control.

The most important of these areas are in the northern province of Morazan, in Cabanas province, the northern part of Chaletenango, in the north of Santa Ana province, the area called Guazapa which is 60 kilometers from San Salvador (the capital city), in San Vicente and Usulután. So you can see that the distribution of our forces is mainly in the northern part of the country and in the north-east.

Let me characterise these areas under our political and military control. In the

first place we are not very interested in expanding them. This is because of El Salvador's specific conditions which include a very good road network. Every yard of ground that you gain you have to defend, and this is very costly. So the objective of controlling these areas is to allow us to concentrate freedom fighters there, to train them, to store arms, to maintain hospitals where we can treat our wounded and the civilian population, and from these areas to launch military operations against the enemy.

So since January and the General Offensive the war has been in its second stage. In this stage the two sides confronting each other are more or less fixed in their territory, because we have to defend our areas. This ties us down to some extent to our areas, but the enemy also must tie itself down, because they must defend their own garrisons. For example, there is a very important government garrison in San Vicente. The mere presence of an FMLN controlled area near that city forces the regime to maintain a larger number of troops in that garrison to prevent us attacking it. The same is true of San Salvador, San Miguel in the east where they have one of their most important garrisons, and where they have to keep more troops fixed. So this is how the war has developed since January, both sides are to some extent fixed, and both sides now have the capacity to launch offensives against the other side.

Since then the main objective of the Junta's army has been to try and dislodge our forces from their areas of control. They have been launching offensive after offensive against our positions. For example an offensive was recently launched against our positions in Chaletenango. About seven have been launched against Guazapa between February and now, the same with Morazan. And right now there is an offen-

sive going on against the FMLN positions in Usulután. So this has been the main activity of the Junta's forces.

Our forces have been able to resist these offensives and we have come to the conclusion that the Junta's army has the capacity to fight for about three days. After three days of offensive the morale and fighting capacity of the Junta's forces tends to deteriorate rapidly, which means that they have to replace them with fresh troops more or less every week, and this is a big problem for them. So I can say that the level of morale in the enemy camp is not very high, and it is tending to get lower and lower. Not only amongst the majority of their troops who are under forced conscription, but even among the professional officers of the Salvadorean army. From January until



now 48 officers have either been killed or else very seriously wounded. This means that for an officer corps of about 500, they have had nearly fifty put out of action in just six months, which is a high loss. That is the war from the enemy's point of view.

From our point of view, controlling areas allows us to launch offensives against the Junta's army. The last offensive that we launched was in July and

August. This was developed in three successive stages. The first stage involved economic warfare. The idea was to hit the Junta's economy, and we did this by blowing up high tension electricity towers. In a ten day period 62 big towers were blown up by our forces, with the result that the east of the country was without electricity for between ten and fourteen days. In the centre of the country, where the capital city and most industry is concentrated, they were without electricity for 48 hours, after which they had to ration electricity to different sectors of the capital city, blacking out the rest. So that was the first stage of our offensive.

The second stage was to cut off communication roads. El Salvador has two main highways. One that crosses the centre of the country, the Pan-American highway, and the other the coastal highway running parallel to it. As well there is a road that connects the north of the country with the centre, and another running from the centre-east to the north-east. The second phase of our offensive was to cut these roads. The aim of this was to measure the capacity of our forces to cut off these main roads, and secondly the military objective was to reduce the mobility of the enemy forces, reducing their ability to send reinforcements from one side of the country to the other. And we achieved this. Our forces cut off and controlled three sectors of the highway. That meant that civilian and commercial traffic were allowed to pass, but military traffic was stopped and with this enemy mobility was reduced. Once we had achieved that we went on to the third stage of our offensive. This involved taking over specific cities. One was in the north east of the country, Perquin, which is important in military terms, another in the centre of the country San Jose Guayabal, laying siege to Suchitoto, and another around the

Cerros de San Pedro. These operations were carried out successfully.

When we seized Perquin the objective was not as the international press reported it, that we were going to set up a "liberated government" — it would be crazy to do that kind of thing in El Salvador given the situation. The idea was to attack the enemy inside their own barracks, to inflict casualties and to take prisoners. And as a result of the seizure of Perquin something around 60 soldiers and National Guard were taken prisoner. Immediately afterwards we stated publicly that we had these prisoners of war and that we were prepared to free them and return them, under the auspices of the International Red Cross. This had a political purpose as well, and I tell you this so that you can see that this type of war is always a political and military war. We can never forget that any military objective has to have political meaning, and that political action has to be in relation to the military struggle as well. What we said was that we were prepared to free the prisoners. Why? Basically for two reasons. Because the army officers were telling the soldiers that any soldier that falls into the hands of the FMLN was killed, assassinated, and that therefore they had to fight until the end or else "the communist guerrillas were going to kill them". So we had taken prisoners and we announced that we were going to free them. This put a counter-argument to what the officers had been saying. And secondly, and this was the political point, we said we were going to do this through the Red Cross, that it would be done according to the Third Geneva Convention. But the Red Cross could only play this role of taking prisoners from one side and freeing them to the other side if that other side acknowledged and accepted that the Red Cross play this role. But for the Junta to accept that the Red Cross perform

this role it would have meant admitting that we had areas under our control, and that we had taken prisoners from their forces. This put the Junta in a political contradiction. Either they could accept and thus admit that the FMLN controlled areas of the country, or if they did not they would have a difficult problem with their own soldiers being in the hands of the FMLN. So that was the situation, and it should help explain how the war is developing in El Salvador.

That is why some people think that there is some sort of stalemate, or draw, in our country. If we look at this situation statically then at this moment you might be able to say that. But we must not forget that the war is a social process as well. Therefore it has a dynamic and we have to see the situation developing within a process. And in this sense we can compare it now with the situation last year and see that we have advanced a lot. Of course we must advance even further in military terms because from this second stage of the war we have to go on to a third stage in which the decisive battles will be fought. But the present moment is a very crucial one in which it will be decided who is going to win militarily. This is crucial.

This stage is where we see the intervention of the North American government, the imperialist government, in El Salvador. And this presents us with a new problem. If the American army were not intervening in El Salvador with advisors, with military equipment, economic assistance and with political support, etc, if they were not doing this the war would already have been finished in El Salvador. But because they are doing this the Salvadorean army has the capacity to replace their material and other losses because the North Americans are supplying them. And this means that the tendency of the war is to become prolonged. And not only that — the problem is now that if

the FMLN advanced militarily and very rapidly against the Junta's army, then the danger of an all-out, massive intervention of the U.S. marines in El Salvador becomes a very real possibility. And this is the problem we have to face. Because an all-out American intervention will not be good for our people because it is going to cost even more suffering from our people. That is not to say that if the Americans intervene we are going to stop fighting — not at all — and if we fight against the Americans, then the Americans are going to get a lot of nice boys sent back home dead — that is for sure. But the problem is not only that — the problem is that the destruction in our country will increase enormously, the suffering of our people will increase, and the stability of the whole region, that is already eroded, will be completely jeopardised. Because the problem of a massive American intervention in El Salvador does not only affect El Salvador. It will also affect the Nicaraguan Revolution, the Grenadan Revolution, the Cuban Revolution, the Panama Canal, and the independence of Belize, because all of these are tied up in the same region. So the problem is that to provoke, or not to be really conscious of this possibility, of an all-out and massive intervention of the U.S. marines, would be quite naive or childish on the part of our people and the leadership of our revolution.

We as revolutionaries have to look after our own revolutionary process, but as well we must look after our own revolutionary processes of Nicaragua, Grenada, Cuba and the process of any revolution in the world. And in that sense then you can understand the problem we are facing.

Therefore what we have to do is to defeat the North American intervention. How? We can not defeat them militarily, we cannot declare the Salvadorean revo-

lutionary war inside the United States and go on to fight the Americans there, this is not possible. The only way we can defeat the American intervention in El Salvador is by political means. That means rallying enough political support among the international community and inside the United States itself to make it impossible or too costly for the Reagan Administration to intervene in our country. This is the only way that we have to prevent an American intervention, and in terms of this strategy of preventing a massive military intervention we have devised our proposal for a political settlement in El Salvador. Let me briefly tell you what the FMLN-FDR understand by a political settlement, and what its implications are.

In the first place we are very clear about one point, that the possibility of a political settlement depends on the FMLN maintaining a strong military presence, that the FMLN is winning the war. If we were the losing side in the war, you could forget about political settlements, there would be no possibility at all. Why? Because our opponents are fascists, and fascists are like that. What they want is to destroy our people, to destroy our organisation. So the only possibility for a political settlement is that the FMLN maintains and increases its military strength and presence in the country. Therefore a political solution depends on the military situation, it depends on the internal political situation. We can say that the independent variable is the political and military situation in El Salvador, and the dependent variable is the political solution. This is completely clear to all of our forces, because it seems the only realistic appraisal of the situation. But having said this, we have said we are ready and willing to have a political solution in El Salvador. We are ready to start talks about a political settlement. We have spelt out quite

clearly both inside El Salvador and abroad under what principles we are prepared for a political solution. There are five principles.

Firstly — the discussion, peace talks, the process of political settlement, has to be between the Junta on one side and the FMLN-FDR on the other. In other words we do not accept divisions, or exclusion of any force in our country. This is quite clear.

Second principle — talks, discussion, dialogue has to be conducted with the presence of other governments to act as witnesses to the discussion process. We completely distrust the other side, they completely distrust us. Therefore we say we must have witnesses to see who it is that really does and doesn't want a political settlement.

Thirdly — the talks have to have a comprehensive character. We are not interested in just talking about small points, such as for example elections and trying to solve everything through elections, because that would not work at all. We are not opposed to talking about elections, and we have no fear of elections in El Salvador because we know whose side the people are on, who the people will follow. But we say that you cannot substitute a political settlement by an electoral process alone. In the present conditions in El Salvador an electoral process is not going to work at all.

Fourthly — the process of the talks has to be in front of the Salvadorean people, the people have to be informed. We are not for making any arrangements behind the backs of our people. They must be informed and everything has to be explained to them, this is the only way to get anywhere, the people must know what the whole thing is about.

Finally, the fifth principle — the process of peace talks has to start without any preconditions being set by either

side.

This is our proposal. It was recently read at the United Nations by Commander Ortega, the Co-ordinator of the Revolutionary Government of Nicaragua. We asked him to and he read out our proposals at the General Assembly of the U.N.

This is our proposal and up to now the response of the government has been No. They are opposed to a political settlement, which we were expecting. But the important thing is to know why they are opposed to it. Inside the government the Christian Democrats are in favour of a political settlement. Why is this? Because for the Christian Democrats it is perhaps the only way to survive. If we win the war as things are at the moment, with the Christian Democrats as part of the government, then they are finished. But suppose that the military win the war against us. Again, the Christian Democrats will be finished because the next day the military is going to send the Christian Democrats home, because they do not want them in the Government. If the Christian Democrats are in the government at the moment it is only because the Americans keep them there. This is quite clear. In July, when the Christian Democrats were going to be ousted from the government, the U.S. ambassador Mr Hinton put a veto on that move and said the United States would support everything except the ousting of the Christian Democrats. So the Christian Democrats want and need a political settlement.

But what about the High Command of the Military? This is where power rests, because the government is not in the hands of Duarte (the Christian Democrat President of the government — editor) but in the hands of Colonel Garcia, the Minister of Defence, Vides Casanova, The head of the National Guard, Colonel Abdul Guitierrez, the Vice-President of

the country, power is in the hands of these three colonels. These people could not accept a political settlement. Why? Because they will lose. Any political settlement has to be a road towards popular participation, it must allow the people in El Salvador to really be able to say what they want, how they want it, and to do it. But the military have been in power, maintaining the government for 50 years, basing themselves on anti-democratic means. Therefore to permit any democracy means to bring El Salvador into a political process and for the military it will mean to lose power, and that is why they don't want any political settlement.

Behind the military is the Reagan Administration, who are also opposed to any political settlement. Because as far as the Americans are concerned, and they have said this quite clearly, any political settlement will be for them a repeat of the Nicaraguan experience in our country. And if they have lost Nicaragua, then they do not want to lose El Salvador as well. Quite clearly. That is why the Reagan Administration is opposed to any political settlement.

We, however, are in favour of such a solution, and we have been around the world, talking to different governments, to different people, and saying, look we are reasonable people, we are in favour of a political settlement, the Americans and the High Command of the Military are the ones against it. And the answer has been that international solidarity from governments and peoples has been growing and growing. The French and Mexican Declaration for instance was the result not only of Mexico and France's foreign policy, but was also the result of our action in favour of a political settlement. And after this Declaration, which recognised the representativity of the FMLN-FDR, other governments of Ireland, Poland, Austria, Sweden,

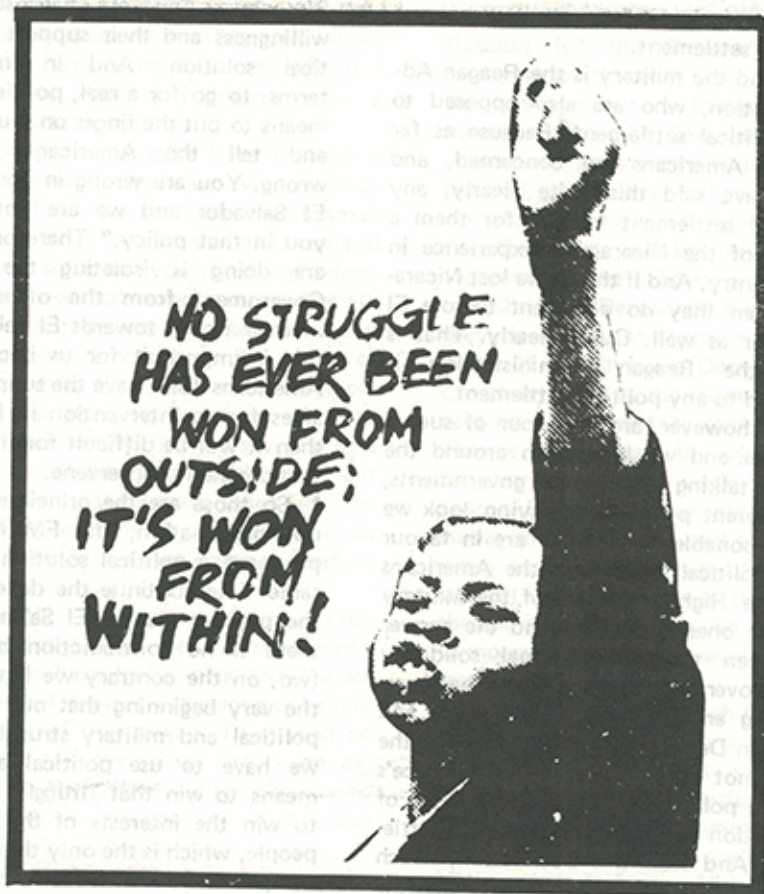


Denmark, and I have just come here from Zimbabwe, Tanzania, have shown their willingness and their support for a political solution. And in international terms, to go for a real, political solution means to put the finger on the Americans and tell the Americans, "you are wrong. You are wrong in your policy in El Salvador and we are not following you in that policy." Therefore what we are doing is isolating the American Government from the other countries in their policy towards El Salvador. And this is important for us because if the Americans don't have the support of their allies for an intervention in El Salvador, then it will be difficult for them to take that decision to intervene.

So those are the principles on which our organisation, the FMLN-FDR, has proposed a political solution and at the same time continue the development of the popular war in El Salvador. For us there is no contradiction between the two, on the contrary we have said from the very beginning that our struggle is a political and military struggle, therefore we have to use political and military means to win that struggle. That means to win the interests of the Salvadorean people, which is the only thing we cannot compromise anywhere and never.

APPEAL ON BEHALF OF THE EL SALVADOR SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

The El Salvador Solidarity Campaign urgently needs financial support to develop its work, and for supporting the liberation movement in El Salvador. By affiliating to the campaign you can make a valuable contribution and be kept informed about the latest news from El Salvador. For affiliation rates and further information please contact the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign at 29 Islington Park Street, London N.1.



DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

(1) The National Democratic Revolution is based upon the *minimum demands* of the oppressed masses of Azania, namely, the reconquest of *all our land and its resources* and the attainment of full democratic rights.

(2) The *Black Consciousness Movement* recognises that the national oppression of our people is a direct result of *capitalism and imperialism* and thus our struggle is both anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist.

(3) The *Black Consciousness Movement* consequently adopts the theory and practice of *scientific socialism* to guide it in the struggle.

(4) However, because of the structural and institutionalised nature of racism in the South African social system, the class struggle continues and will continue to manifest itself in colour terms, and for this reason, we continue to believe in the mobilising role of Black Consciousness in the struggle in which the black people rally against their common oppression.

(5) In response to the popular struggles of the masses for political, social and economic emancipation the current strategy of imperialism as represented by the South African regime is shifting emphasis from expressing itself in purely

race terms to a sharper class content, as witnessed by its overtures to the black middle class. This underscores the class essence of the struggle against national oppression.

(6) The *Black Consciousness Movement of Azania* recognises that the black workers are the most oppressed and exploited section of our society, and, therefore, constitute the major force in our struggle. Thus the strategy for the revolution should be based on the historical, political and organisational *experience of the black working class*.

(7) Organisationally, the *Black Consciousness Movement* will be guided in its functions and conduct of the struggle, by a form of *discipline*, which develops out of a consciousness which itself is a product of internalised revolutionary principles: *criticism and self-criticism; democratic centralism; collective leadership; the principles of recall and active participation*.

(8) In order to advance the Azanian struggle against imperialism on a global scale, the *Black Consciousness Movement* will seek to establish and maintain fraternal links internationally with progressive and revolutionary forces, governments, liberation movements and solidarity groups.

ONE PEOPLE



ONE AZANIA