

Hyenas emerged from the revolutionary ranks. Today no one can yet say whether those who used the dagger of division and internal confrontation did so *motu proprio* or were inspired and egged on by imperialism. It is something that could have been done by the CIA — and, if somebody else was responsible, the CIA could not have done it any better. The fact is that allegedly revolutionary arguments were used, invoking the purest principles of Marxism-Leninism and charging Bishop with practising a personality cult and drawing away from the Leninist norms and methods of leadership.

In our view, nothing could be more absurd than to attribute such tendencies to Bishop. It was impossible to imagine anyone more noble, modest and unselfish. He could never have been guilty of being authoritarian; if he had any defect, it was his excessive tolerance and trust.

Were those who conspired against him within the Grenadian Party, army and security, by any chance, a group of extremists drunk on political theory? Were they simply a group of ambitious, opportunistic individuals, or were they enemy agents who wanted to destroy the Grenadian Revolution? History alone will have the last word, but it would not be the first time that such things occurred in a revolutionary process.

In our view, Coard's group objectively destroyed the Revolution and opened the door to imperialist aggression. Whatever their intentions, the brutal assassination of Bishop and his most loyal closest comrades is a fact that can never be justified in that or any other revolution. As the October 20 statement by the Cuban Party and government put it, "No crime can be committed in the name of revolution and liberty."

In spite of his very close and affectionate links with our Party's leadership, Bishop never said anything about the internal dissensions that were developing. To the contrary, in his last conversation with us he was self-critical about his work regarding attention to the armed forces and the mass organizations. Nearly all of our Party and state leaders spent many friendly, fraternal hours with him on the evening of October 7, before his return trip to Grenada.

Coard's group never had such relations nor such intimacy and trust with us. Actually, we did not even know that group existed. It is to our Revolution's credit that, in spite of our profound indignation over Bishop's removal from office and arrest, we fully refrained from interfering in Grenada's internal affairs, even though our construction workers and all our other cooperation personnel in Grenada — who did not hesitate to confront the Yankee soldiers with the weapons Bishop himself had given them for their defence in case of an attack from abroad — could have been a decisive

factor in those internal events. Those weapons were never meant to be used in an internal conflict in Grenada and we would never have allowed them to be so used; we would never have been willing to use them to shed a single drop of Grenadian blood.

On October 12, Bishop was removed from office by the Central Committee, on which the conspirators had attained a majority. On the 13th, he was placed under house arrest. On the 19th, the people took to the streets and freed Bishop. Whiteman, Jacqueline Creft and other excellent revolutionary leaders were murdered.

As soon as the internal dissensions which came to light on October 12 were manifest the Yankee imperialists decided to invade.

The message sent by the leadership of the Cuban Party to Coard's group on October 15 has been made public: in it, we expressed our deep concern over both the internal and external consequences of the split and appealed to the common sense, serenity, wisdom and generosity of revolutionaries. This reference to generosity was an appeal not to use violence against Bishop and his followers.

This group of Coard's that seized power in Grenada expressed serious reservations regarding Cuba from the very beginning because of our well-known and unquestionable friendship with Bishop.

The national and international press have published our strong denunciation of the events of October 19, the day Bishop was murdered. Our relations with Austin's short-lived government, in which Coard was really in charge, were actually cold and tense, so that, at the time of the criminal Yankee aggression, there was no coordination whatsoever between the Grenadian army and the Cuban construction workers and other cooperation personnel. The basic points of the messages sent to our embassy in Grenada on October 12 through 25, the day on which the invasion took place, have been made public. These documents stand in history as irrefutable proof of our clean principled position regarding Grenada.

Imperialism, however, presented the events as the coming to power of a group of hard-line Communists, loyal allies of Cuba. Were they really Communists? Were they really hard-liners? Could they really be loyal allies of Cuba? Or were they rather conscious or unconscious tools of Yankee imperialism?

The Ultra-Left

Look at the history of the revolutionary movement, and you will find more than one connection between imperialism and those who take positions that appear to be on the extreme left.

Aren't Pol Pot and Ieng Sary — the ones responsible for the genocide in Kampuchea — the most loyal allies Yankee imperialism has in Southeast Asia at present? In Cuba, ever since the Grenadian crisis began, we have called Coard's group — to give it a name — the "Pol Pot group."

Our relations with the new leaders of Grenada were to be subjected to profound analysis, as was set forth in the October 20 statement by the Party and government of Cuba. In it, we also stated that due to our basic regard for the Grenadian people, we would not rush to "take any steps regarding technical and economic cooperation which may jeopardize the basic services and vital economic interests of the people of Grenada." We could not accept the idea of leaving the Grenadians without doctors or leaving the airport, which was vital to the nation's economy, unfinished. Most certainly, our construction workers were to leave Grenada when that project was completed, and the weapons that Bishop had given them were to be returned to the government. It was even possible that our very bad relations with the new government would make it necessary for us to leave much earlier.

The thing that placed Cuba in a morally complex, difficult situation was the announcement that Yankee naval forces were en route to Grenada. Under those circumstances, we couldn't possibly leave the country. If the imperialists really intended to attack Grenada, it was our duty to stay there. To withdraw at that time would have been dishonourable and could even have triggered aggression in that country then and in Cuba later on. In addition, events unfolded with such incredible speed that if the evacuation had been planned for, there would not have been time to carry it out.

In Grenada however, the government was morally indefensible, and, since the Party, the government and the army had divorced themselves from the people, it was also impossible to defend the nation militarily, because a revolutionary war is only feasible and justifiable when united with the people. We could only fight, therefore, if we were directly attacked. There was no alternative.

It should nevertheless be noted that, despite these adverse circumstances, a number of Grenadian soldiers died in heroic combat against the invaders. (APPLAUSE)

The internal events, however, in no way justified Yankee intervention. Since when has the government of the United States become the arbiter of internal conflicts between revolutionaries in any given country? What right did Reagan have to rend his mantle over the death of Bishop, whom he so hated and opposed? What reason could there be for its brutal violation of the sovereignty of Grenada — a small independent nation that was a respected

and acknowledged member of the international community? It would be the same as if another country believed it had the right to intervene in the United States because of the repulsive assassination of Martin Luther King or so many other outrages, such as those that have been committed against the black Hispanic minorities in the United States, or to intervene because John Kennedy was murdered.

The same may be said of the argument that the lives of 1000 Americans were in danger. There are many times more U.S. citizens in dozens of other countries in the world. Does this, perchance, imply the right to intervene when internal conflicts arise in those countries? There are tens of thousands of Grenadians in the United States, England and Trinidad. Could tiny Grenada intervene if domestic policy problems arose that pose some threat to its compatriots in any of those countries? Putting aside the fallacy and falseness of such pretexts for invading Grenada, is this really an international norm that can be sustained?

A thousand lessons in Marxism could not teach us any better the dirty, perfidious and aggressive nature of imperialism than the attack unleashed against Grenada at dawn on October 25 and its later development.

In order to justify its invasion of Grenada and its subsequent actions, the U.S. government and its spokesmen told 19 lies; Reagan personally told the first 13.

1. Cuba had to do with the coup d'etat and the death of Bishop. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
2. The American students were in danger of being taken hostage. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
3. The main purpose of the invasion was to protect the lives of American citizens. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
4. The invasion was a multinational operation undertaken at the request of Mr. Scoon and the eastern Caribbean nations. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
5. Cuba was planning to invade and occupy Grenada. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
6. Grenada was being turned into an important Soviet-Cuban military base. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
7. The airport under construction was not civilian but military. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
8. The weapons in Grenada would be used to export subversion and terrorism. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")

9. The Cubans fired first. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
10. There were over 1000 Cubans in Grenada. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
11. Most of the Cubans were not construction workers but professional soldiers. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
12. The invading forces took care not to destroy civilian property or inflict civilian casualties. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
13. The U.S. troops would remain in Grenada for a week. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
14. Missile silos were being built in Grenada. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
15. The vessel Viet Nam Heroico was transporting special weapons. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
16. Cuba was warned of the invasion. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
17. Five hundred Cubans are fighting in the mountains of Grenada. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
18. Cuba has issued instructions for reprisals to be taken against U.S. citizens. (SHOUTS OF "THAT'S A LIE!")
19. The journalists were excluded for their own protection. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF "LIARS!" "FIDEL, FIDEL, GIVE 'EM HELL; LET'S MAKE 'EM RESPECT US WELL!")

None of these assertions were proved, none are true and all have been refuted by the facts. This cynical way of lying in order to justify invading a tiny country reminds us of the methods Adolf Hitler used during the years leading up to World War II.

The U.S. students and officials of the medical school located there acknowledged that they were given full guarantees for U.S. citizens and the necessary facilities for those who wanted to leave the country. Moreover, Cuba had informed the U.S. government on October 22 that no foreign citizens, including Cubans, had been disturbed, and it offered to cooperate in solving any difficulty that might arise, so that problems could be settled without violence or intervention in that country.

No U.S. citizen had been disturbed at all prior to the invasion, and if anything endangered them, it was the war unleashed by the United States. Cuba's instructions to its personnel not to interfere with any actions to evacuate U.S. citizens in the area of the runway under construction near the university contributed to protecting the U.S. citizens residing in that country. Reagan's reference to the possibility that Grenada might turn into another Iran — a reference calculated to appeal to the U.S. feelings wounded in that episode — is a demagogic, politicking, dishonest argument.

The assertion that the new airport was a military one — an old lie that the Reagan administration had dwelt on a lot — was categorically refuted by the English capitalist firm that supplied and installed the electrical and technical equipment for that airport. The British technicians of the Plessey company, which has made a name for itself internationally as a specialist in this field, worked alongside the Cuban construction workers, to whose civilian worker status they attest. Several countries of the European community that are members of the Atlantic alliance cooperated in one way or another with the airport. How can anyone imagine them helping Cuba to build a military airport in Grenada?

However, the idea that Grenada was being turned into a Soviet-Cuban base is refuted by the proved fact that there wasn't even one Soviet military adviser on the island.

Agreements for Co-operation

The supposedly secret documents that fell into the hands of the United States and were published by the Yankee administration a few days after the invasion refer to the agreement between the governments of Cuba and Grenada by virtue of which our country was to send Grenada 27 military advisers, which could later be increased to 40 — figures that coincide with the ones Cuba published on the number of advisers, which was 22 on the day of the attack, to which were added a similar number of translators and service personnel from the mission. Nowhere in those documents that they have been crowing over is there something that has anything to do with the idea of military bases in Grenada. What they do show is that the weapons that the Soviet Union supplied to the government of Grenada for the army and the militia were subject to an article that prohibited their export to third countries, which refutes the idea that Grenada had been turned into an arsenal for supplying weapons to subversive, terrorist organizations, as the present administration likes to call all the revolutionary and national liberation movements. No weapons ever left Grenada for any other country, and, therefore, Reagan can never prove that any did.

The assertion that Cuba was about to invade and occupy Grenada is so unrealistic, absurd, crazy and alien to our principles and international policy that it cannot even be taken seriously. What has been proved is the absolutely scrupulous way in which we refrained from meddling in the internal affairs of that country, in spite of our deep affection for Bishop and our total rejection of Coard and his group's conspiracy and coup, which could serve only the interests of imperialism and its plans for destroying the Grenadian

Revolution. The messages containing precise, categorical instructions to our embassy in Grenada, which have been widely publicized by the government of Cuba, constitute irrefutable proof of the clear position of principles maintained by the leadership of our Party and state with regard to the internal events in Grenada.

The civilian status of the vast majority of the Cuban cooperation personnel in Grenada has been shown to the whole world by the hundreds of foreign journalists who saw them arriving in our country and who were able to interview each and every one of them. Nearly 50 percent of them were over 40 years old. Who could question their status as civilian cooperation personnel and workers with long years of experience on their jobs?

Cuba Told The Truth

When the U.S. government spokesmen asserted that there were from 1,000 to 1,500 Cubans in Grenada at the time of the invasion and that hundreds of them were still fighting in the mountains, Cuba published the exact number of Cuban citizens who were in Grenada on the day of the invasion: 784, including diplomatic personnel with their children and other relatives. The agencies that sent them and the kind of work they did were also reported, as well as the instructions given them to fight in their work areas and camps if attacked, and the fact that it was impossible — according to the information we had — for hundreds to remain in the mountains. Later, the names and jobs of all cooperation workers were published, as well as the known or probable situation of each one. The facts have shown that the information provided by Cuba was absolutely true. There isn't a single fact in all that information that could be proven false.

The assertion that the Cubans initiated the acts of hostility is equally false and cynical. The irrefutable truth is that the Cubans were sleeping and their weapons were stored at the time of the air drop on the runway and around the camps. They had not been distributed. There weren't enough to go around, and they weren't distributed until the landing was already under way, and that is when the Cuban personnel went to the places assigned to them for that emergency. Even so, our personnel, now organized and armed, had time to see the U.S. paratroopers regrouping on the runway and the first planes landing. That was the invaders' weakest moment. If the Cubans had fired first, they would have killed or wounded dozens — perhaps hundreds — of U.S. soldiers in those early hours. (APPLAUSE) What is strictly historical and strictly true is that the fighting began when the U.S. troops advanced toward the Cubans in a belligerent way. It is also true that when a group of

unarmed cooperation personnel was captured, they were used as hostages and forced to lead the way in front of the U.S. soldiers.

No Warning

The invasion of Grenada was a treacherous surprise attack, with no previous warning at all — just like Pearl Harbour, just like the Nazis. The note from the government of the United States to the government of Cuba on Tuesday, October 24, in an attempted response to our note of Saturday, October 22, was delivered at 8:30 in the morning, three hours after the landing had taken place and an hour and a half after the U.S. troops began attacking our compatriots in Grenada. Actually, on the afternoon of the 25th, the U.S. government sent the government of Cuba a deceitful note that led us to believe that the fighting would cease in a reasonable and honourable manner, thus avoiding greater bloodshed. Although we immediately responded to that note, accepting that possibility, what the U.S. government did was to land the 82nd Airborne Division at dawn on the 26th and attack with all its forces the Cuban position that was still resisting. Is this the way a serious government behaves? Is this the way to warn of an attack? Was this the way to avoid greater bloodshed?

Mr Scoon blatantly declared that he approved of the invasion but that he had not previously asked anyone to invade Grenada. A few days after the landing, Mr. Scoon — lodged in the Guam helicopter-carrier — signed a letter officially requesting the intervention. Reagan could not prove any of his false assertions.

When as a pretext for keeping the Viet Nam Heroico — which was in the port of St. George's on the day of the invasion — from being used as a means of transportation for evacuating the Cuban hostages from Grenada, it was alleged that it carried special weapons, its captain was immediately asked if by any chance he carried weapons on board, and the only thing that was determined was that it had just one fearful weapon — its name: Vietnam. (APPLAUSE)

The slanderous charge that Cuba had given instructions to carry out actions against U.S. citizens in other countries was given a worthy, official and public reply based on reality, proven by the history of the Revolution, that Cuba has always been opposed to acts of reprisal against innocent people.

The government of the United States has not condescended to offer the number of people arrested nor the figure of Grenadian losses, including civilian losses. A hospital for the mentally ill was bombed, killing dozens of patients.

And where is Mr. Reagan's promise that U.S. troops would withdraw in a week? President Reagan himself in his first address to the U.S. people, at 8:30 a.m. on the day of the invasion, in a speech prepared before the landing, stated that the situation was under control. That same day, his own spokesmen described the resistance the invading forces were facing. The military ride the Pentagon had planned would take four hours did not take into account the tenacious and heroic resistance of the Cuban cooperation personnel and the Grenadian soldiers. (APPLAUSE)

Twisting the Truth

Who, then, has told the truth, and who has cynically lied about the events in Grenada? No foreign journalists — not even those from the United States — were allowed to see and report on the events on the spot. The pretext that this prohibition was a security measure for the journalists is both superficial and ridiculous. What they obviously wanted was to monopolize and manipulate the information so they could lie without any let or hindrance to world public opinion, including the people of the United States. This was the only way they could spread deliberate lies and falsehoods of all kinds — which would be difficult to clear up and refute after their initial impact and effect on the people of the United States. Even in this, the method used by the U.S. administration was fascist.

What is left now, objectively, of those 19 assertions? Where are the silos for strategic missiles that were being built in Grenada? But all those lies that the world did not believe, told by the U.S. president and his spokesmen, made a tremendous impact on U.S. public opinion.

Moreover, the invasion of Grenada was presented to the U.S. people as a great victory for Reagan's foreign policy against the socialist camp and the revolutionary movement. It was linked to the tragic death of 240 U.S. soldiers in Beirut, to the memory of the hostages in Iran, to the humiliating defeat in Vietnam and to the resurgence of the United States as an influential power on the world scene. A dirty, dishonest appeal was made to U.S. patriotism, to national pride, to the grandeur and glory of the nation. This was how they got a majority of the U.S. people — it is said that it was 65 percent at first and then 71 percent — to support the monstrous crime of invading a sovereign country without any justification, the reprehensible method of launching a surprise attack, the press censorship and all the other similar procedures the U.S. government used for invading and justifying its invasion of Grenada. Hitler acted the same way when he occupied Austria in 1938 and annexed Sudetenland, in Czechoslovakia, in the name of German pride, German

grandeur and glory and the happiness and security of German subjects. If a poll had been taken in Hitler Germany at that time, in the midst of the chauvinistic wave unleashed by the Nazis, around 80 or 90 percent of the people would have approved of those aggressions.

The deplorable, truly dangerous fact — not only for the peoples of the Caribbean, Central America and Latin America, but for all the peoples of the world — is that, when world opinion unanimously denounced the warmongering, aggressive, unjustifiable action that violated a people's sovereignty and all international norms and principles, most of the people of the United States — manipulated, disinformed and deceived — supported the monstrous crime committed by the government.

There is something even more disturbing: when this about-face was effected in U.S. public opinion, many U.S. politicians who initially had opposed these events ended up by condoning Reagan's actions, and the press — censored, humiliated and kept at a distance from the events — ended up moderating its complaints and criticisms.

Are these, perchance, the virtues of a society where the opinion and the political and informational institutions can be grossly manipulated by its rulers, as they were in German society in the time of fascism? Where is the glory, the grandeur and the victory in invading and defeating one of the tiniest countries in the world, of no economic or strategic significance? Where is the heroism in fighting a handful of workers and other civilian cooperation personnel whose heroic resistance — in spite of the surprise element; the shortage of ammunition; and their disadvantages in terms of terrain, arms and numbers — against the air, sea and land forces of the most powerful imperialist country in the world forced it to bring in the 82nd Airborne Division, when the last stronghold was being defended at dawn on October 26 by barely 50 fighters? (APPLAUSE) The United States did not achieve any victory at all — not political or military or moral. If anything, it was a Pyrrhic military victory and a profound moral defeat, as we pointed out on another occasion.

The imperialist government of the United States wanted to kill the symbol of the Grenadian Revolution, but the symbol was already dead. The Grenadian revolutionaries themselves destroyed it with their split and their colossal errors. We believe that, after the death of Bishop and his closest comrades, after the army fired on the people and after the Party and the government divorced themselves from the masses and isolated themselves from the world, the Grenadian revolutionary process could not survive.

In its efforts to destroy a symbol, the United States killed a corpse and brought the symbol back to life at the same time. (APPLAUSE) Was it for this

that it challenged international law and won the repudiation and condemnation of the world?

Does it feel such contempt for the rest of mankind? Is that contempt really so great that Mr. Reagan's appetite for breakfast on November 3 was not at all affected, as he declared before the press?

Threat to World Peace

If unfortunately all this were true — and it seems to be — the invasion of Grenada should lead us to an awareness of the realities and dangers that threaten the world.

Mr. O'Neill, speaker of the House of Representatives, said that it was sinful that a man who was totally uninformed and ignorant about the international problems and who doesn't even read the documents was president of the United States. If we consider that the United States has powerful sophisticated means of conventional and nuclear warfare and that the president of that country can declare war without consulting anyone, it is not only sinful but truly dramatic and tragic for all mankind.

An air of triumph reigns in the Reagan administration. The echoes of the last shots in Grenada have barely died away and there is talk of intervening in El Salvador, Nicaragua and even Cuba.

In the Middle East and Southern Africa imperialism's acts of interference and military aggression against progressive countries and national liberation movements continue unabated.

In Europe, the first of the 572 Pershing and Cruise missiles are already being deployed, surrounding the USSR and other socialist countries with a deadly ring of nuclear weapons that can reach their territories in a matter of minutes.

Not just the small countries, but all mankind is threatened. The bells tolling today for Grenada may toll tomorrow for the whole world.

The most prestigious and experienced scientists and doctors assure us that man could not survive a global nuclear conflict. The destructive power of these stockpiled weapons is a million times greater than that of the unsophisticated bombs that wiped out the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in just a few seconds. This is what the Reagan administration's aggressive, warmongering policy can lead to.

Meanwhile, the arms race is already a reality in the midst of the worst economic crisis the world has witnessed since the '30s. And, with the problems of development of the vast majority of the peoples in the world still to be solved, who can feel confidence in a government that acts as

precipitately, rashly and cynically as the U.S. government did in Grenada? Reagan did not even bother to listen to the advice of a government as closely linked to him politically, ideologically and militarily as the British government. It is not strange that, in a poll taken just a few days ago, more than 90 percent of the British were categorically opposed to the United States' having the unilateral prerogative of using the Cruise missiles that are being deployed there.

In our hemisphere, just a year and a half ago, a NATO power used sophisticated war means to shed Argentine blood in the Malvinas. The Reagan administration supported that action. It did not even consider the Organization of American States or the so-called security pacts and agreements, but scornfully pushed them aside. Now, basing itself on the alleged request of a phantasmagoric Organization of Eastern Caribbean states, it has invaded Grenada and shed Caribbean blood and Cuban blood. Nicaragua paid a price of over forty thousand lives for freedom, and nearly a thousand more sons of that noble people have been killed in the attacks made by mercenary bands organized, trained and equipped by the U.S. government. In El Salvador, over 50,000 people have been murdered by a genocidal regime whose army is equipped, trained and directed by the United States. In Guatemala, more than 100,000 have died at the hands of the repressive system installed by the CIA in 1954 when it overthrew the progressive Arbenz government. How many have died in Chile since imperialism staged the overthrow and assassination of Salvadore Allende? How many have died in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil and Bolivia in the last 15 years?

What a high price our people have paid in blood, sacrifice, poverty and mourning for imperialist domination and the unjust social system it has imposed on our nations!

Our Ideas Will Multiply

Imperialism is bent on destroying symbols, because it knows the value of symbols, of examples and of ideas. It wanted to destroy them in Grenada and it wants to destroy them in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Cuba; but symbols, examples and ideas cannot be destroyed. When their enemies think they have destroyed them, what they have actually done is made them multiply. (APPLAUSE) In trying to wipe out the first Christians, the Roman emperors spread Christianity throughout the world. Likewise, all attempts to destroy our ideas will only multiply them.

Grenada has already multiplied the Salvadoran, Nicaraguan and Cuban revolutionaries' patriotic conviction and fighting spirit. (APPLAUSE) It has been proved that the best U.S. troops can be fought and that they are not feared. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS) The imperialists must not ignore the fact that they will encounter fierce resistance wherever they attack a revolutionary people. Let us hope that their Pyrrhic victory in Grenada and their air of triumph don't go to their heads, leading them to commit serious, irreversible errors.

They will not find in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Cuba the particular circumstances of revolutionaries divided among themselves and divorced from the people that they found in tiny Grenada. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS)

In more than three years of heroic struggle, the Salvadoran revolutionaries have become experienced, fearsome and invincible fighters. There are thousands of them who know the land inch by inch, veterans of dozens of victorious combats who are accustomed to fighting and winning when the odds are one to ten against elite troops, trained, armed and advised by the United States. Their unity is more solid and indestructible than ever.

In Nicaragua, the imperialists would have to confront a deeply patriotic and revolutionary people that is united, organized, armed and ready to fight and that can never be subjugated. (APPLAUSE)

With regard to Cuba, if in Grenada, the imperialists had to bring in an elite division to fight against a handful of isolated men struggling in a small stronghold, lacking fortifications, a thousand miles from their homeland, how many divisions would they need against millions of combatants fighting on their own soil alongside their own people? (PROLONGED APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS)

Our country — as we have already said on other occasions — might be wiped off the face of the earth, but it will never be conquered and subjugated (PROLONGED APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF "COMMANDER IN CHIEF WE AWAIT YOUR ORDERS!")

In the present conditions of our continent, a U.S. war against a Latin American people would raise the morale of all the peoples of Latin America and turn their feelings against the aggressors. A bottomless abyss would be opened between peoples that, because they are in the same hemisphere, are called upon to live in peace, friendship and mutual respect, and cooperate with one another.

The experiences of Grenada will be examined in detail to extract the utmost benefit from them for use in case of another attack against a country where

there are Cuban cooperation personnel or on our own homeland. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS)

The Cubans who were captured and virtually turned into hostages had an unforgettable experience of what a country occupied by Yankee invading troops is like. The physical and psychological treatment given the cooperation personnel who were taken prisoner was insulting and a cause for indignation, and promises of all kinds were made to each of them to try to get them to go to the United States. But they were not able to break their steel-like staunchness. Not a single one deserted his homeland. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS)

There was no manipulation of the news, nothing was hidden from the people, in our country. All reports concerning the invasion that were received directly from Grenada were transmitted to our population just as they arrived; even though the ones on October 26 turned out to be exaggerated. As a matter of principle, at no time were efforts made to play down the seriousness of the situation or to minimize the magnitude of the dangers facing our compatriots.

We are deeply grateful to the International Committee of the Red Cross (APPLAUSE) for its interest, dedication and efficient efforts to identify and evacuate the wounded, sick and other prisoners and the dead as quickly as possible. We are also grateful to the governments of Spain and Colombia for the immediate efforts they made in this regard. (APPLAUSE)

In bidding farewell to our beloved brothers who died heroically in combat, fulfilling with honour their patriotic and internationalist duties, and in expressing our deepest solidarity to their loved ones, we do not forget that there are Grenadian mothers and U.S. mothers who are crying for their sons who died in Grenada. (APPLAUSE) We send our condolences to the mothers and other relatives of the Grenadians who were killed and also to the mothers and other relatives of the U.S. soldiers who died — because they, who also suffer from the loss of close relatives, are not to blame for their government's warmongering, aggressive, irresponsible actions; they, too, are its victims. (APPLAUSE)

Every day, every hour, every minute — at work, at our study and combat positions — we will remember our comrades who died in Grenada. (APPLAUSE)

The men whom we will bury this afternoon fought for us and for the world. They may seem to be corpses. Reagan wants to make corpses of all our people, men, women, the elderly and the children; he wants to make a corpse out of all mankind. But the people shall struggle to preserve their

independence and their lives; they will struggle to prevent the world from becoming a huge cemetery; they will struggle and pay the price necessary for mankind to survive.

However, they are not corpses; they are symbols. They did not even die in the land where they were born. There, far away from Cuba, where they were contributing with the noble sweat of their internationalist work in a country poorer and smaller than ours, they were also capable of shedding their blood and offering their lives. But in that trench, they knew they were also defending their own people and their own homeland.

It is impossible to express the generosity of human beings and their willingness to make sacrifices in a more pure way. Their example will be multiplied, their ideas will be multiplied and they themselves will be multiplied in us. No power, no weapons, no forces can ever prevail over the patriotism, internationalism, feelings of human brotherhood and communist consciousness which they embody.

We shall be like them, in work and in combat. (APPLAUSE)

Patria o Muerte!

Venceremos! (OVATION)



SLAVE LABOUR ON A CISKEI FARM

Why the workers are in Revolt

By Letsema

One of the main planks for 'development of the homelands', according to the theoreticians of apartheid, is agriculture. Each of the bantustans, "independent" or otherwise, presents agriculture as a primary motor to "economic independence" as well as a means of securing support for their illegitimate and unpopular mini-regimes by installing a middle class farmer-entrepreneur entrenched in the cash economy. The strategy to increase productivity is invariably high capital — and technology — intensive. Ownership is frequently private, white and state; or private, black, white and state. Control is mostly exercised by white management. According to the Ciskei National Development Corporation Annual Report of 1981/1982, for example, only one of its 3 pineapple farms in the Peddie District has a black manager. The report states:

"As this manager is illiterate he needs assistance with administrative tasks, making it all the more impressive that he could rise to this level."

However far from generating development these schemes have served to deepen rural inequality, benefitting few and swelling the ranks of the poor, the landless and the unemployed. This is a fact recognised even by some in the corridors of newly-given power. Thus in 1980 a confidential Ciskei 'government' report stated:

"In the Ciskei we are too obsessed with spectacular capital intensive projects to bother about the masses. Will the day not dawn when the voters of the Ciskei rebel and say 'What is there for us in agricultural development?'"

In the Ciskei the answer is coming in many ways. During 1983 there was a strike at the Tyefu irrigation project. Livestock at the various projects has been injured. Serious theft is rife. Bitterness and resentment are mounting and are not confined to farm workers. Even those who are supposed to benefit from the scheme through land allocations are dissatisfied because they are treated like 'employees'. They have no say over what is produced or the methods employed in production. Their income is fixed and profits go to the real owners of the schemes. They are tied to the land even when they are unable to make a living from it.

The focus here is on the Ciskei, but the problems and conditions highlighted are not peculiar to it; rather they are characteristic of relations in agriculture throughout South Africa. The following interview with Sisa (real name withheld), conducted in 1981 but here published for the first time, vividly reveals the backwardness and repression to which farm workers are daily subjected.

He was the first black manager to be employed on the Tsume citrus project owned by the Ciskei National Development Corporation. At that time it had not yet been incorporated into the Ciskei and the Ciskei had, as yet, not been forced into "independence". The Tsume citrus project is a diversified farming enterprise producing tobacco, oranges, beef, dairy cattle, vegetables and pasturage, covering about 700 acres. It employed 400 full-time workers but at peak periods up to 1000 people worked on the farm. As a 'deputy manager' he was paid R250 a month. There were no fringe benefits. The manager was paid R1,800 a month plus fringe benefits.

Conditions in the Ciskei are substantially unaltered since that time:

How did you become interested in agriculture?

I became involved in agriculture partly because that's where I grew up and had been initiated into it and partly because of my political outlook. My fellow students were interested in doing medicine or white collar jobs. I went to Fort Hare. Black consciousness was very rife and there was a lot of discussion. That is when I made a decision. If we say we fight for land I would like to know how to utilise the land. Hence I decided to study agriculture. In Mdantsane there were many ex-Robben Islanders and I happened to be in touch with some of them, especially the ones of the ANC. So when discussing with one of them, he showed me the importance of the course I had chosen.

It's a four-year course mainly put up by the SA government as a way of building an infrastructure for agriculture in the 'homelands'. My fellow students were mainly sent there by 'homeland governments', which meant that during the holidays they would do practical work. When they finished they would go and work in the bantustans. I finished in 1977. Field work started while I was a student.

I was interested in the Tsume Citrus Project because I knew it during my studies. We used to go and do practicals there. It is one of the farms near to the University.

What were the conditions like on this large, industrial farm?

Starting time for work was 6.00 and knocking-off time was 5 in the afternoon. Saturday was half day. So farm workers worked a five and a half day week. They were paid according to whether they were permanent, seasonal or piece-job workers. A piece-job worker is a worker who is paid according to the day and the amount of work he gets done. For instance, at weeding time, you just cut a piece of land and say you're supposed to work from here to there for a couple of hours, and you get paid on completion of the task.

Men and women were employed. I would say the ratio was two men to one woman permanent workers. Seasonal workers were almost all women. Mostly because it is set up in an area where there is a rural location, a concentration of people from the countryside. And it is almost always the case that the men are in the mines.

Full time workers were housed in anything from tin shacks to rondavels. All the houses were home-made, not built by the Ciskei Development Corporation. There was no electricity. Water was from taps outside.

Where were the seasonal workers housed?

Seasonal workers were staying in the surrounding villages, not on the farm. They were brought into work every day on the trucks. They would be fetched at 5am to start working at six. There were different loads made of different villages and there weren't many trucks to do the rounds. By six-o'clock starting time they were all collected. There were few men, mainly old women and children, a lot of children.

What was the rate of pay?

The highest paid worker there, a permanent worker, earned R20 a month. The 'casual' workers were paid a rand a day. Anyway that was what they

were supposed to get, the official pay. But they were not paid that. They were paid by a white manager. The office sends the money to the manager and before he pays the permanent workers he deducts "for mishandling a tractor" or whatever. He chooses how much to deduct. He deducts the money the worker owes in any form of debt. By the time the whole calculation has been done you find the worker getting R5. Some workers are not paid, even if the manager has the money.

Can you tell us a little about the work done on the farm?

I was employed mainly at the dairy. The dairy had 295 Friesian cattle which were machine milked. The milkers were mainly women, because they believe that women are "more efficient" in milking and cattle care. On the whole the dairy employed 20 workers, both men and women. The men mainly were for tractor driving or feeding the cattle. So there were about 12 women and 8 men permanent workers in all.

How many workers would you expect to need to milk the cows if they didn't have machines?

You need a worker per five cows.

So in labour terms they made a huge economy. Are the women paid the same as the men?

They were paid less than the men. The women were employed mainly in the milking and the cleaning. Men were employed in feeding, the loading of cans and general maintenance work. We started milking at 4 in the morning and there would be a 9 hour break and we would start at half past two up until five in the afternoon. So it was about a six-hour job. The cleaning took two hours.

So that's an eight hour day. Were the men up at the time of the first milking? All the (dairy) workers were up. They were supposed to bring in the cattle, clean out the pens and give fresh feed. The men were working longer hours. The women would finish cleaning at around ten when they would have their breakfast. They would then do washing if they didn't have to do anything in the dairy, until the afternoon.

You worked on tobacco?

I worked on tobacco, citrus and in the farming workshop.

Is tobacco more labour intensive?

Yes, considering that the dairy was a capital intensive unit, mechanised. But with tobacco you have to employ a lot of labour for the transplanting of seedlings and also for harvesting. Mainly women and children worked here. Some were permanent and many were seasonal.

What were the differences between the conditions for tobacco and dairy workers?

There were differences, in the sense that with the dairy workers, they had breaks between shifts and they were getting a ration of milk. Each day a litre per person. They had to wake up early in the early hours of the morning and sometimes go late home because of a breakdown in the machinery and all the problems that that brought ... But really tobacco workers, standing under the sun the whole day, kneeling or having to bend during the transporting and during the rainy season working in the rain picking the tobacco, covered in rashes and developing allergies from tobacco ... really. But all the jobs have their problems.

What kind of medical treatment did they receive?

Most of the workers would not go and show up those things, because they would be taken to be complaining a lot. They just continued with their allergies. Only in extreme cases would a worker be taken to hospital. You don't hear much about what goes on on farms. The workers were deformed by their injuries on their hands, on their feet, scratches all over the body; ear and eye infections — from the spraying especially, because the wind used to blow the pesticides towards the living areas, covering their houses, getting into the water.

Who was employed on the farms?

You find that a person is born or comes to work on the farm with his family. And then generations and generations are born there and the farmer doesn't expect any worker of any family not to work on the farm, unless he goes out to the mines. They all have a long history of working as farm workers. They are not labour tenants. The farmer wants as much cheap labour as possible.

Would you say that the villages are very rich suppliers of cheap labour? They are, but the farmer is mainly interested in the workers from within, because the workers who are in the rural villages are exposed to influences which they call 'politics'. They are political as far as the farmer is concerned, so the farmer would always like to keep the workers from within. The more workers coming out of the families he has, the better for him. For instance, those workers from the CDC farm were not allowed to go to town, because they would meet outside influences and become so-called "cheeky". At month end they had to submit a list of what they wanted and a truck would be taken out to go and do all the shopping for them and bring it to the farm. Then deductions would be made from their salaries.

What are the farm management's attitudes?

There is an attitude of paternalism. The manager behaves like the father. He would do the beatings, the punishments and the charges. All these kinds of things. The more chains he ties around the workers the more the workers have to stay on the farm.

The farmers in South Africa are the ones who believe in *Kragdadigheid* and when they see a black man they see an animal. These men are armed.

You spoke of beatings?

Yes. For instance, the woman who was working for this particular manager who was on the tobacco and orange section, was staying next to my house. She used to come home beaten up by the manager's wife and she would come to me for money, because she wasn't paid. I know the daughter, one time during the holidays, went to help with the washing of the clothes and ironing. She was a child. She once took the comb and combed her hair. Unfortunately, the madam could see that a 'black man' had used the comb, so the child was beaten.

Were the workers organised in any way?

When I came, the CDC agreed that I would work as a link. I didn't want to work haphazardly and since I know that the farm managers have their own informers amongst the workers I asked them that the workers choose a committee with which I could work. A meeting was called and I suggested they draw up a list of their problems. There was a consciousness because they wanted to organise themselves into a committee to represent them. They tended to elect the older people. Resistance began to get organised when I

came. For trying to put across their grievances, management accused me of creating the problems, because before I came they had never had "trouble".

What were their grievances?

One of the things they didn't like was that the deputy manager who was guarding them at work was carrying a gun, because it had happened a year back, before I came, one of the deputy managers (who was still working there), quarrelled with one of the workers. When the worker wanted to retaliate he drew his gun. The worker started to run away and he shot him. So they had that experience.

The other issue was the money. They felt underpaid and they objected to the deductions. They wanted to see their money and their pay slips. Then they could pay back the deductions as they wanted to.

Then there was housing. In the rainy season their houses used to drip with water, they used to melt away.

They also objected to working in the rainy season without any protection. The CNDC management was sending raincoats and gumboots to the units for the workers on rainy days. The farm managers would give them sacks to cover their heads and take these suits and gumboots to sell.

The other grievance was the beatings. For instance, during the orange season the people living around a farm would sneak in and steal oranges. If anybody was caught a fan belt was taken, their heads would be pushed into a drum and they would be beaten on the buttocks. Going into the orchards to pick green vegetables was also punished with beatings. Another thing, if you drive a tractor — if you drive any vehicle — something can go wrong, even if you check. The workers complained that the breakages were not due to recklessness on their part, as the farmer alleged. They were punished for things outside their control.

They complained about their children, because during the holidays their children were employed without being paid. Moreover, they were encouraged to keep on working rather than return to school. They also complained that some of their fellow workers were being used as bossboys to report to the managers about them. They wanted a committee to represent them.

They also complained about their medical treatment. There was an instance of a person who was really in pain at home. He broke a leg while driving a tractor which overturned. The farm manager in the unit said there was no car going to town, when every day there was a car going to town, and for that matter, if somebody was injured a car should be provided. This came to my attention two days after it had happened and I took him to hospital.

Were there any forms of resistance that the workers adopted — not necessarily collectively, but individually?

Of course yes, often. When you take it at an individual level their emotions are involved and they feel there is nothing else they can do, so the nearest thing to do is to break the machine that you're working with or bugger up the tractor you're driving.

Was there a demand for land from the workers?

No.

What connection did they have with the villagers?

That's a very interesting question, because what I found was that even the people who are in the rural villages consider the people on the farms to be on a lower level. There was not much contact. Agriculture has low status. For instance, people from the village would only come to the farms as pickers — 'casual' workers or seasonal workers. They looked down on farm workers. It was funny. Even in the sorting room the seasonal worker would say "Ah for that matter, I'm not a farm worker. I've just come for a short time."

That looking down on the farm people is something which is on the side of the farmers. It works in the favour of the farmers because it shuts the farm workers off from outside influences and ties them more to the farmers.

Was there a difference in consciousness?

The national consciousness of the farm workers was at that stage quite low. The farm situation is such that the workers are closed from what is happening outside — even what is going on 5km away in the villages. Political consciousness was mainly based at a personal level. They know that the white man is treating them badly and that they are living in bad conditions,

And the villagers?

They were in a very active and fertile area. There was resistance to the official party — the CNIP. The migrant workers would come back from the city and tell what they had seen. They were after land. They had been resettled, moved from their ancestral land. It was a real grievance. The migrant workers were looking for jobs.

Finally, what would you say is the difference between the CNDC farm and the average white farm?

There is absolutely no difference. The white farmers operated in the same way as I found the CNDC farm was operated. There are no differences on the bantustan farms.

BOOK REVIEWS

COMBINING MARXIST THEORY WITH AFRICAN REALITY

In the Twilight of Revolution — The Political Theory of Amilcar Cabral, by J. McCulloch (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1983. Price £6.50)

Jock McCulloch is an Australian specialist on African history. The book under review is an attempt to assess Amilcar Cabral's theories in the light of the Guinean and African revolution.

The title itself perhaps summarises what he has to say about Cabral:

"In total, the effect of Cabral's political career was to help bring down the last of the great colonial empires in Africa, and in the realm of theory to dismantle the central shibboleths of African socialism. As such Cabral's legacy, like his bequest to the people of Guiné, does not represent so much a conclusion as a new beginning freed from the fears, prejudices and superstitions of the past." (p.138).

McCulloch assesses the major aspects of Cabral's theories: the primacy of political over military considerations — "our fighters are defined as armed activists"; the connection between imperialism and colonialism (especially Portuguese); ideology and culture; state and class; neo-colonialism and nationalism etc.

According to McCulloch:

"Cabral's intellectual legacy comes to us in a series of fragments. This ephemeral quality is due to two causes: the writings were peripheral or, more correctly, preparatory to the struggle, and they were never written for the purpose of intellectual or abstract enquiry. Therefore they take the form of short articles, scattered essays, speeches and memoranda." (p.130)

There are serious problem facing theory in Africa:

"The major problem facing socialism in Africa has not been due to the typical nature of the social structures colonial rule left in its wake but, rather, to the complete absence of particular classes." (p.75)

Such factors as ethnicity, common land ownership and the absence of an industrial base make a class analysis of African society different and difficult. There are also such problems as the dependence of the working class on the petty bourgeois leadership and at times the inability of these forces to distinguish between formal and genuine independence.

The author says "in Cabral's work there is no obvious nostalgia for pre-capitalist communalism and no suggestion of that antagonism to urban life which is unfortunately typical of African socialism" (p.64) but he portrays Cabral's theories as a variant of African socialism.

There are other contradictions in the book: "Cabral's work is in accord with the best of Marxist tradition;" "Cabral's writings have a certain fidelity to the Marxist tradition" (p.135) and yet McCulloch can still say:

"It is quite easy to trace out the exact points at which Cabral consciously rejected a Marxist approach." (p.134)

This attempt to portray Cabral as accepting and at the same time rejecting Marxism conceals what is basically the difficult and contradictory process of combining Marxism-Leninism with African reality; a problem caused by the distorted and deformed nature of African society, the low level of Marxist-Leninist understanding on the continent, the pressure of international imperialism on the liberation movements and the pessimism that at times emerges in some circles within the national liberation movements. Cabral more than anybody else attempted to apply Marxism-Leninism to Guinean conditions where there was no working class to speak of, no national bourgeoisie, but a peasantry and petty bourgeoisie.

Cabral seems to have understood the dilemma of the petty bourgeoisie, as McCulloch says in different words:

"It is an irony consistent with the history of African socialism that the reason why Cabral could so easily identify the fears and aspirations of the indigenous middle class was because its fears and aspirations were once his own." (p.89)

McCulloch sees "African socialism" — by which he means "socialist theories" emanating from Africa — as an aspect of "Third World Socialism" though he does admit that:

"The great strength of the writings of Cabral, Neto, Mondlane and Machel is that these men were more able to distinguish class forces from racial and ethnic movements than their counterparts in neighbouring colonies." (p.82)

He counterposes "Third World socialists" to "European socialists" and discovers that the shortcomings in Marxism as applied to Africa emanate from the fact that "neither Marx nor Engels had very much of significance to say about the backward countries of Asia and Africa" (p.110). He sees the petty bourgeoisie as a class.

The significance of dealing with a figure like Cabral is that it helps to assess the role of personality in history — an important field of study in the Afro-Asian world. It also helps to answer such questions as how can a country with a relatively weak working class and no national bourgeoisie embark on a revolutionary transformation of society towards socialism? What are the prerequisites for national unity?

The questions are important for countries like Ethiopia which are on the verge of launching a revolutionary party.

The experience of Guiné does not by any means suggest that Marxism is failing in Africa — all it means is that there are problems and these need a fresh look. Cabral did just that. He was one of the most original African thinkers and contributed to Marxist thinking on African problems. His contribution was fresh and stimulating. As the Guinean revolution developed, so did Amilcar Cabral.

The book under review does suggest this, but it falls far too short of expectations.

Nyawuza

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOBODY

Life and Times of Michael K, by J. M. Coetzee. (Secker and Warburg, London, 1983. £7.95)

Coetzee won the prestigious Booker Prize with this novel, but it is hard to imagine why. Michael K is a singularly uninteresting fellow. Disfigured from birth with a harelip and with a mind which "was not quick", Michael K is brought up in an institution which he leaves at the age of 15 to take up employment as a gardener in the service of the Cape Town City Council.

Although Coetzee does not use racial categories or definitions, one infers from the context that Michael K is either Coloured or African, continuously the victim of overt discrimination and rejection by those in authority. Because of his face he does not have women friends, his life is lonely and drab.

As lonely and drab is the life of his mother, who works as a domestic servant. She falls ill and loses her job. Feeling her life may be nearing its end, she suggests that Michael take her to the farm in the district of Prince Albert

where she had been born. He throws up his job and escorts her on her last journey.

They travel on foot. The country is racked with civil strife and the roads are patrolled by the military. Wheeled traffic is only possible in convoy. There are frequent roadblocks and demands for passes and permits. The old lady dies and is cremated. Michael K continues his journey carrying his mother's ashes in a plastic bag in a cardboard box.

Michael K's mother had been his only real contact with the human race outside of police, soldiers, clerks and officials. Now that she is dead, Michael K seeks refuge in the bush and lives alone, scratching a bare living from the soil.

"I could live here forever, he thought, or till I die. Nothing would happen, every day would be the same as the day before, there would be nothing to say . . . Sometimes, as he walked, he did not know whether he was awake or asleep. He could understand that people should have retreated here and fenced themselves in with miles and miles of silence".

Michael K has no resentment, no anger, no ambition and no hope; he merely exists and endures, without emotion of any kind. Round about him guerrillas are fighting against authority, but he is not involved, though his silence is invaded by both sides. He is imprisoned, hospitalised, refuses to eat — not out of protest but out of apathy — grows thinner and thinner until he is little more than a skeleton. For some unknown reason a doctor takes an interest in him and tries to persuade him to eat and survive, but Michael K does not respond.

Eventually Michael K returns to Cape Town and, falling in with a group of dossers, has some extraordinary encounters of a sexual kind which one would have thought beyond his capacity as a walking skeleton. This too he endures without emotion. At the end of the book, lying like "a mole or an earthworm on a cement floor", he thinks to himself:

"At least I have not been clever . . . I was mute and stupid in the beginning, I will be mute and stupid in the end . . . If there was one thing I discovered out in the country, it was that there is time for everything".

And for nothing. Frankly, Michael K is a bore and one finds it hard to sustain interest in his non-activities. He is too negative to comment on or even interpret what is going on around him.

And because the reader cannot identify with him either as hero or anti-hero, one feels neither pity nor terror at this fate, only indifference. Possibly Coetzee intended his novel to show that the human spirit can survive physical and mental disability, the indignities of apartheid, the cruelty of oppression, the stress of civil conflict and war. But the absence of any meaningful

relationship between Michael K and anybody else, including his mother, the absence of love or hate, resistance or acceptance, means that in fact we are dealing not with a human spirit but an amoeba, from whose life we can draw neither example nor warning because it is too far removed from the norm, unnatural, almost inhuman. Certainly those interested in understanding or transforming South African society can learn little from the life and times of Michael K. Nor does this novel provide the reader with entertainment; not even Coetzee's undoubted writing skill can turn a sow's ear into a silk purse.

Z.N.

KARL MARX ON HIS OWN WORK

"And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did was to prove:

1. That the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production.
2. That the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat.
3. That this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."

Marx to J. Weydemeyer in New York, March 5, 1852.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

From a comrade in Botswana

Dear Editor,

The ANC and its allies lay a rightful claim to being democratic organisations within which there is free and open debate. However, one very important issue, that of the emancipation of women has largely been neglected. This is probably for two reasons, Firstly the fear of creating unnecessary divisions at such a crucial time in our history and secondly the fear of falling into the traps of bourgeois feminism. But it is necessary to have discussion on women and in doing this we should avoid both these dangers.

The emancipation of women will *not* automatically come about with the creation of a democratic people's state unless the problem of women's emancipation is tackled now during the period of struggle for power. But in saying this it is firmly believed that race and class oppression in South Africa is of primary importance — it is more important for example to do away with influx control and pass laws as this in itself will make fundamental differences to the lives of women. The problems of creating the foundations for sexual equality should therefore never be treated in a divisive manner and should never detract from our most important task, namely the seizing of power and the creation of a national democratic state.

Threefold Oppression

The majority of women in South Africa suffer a threefold oppression — as blacks, as workers and as women.

As blacks they are subjected to influx control, to the Bantustan policy, to Group Areas and the need to carry passes. As workers they are paid low wages, they do not have adequate unemployment benefits and insurance,

they are subjected to victimisation and dismissal without any adequate redress. As blacks and as workers they suffer similar disabilities as black men and male workers. But in both instances they experience this in ways different from men.

For example, the influx laws and the Bantustan policy ensure that the majority of women are sent to the homelands or live illegally in town. Of course this also happens to men, but there are more job opportunities for men, thus more women than men are left in the homelands totally dependent on their men to survive. A further example is that women with rights to live in urban areas lose lawful access to a house as soon as they are manless, i.e. become widowed or divorced. As workers women are found mainly as domestic and farm labourers. In both cases an important feature of the working conditions is that these workers are isolated from each other and are consequently deprived of the socialising aspects of work. Women working under these conditions do not share their exploitation and oppressions with other workers and thus do not learn to struggle against their hardships collectively.

The oppression of women as women takes the form mainly, but by no means exclusively, of housework and child rearing. In all South African cultures and traditions the burden of housework and child rearing is the sole responsibility of wives and daughters. Those women who do live with their families often have to carry this burden over and above their full day's labour as workers. The fact that the majority of women either live in the homelands, or work under conditions (as domestic and farm workers) where they are isolated from other workers, plus the fact that all women carry the burden of housework, means that women experience their oppression as blacks, as workers and as women as isolated individuals. This, coupled with the fact that housework does not leave women much time to be active in trade unions, community organisations and other political organisations, means that women are not to be found as active members of organisations or as leaders in factories, in the community etc. There are of course exceptions such as certain trade unions where the majority of workers are women and organisations specifically for women.

Women's isolation at home and in the workplace and their lack of experience in organisations causes and reinforces women's perceptions of themselves and others' perceptions of them expressed in beliefs such as women's inferiority to men, that a woman's most important responsibility in life is as wife and mother, that politics is not for women etc etc.

Training For Leadership

In the national democratic struggle it is necessary to involve as many different groups and individuals from amongst the ranks of the oppressed as possible. This is a necessity to ensure victory sooner rather than later and to ensure that it is not a hollow victory won by a small group of people in their own interests. Women make up more than half of the oppressed in South Africa. Our major task is the seizing of power and the creation of a democratic people's republic. However, if there is no sexual equality within the ANC and the mass organisations in South Africa, the contribution (qualitatively and quantitatively) that more than half of the oppressed and exploited can make is limited. This in reality means that our revolution is retarded and the quality of the revolution is drastically affected. We simply cannot afford to leave out or treat as inferior more than half of our future potential builders of a new democratic South Africa.

Participation in the struggle is of course also an educative experience during which time activists develop a greater understanding of their enemy, his tactics etc and also develop their own collective experience and self-confidence as future rulers. In general women have been excluded from activities that give political and organisational skills needed in the struggle. Thus there is a noticeable lack of women in leadership positions. This cannot be changed by decree. It has to be accepted as a fact and conscious efforts have to be made to give women the skills to develop as leaders. Greater numbers of women have to be drawn into the liberation struggle, away from the isolation of home and workplace and greater numbers of women have to be given the organisational and political skills needed in the struggle.

The history of other struggles has shown us that unless the participation of women as equal political and military partners is coupled with open discussion and education of cadres on the emancipation of women and unless the traditional role of women as home-makers is challenged and changed, the equality that women attain during the struggle can be lost once power has been seized. Laws may be changed, but in reality women are expected to return to the kitchen.

THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION IS A STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

A reply By Christos Theodoropoulos

Dear Editor,

One can but agree with "Mandla's" implication that the consummation of the national liberation struggle will free the whole South African people from imperialist domination and fascist rule. The future people's state, based on the alliance of the working class with the peasantry, will eliminate all national oppression (of the African by the settler colonialist state) and class exploitation (of the working class by the capitalist owners of the means of production). However, while such a people's state may simultaneously provide a solution to both the national and the social questions confronting the country, it may not, of itself, correct a grave political and historical injustice which has been, and is being perpetrated against the African people of South Africa. While recognising the interrelationship of the national and the social for the future development of the struggle, we should not relent in our efforts to set the historical record straight.

The usurpation and plundering of South Africa by a group of settler colonialists was unilaterally 'legitimised' by Britain between 1910 (when a large measure of 'Independence' was granted to the Union of settlers following the recommendations of their all-white national convention of 1908) and 1931 (when Britain made the settler parliament 'sovereign'). This unilateral and discriminatory granting of 'independence' to settlers — in pursuance of a common metropolitan/settler conspiracy to "keep the native in his place" — violated the most fundamental and inalienable national rights of the indigenous people; the rights to be free and to freely determine their political and socio-economic development. The British act of recognising settler 'independence' was, therefore, *unlawful* and of no effect as far as the African people are concerned. This is borne out from their consistent resistance and national liberation struggle, particularly since the establishment of the ANC in 1912: *The essence of this struggle is to deny any sovereign rights to the settler state over the territory, the government and the people of South Africa.* It is not too difficult to understand why the then "civilized world" readily recognised this act of Anglo-settler conspiracy against the African by 'accepting' the settler state (the so-called Union of South Africa) as a member

of the international community. The major imperialist powers of the time even rewarded the settler state for its participation in the imperialist World War I for the re-division of colonies on the side of the Allies by allowing it to grab part of the "spoils of war": Namibia. The views of the racist settler leader Jan Smuts that the indigenous people are "so barbaric that no meaning of self-determination could possibly apply to them" fell on fertile soil and were reflected, in effect, in the Covenant of the League of Nations. The preamble to this Covenant was co-drafted by Smuts and the settler Union easily secured representation in the organisation independent from Britain. It will suffice to recall that the Covenant system, devised by the same imperialist powers which recognised the illegal settler state in South Africa, was described by V. Lenin as "the first case in world history of the legal approval of plunder, slavery, dependence, poverty and hunger in relation to 1,250 million people."²

At a time when the voice of the colonial victim was completely muffled, the settler state was thus able to secure imperialist recognition for its plunder in South Africa. Unfortunately, when the UN was established in 1945, this fraud was carried over undetected by even the few liberal members of the then 50-states strong organisation. The illegal usurper settler state became a founding member of the UN. South Africa undertook, in Article I of the Charter, to respect the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples which it so ruthlessly denied to the indigenous people of South Africa. The wolf 'undertook' to protect the sheep!

It is a tragedy that the decolonisation process, which has now more than tripled the original number of UN member-states and created the OAU in 1963, did not question, let alone reverse, the fraud committed against the colonised South African. All states today still recognise South Africa as a sovereign, independent country thereby unwittingly, to say the least, *conferring recognition on the settler state (the RSA) as a sovereign entity and denying the right of the African to statehood.*

Much of the confusion around the national question in South Africa today stems precisely from the acceptance of the myth of independence (of the African) for reality.

Let's cite but a few examples: The Lusaka Manifesto of 1969 states: "The Republic of South Africa is itself an Independent Sovereign state and a member of the United Nations." The O.A.U. also defines South Africa as an "independent sovereign state." This position still reflects the practice of all states regardless of whether or not they maintain diplomatic relations with the "Government" of "RSA". They question the racist policies of the government of RSA but not the illegal existence of RSA itself.

The question, therefore, arises: if colonialism has no right to exist, why should the replacement of British colonial rule by settler colonialism in South Africa be allowed to continue?

Setting the Record Straight

The complexity of the South African situation, and the myth of independence, practised for over seven decades now, are largely responsible for the innumerable — and conflicting — interpretations of the national question in South Africa. Even the Programme of the Communist Party and the strategy of the ANC are not immune from differing interpretations as is witnessed by the ongoing discussion of the national question in the pages of *The African Communist* and *Sechaba*.

The Party and ANC general positions (colonialism of a special type) are well-known:

"South Africa is not a colony but an independent state. Yet masses of our people enjoy neither independence nor freedom."³

"South Africa... is not a colony, yet it has, in regard to the overwhelming majority of its people, most of the features of the classical colonial structures."⁴

The time has perhaps come to extend concepts already found in the above official documents to their logical conclusion and draw the necessary practical implications. Take for instance, the two-nation concept as it is correctly reflected in the *Programme*: "The African people of this country are moving inevitably and consciously towards the formation of a single, modern nation."⁵ Relate this position to the rich experience of the ANC:

"The international legal status (i.e. sovereignty — CT) enjoyed by the regime, which denies the indigenous people the basic political and human rights, is in itself an eloquent testimony of the dominance enjoyed by the imperialist powers at the time South Africa was granted recognition as an independent and sovereign state..."

"The position of the ANC declares that the people of South Africa; like those of Namibia and Zimbabwe, are a colonised people."⁶

Accordingly, if there is a colonised nation in South Africa, isn't it correct to understand the Party 'colonialism of a special type' thesis as actually meaning the struggle to eradicate the *illegal settler colonialist state* which denies the national rights of the indigenous people to freedom and independence? Isn't it what the Freedom Charter principle "South Africa shall be a fully independent state" implies?

At a certain point in the development of the colonial system of imperialism, metropolitan settlers in colonial territories were able to reproduce the colonial system locally with little help from the centre. Their growing economic and financial might enabled them to demand successfully settler

independence — a development which transformed them into a colonising power in their own name. This 'independence', however, did not affect in any way the position of the indigenous people who remained a colonised people, just as they were before 'independence'. In the words of the President of SWAPO Sam Nujoma:

What we are confronted with in South Africa is colonialism of a special type, i.e. settler colonialism. One of the characteristics of settler colonialism is that imperialist domination is no longer exercised by a metropolitan power, but by a white settler state internal to Southern Africa.⁷

Settler colonialism, far from being qualitatively different from classical colonialism, obeys the same laws of motion as the colonial system of imperialism in general. A settler colonialist state will thus attempt to acquire for itself more colonies (e.g. South Africa — Namibia; Australia — Papua New Guinea; New Zealand — Western Samoa, etc.) and even to impose there another settler colonialist state (e.g. DTA-Namibia) in violation of the indigenous peoples' fundamental national rights.

Setting the record straight in this sense would mean acceptance *inter alia* that:

1. Settler apartheid colonialism is a brand of colonialism. Just like metropolitan colonialism, it is illegal and a crime against humanity. All states have the duty to assist morally and materially the victims of settler colonialism in their just struggle for self-determination, freedom and independence.
2. All acts of the illegal settler colonialist state since 1910 are illegal and of no effect *vis-à-vis* the African people. Such acts include the setting up of a settler parliament, government and judiciary, police and army forces, all obnoxious and racist laws and regulations (passes, 'influx control', reservations, colour-bar, etc.), Bantustans, granting of 'independence' to Bantustans, enacting the 'new constitutional dispensation', etc.
3. All states and international organisations have a duty to derecognise the settler colonialist state (the RSA) as the sovereign political power in South Africa. Any transaction with RSA in respect of South Africa is unlawful, particularly transactions of imperialist monopolies. Such monopolies owe full compensation to the future people's state.

The list is almost endless. It stems from the above understanding of the two-nation thesis which, far from being "an over-simplified conception", may indeed help us understand better the unfolding processes in South Africa described by Mandela, somehow puzzlingly, as both "colonialist/neo-colonialist domination" and "imperialist/colonialist domination" at the

same time! "Mandla's fear, however, that the above two-nation thesis might (a) alienate the whites, and (b) blur the role of world imperialism which subjects the whites, too, to monopoly capitalist domination and increasingly to fascist rule, is well-meant, but unwarranted.

As to (a) above, the redressing of an historical injustice and acknowledging an historical truth can only *strengthen* the determination of those whites who are willing to fight on the side of justice and social progress. Justice and truth have never alienated true revolutionaries, whatever the colour of their skin. South Africa cannot be an exception. The 1928 Comintern Resolution on this point is today as true as ever:

"The white toiling masses must realise that in South Africa they constitute national minorities; and it is their task to support and fight jointly with the native masses against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists. The argument against the slogan for a native republic on the grounds that it does not protect the whites is objectively nothing else than a cover for the unwillingness to accept the correct principle that South Africa belongs to the native population."

It is only on this basis that the Freedom Charter principle 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white' can be implemented in a free South Africa. In the peculiar conditions of settler colonialism in South Africa, the shortest, or perhaps the only, way for the white worker to liberate himself from the clutches of capital is to reject his colonial privileges by joining the national liberation struggle of the African people. The national liberation of the African is thus the first condition of the white worker's own social emancipation. For a people who oppresses other peoples cannot itself be free. The two-nation thesis has an objective basis, reflects the major contradiction of South Africa and points the way to its solution. To paraphrase Khumalo Migwe, it shows us how to create class brothers out of political enemies.⁸

As to (b) the achievement of the *national* objectives of the liberation movement (i.e. the destruction of the colonialist state machinery of oppression — the RSA — as the last instrument of the colonial system of imperialism in South Africa and the creation of a national-democratic state) is the logical prerequisite for the success of its *social* objectives (i.e. the abolition of monopoly capitalist domination, the exploitation of man by man and the victory of socialism). Thus, in South Africa, too, the correct solution of the national question on the basis of the two-nation thesis will greatly facilitate the struggle for socialism.

Of course, this doesn't mean that national and social liberation are necessarily two moments different in time. On the contrary, the extensive proletarianisation of the colonised and the invaluable experiences of class struggle in South Africa have objectively enriched the national decolonization struggle

with social, anti-capitalist content. This means, one hopes, that the difficult and rugged road to national independence for the African will be co-terminous with the social emancipation of all working masses, black or white. It is the totality of national and social liberation that will make the colour of one's skin as irrelevant as the colour of one's daily dress.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Mandla", "Two-Nation Theory and the Role of Imperialism", *A.C.* No 94 (1983) p.106.
2. Comintern also refused to be fooled by the granting of 'independence'. It said in 1928: "South Africa is a British Dominion of the colonial type... The Party must continue the fight against all anti-native laws with the general political slogan of an independent native South African republic." See *Fifty Fighting Years*, pp.111-13.
3. *The Road to South African Freedom*, 1962, p.27
4. *Strategy and Tactics of the ANC*, reprinted in *Sechaba*, July 1969.
5. *Programme*, p.33
6. *Sechaba*, 4th Quarter, 1977, p.28. See also Oliver Tambo's comments, *ibid.*, p.8
7. *Address at the 20th Convocation Ceremony of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria*, 18th December 1982.
8. *A.C.*; No. 94 (1983), p.59.



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