

The Communist Party of South Africa— Its Counter-Revolutionary Role

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Some Comments on the Statement from the Dock by Abram Fischer

"I believed when I joined the illegal Communist Party that South Africa had set out on a course which could lead only to civil war of the most vicious kind... Algeria provided the perfect historical example of that. I believed, moreover, and still believe that such a civil war can never be won by the whites of this country. They might win some initial rounds. In the long run the balance of forces is against them, both inside and outside the country.... But win or lose, the consequences of civil war would be horrifying and permanent. Clearly it is imperative that an alternative 'solution' be found, for in truth civil war is no 'solution' at all."

Abram Fischer

He who wants to change the old society, but recoils from the only effective methods of doing so, ends up by accommodating himself to that society. He thereby accepts the values and class morality of the old society, the services of those rulers and supporters he frantically seeks to enlist in order to effect social change.

As a result, he enters into concubinage with them, and embarks upon a course of action which, far from bringing about the desired social change, merely leads to proposed surface modifications of the old society. We call such a person a reformist, or "a left wing fellow traveller of the status quo", in whose eyes the cause of liberation is not compelling enough to permit the use of all means to attain it. But when a person, having set himself the goal of radical social change, is prepared to use the swiftest and boldest methods to achieve it, means and ends are in complete unity; and we call him a revolutionary.

We have before us the speech which Abram Fischer, leader of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) delivered from the dock in the South African Supreme Court, which sentenced him shortly thereafter to life imprisonment. It is called "What I did was right" and brought out by Mayibuye Publications, London. An introduction to it says that he was sentenced in Pretoria in March 1966 "For preparing to overthrow the Verwoerd Government by violence". This stands in sharp contradiction to the theme of his statement which expressed the traditional policy of the CPSA; to avert a popular revolution by seeking the co-operation of the government, through mass pressures and

WORLD REVOLUTION is very grateful to the South West Africa National United Front for making available to us an important revolutionary statement of the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa (Azania). This analysis will enable many revolutionaries abroad, particularly in the United States, to understand the revisionist and dangerous nature of the South African Communist Party to the cause of Black South Africans.

individual acts of bloodless sabotage, to undertake certain political changes in a democratic direction.

Our comments on his speech are therefore virtually an analysis of the policies of the CPSA who saw to it that it was widely circulated and did so with acclamation. Hence we often refer to excerpts from Fischer's speech as CPSA statements.

But, first of all, it is necessary to record that Fischer embarked on his course of action with deep personal conviction and a remarkable display of valour. This evokes our admiration and solidarity with him against the rulers of the country. To be sure his speech from the dock is a touching document of great personal courage and sincerity.

Having said that, there are many who will disagree with the methods his Party adopted to achieve their professed aim of democratic change. They are methods which the CP¹ have doggedly followed for a number of years in our own country, methods which lead further and further away from the goal of liberation and which tend to set back the struggle each time they are employed. Fischer's speech summarises those CP methods, and in taking it as the point of departure for another criticism of them, we do so in the hope that the wiser counsels of revolutionary socialism will finally prevail through the Azania movement for the effective prosecution of the struggle.

Did Fischer's own end—a crushing life sentence by the rulers—justify the faith he had in them that they would play the game according

to the rules and finally sit down with his party in perfect unity to listen to the voice of reason and then make provision for a peaceful transition to democratic rule? More concretely, did the ends of his Party justify the means? Did those means not lead further and further away from the ends they had in mind? It is this complete dislocation between ends and means, as expressed in his Court speech, that is the essential tragedy of the Fischer story. For running like a red thread through CP policy is their willingness to accommodate the rulers at every turn, to the extent of watering down the liberation programme, so that they might become amenable to the idea of sharing power with the oppressed. By accepting the assumptions and resuppositions of the ruling class, he met them unarmed on their battle-field—their own “reasoning” in the teeth of opposition—and became a captive of their special morality. In consequence, his political ends receded and became more obscure as the means of attaining them became more ineffectual.

C.P. “Marxism” as Old-Fashioned Liberalism

The CP make their retreat from Marxism under cover of Marxism. This is due to the fact that Marxism, as a doctrine and method of securing power, has come to grip the imagination of the oppressed everywhere. A political party that openly scraps this ideology therefore does so at the risk of losing its popular support. The CP change themselves from professed Marxists to old-fashioned liberals, but can do so only by changing Marxism itself into a liberal doctrine.

Poor Marx! He is not here to defend himself. Yet the CP are merely following in the wake of the Kremlin bureaucracy who are trying to make Marxism “peaceful” and “respectable” in order to justify their collaboration with imperialism in order to stave off world revolution in general and colonial revolutions in particular.

The CP regard Marxism simply as a “social science” which entitles one to understand the world ... Thus, according to them, “... most of the Marxist principles ... are today accepted by many historians and economists who are by no means themselves ‘Marxists.’ This observation by Fischer is an attempt to give Marxism a liberal respectability. It is true of course that many bourgeois scholars have come to recognise the law of class struggle and use the method of historical materialism in their studies. But the crux of Marxism, which the CP openly reject, is armed revolution to seize State Power and establish the dictatorship of the

proletariat, or the rule of the majority over the minority. Marx was very clear on the kernel of his doctrine. In a letter to J. Weydemeyer (1852) he writes:—

“no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society, nor the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (i) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular phases in the development of production; *ii) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (iii) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.”

The CP do not subscribe to this pith of Marxism, because it conflicts with their concern over the fate of the privileged whites and their current collaboration with imperialism. They say, “Marxism is not something violent or subversive” and add, “We never aimed at a despotic system of government. Nor were efforts ever directed to establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat in this country.”

Whereas Marx says that “Force is the midwife of every old society carrying in its womb a new one” the CP rule out force completely as well. This naturally flows from their abhorrence of the dictatorship of the proletariat which in Azania simply means an armed Black majority crushing the privileges of the whites in general and the imperialist owners of the means of production in particular.

Fischer is quite frank that he is more concerned over the fate of the whites in a war of liberation than he is over the blacks. “I ... believe,” he says, “that a civil war can never be won by the whites of this country” and that in any event “the consequences of civil war would be horrifying and permanent.”

What the “horrifying” and “permanent” consequences are, he does not spell out, but it is clear that he regards the impress of a black proletariat on the State, resulting from a revolution, as more menacing than the retention of white minority rule by force of arms. It is precisely this fear for the future of the whites and their place as a special group in a new society that leads the CP to rule out revolution. For they say:

“The sole questions for the future of all of us ... are not whether the change will come but only whether the change can be brought about peacefully and without bloodshed; and what the position of the white man is going to be in the period immediately following on the establishment of democracy.”

In essence, this means that they are prepared to witness for an indefinite period the perpetuation of white domination by the ruthless persecution and slow mass murder of the black majority rather than to opt for a swift revolutionary way out that can put an end to three hundred years of race wars and genocide. They

cannot agree to spill a little blood now in order to save a lot more blood later, because the blood of the white minority might be involved.

And so they have to emasculate Marxism of its revolutionary core and relegate socialism to the Hereafter. In consequence, concession after concession is made to the status quo. "Neither at that stage (1950) nor at any stage since then has a socialist revolution been on the agenda in South Africa," the CP assure us. Of course not, when the CP always had a vested interest in certain aspects of the status quo and when their collaboration with imperialism rules out any action that threatens the expropriation of imperialist interests in Azania, like the mines and private manufacturing.

"I believe (says Fischer) that socialism in the long term has an answer to the problem of race relations—that is, a socialist state. But by negotiations, other immediate solutions can be found. They must, however, not be imposed but worked out in co-operation, and that is what the Communist Party has stood for."

Having placed socialism into cold storage, the CP proceed to water down even the minimum democratic programme with their emphasis on change by negotiations between the oppressor and the oppressed, exploiter and exploited. The type of state the CP calls for is neither fish nor fowl. What they want is a State embracing all the classes and the old race groups. They feel that "immediate" dangers (of armed revolution, naturally) can be avoided by what we always refer to as a national democratic revolution. The "immediate" proposals" of the CP are put forward within the framework of the Freedom Charter for urgent discussion by a National Convention not in order to establish a socialist state but for the building of a national democratic state.

It is hard to believe, but it is true that in this day and age the CP still sees a dichotomy between democracy and socialism, when it has been proved by life itself that democracy can be consolidated only by introducing socialist measures as soon as the revolution is victorious. To limit the programme of the democratic revolution to the framework of capitalism is not to guarantee the success of democracy but to repudiate it. History testifies that a democratic revolution must either grow over into socialism or suffer defeat at the hands of those against whom wholesale expropriatory measures are not taken in good time. "He who would strengthen democracy," says Rosa Luxemburg, "should want to strengthen and not weaken the socialist movement."

Thus the CP whittle down even the democratic programme by their insistence that a National Convention of the oppressors and the oppressed should meet to form a national democratic State.

So that where the imperialist mining magnates and manufacturers, Afrikaaner land barons and industrialists, should agree to meet the unarmed Black workers and poor peasants for a peaceful transition to democracy, even a simpleton knows who will hold the whiphand and with whom effective political and economic power will really lie in this national and democratic state.

The Marxian conception of the State is that it is the organ of rule of the dominant class which oppresses other classes. It consists of an ensemble of coercive institutions like the standing army, a permanent bureaucracy, courts of law, prisons and a parliament. Today the State is either the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, even where the power of the latter is screened by the institution of parliamentary democracy based on universal suffrage. The CP envisage a type of hybrid State in which the Blacks are brought into the Councils of the nation at a purely parliamentary level, while real power is wielded outside by the bankers, the stock exchange and the owners of the means of production backed by the standing army.

This type of State has been established peacefully in a number of African countries by imperialism for the purpose of gaining local support for the further entrenchment of the foreign monopolists whose power hides behind the facade of parliamentary government. This parliament is just a talking shop and acts as a safety-valve for the grievances of the people as well as a clearing house for imperialist stooges. It can in no way pass laws aimed at breaking the imperialist grip on the country. "Law," says Marx, "cannot be higher than the economic structure of society or the cultural development conditioned by that structure."

What the CP is asking, therefore, is the usual "neo-colonialist" solution to Azania's problems so as to keep intact white and foreign economic and military power, while the Blacks dissipate their energies in a parliamentary fowl run. This is precisely the motive of the CP proposed national convention.

Of course, it has never happened in history for the propertied classes to sit in conference with the people they oppress so as to hand over peacefully and voluntarily a part of their power. Marx mercilessly ridiculed the German liberals who, in 1849, called a parliament to draw up a constitution for a united Germany and then present it to the Austrian overlords for ratification. This parliament or convention of democratic nannies and bourgeois lawyers deliberated for weeks on constitutional niceties, gloriously unconcerned with the question of effective power to enforce their constitutional decision-making. When, therefore, the Austrian rulers had crushed the revolts that had broken

out in various parts of their Empire, they could turn their attention to this assembly of "old women"—as Marx called them—and disperse them without any trouble.

Together with the ANC, the "communists" called an all-in-Conference" in March 1961 "and decided," according to Fischer, "to make one more peaceful call on the Government to hold a Convention, at least to discuss the constitution for the new Republic of South Africa failing which there should be a three-day stay-at-home at the end of May." This Conference was really "all-in" in the sense that the agents of imperialism were also called upon to lend their support to the idea of a national convention. And if the government still remained intransigent, there was to be a strictly controlled "strike" of limited duration so as not to estrange and jeopardise the interests of imperialism whose co-operation the CP wanted for an Oppenheimer-Luthuli coalition within the framework of neo-colonialism.

To be sure, it has been the traditional policy of the CP to give electoral support to the so-called progressive wing of capitalism as represented first by the United Party and latterly by the Progressive Party through both of which imperialism is contriving to promote its interests. The CP did this on the spurious grounds of preferring the lesser evil. In reality, it was calculated to bring about a popular front between imperialism and the more moderate and "responsible" African leadership with the object of ousting the Nationalist regime and establishing a multi-racialist imperialist semi-colony in which an aspirant African bourgeois could have a vested revolutionary

It is fair to say that, in view of the counter-revolution, that has gripped Africa for almost two years now, The African Communist (Number 26, 1966) is doing some re-thinking on the uncritical support it has hitherto been giving to the so-called "non-communist" path which neo-colonialist "national democratic states" have followed in Africa. The author of "Crisis in Africa," published in this number of the theoretical organ of the CPSA, calls for the formation of revolutionary Marxist parties in the African states to struggle for the complete liquidation of imperialism and the formation of workers' states to open the way to socialist reconstruction on the lines of scientific principles laid down by Bolshvik-Leninism. But it is obvious that the CP cannot wear one face in the African states and a completely different one in Azania whose more advanced industrialization makes her riper for the ideas the CP now advocate in the countries of the north. It is time for ideological stock-taking!

The "All-in-Conference" was held in Pieter-

maritzburg. The Congress Alliance and the CP "forget" that effective democratic constitutions are the result of the conquest for power, not a prelude to it; that they are the epilogue of successful revolutionary battles, not a prologue of them. Not that the CP had any plans for a revolution. They were merely applying their traditional policy of class collaboration with the rulers in order to secure some inconsequential reforms. They thereby sowed, with cool calculation, the illusion in the minds of the masses that they could achieve liberation, not by relying on an independent revolutionary struggle but on the goodwill of the rulers. This had the effect of diminishing mass awareness of their organised might to settle their destiny according to their own lights.

What the CP wanted was what Marx called "a partial, merely political revolution" which, with the backing of the forces of law and order, could be achieved peacefully, without arousing the most down-trodden masses who have more "radical chains" to break. Every Communist Party worth its salt bases itself squarely on the most exploited sections of the people. The CP stood in dread of the most exploited sections of Azania, because they feared a thorough renovation of society.

The CPSA Fear of a Revolution By the Black Masses

Several times in the course of his speech, Fischer proudly pointed to the CP record of warning the rulers that unless they altered their policy a revolution would be unavoidable. In fact, the CP willingly and knowingly acted as the barometer of the political pressures building up among the masses so that rulers could either take measures in good time to deal with an impending political storm or heed the advice of the CP to introduce such reforms as would stabilise the situation in the country. Fischer says that it was his duty to be active in the CP "in view of ... the dangerous circumstances which have been created in South Africa." He speaks of the "extremely dangerous situation into which South Africa is being led" by the policies of the government; of "... the present dangers in South Africa which would impel people to act", "The situation created," he warns, "would immediately be explosive and lead overnight to extreme unrest and violence." "South Africa," he continues in the same vein, "had set out on a course which could lead to a civil war of the most vicious kind," and concludes: "Had our white political leaders ... preached the possibility of inter-racial co-operation ... we might already have reached a position of safety."

What kind of language is this, coming as it does from "communists"? It amounts to this: the CP doubly perspires in fear at the prospects of armed revolution and find it more "horrifying" than the continued race violence and genocide committed by the rulers. There is no other interpretation one can place on these remarks.

The CP was exhorting the government to act at once before the liberation struggle came under the influence of a leadership that aimed at nothing less than a radical social overturn by methods of armed struggle. In this connection they refer to their services to the rulers. Fischer cites the Umkonto Manifesto which says:

"We of Umkhonto, we Sizwe, have always sought to achieve liberation without bloodshed and civil clash. We hope, even at this late hour, that our first actions will awake everyone to a realization of the disastrous situation to which Nationalist policy is leading. We hope that we will bring the government and its supporters to their senses before it is too late, so that both the Government and its policies can be changed before matters reach the desperate stage of civil war. (Emphasis added) 2

The "first actions" which Umkhonto (the military wing of the Congress Alliance) undertook to "bring the government and its supporters to their senses" were "some highly controlled and restrictive sabotage" against "carefully selected targets, targets which could be attacked without endangering life and limb... (and) which, if successfully attacked, would disrupt the process of governing."

The CP does not tell us that these futile methods not only increased the intransigence of the whites, but exacerbated their race prejudice, compelling the government at the same time to strengthen their armed forces and arm the whites more effectively. Earlier, Fischer had made reference to the Defiance Campaign against "Unjust Laws" in 1950. It was a peaceful demonstration, "but ... violence was used against the protestors, violence in the form of arrests of innocent people and actual violence in the way of shootings." Yet even this natural reaction by the rulers against those who wanted to change the system of oppression did not deter the CP from using the Black masses more than ten years later in an attempt to bring about reform in order precisely to forestall a revolution. That the use of the Black masses to champion the lost causes of the CP led to their ruthless persecution and death in many instances, does not apparently worry the "communists" as long as a revolutionary upsurge could be averted.

What is significant here is that, while the CP irrevocably rule out force and revolutionary violence by the masses, the race violence of the ruling classes is simply deplored each time it occurs, and this in response to the peaceful methods of the CP and the Congress

Alliance. This is a double standard of morality which naturally flows from their concern over the white voters and the existing property relations. Thus the CP acted in order to prevent a recurrence of the "Paarl riots" and the "Bashee murders" which led to the loss of white lives. Their actions were calculated "to have the effect of detering extremists, whose numbers and influence were growing at an alarming rate, from undertaking precisely that kind of terrorism which we have always fought to prevent." (emphasis added)

Equally damning is the CP view of the Azanian revolution as nothing else than the beginning of a race war. The calculated race wars of the rulers down the centuries hold less terror for them. But as soon as the Black masses undertake some sort of concerted action to counter the race wars of the whites in order to protect themselves and improve their conditions of life, then the CP views this as the beginning and aggravation of racial strife. Listen to this:

"...there had been grave unrest in many parts of the country due to the application of apartheid laws—in Zeerust and Sekhukhuniland, in Durban and Warmbaths, in Zululand and Pondoland.

"All these pointed to the almost inevitable outbreak of violence in its most dangerous form, i.e. indiscriminate violence purely on racial grounds."

Thus the steps taken by the poor peasants in these areas to resist the measures of the rulers to destroy their crops, cull their cattle and destroy their villages in order to force them to work for starvation wages, are called by the CP "violence in its most dangerous form"; more dangerous, that is, than the violence of the State against defenseless people. The CP is more concerned over those organised actions by the masses which "stimulate race antagonism" and lead to loss of white lives than it is over the actions of the State which increase race antagonisms and the loss of Black lives a hundred times.

The CPSA Seeks the Retention of Race Categories

We have seen that, far from basing themselves on the most exploited sections of the people, as every genuine Communist Party does, the CPSA stood in dread of them, fearing the "racial" consequences of their mass mobilisation. When they were organised at times then the CP simply used them as a pawn in order to negotiate from strength with the ruling classes for petty reforms; and this they did with scant regard for the lives, the sacrifice and the morale of the Black masses.

The attitude of the CP to the race division in Azania is intimately connected with the collaborationist politics and their limited dem

cratic objectives. Their goal of a multi-racial imperialist state in Azania rules out a class approach to politics completely. Instead, the CP operates purely within the assumptions of the race divisions laid down by the despotic states.

As a predominantly white organisation, the CP could have done a service to the movement if they had attempted to work among the white workers, especially the Afrikaaner workers and helped to bring them to their working-class senses. Not that whites should only organise whites and Blacks organise Blacks, but they were obviously more accessible to the economically less privileged white workers than the Black leaders of the movement. They could have made propaganda among the white workers by showing that, because they are used by imperialism and the Afrikaaner bourgeoisie as an instrument for the oppression of the blacks, the ruling classes thereby strengthen their domination over them. The working-class consciousness of the whites can be aroused by showing that, while the wages of the Blacks remain low and the wages of the whites high, the latter are constantly being exposed to the threat of wage cuts by the employers who would try, by the most devious routes, to hire cheaper labour irrespective of colour. This is, in fact, one of the objects of so-called Border Industries. In the words of Marx, they can be taught the lesson that "labour with a white skin cannot be free while labour with a black skin is in chains." On this basis some measure of working class solidarity between white and Black workers can finally be forged. The CP pre-occupation with race categories and their interest in the imperialist connection even ruled out such a narrow class approach.

The CP concern is how "men of different races (can) live and work together in harmony and peace—to co-operate for the good of all." They seek to be all things to all men and end up by being nothing to anybody. "All the peoples," says Fischer, "... must be given a voice in their own affairs and in the whole of the country which they work in and they must be taught that races can live and work together in harmony."

The CP does not even measure up to the Liberal Party of South Africa that have opted for a non-racial democracy under which there will be no distinctions based on race and each is simply regarded as a human being, and not a member of a distinctive species. Emphasis is placed by the CP on the Freedom Charter of the Congress Alliance which foreshadows the retention of the race categories in a democratic South Africa. It says: "All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs; and all national groups shall be protected by law

against insults to their race and national pride."

In the colonial world, imperialism's traditional policy is the division of the people by exploiting tribal, religious and race differences. This is part of the policy of divide and rule. Imperialism is thus able to establish its hegemony over the colonies and semi-colonies on the basis of such differences.

To this day, imperialism fosters such racial differences in order to thwart the movement for national unification and full independence.

In Azania imperialism and the Afrikaaner bourgeoisie had erected within the framework of an integrated society the barriers of race in order to exclude the Africans from the body politic on the grounds of their inferiority and the need to safeguard the cultural supremacy of the white race. This served as the basis for the economic super-exploitation of the Africans. The creation of "Cape Coloured" and "Indian" groups, with just so much social privilege as will keep them apart from the Africans, yet not enough to close the social gulf between them and the whites, was designed to sow the seeds of race divisions among the oppressed so that the whites could maintain their supremacy. These groups were calculated to act as social buffers for a small white minority against a turbulent black majority and in this way maintain a social equilibrium. Quite obviously, also as the PAC Communique with the ex-coloured people's congress observed, "the myth of white purity and superiority would have exploded if they had been incorporated in the white power structure."

With the rapid politicalisation of the masses in Azania and the growing awareness that, despite their forcible division on racial lines, all of them share a community of interests, they are sloughing off "colouredism," "Indianism" and tribalism in order to form a unified national movement. For the CP and the Congress Alliance to peddle such things as "race pride" and emphasising the need to maintain race differences is the most abject capitulation to the white racialists that we can find anywhere.

The emphasis on race pride and customs that divide us is an insidious attempt by "progressive" whites in the movement to preserve their identity and prevent themselves from being swamped by the Black majority. The CP therefore repeatedly refer to the position of the whites as a special group in a democratic Azania, because they are seeking a built-in bill of rights for the white minority as a form of protection against the dangers of Black majority rule. This is not only a manifestation of racial fears, but race prejudice.

The CP envisage the retention of the race categories in a future Azania because their

political goal excludes the abolition of the exploitive relations in which these categories are rooted. So that the CP-ANC clamour for "race harmony" and "race tolerance" is an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable interests of the exploited Black masses with imperial and local capitalist interests and thereby keep the liberation movement within the bounds of the existing property relations. The emphasis on race pride is consequently calculated to undermine the growing class solidarity between the black and brown workers and to blunt the edge of the class struggle between capital and labour.

Inter-racial co-operation is a special technique to keep in check the pretensions of the black masses and gain security against them. On the other hand, revolutionary socialists form a unified organisation that transcends the barriers of race and that is squarely based on the most downtrodden sections. The most exploited and militant workers and poor peasants cannot have any race discrimination. How can they when they are victims of race discrimination every minute of the day? They realise that at the root of race discrimination lies economic exploitation that must be tackled in a most revolutionary way. The racial fears and animosities of other groups do not enter into their reckoning. But it is precisely when they are on the move that the class positions of the more privileged layers take on the form of racial fears and animosities. Since in some way these relatively privileged groups are already committed to the struggle, something must be done to contain the growing mass movement. So by the well-known device of transferred diagnosis, they attribute their own racialism to the militant workers, warn them not to alienate the support of well-meaning sections by going it alone, and call on them not to stir up racialism by making "unreasonable" demands and embarking on a "reckless" course of action.

The CP may have a difficulty which we must try to meet if they contend that, by reason of the all-pervasive influence of race and racialism down the centuries, one cannot expect the feelings of race and race prejudice to evaporate into thin air on the very morrow of the revolution. No one is saying this. Indeed, the task of eliminating the haunting traditions of racialism and race feeling will continue for some time after the revolution.

What we do say is that it ill becomes a revolutionary leadership simply to reflect passively the consciousness of the masses. The duty is to transform a race consciousness into a national consciousness so that people do not look at their problems through the prism of the time-hallowed race categories. Above all, the mass of the people must develop a class conscious-

ness than can alone undermine and finally eliminate feelings of race.

With the consummation of the revolution therefore the new State abolishes the statutory race categories so that all simply become members of a single nation, without special treatment or special representation for any section of the nation on the grounds of physical appearance and colour difference. It is as much in the interests of the erstwhile white minority as it is in the interests of all to co-operate simply as human beings. For to perpetuate differences on such lines is to conspire to perpetuate racialism.

The establishment of such a unified nation—so necessary for the development of the productive forces—on the basis of complete equality does not preclude but in fact guarantees the rights of every individual to practice those customs (religion, language) he holds dear. This is an elementary principle. The continued existence of religious communities like the Jews, Moslems and Indians in a non-racial Azania does not contradict the principle that in relation to the State and political representation all are treated as individuals.

If the CP are concerned over the place of a white majority in a democratic Azania and seek to retain it as a distinct group, so that, according to Fischer it may secure a "fair share" of political and economic power, then they are holding the revolution to ransom and entrenching that very racialism among the whites which they fear in the Blacks. Indeed, how can a dictatorship of workers and poor peasants embracing the majority of the nation, share power with a privileged group that moreover elects to stand aloof from that nation?

The CP may profitably reflect on the policy which the French CP followed in Algeria for a long time during the civil war. For, in the interests of the French settlers in Algeria and as a manifestation of their national chauvinism the French CP persistently called for the retention of Algeria as an inextricable part of France. This disastrous policy exacerbated the race feelings among the colons and encouraged them to make a last ditch stand, when the French CP with their professed Marxist principles should have exhorted them to co-operate with the revolutionary forces to help rid the country of French imperialism and in this way shorten the civil war.

Marx says that for a "total" revolution, as opposed to a "partial" revolution, a class must be organized that is not in but of civil society. "There must be a formed sphere of society," he continues, "which claims no traditional status but only human status... a sphere—which has a universal character because its sufferings are universal and which does not claim a particular redress because the wrong which is done it is

not a particular wrong but a wrong in general."

In Azania the downtrodden Blacks are outside the body politic, although their labours sustain an official or civil society in which they are not recognised. They form the backbone of "total" revolution, and on their accession to power they will not cling to their traditional status as Blacks, but will simply claim human status. Liberation from their universal sufferings therefore also signifies the liberation of the whole nation. Their assumption of human status means its extension to all other groups as well. And with that the race categories so beloved by the CP are dissolved.

Birth of a New Azania: By C.P.'s Immaculate Conception?

There is no historical proof that the ruling classes surrender without a bitter struggle. Fischer's reference to the peaceful extension by imperialism of independence to the African States is of course illusory. What happened was that under colonial mass pressure imperialism was forced to groom a new "native" ruling class to act as the custodian of her vested interests in the African country. At the same time the introduction of black majority rule under a bourgeois parliamentary system was designed to channelise the aspiration of the masses and act as the facade for the continuing dictatorship of the imperial interest. In this way formal political independence came to stabilise imperial rule at a higher level, and helped to pre-empt a revolution.

The rulers stay in power as long as they have the necessary force to defend their positions. To talk to them about legal change is useless, because the law itself is the instrument of the old order and serves to guard the existing property relations. To be sure, the law contrives to entrench the position of the dominant class by preaching against the use of violence, so that the armed might of the State may use violence as its monopoly against the threat of revolution.

In this respect, the Rhodesian crisis holds important lessons which surely will not be lost on the dedicated revolutionaries of Southern Africa. One is that while, on the one hand, Britain warns the liberation movement in Zimbabwe to follow the constitutional path to independence, on the other hand, she is quite prepared to stand idly by when Smith seizes independence by force and rules by violence, because his regime can still guarantee, in view of the liberation forces, the protection of the imperial interest. For it is patently clear that imperialism does not use force against movements and regimes of the extreme right if they

can keep in check the pretensions of the revolutionary forces and safeguard vested interests. The other lesson is that Britain will intervene swiftly to crush a growing liberation struggle that threatens "law and order" in Zimbabwe, and then prepare the ground very carefully for a neo-colonialist solution with a Black leadership who, with the support of a middle class carefully groomed and brainwashed, can come to a "proper understanding" with the South African regime and Portugal with the view to preserving the massive foreign interests in the African sub-continent. Which means—and this is the third lesson—that a negotiated independence is no independence whatsoever.

It is the lesson of history that the most all-embracing liberation of a people can be brought about only by an armed revolution of the most sweeping kind. For no ruling class gives up by its own volition its economic and political power. That a man's property is finally worth far more than his very life is a Machiavellian dictum borne out by the struggle to the death of the dominant classes in defence of their possessions. Attempts to argue with them rationally to surrender do not help, because they are asked to give up, at their own expense, to those on whom their privileged positions depend. It is presumptuous cheek on the part of the CP to expect the South African ruling classes to respond to "reasonable requests" and to alert them to the dangers of revolution so that they would introduce reforms with the consent of the people.

The ruling classes do not listen to "reason" unless it has the support of superior force; and when they do respond peacefully, then this is only in order to avert their own downfall by introducing petty reforms in order to derail a revolution. The institution of "one man, one vote" in the various African States is a case in point.

It has been proved by history that attempts to bring about social change by methods of conciliation and moderation lead to a greater loss of blood than methods of armed revolution. The vacillations of the Spanish Republicans in the 30's resulted in the death and persecution of half the population of Spain, and paved the way for the Fascist reaction. On the other hand a decisive break with the past by the most revolutionary methods does not only lead to more permanent gains, but helps to save more lives in the long term. How many people in Azania die every year of hunger and overwork, persecution and police massacres? Must millions more continue to die just because a peaceful way out must be found? Such "humanitarianism" does not consider human feeling.

We are arguing about elementary matters. The imperialists, the Soviet bureaucracy and the

various social democratic parties of Western Europe warn the people of the colonies not to use force to settle their problems and enjoin on them to attain their independence by peaceful methods. But this does not prevent them from sanctioning the use of force, if only after the event, when they give recognition to those favourably disposed governments that come to power as a result of military coups.

Whether one wants a "partial" revolution or a "total" revolution depends on the methods one invokes to achieve either. In dealing with means and ends Rosa Luxemborg drew a distinction between the aims of the reformist and the revolutionary socialist. She writes:—

"...people who pronounce themselves in favour of the method of legislative reform in place of and in contradistinction to the conquest of political power—a social revolution—do not really choose a more tranquil, calmer and slower road to the same goal, but a different goal. Instead of taking a stand for the establishment of a new society, they take a stand for slight changes in the old society".

The downtrodden masses of Azania have a vested interest in the most radical break with the existing order. In the words of Marx, they are "not opposed to particular consequences but (are) totally opposed to the assumptions of the... political system." They naturally take to armed struggle, because they are incessantly subjected to violence.

The assassination of Verwoerd does not alter the situation in Azania but the masses were none the less jubilant, because they realise, in the words of Malcolm X, when he commented on President Kennedy's assassination, that the chickens are coming home to roost.

A proposal has recently been made by the revisionists and agents of the imperialist powers that the Blacks should now be given training in the administrative aspects of government, (naturally by imperialist agencies) so that when the time comes they will be fully prepared to work the machinery of State in Azania. It is certainly a convenient arrangement whereby the Blacks become enmeshed in the administrative machinery to serve and be subordinate to the economic and military power of imperialism.

But the Black masses of Azania will prepare themselves to handle all aspects of their own affairs not in the houses of the rich nor in academic seminars whose job is to brainwash and to confuse. They will equip themselves only in the veld and forests, the mountains and high grasslands, of their own country where a life and death struggle will teach them to organise, to learn techniques, to improvise and to produce. The use of violence as an end in itself is naturally not the answer.

It is only by changing their environment in the furnace of a revolution that Azanians can also change themselves and be fit to master their own affairs.

Footnotes:

1. Throughout the text CP is the Communist Party of South Africa unless otherwise noted.
2. All emphasis by underlining throughout the article is in the original text and has not been added by WR.

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