



AVANÇA! War in Southern Africa

THE PFLO FIGHTS ON!

SINO-SOVIET SPLIT

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Editor's Introduction

With this issue, *LSM NEWS* takes on a more regular format. Several features which have only occasionally appeared - letters, revolutionary culture, an editorial introduction - will now be regular features. Until the SWAPO Printshop is completed, we will regularly report on its progress and try to analyze its significance for North Americans. We are grouping our articles according to the general area of the imperialist system they mainly concern. Articles on revolutionary movements in underdeveloped countries of the "third world" will be in our "countryside" section. This will include articles, interviews, translated documents, excerpts from life histories and similar materials. The "metropolitan" section will include reports and analysis of anti-imperialist activities in the North American Left. This division reflects LSM's dual strategy for North American revolutionaries as expressed in our pamphlet, *Toward an International Strategy*. Some articles, either because they deal with broad theoretical questions or because they discuss relations between the anti-imperialist movement and the national liberation movements, may not quite fit into this division, but there will always be room for such material.

This issue features "Avanca! War in Southern Africa," an analysis of the revolutionary movements in five countries in southern Africa

Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa - and of imperialist strategy to maintain its domination. "The Sino-Soviet Split" sums up the first stage of our investigations and discussions raised by the long-standing ideological struggle between China and the Soviet Union in terms of its effects on our practice and on liberation movements. In the countryside section, "Oman: the PFLO Fights On!" is an update on the state of the revolution in Oman and a brief report on an international support conference for the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman. The metropolitan section includes a brief and preliminary report on a recent struggle within LSM. Many anti-imperialist forces have had similar experiences which should be discussed and shared. Some of the key lessons from LSM's struggle involve conceptions of political structure and relations and the obligations of members to work within them.

Looking ahead, our next issue, to appear in August, will include a group of articles on the general theme of Marxism-Leninism in Africa - the historic attempt to transform liberation movements into communist parties. Also planned is a review of the recent film, "Bush Mama," and an analysis of a campaign in the US to boycott South African cargo (see LSM NOTES in this issue).

AVANÇA!

War in Southern Africa



The Main Contradiction

Today, 16 years after MPLA militants attacked Luanda Prison and launched the armed struggle in Angola, socialist development is the order of the day for millions of Africans in that country and in Mozambique. Yet the main contradiction in Southern Africa remains that between the revolutionary interests of the black masses and the exploitative interests of imperialism. Peasants, migrant and urban workers, petty-bourgeois clerks, teachers, and merchants - all confront and oppose those who benefit from and depend on the continued superexploitation of Africa's human and material resources, from Ford Motor Co. to Anglo-American Corp., from the racist white power structure to the bourgeoisified white working class which supports it. Historically, this contradiction has been manifested as a struggle against colonialism, in one form of white minority rule or another.* But anti-colonialism is just one stage of the revolution. As Amílcar Cabral put it, "When we are independent, that's when our struggle really begins."

The main contradiction in Southern Africa is presently being played out on three main fronts, each representing different stages of development of the socialist revolution: 1) Angola and Mozambique, 2) Namibia and Zimbabwe, and 3) South Africa. In the following pages, based on LSM's experience, we will try to enrich this formulation. Our aim is to arm anti-imperialist forces to play a greater role in the resolution of the main contradiction. We will also take a critical look at aspects of LSM's past practice of information and propaganda. Those of you familiar with our work will know that we have concentrated on documenting the positive side of these struggles - the

*Though South Africa is unique in many respects, its system of rule is also essentially colonial. Thus, J-F Bonaldi writes, "In short, the colonial metropolis has been established within the geographical borders of the colonized country." In "A Cauldron Under Pressure" in *Tricontinental*, No. 100, Havana, 1976, p. 3.

revolutionary efforts of the masses and their liberation movements. We have not devoted much energy to examining imperialism. As a first step to correct this weakness, we will try to examine imperialist interests and strategy in Africa in light of the recent progress of the liberation struggles.

First, from the revolutionary side, let us briefly examine some of the common features of the struggles in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Progressive forces throughout the area have embraced and to varying extents carried out a strategy of protracted armed struggle aimed at seizing state power from entrenched settler colonial regimes and, once in power, at transforming social relations to build new societies. These progressive forces are embodied in movements of national liberation led by worker and petty-bourgeois elements and draw their essential strength from the rural masses, the peasantry (including "peasant-workers" such as Namibian contract laborers¹). From bases in the countryside, their strategy has been in effect to encircle the cities, the centers of the colonial state and settler population and the points of connection with international capital; to harass, wear down, and defeat the enemy as they mobilize and encourage the masses.

This armed struggle, combined with urban underground work, takes the shape of People's War. Thus, the liberation army is a political army; its members are volunteers, not conscripts or professionals. They carry out many non-military tasks: food and tool production, literacy campaigns, health care, and, above all, political education among the masses. Part of such an army's methods in defeating the



Samora Machel and "Continuadores" at FRELIMO Congress.

colonial forces is organizing and mobilizing the bulk of the rural, and to lesser extents, the urban population. The importance of this is stressed by Samora Machel:

What seemed unaccomplishable for those dominated by reactionary and imperialist prejudices has become a fact: the victory of peasants and workers over a bourgeois army, technically fit, experienced in wars of aggression and powerfully armed. Our struggle showed once again that, when united by a correct political line, when motivated by their fundamental interests, the People are able to crush any aggressor, however powerful he might be.

The active support of the population

is essential in conducting guerrilla warfare. Thus a deputy political commissar of the Zimbabwe People's Army explains that ZIPA is now "operating in bigger military units, which has been possible because of the qualitative development of the consciousness of the masses, who are serving as our camouflage, as our intelligence system and as our quartermasters."²

The really revolutionary element of the liberation movements consists in their transforming the old societies into new ones which serve the interests of the masses, which improve their living conditions. Necessarily they must restructure relations of production both within the country, e.g. turning coffee plantations into cooperatives in Angola, and with the imperialist system, e.g. nationalizing foreign enterprises. This means essentially transforming the lives of the masses from those of materially and culturally oppressed peoples producing wealth for capitalist enterprises both foreign and domestic, to those of advanced social formations which develop not only the nation's productive forces but the human qualities and comforts of those who produce the wealth. "Always bear in mind that the people . . . are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children," said Amilcar Cabral.

In the war of contending forces and interests in Southern Africa, we discern three main fronts. How do we identify them? What characterizes their development since 1974? Liberation forces have made substantial progress on all fronts; imperialism has been clearly on the defensive since the Lisbon coup in April 1974. However, developments and changes have been varied and uneven.

War on Three Fronts

The struggle inside *South Africa* has intensified in the past year but has not yet established military action as the main form of struggle. Opposition to the apartheid regime has taken shape as open violent defiance in sporadic mass action, along with underground organizational work and preparations for armed struggle. The African National Congress - pre-eminent among South Africa's liberation forces in experience, political line and, most likely, popular support - has written that "small-scale actions (whether they are in downing of tools, picketing, demonstrations, protest meetings, go-slows, boycotts, stays-at-home, defiance, etc.) are important and lead to higher revolutionary activities (sabotage, guerrilla action and the seizure of power)."³ Repeatedly taking to the streets in the face of brutal police repression, the black masses have demonstrated a willingness to fight and take extreme risks; their receptivity to revolutionary practice is high. South Africa appears in a period of transition to "higher revolutionary activities." But this may be a long transition (perhaps depending on a stable rear base in Zimbabwe) and could be reversed in the short run (as when the ANC launched sabotage campaigns and guerrilla warfare in the sixties). A clearly identifiable, united leadership and program of action have not been evident in the recent struggles; moreover, the South African regime, unlike its counterpart in "Rhodesia," remains relatively strong and united. Soweto shows us that South Africa's old way, apartheid, is untenable, indeed increasingly unacceptable to much of the capitalist world. For imperialism the central question is: can White South

Africa stabilize its rule, scrapping apartheid without scrapping capitalism? Can it effect enough of the minor changes in order to forestall major, revolutionary ones? In short, the revolutionary situation in South Africa is in an early stage; the course of the struggle will depend first on revolutionary leadership and organization, second on the nature of white rule: reformist or hard-line.*

In *Namibia* and *Zimbabwe* we find rapidly developing revolutionary situations. Struggles there have intensified to the point of seriously threatening continued white minority rule. Guerrilla warfare has become more effective and widespread over the past two years, producing crises for the settler colonial regimes and laying a basis for a transfer of power to the black masses under revolutionary governments within the next few years.

In Namibia SWAPO has even carried the armed struggle into the "white heartlands" of the South, while it has begun to articulate a more lucid socialist perspective. This was clearly reflected in SWAPO's revised constitution and political program adopted at the enlarged meeting of its Central Committee in August 1976. These documents call for the creation of a non-exploitative, classless soci-

*Lenin provides us with a useful definition of a revolutionary situation; in part: "Usually, for a revolution to break out it is not enough for the 'lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is necessary also that the 'upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way." V. I. Lenin, "The Collapse of the Second International" in *Against Revisionism*, Moscow, 1959, p. 228.

ety.⁴

In Zimbabwe the Zimbabwe People's Army has attempted to unite guerrilla cadres of ZANU and ZAPU under an 18-member High Command, posing such a military threat to the Smith regime that thousands of Zimbabweans have abandoned their former livelihoods to join the revolution, while the regime itself has played out a confused farce of imprisoning hundreds of thousands in "protected villages" while haggling about "integrating" bars and park benches. Meanwhile, at the political level, the Patriotic Front of ZANU and ZAPU is working to bridge the old antagonisms which have held back the Zimbabwean movement in the past.

In both Namibia and Zimbabwe imperialism has been maneuvering to stabilize the situation; however, conditions are still explosive and qualitative change is likely soon. The end of the anti-colonial stage of the liberation process is now in sight. More importantly, both movements have given evidence of transforming the national, anti-colonial struggle into a revolutionary one.*

The struggles in *Mozambique* and *Angola*** have moved beyond the now defeated immediate enemy - colonialism -

*In the case of Zimbabwe, John Saul (in *Southern Africa*, January-February 1977) discusses an important principle that we have dealt with in earlier issues of *LSM NEWS*, namely that those who would collaborate with revolutionary forces must look *critically* at the practice (encompassing but going beyond stated aims and objectives) of liberation movements.

**With minor differences, the essential content of liberation in Guinea-Bissau is the same.

to embrace a two-fold content. First of all, the two People's Republics must defend the revolution; consolidate the victory against imperialism. In Angola a Second War of National Liberation had to be fought against the combined forces of imperialism within (puppet movements FNLA and UNITA) and without (Zaire, South Africa, and mercenaries) the country. Diplomatic, economic, and military isolation and harassment have threatened the new regimes since their coming to power. Second, and ultimately most important, revolutionary governments in both countries are clearly committed to and have embarked on programs of socialist reconstruction; state power has now become the platform for applying the lessons, programs, structures, and mentality from the liberated regions during the anti-colonial war to the entire country. During the armed struggle Amilcar Cabral said: "The greatest success of our struggle is not the fact that we are able to successfully fight the Portuguese colonialists; it is the fact that we are in the process of building a new social and cultural life in our country while we are fighting." In Angola and Mozambique today, building *poder popular* is the succinct expression of this process. This involves struggle against both the oppressive features of traditional African cultures and the inherited colonial state. Samora Machel has said: "We need to be aware that the apparatus we are now inheriting is, in its nature, composition and methods, a profoundly retrograde and reactionary structure which has to be completely revolutionized in order to put it at the service of the masses."

These emerging nations are beginning to disengage from the capitalist world order, changing relations with imperialist institutions (like Gulf Oil in

Angola) and turning the colonial socio-economic structures on their heads (plantations into cooperatives). This means creating systems of popular democracy capable of mobilizing masses of people to take control of their lives. New institutions are taking shape: dynamization groups, people's commissions and, in the coming year, vanguard Marxist-Leninist parties created out of the liberation fronts, MPLA and FRELIMO. New relations are taking shape: between men and women, between the people and the law, between town and country. New mentalities are taking hold: against racism, sexism, and cultural imperialism. All these changes are products of deep struggle and the unleashing of the energies of the masses. They mark a stage in the national liberation process in Southern Africa, and they are a source of inspiration and material support for the other fighting peoples of the area. They are also a profound threat to imperialism.

Imperialist Interests and Maneuvers

The prospect of an emerging socialist bloc in Southern Africa is obviously anathema to the forces of settler colonialism and international capital. This was evident in the imperialist assault on Angola with South Africa's unprecedented full-scale invasion accompanied by Zaire and US-financed mercenaries. Given the enormous economic and strategic importance of Southern Africa and the abruptness of the Lisbon coup, the imperialist response was a defensive reflex action which severely underestimated the internal forces, i.e. popular support for the MPLA. With the acceleration of contradictions in the aftermath of the MPLA victory, we have seen, personified by Kissinger's desperate shut-

ting acts last year, more of the soft-sell maneuvers to minimize losses and cultivate neocolonialism.

The scope of activity that took place behind the scenes in preparation for the Geneva Conference on Zimbabwe is worth noting here. In early October, just before Geneva got underway, two sets of meetings were conducted. Joint US-Britain-South Africa talks were held to work out the details of a US-proposed "Rhodesia Adjustment Fund" of some \$1.5 billion to serve as a "safety net" for white interests and a possible "development" fund. Also in this period, the US State Department's then Asst. Secretary for Economic Affairs, William Rogers, met with heads of some 20 multinational corporations such as Chase Manhattan Bank, Citibank, Mobil Oil and Union Carbide to coordinate private investment and AID plans during the envisioned transition period. The clear intention was to organize a large-scale flow of western capital into Zimbabwe during the transition period to underwrite the basic economic structures and cultivate a Zimbabwean elite.

In Namibia there were reports of US promises to Vorster of similar large-scale investment and economic and military aid to an "independent" Namibia, if South Africa would negotiate a withdrawal of its illegal occupation with "all political forces, including SWAPO." But while US officials spoke of including SWAPO in any settlement, the US covertly backed one of Vorster's pliant tribal chiefs involved in the "Constitutional Talks," Clemens Kapuuu.

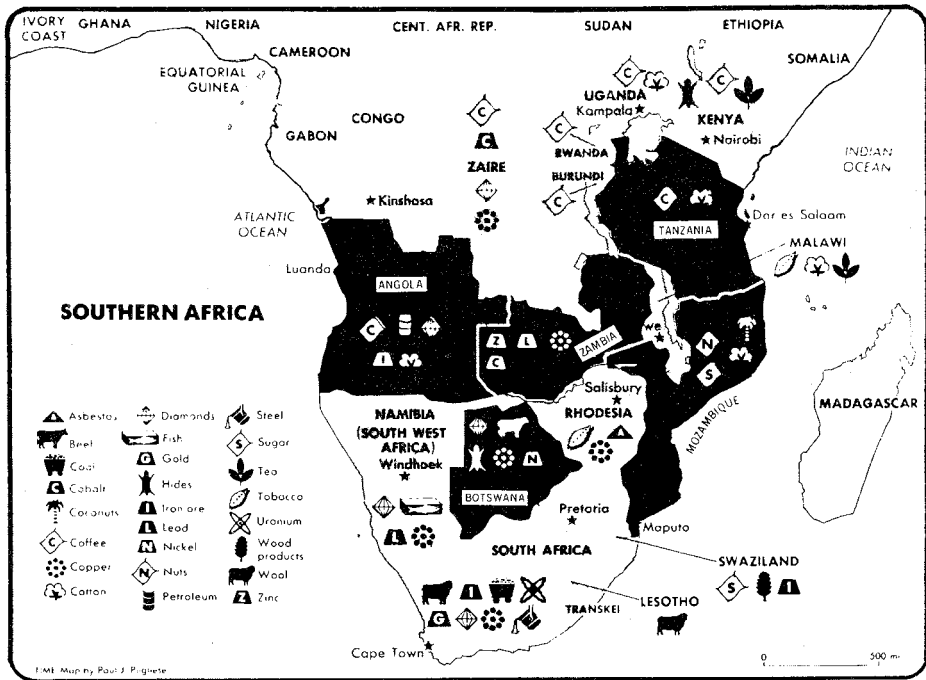
This sort of maneuvering reflects the initiative and interest of international capital to stabilize the present crisis situation, to transcend the narrow self-interest of settler colonialism in Namibia and Zimbabwe

and to cultivate aspiring petty-bourgeois African interests there as part of a long-range strategy of developing a regionally integrated network on the subcontinent. Crude white minority rule has demonstrated its inability to contain the African revolution. As Kissinger put it in a speech last August, "The remaining outposts of colonialism are now in an untenable position." From the imperialist point of view, stability in the region now requires establishing neocolonialism in Zimbabwe and Namibia according to the "Kenya model." That means establishing the kind of African leadership which will be subservient to the paramount concerns of international capital in Southern Africa: insuring the flow of vital raw materials (gold, copper, etc.) and maintaining an "open door" to Western investment. But South Africa's role on the subcontinent is particularly important for and indicative of imperialist strategy.

South African Sub - Imperialism

South Africa is the prime guardian of Western interests and vehicle for their expansion. More than a decade ago Prime Minister Vorster said, "In many ways we have, with respect to much of Africa south of the Sahara, a responsibility which the US has undertaken on a much larger scale with respect to the underdeveloped areas of the world as a whole."

South Africa is the only industrialized country in Africa. Fueled by international finance and technology, South Africa has based its growth on its enormous mineral wealth, 43% of the total so far discovered in Africa,* and on its abundant, heavily policed, cheap black labor. The super-exploitation of black workers, first on the diamond fields and then in the



gold mines, has been played into a rapid capital accumulation and developing industrial economy. South Africa produces four times as much steel as the rest of Africa combined and more than 60% of the continent's electricity. But what has produced for Whites the highest standard of living in the world, has left the black masses impoverished. These conditions generate South Africa's search for both markets and international *de facto* acceptance of apartheid in Africa, a search which finds expression in "outward policy," "dialogue" and most recently "detente."

*This includes 70% of the capitalist world's gold production, 75% of chrome reserves, 40% of manganese, 25% of uranium reserves and substantial reserves of coal, iron, copper, platinum, asbestos, vanadium, diamonds and other minerals. *South African Digest*, 8 April 1977.

Concretely South Africa is seeking to cultivate a regional grouping of client states both within its borders (i.e. as Bantustan "homelands") and outside (from Zambia southward). A look at the Transkei, formally independent since October 1976, gives us a sense of the Afrikaner notion of "independence": "An 'independent' Transkei can provide jobs for fewer than 25% of its resident population. About 350,000 resident Transkeians have to seek work outside the Transkei as migratory workers on the white farms, factories and mines, contributing 70% of the Transkei's income. . . . Agricultural production in the Transkei is declining, and 90% of the food consumed in the territory has to be imported."⁵ The Bantustan strategy is to create ten such client states, while 87% of the land, including all industry and mining, remains in white hands. Regionally, the entire banking, communications, transport and postal

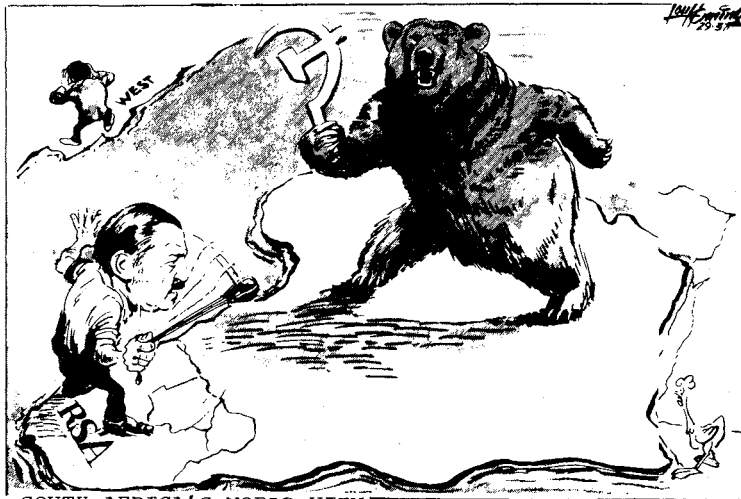
institutions of Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana are all South African based. Six of the ten largest industries in "Rhodesia" are South African owned. Moreover, South Africa has made openings with conservative, dependent black states such as Ivory Coast, Gabon and Zaire. Since 1974 more than \$450 million in export credits and loan projects have been extended to nine African states.

Behind all this, bound up with South African interests is some \$9 billion in Western foreign investment, about \$4 billion of which is British, about \$2 billion American. Profit returns on investment in South Africa have been upwards of 20%, nearly double most domestic US investment.

Defending this highly profitable part of the "free world" has been a major role for South Africa. Involved for many years in counter-insurgency in the former Portuguese colonies and Zimbabwe, South Africa was called out in force during the Angolan "emergency." Strategically, South Africa has already begun to be integrated into NATO's intelligence network. Project

Advocaat, a huge computer intelligence base sunk into a mountain at Silvermine, near Cape Town, monitors air and naval traffic from Venezuela to the Bay of Bengal, aided by NATO defense equipment coding.

In the imperial network, South Africa forms the western flank of a strategic ring around the Indian Ocean. The US has some \$10 billion invested in the littoral states of the Indian Ocean. About 80% of Europe's oil and 70% of its strategic minerals are shipped from the Arabian-Persian Gulf around the Cape and up to the South Atlantic. To "protect" these sea lanes, the Pentagon has cultivated a network of allies from the Pacific rim to the South Atlantic, while the Pacific Command (PACOM) has expanded its 7th Fleet area of responsibility. This network stretches from bases in the Philippines, Guam, Tinian, Taiwan, Japan, and Australia to Diego Garcia and the Omani island of Masirah, and down to South Africa. In the aftermath of the MPLA victory in Angola, there has been a growing interest in military circles in establishing a



SOUTH AFRICA'S WORLD VIEW

Die Transvaler

South Atlantic Alliance (SATO) composed of South Africa and reactionary military dictatorships in Latin America, such as Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. This would be informally linked to NATO and if accomplished would extend the strategic encirclement without formally linking the Western powers to Pretoria.

Troubles in the White Camp

It is these sorts of imperialist connections that the liberation movements have begun to threaten. While complete disengagement from the global capitalist system is a long-term process, the liberation of Angola and Mozambique have very concretely damaged neocolonial expansionism. For example, South Africa's plans for the Cunene hydro-electric complex in Angola which would have built an infrastructure in southern Angola and Namibia to exploit raw materials, rather than to develop agriculture, have been set back. Although Mozambique inherited a service economy (45% of foreign exchange earnings) for South Africa and Rhodesia, FRELIMO's rural development plans aimed at reordering the infrastructure to serve Mozambique's needs have begun to put a damper on Pretoria's designs in the region.

Within South Africa these contradictions have begun to be felt. The contradiction between the need for a stable, skilled work force and developed internal market on the one hand, and the pattern of white privilege and black oppression under apartheid on the other, is manifested in tension between Vorster's ruling Afrikaner Nationalist Party and the "enlightened" South African financial-industrial circles and foreign capital.

The entrenched interests of white farmers, merchants, and white workers

who comprise Vorster's constituency, explain the hardline response to the political crisis of 1976: more than 500 dead, more than 1000 wounded, and some 5000 jailed. After forcibly moving some 1.6 million Africans into desolate Bantustans, the regime must still contend with the nine to ten million Blacks crowded into townships like Soweto. These are the workers without which South Africa cannot function.

In response to the growing militancy of the large permanent urban black working class there is a growing current of "reform from above" advocated by industrialists such as Anglo-American conglomerate head Harry Oppenheimer, US corporate spokesmen, and the Carter administration. South Africa's financial crisis in 1976 has added an extra element of urgency to the situation.*

The sort of reforms being canvassed would call for a "federal solution" incorporating the ten Bantustans into a federal structure, giving some appearance of democracy, but leaving all political and economic power in white hands. This would include concessions officially permitting Blacks to live in urban areas, abolishing the pass laws, permitting limited African trade unions, allowing Africans to own homes, etc. This would also have granted more rights to the 2.5 million "Coloureds" in order to create a petty-bourgeois buffer between Whites and Africans. The advocates of this plan hope to level out the crisis and provide some short-term stability while

*Thus, a foreign debt of some \$5 billion, with debt servicing (financed largely by US banks) of some \$975 million precipitated largely by the drop in the price of gold, which is vital to Pretoria's foreign exchange.

creating an African skilled labor force.

At present, however, even this option appears beyond the scope of Vorster's white constituency; thus the possibility of a split in the white camp and the likelihood that reform will prove impossible and rebellions intensify. The Carter administration's articulated strategy to "aggressively" pursue reform may therefore be effectively stifled by the inertia of white power.

A Serious Enemy Still

Imperialist losses to anti-capitalist forces in Southern Africa and elsewhere are important. However, we should not overestimate the short-term implications of recent events. The political economies of Southern Africa are still woven into the fabric of international capital; disengagement will be a protracted process. The Angola of MPLA, just as the future Namibia of SWAPO, will face a limited range of options in realizing the value of their natural resources.

Meanwhile, imperialism demonstrates its resiliency, its ability to adjust to new conditions. The defeat in Indochina led to a new strategy, based on the futility of fighting a land war, of developing American air and sea power as a capital intensive, high-technology, "quick strike" force, and cultivating a network of sub-imperial servants to safeguard the interests of capital - thus, Brazil, Zaire, Indonesia, Iran, South Africa (witness gendarme actions in Chile, East Timor, Oman, and Angola). This strategy has bolstered the US position since the "Nixon Doctrine" was unveiled in 1969. The 1977-78 US Defense budget of a record \$110

billion, coupled with massive arms sales to imperialist "partners" - Iran and Saudi Arabia alone have purchased more than \$22 billion in US military hardware since 1973 - suggest that imperialism is not about to go quietly.

But there is no question that in terms of a long-term historical process, the parameters of the global capitalist system have begun to contract - as in the influence and control of future markets, resources, investment opportunities, and all the police-state structures needed to ensure them. Recognition of this lies behind the strategy of the Trilateral Commission, the Rockefeller-backed "private" policy formulating group formed in 1973 by Zbigniew Brzezinski, at least ten of whose members (including Carter and Mondale) now stock top offices in the White House, State, Treasury, and Defense Departments. The Trilateral strategy seeks to coordinate economic, financial, and monetary policies among the advanced industrial powers of North America, Europe, and Japan in order to stabilize a multi-lateral global order with the US in a Godfather role.

Despite its setbacks, imperialism still constitutes a serious danger in Southern Africa. The instruments of oppression, the economic and social relations, the prevailing ideologies all bear the stamp of imperialism, all are its natural or adopted children. As the revolutionary governments and liberation movements continue their advance, a growing assortment of tactics will be employed by imperialism in its rearguard battle. Though the basic revolutionary process cannot be reversed, obstacles can still be put in its way and time won to create new diversions. In this zig-zag battle of revolution versus counter-revolu-

tion it will be crucial not to lose sight of the main contradiction. Imperialism is the enemy; the masses of African peoples, led by their movements of national liberation, are *our* allies.

* * * *

Theory and Practice: A Self - Criticism

The April 1974 anti-fascist coup in Portugal, the product of the long, frustrating, and expensive wars in the colonies, set off a new dynamic in Southern Africa. A new pace of change emerged, contradictions developed more rapidly than ever before, the experiences of ten or twenty years were packed into the events of a day.

However, LSM's practice in propaganda and material support continued as if no qualitative changes had occurred. As we continued to work in the old way, our practice soon fell out of step with real conditions in Southern Africa. By 1975 the MPLA no longer confronted the armed resistance of the colonial state, but instead faced the hostile opposition of neocolonial puppet armies backed by increasing intervention of imperialist forces, including South Africa, Zaire, and the United States. By late 1975 and 1976 Angola was front page and prime time in the bourgeois media; for a considerable period Angola was a burning question on the Left and throughout the US.

But at this critical juncture - mainly August 1975 to January 1976 - LSM was too slow and ineffective to significantly advance North American support for the Angolan revolution. We should have done much more at least to distinguish the contending forces in the struggle; to elaborate the his-

tory and nature of the struggle, to counter the lies and distortions about American involvement and Cuban participation, to publicize the basic political positions of the MPLA and the reactionary forces. Specifically we should have found new avenues to produce and disseminate what we knew about the Angolan situation, utilized much more the presence in Angola of one of our members, and played a more active role in discussing the situation with other Left forces. Ultimately we produced some valuable publications and carried out a nation-wide speaking tour (March - April 1976). But why were our efforts relatively too little, too late? Examining this problem led us to look closely and critically at our practice.

LSM's information and propaganda work took shape during a particular stage in the struggles against Portuguese colonialism, i.e. the period of protracted armed struggle. When we started out, awareness and understanding of these struggles were at a very low level in North America. The war in Vietnam was an eye-opener and in fact prompted some North Americans to, in a sense, look for and recognize similar struggles in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. We were few and far between though. In order to raise consciousness of and build effective support for these struggles LSM proceeded to gather basic information about the revolutions in Southern Africa. This we published in the forms of interviews, life histories, firsthand accounts, and other basic documents.

As most of us took up this work without expertise or prior experience, especially in producing and distributing literature, our "pace of production" was from the beginning slow. At this time (1970-74), however, this was

not a critical weakness, since the pace of developments in Southern Africa was relatively slow too, changes appearing over months and years rather than days. Moreover, our life history publications were in some sense "timeless" as documents of colonial oppression and the transformation of colonial victims into revolutionary activists; our depth interviews sought to describe the fundamental characteristics least likely to change rapidly, or at all. Thus, we could take six months (or longer) to publish something because the content retained its currency and was appropriate to the task of informing and motivating progressive North Americans.

However, by 1975 our propaganda apparatus clearly proved inadequate to the demands of the Second War of National Liberation. Our newly started quarterly, *LSM NEWS*, provided in form a greater measure of flexibility, but our still underdeveloped store of skills and techniques kept us from using this organ as effectively as we might have. What can we learn from this? That history plays nasty tricks, like pulling off big changes before we are ready for them? That we had been doing the wrong thing all along?

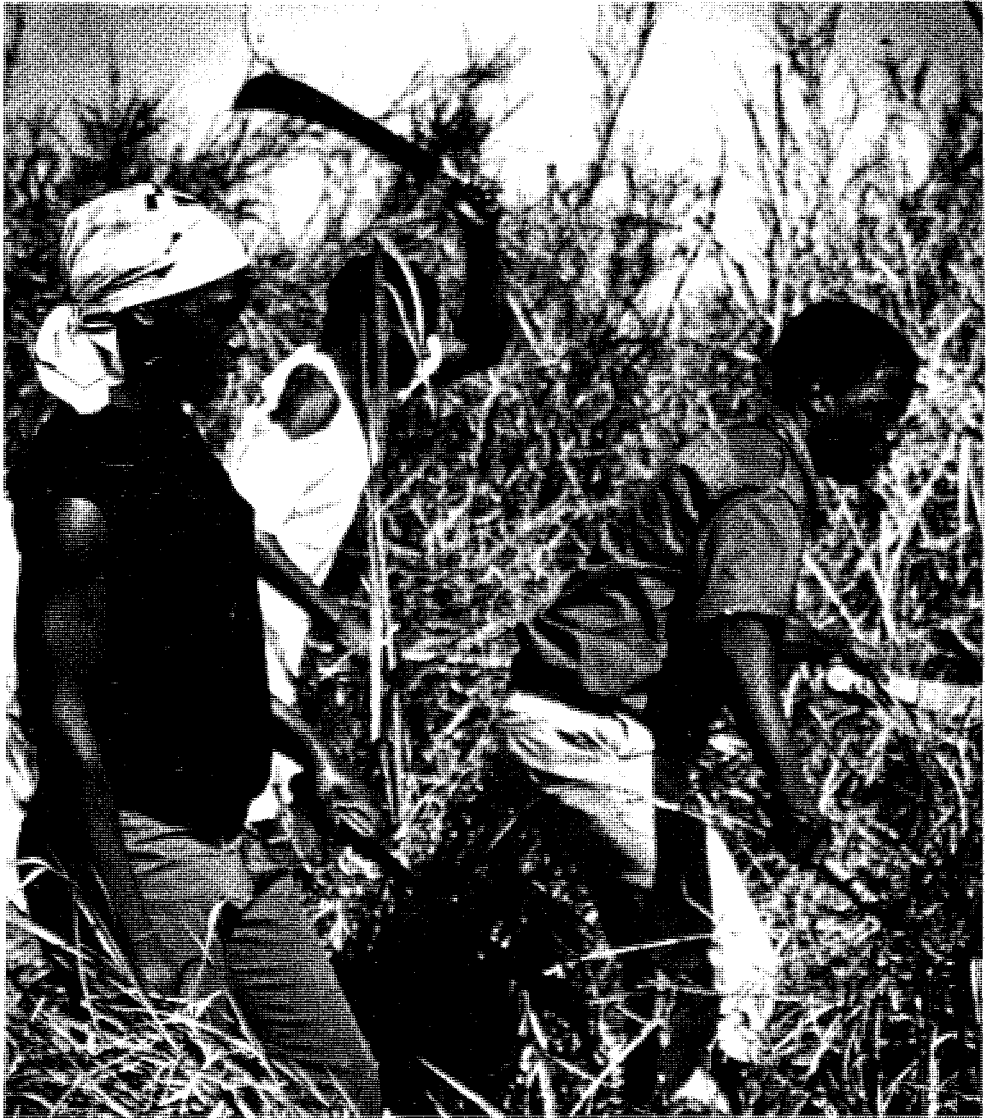
No, we can't rail against "history" or look at ourselves one-sidedly. We learned that changes in the real world must be predicted and accounted for in our practice. The course of contradictions in Angola could have been anticipated in 1974 and our practice adjusted accordingly. But to arrive at such a new understanding and anticipate the course of events we need to practice analysis. We need to subject our working notions, like "imperialism" and "national liberation," to critical investigation. Periodically we have to stop and ask ourselves: Do we know what we're

talking about? Do our ideas correspond to real conditions? If we expect the world to change (more than anyone, revolutionaries should so expect), should we not expect our ideas to change, too?

We easily develop a static view of the world. In 1972 we wrote that imperialism would promote "the installation of an African government willing to guarantee current investments and a stable and orderly foreign investment climate."⁶ We expected that imperialism would not stand idly by if something could be done to prevent a peaceful transfer of power to a revolutionary MPLA-led government; we knew that the most likely prospect was for sharp and violent struggle. Yet we did not develop plans or make changes necessary to relate our practice to the foreseeable new conditions. Our attitude toward national liberation in Southern Africa was static; our appreciation of the interests of imperialism and the tenacity with which it would defend those interests was likewise passive and unimaginative.

Discovering weaknesses, of course, is pointless without struggling to overcome or neutralize them. It was practice which revealed our theoretical and analytical weaknesses; we hope our efforts at rectification are reflected in these pages and in other areas of our practice. Concretely, LSM has initiated more ambitious programs of study and analysis than ever before; we have begun to investigate new forms of technical support, better suited to the current stage and needs of the struggles. The Chinese line and *de facto* collaboration with imperialism in the case of Angola has had the positive effect of forcing us to question deeply the real content of much of

continued on p. 56



We cast our eyes over our land
we work our hands we feel and live
so many conquests of the People

The land houses schools hospitals
our whole life
has been regained is ours now

The capitalists say that the People
are born inferior contemptible
the part of humanity
who don't know what they want

We know the capitalists — the enemies
of all that is beautiful and just and collective
We know what they want we know
why they make war when we demand
an end to hunger a just distribution of wealth

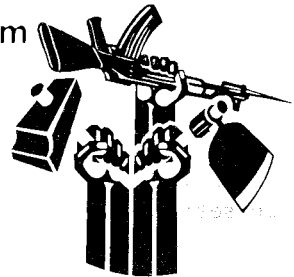
Today our People discover the weapon for the
new struggle

Armed with Scientific Socialism
they define the goal the strategy the way
And fighting they widen
the liberated zone of humanity

All the immense wealth
we build it with our hands
of workers and peasants
All the immense wisdom we create

We are the conscious builders
of History and Progress
We are the demolishers of imperialism
We are the People

Jorge Rebelo
FRELIMO 1977



Printshop Project Moves Ahead



As our readers will know, LSM is presently engaged in a project to supply SWAPO of Namibia with a printshop and instructors. Our project coordinator, Carol Barnett, left California in mid-January to set up the printshop and start training of liberation movement militants. After making contact with interested individuals and organizations in Vancouver, New York, Geneva and London, she arrived in Luanda, Angola in early February. Following is a letter Carol has sent on the progress of the project:

April 1977

Dear Friends and Comrades,

First, I want to thank all those individuals and groups who have so generously contributed to the SWAPO Printshop Project. Now that I am here, and working with the SWAPO comrades, I can appreciate even more the importance of this project - not only in terms of what it is going to enable SWAPO to do in the field of publicity and education, but more importantly, because they will be able to do it on their own. In the struggles being waged, whether on the battlefield or in education, self-reliance is essential. And with projects such as this one, through the practice of proletarian internationalism, self-reliance is achievable.

After investigating the availability of equipment, supplies and accessories here in Luanda, where the shop is to be set up, we have proceeded to

purchase the necessary machinery locally and from Europe. The Communist Working Circle of Denmark, with whom LSM has worked in the past, has located and purchased some major items for the project. Funds have been forwarded to them for this. The International University Exchange Fund in Geneva has raised funds and ordered the press of our choice. We are now awaiting the arrival of the equipment, seeking a place to set up the shop and selecting the SWAPO cadres to be trained.

Our needs are still great, however. I arrived in Luanda with sufficient funds to get the project moving, but not enough to complete it. And with little knowledge of the many difficulties faced by all those in Angola - a newly independent, socialist country with enemies encroaching borders in both north and south. Recently I interviewed Jesaja Nyamu, the SWAPO cadre in charge of Information and Propaganda here in Luanda. Here is what he had to say:

I can emphasize the need for the project. At this particular moment we need to have a regular

flow of our informational material, and our past experience shows us that to do so is quite an expensive endeavor, especially if you have to have it published commercially. SWAPO simply cannot afford it. So we see this printshop project as a big and useful investment as it will help us to save on informational expenditures and above all because it will help us to train our own cadres who will be able to continue to work for the people's information and education in a free Namibia.

We want to run our own affairs on the basis of self-reliance. Right now we have many manuscripts which need to be printed. All departments in SWAPO are crying because they don't have enough funds and the necessary means to publish their informational material.

All these facts demonstrate beyond a doubt the burning need for the establishment of this project. Now, to this end, there is a hope that LSM and other anti-imperialist organizations and individuals will continue to push hard for the complete realization of this project. As recipients SWAPO will do its utmost to effect the realization of this project.

For hundreds of years, the peoples of the Third World have been oppressed, exploited, subjected to inhumanity and enslavement - of the mind as well as the body. And today their struggles are taking new forms; they are being effective against the once almighty rulers. The people know that many will die in the struggle, and they are willing to fight and suffer for

what they know is just. They know that with the people and the liberation movements united, the imperialists cannot continue to make the rules, to rape their countries, their peoples, their cultures. Every day that I work with SWAPO comrades, talk to Angolans I meet, read the daily papers and hear radio broadcasts, this fact is made more and more clear to me.

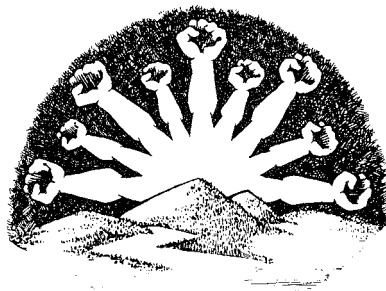
We who are struggling from the "belly of the beast" can contribute to the dismemberment of the imperialist system, not only by engaging in the many anti-imperialist activities which are so essential at home, but also by participating in the process of proletarian internationalism - by assisting those who have taken up the gun to fight our common enemy. It is in this spirit that LSM is engaged in the SWAPO Printshop Project. And it is in this spirit that we again ask for solidarity and concrete assistance. The project still requires a minimum of \$12,000 for its successful completion.

I know that some of these funds are already coming in. People are buying the SWAPO Poster (contributed by Glad Day Press), both for its content and beauty and as a contribution to the project. Other groups, such as the Salsedo Collective in Chicago and Southern Africa Solidarity Committee in San Francisco, have held fund-raising benefits. Numerous individuals have contributed a day's wages. These efforts are all important and much appreciated. We hope they will continue and that we can see the successful completion of the project before the end of 1977.

A Luta Continua!
A Vitoria e Certa!

Carol Barnett

THE PFLO FIGHTS ON!



Did the massive 1973 invasion by Iranian troops put an end to the Omani revolution? Has the Nixon-Kissinger Doctrine, so ignominiously defeated in Vietnam, scored a strategic victory over the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO)? Enemies and even a few friends of the revolution have recently spread this message. In recent discussions with the PFLO, LSM has learned that the nature of the struggle has changed considerably in the last few years but that the revolution continues to advance. Based on these discussions, this article tries to cut through distortions to convey a more accurate picture of Oman in 1977.

The capitalist press "blackout" over the Omani revolution is nearly total, and the North American movement of support for the struggle in Oman is still in its infancy. Yet the US has already become the dominant neo-colonial power in Oman and the entire Arabian peninsula of which Oman is the southeastern edge. The dangerous potential therefore exists that the North American anti-imperialist movement may be unprepared and ineffective in intervening to block US efforts to crush the Omani revolution.

The article begins by providing some historical background as a basis for a balanced assessment of the present situation in Oman. Imperialist strategy has made major shifts since

1970 not only through the Iranian invasion but with cosmetic reform measures and significant but unbalanced "development." Consequently there have been real changes in the Omani social structure. The PFLO's response to these changes is the plus side of a balance sheet of victories and losses, not only on the battlefield but in the battle for the loyalty of the Omani people.

Britain Captures Oman

Precolonial Oman was a sparsely settled shepherd society linked with a great coastal trading empire which reached across the Indian Ocean to the Omani colony of Zanzibar off the coast of Tanganyika. Oman's inland borders have never been clearly defined since they lie on the shifting sands of a huge desert. Nevertheless there is an Omani people; the nomadic shepherds and the sailing merchants share a distinct language, religion and many other common features. Oman has never had a single centralized state, however, and most of its political entities have been tribally based.

The British took Oman because its strategic location could both threaten and guard the shipping routes to India. British steamships destroyed the market on which the Omani trading empire had been built. British-imposed

treaties also carved up Oman into nine political entities: Oman proper, Bahrain, Qatar and the six small emirates which today compose the United Arab Emirates. All of these are ruled by tribal families maintained in power by British military power since the nineteenth century. The PFLO refers to these small states of the Gulf as northern or coastal Oman.

The discovery and development of oil reserves surrounding the (Arabian/Persian) Gulf gave renewed strategic and economic import to Oman. First, oil tankers pass through the narrow, shallow entrance to the Gulf every few minutes, twenty-four hours a day. On one side of this channel is Iran; on the other - Oman. Second, since the 1950's, world demand for oil has risen so rapidly that every possible source of oil becomes a target for the international oil cartel. More than anything else, oil has made Oman of vital importance to international capitalism.

Rumbles of Discontent

The interior of Oman had never been subjugated either by the British or the Sultan who ruled the coast from Muscat. A long-standing treaty between the Sultan of Muscat and the Imam of Inner Oman had guaranteed the autonomy of the area. But in 1955 the British decided to drill for oil in Inner Oman and thus to impose military and political control. The people spontaneously rose in revolt against the British from 1957 until 1959, when the uprising was suppressed.¹ Yet popular discontent continued to smolder and the potential threat to the oil reserves and Oman's strategic position had become obvious.

Sultan Said bin Taimur was under

the control of Britain. His incredibly repressive internal policies, however, were so harsh that they caused embarrassment for the British. The Sultan's insistence on preserving slavery and his refusal to allow people to wear glasses and trousers rather than traditional kilts aroused opposition. No modern industry was allowed. Against these medieval restrictions, political groups secretly began to appear, particularly among young Omanis in the colonial army and among others who illegally emigrated to work in the oil fields and refineries of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The experiences abroad gave many Omanis ideas of how their country could be run in the interests of the Omani people. Their familiarity with the struggles of other Arab peoples provided the basis for a strategy to liberate Oman from the Sultan and his British masters.

From these early groups grew what is today known as the PFLO. Armed struggle began in 1965 in the southern province of Dhofar. After learning from early mistakes, the movement made great gains in the period after 1968 when it adopted socialism as its aim and people's war as its strategy. It liberated over 90% of Dhofar, initiated armed activity in Inner Oman, contacted workers' groups in the capital, Muscat, and began to organize branches in Bahrain, Qatar and the other emirates in northern Oman. Most important, the movement built a firm base among the Omani population through its concrete programs of education, health care, and organizing production and through its struggle for such social changes as the liberation of women.

The British finally realized that the Sultan was driving the Omani people toward the PFLO. In 1970 they

staged a palace coup and replaced Sultan Said with his British-educated son, Qabus. Qabus relaxed some of the most blatant of his father's restrictions and made a few reforms the British deemed necessary to raise hopes of significant change among the people. But few responded to Qabus' call to abandon the revolution, surrender their arms and stop fighting, and it soon became apparent that change was too little and too late.

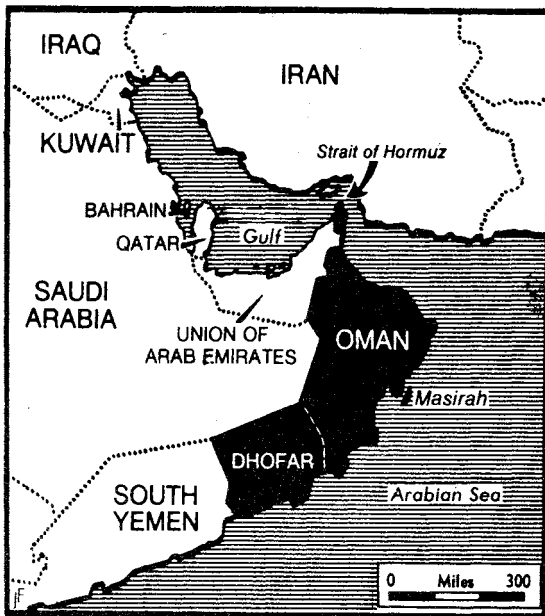
Designing A New Imperialist Strategy

The British recognized two elements vital to a strategy to contain and destroy the revolution. First of all, Oman had to be provided with an extensive neocolonial apparatus so that some discontented reformist elements could be absorbed into and thus form a base of support for the regime. But the British lacked the massive financial resources necessary for neocolonial "development" such as capital investment, expanding the state machinery, and so forth. In fact, the British had previously announced significant cutbacks in their military presence in the region - cutbacks necessitated by the desperate state of the British economy. The second necessary element to the counter-revolutionary strategy was overwhelming military force to defeat the revolution on the battlefield. For the same reasons the British were unable to muster the necessary forces on their own.

But another imperialist power is active in the Gulf region, one with growing vital interests - economic, strategic, political and military. Since the second world war, the US had gradually been edging out the British, first from Saudi Arabia and

Iran. These two US neocolonies have become regional cornerstones of US imperialist strategy for the entire Middle East along with Israel. This strategy, known as the Nixon Doctrine, utilizes proxy powers to defend US interests. To Saudi Arabia falls the economic and political role of liquidating the Arab Left and buying off, propping up and expanding Arab reaction. Their most notable success has been in Egypt where huge financial subsidies from the Saudis since 1967 have been the basis for political dependence which forced Egypt's return to US domination. More and more Arab countries are being drawn into a Saudi-dominated reactionary Arab detente which now includes Sudan and Syria, as well as Jordan. Saudi Arabia thus seemed to provide a perfect solution to Britain's needs - perfect except for a single flaw: Saudi Arabia is the obedient servant of the US, not Britain.

Iran is not an Arab nation and could not play the same political role among the Arab countries as Saudi Arabia. Still, the Shah has been using his massive oil revenues to buy many billions of dollars of modern weapons and to build a ring of military bases on the coast of the Gulf. He has now recycled so many petrodollars, about 20 billion, to US and western European arms industries, through the purchase of advanced equipment and technicians to operate it, that he has had to borrow money despite Iran's massive oil revenue. Iran has been armed with a purpose; the Shah's standing orders from the US are to police the region and to deal with any perceived threats to its economic, political or social stability. In 1971 the Shah flexed his new muscles by seizing three Omani islands near the entrance to the Gulf. Despite scattered demonstrations of



states of the Gulf region together with military, economic and political ties. A meeting was held in Oman in November 1976 but to date many rivalries, not only between Iran and Saudi Arabia but among the Arab states as well, have outweighed the need for coordination. The PFLO, however, does not rely on the divisions among its enemies; revolutionary forces in the region are also building links of solidarity. In fact, the PFLO considers that to liberate Oman will require an upsurge in revolutionary activity in the surrounding states including Saudi Arabia and Iran. In Iran guerrilla organizations are already active.

Imperialist Strategy Unfolds

With this background, we are ready to analyze the processes at work in contemporary Oman. On one side there is a growing and increasingly politically sophisticated liberation movement winning military and political victories and spreading across state boundaries. On the other is a US-orchestrated strategy of Saudi-financed neocolonial "development" and Iranian military invasion which began in December 1973. The Shah sent thirty thousand Iranian troops to Oman along with his modern air force. His strategic objectives were simple. First, cut off the flow of supplies and support from the neighboring revolutionary regime in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). To accomplish this, the Iranian forces bomb heavily on both sides of the border and build fortified bases along the border such as at the village of Sarfeet. Second, open up Dhofar's main road for military purposes. Third, establish fortified positions throughout Dhofar and herd

protest from Democratic Yemen and one of the Emirates, most Arab states silently ignored the annexation and the islands are still occupied by Iran today. As a sign that the Shah would not be left on his own to handle such an awesome responsibility, former CIA Director Helms was dispatched to serve as his advisor in the post of US Ambassador to Iran. Once again, a "perfect" solution to the "problem" in Oman; once again, the same flaw.

Another fly in the ointment is the intense rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, each of which wishes to serve as "the first horse in the American stable," in the words of a Bahraini comrade. Intensive efforts are now under way by the reactionary regimes to organize a Gulf Security Pact to link Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and the other

the Omani people into strategic hamlets to isolate them from the PFLO fighters.

To complement the invasion, the "development" strategy was implemented largely through the Dhofar Development Plan. To finance the plan a bank was set up by Kuwait, the wealthier emirates, and Saudi Arabia. What kinds of development has resulted? Roads and communications have been built to facilitate the mobility of the growing police force and army. Many new buildings have been constructed to house the rapidly expanding administrative bureaucracy. Only in the coastal cities have a few elementary schools and hospitals been opened. The aim of such development is not to affect, much less benefit, the bulk of the Omani people. Its aim is to build a small but loyal comprador class to shore up the Sultan's rule in Oman. Qabus also opened the country to foreign investment.

The Sultan has also hired Egyptian and Syrian propagandists to staff the two color television stations, ten magazines and the mobile cinema he established, though the majority of the Omani people are illiterate. In fact many of the newly-created technical jobs are filled by the sixty thousand Indian, Pakistani and Iranian workers who now work in Oman.

The small group of educated Omanis are not expected to serve as technicians. A PFLO representative told of a student trained as an engineer who was given an administrative post as a customs official with fully furnished villa, fancy red car and large salary. Unless this student, made such an offer, is totally committed to the revolution, the regime will swallow him whole. Thus an engineer

becomes a government bureaucrat tied to the regime which then hires a foreign engineer.

Another group which the regime has been able to influence has been those Omanis most tightly bound to the traditional tribal system. Some of these guide the military forces, using their familiarity with the terrain. Though such spies have found some PFLO roads which foreign troops could not have located, the PFLO has been able to continue to supply its areas.

PFLO Counter - Strategy

How has the PFLO responded to the Iranian invasion and the strategy of "modernization"? First of all, the PFLO recognized that Oman's social structure had begun to change in fundamental ways and that the strategy of the revolution had to be adapted to the new conditions. The PFLO held a Congress in the summer of 1974 to accomplish this task. Prior to this Congress the PFLO's parent organization had branches operating in several Gulf states. The tasks of the non-Omani branches had become significantly different from those in Oman. In Bahrain, for instance, the workers' movement is quite active and struggles have centered around strikes, democratic rights and the student and women's movements. Thus the Bahraini class struggle is relatively advanced and cross-class alliances, such as Oman needs to face the foreign invasion, would be counterproductive. As a result, structural ties were severed between the various branches, allowing each to pursue the strategy best suited to existing conditions. Today the People's Fronts in Bahrain and Qatar are autonomous but maintain close relations with the PFLO.

Inside Oman, the response to the invasion was to resist militarily and to organize all Omanis who opposed the invasion, whether or not they supported all aspects of the PFLO's program. Thus the national tasks of the revolution had grown and sharpened to oppose not only British colonial control, but Iranian intervention under US imperialist auspices. The PFLO's strategy, however, goes beyond this "minimum program." The development programs of the regime have brought changes, but the results have not been quite what the Sultan had intended. For instance, the repressive apparatus - police, courts, and so on - have expanded, but increased repression has brought demands for democratic rights which only a few years ago were abstractions for most Omanis. In addition, open collaboration with the invaders, by the regime and by the privileged segments of the population, has sharpened the people's understanding of the class aspect of the revolution. Thus, while national demands are still foremost - forced withdrawal of Iranian troops, elimination of US bases and military presence - the people have now become more aware of the need to deal with Omani enemies as well.

The PFLO views this process of politicization as part of a broad radicalization of the Omani people. For most people, the Sultan's development programs have meant inflation and deteriorating conditions. The influx of foreign workers and money has driven up prices and created a chronic housing shortage. Many Omanis who have moved to the cities find only unemployment. The Omani people have learned from bitter experience that opening up their country to foreign investment provides benefits only to foreign companies like Del Monte and

FMC. With its cadres among the people, the PFLO plays a vital role in this radicalization process. Thus even when a few real reforms - building a hospital or abolishing slavery - have been implemented by Sultan Qabus, the PFLO explains that these should be viewed as accomplishments of the revolution which forced the British and the Sultan to grant them. The PFLO also exposes such reforms as attempts to bribe or pressure the people into accepting the status quo. Under the leadership of the PFLO, they have begun to realize that the aims of the revolution are not merely financial or material, but are also a matter of self-determination.

Strategies Clash in the Real World

This political strategy provided a basis to organize the Omanis to fight; but it was still necessary to confront as many as 30,000 Iranian, British, Jordanian and Omani troops on the battlefield. How did the PFLO fare? In 1974 and early 1975, the inexperienced Iranian soldiers were ineffective against combat-hardened PFLO fighters. The Shah had hoped his forces would improve after facing real combat conditions,² but they became so demoralized that he had to rotate them every three months.

Though PFLO's military advance may have been halted, none of the Shah's military objectives in Oman have been achieved. The old supply route from Yemen has been blocked by the Iranian base at Sarfeet, but the PFLO has opened new routes through the desert. A PFLO representative summed up the situation:

Communications between Yemen and the liberated areas are not cut, but it is no longer possible, as

it used to be, for large supply caravans to cross the border. You must remember, however, that during the first years of our struggle, in fact until 1969, we did not depend on supplies transiting through Yemen. And more recently, since the 1973 Iranian invasion, the central and eastern regions have become self-sufficient. External supply problems cannot be decisive for the continuation of armed struggle. Our largest units have now been split up into small groups and reorganized. These groups are fed by the population. They buy basic products, arms and ammunition in contraband from the auxiliaries of the Sultan's Army.³

PFLO communiques, foreign press reports and even questions in the British Parliament,⁴ show that the Sarfeet base and Iranian bases in eastern and central Dhofar are under frequent attack. Even airborne vehicles are frequently shot down. In these circumstances, it is not possible for the Iranian forces to keep open the road which connects Dhofar's capital, Sallalah, to the rest of Oman. The PFLO considers that it has returned to the tactics of mobile warfare which are the military foundation of people's war. Its fighters follow the classic rules of guerrilla warfare: vacate disadvantageous positions and retain those positions disadvantageous to the enemy.

Although material inducements are offered to Omanis who resettle in "strategic hamlets," the government villages have only attracted a few desperate families who lost all their possessions, particularly their ani-

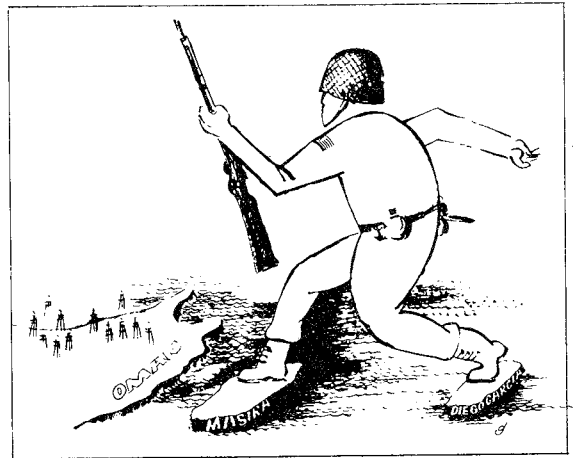
mals, to the bombing; the vast majority have stayed in their villages where they continue to practice the social policies adopted under PFLO leadership, such as respect for women and abolition of the dowry.

In late 1975 the Sultan and the Shah announced that the revolution had been crushed. Yet monthly PFLO communiques and foreign press reports reflect continued intense military activity throughout Dhofar.⁵ Recent announcements of Iranian withdrawals appear to be only normal three-month rotations rather than real reductions.

Despite some unavoidable setbacks, such as Iranian incursions into formerly liberated territory and increased logistical difficulties, the Omani revolution survives and grows. A revolution is not a single battle or military campaign. In Oman the military situation of the revolution has become more difficult but the armed struggle continues at high intensity. And the sweeping social changes unleashed by the policies of the Sultan provide a basis for new growth of the revolutionary forces in the next few years. The PFLO is presently working among both Omani and foreign workers in Oman's cities.

Because even Iran's costly military might is not defeating the PFLO, the US has gained Sultan Qabus' approval to use the British-vacated military base on the Omani island of Masirah in the Indian Ocean. Of course, the base will have uses beyond Oman for policing the entire Indian Ocean. Though the Sultan denies a US presence, the US State Department has acknowledged that US use of the Masirah base has already begun.⁶ Additional US ventures provide an unmistakable signal of preparations for US intervention. The US has a new base at Diego Garcia, an island in

the center of the Indian Ocean. US military technicians numbering in the tens of thousands have been pouring into Iran. The US has a small naval base in Bahrain and not long ago a US aircraft carrier sailed into the Gulf for the first time in twenty years. The stakes in Oman and the region are too high to discount these moves as empty gestures. Oman might well see direct American intervention in the 1980's or even the late 1970's. It is up to the anti-imperialist movement to create a political environment in which the domestic costs of US intervention must be weighed against potential US losses in the Gulf.



¹See *The Oman War 1957-59 A Critical History* for the PFLO's analysis of this defeat. Available from LSM.

²*Gulf Newsletter*, March 1976.

³*Ibid*, July-August 1976.

⁴Various issues of *Gulf Newsletter* and *Saut al-Thawra*.

⁵See, for instance, recent issues of *Saut al-Thawra* for accounts of military activity in 1977.

⁶*Gulf Newsletter*, February 1977.

Read More on Oman

- *OMAN: A CLASS ANALYSIS.
- *THE OMAN WAR: 1957-59 A CRITICAL HISTORY
- *ARMS BUILDUP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE GULF.
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OMAN: Support Until Victory

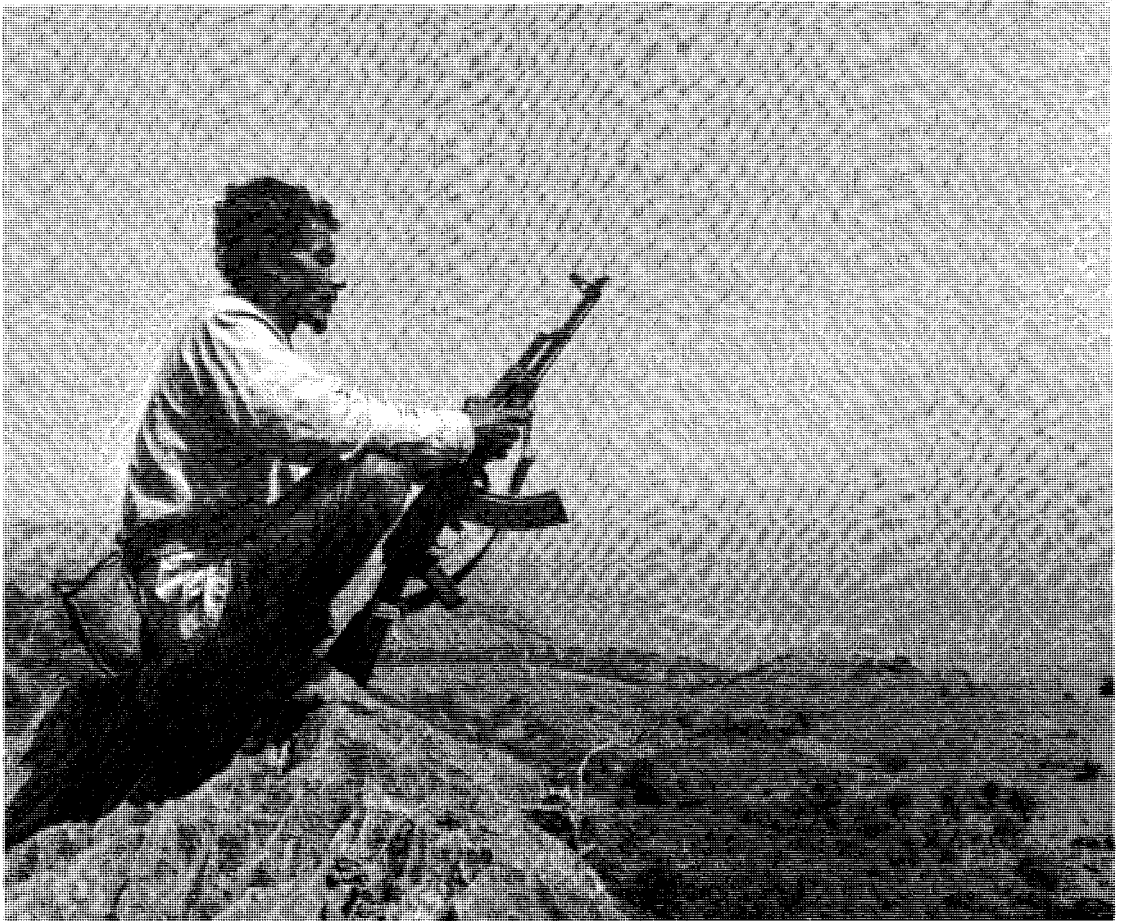
In February 1977, LSM attended the Third Congress of Support Committees for the Omani Revolution in Paris. About twenty support committees were represented in addition to three comrades from the PFLO and one from the People's Front in Bahrain. The Congress reviewed the work of the previous two years and projected ahead two years. Two highlights were the thoroughly discussed PFLO political report and the ambitious program of material and informational support to be undertaken by the support committees.

The European committees have done quite impressive work. Over the previous two years eleven groups channelled over \$100,000 for medical supplies through the Danish group KROAG (Committee for the Revolution in Oman and the Arabian Gulf). These funds were collected through intensive campaigns, such as flea markets in many cities. The Congress mandated that this work should continue to supply the PFLO's hospitals. France and Germany each have 15 to 20 active lo-

cal committees to support the Omani and Gulf revolutions. Other committees are active in Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy and Great Britain. Working in addition to the committees are Arab and Iranian student organizations which were represented at the Congress.

US committees from the Bay Area, Oregon and Michigan came to Paris. Another committee functions in New York. Both the level and quality of the work in the US are much lower than in Europe. LSM members are currently working with the Gulf Solidarity Committee in the San Francisco Bay Area which is planning a bimonthly bulletin on Oman and the Gulf to be distributed nationally beginning in June. We hope this will serve as an organ around which to expand support work for the PFLO. *LSM NEWS* readers can play a crucial role in helping to spread the above information, one of the major tasks necessary to build a support movement. For more information, write to Gulf Solidarity, P. O. Box 40155, San Francisco, CA 94140.

9th of June 1965-77 12 Years of Armed Struggle in Oman









PFLO photos taken in liberated regions in Oman.

SINO-SOVIET SPLIT

Consequences for Anti-Imperialist Theory, Strategy, and Practice

China's stance on Angola forced LSM to re-examine our own position on many theoretical and strategic questions which revolve around the Sino-Soviet split. In this article we summarize these questions and state our views based on considerations of the expressed international lines of both China and the Soviet Union and of the international practice of each. We are self-critical about our theoretical complacency which facilitated our uncritical absorption of many terms and concepts we now realize that we are in disagreement with. We conclude by explaining LSM's position of critical nonalignment regarding China and the Soviet Union. The article is a product of much discussion inside LSM and is a first step toward deepening our understanding of many questions of serious consequence for socialists everywhere.

Posing the Questions

Since 1970 LSM has moved from close theoretical agreement with the People's Republic of China to increasing concern and disagreement with subsequent changes in China's expressed world view and a resulting turnabout in its foreign policy. We were critical of Chinese alliances with reactionaries such as the Shah of Iran, Mobutu of Zaire and the Dergue of Ethiopia and the corresponding decline in support for the counter-

posed revolutionary movements in Oman, Angola and Eritrea. Yet we continued to consider China a leading force in the world revolutionary movement and leaned toward China's side of its dispute with the Soviet Union. The events surrounding Angola's Second War of Liberation forced us to face the grave necessity of re-examining China's international analysis and role.

During the Angolan war China's material assistance to the CIA-sponsored FNLA and implicit political support for the South African invasion to "expel Soviet social imperialism" resulted in great confusion and division within the North American Left. Even as FNLA and UNITA links to US imperialism became indisputable, a small sector of the Left refused to support the MPLA-led People's Republic because they believed the Soviet "superpower," not US imperialism, to be the main enemy of the Angolan people. This analysis impeded the Left's ability to mobilize support for the People's Republic of Angola at the new state's critical moment in late 1975 and continues to have a negative effect on solidarity work today.

Along with many of our comrades, we had to face the essential questions raised by the Angolan war. Was China's role in this situation an incorrect application or a consequence of its analysis? Soviet aid to the Angolan people at a critical moment

in their history brought into question Chinese assertions regarding the nature of Soviet society and its role in the world revolutionary process.

But the central issues for those who would formulate a strategy for revolutionary work in North America are: who are the revolutionary forces in the world and who is their main enemy? Conversely we must determine where *we* stand in relation to the revolutionary forces. Whether the principal contradiction in the world includes US-led imperialism or Soviet "social imperialism" as the main enemy, as well as whether North Americans are moving within the revolutionary vanguard or outside it, leads to very different kinds of alliances, strategies and tactics.

Our information and propaganda work during the second Angolan war raised for us the compelling need for theoretical clarity on these questions. Within LSM we initiated a study of the Sino-Soviet split. This investigation was the basis for a discussion of this question and its relation to our practice at LSM's Central Committee meeting in the summer of 1976. Our discussions identified the essence of the Soviet and Chinese lines and clarified LSM's areas of agreement and differences with each. Our study had only touched the surface of the theoretical questions raised by the dispute and the international practice of both nations. Before we can adequately evaluate the role of these or any other countries in the world revolutionary process we need a deeper understanding of their internal social organization and relations. Our study must move us from a general to a more scientific knowledge of the economic, political and social forms and relations of socialist development.

LSM is self-critical about our past acceptance of Chinese assertions about Soviet "social imperialism" without independent investigation and substantiation. Whether such a phenomenon exists is a question we must also pose for our study. Lenin's discussion of "social imperialism" as a collaborationist trend from within the socialist movement is a far cry from a theory of a social imperialist state.¹ If social imperialism can assume state form, how would it be similar to or different from other imperialist states? This in turn raises the broader question of the nature of contemporary imperialism some 60 years after Lenin's *Imperialism: Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

Last summer we decided to continue our study on questions raised by the Sino-Soviet split. Here we sum up our first steps in an ongoing process of theoretical development. The Chinese and Soviet lines are summarized and compared with our own views. We have then tested their analyses as manifested in their relations with several liberation struggles. Finally we explain why we view US imperialism as the main enemy in the world and why LSM is led to a position of *critical nonalignment* with respect to the differences between the Soviet Union and China. Our study on this subject is still in an early stage. Yet we want to share our views as they develop so that they may be critically considered and tested against the knowledge of others engaged in similar study and discussion.

International Line - CPC & CPSU

In reexamining the many questions raised by the Sino-Soviet split, it is first necessary to analyze the lines as they have emerged and been advanced by both the CPC and CPSU.

We should understand and evaluate their usefulness in explaining and changing the world as well as the role they have played in the development of our own theory and practice.

Each line can be traced to a turning point in history. The decade of the 1950's contained many significant lasts and firsts, ends and beginnings. Joseph Stalin's death signalled a new era in Soviet leadership and economic and political strategy though the tendencies which soon became dominant had long existed within the CPSU and Soviet government. Wars of national liberation were underway in Korea and Vietnam. The Cuban revolution established an outpost of socialism ninety miles from the shores of the United States. China was able not only to get back on its feet but to begin the construction of socialist relations and institutions. These material changes must be the basis of any attempt to explain the dispute which arose between the Communist Parties of China and the Soviet Union.

The dispute did not emerge into public view until the early 1960's and there are even two versions of how it happened. The Chinese see the beginning of the conflict in the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev denounced and negated Stalin's leadership and achievements and began a new Soviet process which the CPC contends has led to the restoration of capitalism.² The Soviet version is that China began the dispute in 1958 to divert attention from the "failures" of the Great Leap Forward economic campaign.³ But it seems to us that ideological differences were the real root of the dispute as maintained by the Chinese.

Through a debate conducted in a series of letters, clearly defined

and widely divergent Soviet and Chinese positions emerged in both theoretical and practical spheres. Among the key differences were those on how a socialist country ought to conduct its foreign relations, i.e. over the principles which ought to underlie peaceful coexistence, and on how to formulate and implement an international communist strategy. Although the question of how to construct socialism is basic, LSM's study has first been directed to the international dimension of the conflict which most immediately concerns and influences the world's revolutionary forces of which we consider ourselves a part. Later we intend to develop our understanding of questions involving socialist economic development and the transformation of social relations. This separation, however, should not imply that we view foreign policy as unrelated to other aspects of socialist development; such policy can only reflect the ongoing class struggles within socialist countries.

Chinese documents on international policy written in the early 1960's, such as those collected in *Whence the Differences*, greatly influenced LSM's main statement of theory and strategy: *Toward an International Strategy*. Strategically the Chinese felt that liberation struggles in the Third World were spearheading the world anti-imperialist struggle. "The various types of contradictions in the contemporary world are concentrated in the vast areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America; these are the most vulnerable areas under imperialist rule and the storm centers of world revolution dealing direct blows at imperialism."⁴ In contrast, the Soviets argued that the conditions were good for socialist revolution through-



Chinese poster from the 1960's.

out the imperialist system. "There are favorable international and internal conditions in the present epoch for more and more countries to go over to socialism. This is true of the developed capitalist countries as well as of the countries which have recently achieved national independence. The world revolutionary process is developing on an ever larger scale, embracing all continents."⁵ In spite of the rise in left activity in North America and Europe in the late 1960's when LSM began its work, we simply could not reconcile our life experience and knowledge with the Soviet position which essentially suggested that revolutionary conditions in the US or France approached those in Vietnam or Angola.

On the question of socialist foreign policy and the principal task of revolutionaries around the world,

the Soviet Union increasingly emphasized the possibility of a world without war and a peaceful transition to socialism. "With the balance of forces increasingly tipping in favor of socialism and against imperialism, and with the forces of peace increasingly gaining weight over the forces of war, it will become really possible [to eliminate the threat] of world war from the life of society even before socialism fully triumphs on earth, with capitalism still existing in a part of the world."⁶ The primary task of revolutionaries around the world was described as follows: "He who wants to bring closer the victory of socialism throughout the entire world should, *in the first place*, show concern for strengthening the great socialist community and its economic might, should seek to raise the standard of living of its peoples, de-

velop science, engineering and culture, consolidate its unity and solidarity and the growth of its international authority."⁷ [emphasis added]

We found ourselves in sympathy with the Chinese response: "Certain persons have one-sidedly exaggerated the role of peaceful competition between socialist and imperialist countries in their attempt to substitute peaceful competition for the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations. According to their preaching, it would seem that imperialism would automatically collapse in the course of this peaceful competition and that the only thing the oppressed peoples and nations have to do is to wait quietly for the advent of this day. What does this have in common with Marxist-Leninist views?"⁸

The tragic lessons in Indonesia, Chile and other countries, we feel, add significant weight to these remarks. Rather than "in the first place" supporting the socialist countries, the Chinese thought world revolutionaries should actively support the liberation struggles currently being waged. They said: "The whole cause of the international proletariat hinges on the outcome of the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of these areas [Asia, Africa and Latin America] who constitute the overwhelming majority of the world's population. . . . The working class in every socialist country and in every capitalist country must . . . study the revolutionary experience of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, firmly support their revolutionary actions and regard the cause of their liberation as a most dependable support for itself and as directly in accord with its own interests."⁹

Thus at the end of the decade, LSM and many others shared a deep agree-

ment with the Chinese analysis and strategy for world revolution. But since that time another turning point has come. China, for instance, served as a *de facto* ally of the US during the Angolan Second War of Liberation. Many other features of Chinese policy and practice changed in ways which we will describe below. Here we will try to show how the Chinese view of the world has changed and how we view this change.

For analytical purposes, the Chinese have, for a long time, accepted the so-called three world formulation. Throughout the beginning of the Sino-Soviet dispute in the 1960's, they accepted the division between world one - the imperialist or advanced capitalist countries; world two - the socialist countries; and world three - the underdeveloped colonies and neocolonies primarily in Asia, Africa and Latin America. LSM has never accepted this formulation since we believe that the first and third world countries are thoroughly linked and integrated in the world imperialist system in which the people of the first world countries are relatively privileged and the people of the third world countries are superexploited. So long as this theoretical link, i.e. the real relationship, (as well as the many practical links between the imperialist and socialist "worlds") was clear, as it was in the earlier Chinese position, we could accept and even make use of the term "Third World." But now the Chinese feel the world should be analytically redivided. They still see three worlds but now define them as first, the "two superpowers" (US and USSR); second, the developed countries linked with either the US or the USSR; and third, the underdeveloped countries, both socialist and capitalist.¹⁰

This theoretical redivision reflects the basic fact that the Chinese no longer consider the struggle between the oppressed nations and the imperialist bourgeoisie to be the principal contradiction; they now see "contention and collusion" between the "two superpowers" as the main contradiction in the world today and as the "cause of world in-tranquillity."¹¹ No longer are the three continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America the centers of struggle. "Strategically the key point of their contention is Europe."¹² Although China's position today is not often stated clearly or consistently, we believe it is reflected fairly here. For the Third World, the Chinese now emphasize strictly nationalist demands such as the 200-mile nautical territorial limit and OPEC oil-price demands rather than national liberation wars. They state: "No fundamental conflicts of interests exist among the Third World countries."¹³

The most far-reaching change in Chinese policy is in their view of the Soviet Union: from being a revisionist ally to being part of the enemy camp, first as one of the "two superpowers" and now as the more dangerous of the two. Beginning in 1968 the Chinese began publicly calling the Soviet system "social imperialist" and calling for its overthrow.¹⁴ For some time Peking sought the "broadest united front against imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism, and in particular against the hegemonism of the two superpowers - the US and USSR."¹⁵ But in the past couple of years, articles in *Peking Review* have increasingly been describing the Soviet Union as more "cunning," "pugnacious," "rapacious," and "truculent" than the US.¹⁶ Based on many recent conversations in China, the (former)

National Chairperson of the US-China Peoples' Friendship Association, William Hinton, has said that China's new slogan is: "Mobilizing the third world, unite with all forces of the second world willing to struggle, neutralize the United States and strike the main blow at the Soviet Union."¹⁷ Thus China, in focussing its attack on the Soviet Union, is willing to make accommodations with the US such as in Angola and Zaire. China now describes the Soviet Union as the "most dangerous enemy of the Third World."¹⁸ Former Defense Secretary Schlesinger, a representative of the sector of the US ruling class opposed to detente with the USSR, was not only welcomed in Peking but given tours of sensitive border areas and engaged in discussions of military strategy.¹⁹

In order to justify such a major shift in analysis and strategy, LSM would have to see a turning point not only in China's position but in history. Have liberation struggles become less important in the world? Has the Soviet Union obstructed their advance systematically and successfully so that we can speak of it as the "most dangerous enemy"? It appears to us that just the opposite is the case for each question. Victorious national liberation struggles and emerging socialist states in Indochina and Southern Africa and ongoing people's wars elsewhere seem to support China's old analysis more than the new one. And the Soviet Union continues to provide material and political support which advances some liberation movements. So, while we must always be prepared to adapt our analysis and strategy to real historical turning points, we do not agree that the Chinese are responding to a real change in world conditions. In

fact, a survey of the world - Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and Africa - shows the US as the main enemy. This is not merely LSM's assessment but that of the liberation movements in each area as well. Even in Egypt and India, where the influence of the Soviet Union has been widely used to prove a case, US control appears today to be stronger than ever.

It should be noted as well that the threatening Soviet presence often invoked by the Pentagon when the latter's budget is under consideration has little basis, particularly when it comes to trade. The following from *Africa News* is instructive:

Due to its military might, the Soviet Union has commonly been categorized with the United States as one of the two world 'superpowers.' In the realm of international economics, however, it is no more than a 'middle power,' with total foreign trade comparable to that of Belgium. In Africa, the Soviet Union is a mere economic pygmy as yet, far behind Africa's other trading partners.*

Soviet foreign policy has undergone small modifications without the kind of qualitative changes made by the Chinese. The Soviets still identify

the revolutionary forces as the socialist countries, the national liberation movements and the international proletariat,²⁰ and view the "development of the socialist countries, their greater might, and the greater beneficial influence of their international policy . . . [as] the main direction in mankind's social progress."²¹ They also continue to aim for a "turn from cold war to peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, a turn from explosive tensions to detente and normal, mutually beneficial cooperation" because they see this "as the way to create more favorable conditions for peaceful socialist and communist construction."²² At the same time the Soviets acknowledge that "detente does not in the slightest abolish, nor can it abolish or alter the laws of class struggle. No one should expect that because of the detente Communists will reconcile themselves with capitalist exploitation or that monopolists will become followers of the revolution."²³

The Soviets continue to maintain the viability of peaceful transition to socialism. "The Chilean tragedy has by no means invalidated the communist thesis about the possibility of different ways of revolution, including the peaceful way, if the necessary conditions for it exist."²⁴ At the same time, however, they acknowledge that "a revolution must know how to defend itself" and say that "our Party supports and will continue to support peoples fighting for their freedom."²⁵ Overall, the fundamental features of Soviet foreign policy remain the same: emphasis on detente, peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition to socialism. This emphasis has apparently not prevented Soviet support to armed libera-

**Africa News*, 28 March 1977. The following table was provided:

TRADE WITH AFRICA (excluding South Africa), 1974 (millions of dollars)

	Imports	Exports
W. Europe	24,800	16,900
Japan	1,700	3,900
USA	4,900	2,400
E. Europe	800	1,100
USSR	800	800

tion movements.

Where there has been a substantial change is in relation to Chinese foreign policy. The Soviets think that "Peking's frantic attempts to torpedo detente, to obstruct disarmament, to breed suspicion and hostility between states, its efforts to provoke a world war and reap whatever advantage may accrue, present a danger for all peace-loving peoples. . . . The policy of its present leaders . . . merges directly with the position of the world's most extreme reaction - from the militarists and enemies of detente in the Western countries to the racists of South Africa and the fascist rulers of Chile. This policy is not only entirely alien to socialist principles and ideals, but has also, in effect, become an important aid to imperialism in its struggle against socialism. . . . We shall continue the struggle against Maoism - a principled and irreconcilable struggle."²⁶

Just as the theoretical basis of Soviet foreign policy has not altered, LSM's disagreements with it remain largely unchanged.

LSM's Self-criticism

In retrospect we can now see that we did not critically follow the Chinese analysis as it evolved and changed since the 1960's. We drifted from our original agreement to a vague and unformulated but definitely pro-Chinese leaning without making an independent examination of reality. Not all questions raised on the Left warrant equal consideration and, to us, the importance of theory has generally been found in its direct relevance to practice. But there were strong indications - in growing divisions and confusion among anti-imperialist forces as well as in China's declining support for national liberation strug-

gles - of the need for theoretical clarity on Sino-Soviet related questions. LSM is self-critical both of theoretical complacency on our part and of our use of unsubstantiated theoretical assumptions to guide our practice. This is the basis underlying problems of dogmatism in theory. To fully draw the lessons from our mistakes, it is necessary to examine how our errors in theory were manifested in practice.

LSM has worked for principled and critical relations between progressive and Marxist-Leninist organizations whether they are North American groups, liberation movements or socialist states. The right to make comradely criticism must be earned through practice. On the other hand, the tendency of many to refrain from criticizing "leaders" in the international movement - or from questioning dominant and influential ideological positions - is unhealthy because it leads to the reinforcement of persistent class tendencies towards dogmatism and orthodoxy.

In this vein we wrote in the Winter 1974 *LSM NEWS*: "Though LSM believes China to be in the forefront of the movement for international socialism, this does not mean that we accept as unquestionable truth all aspects of China's analysis of the world situation, nor that we believe China is 'above' comradely criticism or serious questioning regarding some of its policies and practices."²⁷

Yet LSM, instead of playing the independent role we counseled, was also caught up in the uncritical enthusiasm generated by China's cultural revolution. While making critical observations on China, in fact we have periodically issued endorsements of major aspects of China's new world view.

Thus we wrote in the same issue of *LSM NEWS*: "[The Chinese] struggle against the social imperialism of the Soviet bureaucrat bourgeoisie, and their own negation of revisionism . . . have had an enormous and healthy impact on the international socialist movement." In that article we also referred to China as the "unquestioned leader of the international socialist movement." Then, in our feature article on Angola in the Winter 1975-76 issue of *LSM NEWS*,²⁸ we referred to "superpower contention" between the US and USSR.

Yet, while greatly respecting Mao Tse-Tung and his contribution to world revolution, we are not Maoists.* We have always based our support for liberation movements on their own merits and significance in the international struggle against imperialism - not on the basis of the relations with China, the Soviet Union or any other external forces. Also we have struggled for the past several years against the extreme dogmatism, slavishness and sometimes reactionary views of those in North America who most ardently proclaim strict adherence to China's line. The point is that while China did raise valid criticisms of Soviet theory and behavior, as we have noted above, they did not scientifically substantiate their contention that capitalism has been restored and that the Soviet Union is social imperialist.

We now think it was a mistake to refer to Soviet "social imperialism" as we did, or to "superpower conten-

tion" and "extra-territorial Soviet ambitions." These phrases were an accommodation on our part to Maoist influences in North America made without first ourselves critically evaluating these concepts. It appears that the Chinese role in Angola was a direct consequence of its analysis of the Soviet Union as a "social imperialist superpower." The phrase, "superpower contention," equates the USSR with the US as the enemy of the Third World today. In rejecting the term "superpower" we are reaffirming that it is more important to establish the nature of power than its quantity. To use such a term is to muddy the waters of class analysis. Those who succumb to this aspect of China's world analysis are faced with great difficulty in analyzing and effectively mobilizing support for revolutionary struggles as was clearly the case in Angola.

LSM is thus self-critical that our theoretical complacency permitted our own support for the Angolan struggle to continue to incorporate phrases and notions which could only increase our readers' confusion. Even though our basic position of support for MPLA and the PRA and for principled acceptance of Soviet and Cuban assistance was correct, we failed to expose and criticize China's erroneous analysis deeply enough and incorporated parts of that analysis into our own language.

The Crucible of Practice

If our theoretical disagreements with the international lines of both the CPC and CPSU are sharp, our differences with their practice are even stronger. To make more concrete LSM's criticisms of the international practice of both China and the Soviet

*The term "Maoist" is not used by the Chinese who feel Mao is a contemporary Marxist-Leninist and not the originator of a new ideology. Here we use the term to refer to those who slavishly follow their own interpretation of Mao's and China's every word.

Union, we have studied and reviewed some "test cases." Because our work and experience has been primarily directed toward developing links of solidarity with revolutionary national liberation struggles, we have begun with the relations of China and the Soviet Union with revolutionary movements in the "third world." We make no pretense to completeness or thoroughness. Still we feel that the evidence available to us supports our tentative conclusions.

Angola - LSM has already made our own position clear on the Angolan revolution.²⁹ MPLA was and is the only progressive and revolutionary force in Angola. FNLA and UNITA, each of which received Chinese support, were closely linked with the CIA, Zairean President Mobutu (described by the Chinese in 1967 as a "puppet"³⁰) and South Africa. FNLA and UNITA each hoped to rule over a neocolonial Angola under US domination. MPLA had mobilized massive popular support and only requested and received assistance from Cuba and the Soviet Union following the beginning of a three-pronged imperialist-instigated invasion by South African, Zairean and mercenary troops. MPLA was then and continues to be supported by all progressive forces in Africa, including some of China's closest friends such as President Nyerere of Tanzania, and by virtually all progressive forces elsewhere in the world - in Latin America, in the Middle East and in many parts of Asia.

A key point we demonstrated is that China has played a counter-revolutionary role in Angola by siding with the US and South Africa against this wide range of progressive forces. China went so far as to denounce as "mercenary" the shining example of Cuban

internationalism. Troops from Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville and SWAPO guerrillas also fought with MPLA. Were they, too, mercenaries? News stories in *Peking Review* distorted, invented or ignored facts in an attempt to bolster their position which could not be defended by concrete analysis of the situation in Angola. Clearly it was more important to the CPC to "prove" its international line, i.e. its charges against the Soviet Union, than it was to objectively advance the world socialist revolution. And the effect of this ultra-sectarian policy proved even more its contradiction with the real world. China managed to drive a wedge between itself and progressive forces not only in Angola but throughout the world; forces which had been quite open and friendly toward the Chinese revolution now were forced to choose between a progressive course or closer ties with China.

LSM is not uncritical of the nature of Soviet support for MPLA and the People's Republic of Angola; though Soviet assistance dates back to the early 1960's, it was not always steady and never sufficient to meet MPLA's desperate needs. Yet at the critical moment when the fate of Angola for decades to come was in the balance, the Soviet Union did add its weight on the side of MPLA. Nothing can erase this objectively progressive act from history; no one should try to rationalize it away. It is no more correct to argue that either the Soviet Union or China have played consistently reactionary roles than it is to blindly follow them.

Chinese activities in Southern Africa deserve to be updated in view of the extreme stance they are now taking on the uprising in Zaire. President Mobutu is portrayed as a

patriotic defender of his country's sovereignty and gets plane loads of Chinese military aid. Perhaps China has conveniently forgotten Mobutu's long and profitable relationship with the CIA. But absolutely no evidence has been produced to verify hysterical Zairean claims of Cuban or Angolan involvement. Fidel Castro and Agostinho Neto have categorically denied such involvement. Yet the Chinese speak of "the present invasion of Zaire by mercenaries from Angola" and describe the Soviet Union "as the organizer and commander of the mercenary troops in Angola" who "cannot absolve themselves from their crime."³¹ And the Chinese continue to print vicious and outrageous false slanders of the People's Republic of Angola.³² Whom do they cite as their sources? The slavishly dogmatic *The Call* of the October League and the *Manchester Union Leader*, the reactionary Republican newspaper in New Hampshire. With these unimpeachable and reliable sources, who are obviously in close touch with events in Angola, Chinese propaganda is sure to win over many ... to support the MPLA and the People's Republic of Angola.

Oman & Iran - Since 1965 guerrillas in Oman, on the southeastern edge of the Arabian peninsula, have been waging a people's war against British colonialism and the rule of the Sultan. By 1971 they had liberated over 90% of Dhofar province.³³ The Omani liberation movement, the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO), embraced socialism in the late 1960's. China, and later the Soviet Union, gave strong political and material support to the PFLO from that time.

In 1973, thousands of Iranian

troops invaded Oman and became the immediate obstacle to the advance of the Omani revolution. This massive invasion, armed with sophisticated technical equipment, was Iran's attempt to fulfill its role of US-appointed "policeman" of the Gulf area. The Iranian armed forces have not, however, been able to crush the PFLO decisively as planned. Within Iran itself, underground guerrilla organizations are conducting both propaganda and military actions with increasing success.

The present Shah of Iran came to power in 1953 through a CIA-engineered coup which toppled the progressive government headed by Dr. Mossadegh.³⁴ Since then, Iran has become a spearhead for imperialist interests in the Middle East: providing secretive but crucial support to Israel (and South Africa) via oil and exchange of intelligence information; protecting imperialist oil investments in Iran through severe repression of the Iranian population; and safeguarding the strategic Gulf region for US and other western interests. Between 1970 and 1974 alone the Shah was equipped with over \$10 billion in sophisticated US armaments.³⁵

Economic relations between Iran and the neighboring Soviet Union are substantial. Iran is the Soviet Union's third largest trading partner in the Third World,³⁶ and the Soviets have undertaken numerous aid and development projects in Iran, often in exchange for Iranian products such as natural gas which they sell in Europe for a tidy profit. Between 1955 and 1972 the Soviets supplied Iran with 500 million dollars in military aid.³⁷ Yet the Soviet Union also provides material support for PFLO.

China's initial support for the

Omani struggle was very enthusiastic. A series of Hsinhua articles were published in *Peking Review* between 1969 and 1972 giving strong support to the Omani liberation movement.³⁸ But since 1972 China has never mentioned the Omani struggle in *Peking Review* and has in fact praised the fascist Shah of Iran for his massive arms build-up which was described as "protecting the independence and security" of Iran and the Gulf region.³⁹ Such Chinese statements were an implicit but clear attack on PFLO. And while China delivered a message of support as recently as 1974, little material assistance has been received since 1971. Recently China has been praising moves to establish reactionary Arab detente.⁴⁰

It appears as though China and, to a lesser extent, the Soviet Union have made the decision that economic or political ties to Iran outweigh clear-cut support for the PFLO. LSM cannot accept such decisions uncritically. Iran is a principal ally and loyal servant of US interests in southwestern Asia. The Shah's outspoken but token verbal remarks on imperialism are more than made up for by his equally outspoken defense of US imperialism and its presence and by his feverish attempt to prevail over Saudi Arabia as the first defender of US interests. We cannot conceive of a reason for China to maintain warm relations with Iran rather than to support revolutionary movements like the PFLO or for the Soviet Union to send the Shah half a billion dollars in military aid. We find it very revealing, not about Iran or Oman, but about both China and the Soviet Union's digressions from proletarian internationalism, that they choose to cultivate friendly (China) and extensive (Soviet Union) relations with the Shah,

who remains after all a creation of the CIA.

Eritrea - Discussions with comrades in the organization, Eritreans for Liberation in North America, have increased LSM's understanding of the difficulties faced by the Eritrean people in gaining international recognition and support for their fight for self-determination. LSM believes it to be an important duty for anti-imperialists to promote an understanding of this little-known and often incorrectly perceived struggle.

Although Eritrea is a small country, it is strategically important because of its position on the African side of the Red Sea through which all Suez Canal traffic must go. In the US, the Eritrean war is relatively unknown and the ignorance of Eritrea's colonial history on the part of some who are aware of this struggle leads them to believe that this is not a legitimate national struggle. Lack of support from either China or the Soviet Union has fed these assumptions. Before looking more closely at the roles of those countries, it is necessary to give a brief historical context for this struggle.

Eritrea became an Italian colony in 1889, during the "scramble for Africa," but was taken by Britain in World War I. In 1950 the UN passed a resolution, initiated by the US and Britain, to federate Ethiopia and Eritrea - without even consulting the Eritrean people! In 1961, after years of peaceful protest for self-determination, the Eritrean armed struggle was launched. In 1962 Ethiopia unilaterally and illegally annexed Eritrea. Since then, the armed struggle has escalated and liberation forces, presently constituted in an embryonic united front at the



EPLF Peasant militia in Eritrea. (Bruce Parkhurst)

initiative of the revolutionary Eritrean People's Liberation Front - EPLF,* now control the vast majority of the territory. The Dergue, the military junta which seized control in Ethiopia in 1974 with the promise of "Ethiopian socialism," has not changed the colonial policy toward Eritrea. In fact, the present junta is even more brutal and fascist in trying to repress the Eritrean struggle.⁴¹ Complexities of Organization of African Unity (OAU) politics have, until now at least, inhibited explicit support for the Eritrean struggle, but it is known that the struggle there has the sympathy

*Presently there is coordination but not merger of the forces of the EPLF and the Eritrean Liberation Front - ELF.

and solidarity of some Southern African revolutionary forces and material and political support from Arab regimes. The Eritreans' closest links, however, are with Arab revolutionary and progressive forces such as the PFLO of Oman, Democratic Yemen and the PFLP and DFLP of Palestine.

In 1950, when the UN was debating decolonization, the Soviet Union opposed the "federation" with Ethiopia and advocated Eritrean self-determination. After the armed struggle began in 1961, they gave some political and material support.⁴² Since 1968, however, they have withdrawn this support and in 1975 termed the struggle against the military junta as "unfortunate" and implied that the Eritrean people should come to terms presumably by settling for something less

than self-determination and national independence.⁴³

The Chinese also gave moral and material support to the Eritreans during the 1960's.⁴⁴ But after the visit to China by feudal Emperor Haile Selassie in 1970, such support ceased. Recently they have given at least verbal support to the Ethiopian junta's efforts to crush the liberation struggle, referring to the junta's repression as "safeguarding state sovereignty and the national interests."⁴⁵ China now sends sizeable economic aid to the junta, including large numbers of technicians. Recently the Soviet Union has mounted a campaign to woo the Ethiopian junta away from US influence and resolve the differences between Ethiopia and neighboring Somalia which is friendly to the Soviet Union. At the same time the reactionary Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, have appeared to be backing the more conservative of the two main Eritrean liberation organizations, the Eritrean Liberation Front.

LSM can understand the need for relations between socialist and non-socialist states and even the necessity to try to win over or neutralize elements which are not totally hostile. Especially considering that the OAU has not endorsed the Eritrean liberation struggle, we can understand the need for diplomatic caution on this issue. But why should it be necessary to endorse the reactionary, oppressive policies of the Ethiopian regime? Should tactical alliances be made at the expense of revolutionary struggles? We think not.

There are other examples in the international practice of both China and the Soviet Union with which LSM could not agree. It is well-known

that the Soviet Union did not support the National United Front of Cambodia during most of its struggle. China's relations with the fascist junta in Chile are also well-known as are Soviet relations with Israel and support for the capitulationist UN resolution 242 on Palestine. The Soviet role in Egypt and India certainly deserves detailed scrutiny as does Chinese support for Egyptian rightists who easily and successfully renounced Soviet ties and led Egypt back to US domination.

In the instances of Oman, Iran and Eritrea, the Soviets fall short of the unconditional support for these national struggles for self-determination which should be the basic tenet of the foreign policy of any socialist state. Yet in Angola, Vietnam and Korea, Soviet aid has been a critical factor in the victory over imperialism. In fact the Soviet Union has given significant support to many national liberation movements throughout the world. This aid has not meant Soviet expansion through the establishment of military bases, control of resources or exploitation of labor of the peoples it has supported. The Soviet Union's exemplary aid to Cuba should also be noted: interest-free loans, postponement of debts until 1986, higher than world market prices paid for Cuban raw materials and products along with generous technical assistance. The development of socialist relations in Cuba, Angola, Vietnam or Mozambique depends not on the conditions of aid agreements with the Soviet Union but on the ability of the revolutionary leaderships to mobilize the masses in their countries to seize and hold power.

It is too early in our study to judge Soviet foreign policy as a whole based on its practice. We cannot assess, at this point, the nature

of its economic relations with other nations. (We do not ignore Eastern Europe or India but recognize the need for further study of their political and economic relations with the Soviet Union.) Nor can we say that its foreign policy is clearly guided by socialist principles. The date we've considered so far does indicate that Soviet support for many liberation struggles has been progressive, that the Soviet Union has acted as a friend and not as an enemy. Yet with the Eritrean struggle we see the tendency to accommodation with imperialism urged on to the liberation movement, while in the Gulf, policy seems based on Soviet national interests above those of revolutionary forces in the area.

China, too, has supported many liberation struggles notably with its own soldiers in Korea and crucial material and logistical support for Vietnam. As we have already shown, China formerly gave important theoretical support to the leading role of these struggles in the world revolutionary movement. China has also provided significant aid for many underdeveloped nations. Projects such as textile mills, ship-building industries, roads and the Tan-Zam railway have been built with Chinese expertise and generous financial assistance. However, with the emergence of the "superpower contention" analysis we have seen a shift in Chinese foreign policy. In the cases we have explored, we find that revolutionary national struggles have been subordinated or abandoned to strategic alliances and that China, at times, has objectively sided with reactionary regimes and with imperialism. The counter-revolutionary consequences of the "superpower contention" line strengthen LSM's disagreements with

it. They also lead us to seriously and deeply question many of its fundamental assumptions.

LSM's Position: Critical Nonalignment

World events have demonstrated the essential correctness of the main points of the initial Chinese critique of the Soviet Union and of the international line simultaneously advanced by the CPC in the early 1960's: every successful socialist revolution (and there are now many underway) has taken place in the imperialist "countryside" (Asia, Africa and Latin America); armed struggle has been the method of victory in each case; contradictions and class struggles in metropolitan countries, such as Portugal and the US, have been escalated, not by the example of rising material standards in socialist countries but by the material effects on the metropole caused by people's wars in the colonies and neocolonies. We believe that these events, dramatically punctuated by the numerous revolutionary gains and victories of the last two years, convincingly demonstrate that the principal contradiction between the imperialists led by the US, on the one hand, and the super-exploited peasants and workers of the underdeveloped countries led by their revolutionary movements struggling for national liberation, on the other, has heightened and sharpened, not subsided.

The US does not merely turn up accidentally as the prop of reaction in fighting virtually every liberation struggle. US-led imperialism has built up a wide-ranging infrastructure of exploitation which includes the World Bank and other financial institutions; experienced international monopolies which control transport, communications, information.

culture, electric power, water resources, refineries, and much more and a vast array of other tools with which to penetrate nearly any country. At the same time the US maintains thousands of military bases throughout the world and is extending these into new regions such as the Indian Ocean. These features of imperialist domination provide strong material proof that US-led imperialism is indeed still the principal enemy of world revolutionary forces.

China's progress in building socialism stands out as a tremendous contribution to international socialism. Still it appears to us that China is making serious errors in its foreign policy, such as in Angola, Eritrea and Oman, based on its one-sided anti-Soviet campaign. Escalating the anti-revisionist struggle to the point where it becomes more important than and displaces the international anti-imperialist struggle is a grave mistake with negative consequences for not only the Chinese and Soviet peoples but for oppressed peoples and nations around the world. Indeed, anti-revisionism can turn into its opposite: collaboration with imperialism. For some time, this seemed only a possibility; yet that is clearly what happened in Angola. The Chinese analysis, as presented by Hinton, explicitly projects the Soviet Union as the *main danger* and predicts a World War III in which it will be necessary to *ally with the US against the USSR*. Can this possibly be a revolutionary strategy? If a world war did occur, are the Chinese saying they will ally with the US and its allies? With South Korea against the North? With Iran against People's Yemen? With President Marcos of the Philippines against the New People's Army? With Zaire against Angola?

At the crux of the Sino-Soviet dispute in the early and mid-sixties was the question of strategy in the anti-imperialist struggle. The Chinese correctly criticized the Soviet Union for theoretical and practical accommodation with imperialism. At that time they said: "The sharpest difference of theory and line between Marxism-Leninism and Khrushchev revisionism concerns precisely the question of handling our relations with enemies and friends, in other words, the question of whether to oppose or unite with imperialism, and above all the question of whether to oppose or unite with US imperialism. . . . The crux of the matter is that, . . . [instead of] opposing US imperialism, the new leaders of the CPSU are allying themselves and collaborating with it to dominate the world."⁴⁶ Now, it appears, China has decided alliances with US imperialism are desirable. The tables have turned.

We continue to disagree with the Soviet stress on peaceful transition to socialism and particularly with their analysis of world contradictions. We have serious questions about the present implications and future consequences of close economic, political and military ties between the Soviet Union and imperialist-dominated countries such as Iran. If profit and benefit for the Soviet Union exists in the present relationship - which it certainly seems to - does not this provide the material basis for resistance or opposition to revolutionary change? Why didn't the USSR support the liberation struggle in Cambodia? Why does it no longer support the revolutionary struggle of the Eritrean people? We also have unanswered questions about Soviet domestic policies which are the legitimate concern of all serious proponents of socialism.

Our position on the Sino-Soviet split is one of *critical nonalignment*. LSM's basic commitment is to struggle for the overthrow of imperialism and the construction of an international socialist society. Our enemy is thus the US-led imperialist ruling class, its allies and local agents. Our main support goes to those who are fighting this enemy most actively. It includes concrete assistance to revolutionary liberation movements and attempts to strengthen their relations with progressive forces in North America. Sometimes, as in Angola, this will lead us to support forces also supported by the Soviet Union; at other times, as in Cambodia, our support will coincide with that of the Chinese. In several cases both countries support liberation movements: Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe. And in those cases, such as Eritrea, where neither country gives diplomatic or material support, we will still support a genuine liberation struggle.

We are thus *critical* of China and the Soviet Union when their actions deviate from support for the revolutionary forces. In general we *align* with neither China nor the Soviet Union because each in its own way deviates from proletarian internationalism in theory as well as in practice. We ally with world forces, whether these are progressive governments or North American organizations, on the basis of their role in advancing or retarding the liberation movements of the workers and peasants of the oppressed nations.

We have found the point of view of the Tupamaros, speaking for the Junta of Revolutionary Coordination* to be persuasive. "The Sino-Soviet split . . . is a secondary problem. At the head of the socialist movement, we view, as a country and a vanguard

party our Vietnamese comrades, the Cuban companeros and the Koreans. We believe that they are the vanguard of the world communist movement."⁶ Our comrades from Vietnam, Cuba and Korea have remained in the forefront of the world revolution because and to the extent that they direct their main blows at US imperialism and because they give unstinting support to others who do the same. All three of these countries have been both recipients and suppliers of revolutionary internationalism. When South African and Zairean troops invaded Angola and the new People's Republic requested Cuban assistance, Cuba had the option of following narrow self interest (the US seemed close to dropping the economic blockade) or of acting along proletarian internationalist lines. As we know, they chose the latter course and played a vital role in Angola. Fidel summed up the matter beautifully in his speech of 26 July 1976: "Let no one think that a people loses something when it helps another. When a people helps another, it is not a loss but rather a gain. Our country loses nothing by sending a doctor to some country - like those we have had practicing their profession in Algeria, Yemen, Tanzania, Somalia or Angola itself. In fact, the country gains by doing this because it gains a professional who becomes more conscientious, more revolutionary."⁸

Our firm belief is that in this era of building socialism on a world scale, one of the crucial struggles is overcoming narrow nationalism - the ten-

*JRC includes ELN(National Liberation Army)/Bolivia, Tupamaros/Uruguay, MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left)/Chile and ERP (People's Revolutionary Army)/Argentina.



Fidel Castro and Agostinho Neto in Luanda, April 1977.

dency to view the interests of one country apart from the needs of the world revolution - with genuine internationalism. Thus we see those countries which stress this - in word and in deed - as in the vanguard. The point, however, is not to identify the vanguard and follow it; the point is to engage in internationalist practice and contribute to the struggle for socialism. We can only do so by maintaining critical and principled relations with all forces in that struggle.

¹"The Collapse of the Second International" in Lenin's *Against Revisionism*, Moscow, Progress, 1966, p. 251.

²*The Origin and Development of the Differences Between the Leadership of the CPSU and Ourselves*, Peking,

Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1963.

³*From Anti-Imperialism to Anti-Socialism/The Evolution of Peking's Foreign Policy*, Moscow, Progress, 1974, p. 11.

⁴*A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement*, Peking, 1963, CPC letter of June 14.

⁵*Ibid.*, CPSU letter of March 30.

⁶*Ibid.* ⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*, CPC letter of June 14.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Peking Review*, 15 October 1976, p. 13. This analysis is attributed to Mao Tse-Tung.

¹¹*The Tenth National Congress of the CPC*, Peking, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1973, Chou En-Lai's Report.

continued on p. 56

Letters to LSM

With this issue we are reinstituting a section based on letters we receive. We encourage you to write and send us your ideas, including *critical* comments, not only to be published in *LSM NEWS*, but to help us improve our work.

From SWAPO

Your "Special Issue Journal on Namibia" was very, very fantastic. Although I know the Nehova ordeal, it was so moving when logically compiled. It really makes history. We thank you all in the LSM for the work very well done indeed!

Nehova is well and fine. He had just returned from India where he underwent medical treatment for his sight. He can read a little while but only for 30 minutes at the most....

It is very encouraging to have progressive organizations like LSM, which are all out determined to fight alongside the oppressed masses the world over....

A Luta Continua!

T. Kalomoh, SWAPO Chief Representative for West Africa, Dakar, Senegal

Nehova Again

[Most interesting to me was the] personal history of Nehova because it was very moving and personalized the politics of the liberation struggle.

I always look forward to the journal. They are well done and thorough. I work at a bookstore which carries it and see much interest in your literature from black customers.

KD, Seattle

More Special Issues

Thank you for the *LSM NEWS* special issue on South West Africa People's Organization. It was very enlightening as to the extent of mistreatment the people of Africa encounter that live in regions still under South African rule. I have no doubts that victory will come to all the struggling countries of Africa that is in the process of liberating themselves from unlawful governments that rape the countries of their natural resources and enslave the people. I would like to see other LSM special issues go to press, keep up the good work. Right on.

LS, prisoner, Indiana

"Field Nigger"

Greetings in the name of African liberation from top to bottom of the whole continent of Africa. I am a "poor-greasy-incarcerated-black-and-proud-of-it-dirty-fat-field-nigger" who would like to cop sure enough an old or worn or used or slightly abused or messed-up and unsellable but still presentable copy of your "African Liberation Calendar." If and when you and yours do, I will love you'lls Liberation Support Movement Info. Center people....

Bro. SAB, prisoner, Pennsylvania

Who's Left?

I visited my son [at Green Haven prison] and he told me that the "Africa Liberation Calendars" came. He was happy. It was his idea to order and pay for the [12] calendars since it would be too complicated for each member of the Black Studies class to send out individually.... It's a class run by inmates. ... I thought you might find it interesting. Some prisoners, as they passed his cell, admired the picture on the cell wall.

He is enjoying Uncle Ho with a scene on the side now. ...

You do good work, lots of good luck in your work. Peace and brotherhood for all of us, or what is there left?

LL, New York

Prisoners & LSM's Work...

Support such as literature, political dialogs, etc., as y'all are giving is important for all of us locked down. It helps break down isolation between the military and political fronts, although it seems a bit extreme for some of us to have to be locked down in order to develop the beginning stages of unity. Dig?

Along with that, contact and support with 'rades outside helps us to realize that our efforts, while not insignificant, are not the only thing that is happening. For people like myself who left the working class through college (at the cost of 4 years in USMC), it is very easy to become egotistic - outside contact reaffirms we're not alone and also helps us maintain proper perspective as regards our contribution and struggle in the world revolution.

So, thank you for that also.

Anyway, thank y'all again for that support. Would like to develop closer links if possible. Continue your excellent work - revolutionaries *everywhere* need it. A luta continua!

...And Our Line

While fighting imperialism is working for all working-class and other exploited people of the world, it is often times difficult for people in the US to relate their day-to-day struggles to survive the ravages of monopoly capitalism to the anti-imperialist struggles. (I'm talking specifically about working-class and poor people, but this also - unfor-

tunately - applies to many "left-ists.") Definitely a major aspect of imperialism - through fascism - is the lessening the control people have over their lives (this of course varies between a police state such as Chile, and a "corporate democracy" (i.e. fascist) state such as the US.) I think we (as anti-imperialists) must consciously expand our work to include those people fighting to control their own lives; i.e. "anti-imperialism" must include *both* (1) fighting imperialism - such as organizing against imperialist corporations (Del Monte, *et al*), organizing against puppet regimes, organizing against military expenditures and expansion, and organizing against domestic repression (including supporting political prisoners); as well as (2) fighting for the people - such as organizing in the workplaces, and fighting to regain workers' democratic control over their unions, organizing in our communities for jobs, decent health care, quality education, etc.

I feel LSM's greatest theoretical weakness has been ignoring the second half of this dialectic.

One way I feel you could continue along your current lines, but expand it to the US, would be to do "life histories" of revolutionaries in the US, particularly those who are in prison for military actions (examples are legion: Assata Shakur, Marilyn Buck, Sundiata Acoli, Tony Bottoms of the BLA, Black Panther cadres such as Geronimo Pratt, the SLA comrades, Al Glatkowski - here at Lompoc for hijacking a napalm-laden ship going to Vietnam in 1970 and diverting it to Cambodia, Cameron Bishop, etc.) The "left" has a very bad habit of abandoning comrades of this nature by labelling us as "ultra-leftists."

SS, prisoner, California

Our Methods of Work

Comments on a Recent Struggle in LSM

A recent struggle within Liberation Support Movement (LSM) has resulted in a significant number of members and sympathizers leaving our organization. Because many of you have contributed to LSM's work or collaborated with us in different areas, we feel a duty to inform you of this and present a preliminary analysis of the conflict. Left forces in North America need to learn from one another, and critical discussion around problems and progress is part of this process. Perhaps some of you have had similar experiences; others may have a different interpretation of the situation we describe below. In any case, we welcome your comments, criticisms or questions.

Let us first outline the context. LSM is a small organization with limited capacity and resources. We see ourselves as part of a larger anti-imperialist movement in North America, within which there must be a division of labor in practical work and development of theory. Our propaganda and concrete support for liberation struggles in Africa and Asia are direct contributions to revolutionary forces challenging the imperialist ruling class based in North America and Europe. Such activities also provide avenues for the struggle against racism and national chauvinism here in North America. Our working relationships with liberation movements and progressive North Americans give us a basis to help develop the theoretic-

cal and strategic foundations for anti-imperialist work. However, there are many areas which we do not have the capacity to examine in depth. Appreciating our limitations, we realize the necessity to learn from the experience and theoretical development of other anti-imperialist organizations and to work for productive collaboration with them.

During the eight years since LSM's formation we have tried various forms of structure and internal organization. We have arrived at an organizational form based on democratic centralism. Our experience has demonstrated the need for methods which ensure accountability and discipline and restrict tendencies toward individualistic and anarchistic practices. LSM's bi-annual Congress is a major forum where members critically assess our theory, formulate strategy and elect leadership and a Central Committee for the coming two-year period. Following the Congress, each member makes a written commitment and projection of activities for the period up to the next Congress.

Between Congresses, leadership has the responsibility for guiding the organization and implementing Congress decisions. Regular meetings and channels provide for discussion and criticism at all levels and are seen as the main way to improve individual and collective practice and comportment. When differences arise, the minority must submit to the majority and the lower body to the higher, thus re-

specting organizational structure and unity. Criticisms or differing views should be raised within the provided channels. These principles we see as the key issue in LSM's recent internal struggle.

The struggle was sparked by decisions of a recent Central Committee (CC) meeting. It was the task of this meeting to further implement, for the coming period, our 1975 Congress decisions which established Southern Africa as the focus of our work, the SWAPO Printshop Project as our primary material support task and the vital importance of political consolidation, theoretical development and development of democratic centralism organizationally. The CC resolved to: maintain propaganda and educational work as the focus of our practice; continue investigation around the possibility of future technical support activities (e.g. sending skilled North Americans to assist liberation movements or revolutionary governments); advance the SWAPO Printshop Project; and combat compartmentalization and alienation between mental and manual labor in our daily practice. Preparations for the next LSM Congress, to be held in three to six months, were outlined. The CC stressed that the implementation of these resolutions - formulated as a set of guidelines for our work - would depend on the creative input of all members. Everyone had a responsibility to point out problems or inadequacies, to help improve the decisions in the course of practice.

During the Central Committee meeting there was criticism of and self-criticism by several leaders and CC members. The criticism of one CC member was particularly serious. She had violated leadership decisions and directives when they did not suit her

and had participated in subjective and destructive criticism of the organization and its leadership. This had become particularly blatant immediately prior to and during the CC meetings. This person has a history of such behavior, several times prompting major criticism and self-criticism. The CC sought to have her fully understand and accept the criticism and remain in the organization on probational status. When she rejected the essence of the criticism and, with that, basic democratic centralist principles, it was decided to expel her.

During the three days of the CC meeting, this same member disregarded our decision not to discuss its deliberations until unity had been reached and all its resolutions could be presented to membership for discussion and explanation. She discussed CC decisions, including the criticism of her, fueling subjectivity and disagreements. When the general meeting was held to present and explain the resolutions and guidelines, there was an immediate hostile and subjective reaction from several people. Over the next few days and through another general meeting, these people maintained their antagonism, lobbied among other members and managed to draw with them some who had doubts or confusions about the CC decisions. Leadership then called for organizational meetings to clarify these members' questions or criticisms.

At this point the "dissidents" declared themselves a faction and called for rejection of the CC decisions, disbanding of existing structure and leadership, and recognition of two "tendencies" within the organization which should negotiate on an equal basis. The organization rejected this attempt to divide LSM into

competing factions and explained that it was a violation of basic democratic centralist principles. After some struggle, it was agreed by all to proceed with the planned meetings, to give the necessary clarity for leadership to review its decisions and assess the situation. During these meetings, however, it became clear that these members maintained their opposition to organizational structure and unity. Their departure was confirmed when they refused to attend further organizational meetings.

What were the differences that led some members to reject the CC decisions? Various individuals made references to the need for more technical support work, more direct organizing of North Americans for anti-imperialist work, more participation in coalitions, and more study on theory and strategy. This was sometimes combined with subjective attacks that the organization is "sectarian and isolated," the leadership "manipulative and bureaucratic," etc. We believe that time, and the political practice that those who left establish, will provide the best clarification of what their differences in strategy really are.

We believe that, with few exceptions, those who left did not have significant differences over theory and strategy. Despite some confusion and doubt, there was a definite basis for all of them to fulfill their commitments to work with LSM until the next Congress. Unfortunately, each one broke this commitment, forcing us to cut back LSM's practice in some areas, such as having to temporarily close our New York office.

For us the main political question involved in this internal struggle concerns democratic centralist organ-

ization and principles. What is the correct course to follow when one does not understand or agree with decisions of leadership? Objectively, the course chosen by those individuals who left was: to reject leadership's decisions and form a faction, to attack the organization and demand that leadership and structure be dissolved, and then to unilaterally break their commitments and leave the organization. What course should they have followed? It is not incumbent on members or leaders to agree with all decisions taken; all members, however, once decisions are made, must support their implementation. In this case, there was considerable flexibility in the decisions, allowing for improvement and even alteration in the course of implementation. Those members who saw weaknesses or mistakes could have fully expressed these during this process. They should also have struggled for their ideas at the forthcoming Congress, which will be specifically responsible for deciding basic questions of theory, strategy and organization. If still not in agreement with the majority, these individuals could then have left LSM in a principled way.

Why, then, did this happen? Organizational weaknesses were a contributing factor. Since the death of LSM's founder and chairperson, Don Barnett, we have had problems in effectively practicing democratic centralism. Arbitrary and insensitive leadership has been correctly criticized. There has been a tendency toward "employee mentality" on the part of members, that is, waiting passively for leadership to provide all answers and solve all problems. Insufficient ideological development has been another major shortcoming. This was

especially the case for members of our production unit, depoliticized due to the isolation of their daily work, and in the external relations unit, where alienation developed because of this unit's lack of interaction with the rest of the organization.

Over the period leading up to the CC meeting, liberalism and structural weaknesses allowed negative tendencies arising from these problems to go unchecked. There was inadequate clarification of the crucial distinction between constructive and destructive criticism (and how to use criticism to improve our work) and of the appropriate responsibilities and requirements of leadership and membership.

In this situation, negative individual and class tendencies emerged and, ultimately, ran their course. Our deeply ingrained petty-bourgeois aversion to leadership and discipline was manifested in actions which implicitly said: "Structure is fine ... as long as things are going well and I agree with leadership's decisions." Subjective attacks and rationalizations were put forward to hide the basic fact that individuals were breaking principled agreements and commitments to the organization.

We do not believe that structure and methods of work are simply questions of "form." On the contrary, these are vitally important issues for the ability of an organization to survive and develop. The considerable attention given to these questions by such revolutionaries as Lenin, Mao, Che and Samora Machel is ample testament to its importance. We continue to believe that democratic centralism is the best method for LSM to achieve its objectives. In order to fulfill our

commitments to the revolution and effectively learn from our experiences and mistakes, we need discipline, leadership, constructive criticism and structure. It was this issue, and specifically the responsibility of the minority to submit to the majority, respecting unity and procedures, which was the key issue in the recent struggle within LSM.

Although fewer in numbers, we feel in many ways stronger and more united. The majority of membership, including nearly all the more experienced members and leaders, are committed to carry on LSM's practice. While we will have to limit or cut back our work in some areas, our major activities - propaganda and information, the SWAPO Printshop Project and further investigation regarding technical support - will be going forward. We see this practice as an integral part of anti-imperialist work in North America in general and of the growing militant solidarity with the African Revolution in particular.

We are very critical of those who have left during this recent struggle. At the same time, we hope they will take up a progressive political practice outside LSM. For some time to come we will be analyzing and drawing lessons from the conflict. This was not the first such struggle to occur, and we know that it will not be the last. Meanwhile, we aim to develop and improve our practice. If you have questions or comments about what has happened, or our work generally, we invite you to contact us.

The Struggle Continues!
Victory is Certain!

LSM Notes

LSM Notes will be a regular feature of *LSM NEWS* from now on. In this column we will mention new resources, recent events and other brief items of interest to our readers. We invite you to submit items for LSM Notes.

The SWAPO Printshop Project has received the support of a great many groups and individuals throughout North America - too many to mention here. Special thanks go to those publications which have helped us advertise the project's fund-raising poster, including *Black Panther*, *Black Scholar*, *Burning Spear*, *Guardian*, *Monthly Review* and *Southern Africa*. Other publications which have helped and may not already be known to our readers include:

African Youth, the publication of the African Youth Movement for Liberation and Unity, (c/o Kassahun Checole, Dept. of Sociology, State University of New York, Binghamton, NY 13901, subs \$5 individuals, \$10 institutions). A recent issue featured an interview with Mozambique's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joaquim Chissano.

Africa Today, (c/o Ed Hawley, GSIS, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80210, Subs \$8 ind., \$12 inst.) see the recent issue on southern Africa.

MERIP Reports, (Middle East Research and Information Project, Box 3122, Columbia Heights Station, Washington, DC 20010, \$10 ind., \$15 nonprofit, \$30 inst.).

The Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) was founded in Liberia three

years ago as "an independent, mass-based, Pan-African liberation organization dedicated to the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism in Africa." MOJA describes its role as "to build mass-support organizations which would fulfill the role of mobilizing the people and the government in support of the liberation struggle of our peoples." MOJA has organized material support for the struggles in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique and publishes a monthly newsletter, *MOJA NEWS*.

MOJA is requesting support for its organizational and political education work. For more information or to send contributions, contact MOJA at P.O. Box 1559, Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa or their North American contact at P.O. Box 6237, Syracuse, NY 13217.

In early April LSM members were among the 500 participants in a demonstration which attempted to prevent the off-loading of South African cargo at the docks in San Francisco. Less than 15 longshoremen crossed the picketline to work during the picket while many more refused to accept the assignment in the first place. The next *LSM NEWS* will analyze this action in more depth.

A new bimonthly bulletin on Oman and the Gulf, *Gulf Solidarity*, will appear for the 9th of June, the 12th anniversary of the Omani revolution. The first issue will have articles on the PFLO, the Omani regime, Iran, the Gulf states and more. A one year, 6 issue subscription costs \$2 for individuals, \$3 for those outside the US and \$5 for institutions. Write to Gulf Solidarity, PO Box 40155, San Francisco, CA 94140.

continued from p.13 AVANCA...

the vocabulary which we and other left forces use daily: "imperialism"; "third world"; "superpower"; "internationalism"; and so on. The danger of empty rhetoric, theoretical complacency, and insufficient analysis consists in ineffectiveness, isolation, and historical irrelevance. We hope others engaged in practice such as ours, facing this same danger but facing, too, the tremendous potential for helping to make revolutionary change in the world today, can learn from LSM's experience and these reflections on it.

¹See for example *Breaking Contract*, LSM Press, Richmond, B.C., 1974.

²*Zimbabwe People's Army*, LSM Press, Richmond, B.C., 1976, p. 7.

³ANC underground newsletter, *Amandla-Matla (Power)*, reprinted in *Sechaba*, X, Third Quarter 1976, London, p. 18.

⁴See *LSM NEWS*, 11-12, Oakland, 1976.

⁵"Transkei: The Myth of Independence" in *Sechaba*, X, Fourth Quarter 1976, London, pp. 3-4.

⁶Don Barnett, "Preface to the English Edition" of Americo Boavida, *Angola: Five Centuries of Portuguese Exploitation*, LSM Press, Richmond, B.C., 1972, p. 7.



continued from p. 48 Sino-Soviet Split

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Peking Review*, 1 August 1975, p. 13.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, number 36, 1968.

¹⁵*Tenth National Congress of CPC.*

¹⁶*Peking Review*, 30 January 1976.

¹⁷*Guardian*, New York, 5 May 1976.

¹⁸*Peking Review*, 29 October 1976.

¹⁹*New York Times*, 29 September 1976, p. 12.

²⁰*Report of the CPSU CC to 25th Congress of CPSU*, Moscow, 1976.

²¹*Ibid.* ²²*Ibid.* ²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.* ²⁵*Ibid.* ²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*LSM NEWS*, I, 3 (December 1974).

²⁸*Ibid.*, II, 4 (Winter 1975-76).

Winter 1975-76.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰*Peking Review*, 28 April 1967.

³¹*People's Daily* quoted in *Guardian*, New York, 6 April 1977, p. 22.

³²*Peking Review*, 8 April 1977.

³³*Dhofar*, Iranian Students Association and Arab Students Association in Northern California, 1974.

³⁴*Ibid.* ³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*MERIP Reports*, number 39.

³⁷*Ibid.*, number 30.

³⁸*Peking Review*, 5 December 1969, 30 September 1970, 28 January 1972, 23 June 1972.

³⁹Chi Peng-fi quoted in *Iran Tribune*, July 1973; *Peking Review*, number 37, 1976.

⁴⁰*Peking Review* 18 June 1976, 16 April 1976.

⁴¹*Revolution in Eritrea*, EFLNA, New York, 1975.

⁴²Discussion with EFLNA.

⁴³*New Times*, Moscow, March 1975.

⁴⁴Discussion with EFLNA.

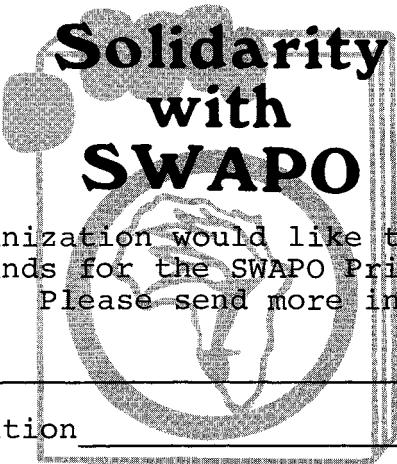
⁴⁵*Peking Review*, August 1975.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, number 46, 1965, p. 13.

⁴⁷*Resistance Courier*, Bulletin of MIR outside Chile, Oakland.

⁴⁸*Granma*, Havana, August 1976.

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Poster for a Free Namibia!

SWAPO: the people armed

August 26, 1966 - Beginning of armed struggle in Namibia

"It is by the people's effort that colonialism is routed,
it is by the sweat of the people's brow that nations are built."



South
West
Africa
People's
Organization

This new, six-color, 17" x 22" poster was designed by the Art Works Collective and printed by Glad Day Press as their contribution to the SWAPO PRINTSHOP PROJECT. The poster is a striking salute to the Namibian struggle for independence from South Africa. All proceeds go toward building a complete, fully equipped and staffed printshop for SWAPO.

\$2.00

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