

Socialist Ideas in Africa

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WITHIN the past seven years the number of independent states in Africa has trebled. In 1957 there were only 10—following the achievement of independence by Kenya and Zanzibar in December 1963, there are now 34. With the exception of South Africa (which is “independent” only for the European minority) these independent states account for over 80 per cent of the African territory, and 85 per cent of its population.

This rapid change began with the achievement of independence by Ghana in March, 1957. By the end of 1960, 17 more African countries had won political independence. In the last three years seven more African countries have become independent, and Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia will follow suit in 1964, leaving only South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Angola, Mozambique, and a few small colonies to win their freedom.

The newly independent states are still faced with big problems. Experience has proved that political independence alone cannot remove the heritage of colonialism. Moreover, imperialism finds new ways in which to tighten its economic grip, retain its political influence, and exercise its domination. The independent states will have to wage an ever sharper struggle against the strategy of neo-colonialism.

Next Steps

Dr. Nkrumah put this issue bluntly in the course of his speech at the Addis Ababa Conference of Heads of States in May, 1963, when he said:

“Our people supported us in our fight for independence because they believed that African Governments could cure the ills of the past in a way which could never be accomplished under colonial rule. If, therefore, now that we are independent we allow the same conditions to exist that existed in colonial days, all the resentment which overthrew colonialism will be mobilised against us.”

The timeliness of this warning was revealed soon after when President Abbé Youlou of the Republic of Congo (formerly French) was overthrown in August, 1963, and President Maga of Dahomey was forced to resign in October, 1963. In both cases the armed revolt against them was supported by the trade unions.

What is the next step forward for the indepen-

dent African states? This is now the subject of intense discussion, not only in Africa, but in the new states in Asia, in the socialist world, and even in Britain.

Will the new African states take the path of capitalist development, or will they advance on the socialist road? Can they find a “neutral” road which is neither capitalist nor socialist?

Some of the new African states are only just emerging from tribal society, and are only in the earliest stage of building a new nation. Will they be able to “jump” stages of economic and social development and by-pass the path of capitalist development?

Is there a “new” path of development which is peculiar to African conditions?

First, on the prospects of capitalist development in the new African states. In most of them the economic grip of overseas monopoly firms is still strong. The aim of the imperialists was not to build up an independent and balanced national economy, but to extract the maximum amount of natural and mineral wealth, drain away colossal profits, and get the maximum benefit from the declining prices of raw materials and primary products in return for increasing prices for the capital and manufactured goods exported to these countries. This is still the aim, and practice, of imperialism.

Colonial rule has always been the biggest obstacle to the growth of an independent national economy. The acceptance of continued imperialist domination will not promote the economic development of the new African states. There is ample evidence in Algeria, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and even Nigeria, that only *after* achieving political independence has it been possible to embark upon the rapid growth of an independent and balanced national economy.

In any case, open advocacy of imperialist rule is no longer possible in Africa. It has become a “dirty word” among the mass of its peoples. Not only are they opposed to imperialism, but they are also opposed to the capitalist path of development. They are seeking a different road, and are convinced that Africa has something new to contribute to the world.

Capitalist development in Europe depended a good deal, and still does, on the exploitation of colonial resources, just as slavery in the southern

states was a big factor in the growth of U.S. capitalism. The African national bourgeoisie (national capitalists) is still small, extremely weak and undeveloped, and scarcely exists as an organised class force. Apart from a few small factories it is engaged mainly in trade, generally taking second place to the big overseas monopoly firms. It has no colonial possessions and cannot embark upon colonial expansion. Even if it were possible to do so, it would be resisted even by the most politically backward of the African masses.

This makes clear that the "traditional" path of capitalist development is not possible in most parts of Africa. At the same time, there is some degree of capitalist development (mainly in South Africa, the Rhodesias, and the Congo), but in most countries of tropical Africa industrial development is based more and more on the public sector rather than the private sector, and agricultural production is based more and more on co-operative methods.

Varieties of "Socialism"

What prospects are there of an advance towards socialism?

Most African national leaders proclaim that socialism is their aim. To advocate the growth of capitalism would seriously weaken (or even completely destroy) their political influence among the masses. Socialism is the new gospel to win the support of the African peoples.

The great socialist advances of the Soviet Union, its firm stand for world peace and its gigantic support for all national liberation struggles, are making a powerful impact throughout Africa. Emerging from their first stage of political liberation from imperialism the African peoples are inspired by the socialist world to look forward to the new stage—complete liberation from all forms of colonialist and imperialist domination, and the advance to socialism.

The African weekly journal *The Spark* (organ of the Bureau of African Affairs in Ghana) was bold enough to declare (22/12/62):

"Like the rest of the world, the decisive influence of socialism is making itself felt in Africa. The growing appeal of socialist ideas is everywhere manifest. Africa is moving irresistibly to socialism."

African conditions, together with its class relations, are so different that socialism is interpreted in many different ways. In Africa the opposition to the path of traditional capitalist development in Western Europe is a strong and positive factor, but its negative aspect is the temptation to throw overboard all the positive lessons of the political struggles in other parts of the world.

It is argued that rival classes do not exist in African society. With the achievement of political independence (together with the absence of a *developed* national bourgeoisie) it is claimed that all Africans have common aims. It is argued that there are no rival classes, and so no need for rival political parties. This gives rise to the one-party system as a form of government in several independent African states.

This separation from the rest of the world, idealisation of traditional African society, blurring over of class differences, together with separate national ambitions of bourgeois elements, has led to a great variety of "socialist" concepts in Africa.

Thus, there is the "Arab socialism" of President Nasser, whereas in Tunis (another Arab country) there is "Neo-Destour socialism"—Neo-Destour being the name of the ruling party, meaning "new life". There is the "Negritude" preached by President Senghor of Senegal, often presented as a variety of "African socialism". The National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) presents the concept of "Pragmatic Socialism" (the old hand-to-mouth process) and the Action Group of Nigeria sets the aim of "Democratic Socialism"—much in the same way as the right-wing leaders in Britain.

Most widespread is the concept of "African Socialism"—something different from the Social Democratic concepts in the capitalist countries and also from the scientific socialism of Marxism in the socialist world. Even within the concept of "African Socialism" there are different varieties, ranging from the "tribal Socialism" of Julius Nyerere, President of Tanganyika, to the mixed economy "democratic socialism" presented by Jomo Kenyatta in the recent election programme of the Kenya African National Union.

Brockway's Views

Mr. Fenner Brockway, M.P., has a well-deserved record as a staunch opponent of colonialism, but has a curious conception of socialism. In his recent book *African Socialism*, he gives his own peculiar version of this proliferation of socialist concepts in Africa. He sums them up as "four trends in socialist theory".

"Communism or Marxist-Leninism, African Marxism, African Pragmatic Socialism, and African Democratic Socialism" (p. 19).

Mr. Brockway expresses the view that the Marxist-Leninists are extremely weak because they "come into conflict with the general socialist flow in Africa because they insist that their 'scientific socialism' is authoritative under all conditions, and that its theory and method must be universally accepted" (p. 20).

No proof is offered for this contention, and throughout his book there is the utmost confusion as between the *form* and *content* of socialism. On the political content of socialism Mr. Brockway is correct in asserting that Marxist-Leninists declare that:

"There is no such thing, in their view, as distinctive African socialism any more than European, Asian or American socialism" (p. 20).

On the form of socialism, Mr. Brockway seems to be grossly misinformed when he explains:

"The adaptation of the tribal system to complicated modern conditions presents, of course, enormous problems. It will mean, as all *except* the Marxist-Leninists realise, an African socialism different in many *forms* from either European social democracy or Soviet communism" (p. 26). [My emphasis.]

The basic attitude of the international Communist movement was presented in the 1960 Moscow Declaration of 81 Communist and Workers' Parties:

"The *forms* and course of development of the socialist revolution will depend on the specific balance of class forces in the country concerned, on the organisation and maturity of the working class and its vanguard, and on the extent of resistance put up by the ruling classes."

(36 *Million Communists Say*, p. 30.)

The real issue is not the form of socialism but its political *content*. To Mr. Brockway several African countries are already socialist, though the concept of socialism differs from one to the other. In his third chapter *The Socialist Sector of Africa* he includes the United Arab Republic, Tunisia, Algeria, Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Ghana, and Tanganyika. Even Dahomey is included, simply because the Minister of Commerce informed Mr. Brockway (when he touched down in Dahomey while travelling by air from Accra to Khartoum) that "the next stage of socialisation planned is to establish publicly-owned industries associated with agriculture" (p. 42).

Even before Mr. Brockway's book was published in November 1963, news had come through that President Maga of Dahomey had been deposed but retained in the Cabinet as a result of action taken by the armed forces—which are under French influence. True, the trade unions took a secondary part because of dissatisfaction, and this was exploited to bring about a Cabinet re-shuffle. Such is the "socialism" of Dahomey. Also in Senegal, during September and October 1963, there were large-scale strikes, with 50,000 demonstrating on September 27 outside President Senghor's palace. They broke down the prison gate and hundreds were arrested, but again on

October 4, more than 50,000 filed past at the funeral of one of their leaders who had been killed. Surely it is a strange kind of socialism in Senegal!

Within Mr. Brockway's large compass of countries building "socialism" in Africa he includes Tunisia ("few African countries have gone further in socialist planning"), the "pragmatic" socialism of President Nasser, and the net is even cast outside Africa to include Israel which "is perhaps to a greater degree than any country a democratic socialist state" (p. 106). Based on all these varieties of "socialism" Mr. Brockway expresses the conviction that:

"Indeed, it is not too much to say that the most dynamic socialist movement in the world today is in Africa" (p. 17).

Mr. Brockway can learn a great deal from the rising generation of socialists in Africa. Even a year ago this conglomeration of "socialist" concepts came under severe criticism in *The Spark*:

"Socialist orientation does not mean preaching a hotch-potch of pragmatism-cum-humanism-cum-metaphysics plastered over with idiosyncrasies and passed over as African socialism. African socialism can mean no more than the basic tenets of socialism in an African setting." (December 29, 1962.)

In a subsequent editorial *The Spark* came out clearly for "scientific socialism" urging all Africans to "stop chasing illusions like African socialism, Arab socialism, pragmatic socialism, democratic socialism and such other beautiful phrases that cover up a multitude of anti-socialist sins" (25.10.63).

Senghor's Outlook

The hotch-potch of socialist ideas referred to is not confined to Africa. When the Ba'athists in Iraq staged a successful counter-revolutionary coup in February 1963, Mr. Brockway wrote: "It is neutralist, Socialist, moved by Arab unity" (*Tribune*, 15.2.63). Even on the first day of this coup it was clear that this fascist gang had nothing in common with unity, democracy, or socialism, but simply used these phrases for their reactionary aims.

Let us examine these countless versions of "socialism" now being put forward by various African national leaders.

President Senghor is often acclaimed as the theoretician of "African Socialism". After three years of Senegal's "independence" he declared in 1961: "The French Community (continued relations with France) created by General de Gaulle with Africa's true representatives, is one of the

greatest achievements of our time." In his book *West Africa in Evolution* he explains:

"We aim to hold firmly to a middle-of-the-road socialism which is liberal and undoctinaire—one which socialises all that should be socialised, beginning with the rural economy, but no more than that."

Among African leaders Senghor is the outstanding exponent of what is termed "Negritude". This is how he defined it in a lecture at Oxford University in October 1961:

"*Negritude is the whole complex of civilised values—cultural, economic, social and political—which characterises the black peoples, or, more precisely, the Negro-African world.*"

(*West Africa*, 4/11/61.)

This excludes the Arab peoples of Africa, but includes the Negro peoples of the United States, the character of whose struggle is vastly different from that of the peoples of Africa. African liberation is presented as a clash of *colour* and *culture*, not a *political struggle*. Influenced by his Roman Catholic upbringing, Senghor surrounds his peculiar concepts with mystical illusions, completely devoid of any scientific analysis of the motive forces in history, not to mention the class forces within society. One of the commentators in *West Africa* (by no means a Marxist), bluntly described these devotees of "Negritude" as comprised of "Muslims, fetishists, hard-core Calvinists, diehard Papists, and renegade Marxists" (*West Africa*, 30/6/62).

Senghor asserts that "our Negro-African society is a classless society" and that the problem is "not how to put an end to the exploitation of man by his fellow, but how to prevent it happening". In the next breath he admits: "and yet we have not legally suppressed private capitalism, which is foreign to our country; we have not even nationalised anything" (*West Africa*, 11.11.61).

Despite Senghor, the fact remains that class differentiation in Senegal cannot be hidden. Not only has nothing been nationalised, but together with the Ivory Coast, Liberia and the Congo, it is more strongly in the economic and political grip of foreign imperialism than any other independent state south of the Sahara, with living standards far below Ghana's.

It is certainly not surprising that both Senghor and President Tubman of Liberia were honoured by the Queen early in 1963—alone among the non-British independent states in Africa.

In a recent statement made by President Modiba Keita of Mali, he declared:

"We will not allow ourselves to be caught by the magic of words. Most of the states speak of African socialism—even Senghor speaks of

African socialism. If we are not careful the word 'socialism' will be emptied of its meaning, and bourgeois systems of the most reactionary kind will be able to camouflage themselves under the sign of socialism."

Tribal Society and "Socialism"

Among the African national leaders with a far more consistent anti-imperialist record than Senghor is Julius Nyerere, President of Tanganyika. Not only in the struggle for political independence, but after its achievement, Nyerere has taken a principled stand against the vile apartheid system in South Africa (long before the Addis Ababa Conference in May 1963), and has put into practice effective steps to boycott trade, arms, and airspace with South Africa. Moreover, Tanganyika has become a haven for the leaders of illegal liberation movements in South Africa, South-West Africa, Angola, and Mozambique.

Though a staunch opponent of imperialism, Julius Nyerere is also overwhelmed by African "exceptionalism". His pamphlet *The Basis of African Socialism*, written in April, 1962, starts off with the assertion that "Socialism—like Democracy—is an attitude of mind". Socialism is not a "standard political pattern", and the basic difference between socialism and capitalism "does not lie in their methods of producing wealth, but in the way that wealth is distributed".

Nyerere's ideal, like Senghor's, is the "traditional African society where both rich and poor are completely secure", and this is the picture he paints of it:

"Nobody starved, either of food or human dignity, because he lacked personal wealth; he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member. That was socialism. That is socialism. There can be no such thing as acquisitive socialism, for that would be another contradiction in terms. Socialism is essentially distributive. Its concern is to see that those who sow reap a fair share of what they sow."

More than 120 years ago Karl Marx laid bare the fallacies of the utopian socialists and others who were blind to the class forces in society. Like Nyerere they believed that the equitable distribution of wealth could be separated from the *class* ownership of the means of production, and did not grasp that the *distribution* of wealth depends on which *class* in society owns the land, means of production, and the power to exploit labour.

At an early stage of capitalist development these utopian ideas are not unusual. In the section on "Critical—Utopian Socialism and Communism" in the *Communist Manifesto*, 1848, Marx pointed out:

"The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, cause Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to class antagonisms."

Wishful thinking will not eliminate class antagonism in Tanganyika. True, direct colonial rule has been abolished, but imperialism still retains its economic grip. Foreign monopoly firms still have a stranglehold on sisal (Tanganyika's main product) and make gigantic profits, many times bigger than the total wage-bill. Mr. Nailo Swai, Minister for Development and Planning, recently explained that "Investment in the private sector amounts to 60 per cent". (*Reporter*, 5.10.63). The official *Industrial Directory* of firms in 1961 (large and small) gives a total of 1,999 firms. Wage disputes and strikes among sisal workers are frequent, and have increased in recent years. There is certainly no semblance in this situation of depending "on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member".

Nyerere contrasts African "tribal socialism which knows nothing of class conflicts" with "European Socialism which was born of the Agrarian Revolution and the Industrial Revolution which followed it". He asserts that the former produced the "modern capitalist" and the latter "the industrial proletariat", and that these two revolutions "planted the seeds of conflict within society".

If the term "agrarian revolution" refers to the breakdown of feudalism it certainly ignores the basic factors responsible for this change. Even more misleading is the topsy-turvy view that it is revolutions which plant the seeds of conflict in society, rather than class conflicts creating revolutions.

In an attempt to justify the claim that classes do not exist in African society, Nyerere points out that the word "class" has no equivalent in any indigenous African language. Obviously, the word "class" appears nowhere in any tribal society in Africa or elsewhere, for classes only appear when tribal society breaks down. And there can be no doubt that tribal society is rapidly breaking down in Tanganyika.

Marxists have always been conscious of the positive as well as the negative aspects of tribal society. Contrary to Nyerere's idyllic picture, tribal society was essentially a primitive form of existence in which no surplus was produced above bare subsistence needs. There was no other way to live except by sharing things in common, and it was a community of *poverty*, not of wealth. At the same time, however, there was not an exploit-

ing class, exercise of dictatorship, or political suppression.

Engels was fully conscious of these positive aspects of tribal society, and in his classic essay *Origin of the Family*, quoted with approval the perspective given by Lewis Morgan, in his authoritative survey *Ancient Society*:

"Democracy in government, brotherhood in society, equality in rights and privileges, and universal education, foreshadow the next higher plane of society to which experience, intelligence and knowledge are steadily tending. It will be a revival, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes."

Socialism is the transformation of the positive features of tribal society to the "higher plane of society". From a low level of existence new and higher relations will arise from the mastery of science and the laws of social development. The most positive features of primitive communism are transformed into scientific socialism, a stage to communism, and the pinnacle of human development.

Can the positive features of the old tribal society be preserved in the modern age during the transition from capitalism to socialism?

This depends on the speed with which Africa advances to socialism. As early as 1882, in his introduction to a new edition of the 1848 Communist Manifesto, Engels held out the prospect that the "mir" system in Tsarist Russia (under which more than half the land was owned in common by the peasants) might be preserved under certain conditions:

"If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a workers' revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of the land may then serve as the starting point for a communist development." (London, January 21, 1882.)

More than twenty years later, Lenin gave a clear analysis of the disintegration of the communal land system in Tsarist Russia and the creation of a new "peasant bourgeoisie" within the framework of the old feudal system. This was the situation confronting the 1917 Russian socialist revolution. It was not followed by victorious revolutions in the West, and for this failure, world humanity paid the price of the Second World War and faces now the threat of a terrible nuclear war.

One of the first decrees of the new Russia was to give land to the peasants, and at a later stage the elimination of the "kulak" (rich peasant) through the system of collective farming. It established common ownership of land throughout the whole of the Soviet Union. The building of

socialism has transformed the old mir system from a community of poverty into a community of wealth, with advances in the field of science and technology which are the envy of the whole world.

In the light of its own specific conditions Tanganyika may take a different road to achieve these objectives—not back to “tribal socialism”, but forward to co-operative and collective farms, mechanised agriculture, and scientific industrial development. This is the way forward to socialism.

Looking to the Past

Among the more recent exponents of “African Socialism” is Mr. Tom Mboya, General Secretary of the Kenya African National Union, and a Minister in the Government. Writing on this subject in March, 1963, he explains:

“When I talk of ‘African Socialism’ I refer to those proven codes of conduct in the African societies which have, over the ages, conferred dignity on our people and afforded them security regardless of their station in life. I refer to universal charity which characterised our societies and I refer to the African thought processes and cosmological ideas, which regard man, not as a social means, but as an end and entity in the society.” (*Transition*, Uganda magazine.)

In one respect Mboya differs from Nyerere when he admits that “poverty existed, but it was not due to man exploiting man”. If his assertion is true that the peoples of Kenya have always had “security regardless of their station in life”, one wonders what they have been fighting for all these years! Why have they waged a ceaseless struggle for many decades against European land robbery; organised innumerable strikes in the past forty years, and created trade unions and political movements to wage the fight for independence?

On July 24, 1962, the *Financial Times* estimated that there were 300,000 unemployed in Kenya, and Tom Mboya (who was then Minister of Labour) declared that 31,500 Africans had been thrown out of work in one year alone (ending in June 1961), and that “hungry men have to steal in order to live” (*Times*, July 19, 1962). Not much security there, and certainly no sign of a classless society!

When it comes down to brass tacks, Mboya himself advocates measures which are in striking contrast to the “communal” principles of traditional African society, proposing loans for local and foreign capitalists, and that the government should stimulate private investment. Mboya contrasts “African Socialism” with what he describes as “Socialism of the Western type” on the one hand, and “a Marxian type of Socialism” on the other. He makes a fervent plea: “Let us go

abroad to ask for loans and technical skills, not for ideals and ideologies.”

What is Mboya’s concept of socialism? In one sense he expresses agreement with Nyerere in stating that: “Socialism is a mental conditioning or an attitude of mind established in order to achieve rational relationships and harmony in society.” Any capitalist would agree with this vague general formula, even when he spells it out in more detail:

“Socialism stands for equality of opportunity, security of income and employment, equality before the law, the rule of law, individual freedom, universal franchise, state regulation of economic life, state control of vital means of production and distribution. . . .” (*Transition*, March 1963.)

If the word “socialism” is left out, all supporters of the capitalist system will agree with these objectives. Even in *imperialist* Britain there is a considerable *state regulation* of economic life and *state control* of production and distribution.

What is Socialism?

Scientific socialism is not a concept limited to geographical boundaries, either “East” or “West”. It is a universal concept of a new stage of society, applicable *anywhere* in the world, providing the objective and subjective factors have sufficiently matured to advance towards this new stage. It actually exists in one-third of the world, and as a political aim in most of the remaining two-thirds. Its basic tenets are *universal* in character, but the methods of reaching this stage and the application of its principles will be different in different parts of the world.

“The term ‘African’ is used to cover up the fact that the ‘Socialism’ advocated is in reality a negation of socialism. It is used to flatter African intellectuals that the new ideology is of their own creation.” (Julius Sago. *The Spark*, April 19, 1963.)

To speak and write of “African Socialism” makes no better sense than dividing the sciences into geographical compartments, e.g. African mathematics, African chemistry, African biology, or African physics. Science is universal, but its *application* differs according to different situations. There is only one socialism—scientific socialism—which belongs to the whole world, and not to one continent or one country. “African Socialism” is a mirage, but there can be different *roads* to Socialism arising from the different conditions in the African countries.

What are the basic tenets of socialism? Briefly, they are:

- (1) Common ownership of all the means of production, distribution and exchange, and production for use, and not for private profit.
- (2) Planned methods of production, based on harmonious relations between industry and agriculture, raising of living standards, and overcoming the inequality between town and country.
- (3) Application of science to all spheres of production, unleashing the inventive genius of human beings, and to make machines the servants of men and women.
- (4) Political power in the hands of the people, led by the working class and its Marxist party, and based on full democracy in all aspects of economic and social life.
- (5) National sovereignty and friendship with all nations, based on internationalism and not narrow bourgeois nationalism.
- (6) Equal rights for all men and women.
- (7) Encouragement and promotion of young people to take key positions of leadership.
- (8) Positive measures for the flourishing of the arts and sciences, for scientific and technical education, and for equal opportunities for every child to advance in all spheres of education.

There is nothing specifically Russian, German, French, British, or American about these basic tenets of socialism, and nothing in them which is "alien" to any African country. They represent a stage in the advance of human society which would end all forms of imperialist domination, all forms of economic exploitation, and all forms of inequality.

True, in the vastly different conditions of Africa the forms and methods of a socialist society cannot be an exact copy of the existing socialist countries. The existing class relations, communal land ownership, the sense of African unity, pride in African history and culture, will have to be taken into account.

Already, many of the independent African states have an expanding public sector of production, village and peasant co-operatives, a growing number of collective farms, and even some state farms. Socialism will advance these progressive developments to a far higher stage.

In contrast to most African national leaders, Dr. Nkrumah has given a far clearer expression of the real content of socialism:

"Socialist production is production of goods and services in fulfilment of the people's needs. It is not production for individual private profit. . . . Socialism is the only pattern that can within the shortest possible time bring the good life to the people. For socialism assumes the public ownership of the means of production—the land

and its resources—and the use of these means of production that will bring benefit to the people." (*Address to the Accra Study Group, CPP 22.4.61.*)

Ghana has made big advances in its state sector of production. The properties of many overseas firms have been taken over or bought out. Co-operative farms have grown rapidly, and a number of state farms have been established. However, Dr. Nkrumah made it clear in this address that Ghana is not a socialist state, and that all talk of socialism is just empty words without basic industrialisation and agricultural production, and the expansion of socialist education. He went on to stress that:

"We cannot build socialism without Socialists, and we must take positive steps to ensure that the party and the country produce the men and women who can handle a socialist programme."

The achievement of socialism is not only a matter of political theory and programmes, but also of class relations. Political independence was won by an alliance of class forces led by the progressive elements of the national bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, but workers and peasants were the biggest mass force.

Transition to Socialism

The new stage demands a sharper struggle to achieve economic independence and end all forms of imperialist domination. The more reactionary elements among the national bourgeoisie, including the African intelligentsia, show serious signs of wavering in this new phase of the struggle. Their conception of the alliance is that they must preserve their key positions in the new states; that the trade unions must not fight for higher wages, and that no step must be taken to change their relations with the imperialist countries.

To justify this attitude, all kinds of spurious theories are put forward to bolster up the idea of African exceptionalism. The new formula "African Socialism" can be used, and is being used, not to advance the cause of socialism, but to hold it back. Trade unions are urged to postpone wage demands, there is resistance to working class elements advancing to the leadership of the national movements, and to the formation of Marxist Parties, on the plea that there are no class struggles in Africa.

The alliance of class forces (expressed in the national movements which won independence) is still essential in the new stage of the struggle. But the advance to socialism is possible only if the working class advances to the leadership in the national united front. The spread of socialist ideas in Africa does not mean that socialism is the

next item on the agenda of independent African states. True, many positive and impressive measures are being taken in Algeria, Ghana, Mali, Guinea and elsewhere which can prepare the way to socialism.

The next step was clearly outlined in the perspective of an independent national democracy given in the 1960 Moscow Declaration of Communist and Workers' Parties, representing a transitional stage to socialism, and seems to be the most likely path of development:

"In the present situation, favourable domestic and international conditions arise in many countries for the establishment of an independent national democracy, that is, a state which consistently upholds its political and economic independence, fights against imperialism and its military blocs, against military bases on its territory; a state which fights against the new forms of colonialism and the penetration of imperialist capital; a state which rejects dictatorial and despotic methods of government; a state in which the people are ensured broad democratic rights and freedoms (freedom of speech, press, assembly, demonstrations, establishment of political parties and social organisations), the opportunity to work for the enactment of an agrarian reform and other democratic and social changes, and for participation in shaping government policy. The countries concerned make rapid social progress and play an active part in the people's struggle for peace, against the aggressive policies of the imperialist camp, for the complete abolition of colonial oppression."

This transitional stage arises from the fact that the working class is not yet in the leadership of the independent African states, and (apart from Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, Sudan, and South Africa) Marxist parties do not exist. Even where they do exist they are not yet a decisive force in the national movement.

Neither Marx nor Lenin were able to provide solutions in advance to the new problems facing Africa today. But the principles of Marxism-Leninism provide guiding lines for a solution. They can serve to throw light on the decisive factors in African society, the specific class relations which exist, the essential steps to complete the process of national liberation, and Africa's place in the advance of national liberation and socialism throughout the world.

The advance of working class elements into the leadership of the African national movements is essential even for the next stage of advance, which is the building of an independent democratic state. This is not a "third way", but a transitional stage to socialism. The transition may be of long

or short duration, depending on the relation of class forces in the country and especially on the strength and political consciousness of the working class. For it is the working class, with its revolutionary Marxist Parties which is the harbinger of socialism:

"Wherever the anti-imperialist front was under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist, Communist Parties, the revolution did not stop at the bourgeois-democratic stage but developed into a socialist revolution.

"Wherever the movement was headed by the bourgeoisie, or bourgeois influences predominated in the anti-imperialist front, the national bourgeoisie that came to power led society along the path of capitalist development, thus delaying the transition to a higher stage of the revolution." (*Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, English edition, p. 501.)

This lesson needs to be understood in Africa today. If the principles of Marxism-Leninism are applied within the context of the struggle through Africa, there are good prospects of advance in the new stage of the struggle, for the growth of independent national democracies, and an advance towards socialism.

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