

chief will remain chief but he will be without power. But if he is a good chief, a revolutionary one, it is better for him to lead his people.

Question: So at the group level people elect their own action committee which sends representatives to the sector action committee?

Answer: Yes. And then from the sector level they send their representatives to the zone action committee. In each zone there are some who are very intelligent and they represent their people on the regional committees. The central committee selects one or two from each zone who are militants, who are already politically educated, and they represent their zones on the regional committee. With the help of the military command these action committees keep registers of all marriages, births, deaths, and so on. They also administer justice. Those traditional chiefs are well versed in local laws and customs, but we must take care with the traditional laws and habits which are not good, which are not adapted to the revolutionary conditions of today. So we must help them to settle some cases. In addition, they have their own police, recruited from the militia. The militia is paramilitary, but within a militia group they choose some to be police. They keep order in the villages, or groups, and in the sector.

Question: You mentioned women's organizations. Perhaps you could discuss this question of the role of women in a little greater detail.

Answer: For us the role of women in the struggle is very important. Because in Angola, as everywhere in Africa, it is the women who have suffered most under colonial rule. Our Organization of Angolan Women (OMA) is now fighting for the emancipation of the women of Angola. This organization is a part of the MPLA and shares our orientation. But inside the country they've got their own structures, programs, etc., and represent the interests of the women through their organization. We find it is better if they have their own women leaders, who can lead them inside the country. They are now participating in the struggle without discrimination. When the OMA was formed, MPLA was located only in the northern region of Angola; now we are in the east and south, so we must train their leaders—women leaders—both politically and militarily. We already have a number of women guerrillas and nurses, and we are training others to carry out political work among the women. In the guerrilla forces the women are not separated from the men; they serve right along with the men, under the same conditions.

Question: Do women also serve on the action committees?

Answer: They have their own OMA groups at every level, with their own elected officers and their women's militia, too. Then in each zone the

women have one representative who represents them on the zone action committee.

Question: Have you also introduced democratic procedures within the military structure?

Answer: Our movement is a democratic one and so our structures, both military and political, must also operate according to democratic principles. We have ranks within the military, but these ranks only separate the different areas of responsibility. There are no privileges which go with higher ranks. We all eat the same food and other rations are distributed equally.

Question: Are there possibilities for the lower-ranking freedom fighters to express their views or criticize the actions or decisions of the leadership at the various levels?

Answer: Yes, of course. All militants have the right to criticize others, and also themselves, as in the Party. In our political life we follow this principle of criticism and self-criticism. If someone or something is not going right in the Party, politically, militarily, in production, etc., one has the right to say, "This is not good for such and such reasons." Anyone, whatever his rank—he may be a political or military leader, he may be in the central committee or the military commission, or a guerrilla or a member of the women's organization—if he is in the party he has a right to speak freely, to say whatever he wants. At all levels and for all ranks there exists criticism and self-criticism.

AMILCAR CABRAL: THE POLITICS OF STRUGGLE*

I. LIBERATION AND THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE

IN the rural areas we have found it necessary to distinguish between two distinct groups: on the one hand, the group which we consider semifeudal, represented by the Foulas, and, on the other hand, the group which we consider, so to speak, without any defined form of state organization, represented by the Balantes. There are a number of intermediary positions between these two extreme ethnic groups (as regards the social situation). I should like to point out straight away that although in general the semifeudal groups were Muslim and the groups without any form of

* From a series of speeches delivered at a seminar in Treviglio, Italy, May 1-3, 1964, convened by the Centro Frantz Fanon of Milan, and published in *International Socialist Journal*, August 1964.

state organization were animist, there is one ethnic group among the animists, the Mandjaks, which had forms of social relations which could be considered feudal at the time when the Portuguese came to Guinea.

I should now like to give you a rapid idea of the social stratification among the Foulas. We consider that the chiefs, the nobles, and the religious figures form one group; after them come the artisans and the Dyulas, who are itinerant traders, and then after that come the peasants properly speaking. Although certain traditions concerning collective ownership of the land have been preserved, the chiefs and their entourages have retained considerable privileges as regards ownership of land and the utilization of other people's labor; this means that the peasants who depend on the chiefs are obliged to work for these chiefs for a certain period of the year. The artisans, whether blacksmiths (which is the lowest occupation) or leatherworkers or whatnot, play an extremely important role in the socioeconomic life of the Foulas and represent what you might call the embryo of industry. In general the peasants have no rights and they are the really exploited group in Foula society. Women take part in production but they do not own what they produce. Besides, polygamy is a highly respected institution and women are to a certain extent considered the property of their husbands.

Among the Balantes, which are at the opposite extreme, we find a society without any social stratification: there is just a council of old men in each village or group of villages who decide on the day-to-day problems. In the Balante group property and land are considered to belong to the village but each family receives the amount of land needed to ensure subsistence for itself. The means of production, or the instruments of production, are not collective but are owned by families or individuals. The Balantes still retain certain tendencies toward polygamy, although it is mostly a monogamous society. Balantes women participate in production, but they produce and this gives them a position which we consider privileged as they are fairly free; the only point on which they are not free is that children belong to the head of the family, and the head of the family, the husband, always claims any children his wife may have; this is obviously to be explained by the actual economy of the group where a family's strength is ultimately represented by the number of arms there are to cultivate the earth.

In the rural areas I should mention the small African farm owners; this is a numerically small group but all the same it has a certain importance and has proved to be highly active in the national liberation struggle. In the towns (I shall not talk about the presence of Europeans in the rural areas as there are none in Guinea) we must first distinguish between the Europeans and the Africans. The Europeans can easily be classified as they retain in Guinea the social stratification of Portugal (obviously depending on the function they exercise in Guinea). In the first

place, there are the high officials and the managers of enterprises who form a stratum with practically no contact with the other European strata. After that there are the middle officials, the small European traders, the people employed in commerce, and the members of the liberal professions. After that come the workers, who are mainly skilled workers.

Among the Africans we find the higher officials, the middle officials, and the members of the liberal professions forming a group; then come the petty officials, those employed in commerce with a contract, who are to be distinguished from those employed in commerce without a contract, who can be fired any moment. The small farm owners also fall into this group; by assimilation we call all these the African petty bourgeoisie (obviously, if we were to make a more thorough analysis the higher African officials as well as the middle officials and the members of the liberal professions should also be included in the petty bourgeoisie). Next come the wage earners (whom we define as those employed in commerce without any contract); among these are certain important subgroups such as the dockworkers, the people employed on the boats carrying goods and agricultural produce; there are also the servants, who are mostly men in Guinea; there are the people working in repair shops and small factories; also there are the people who work in shops as porters and suchlike—these all come under the heading of wage earners. You will notice that we are careful not to call these groups the proletariat or the working class.

There is another group of people whom we call the *déclassés*, in which there are two subgroups to be distinguished. The first subgroup is easy to identify, what would be called the lumpenproletariat if there was a real proletariat: beggars, prostitutes, and so. The other group, not really *déclassé*, to which we have paid a lot of attention, has proved to be extremely important in the national liberation struggle: it is mostly made up of young people, connected to petty-bourgeois or workers' families, who have recently arrived from the rural areas and generally do not work; they thus have close relations with the rural areas, as well as with the towns (and even the Europeans). They sometimes live off one kind of work or another but they generally live at the expense of their families. Here I should just like to point out a difference between Europe and Africa; in Africa there is a tradition which requires that, for example, if I have an uncle living in the town, I can come in and live in his house without working and he will feed me and house me. This creates a certain stratum of people who experience urban life and who can, as we shall see, play a very important role.

Schematically, the methodological approach we have used has been as follows: first, the position of each group must be defined—to what extent and in what way does each group depend on the colonial regime? Next we have to see what position they adopt toward the national liberation

struggle. Then we have to study their *nationalist* capacity and lastly, envisaging the post-independence period, their *revolutionary* capacity.

Among the Foulas, the chiefs and their entourages are tied to colonialism; particularly as in Guinea the Foulas were once conquerors (the Portuguese allied themselves with them in order to dominate Guinea at the beginning of the conquest). Thus the chiefs (and their authority as chiefs) are very closely tied to the Portuguese authorities. The artisans are extremely dependent on the chiefs; they live off what they make for the chiefs who are the only ones who can acquire their products so that there are some artisans who are simply content to follow the chiefs. The main point about the Dyula is that their permanent preoccupation is to protect their own personal interests; at least in Guinea, the Dyula are not settled in any one place, they are itinerant traders without any real roots anywhere and their fundamental aim is to get bigger and bigger profits. It is precisely the fact that they are almost permanently on the move which provided us with a most valuable element in the struggle. It goes without saying that there are some Dyula who have not supported our struggle, and there are some who have been used as agents against us by the Portuguese, but there are some whom we have been able to use to mobilize people, at least as far as spreading the initial ideas of the struggle was concerned—all we had to do was give them some reward, as they usually would not do anything without being paid.

Obviously, the group with the greatest interest in the struggle is the peasantry, given the nature of the various different societies in Guinea (feudal, semifeudal, etc.) and the various degrees of exploitation to which they were subjected; but the question is not simply one of objective interest.

Foula peasants have a strong tendency to follow their chiefs. Thorough and intensive work was therefore needed to mobilize them. The Balantes and the groups without any defined form of state organization put up much more resistance against the Portuguese than the others and they have maintained their tradition of resistance to colonial penetration intact. This is the group that we found most ready to accept the idea of national liberation.

Does the peasantry represent the main revolutionary force, then? In Guinea, it must be said at once that *the peasantry is not a revolutionary force*—which may seem strange, particularly as we have based the whole of our armed struggle for liberation on the peasantry. A distinction must be drawn between a physical force and a revolutionary force; *physically*, the peasantry is a great force in Guinea: it is almost the whole of the population, it controls the nation's wealth; it is the peasantry which produces. But we know from experience what trouble we had convincing the peasantry to fight. It was not possible for our Party militants and propaganda workers to find the same kind of welcome among the peasantry in Guinea for the idea of national liberation as the idea found in China.

The Europeans are, in general, hostile to the idea of national liberation; they are the human instruments of the colonial state in our country and they therefore reject *a priori* any idea of national liberation there. It has to be said that the Europeans most bitterly opposed to the idea of national liberation are the workers, while we have sometimes found considerably sympathy for our struggle among certain members of the European petty bourgeoisie.

As for the Africans, the petty bourgeoisie can be divided into three subgroups as regards the national liberation struggle. First, there is the petty bourgeoisie which is heavily committed, and compromised with colonialism; this includes most of the higher officials and some members of the liberal professions. Second, there is the group which we perhaps incorrectly call the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie; this is the part of the petty bourgeoisie which is nationalist and which was the source of the idea of the national liberation struggle in Guinea. In the middle lies the part of the petty bourgeoisie which has never been able to make up its mind between the national liberation struggle and the Portuguese. Next come the wage earners, which you can compare roughly with the proletariat in European societies, although they are not exactly the same thing; here, too, there is a majority committed to the struggle, but, again, many members of this group—wage earners who had an extremely petty-bourgeois mentality and whose only aim was to defend the little they had already acquired—were not easy to mobilize.

Next come the *déclassés*. The really *déclassé* people, the permanent layabouts, the prostitutes, and so on, have been a great help to the Portuguese police for giving them information; this group has been outrightly against our struggle, perhaps unconsciously so, but nonetheless against our struggle. On the other hand, the group of mainly young people recently arrived from the rural areas with contacts in both the urban and the rural milieus has proved extremely dynamic in the struggle. Many of these people joined the struggle right from the beginning and it is among this group that we found many of the cadres whom we have since trained.

The importance of this urban experience lies in the fact that it allows *comparison*: this is the key stimulant required for a *prise de conscience*. It is interesting to note that Algerian nationalism largely sprang up among the *émigré* workers in France. As far as Guinea is concerned, the idea of the national liberation struggle was born not abroad but in our own country, in a milieu where people were subjected to close and incessant exploitation. Many people say that it is the peasants who carry the major burden of exploitation; this may be true, but so far as the struggle is concerned it must be realized that it is not the degree of suffering and hardship involved as such that matters: even extreme suffering in itself does not necessarily produce the *prise de conscience* required for the national liberation struggle. In Guinea the peasants are subjected to a kind of exploitation equivalent to slavery; but even if you try and explain

to them that they are being exploited and robbed, it is difficult to convince them by means of an unlivid explanation of a technico-economic kind that they are the most exploited people; whereas it is easier to convince the workers and the people employed in the towns who earn, say, 10 escudos a day for a job in which a European earns between 30 and 50, that they are being subjected to massive exploitation and injustice *because they can see it*. To take my own case as a member of the petty-bourgeois group which launched the struggle in Guinea, I was an agronomist working under a European whom everybody knew was one of the biggest idiots in Guinea; I could have taught him his job with my eyes shut but he was the boss: this is the *confrontation* which really matters.

It is our opinion that if we get rid of colonialism in Guinea, the main contradiction remaining, the one which will then become the principal contradiction, is that between the ruling classes, the semifeudal groups, and the members of the groups without any defined form of organization. The first thing to note is that the conquest carried out first by the Mandingues and then by the Foulas was a struggle between two opposite poles which was blocked by the very strong structure of the animist groups. There are other contradictions, such as that between the various feudal groups and those between the upper group and the lower. All this is extremely important for the future, and even while the struggle is still going on we must begin to exploit the contradiction between the Foola people and their chiefs, who are very close to the Portuguese. There is a further contradiction, particularly among the animists, between the collective ownership of the land and the private ownership of the means of production in agriculture. I am not trying to stretch alien concepts here; this is an observation that can be made on the spot: the land belongs to the village, but what is produced belongs to whoever produces it—usually the family or the head of the family.

There are other contradictions which we consider secondary. You may be surprised to know that we consider the contradictions between the tribes a secondary one; our struggle for national liberation and the work done by our Party have shown that this contradiction is really not so important. The Portuguese counted on it, but as soon as we organized the liberation struggle properly the contradiction between the tribes proved to a feeble, secondary contradiction. This does not mean that we do not need to pay attention to this contradiction; we reject both the positions which are to be found in Africa—one which says: there are no tribes, we are all the same, we are all one people in one territorial unity, our party comprises everybody; the other saying: tribes exist, we must base parties on tribes. Our position lies between the two; all structural, organizational, and other measures must be taken to ensure that this contradiction does not explode and become a more important contradiction.

This has led us to the following conclusion: we must try and unite

everybody in the national liberation struggle against the Portuguese colonialists. It is imperative to organize things so that we always have an instrument available which can solve all the other contradictions. This is what convinced us of the absolute necessity of creating a party during the national liberation struggle. There are some people who interpret our Party as a front; perhaps our Party is a front at the moment, but within the framework of this front there is our Party which is directing the front, and there are no other parties in the front. For the circumstances of the struggle we maintain a general aspect, but within the framework of the struggle we know what our Party is, we know where the Party finishes and where the people who just rallied for the liberation struggle begin.

When we had made our analysis, we had some knowledge of other experiences and we knew that a struggle of the kind we hoped to lead—and win—has to be led by the working class. We looked for the working class in Guinea and did not find it. What then were we to do? We were just a group of petty bourgeois who were driven by the reality of life in Guinea, by the sufferings we had to endure, and also by the influence events in Africa and elsewhere had on us, in particular the experiences some of us acquired in Portugal and other countries in Europe.

And so this little group began. We first thought of a general movement of national liberation, but this immediately proved unfeasible. We decided to extend our activity to the workers in the towns, and we had some success with this; we launched moves for higher wages, better working conditions, and so on. But we obviously did not have a proletariat. We quite clearly lacked revolutionary intellectuals, so we had to start searching, given that we—rightly—did not believe in the revolutionary capacity of the peasantry.

One important group in the towns were the dockworkers; another important group were the people working in the boats carrying merchandise, who mostly live in Bissau itself and travel up and down the rivers. These people proved highly conscious of their position and of their economic importance and they took the initiative to launch strikes without any trade union leadership at all. We therefore decided to concentrate all our work on this group. This gave excellent results and this group soon came to form a kind of nucleus which influenced the attitudes of other wage-earning groups in the towns.

We also looked for intellectuals, but there were none, because the Portuguese did not educate people. In any case, what is an intellectual in our country? It would probably be someone who knew the general situation very well, who had some knowledge, not profound theoretical knowledge, but concrete knowledge of the country itself and of its life, as well as of our enemy. We, the people I have talked about, the engineers, doctors, bank clerks and so on, joined together to form a group.

There was also this other group of people in the towns, which we have been unable to classify precisely, which was still closely connected to the rural areas and contained people who spoke almost all the languages that are used in Guinea. They knew all the customs of the rural areas while at the same time possessing a solid knowledge of the European urban milieus. They also had a certain degree of self-confidence, they knew how to read and write (which makes a person an intellectual in our country) and so we concentrated our work on these people and immediately started giving them some preparatory training.

We were faced with another difficult problem: we realized that we needed to have people with a mentality which could transcend the context of the national liberation struggle, and so we prepared a number of cadres from the group I have just mentioned, some from the people employed in trade and other wage earners, and even some peasants, so that they could acquire what you might call a working-class mentality. You may think this is absurd, that in order for there to be a working-class mentality the material conditions of the working class should exist, a working class should exist. In fact we managed to inculcate these ideas into a large number of people—the kind of ideas, that is, there would be if there were a working class. We have trained about 1,000 cadres at our Party school in Conakry; in fact for about two years this was about all we did outside the country. When these cadres returned to the rural areas they inculcated a certain mentality into the peasants and it is among these cadres that we chose the people who are now leading the struggle. We are not a communist party or a Marxist-Leninist party but the people now leading the peasants in the struggle in Guinea are mostly from the urban milieus and connected with the urban wage-earning group. When I hear that only the peasantry can lead the struggle, am I supposed to think we have made a mistake? All I can say is that at the moment our struggle is going well.

The concept of a party and the creation of parties did not occur spontaneously in Europe, they resulted from a long process of class struggle. When we in Africa think of creating a party now we find ourselves in very different conditions from those in which parties appeared as historico-social phenomena in Europe. This has a number of consequences, so that when you think "party," "single party," etc., you must connect all these things up with conditions in Africa, and with the history of the different societies.

A rigorous historical approach is similarly needed when examining another problem related to this—how can the underdeveloped countries evolve toward revolution, toward socialism? There is a preconception held by many people, even on the Left, that imperialism made us enter history at the moment when it began its adventure in our countries: this preconception must be denounced. For somebody on the Left, and for Marxists

in particular, history obviously means the class struggle; our opinion is exactly the contrary. We consider that when imperialism arrived in Guinea it made us leave history—our history. We agree that history in our country is the result of class struggle, but we have our own struggles in our own country. The moment imperialism arrived, colonialism arrived. Obviously, we agree that the class struggle has continued, but it has continued in a very different way: our whole people is struggling against the ruling class of the imperialist countries, and this gives a completely different aspect to the historical evolution of our country. As we see it, in colonial conditions no one stratum can succeed in the struggle for national liberation on its own, and therefore it is all the strata of society which are the agents of history. This brings us to what should be a void—but in fact it is not. What commands history in colonial conditions is not the class struggle; I do not mean that the class struggle in Guinea stopped completely during the colonial period, it continued, but in a muted way. In the colonial period it is the colonial state which commands history.

Our problem is to see who are capable of taking control of the state apparatus when the colonial power is destroyed. In Guinea the peasants cannot read or write, they have almost no relations with the colonial forces during the colonial period except for paying taxes, which is done indirectly. The working class hardly exists as a defined class, it is just an embryo. There is no economically viable bourgeoisie because imperialism prevented it being created. What there is is a stratum of people in the service of imperialism who have learnt how to manipulate the apparatus of the state—the African petty bourgeoisie. This is the only stratum capable of controlling or even utilizing the instruments which the colonial state used against our people. So that we come to the conclusion that in colonial conditions it is the petty bourgeoisie which is the inheritor of state power (though I wish we could be wrong). The moment national liberation comes and the petty bourgeoisie takes power we enter, or rather we return to history, and thus the internal contradictions of our social and economic conditions will break out again.

When this happens, and particularly as things are now, there will be powerful external contradictions conditioning the internal situation, and not just internal contradictions as before. What attitude can the petty bourgeoisie adopt? Obviously people on the Left will call for the Revolution; the Right will call for the "nonrevolution," i.e., a capitalist road or something like that. The petty bourgeoisie can either ally itself with imperialism and the reactionary strata in its own country to try and preserve itself as a petty bourgeoisie or ally itself with the workers and peasants, who must themselves take power or control power to make the Revolution. We must be very clear exactly what we are asking the petty bourgeoisie to do. Are we asking it to commit suicide? Because if there is a revolution, then the petty bourgeoisie will have to abandon power

to the workers and the peasants and cease to exist *qua* petty bourgeoisie. For a revolution to take place depends on the nature of the party (and its size), the character of the struggle which led up to liberation, if there was an armed struggle, what the nature of this armed struggle was, and how it developed.

This connects with the problem of the real nature of the national liberation struggle. In Guinea, as in other countries, the implantation of imperialism by force and the presence of the colonial system considerably altered the historical conditions and aroused a response—the national liberation struggle—which is generally considered a revolutionary trend; but this is something which I think needs further examination. I should like to formulate this question: is the national liberation movement something which has simply emerged from within our country, is it a result of the internal contradictions created by the presence of colonialism, or are there external factors which have determined it? In fact I would even go so far as to ask whether, given the advance of socialism in the world, the national liberation movement is not an imperialist initiative. Is the juridical institution which serves as a reference for the right of all peoples to struggle to free themselves a product of the peoples who are trying to liberate themselves? Was it created by the socialist countries who are our historical associates? Let us not forget that it was the imperialist countries who recognized the right of all people to national independence. Even Portugal, who is using napalm bombs against our people in Guinea, signed the declaration of the right of all peoples to independence. One may well ask oneself why they were so mad as to do something which goes against their own interests and whether or not it was partly forced on them. The real point is that they signed it. This is where we think there is something wrong with the simple interpretation of the national liberation movement as a revolutionary trend. The objective of the imperialist countries was to prevent the enlargement of the socialist camp, to liberate the reactionary forces in our countries which were being stifled by colonialism, and to enable these forces to ally themselves with the international bourgeoisie. The fundamental objective was to create a bourgeoisie where one did not exist, in order specifically to strengthen the imperialist and the capitalist camp. The rise of the bourgeoisie in the new countries, far from being anything surprising, should be considered absolutely normal. It is something that has to be faced by all those struggling against imperialism. We are therefore faced with the problem of deciding whether to engage in an out-and-out struggle against the bourgeoisie right from the start or whether to try and make an alliance with the national bourgeoisie, to try to deepen the absolutely necessary contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and the international bourgeoisie which has promoted the national bourgeoisie to the position it holds.

What really interests us here is neo-colonialism. After the Second World War imperialism entered on a new phase: on the one hand, it worked out the new policy of aid, i.e., granted independence to the occupied countries plus "aid," and, on the other hand, concentrated on preferential investment in the European countries. This was, above all, an attempt at rationalizing imperialism. Even if it has not yet provoked reactions of a nationalist kind in the European countries, we are convinced that it will do so soon. As we see it, neo-colonialism (which we may call rationalized imperialism) is more a defeat for the international working class than for the colonized peoples. Neo-colonialism is at work on two fronts—in Europe as well as in the underdeveloped countries. Its current framework in the underdeveloped countries is the policy of aid, and one of the essential aims of this policy is to create a false bourgeoisie to put a brake on the Revolution and to enlarge the possibilities of the petty bourgeoisie as a neutralizer of the Revolution. At the same time it invests capital in France, Italy, England, and so on. In our opinion the aim of this is to stimulate the growth of the workers' aristocracy, to enlarge the field of action of the petty bourgeoisie so as to block the Revolution. In our opinion it is under this aspect that neo-colonialism and the relations between the international working-class movement and our movements must be analyzed. *En passant*, I might point out that imperialism is quite prepared to change both its men and its tactics in order to perpetuate itself; it will make and destroy states and, as we have already seen, it will kill its own puppets when they no longer serve its purposes. If need be, it will even create a kind of socialism, which people may soon start calling "neo-socialism."

If there have been any doubts about the close relations between our struggle and the struggle of the international working-class movement, neo-colonialism has proved that there need not be any. Obviously I don't think it is possible to forge closer relations between the peasantry in Guinea and the working-class movement in Europe. What we must do first is try and forge closer links between the peasant movement and the wage-earners' movement in our country.

II. DIRECTIVES*

—In the liberated regions do everything possible to normalize the political life of the people. Section committees of the Party (*tabanca* committees), zonal committees, regional committees, must be consolidated

*Series of directives issued by Cabral in 1965. Translated by Basil Davidson and published in his *The Liberation of Guiné: Aspects of an African Revolution* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, 1969).

and function normally. Frequent meetings must be held to explain to the population what is happening with the struggle, what the Party is endeavoring to do at any given moment, and what the criminal intentions of the enemy may be. In regions still occupied by the enemy, reinforce clandestine work, the mobilization and organization of the populations, and the preparation of militants for action and support of our fighters.

—Develop political work in our armed forces, whether regular or guerrilla, wherever they may be. Hold frequent meetings. Demand serious political work from political commissars. Start political committees, formed by the political commissars and commander of each unit, in the regular army. Oppose tendencies to *militarism* and make each fighter an exemplary militant of our Party.

—Educate ourselves, educate other people, the population in general, to fight fear and ignorance, to eliminate little by little the subjection to nature and natural forces which our economy has not yet mastered. Fight without useless violence against all the negative aspects, prejudicial to mankind, which are still part of our beliefs and traditions. Convince little by little, and in particular the militants of the Party, that we shall end by conquering the fear of nature, and that man is the strongest force in nature.

—Demand from responsible Party members that they dedicate themselves seriously to study, that they interest themselves in the things and problems of our daily life and struggle in their fundamental and essential aspect, and not simply in their appearance. Learn from life, learn from our people, learn from books, learn from the experience of others. Never stop learning.

—Responsible members must take life seriously, conscious of their responsibilities, thoughtful about carrying them out, and with a comradeship based on work and duty done. Nothing of this is incompatible with the joy of life, or with love for life and its amusements, or with confidence in the future and in our work.

—Reinforce political work and propaganda within the enemy's armed forces. Write posters, pamphlets, letters. Draw slogans on the roads. Establish cautious links with enemy personnel who want to contact us. Act audaciously and with great initiative in this way. Do everything possible to help enemy soldiers to desert. Assure them of security so as to encourage their desertion. Carry out political work among Africans who are still in enemy service, whether civilian or military. Persuade these brothers to change direction so as to serve the Party within the enemy ranks or desert with arms and ammunition to our units.

—We must practice revolutionary democracy in every aspect of our Party life. Every responsible member must have the courage of his responsibilities, exacting from others a proper respect for his work and properly

respecting the work of others. Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories.

III. IDEOLOGY AND ARMED STRUGGLE *

It is often said that national liberation is based on the right of all peoples freely to decide about their destinies and that the aim of this liberation is to obtain national independence. Although we do not disagree with this vague and subjective manner of expressing a complex reality, we prefer to be objective since, for us, the basis of national liberation, whatever the formula adopted by international law, lies in the inalienable right of each people to have its own history; and the aim of national liberation is the reconquest of this right usurped by imperialism, i.e., the freeing of the process of development of the national productive forces. For this reason, in our opinion, any national liberation movement which does not give due weight to this base and this aim, may indeed fight against imperialism, but it will certainly not be fighting for national liberation.

This implies that, bearing in mind the essential features of the world economy of our time as well as of experiences already gained in the realm of anti-imperialist struggle, the main aspect of the struggle for national liberation is the struggle against neo-colonialism. Furthermore, if we consider that national liberation demands that a deep change should take place in the process of development of the productive forces, we see that the phenomenon of *national liberation* necessarily corresponds to a *revolution*. What matters is being aware of the objective and subjective conditions in which this revolution takes place and knowing the forms or form of struggle best suited to its realization.

We shall not here repeat that these conditions are frankly favorable at the present stage of the history of humanity; it is sufficient to recall that there also exist unfavorable factors, both on the international level and within each nation struggling for its liberation.

On the international plane, it seems to us that the following factors are at the very least unfavorable to the movement of national liberation: the neo-colonial situation of a large number of states achieving political independence being added to others having already achieved it; the progress made by neo-colonialism, particularly in Europe, where imperialism has recourse to preferential investment, encouraging the development of a privileged proletariat with the subsequent lowering of the revolutionary

* Speech delivered at the First Conference of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (OSPAAAL or Tricontinental Conference), held in Havana, January 3-12, 1966. Translation by Judith Landry.

level of the laboring classes; the neo-colonial situation, whether overt or disguised, of some European states which, like Portugal, still possess colonies; the policy known as "aid to the underdeveloped countries," practiced by imperialism with the hope of creating or strengthening the autochthonous pseudobourgeoisies, necessarily enfeoffed to the international bourgeoisie, and thus blocking the path to revolution; the claustrophobic revolutionary timidity, which led several newly independent states with internal economic and political conditions favorable to revolution to accept compromise with the enemy or its agents; the growing contradictions between anti-imperialist states; and, lastly, the threats, by imperialism, to world peace with atomic warfare. These factors contribute to reinforcing imperialism against the movements of national liberation.

Internally, we believe that the most important weaknesses or unfavorable factors lie in the socioeconomic structure and in their evolutionary tendencies under imperial pressure or, to be more exact, in the little, or complete lack of, attention paid to the characteristics of this structure and these tendencies, by the national liberation movements in the working out of the strategies of struggle.

This point of view does not claim to diminish the importance of other internal factors unfavorable to national liberation, such as economic underdevelopment, the social backwardness of the popular masses resulting from it, and other less important discrepancies. But it should be pointed out that the existence of tribes does not emerge as an important anomaly except in terms of opportunistic attitudes, generally coming from detribalized individuals or groups within the national liberation movement. Contradictions between classes, even embryonic ones, are far more important than contradictions between tribes.

Although the colonial and neo-colonial situations are identical in essence, and though the main aspect of the struggle against imperialism is the neo-colonial aspect, we believe that it is vital to distinguish these two situations in practice. Indeed, the horizontal structure of autochthonous society, though more or less differentiated, and the absence of a political power composed of national elements, make possible the creation of a broad front of unity and struggle in the colonial situation, indispensable moreover to the success of the national liberation movement. But this possibility does not exempt us from rigorous analysis of the indigenous social structure, of the trends of its development, and of the adoption in practice of appropriate measures to guarantee a real national liberation. Among these measures, we regard as indispensable the growth of a solidly united vanguard, aware of the true meaning and aim of the national liberation struggle it must lead. This need is all the more pressing since we know that, with a few rare exceptions, the colonial situation does not allow or demand the significant existence of vanguard classes (self-aware working classes and rural proletariat) which could ensure the vigilance of the popular

masses with regard to the development of the liberation movement. Inversely, the generally embryonic character of the working classes and the economic, social, and cultural situation of the most important physical force in the struggle for national liberation—the peasantry—do not enable the two main forces of the struggle to distinguish, on their own, true national independence from factitious political independence. Only a revolutionary vanguard, generally an active minority, can be aware, from the start, of this difference and bring it, through struggle, to the notice of the popular masses. This explains the basically political character of the struggle for national independence and, to some degree, the importance of the form of struggle in the final result of the phenomenon of national liberation.

In the neo-colonial situation, the more or less accentuated vertical structure of the indigenous society and the existence of a political power composed of autochthonous elements—national state—actually intensifies the contradictions within this society, and makes the creation of a front as broad as in the colonial case difficult, if not impossible. On the one hand, the material effects (mainly nationalization of the state bureaucracy and the increase of the economic initiative of the indigenous element, particularly on the commercial level) and psychological effects (pride of believing oneself led by one's own compatriots, exploitation of a religious or tribal solidarity between a few rulers and part of the popular masses) help to demobilize a considerable part of the nationalist forces. But the necessarily repressive character of the neo-colonial state vis-à-vis the forces of national liberation, the worsening of class discrepancies, the objective permanence of agents and signs of foreign domination (settlers who retain their privileges, armed forces, racial discrimination), the increasing pauperization of the peasantry and the more or less obvious influence of external interests, help to keep the flame of nationalism burning, progressively to sharpen the awareness of vast sectors of the people, and to rally the majority of the population to the ideal of national liberation as a way out of its neo-colonial frustration.

Furthermore, while the autochthonous ruling class is becoming progressively more bourgeois, the development of a working class composed of town workers and agricultural proletariat, all exploited by the indirect domination of imperialism, opens new vistas to the growth of national liberation. This working class, whatever its degree of political awareness (beyond a minimum limit, which is *awareness of its needs*) seems, in the case of neo-colonialism, to constitute the real popular vanguard in the struggle for national liberation. But it will never be able completely to achieve its mission within the framework of this struggle (which does not end with the gaining of independence) if it does not join solidly with the other exploited classes, the peasants in general (farm workers, sharecroppers, agricultural laborers, small farm owners), and the nationalist

petty bourgeoisie. The realization of this alliance demands the mobilization and organization of nationalist forces within the framework (or through the agency) of a strong and well-structured political organization.

Another important distinction between the colonial and neo-colonial situation is to be found in the perspectives of the struggle. The colonial case (where the *nation-class* is fighting against the repressive forces of the bourgeoisie of the colonizing country) may lead, at least apparently, to a nationalist solution (national revolution); the nation wins its independence and hypothetically adopts the economic structure which most suits it. The neo-colonial case (where the laboring classes and their allies are fighting simultaneously against the imperialist bourgeoisie and the autochthonous ruling class) is not resolved by a nationalist solution; it requires the destruction of the capitalist structure implanted by imperialism on the national territory, and postulates, precisely, a socialist solution. This distinction results mainly from the difference in level of the productive forces in the two cases and from the subsequent intensification of the class struggle.

It would not be difficult to show that, in the past, this distinction is barely apparent. One need only remember that in our present historical conditions—liquidation of imperialism which perpetuates its domination over our peoples by all possible means, and consolidation of socialism over a considerable part of the world—there are only two possible paths for an independent nation: to go back to imperial domination (neo-colonialism, capitalism, state capitalism) or the path of socialism. This option on which compensation for the efforts and sacrifices of the popular masses during the struggle depends, is strongly influenced by the form of the fight and the degree of revolutionary awareness of those leading it.

Facts spare us from proving that the essential element of imperialism is violence. If we accept the principle *according to which the struggle for liberation is a revolution*, and that this ends only when the flag is hoisted and the national anthem sung, we shall see that there is not and cannot be national liberation without the use of liberating violence on the part of the nationalist forces, to counter the criminal violence of the agents of imperialism. No one doubts that, whatever may be the local characteristics, imperialism implies a state of permanent violence against the nationalist forces. No people on this earth having been subjected to the imperialist yoke (colonial or neo-colonial) has conquered its independence (nominal or actual) without victims. What matters is to determine what forms of violence may be used by the forces of national liberation not only to counter the violence of imperialism, but also to guarantee, through struggle, the final victory of its cause: real national independence.

Past and present experiences of certain peoples, the current situation of the struggle for national liberation throughout the world (particularly in Vietnam, the Congo, and Zimbabwe) as well as the situation of permanent

violence, or at least of discrepancies and uncertainties, of certain countries which have gained their independence by so-called pacific means, show us that not only are compromises with imperialism inoperative but also that the normal path of national liberation, imposed upon the peoples by imperialist repression, is *armed struggle*.

It is evident, too, that both the effectiveness of this path and the stability of the situation to which it will lead after liberation, depend not only on the characteristics of the organization of the struggle but also on the political and moral awareness of those who, for historical reasons, are in position to be the immediate heirs of the colonial or neo-colonial state. For the facts have shown that the only social sector capable of awareness of the reality of imperialist domination, and of running the state machinery inherited from this domination, is the autochthonous petty bourgeoisie. If we bear in mind the unpredictability, the complexity of the national tendencies inherent in the economic situation of this social structure or class, we shall see that this specific inevitability of our situation constitutes one of the weaknesses of the national liberation movement.

The colonial situation, which does not admit of the development of an autochthonous pseudobourgeoisie and in which the popular masses do not as a whole reach the necessary level of political awareness before the unleashing of the phenomenon of national liberation, offers the petty bourgeoisie the historical opportunity of running the struggle against foreign domination. Because of its objective and subjective situation—higher level of life than that of the masses, more frequent contacts with the agents of colonialism and hence more opportunities for humiliation, higher level of education and political culture, etc.—it is the stratum which most rapidly becomes aware of the need to free itself from foreign domination. This historical responsibility is taken on by the sector of the petty bourgeoisie that can, in the colonial context, be called revolutionary, while the other sectors ally themselves with colonialism to defend their social situation, however deludedly.

The neo-colonial situation, which demands the liquidation of the autochthonous pseudobourgeoisie for the achievement of national liberation, also gives the petty bourgeoisie the opportunity of fulfilling a front-rank, indeed decisive, role in the struggle for the liquidation of foreign domination. But, in this case, in virtue of the progress achieved in the social structure, the function of direction of the struggle is shared (to a greater or lesser degree) by the more educated of the laboring classes and even with elements of the national pseudobourgeoisie, imbued with patriotic feeling. The role of the sector of the petty bourgeoisie which takes part in leading the struggle is even more important, particularly since in the neo-colonial situation itself it is more apt to take over these functions, either because the working masses have economic and cultural limitations, or because of the complexes and limitations of an

ideological nature which characterize the sector of the national pseudo-bourgeoisie which is involved in the struggle. In this case, it is important to note that the mission entrusted to it demands from this sector of the petty bourgeoisie a greater revolutionary conscience, the ability to interpret the aims of the masses faithfully at each phase of the struggle and to identify with them more and more.

But, however great the degree of revolutionary awareness of the sector of the petty bourgeoisie called upon to fulfill this historical function, it cannot free itself from this objective reality: the petty bourgeoisie, as a service class (i.e., which is not directly involved in the process of production), does not have at its disposal the economic bases which would guarantee it the assumption of power. Indeed, history shows us that, whatever the role—sometimes important—played by individuals of the petty bourgeoisie in the course of a revolution, this class has never been in possession of political power. And it could not be, because political power (state) is based on the economic capacity of the ruling class and in the conditions of colonial and neo-colonial society. This capacity is held by only two entities: imperialist capitalist capital and the national laboring classes.

To retain the power that national liberation puts into its hands, the petty bourgeoisie has only one path: to give free rein to its national tendencies of embourgeoisement, allow the development of a bureaucratic bourgeoisie—and of intermediaries—in the goods cycle, in order to become a national pseudobourgeoisie, i.e., to betray the revolution and rally necessarily to imperialist capital. Now all this corresponds to the neo-colonial situation, i.e., to the betrayal of the objectives of national liberation. So as not to betray these aims, the petty bourgeoisie has only one path: to strengthen its revolutionary conscience, repudiate the temptations of embourgeoisement and the national pressures of its class mentality, identify with the laboring classes, not set itself up against the normal development of the process of revolution. This means that the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie must be capable of class suicide, to come to life again as revolutionary workers. This shows us that though national liberation is essentially a political problem, the conditions of its development lend it certain characteristics which belong to the moral sphere.

Cuba

In the ideological world of Marxist-Leninists, three "models" of successful revolutions are carefully studied and, often, imitated—the Russian, the Chinese, and the Cuban. The Russian because of its success through general insurrection; the Chinese because of its drawn-out ("protracted") people's war; the Cuban because an invincible guerrilla nucleus (later to be called foco) brought about the collapse of the bourgeois state. So far no other model has emerged, although many other countries have established revolutionary regimes, some as a result of tactics and strategy also used in the basic three. The Algerians, for example, fought a guerrilla war against an outside power—France—much like the "patriotic" first stage of the two-stage Chinese Revolution. The Vietnamese, not yet totally victorious by the end of 1970, also waged a national war against foreign domination, first the French, then the United States. As for Eastern European revolutionaries, they came to power with the Russian Red Army, while the North Koreans profited both from people's war against the Japanese and the Red Army. The Middle East "socialist" countries, revolutionary mainly only in rhetoric, are the consequences of coups d'état.

Of the three "models," China's way seems most appropriate where imperialists are intervening with full force (Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Eritrea, Palestine, Chad). Russia's example appears as the best guide for revolutionaries in developed capitalist countries where an organized proletariat is politically conscious of the class struggle. And Cuba, which fought foreigners only indirectly (U.S. agents, infiltrators, bribed counter-revolutionaries, etc.) until the Bay of Pigs invasion (which, though using Cuban exiles, must be considered U.S.), remains fascinating for the rest of the underdeveloped world not occupied by imperialist military forces.

And yet, most revolutionary theorists, whether Marxist-Leninist or not, insist that Cuba is an "exception." The reasons: (1) until he fully