

NATIONAL AND SOCIAL
REVOLUTION
CAIRO
OCTOBER 1966



A. Sobolev, Gisela Rabesahala (Madagascar), Loutfi El Kholi, on the Presidium at the Seminar.

AFRICA: NATIONAL AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION

A Report on the Cairo Seminar

Contemporary African reality, the problems Africa now faces, and the strong, vigorous currents flowing in Africa demand in the first place a clear vision; a vision able both to take in the whole picture and to estimate correctly its component parts; so as to gain renewed strength and ensure an uninterrupted revolutionary struggle on African soil.

(From the message of President Nasser to the Seminar.)

AT THE INVITATION of the two journals *Al Talia* and *Problems of Peace and Socialism* about seventy leaders of African revolutionary and democratic thought, representing twenty-five parties and national liberation organisations in various parts of the continent, came to Cairo at the end of last October to take part in the Seminar: *Africa—National and Social Revolution*.

The character of the two convening journals was in itself an earnest of the exceptionally militant, anti-imperialist content which might have been expected from such a Seminar. It also symbolised the unity of all genuinely revolutionary forces, both Communist and non-Communist, which the severity and complexity of Africa's fight for true independence demands. *Al Talia* (Vanguard) is the monthly theoretical journal of the ruling Arab Socialist Union, published by the authoritative daily *Al Ahram*. *Problems of Peace and Socialism* (the English version appears as *World Marxist Review*) is the international journal of the Marxist-Leninist Parties. Though its headquarters are in Prague, its Editorial Board and editorial personnel include representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties in all the Continents, and it is published in eighteen languages.

The purpose of the gathering was to hold a serious, scientific discussion on the most burning problems of our continent—the struggle to liberate the whole of Africa from imperialism, colonialism and racialism; to safeguard and fortify independence; to advance our peoples on the path to social progress and emancipation. The enthusiastic response from all quarters showed how timely and necessary such a discussion was felt to be. Naturally, physical and practical considerations made a comprehensive and all-embracing gathering, covering every country, impossible. In some cases travel and other difficulties prevented those who were invited and keen on coming from doing so—for example, of the delegation of three from Oginga Odinga's Kenya People's Union, only one, Mr. Kimani Waiyaki, was allowed to come, and he was delayed until the seminar was in its closing stages. Nevertheless, the seminar was a unique occasion bringing together from all over the continent and for the first time in such a discussion, the most militant and advanced forces of the African Revolution.

Leading statesmen from revolutionary Parties governing independent African countries heading for socialism played a prominent part. Present were the delegations of the Arab Socialist Union (U.A.R.), the Guinea Democratic Party, the Sudanese Union (Mali), the National Liberation Front (Algeria) and the Tanganyika African People's Union (T.A.N.U.). But there were also revolutionaries with fresh reports from guerilla battlefields and harsh underground struggles—P.A.I.G.C. from 'Portuguese' Guinea; M.P.L.A. from Angola, F.R.E.L.I.M.O. from Mozambique, the African National Congress of South Africa, Zimbabwe African People's Union, South West Africa People's Organisation. A number of African Marxist-Leninist Parties were represented: the Communist Parties of Morocco, Sudan, South Africa and Lesotho, the African Independence Party (P.A.I.) of Senegal. And

there were also a number of African revolutionary-democratic organisations and leaders—from Ben Barka's U.N.F.P. (National Union of Popular Forces) of Morocco, the Sudan People's Democratic Party, and representatives from Congo (Kinshasa), Somalia, Niger, Cameroun, Eritrea and Malagasy.

A message of welcome and good wishes from President Gamal Abdel Nasser was read to the Seminar (he was on a state visit to India at the time) and warmly applauded, as was a message from Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, sent from Bamako. From various regions of Africa greetings were expressed: from the West by Idrissa Madeira, Political Secretary of the Sudanese Union of Mali; from the East by T.A.N.U. leader and Parliamentarian F. U. Masha; from Southern Africa by J. B. Marks of the A.N.C.

The Seminar then got under way with five days of intensive discussion. It was opened with two remarkable reports: *Anti-imperialist Struggle in Africa at the Present Stage*, delivered by Loutfi El Kholi, Editor-in-Chief of *Al Talia*, and *Some Problems of Social Progress in Africa* by Dr. Alexander Sobolev, Executive Secretary of *World Marxist Review*.

Over sixty written papers, in addition to a great many spontaneous interventions, were considered by the Seminar in the following sessions. The Agenda covered the following themes:

- Neo-colonialism in Africa,
- Imperialist capital investments in Africa,
- Methods of imperialist penetration into African countries,
- Analysis of reasons for and character of various military coups,
- Defence and strengthening of progressive regimes in liberated countries,
- Need for unity of revolutionary forces in Africa,
- Liberation movements of colonial countries in Africa,
- Struggle against racist regimes,
- The African Revolution as an integral part of the world revolutionary process,
- Analysis of the class structure in African societies and the role of various social forces,
- Democratisation of political life as the condition for progressive development,
- Problems of creating revolutionary vanguards and unity of patriotic forces,
- Agrarian problems,
- Planning and sources of accumulation,
- Tasks and perspectives of inter-African economic co-operation,
- Importance of co-operation between African countries and socialist states.

Clearly, to report such a rich and wide-ranging exchange of views and information in detail would require not an article, or even a series of articles, but a book. Indeed it is greatly hoped that such a book will be prepared by the sponsors of the Seminar; it would be a treasure-house for all African revolutionaries and patriots. The present

article cannot hope to do more than to summarise some of the striking ideas that emerged, to recapture something of the tone and atmosphere of the Seminar. The reader will have observed that many of the themes of the agenda overlap to a greater or lesser extent, and broadly speaking are embraced also by the opening papers. Without attempting in any way to be comprehensive, we shall then traverse in outline the opening papers, pausing to note some of the other contributions that amplify points made in them—or in some instances, of course, may differ with them. For the papers were all independently drawn up, and while the broad coincidence of views on all main issues was truly remarkable, it would have been unbelievable had there been no points of difference! But one of the most inspiring features of the event as a whole was the complete absence of any tendencies to score debating-points; these were serious revolutionaries, earnestly and in a true scientific spirit seeking the truth.

THE FIGHT AGAINST IMPERIALISM

LOUTFI EL KHOLI'S REPORT

In his opening report on Africa's fight against imperialism, LOUTFI EL KHOLI began by emphasising that the African Revolution was intrinsically and inseparably connected with the world historical and revolutionary process. Indeed, our revolution was directed to break down Africa's isolation, to demolish 'that iron curtain tightly constructed around the African people in the last years of the nineteenth century by the imperialists'. Through revolutionary struggles, 'Africa has opened her doors and windows on to the world'. 'Her contemporary revolution has become part and parcel of the world revolution . . . against imperialism, old and new, against its military, monopolistic and racialistic bases . . . against under-development, national disintegration and exploitation.'

The African revolution is a part of the orbit of history, aimed at ending feudalistic methods, capitalism and war. 'It aims at establishing free communities with a developed national economy, using the most up-to-date means of modern technology and placing them at the beginning of the path of socialism—man's greatest achievement in social thinking.' Any attempt to separate our revolution from progressive world developments and socialist trends was wrong, unreal, unhistorical and harmful to the interests and struggles of the African peoples. Indeed, such a separation was in essence 'a reactionary and imperialistic plan', aimed to substitute reformist trends for revolu-

tionary, to replace colonialism with neo-colonialism, utopian for scientific socialism.

In addition from this global framework, the African revolutionary struggle was closely integrated with those of Asia and Latin America, against the same enemies and pursuing the same goals. 'The common man in Africa does not need special intelligence to realise that the American aggression, for example, in Vietnam is the very same aggression from which he suffers.' This identity of interests was reflected in the Bandung and other Afro-Asian Conferences, and in the Tri-Continental Conference in Cuba in 1966.

Africa as a whole was the battlefield of especially acute struggles. Loutfi El Kholi considered that the Asian peoples had, on the whole, basically succeeded in containing the imperialist powers to 'rather limited positions and bases'. And this contention was not affected by the American aggression in Vietnam, which because of the heroic resistance of the people and the world-wide support they enjoyed, was bound to fail and collapse 'and lead the imperialist presence in Asia as a whole to the brink of total collapse in the very near future'. In Latin America, 'despite the rise of Cuba as a liberated and socialist country and her endurance', and also despite the emergence of a number of resistance movements against puppet regimes, the struggle had 'not yet reached the stage of decisiveness that we observe in Africa'. Moreover, unlike Latin America which was more or less the exclusive preserve of the United States as overlord, 'Africa is fully open to all the classical imperialist powers in addition to the U.S.A. . . . This leads to bloody competition for political, economic and military influence in the continent and ends in instability even for conservative and puppet regimes'. Loutfi illustrated his point by referring to the latest military coups in the Congo (Kinshasa), Dahomey, Upper Volta, Central Africa and Nigeria, within a period of less than three months.

This aspect of the 1966 coups was brought out in more detail by other contributors. Tigani El-Taib, Sudanese Communist and a member of the *World Marxist Review* delegation, declared: 'In the Central African Republic, Dahomey and Upper Volta it was a clear case of pro-imperialist military dictatorships replacing pro-imperialist civilian regimes. The army came to power as a more reliable agent of French imperialism to protect its interests against those of rival powers.' But he adds that 'regardless of the intentions of their initiators, these coups manifest the mounting discontent of the mass of the people'. Though they 'reveal a lamentable lack of revolutionary organisation and leadership' and also an alarming degree of imperialist influence in the bureaucracy and especially within the armed forces,

'reactionary army take-overs cannot change the objective conditions which give rise to political crises. . . . They change the forms of the struggle but not its content'.

To return to the opening paper:

The 'area of exploitation' for the imperialist monopolies has diminished greatly since the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. More countries have joined the group of socialist states. Former colonies, in the course of national liberation, have increasingly gained control over their own resources. Many of them have entered into commercial and economic relations with the socialist states, whose productivity has grown rapidly, now reaching 30 per cent of world production.

These factors have impelled the imperialists to concentrate ever more intensely on exploitation of the vast resources of Africa, with its cheap labour, fertile land, vast forests and abundant mineral wealth. The paper estimates that Africa has 98 per cent of the world's diamonds, 50 of gold, 70 of cobalt, 40 of chrome, 30 of manganese, 35 of raw phosphate and 24 of copper, 'in addition to iron, coal, oil and gas in huge quantities and at economic prices'.

THE FEROCITY OF THE BATTLE

'Consequently', the paper declares, 'our continent has become in reality the field for the main direct and acute collision and confrontation between national revolutionary forces and imperialist powers in the contemporary world.

This may explain the ferocity of the battle in Africa, its complexities, its variety of methods and weapons. For we at the same time face both neo- and old imperialism. We are also confronted with puppet, conservative, racist regimes, military bases and occupation at one and the same time. We face the horrors of the policy of racial discrimination; the recruiting of white mercenaries against national and progressive governments; economic pressures and exportation of counter-revolution; blockage by pacts and military bases and conditioned aid and forced treaties.

We also face missionaries hiding behind religious banners and destroying the people's moral integrity and national heritage; we face them side by side with collective aggression by imperialist states—in spite of secondary differences between them—sometimes under the guise of the United Nations. The tragedy of the Congo (Leopoldville) is a clear example. We face, moreover, genocide of tribes, kindling of hatred in countries to prevent national unity. We also face imperialist intrigues to instigate border wars. This at the same time explains the great diversity of means, methods and paths of struggle of the people of the general revolutionary front in Africa.

The African Revolution was advancing at a time of great world changes—the advances and victories of national liberation; the growing extent and might of the socialist camp; the great advances of science and technology; the increasing importance of moral forces expressed

by the United Nations and world opinion—which had been recognised and endorsed in the U.A.R.'s revolutionary National Charter. But Africa itself remained a poverty-stricken area. Ninety per cent of Africans were living on agriculture; although the continent accounts for one-seventh of world raw material production, her industrial production does not exceed one-fiftieth of the world output, accounting for less than 14 per cent of national income. Average yearly income was 90 dollars compared with 3,000 dollars in the U.S. And things were getting worse because of imperialist domination of world markets and world trade, resulting in steady impoverishment of Africa for the benefit of the monopolies. Raw material prices were continually being depressed, while those of industrial products, machines and equipment were going up and up. Between 1951 and 1961 raw material prices (excluding petrol) fell by 33.1 per cent; prices of industrial products rose 3.5 per cent, of machines and equipment 31.5 per cent.

Thus the African revolution acutely faces the reality of under-development in a world changing and developing at a ratio never equalled before. In her efforts to develop her national economies and her resources at the ratio of the age Africa finds herself before a historic choice between two paths: that of conventional capitalism or of anti-capitalist development leading to socialism.

The choice of the socialist path, Loutfi El Kholi said, was 'inevitable'. Whatever resistance and pressures, socialist development was quicker and better able to preserve income rates. It met the demands of the peoples 'for so long crushed, vanquished and exploited'. Capitalism was not only too slow, but lacked support. The bourgeoisie of today lacked the revolutionary spirit of its predecessors in earlier times, due to the maturity of the class struggle locally and internationally. Socialism had strong powers of attraction not only for the working class but also for intermediate classes. Thus, in Africa, the national liberation revolution was merging into the social revolution 'with its socialist horizon'.

MAIN RAGING BATTLEFIELD

Africa today, Loutfi El Kholi continued, is 'the main raging battlefield' of the struggle between revolutionary and imperialist forces. For both it is a life and death battle. Any degree of independence for any African state is under threat so long as the whole continent has not been purged of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Although the battle differed in its level and methods, reflecting circumstances of both sides in each area, unity of the revolutionary forces was growing—faced with growing co-ordination and collective aggression by the imperialists. In the course of the struggle, conditions

were bringing about the merging of the national liberation and the social revolutions; the African revolution has become part of the 'progressive human revolution against imperialism, under-development, exploitation of man, and war'.

The paper briefly traced the tide of independence that swept the continent from 1950 with three nominally independent African-governed states, to 1966 with thirty-nine states having achieved independence. Yet independence had not meant liberation from imperialist exploitation. On the contrary, it had meant increased exploitation through restricted aid, and the methods of neo-colonialism, to rob the continent of its wealth and drain its labour powers. Investments had reached the amount of 22,000 million dollars, yielding profits of 2,000 million yearly. Imperialism controlled the world markets and dominated African trade, forcing down raw material prices and inflating those of industrial products and machinery, thus making 'fabulous profits' and preventing accumulation for African development. U.S. investment had leaped up from 287 million dollars in 1950 to 1,700 million in 1964; U.S. exports to Africa had gone from 494 to 916 million dollars in the same period, and corresponding imports from 362 million to 1,211 million.

Imperialists were extending aggressive military bases in our continent, and America—with naval and air bases in Morocco, Lybia, Tunisia, Liberia and Ethiopia, more rapidly than the others. The U.S. had begun brazen intervention against national liberation movements in Africa, reaching its climax in the Congo, besides planning reactionary coups and 'exporting counter-revolution'.

These events needed to be seen against their historical background—the capturing and transport, under frightful conditions of tens of millions of slaves—depriving Africa of whole generations of the strongest, most energetic young men and women—thus not only stopping development of African communities but also pushing them towards deterioration and fanning tribal conflicts so as to get African agents for the slave trade. The imperialists had also fanned regional divisions of all kinds—especially between the North and the rest of the continent—which still left heritages which threatened African unity. Imperialism had preserved the most backward political, economic and social patterns, stifled education and opposed economic development other than foreign-owned mines and plantations. Wherever climatic conditions were suitable, white settlement had been instituted as in South Africa, Rhodesia, Kenya and Algeria, reflecting the racist nature of imperialist policy.

Western imperialists did not regard Africans as human beings but rather as animals fit for export to foreign labour markets. The after-

math of this hateful racist outlook is reflected today in apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia. It remains . . . the background of neo-colonialist policy.

NEO-COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALIST AID

The essence of neo-colonialism is to maintain the superficial aspect of political independence while securing actual subordination to imperialism, especially economically. This is ensured by a large number of methods, economic, political, military and ideological; methods based on economic links, special relations, loans and investments. There would be links between an African country and 'a specific zone of influence', a customs union of a 'common market' dominated by imperialism. In most West and Central African states the monetary systems are linked with France and subordinated to the 'Bank of Western Africa' and the 'Bank of Central Africa'. 'The Monetary Council that issues the East African Shilling is dominated by the British'. A huge number of African states are still in either the sterling or the franc zone. 'Commonwealth preference' directs their foreign trade, and many are tied to the European Common Market without being allowed any share in its decisions and administration.

In the 'British Commonwealth' group, the British, U.S. and West German share of imports usually are more than half. In the former French colonies, however, the French share (1963) varied from 33 per cent (Togo) to 74 per cent (Malagasy). The neo-colonialists claim that the African states benefit from these arrangements because they pay higher prices for African products, especially agricultural, than prevailing rates on the world markets. But—and here's the catch—the same imperialist states also fix the world market rates! Most African countries suffer a balance-of-payments deficit which they can't cover without going back to the imperialists for 'aid' and loans. 'Aid' is also sought for deficits in state budgets, and for military 'assistance' to equip and train African armed forces.

Of course, this need for 'aid' arises, in the first place, from the activities of imperialism, which hampered African development, and rigged prices, and still acts to depress prices of African-produced materials. This is not merely the working out of some natural economic law favouring industrial against agricultural products. Egyptian cotton, better in quality and in shorter supply than American, fell in price by 30 per cent in the decade 1955-1965, but the American price fell only 12 per cent. The core of the question is in the relationship of exploitation forced on developing countries by inequitable trade, as a result of which African countries lose more than double what they receive in 'aid'.

This 'aid' has a 'stupefying' effect, African countries which depend on it cannot make any real effort to develop their economies and redress the balance of payment. This is obvious in cases where foreign aid is needed to cover budget deficits. 'Would a government that depends on foreign help to pay the salaries of the civil service seriously be called independent?' And the 'military aid' is really to brainwash African military trainees to do the dirty job, formerly carried out by imperial armies, of suppressing national liberation movements.

The attitude of the International Bank towards the Aswan High Dam project proves that technical aid offered by international bodies followed the 'Western' line. Most experts and specialised agents of the United Nations are people who fled from the socialist countries because of their hatred for the socialist system, and incompetent ex-colonial civil servants accustomed to high salaries. An accurate description of imperialist 'aid' was given by a French Minister answering some Members of Parliament who objected to the amounts of grants to former French colonies. The Minister assured them that the cost of aid was much less than occupation expenses . . . and, of course, far less than the cost of colonial wars. After all, the Vietnam war cost France a million francs a day.

Talk of Western investments financing development schemes in Africa, said Loutfi El Kholi, was highly misleading. The nature of international monopolies' investments had not changed since independence. 'These investments are mainly directed towards exploitation of the peoples of these countries and the draining of their natural resources.' It was remarkable that since independence monopolistic investments in Africa had doubled, due to the return of colonialism to the exploitation of previously neglected African resources after the liquidation of most of its strongholds of Asia; to the massive arrival in Africa of U.S. imperialism and its huge monopolies; and the opening up of former British and French colonies to the penetration of other imperialists, notably West German.

The predominant character of imperialist investments is their concentration on extractive and related industries. Such industries already existed before independence without bringing about any real development: the big profits made by foreign concerns out of the Katanga did not enable the Congo to take any effective steps towards development. Where certain light or consumer industries, such as breweries, were introduced, it was notable that efforts were made to associate the emerging bourgeois elements with imperialist interests through agencies and appointments to senior posts in local branches of imperialist concerns, or even through offers of partnership in local enterprises.

Even where local industries were established to process raw materials, an important element of foreign exploitation remained. Formerly the Western countries imported low-price raw cotton and sold it back in the form of high-price textiles. Now, thanks to abundant raw materials and cheap labour rates in Africa, 'they import cotton textiles at a cheap price and, in return, export at the highest prices, machines, spare parts, technical experience and foreign capital'.

Here we may depart from a summary of Loutfi El Kholi's opening report to add that a number of other contributors presented detailed papers on various aspects of neo-colonialism imperialist investment and 'aid' in African countries.

An important study of many aspects of capitalist and imperialist investments in Africa was contributed by the economist MOHAMED SID AHMED of *Al Talia*. Pointing out that Africa was one of the wealthiest potential areas and had 'unlimited possibilities for development', this paper pointed out that, nevertheless, income per head in African countries (excluding the Republic of South Africa) amounted to 90 dollars a year as compared with 1,400 to 1,600 dollars in West Europe and 3,057 in the United States.

Despite these great changes that have occurred on the map of Africa, African independent states did not all embark on the way to economic independence, nor have they developed their productive capacities in the most suitable way to increase the prosperity of their people. Foreign monopolies maintain their grip on the orientation of these states, since they hold key positions in their national economies. This phenomenon is known as neo-colonialism.

The backwardness of Africa is not due to lack of wealth. Imperialist capital investment is directed not towards industrial development but, on the contrary, towards maintaining Africa as a source of raw materials and a market for the products of the developed capitalist countries. This objective is secured in various ways, including loans and economic aid 'with a view to maintaining the state of dependence, to keeping newly-independent countries within the world capitalist system, and to oppose the setting up 'of a solid public sector capable of steering the national economy on the non-capitalist path'. Also they used the situation prevailing in international trade, the balance-of-payments factor and the existing gap between developed and undeveloped countries to strengthen their control over the wealth of African and other newly liberated countries.

The disequilibrium which was the main feature of the African countries' relations with the imperialist countries had its origin in the fact that 'equal amounts of products exchanged on the world market do not actually have the same value, which varies according to the productivity of labour'. Thus, the disequilibrium is situated 'not in

the sphere of exchange and trade, but in the sphere of production itself, in the inequality in degrees of development and industrialisation'. Hence the opportunity for the wealthier countries to become always still wealthier at the expense of the poor countries. This phenomenon is aggravated further by monopoly, a feature common to imperialism, and the ability of international monopolies to influence and determine prices in their own interests.

Losses by developing countries, as a result of trade disequilibrium, pointed out Mohamed Sid Ahmed, are estimated at between 14 and 16 billion dollars a year—i.e. 55 per cent of their overall exports to the imperialist countries. This amount corresponds to twice the total economic aid from the developed countries, including private investment.

In other words international monopolies got hold of 9 per cent of the national income of the developing countries, thus depriving them of a sum that exceeds the whole of their investments, which are estimated at about 15 billion dollars a year.

One consequence of trade disequilibrium was the steadily increasing indebtedness of the developing to the developed countries. United Nations estimates showed such debts to have risen from 9 billion dollars in 1955 to 33 billion in 1964. Adding private debts, and other commitments, one found that the amount of dividends and interest payments from the developing group of countries already amounted to over 3,500 million dollars, and this amount was steadily rising. The proportion of the exports of developing countries devoted to such payments had risen from 4 per cent in 1955 to 12 per cent in 1964. The export of monetary resources from rich to poor countries was already counterbalanced by 50 per cent in the reverse direction to pay for dividends and interest on loans. 'This proportion increases from year to year, and this phenomenon threatens to block entirely the transfer of monetary resources to newly independent countries, even if we assume that these sums were being directed to development projects. If such a situation continues in the years to come we should expect that in fifteen years this transfer of capital will stop completely; any transfers of capital would be counter-balanced in the reverse direction' by interest payments.

This paper supported these general conclusions by a good deal of detailed statistical material of absorbing interest, which there is no space to reproduce here. In fact he shows that imperialist investments in developing countries 'are not material capabilities and energies offered . . . to contribute to the process of development, but merely act as a "pump" to absorb the wealth of developing countries and pour it into the developed capitalist countries'.

These investments are mainly directed to extractive industries, to pull out African resources for processing and manufacture abroad. In nine years United States investments in Asia, Africa and Latin America amounted to 4,500 million dollars. These investments were a source of profits (representing a transfer of capital in the reverse direction) amounting to 14,400 million dollars—a gross loss for the developing countries of 9,000 million: 1,000 million a year.

Only a part of these profits are usually re-invested in the developing countries, the lion's share being repatriated for investment in the imperialist countries. Thus from 1947 to 1953, French concerns in Africa made 23,200 million francs; they re-invested only 7,200—about one-third.

Assuming foreign investments in Africa to be not more than 20 billion dollars, earning a profit of 25 per cent (almost certainly too low an estimate); and assuming further that half these profits were re-invested in Africa (an over-estimate), 'this means that 1,500 million dollars are transferred every year from African countries' to the imperialist countries.

Following a close study of the direction, amounts and purposes of American 'aid' to African countries, and U.S. investments in South and South West Africa, the Congo (Kinshasa), Nigeria, Morocco, Ghana, Angola, Mozambique, Somalia and elsewhere in the continent, the paper notes that 'a principal object of the American aid is to create the most favourable conditions for the exploitation of capital and to reduce the amount of expenditure which does not lead to any immediate or clear profit. American aid is used for the purpose of exporting American goods, thus helping the United States to find a market for agricultural surpluses and help her balance-of-payments difficulties'.

Despite the influx of American investments the traditional investing countries maintained the lead. After 1960 Sid Ahmed estimates British investments at 6,500 million dollars, French at 7,000 million and U.S. at 1,100 million. British investment is concentrated in former British colonies in Southern Africa (including the Republic) and Rhodesia, East and West Africa. Similarly, French investments are mainly in former colonies of the French empire. The magnitude of these is shown by a detailed list of French companies in the continent, with their capital, field of activity, date of establishment and site of headquarters.

Attention is also drawn to the increasing penetration of West German finance capital in Africa, and the close relationship between

West Germany and the racial regime in South Africa. The Portuguese colonies are also brought under examination, with a note that American, Belgian, British and West German capital is increasingly infiltrating these areas and demanding their share in return for financial and military aid lent to the Portuguese in their war against Angolan, Guinean and Mozambique guerilla fighters. The paper concludes with a note on the role of Israel, which facilitates the infiltration of foreign capital in some African countries. A major part of U.S. investments in Israel as well as West German reparations, is not retained but re-exported as capital exports in African countries.

Similar conclusions, based on the examination of independent data, were reached by ALI YATA, General Secretary of the Moroccan Communist Party, in his outstanding paper on *Neo-Colonialism*. For example he reveals that of 1,629 million dollars invested in Africa by the United States in 1964, only 225 million was for manufacturing industries—and of this amount 192 million were invested in the Republic of South Africa, leaving 33 million for the rest of the continent. This paper also contains a valuable analysis of imperialist economic manoeuvres in Morocco itself. In the same spirit, many contributors to the seminar presented highly significant data on imperialist economic interests in their own countries. Thus the representative of the *South West African People's Organisation* pointed out the close connection between the imperialist powers' covert backing for the Republic's annexation of South West Africa and the activities of American and other foreign companies with investments in s.w.a. and are interested 'in keeping the Territory as a field for the investment of their capital, a source of raw material and cheap labour'. P.A.I.G.C. (*African Independence Party of 'Portuguese' Guinea and Cape Verde*) presented a detailed analysis of the foreign capitalist concerns in their territory, as 'a striking testimony that the machinery of the colonial economy in our country is in the hands of a handful of big finance men'. A similar analysis of the set-up in 'Rhodesia' was presented by Mr. STEPHEN NKOMO of the *Zimbabwe African People's Union* (Z.A.P.U.). A South African paper pointed out that this country 'was made safe for foreign capitalists by the Boer War of British imperialism seventy years ago. It became the pioneer example of neo-colonialism in 1910 when political power was transferred to Smuts and the white minority. Since then, imperialist investments had poured in—but at the cost of the wholesale robbery of the Africans' land, a regime of unbridled terror and racialism, and all the other well-known horrors of apartheid. 'It is precisely because the Republic of South Africa is an investors' paradise that the great imperialist powers are at such pains to protect and save the evil Pretoria regime. . . .'

THE STRUGGLE FOR AFRICAN UNITY

To return to the opening paper of Loutfi El Kholi. Against the neo-colonialist manoeuvres of colonialism, he said, Africa had adopted the banner of unity. 'Since 1945 African unity has come to mean unity of destiny of the peoples of the continent—i.e. unity in action against the common enemy, for independence and national sovereignty.' It began with co-operation in the independence struggle, but after independence the slogan was widened to embrace co-operation to safeguard independence and solve the economic and political problems which could not be solved by any country alone. In the series of all-African conferences a 'programme' of struggle had been adopted, 'taking as the point of departure the common struggle against neo-colonialism and for the liberation of the African territories still under colonialist domination'. This gave the concept of African unity 'a militant and profound content; it broadened the fight against colonialism to include that against neo-colonialism; it acquired a social content through the realisation that co-operation was needed to safeguard independence by eliminating economic, social and cultural backwardness. With this new concept, unity became the aim and objective of the popular masses in Africa, for which the workers, peasants, intellectuals and revolutionaries are struggling.'

A big step forward towards African Unity was the establishment in 1963 of the Organisation of African Unity (O.A.U.) and the adoption of its progressive, anti-imperialist Charter. The establishment of the O.A.U. opened up opportunities to extend their co-operation in all fields and develop common attitudes in defence of the cause of world peace and African liberation. But these opportunities had not all been taken, due to shortcomings—the O.A.U. faced such difficulties as: subversive activities of the neo-colonialist forces; negative stands by certain African governments which were inclined to depend on neo-colonialism; differences in the political and economic structures, and levels of development, between O.A.U. members; theoretical and ideological difficulties. Yet the desire and trend to African unity remained the most powerful factor.

The forces interested in African unity—the newly-free African states, political, national and progressive parties and organisations, trade unions and social organisations—should work to safeguard African freedom, stick to the path of independent development through liberation of the national economy, and the promotion of industry and agriculture in the interests of the people. Most African countries needed to extend economic co-operation on all levels, from the development of trade to plans for economic co-ordination and integration, to establish national industries and make full use of natural resources.

Loutfi El Kholi envisaged a struggle to maintain the anti-imperialist stand of the O.A.U., and prevent the emergence of factions and new divisions. It should concentrate on questions which would unite and mobilise all Africans. The way to unity would be paved by united struggle of the workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals, who should establish 'a strong alliance of all anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist forces'. All progressive parties and organisations should establish, on a continent-wide scale, 'an order of priorities', and thus define common actions and positions. The trade unions have a glorious part to play; it was necessary to strive for a powerful unity of the trade union movement and against divisionist activities by colonialist agents. A peasant movement should be encouraged in alliance with the trade unions and the revolutionary intellectuals.

The forward posts in the defence of African unity were held by the African countries which had chosen the socialist path. A heavy duty fell on the revolutionary parties and political organisations in these countries, to safeguard internal unity—a pre-condition for socialist transformation.

'At this stage, characterised by rabid attacks of neo-colonialist forces on the continent, the revolutionary parties (in these countries) are faced with the task of struggle in the ideological field with the aim of purging their respective societies of ideas antagonistic to scientific socialism' and of exchanging experience to help solve the complicated problems of the 'fusion of the national and social revolutions'.

The African revolution, he continued, could not be classified under the category of 'slow classical developments in the history of mankind'. It came rather under the category of 'revolutionary leaps and profound transformations of exceptional rapidity'. It was like an explosion that took place after centuries of suppression and repression. Modern communication and science had made the world small; socialism had become a material world phenomenon and revolutionary thought and radical change on a world scale had found loud echoes in Africa. The African toiling masses had nothing to lose but chains. Hence the explosion, taking place in favourable world conditions, with great support from the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union which offered unconditional material aid and support.

But we should not only look on the bright side. Revolutions knew their ebb and flow. The map of the continent, flying the flags of forty independent countries, was in a sense deceptive.

Less than ten African countries had been able, in varying degrees, to attain true independence through the emancipation of their econo-

mies; the rest, the great majority, had yet attained no more than formal independence. The fight for economic emancipation was complicated by backwardness, lack of possibilities of financial accumulation and shortage of technical cadres. Also imperialism had disintegrated the continent into small units; only three African countries had populations exceeding 20 million; twenty-five had below 5 million and thirteen below 1 million. These factors militated against viability of most African countries to develop on their own and severely limited their internal market. Thus the struggle for economic emancipation was closely associated with the question of African unity. The struggle was also closely associated with the need for pursuing the road to socialism.

Loutfi El Kholi emphasised that only the road towards socialism could mobilise all human, technical and material resources in development which would serve the masses and raise their living standards. Any other path would only serve the interests of a minority of parasites who would soon develop into a bourgeois class 'linked by its interests and nature with the foreign monopolies and neo-colonialism'.

The paper considered that in Africa the capitalists could not, as in the past century in Europe, lead the national revolution. Even in countries like Egypt where a local capitalist class had been allowed to develop under colonialist rule, that class was too weak to undertake big development within the framework of capitalism. Further, as the masses had been more strongly attracted towards socialism, especially since World War II, the capitalist class had become antagonistic towards the national liberation movement; it had lost all classical revolutionary attributes which had characterised it earlier when it fought against imperialism to win the national market and achieve some degree of independence.

Moreover, unlike the old variety of colonialism, imperialism today, in the neo-colonialist period, was not hostile to this bourgeois class and its ambitions; it was ready to play the role of partner with it and help consolidate it as a counter to the progressive national revolution with its trend towards socialism. Neo-colonialism was prepared to tolerate political independence and even a limited degree of development—provided that development would not go beyond strategic and processing industries and proceed to heavy industry—the basis of national economy and essence of independence.

The plan of neo-colonialism for Africa envisaged building the nucleus of a national bourgeoisie in countries where there was no such class. Local bureaucrats were found to replace the colonial civil service in the state apparatus; aid and loans were granted to set up

private firms linked with foreign monopolies. This all-continental phenomenon also required continent-wide mobilisation to secure, throughout the continent, the following-up of the achievement of formal independence by economic liberation, advancing to socialism under the class leadership of the working people. It was impossible for each country to concentrate purely on its own development. 'The independence of every African country is seriously menaced by the existence of imperialist forces anywhere on the continent; for imperialism's present zones of influence are in fact but springboards against independent states.'

Loutfi El Kholi underlines the importance of this point by referring to the fate of the Lumumba government in the Congo, the Nkrumah government in Ghana and the stabilising of the Smith regime—'a serious and direct menace to Zambia'. The common struggle against imperialism was not only a duty to oppressed brothers; it was vital for the safeguarding of the independence of each African state. This 'duty to self and brother' was not observed with the required effectiveness by a considerable number of independent countries'. Our revolutionary unity in Africa had not attained the standard required by the fierceness and nature of the battle. We had experienced bitter lessons of the cost of inaction and disunity.

The revolutionary African forces should reject, in theory and practice, the policy of anti-Communism. Communist forces should simultaneously reject doctrinal rigidity before the new phenomena that appear in Africa. We are called upon to build our revolutionary unity through the scientific vision of reality, and to participate in drawing up a unified plan of African revolutionary action, taking into account the special circumstance and distinguishing features of every one of our societies.

Drawing attention to the lessons of the coup in Ghana and other coups, which he analysed in some detail, Loutfi El Kholi said that the imperialists, old and new, were pooling their resources in a life and death struggle against Africa. African countries could not withdraw into isolation from one another without giving up not only the principles for which they had fought and abandoning their defences against colonialism and reaction. To try to bargain with imperialism would mean forfeiting the gains of independence and eventually reverting to the status of colonies. The only road that remained was to continue the revolution against colonialism throughout Africa, 'pooling all efforts and reorganising our forces in the light of the experience gained in the battle'.

'This is the path of History, Hope and Life—a hard path, in fact, but with no alternative but slow and gradual suicide.'

PATHS OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

DR. SOBOLEV'S PAPER

'I am far from thinking', began Dr. Sobolev in his paper on *Some Problems of Social Progress in Africa*, 'that I have managed to find the absolute answers to the problems of Africa today'. He emphasised that he was speaking for himself, not for his journal, which belonged to many Communist and Workers' Parties all of whom had their own viewpoints. And he welcomed frank opinions on the questions he raised.

Like practically every contributor, he saw the most important contradiction at the basis of African reality as that between imperialism and neo-colonialism, on the one hand, and the African people on the other. But there were also other contradictions, in close connection with this basic one: between the African exploiters and working people; the poverty of the masses and the wealth of the élite; the archaic social relations and the requirements of the productive forces; between growing populations and slow rate of production. Ethnic, tribal and racial contradictions were interwoven with class struggle.

As a result of the slave trade and then colonial domination, 'accompanied by savage and crude forms of plunder', African development had been delayed and distorted. There existed two parallel sectors in the economy—the colonial commodity sector and the traditional patriarchal sector—with no organic link between them. The economy was based on natural small-scale production in the embryo and tribal, communal relations using 'non-economic methods of compulsion'. Class differentiation proceeded extremely slowly, without clearly defined class boundaries, many intermediate groups, uneven development and inter-penetration of social groups. The National Revolutionary Movement of Congo (Brazzaville) had enumerated no less than fourteen classes and strata in the country.

Tribalism, or remnants thereof, existed in all tropical African countries. Some African politicians defended tribalism as an expression of the originality of the African way of life, and criticised the Marxists for alleged hostility to African traditions and ways of life, and to tribalism. But the tribal and communal relations were dying out, not because of Marxist criticism but because of cash crops, because of the bourgeois striving for profit implanted by colonial policy. 'The golden calf is the real enemy of the best features of Africanism.' Marxists, while resolutely opposing reactionary aspects and stagnant social phenomena, want to preserve the best features of the traditions and cultures of Africa. The colonisers had brought about the degradation of much of the tribal upper strata into exploiters, administrators

who slavishly carry out the will of their masters, and impose semi-feudal or semi-bourgeois types of exploitation. Again, it was not the Marxists who were responsible for aggravating class contradictions and destroying unity of African society. Inevitably in the course of history, tribes would disintegrate, but it was possible to see that this progressive development took place without stratification into antagonistic classes and bloody clashes, on a democratic basis. Working classes would develop, peasants, preferably working in co-operatives, and workers.

TRIBAL COMMUNE AND SOCIALISM

One thing is sure: the elimination of communal relationships has long since become a necessity and is an indispensable and important condition for the growth of productive forces, not only in agriculture but also in industry, declared Dr. Sobolev.

The lot of most African working peasants making up the communes is one of extreme poverty; and this poverty 'the greatest evil of our time' was growing instead of decreasing, hampering the development of productive forces. The consumption of some members 'is to a considerable extent of a parasitic character', and there was no possibility for productive accumulation. 'However much some may earn somewhere, everything goes for non-productive consumption within the tribe, which is not a bit interested in productive accumulation of modernisation of production.' The peasants and farm workers were 'plundered' by moneylenders, second-hand dealers and merchants. Poll taxes and other taxes also ruined the African peasant, so that, unable to feed his family, 'he goes to towns, mines, railroads, ports, in search of work and becomes the victim of colonial exploitation. But he always maintains his ties with the tribe . . . where his income does not fully belong to him but to all members'.

While, therefore, most African peasants who do not produce cash crops are not petty bourgeois in their outlook or their attitude to property, the tribal commune as such 'possesses no driving motive or internal sources for extended reproduction or for the organisation of modern production'. This is due to the backward and conservative character of the organisation of production and the obsolete system of distribution, Sobolev continued.

The commune cannot serve as a source of socialism, and does not alleviate as many believe, the advance to socialism but, on the contrary, hinders it.

This outspoken challenge to certain concepts of 'African socialism' was supported and echoed by other contributors, perhaps most notably in a paper specially prepared for the Seminar by DR. KWAME

NKRUMAH and read by the Ghana C.P.P. representative, MRS. SHIRLEY GRAHAM DUBOIS.

In this paper, *African Socialism Revisited*, Nkrumah argues that the phrase African Socialism no longer expresses its original meaning, 'tends to obscure our fundamental socialist commitment', and should be abandoned. Today, the phrase,

seems to espouse the view that the traditional African society was a classless society imbued with the spirit of humanism. . . . Such a conception of socialism makes a fetish of the communal African society. But an idyllic, African classless society . . . is certainly a facile simplification; there is no historical or even anthropological justification for any such society.

Nkrumah dismisses this approach as 'anthropological'. Certainly we should try to recapture the philosophy and humanism within communalism, but this was rather philosophical than anthropological. It was not possible, practically, to return to communalism. 'Such a return to a *status quo ante* is quite unexampled in the evolution of societies. There is no theoretical or historical reason to indicate that it is at all possible.' 'It is,' he concluded, 'the elimination of fancifulness from socialist action that makes socialism scientific. To suppose that there are tribal, national, or racial socialisms is to abandon objectivity in favour of chauvinism.'

Dr. Sobolev did not merely condemn communalism as an unsatisfactory basis for the building of a modern socialist society; he also discussed, though briefly, its future. Should it be destroyed? Or should one await its inevitable decay through the spontaneous development of commodity-money relations? Rejecting both these alternatives, he envisaged the transformation of the commune, 'maintaining the features of a democratic and collective character', and turning it into 'a productive unit with equality of all members and the obligation to work; with the gradual introduction of wages, the translation into practice of a broader system of individual and collective incentives in the development of production'.

Such a renovated and transformed commune can ensure extended reproduction, serve as a form, opening up broad vistas for the development of productive forces in agriculture and handicraft.

THE AFRICAN PROLETARIAT

Dr. Sobolev next turned his attention to some special features of the proletariat in Africa, which has emerged as a result of the intrusion of foreign capital, and is counterposed to foreign, rather than indigenous, exploiters. The colonialists had infected the African working class with three serious disabilities—inconstancy, migration and lack of skill—in an attempt to limit its political role of creator of a new society. But, history prevails. Though numerically small, a modern

experienced proletariat was emerging as the most progressive section in African society, to carry out its historic mission as the creator of a new society and in the final event the builder of socialism.

The study of the characteristics of the African working class was amplified in much greater detail, and in a particular area, by the outstanding Marxist sociologist MAJHEMOUT DIOP, General Secretary of the African Independence Party (P.A.I.) of Senegal. In facts and figures this paper—*Notes on the Senegalese Working Class*—analyses the categories, wages and conditions of various sections of workers in this country; their degree of organisation into trade unions, co-operatives and political parties. 'Our society is far from being an exact copy of European society,' noted Diop. 'We should try to avoid superficial similarities.' Class consciousness among African workers was complicated by such factors, connected with the pre-colonial period, as—the extended family of the patriarchal type; the ethnic or tribal aspect; vestiges of communal organisation and feudal-type classifications. The colonial period too had left its mark in the development and ideology of the petty bourgeoisie, various types of nationalism, the transition of people from one class to another, and the differences arising from religion, all of which factors taken together tended to blunt and obscure class differences and class consciousness among the workers. On the basis of such a study Diop considers the Senegalese population can be divided thus: peasant strata (77.6 per cent), 'pre-proletarian' strata (17 per cent), 'pre-petty bourgeois' strata (5 per cent) and 'pro-bourgeois' strata (0.4 per cent). Each of these 'strata' is again subdivided into a total of no less than eighteen categories and sub-categories. The purpose is to arrive at a more exact understanding of class forces and alignments. It is most likely true that the era of bourgeois democratic revolutions is over, and all revolutions should lead to socialism. But to conclude from this that our revolution is a socialist one and must be led by the proletariat would be too hasty. 'What is actually taking place in our countries are transitional democratic revolutions. The leadership might be petty bourgeois, or led by classes developing towards a proletariat, or developing towards a working class—or a combination, giving them a dual character. A struggle was developing between those right-wing elements who sought to turn the revolution towards a capitalist direction, and the radicals who sought to advance to socialism. The developing working class should not seek to 'by-pass certain stages'. To seek an exclusive worker-peasant alliance would mean to isolate the radical petty-bourgeoisie, misunderstand the revolutionary perspectives and commit serious mistakes 'for which our enemies would blame socialism'. Rather, in line with Lenin's concept in *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*

in the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution, the developing working class should unite with the petty bourgeoisie and together with it win over the peasantry. The transitional democratic revolution leads to the establishment of a national democracy, in the course of which fierce class struggle develops against the pro-bourgeois strata. National democracy does not mean 'peaceful coexistence of classes'. We must anticipate 'open and sharp conflict between progressive classes and those aiming at hindering the advance of society'.

Dr. Sobolev continued by discussing the relevance of Marxist theory in general, and the experience of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in particular, to the specific problems of Africa. He considered that the Marxist-Leninist conception of the development of human society had been fully substantiated by history. Scientific communism had guided the peoples of the Soviet Union in carrying out the October Revolution, in building socialism; and the same principles had been the guide to revolution and building socialism in a number of countries of Europe and Asia, as well as Cuba. The experiences of these countries were of international significance. But 'the experience of one country can never be fully utilised by another'. 'Historical experience teaches but it does not dictate; it enriches and deepens our knowledge of social processes but is not a stencil for duplicating revolutionary forms.'

Considering the transition of African countries to socialism, one had to supply the general theory to the actual conditions and special features, as well as to make use of the experience of other countries which had built socialism already. Powerful enemies stood as obstacles to African development in a socialist direction—imperialism and neo-colonialism; local reactionary forces; and economic and cultural backwardness, the heritage of colonialism.

In most African countries there was no feudalism, nor did capitalism exist 'as an advanced social system'. This meant that the enormous task of destroying these established social formations, which had faced other peoples building socialism, did not exist in Africa; there was a real possibility of avoiding violent armed conflict between antagonistic classes. 'There does appear in Africa a fundamental possibility of waging a widespread struggle with the aim of isolating hostile class elements by peaceful political and economic means.'

At this stage the speaker warned, however, that his remarks referred to internal conflicts, not the clash between the African peoples and imperialism, 'against which a struggle is being waged with all means . . . including armed means of struggle'.

This point was fully borne out by all the representatives from countries still enslaved by direct colonialism or colonialism of the

special type of white supremacy regimes in the South. Representatives from the Portuguese colonies reported on the progress of the armed struggle in Mozambique, Angola and 'Portuguese' Guinea, and in some cases of the revolutionary methods of administration, land reform and education within the liberated areas. Similarly, from Zimbabwe, South West Africa and the Republic of South Africa, representatives of the fighting movements against apartheid made it clear that their perspective embraced all forms of struggle, including armed struggle. 'Our people everywhere in Southern Africa,' said J. B. MARKS, a leader of the African National Congress and head of the South African delegation, 'have fought and will continue to fight for their liberation . . . with modern arms in hand. Armed counter-revolution must be faced with armed revolution'. 'In all the countries now remaining under white minority rule armed struggle is the only perspective left for the people.'

NON-CAPITALIST STAGE

The solution of the democratic tasks of the African continent, continued Dr. Sobolev, could not be found within the framework and by the methods of capitalism; they could only be solved 'within the framework of a transitional stage . . . conditionally called . . . the non-capitalist stage of development'.

It might be noted here that this particular formulation did not meet with unanimous approval among the participants in the Seminar. An extremely thoughtful paper submitted by the governing Party of Mali (the *Sudanese Union-R.D.A.*) considers that 'there is no qualitative difference between "the non-capitalist path of development", and "the socialist path of development", though of course there are degrees or steps within the socialist path. The Mali delegation felt that the expression was used because it was considered axiomatic that the socialist way could be led only by a vanguard, class party, not by a mass party. But was this so? If a mass party, organised on the principles of democratic centralism, set out to achieve socialism, and took radical actions—such as: nationalised finance; state monopoly of imports and exports; control of distribution controlled essentially by the state and self-management sectors; main means of production owned by the state and workers; prevention of large private exploitation in agriculture—was it not at the stage of building socialism? Vanguard parties of the proletarian type did not exist in many African countries simply because economic and social conditions did not permit of them. Yet there were united parties functioning on the basis of democratic centralism, aiming at a socialist way of development and acting according to the principles of scientific socialism. 'An

original solution for building socialism in countries escaping directly from the colonial era must exist.'

Dr. Sobolev himself stressed the transitional character of what he called the non-capitalist stage, embodying elements both of the past—capitalist in character—and of the future—socialism. There was a 'complicated and varied picture of social relations taking shape'. What was important was the role of the masses, the extent of their participation in social life, the level of democracy, the possibility of the people really influencing policy. Power alone was not the source of socialism; the needs of production and the interests of the people were the basic source. 'The people are the builders of socialism.'

This concern for the strengthening of democracy as an essential condition for African development was reflected in a number of other contributions. A significant paper was presented by OMAR MUSTAFA of the Communist Party of Sudan, in which he pointed out that true democracy required that 'the masses of the people enjoy full rights in the administration of their political, social, economic and cultural affairs and . . . grasp their destiny'. The Western-type parliamentary democracy bequeathed by the colonial powers had proved empty of content, lacking ties with the working classes . . . 'a hollow body which fails to provide food and clothes for the worker or peasant'. In Sudan, bourgeois democracy proved a failure; 'the masses witnessed their Parliament transformed into a market where deputies were bought and sold . . . the so-called democratic system became more and more isolated from the masses and they ceased to believe in it'. That paved the way for the Aboud coup of November 1958. Mustafa characterised the revolutionary movement of workers, peasants and intellectuals headed by the Communist Party and the Democratic People's Party, which had overthrown the military regime and opened up new horizons to progress. But using anti-communism, slander and violence, reactionary forces in collusion with the imperialists, had carried through counter-revolutionary acts, faked elections, banned the Communist Party and once again, under the cloak of bourgeois democracy restored the power of feudalistic, capitalist and other retrograde elements. 'We do not reject bourgeois democracy absolutely and in all cases . . .' but 'there is no such thing as an absolute democracy in any society. . . . 'The presence of the forces of the working people in power is the only way to safeguard the utmost democracy.'

The final stage of Dr. Sobolev's paper dealt with the prospects for developing the democratic revolution in Africa into a socialist revolution. There was a real prospect, due to the historical circumstances of Africa's liberation, not least the influence and support of the world socialist system, that Africa would enter socialism—the

only direction in which to overcome the heritage of colonialism quickly—in an easier, more humane way than that of the Soviet Union and other countries which had pioneered the trail. 'Africa has already made its contribution to world history and it will contribute many powerful, original, valuable and rich features to it.'

AN HISTORIC OCCASION

Looking back on the Cairo Seminar, one feels that it would be difficult to over-estimate its significance, though there are those—who for one reason or another did not participate in it—who are anxious to belittle it. Even the above curtailed and incomplete account will give some idea of the breadth of the field that was covered, the wealth of original and challenging ideas which were discussed. As more of the material is published, it will be a mine of inexhaustible value for theoreticians and students in our continent and indeed all over the world, the more precious because the material emerges from the heartland of revolutionary Africa itself.

The Seminar represented a coming together, in a spirit of the utmost friendliness and goodwill, of the main revolutionary forces of Africa, both Marxists and non-Marxists, to discuss some of the most serious problems of the continent. This, in itself, underlined the overriding need for continuing and deeper unity in the life-and-death struggles against imperialism, colonialism of all types, and reaction. As KHALED MOHEI EL DIN pointed out in his illuminating address:

Conflict and dissension among militants and revolutionaries is no less dangerous than enemy attacks. . . . The existing contradiction between non-Marxist and Marxist revolutionary forces should be resolved on the basis of objective discussions free from the influence of imperialist propaganda.

The participants practically to a man endorsed the aim of socialism both a goal and as a means of securing victory in Africa's struggle against imperialism, colonialism, backwardness and poverty. In this respect, the vanguard role of those African countries aiming at socialism—the United Arab Republic, Guinea, Mali, Congo-Brazzaville, Algeria and Tanzania—was repeatedly stressed, as well as the need for all African patriots to rally for the defence of these countries, as an all-African task on a par with the liberation of the still enslaved areas dominated by Portuguese and white-supremacy regimes.

It was a source of great inspiration that the exchange of views was held on the soil of revolutionary Egypt, in the front line of defence of the gains of the African revolution against imperialist attacks, and striving under the dynamic leadership of President Nasser and his colleagues towards socialist construction. In addition to their efficient

arrangements and truly African hospitality, the U.A.R. gave the participants an opportunity to study at first hand the progress of their country by organising visits to the Aswan High Dam, the Suez Canal Area and the reclamation scheme of Al-Tahrir.

'Noting the success of the Seminar, the need for and importance of further joint discussions on the new and burning issues arising daily in the course of the African revolution, the participants believe that it will be useful to hold more joint meetings in the future.'

Thus read the communiqué unanimously adopted on the motion of the Sudanese delegation, and fully reflecting the wishes of all who took part. Indeed, the two journals have rendered a great service to Africa. The Cairo Seminar was a landmark in our history.

M.H.

WORLD MARXIST REVIEW

English-Language edition of

PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM

*Monthly journal of Marxism, Leninism, published in
Prague, Czechoslovakia*

January 1967 issue contains papers delivered at the Cairo
Seminar, Africa—National and Social Revolution

London distributors:

Central Books Ltd., 37 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1