

The magnitude of the problems sweeping over Africa cannot be underestimated. The tempo of the change is unequalled. But change brings new problems and challenges. Some of them are dealt with in this article.

EDITORIAL

New Problems of A CONTINENT IN REVOLUTION

AFRICA in 1960 is a continent in revolution. With dizzy speed, the era of direct domination over the peoples and countries of this continent is coming to an end. In one territory after another the old colonial orders are being dismantled and replaced by new governments composed of African leaders who, for the most part, enjoy a wide measure of popular support. Even in some areas where colonial rule and white privilege seemed most strongly entrenched the old colonial administrations are being modified and adapted, and hurried preparations made to transfer formal political power to African hands. The map of Africa is changing before our eyes, and the area of self-government extended to cover the whole continent.

A mighty, continent-wide tide of African liberation is surging from north to south, from east to west. The freedom struggles of individual African countries cannot be contained within their "national" boundaries, drawn by the imperialists. A common history of oppression going back over centuries of foreign rule, whether French or Belgian, British or Portuguese, unites the African people, regardless of their language and their past, or of which European power colonised them. The new independent States need to stand together to safeguard their new-won freedom and to help their African brothers still under the colonial yoke. There is a powerful urge towards co-operation of African liberation movements and union of the young African republics. All-African unity is an invaluable weapon against the forces of colonialism.

DANGEROUS ILLUSIONS

But the very speed of the striking transformation of Africa can and does give rise to certain widespread illusions which could be very dangerous. Some people seem to think that the struggle for African freedom has already been won, that it remains only to complete the process with a few "mopping up" operations, and

that the future progress by the peoples of Africa to full equality with the nations of the world will be an easy process, unaccompanied by storms, struggles and upheavals. There is an illusion that imperialism has surrendered, that the colonialists mean to give up without a struggle their vast sources of power and profit on this Continent.

There is the illusion that the winning of political independence, which is only the first phase of the African Revolution — though a vital and important one is the end of the freedom road, and not only the first miles along it, necessarily to be followed by far-reaching economic and social changes which will bring true emancipation to Africa and end its heritage of poverty, backwardness and dependence.

Again, airy and ill-defined talk of "Pan-Africanism" and the "African Personality" give rise to vague and mystical notions that the problems of our Continent are peculiarly and exclusively African, unrelated to those of other Continents and peoples, that our way forward will be unique and that the experiences of other peoples and countries are without meaning and value to us in Africa.

Of course, there *are* certain notably distinct features of the African Revolution, which we hope to deal with in future articles in this magazine. But, like the Asian states which embarked upon the road of independence after the second world war, and like recently independent Cuba, the emergent African republics have many problems common to all who seek to win their rightful place among the older and more developed countries. More: there are vital issues which face every country and people in the modern world. There is the key question of world peace, in an era where a new world war threatens the very survival of the whole of humanity. There is the crucial issue of our times — capitalism versus socialism — and which of these offers African states the better chance of overcoming the crippling heritage of imperialism. There are vital issues of foreign policy facing every new African state. These are some of the challenges facing African leaderships and statesmanship today.

WAR OR PEACE?

African freedom and the battle for world peace are as closely linked as Siamese twins. Few Africans can be blind to the fact that those imperialist forces which have held Africa in bondage for centuries are those that today engage in vast preparations for war

and are responsible for the state of international tension in the world.

In 1956 Egypt, newly independent, asserted her sovereign right to nationalise her major asset, the Suez Canal. Britain and France, using Israel as a catspaw, and with the connivance of the United States, launched a war against Egypt and the world tottered on the brink of nuclear war.

Trying to hold on to her last outpost of empire, France has for six years fought a bloody and brutal war against the Algerian people.

Earlier this year, in a show of strength on the stage of world power politics and in Africa, France, exploded an atom bomb on African soil, though the test blast was condemned by the United Nations and the unanimous voice of the African people.

When Belgium rushed paratroopers into the Congo to try to wreck the newly proclaimed Congo Republic the first powers to rush to her aid were the United States (most powerful Imperialist power and leader of the war bloc), and Welensky's Central African Federation (one of the police forces of White supremacy on the continent).

The massive military machines prepared by the western states for the alleged reason of defence against 'Communism' can be and are repeatedly used to suppress the revolts of the African peoples against domination by European powers or white settlers, or to threaten the independence of those countries which have succeeded in gaining a measure of self-government.

As imperialism and colonialism and war are linked, so are the forces of socialism and peace and freedom tied together. The Socialist system of planned economies does not need to resort to munitions industries and war to solve its economic crises, and the Soviet Union has consistently been at the head of those forces trying to outlaw war and keep the peace. The Soviet Union took the unilateral decision to reduce arms and troops, to stop nuclear tests. She put forward disarmament proposals to the Big Powers and pressed for top level negotiations on disarmament.

The remarkable technical achievements of the Soviet Union, strikingly demonstrated by the 'sputniks' and 'luniks' and other feats of science destroyed the myth of Western technical superiority upon which the policy of 'cold' war was based. Logically the only

alternative to the 'cold' war was a policy of peaceful co-existence and the acceptance of the Soviet proposals for stage-by-stage total disarmament. The imperialist powers, led by the United States, ignored this logic and continued with the ruinous and dangerous amassing of weapons. And as the Summit Conference drew near and the prospects for peace were brighter than for years past, the United States took last desperate steps to wreck the peace talks and sent military planes on provocative spy flights over Soviet territory.

Imperialist military machines ranged against the Socialist countries are the same forces used to police the African continent and put down the freedom forces of the African Revolution. So at one and the same time the growing strength of the Socialist world weakens the world force of imperialism and helps the spurt forward of the peoples of Africa. Africa needs peace to enjoy her newly-won independence and she cannot stand aside from the battle for peace. Conversely, a blow to the war plans of the Imperialist countries helps immeasurably to loosen their grip on their colonial possessions.

THE CONCEPT OF 'NEUTRALISM'

Such concepts as 'neutralism', 'positive neutrality' and 'non-participation in power blocs' are popular at all-African conferences and in Asian countries. These concepts have a positive side. They reflect a moving away of the former colonies from the position of being imperialist dependencies or 'spheres of influence'. Following this concept the Afro-Asian 'bloc' has played a progressive role at the United Nations and many of its member countries have entered into closer relationships with the socialist countries on the diplomatic, economic, cultural and other levels.

At the same time 'neutralism' has harmful and negative aspects. It suggests the identification of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and other socialist countries with the imperialists, all as 'alien powers seeking to dominate and exploit Africa and the African peoples'. It suggests that African countries, anxious to safeguard their independence, must stand aside from not only the countries of imperialism but also those of the socialist world, that both forces are ranged against the African Revolution. Under cover of talk of 'opposing foreign ideologies', imperialist agencies like the Moral Rearmament Movement, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions smuggle poisonous anti-Communist talk and policies into the African nationalist and trade union movements. These 'neutrals' are not neutral. They have

invariably turned out to be committed to the forces of imperialism trying to hold on to their spheres of influence on the continent, though in new shapes and forms.

Africa cannot be 'neutral' towards the imperialist powers which have conquered and degraded its peoples and are still striving in various ways, ranging from open warfare to subtle economic infiltration, to keep their stranglehold over the continent. Africans cannot regard these powers in the same light as the socialist countries which have consistently upheld the rights of the colonial peoples to self-determination, and which have given generous economic assistance — without strings attached — to all African and Asian states which have asked for it.

While 'neutralism' has played, and may still play for a short period, an objectively progressive and necessary part as a slogan of the *transition period* from colonialism, it must in the future increasingly become a reactionary slogan, under cover of which an anti-socialist and pro-imperialist policy is peddled.

Progressive movements in Africa recognise the genuine feeling in Africa for "positive neutralism", but must guard against these who would use this slogan to cause harmful dissension and splits in the African liberation front. The main thing is to unite all African freedom forces in the sharpest possible struggle against imperialism and colonialism in Africa and throughout the world. The Bandung spirit of Afro-Asian solidarity against imperialism must be carried to higher levels, and the closest possible friendship built, based on equality, between the countries of Socialism and the free states and the peoples of Africa.

NEW FOREIGN POLICIES FOR AFRICA

Despite the talk of 'neutralism' and 'non-alignment', African states even under conservative national leaderships, have not failed in the acid tests put before them. Moving like one man the states of free Africa have taken sides against every act of imperialist aggression in Africa, from the declaration of states of emergency in Nyasaland and the Rhodesias and South Africa to the armed Belgian intervention in the Congo, from the French atomic blast in the Sahara to the continuance of the war in Algeria.

For the nature of the anti-imperialist fight is that all liberation forces in Africa have to make a firm stand against the Western Powers. They cannot shelter behind formulae of 'neutralism'. When Africans and Arabs are being shot down in Leopoldville and

Algiers, and Congress leaders being detained in Blantyre, Livingstone and Cape Town, African states and movements unite in immediate support, moral and practical, of the victims of imperialism.

This is the great common interest — the fight to break the grip of imperialism on the continent — which cements together the foreign policies of the states and liberation movements of our Continent.

This struggle against imperialism, open or concealed, is the basis of the agreement reached at the All-Africa conferences at Accra and Conakry, at the conference of African States held at Addis Ababa and the foundation stone of the foreign policies of the new African states. Significantly the two most crucial issues on the agenda of the Addis Ababa conference were the Algerian war and the mounting campaign against the Nationalist Government of South Africa.

The Algerian war and the boycott movement against South Africa are the two touchstones by which international attitudes on African liberation are judged these days. States which stand aloof from support of the FLN freedom forces in Algeria or condemnation of the South African Nationalist Government are suspect in the eyes of Africa.

As the struggle against imperialism deepens in many parts of the continent more and more of the newly emerged African states have to produce a foreign policy that does not merely react to sharp imperialist prods and attacks here and there, but which takes on a more consistent pattern. And a consistent policy of opposition to all imperialist plans and intrigues hastens the time when African countries enjoying merely formal self-government must break the last connections with their imperialist masters and strike out for real independence.

The imperialist countries realise, too, the great changes coming over the continent have forced them to retreat from the positions of naked domination they held in Africa. But they are not running away in blind panic. They are retreating to carefully prepared positions. They wish to retain the thousand invisible strings of dependence which tie Africa economically to Western Europe and North America and, under cover provided by nominally independent African governments, to exercise innumerable subtle forms of continued control and exploitation.

The United States, the most powerful imperialist country, tries to use the anti-imperialist sentiments of the African people to

replace western European influence in Africa with that of the influence of United States monopoly capitalists and financiers. With its long years of practice in treating the nominally independent countries of South America as its economic colonies, the United States sees itself as well equipped to change the new Africa into an American dependency too.

While Africa is weak, while her countries are backward economically and militarily, there is the constant threat of disguised or even open attempts to reconquer and recolonise Africa. These attempts find their chief expression, their main hope and source of potential strength in the white settler communities which live in Africa, in Algeria, Kenya, and Southern Rhodesia and of course South Africa. For the countries of new Africa, measures to assist the emancipation of the people of South Africa and Central Africa and the victory of the Algerian people in their war are therefore more than acts of support and African brotherhood. They are vital measures to ensure the safety of Africa, and to remove a poison-bed of reaction which could infect the whole continent, and a storm centre of counter-revolution.

SOCIALISM IS THE ROAD

The winning of political independence is therefore only the first phase—although an essential and important phase—of the African Revolution. That revolution, if its gains are to be preserved and its benefits realised for the great mass of the people cannot stop short at this phase. It must continue, to wipe out all remnants of colonialism. It must bring about large scale industrialisation. It must spread the African revolution into the countryside to transform the life of the African subsistence farmer; it must move on to the elimination of backwardness, illiteracy, tribalism and feudalism.

African independence cannot survive in the present age until and unless its economic basis rapidly catches up with that of the advanced industrial countries of the world.

Sooner or later emergent Africa must see that the only way in which she can carry out this gigantic task of defeating backwardness and advancing into full freedom is through Socialism: the planned development of commonly-owned means of production.

The Soviet Union, the Peoples' Republic of China, in widely differing conditions and two different epochs showed that only

under socialist planning can breath-taking economic scientific and industrial advance transform two of the poorest countries of the world into two of the world's greatest powers.

It is this unprecedented industrial and technical development which has made it possible not only to bring new life to the Russian and Chinese worker and farmer, but also for the socialist countries to give invaluable help to the underdeveloped countries and former colonies, Africa included.

Economic and technical aid from the socialist countries differs fundamentally from the 'aid' offered by imperialist countries to underdeveloped Africa and Asia. Socialist aid is given on very generous terms — there are long periods of repayment and low rates of interest — (terms which capitalist businesses, concerned primarily with the export of capital at high rates of profit will not offer). Even more important is the purpose of aid from the socialist world and the conditions under which it is given. The imperialists offer aid in the shape of surplus consumer products and are anxious to keep the underdeveloped countries in a state of backwardness and dependency.

The socialist world is able and willing to help in the rapid industrialisation of the former colonies to enable them as quickly as possible to stand on their own feet and attain complete economic independence. The imperialists make all sorts of political and military conditions for their handouts to ensure that their 'beneficiaries' will remain within the western 'sphere of interest'. Socialist assistance is given without strings or conditions. Thus not only countries headed by militant peoples' leaders like Sékou Touré, moving in the direction of socialist planning and democracy, but even those ruled by feudal kings like Haile Selassie and anti-Communists like President Nasser benefit from Soviet aid. Socialist aid to underdeveloped countries springs from genuine concern in the welfare and social advancement of the peoples of the country concerned.

Thus the advance of socialism and anti-imperialist forces all over the world spurs forward and assists the advance of the peoples of Africa to freedom and independence. And the African Revolution saps still further the greatly weakened force of world imperialism and opens the way to full freedom for the peoples of this continent and the world at large.