

THERE is fire on the mountain, though it looks clothed in roses. When imperialists, fascists, exploiters of humble humanity, monopolists, hegemonists, international terrorists and military dinosaurs and parasites of all sorts take it upon themselves to raise high a counterfeit banner of 'human rights' and dash with it in fast planes, or on radio waves, around a world reeling from mortal wounds inflicted by them, there is need for the honest, the humble, the genuinely humane and the oppressed to be wary. Sometimes, a 'friend' in need may seem a friend indeed, but in the history of world affairs, wolves in the clothing of friendly sheep have supplanted the real owner of the house and taken over as dictators and all-powerful human rights violators.

This is the reason why I, for one, have been cautious with the current 'human rights' campaign led by the United States imperialism and its West European capitalist allies. Why did this campaign open around the 1970s when the advance of the socialist and national liberation movements were at their high-tide, when world capitalism entered a very gloomy period of prolonged depression, and precisely when imperialists were furiously financing and arming fascists, dictators and murderers against deeply-minded humanists and liberation fighters in Cuba, Chile, Nicaragua, elsewhere in Latin America, Central and Southern Africa, the Middle East, Vietnam and all over Asia?

Why was 'human rights' made the focus of international imperialist propaganda, especially against the

lands of victorious socialists and national liberation revolutions? It is impossible to deny a grave loss of human or socialists face through Stalinist inheritance in the former USSR and other lands that used her as a model of the road to socialism. Nevertheless, the serious miscarriage of the socialist enterprise by Stalinism does not excuse the naivety of the likes of Mikhail Gorbachev.

The naive Gorbachev allowed himself to be hoodwinked by 'human rights' window-dressing with catastrophic repercussions for world revolution. Having got their third imperialist world conquest mission thus boosted, the busy architects of 'star wars' against the freedom and dignity of millions of people got emboldened and have since been striding like Cyclops, the one-eyed giant, around the world — one-eyed because one of the eyes is blind to the heinous human rights violations of imperialism, white racism, capitalists and fascistic allies of imperialism all over the world.

Why was it not the imperialists, fascists, monopoly capitalists and racists that campaigned against and struggled to unseat the racists in South Africa and the 'Mobutuists' in Kinshasa-Zaire? These are the resounding victories of true humanism in Africa since 1985. A genuine human rights movement or campaign must be the people's movement: it must rely on the people, and arm the people against all exploiters and oppressors. This is

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what it was in the Allende's Chile, revolutionary Vietnam, and South Africa under the banner of the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-African Congress, the South African Communist Party and other anti-fascist, anti-racist, anti-parasite and anti-imperialist movements in that country. This is what it was in erstwhile Kinshasa or Zaire from Patrice Lumumba and his death from the bullets of imperialism and its allies to this day. This is what it has been among the Palestinians.

Only a hundred years ago, imperialism penetrated and took over Africa, Asia and Latin America with the slogan of a Christian civilizing mission. Only half-a-century ago from World War II, neo-colonial imperialism won a lease of life in Africa, Asia and Latin America with slogans of 'development aid', 'partnership in progress', 'staying out of the cold war', and 'free-world development'. Since the great capitalist depression of the 1980s, imperialism has opened new penetration campaigns — 'structural adjustment', 'democracy', 'man-centred on people-centred development' meant to steal the thunder of the socialist revolution, 'environment and sustainable development', 'human rights', and now — since the 1990s — 'anti-corruption and accountability'. Apart from 'structural adjustment' in slavery and exploitation, as against 'structural trans-

formation to freedom and full self-development, there is none of these most recent themes of the imperialist and exploiter orchestra that the socialist revolution has not put on the urgent agenda of mankind and fought for with breath-taking sacrifices since the 1830s.

The writer of this article has been a dedicated campaigner for human rights — full and genuine human rights — since he was in his teens. He remembers Marcus Garvey. He is not prepared to be taught lessons in human rights or their violation by imperialists, exploiters, fascists, terrorists with a large but hidden military fist, and cold-blooded murders of really profound, independent and dedicated human rights leaders around the world.

What did Malcolm X and Martin Luther King do to be worthy of murder by the agents of U.S. imperialism, racism and capitalist parasitism, except to stop being simply anti-racists and brainwashed bourgeois 'democrats' and start campaign for human rights in a more deeply humane way that posed a big question not only for racism but also all forms of parasitism and anti-people hegemonism in the U.S.A.? What did Patrice Lumumba, Ernesto Che Guevara and Allende do to be worthy of murder by U.S. imperialism and its allies, other than their total dedication to profound and genuine human rights which made them immensely popular and so maximally powerful against all forms of anti-humanism? What has Fidel Castro done in the last

37 years to be worthy of all the sustained efforts of the U.S. government to murder him and the astonishing amount of money and ubiquity of organisation put into the execution of this blood-curdling scheme? The answer is that the Allendes, Lumumbas, Guevaras and Castros — the world's leaders are so profound and encompassing in their view of human rights, so genuine in their honesty with regard to the lot of ordinary humanity, and so popular and influential, thanks to their record, that they must be liquidated for anti-humanism, with or without the garb of 'human rights', to have its way.

It was not long ago when Herbert Macaulay, Michael Imoudu, Nnamdi Azikiwe and other powerful campaigners for human rights in Nigeria faced the bitter opposition of the antecedents of today's champions of human rights and were marked down for calumny and denigration.

Now, what are human rights? They are rights recognised by the human conscience, as such, or this conscience edified by science, education and other forms of enlightenment. Human rights are not whatever the U.S. and West European propagandists are prepared to regard as human rights to the disregard of whatever does not fit their bill. Still less are they simply pegs of objection to the authoritarian or dastardly acts committed by those military dictatorships and opportunistic politicians or bureaucrats that are not in the good books of imperialism for one reason or the other.

• To be continued.

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HUMAN rights include the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, according to the American freedom fighters and European liberals of the 1770s. They include the right to equality with others and fraternity, that is, to non-discrimination due to class, racial, sex, religious or other status privileges, according to the French humanists and revolutionaries of the 1780s. Among bourgeois liberals generally, they include the right to private property and to be governed by representation and the rule of democratically-made and humane laws. They include the right to defend oneself, to seek knowledge, to propagate it, and to hold and express one's own opinion. They include the right not to be condemned without being heard. They include, also, the right not to be tortured or visited with violence or some other indignity — although in certain circumstances, they include the right to violence in self-defence by the relatively powerless against the relatively powerful.

Among all of the world's patriots, human rights include the right to self-liberation against foreign rule, exploitation, violence or hegemony. Among all the revolutionaries of the world from time immemorial, human rights include the right to rebel against exploitation or domination and to take up arms in such a rebellion. Human rights exclude domination, 'peaceful' or other, by exploiters, imperialists, hegemonists and other species of parasites. In bourgeois and other states ruled by parasites — and not only in military dicta-

torships — the foregoing rights are very much circumscribed by various laws and social conventions which underdog groups are forced by circumstances to live with. Shallow-minded, if not sadistic observers, like to remark, falsely, that such circumscriptions are 'accepted' by the society concerned.

In capitalist society, for instance, the right to private property includes the right to exploit others and the right to exclude others, and even society, from the use of even such a natural asset as land, notwithstanding that others need the property for life. In other words, bourgeois property right includes the right to be selfish or monopolistic. It, thus, compromises the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness on the part of millions excluded from substantial — to say nothing of crucial — property in capitalist society.

Among socialists, human rights include not only the right to life but also the right to the means of life. This explains the dominance of collective-ownership of means of production and the limits to private property rights under socialism. The rights of man recognised by the deeper human conscience of scores of millions of socialists from the 1830s include the right to be free from all economic and other forms of exploitation. The socialists recognise the right of everyone to adequate food, education and health, a decent home, good water, access to other basic requirements of a decent life, and what is

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also very important — the means of achieving these things acquired not by stealing or any form of parasitism but through individual or willing, collective labour. Consequently, the socialists recognise the right to work. This is not only because work is necessary for a dignified, healthy and non-parasitic living; it is also because work is to socialists the legitimate way to the enjoyment of other rights. These important socialist-affirmed human rights do not exist in capitalist society.

Of course, socialists recognise as authentic all the rights we had earlier spoken about, but they are also humane and honest enough to see and admit that every right is, and must be, grossly undermined in any form whatsoever of parasitic society, no matter how 'free' it is for privileged, selfish or greedy persons. Gorbachev and his likes in the USSR did not understand matters clearly enough, and were not sufficiently guarded against the hidden barbs of an imperialist-sponsored human rights campaign. That is why, in his effort to leave the imperialist-imposed cold war burdens of the Soviet state behind, Gorbachev fell easy victim to the 'human rights' drum beating, and even dictation, of the world's leading parasites. Even, granted that he was not a conscious imperialist fifth columnist, a man more seasoned in the struggle

against man's inhumanity to man, better read in the history of social struggles, and less frightened by imperialist star-wars and other militaristic brandishments would have made the distinction, which he failed to make, between the total socialist conception of human rights and the partial, circumscribed, circumstantial and even opportunistic and self-serving bourgeois conceptions and misrepresentations.

It was the socialist states when they emerged from socialist revolutions after World War II and joined the United Nations Organisation (UNO) that campaigned stubbornly, in the teeth of opposition by capitalist states, for the extension of the human rights to be inscribed in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights to rights outside the narrow and parasitic purview of capitalists and imperialists, including the rights of the people of what became the Third World to independence and ownership of their resources.

No one in the world should follow this Soviet leader's example of being an easy dupe. I read from Gorbachev's discourses that his understanding of imperialism was basically misguided, and that he failed completely to see the differences between the liberal, the utopian socialist and the anarchist strategies in the struggle for human rights and the Marxian strategy. The Marxists regard the liberal strategy as fighting with one's hands in hand-cuffs for only a part of the territory, the utopian socialist strategy as

fighting with dark glasses on and with eyes trained on a mirage mistaken for the real land, and the anarchist strategy as one bound to lose the war through anomie and intemperance.

The point about Gorbachev is that as he was at the head of a state that campaigned most consummately from 1917 for the broadest and deepest conception of human rights, his capitulation on the platform of human rights to imperialist propaganda made it possible for all congenial hypocrites to put themselves forward as the best or even the only champions of human rights anywhere and everywhere and to impose upon the world their own truncated, opportunistic, self-serving, selective and even tainted versions of 'human rights'. Thanks to the weakness of the Soviet leadership, the disaster in the advance to socialism caused by it, the rise of military autocracies in the Third World owing to the heightening of the contradictions of parasitic development in this part of the world, the ebb in the national liberation revolutions, and the accentuation of mass misery caused by the great capitalist depression which no one is allowed to see as a capitalist phenomenon, the imperialists have had a ready audience and a field day. They have succeeded in presenting their campaign and their lavish finance of it as a liberation chariot, rather than a Trojan horse.

All those heard clamouring for human rights are either genuinely or seemingly on my side, but I can read between the lines. Humanity will be less deceived and better served if others can do so as well.

• Concluded.

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