

ON June 30, Belgium's Central African colony of Congo (Leopoldville) was granted formal political independence. Patrice Lumumba, a 35-year-old radical African nationalist and the leader of the Congolese National Movement became the Prime Minister of the new African nation. He earned this position not by appointment, but through an election supervised by the Belgian authorities. But Lumumba remained in office for only 109 weeks and lived for less than eight months after independence. Moreover the 31-years history of independent Congo (now Zaire) has been a history of economic exploitation, political intolerance and violence, civil wars, etc. Imperialism more than any other historical factor has ensured that this is the trajectory to be traversed by the African nation.

Congolese soldiers in the army under the inspiration of Lumumba had agitated for the replacement of Belgian officers by Congolese in the army of the newly independent nation. In response, the Belgian officers initiated a general crack-down not only in the army, but also in the civil population. Acting on the encouragement and military assistance from Belgium and its imperialist allies — America and Britain — internal forces opposed to Lumumba's radical orientation and anti-imperialism, seized the opportunity of the military crack-down to initiate acts of political rebellion and treason.

Moise Tshombe, a Congolese politician, educated at an American Methodist mission took the furthest step: He declared the

independence of the mineral-rich Congolese province of Katanga. In response to these aggressive acts—military and political—Lumumba appealed to the United Nations Security Council to send troops to help him restore political stability and safeguard the territorial integrity of the Congo. But as soon as the troops arrived, they were manoeuvred into a position which was objectively in opposition to Lumumba and in support of the coalition of reactionary and pro-imperialist forces which included the Belgian officer corps, Tshombe's secessionist movement, Joseph Mobutu's faction of the army, and Joseph Kasavubu who was appointed President at the time Lumumba was appointed Prime Minister.

The United Nations troops stood by while Kasavubu illegally seized the reins of government and dismissed Lumumba. The troops were standing by when Mobutu on September 14, 1960, staged a coup which confirmed the illegal removal of Lumumba while integrating Kasavubu into a military government.

The UN troops were guarding Lumumba's residence when he "escaped" and fell into the hands of Mobutu's troops who brutalised and humiliated him. The United Nations troops stood by when Mobutu's troops handed over Lumumba and his two comrades to Tshombe's troops led by American and European officers who continued and intensified the torture. The United Nations stood by when on January 17, 1961 Tshombe's troops murdered the

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By Edwin Madunagu

three African nationalists and announced that the place of their burial was "unimportant".

Having extinguished the fire of radical anti-imperialism (and communism!) in the young nation, imperialism initiated a process of reconstructing the Congo in line with the former's economic, political and military interests. A united and politically stable Congo was required; but it has to be a unity and stability erected on imperialist interests and solid anti-communism. It is in pursuit of this twin objectives that Moise Tshombe a traitor, a secessionist leader, a murderer, but whose anti-communism reached a pathological level was installed Congolese Prime Minister in 1964 after fighting a long war with the United Nations troops. As Prime Minister, Tshombe carried out his imperialism mandate ruthlessly wiping out Congolese nationalist

forces until his complete loss of credibility at home and abroad persuaded imperialism to sacrifice him. He was overthrown by Mobutu on November 25, 1965. Today, more than 25 years later, Mobutu is still in power, imperialism is still in control, and the people of the Congo (now Zaire) are still enslaved.

The Dominican Republic is a Caribbean country with a mixed population (5 million) of Spanish African, and Indian people. It was a Spanish colony but became independent in 1844. After several but small-scale military in-

terventions in this independent country by America, the latter landed on the Island on June 26, 1914. On November 29, 1916, the United States of America issued a formal proclamation of military occupation. The proclamation was read in Santa Domingo, the capital of the occupied country. The occupation forces withdrew in July 1924 after ensuring the "election" of Horacio Vasquez as President. The country had been under an illegal American occupation for a decade.

In April 1965, American troops again intervened in the island nation. Following the outbreak of a nationalist rebellion in April 1965 against a military junta which had seized power in September 1963, the imperialist authorities in America landed a

force of 23,000 troops to suppress a rebellion of 4,000 Dominicans most of whom were civilians. It did not matter to the imperialists that the Dominican nationalists were rebelling against a junta that overthrew a government which had been elected democratically by 62 per cent of the electorate. The concern of American imperialism, led by President Lyndon Johnson, was to prevent Dominican Republic from falling into "communist hands", or as the imperialists later put it, to prevent the emergence of "another Cuba".

Employing a tactics that it was later to employ in the invasion of Grenada in 1983 and the attack on Iraq in 1991, American imperialism bribed the client leaders of

Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica and Brazil to send token forces to Dominican Republic. An essentially United States occupation force was thus given the appearance and later the name of Inter-American Peace Force. The nationalist rebellion was mercilessly crushed. The occupation force was withdrawn in September 1965 after it had inaugurated a "loyal" government headed by fascists imperialist agents, traitors and murderers.

On November 4, 1964, the populist and democratically-elected government of President Paz Estenssoro of Bolivia was

toppled in a military coup d'etat sponsored by the CIA and led by General Barrientos, who was the Vice-President in Estenssoro's government. It was the 80th coup in Bolivia's 139-year history. The military junta moved swiftly and with brutal efficiency to reverse all the reforms which had endeared Estenssoro's government to the poor, including workers and peasants. Nationalised industries were returned to the imperialists and tracts of land that had been distributed to landless peasants were taken back and given to the landlords. The people rose in revolt.

In 1966, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara arrived in Bolivia at the head of a guerrilla army. Early in October 1967, he was captured alive in an ambush carried out jointly by the Bolivian army and CIA agents.

The agents made no attempt to hide themselves from journalists. Che Guevara was summarily executed shortly afterwards, on October 9, 1967.

• To be continued next Thursday



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## Imperialism's bloody record (2)

By Edwin Madunagu

IN his 1975 book, *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*, Philip Agee, a former senior operator of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), described the organisation as "nothing more than the secret police of American capitalism, plugging up leaks in the political dam night and day so that the shareholders of United States companies, operating in poor countries, can continue enjoying the rip-off". The bloody events in Indonesia (1965), Bolivia (1967), Chile (1973) etc, have shown that Agee's declaration is an understatement.

Ruth First was more specific. In her book, *The Barrel of a Gun*, she stated that the CIA is "the agency whose job it has been to topple governments objectionable to the United States". She cited the coups in Iran (1952), Guatemala (1954), Guyana (1961) as well as the failed invasion of Cuba in 1961 (the famous Bay of Pigs invasion) as illustrations. The CIA is indeed a murderous organisation, operating interests world-wide by every means, including economic subversion, bribery, murder, terrorism and coups d'état.

Before October 1965, Indonesia, under President Sukarno, was a militantly anti-imperialist country. But on October 1, some Indonesian army generals, under the sponsorship of the CIA, moved to unseat the government in a coup d'état. This was resisted by radical anti-imperialist officers, nationalists, workers, students and partisans of the Indonesian Communist Party which was then in alliance with Sukarno's party. What followed was a CIA-inspired country-wide

slaughter whose scale had few parallels in history.

According to Jack Woddis, "For weeks the slaughter went on, streams were choked by mutilated bodies or hacked-off limbs. Not all those butchered in this way were communists. Whole families, including children, were wiped out. In some places villages were decimated." When the slaughter ended, about a million Indonesians lay dead, while hundreds of thousands others were either in prison or in concentration camps. The Communist Party with a membership of more than three million - the largest in the Third World - and an electoral support of 10 million was virtually wiped out. Indonesia's democracy and anti-imperialism ended.

Now to Chile. Salvador Allende was born in Valparaiso, Chile in 1908. He trained to become a medical doctor and established a practice. He became involved in radical politics early in life and helped to form the Chilean Socialist Party. The party, though a marxist organisation, was, for some tactical and strategic reasons, independent of the long-established Communist Party of Chile. The two parties were however in alliance in several of the elections that were conducted in Chile before the bloody coup of 1973.

Allende was a socialist deputy in the National Assembly from 1937 to 1945; and from 1945 to 1970 he was a socialist senator. He also served briefly as Minister of Health in a

Popular Front government in which Socialists and communists were represented. On three consecutive presidential elections, the Socialist Party put up Allende as its candidate. On each occasion he lost. But the Socialist Party and Allende remained committed to coming to power on the basis of the constitution, that is, through elections. There was not an abstract commitment based on mere faith in the constitution. They were convinced that the popular forces could win elections under the existing rules provided they worked hard and avoided sectarianism.

Allende and his compatriots refused to be provoked by the CIA and its local agents. They mobilised the rank-and-file of the Socialist Party, members and supporters of the Communist Party and all the popular forces (workers, women, peasants, students, radical political groups, etc) into one gigantic anti-imperialist front, called the *Popular Unity*. The result was that, in September 1970, Salvador Allende became the first marxist politician to be elected president anywhere in the world under a constitution fashioned by the bourgeoisie. His was an exception to the rule. It has never been repeated anywhere in the world.

Simply put, the Popular Unity government, under President Allende, was regarded by the government of the United States, the

US companies and the CIA as the greatest challenge and threat to their interests not only in Chile, but in the Western Hemisphere. President Allende's government was a dangerous foe which must be removed together with all its traces, records and influence anywhere. This new 'Cuba' must be killed at birth; Allende was aware of the imperialist attempts to prevent him from winning the elections. He was now aware of the plans to liquidate him and his government. But he had a mandate and a duty.

The Popular-Unity programme declared that "the task which faces the government of the people is to put an end to the power of the imperialists, the monopolists and the land-owning oligarchy and begin the building of socialism in Chile". As an immediate step, the programme projected "a national democratic revolution which, by carrying through basic democratic transformations in the economy and in the state, would pave the way for socialist change." Finally the programme emphasised that "it is the three million workers, *together with the whole people*, all those not committed to the power of reactionary national and foreign interests who, by their unified combative action would be able to break the present structures and advance in the task of their liberation".

Three factors combined to accelerate imperialist attack. In the first place, the Popular Unity prog-

ramme included radical changes in Chile's economic structure, involving, in particular, the nationalisation of the key industries owned by American companies. These companies which included the ITT and Kennecott Copper, were "determined right from the beginning to prevent Popular Unity from achieving its aims". In the second place American imperialism feared that "a success in Chile for Popular Unity would prove contagious" in the sense that "similar trends would develop in other Latin American countries". And finally, the way the Popular Unity Government had come to power had raised the question in revolutionary circles worldwide of the possibility of transition to socialism without an insurrection or civil war. Since imperialism has always claimed that socialist forces can only come to power or retain power undemocratically, it was eager to destroy the Chilean example.

The regime of incitement, sabotage and provocation mounted by the CIA lasted three full years. On September 11, 1973 under the open encouragement and support from the CIA, detachments of the Chilean Armed Forces, headed by General Augusto Pinochet attack the Presidential Palace in Santiago, capital of Chile. Allende refused to surrender as the fascist rebels demanded. Rather, he called on the popular masses to defend the constitution and their government. The masses responded and fought the troops on the roads. Allende, leading some of his lieutenants, took up arms and put up a heroic defence of the presidential place. He died fighting.

To be concluded on Thursday.

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IN this final instalment I shall attempt a partial listing of America's military interventions in other countries during this century alone.

Before World War II:

- The Philippines provides a classical example. America's military occupation of the country was formally established with the Treaty of Paris in December 1898 — after the Spanish-American War.

- Almost a century later the occupation is yet to come to an end. American military bases still dot the island and American troops are still occupying large areas of the country.

- Mexico, a Central American country, was invaded by United States troops in 1914 and 1916. Through these punitive expeditions Mexicans were, in February 1917, forced to adopt a constitution fashioned after the American model of governance.

- After American troops had "policed" the island of Cuba from 1899 to 1902, the latter was forced to confirm America's right "to intervene militarily in Cuba if the political situation deteriorated". Under this forced treaty, American troops invaded Cuba four times: 1906; 1912-1913; 1917 and 1933. During World War II, American troops built a strategic base at Guantanamo.

- Puerto Rico is a group of islands in the West Indies. It has an area of 3,423 square miles and a population of four million, half of whom are of Spanish-descent. The other half is made up of peoples of African and

Indian descents. The country was a Spanish colony until 1898, when it was "ceded" to America as one of the conditions to ending the Spanish-American War. But instead of advancing the new colony to independence, American imperialism annexed it, having first changed the name of the country from Porto-Rico to Puerto Rico (1932). Puerto Rico was thus removed permanently from the community of independent nations. But in doing this, American colonialists put up a farce which it called a *referendum*. In this farce a majority of Puerto Ricans were reported to have voted for the annexation of their country.

Hawaii Islands were similarly annexed by America. These annexation remind one of the Stalinist referenda through which the Baltic states of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia were annexed by the Soviet Union country with a land area of 28,576 square miles and a population of 2.4 million. Having persuaded Panama to secede from the Republic of Colombia in 1903, American imperialists coerced the newly independent nation to agree that the United States "should construct and maintain an inter-ocean canal and should hold in perpetuity the use, occupation and control of a Canal Zone (two strips five miles wide on each side of the canal), in which it would exercise ex-

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clusive sovereign authority".

This terrible treaty was signed only 15 days after the declaration of independence by the Panamanian leaders. American troops have remained the sole authority of the time, with or without provocations, the troops invade the Panama City to threaten or force through a policy or a change of government. (Latest invasion: December, 1989).

- American troops invaded Nicaragua in 1955 under the pretext that they were helping neighbouring Costa Rica on the request of the Organisation of American States (OAS) to repel rebel attacks mounted from Nicaraguan territory.

- Haiti is situated on the western side of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean. It has a land area of 10,714 square miles and a population of 6.4 million, 95 percent of whom are of African descent. American marines invaded the country in 1915. Although they withdraw 19 years later, in 1934, American imperialism continued to control the country's revenues until October 1947.

Other countries invaded by America before World War II include China, Colombia, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Honduras. Indeed, as one historian has observed, virtually every country in

the Caribbean was invaded by American marines at some time between 1900 and 1939.

After World War II: The following partial listing of American invasions of independent nations has been provided by historians: China, Guatemala, Cuba, Korea, Indonesia, Laos, Bolivia, the Congo, the Middle East, Venezuela, Vietnam and Grenada.

- The historical devastation which imperialism inflicted on Vietnam deserves a separate account. Except for the slaughter which American troops carried out in Iraq between January and February 1991, the imperialist campaign in Vietnam has no historical parallel as regards the scale of the suffering, agony and death which it inflicted.

Vietnamese partisans under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, succeeded in clearing out both the French and the Japanese armed invaders during World War II. But when the war ended, French troops attempted to re-colonise the country. This was resisted, and a second war of liberation erupted. As American imperialists did in Germany (1945) and Korea (1953), French imperialists forced through the partition of Vietnam after their troops had been defeated by Vietnamese troops the historic Battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954. As happened in Korea, imperialists having been defeated in a decisive battle

settled for the establishment of puppet-regime in a part of the country — in this case, South Vietnam.

But as soon as the humiliated French troops withdrew, American troops entered Vietnam on a campaign "to build up the South Vietnamese as a barrier against the spread of communism in South-East Asia". (The American imperialists gave themselves the same anti-communist assignment in Congo, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Chile, etc).

By 1966, America's combat troops in Vietnam had totalled 400,000, and America's bombing "mission" over Vietnamese territory averaged 164 a day. On March 16, 1968, American troops under the command of Lieutenant Williams Calley massacred and wiped out the entire population — men, women and children — of the Vietnamese village of My Lai. The report of the atrocity was denied for 20 months, and when it was decisively exposed to the world, only one soldier — William Calley — was prosecuted. He earned only a few years in prison.

The Vietnam war cost 100,000 American and millions of Vietnamese lives. Eventually in March 1975, the Vietnamese defeated imperialism and its local puppets. The two parts of the divided nation were re-united. But the Vietnamese economy and society are yet to recover from the devastation caused by the longest imperialist aggression in modern history.

• *Concluded*