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PERSONAL

MASS LINE

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RESUMPTION OF 'MASS LINE'

It has become necessary to resume the publication of 'Mass Line'. As before, its role is to rally the progressives of Nigeria and help them to discover the correct road to the liberation of the Nigerian people from imperialism and the exploitation and oppression of capitalists, land owners and city and rural tyrants.

The socialists need to unite and use their unity to promote the unity of democrats dedicated to the people and the people themselves. However, long experience in the world and Nigeria shows that unity, even among socialists, is not a simple or easy matter. It is not simple because even if they agree that socialism is desirable and that what they mean by it is a new democracy based on the social ownership of the means of production and distribution and a thoroughly humanistic outlook, this does not mean that differences concerning specific ideological questions, strategy and tactics will not exist among them. Unity is not easy either because bourgeois infusions, personal ambitions, sectarianism, factional loyalties, rudeness and intemperance, ideological confusions, opportunistic calculations, differences in maturity and experience, dishonesty, disparities in enthusiasm and other factors abound as perennial sources of disunity.

Unity is not a love affair. It does not seem that Nigerian socialists love the people or are attracted to one another to any lesser degree than socialists in other countries. However, continuous and powerful unity presupposes principle - the acceptance of an approach, the cultivation of acceptance and accepted methods of work and good qualities of leadership.

'Mass Line' is not vague. To unite socialists an ideological-strategic line must be boldly put forward and the socialists called upon to embrace it. Those who embrace it form the core of unity.

Our journal believes that it is necessary not only to be a socialist but also to learn a lot from Marxism and from Leninism.

This position stems from theoretical and practical awareness. It is by no means an unimportant matter that socialism has had about a hundred and fifty-year history in the world during which it has weathered several storms and seen various 'socialist' factions come and go, but only the Marxist tendency has kept growing over the years, in spite of persecution. As Lenin once put it, "the Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true".

Neither is it an accident that in spite of many interpretations of Marx it is only movements founded on Leninism that have in practice destroyed bourgeois power anywhere and launched the march to socialism. There must be something universal and real in Leninism that gives it this power to triumph where non-Leninist experiments fail. Where this power lies we must discover.

It must be pointed out also that our journal starts off from the belief that the foundation has been laid for genuine socialism in a number of countries in the world today, namely, the Soviet Union, the East European Socialist States, Mongolia, North Korea, China and Cuba. A genuine advance

towards socialism is being made in a number of other countries, such as Vietnam, Ethiopia and Angola. No state exists in the world today that is a perfect picture of socialism as seen in socialist theory, but no capitalist state has ever existed either that perfectly corresponds to the liberal ideal of a capitalist state. All states are approximations to the ideal theoretical ideal. In any case, the youth of socialism as a practical system and the still powerful remnants of capitalism in the world with which fighting socialism has to coexist, interact and contend imply that the world has not yet had the opportunity of a socialism that develops freely on its own basis only.

In effect, we reject as totally wrong the thesis that the existing socialist states are not socialist but are forms of 'state capitalism'. State capitalism is the sort of thing that exists in the so-called 'mixed economies' of Nigeria, Britain, France, Italy, India and the like. It has nothing to do with the sort of system that exists in the Soviet Union, Hungary or Cuba.

Of course, all existing reality, old or new, is subject to man's criticism.

This journal also believes that the socialist revolutions in the existing socialist states all have universal lessons to teach, but none of them is a 'model' that can be simply copied in all respects. Which features of a given revolution are universal and which are peculiar to the circumstances of a particular country are matters for thorough scientific study. While through scientific self education Nigerians should extract and imbibe the universal lessons from the experiences of existing socialist states, they have concretely to seek their own practical road to socialism.

These declarations about the most basic positions are made because the search for unity must start from those who subscribe to a basic non-shifting area of agreement. Progressives and the masses must be rallied around correct basic ideas and not erroneous ones.

What we have stated are basic editorial positions. 'Mass Line', however, is a debating forum. Anyone with ideas that will help the socialists and the working people is welcome to share those ideas with the readers of 'Mass Line'.

ANNOUNCEMENT

After reading 'Mass Line', do the people a duty by passing it on to a friend. Better still, form a circle of friends to discuss the issues in 'Mass Line'.

ADDRESS

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