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IN THIS ISSUE

Banner

MAMSER

At School with Comrades

Class Society

The People in Action

How 13,000 Workers Paralysed Insensitive Government
Mass Revolt Against Ershad's Autocracy in Bangladesh

Theory and Method

What is Social Revolution?

With the People's Party

Origin of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia
On the Revolutionary Road - Exchange of Views, Musa/Toyo

Book Review

Lenin and the Road to Socialism

Letters Various

Notices

The People of this Land have suffered enough
THEIR CHAINS MUST FALL !

CBS/3/
1081

Banner

MAMSER

This acronym means 'Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance and Economic Recovery' but President Babangida adds "and Social Justice", so that it can be read as 'Mass Mobilization for self-reliance, social justice and Economic Recovery'. President Babangida himself has often advocated 'social justice' and 'equality and opportunity'. President Obasanjo has **also intoned** in a recent speech that "our federation needs to be firmed on principles of justice, understanding, co-operation, freedom of speech, consensus, equality of opportunity, religious tolerance.." Everyone is free to interpret that in his own way, including the workers and socialist.

Why mass mobilisation? Actually the idea was given birth by the Political Bureau. The Bureau recommended socialism and mass mobilization. Why the two together? Because they are necessarily associated. Only the exploited - the workers, peasants and other toilers themselves - can build socialism. This is because socialism means their liberation from exploitation and their construction of a new life for themselves based on their common ownership of the means of production and exchange and their democratic management of affairs.

No one - military leader, dictator, giant intellectual or what not - can build socialism for the people. Only the people themselves working through their own state, party, trade unions, co-operatives, communes, youth and women's organisations, militias, vigilante groups, etc. can build socialism, guided by Marxist-Leninist science and the vision and activity of the progressive intelligentsia.

In order to build socialism, therefore, working people have to be conscientised, organised and spurred into well-considered action. This is what mass mobilisation means. The Political Bureau understood this well.

But since the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) did not choose socialism as the goal of the state, why 'mass mobilisation'? The AFRC could have reasoned that it did not take power in order to make a fundamental ideological choice for Nigeria. The present military regime has declared itself, merely 'corrective', having come to power principally because of the drift into bankruptcy which stared the country in the face. If the people want socialism, they can, when they have the opportunity to elect new leaders, choose those that can bring socialism about. That opportunity can come in 1992. The question of socialism versus capitalism can split the armed forces once again and we shall be back to the 1966 situation. So the reasoning may go.

It would follow that all that the present government can do about mobilization is to whip up mass support for 'economic recovery' and build up a consciousness of the need for a system based on social justice and equality of opportunity.

The above, one may say, is a generous interpretation of the action of the AFRC, but it is at least a sensible interpretation. Some of the official personnel propagating MAMSER have, in fact, interpreted it to mean mobilising the people for economic recovery and conscientising the masses for a new social order based on social justice and equality of opportunity.