

Popularising Marxism

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Q:— THE Marxist-Leninist Party Frelimo, created a little more than two years ago, began its first major campaign to admit new members in February last year. Briefly, how would you describe the Party's presence in the country today?

A:— The Party structuring campaign which ended last November made it possible to create hundreds of cells in priority work places and residential areas. Tens of thousands of new members have been admitted.

Today the Party is present, through its militants, throughout the country. The Party's leadership, role in state and society is thus guaranteed.

Q:— Mozambique has a high level of illiteracy. What implication does this have for popularising Marxist-Leninist concepts among the largely illiterate workers and peasants?

A:— The concept behind this question is that it (Marxism) is a foreign experience. So how will they learn it if they can't read? But listen — and this is the principle point — Marxism-Leninism is a class science.

Who is it who makes Marxism? Who makes this science after all? Is it the scientist closeted with his books?

A science belongs to its creator. Who is the creator of Marxism-Leninism? It is a science of class. It belongs to its creator — the working class. Its creator is the people, the people in their centuries-long struggle against the different forms and systems of exploitation. Its creator is, above all, the working class which, because of its specific role in society, is capable of conceiving of a new society, a new type of relations among the people.

Now then, who is the best Marxist? Is it the person in the library reading tomes — or the one doing the job? Scientific socialism was not forged and developed among those who spend all their time in libraries and universities. That is a lie! It was not the agronomists who invented geometry; it was the peasants in the demarcation of their land. They invented the science right there.

The Mozambican workers have a long experience of suffering and struggle against slavery, feudalism and capitalism. How do you interpret this? Who were the people who took power in Russia? Were they from the University? Who were the people who took power in the long march in China? Were they from the university?

Q:— But Mr. President, you yourself have said that socialism cannot be built with an illiterate population

A:— That's right. During the literacy campaign Party members are the object of a special literacy drive aimed at raising their scientific knowledge and conceptions of the world. To be able to read, to have the capability to synthesise experiences, to raise them to the level of theory.

There are two things here: one is to see where the theory comes from, where the ideas come from. They come from praxis! Now we want the people to synthesise this praxis, to have the capacity to synthesise their experiences.

Thus the illiterate peasants in Cabo Delgado learned the essence of the system of exploitation of man by man that the new exploiters of the Simango/Lazaro group tried to introduce in the liberated areas. Now Marx went there to say: "Look, this is exploitation, this is this and this is this". They didn't read it in any books, but they felt it: these new exploiters, let's fight them.

It was these peasants who struggled and brought about the victory of the co-operatives over exploitative private commerce and the big landowners. It was the peasants! They struggled and made People's Power, class power, triumph over feudal and bourgeois power that the new exploiters tried to impose. They didn't know where the door of the university was. They didn't even know the way there.

The people's liberation war, our military science which defeated the colonial-fascist generals, was drawn up and developed by our own illiterate people. Marxism-Leninism did not appear in our country as an imported product. Mark this well, we want to combat this idea. Is it a policy foreign to our country? Is it an imported product

THE following interview was given recently by President SAMORA MOISES MACHEL of the People's Republic of Mozambique. The interviewers were ALLEN ISSACMAN, Professor of African History at the University of Minnesota, currently teaching at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, and IAIN CHRISTIE of the Mozambique Information Agency (AIM).

or merely the result of reading the classics? No. Our Party is not a study group of scientists specialising in the reading and interpretation of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Our struggle, the class struggle of our working people, their experiences of suffering all enable them to assume and internalise the fundamentals of scientific socialism. The same struggle contributes to the continuous development and enrichment of Marxism-Leninism, which is the common property of all exploited peoples and classes.

In the process of the struggle we synthesise our experiences and heighten our theoretical knowledge. It's different from first studying the theory of how to wage a war and then going out to do it. We did it and now we synthesise. We think that, in the final analysis, this has been the experience of every socialist revolution.

Q:— And indeed the largely illiterate masses played a vital role in the selection of Party members in the Party structuring campaign

A:— They did. Each candidate for Party membership was studied not only by the Party structures — each one was the subject of broad debate by the masses. Decisions were made on a case-by-case basis, and today the masses feel that they have in each Party member a truly vanguard element. They are aware that they can denounce those who, by chance, are able to infiltrate into the Party or who fail to follow the Party line.

The way in which this campaign was carried out greatly enhanced the Party's prestige among the masses.

Q:— However other countries building socialism have experienced serious abuses of power by Party members. How is Frelimo trying to avoid this?

A:— Our Party has had a great deal of experience with errors and abuses that arise in the exercise of power. During the course of our struggle for independence, we developed and institutionalised certain essential mechanisms. Criticism is a constant with us, criticism in Party structures and criticism by the masses. People's vigilance is extremely important and we continually search for ways to increase its use.

The leading bodies are in permanent contact with the masses and daily receive their opinions, criticisms, suggestions and proposals. The democratic mass organizations are also more and more, involved with all sectors of the population, in their work places and residential neighbourhoods.

Party militants have the right to contact all party organs, including the Central Committee, and they exercise this right. All citizens have the equal right to get in touch with the state administrative organs, including the head of State, and they exercise this right. Letters to the editor in newspapers and magazines are also an important source of criticism and, thus, control of abuses.

Cases of Party and State leaders who were removed from their functions and publicly exposed for deviations from the political line or for improper conduct are well-known.

In these circumstances, it seems to us that we can safely say that eventual abuses of power that arise will be rapidly detected and punished.

Q:— In your speech to the first Conference of Mozambican Women in 1973 you emphasised that without women's emancipation the revolution could not triumph. Although you stressed that this would be a long and difficult struggle, have women made substantial gains during these last six years? And what obstacles still retard their emancipation?

A:— At the Second Conference of the Mozambican Women's Organisation, which took place in 1976, we defined women's participation in all aspects of production as the critical element in their emancipation. We have put this into practice in factories throughout the country where women now work side by side with men. In northern Mozambique, for example, 30

women have been trained as dock workers and are currently employed, if I am not mistaken, at the port of Pemba.

In Gaza Province women have begun working in cashew processing factories doing jobs which were previously reserved for men. There are also large numbers of women employed on newly formed agricultural co-operatives throughout the country. Thus, we are not only liberating women from being housewives, but we are training them in sectors other than those in which women traditionally worked.

The principal obstacle to the emancipation of women is men themselves.

Men still can't accept the possibility that their wives might hold positions that are more important than theirs. When this happens, it creates a great conflict within the household. Now I ask you, is this a problem of the emancipation of women or of the emancipation of men?

For example, in Mozambique, as in the world in general, if a woman is employed and her husband is without a job, he will refuse to remain at home and take care of the children. Instead, he prefers to spend his time elsewhere. Now, is this a problem of women or of men?

and green vegetables. The main organizational and development measures in this sector, such as the installation of irrigation systems, production of seeds and improvement of seed quality, scientific research and so on, have been either carried out already or are in the process of being implemented.

In industry too the general fulfilment of Congress orientations is forecast. In the iron and steel and heavy engineering industries, the glass industry, petroleum refining, the chemical industry, the textile, clothing, footwear and food industries, vital reorganisation is under way. These sectors suffered interruptions in production of differing severity in 1975 and 1976. But the process of recuperation which began in 1977 has been consolidated.

Q:— At the time of independence Mozambique's industry was virtually paralysed as a result of the flight of most foreign technicians and factory owners. Since then, how has this sector of the economy been reorganised?

A:— Industrial production is recovering on all fronts. Since independence the principal steps include combating the sabotage brought to a head by capitalism in flight — by the

many directorates already include a representative of the enterprise's workers.

Q:— In light of the difficulties a number of countries have faced in their attempts to organise communal villages on a voluntary basis, how has Frelimo fared?

A:— The Party's decision to create communal villages and co-operatives was received enthusiastically by the peasants. The obvious benefits flowing from the establishment of this form of collective production and the concomitant elimination of exploitation stimulated the rapid development of communal villages and co-operatives.

Today, there are more than 1,000 communal villages, with more than 1 million resident, and over 500 agricultural co-operatives with over 30,000 members.

Because of the success of these communal villages and co-operatives, many other peasants have taken the initiative and organised collective production units. Take the case of cotton, whose production during the colonial period was based on forced labour, leaving deep scars on the peasants subjected to it. Today, it is common for peasants to join together and create cotton-producing co-operatives.

The collectivisation of production gradually leads to collectivisation of other activities as well. Thus, consumer and marketing co-operatives have been created, there is collective construction of houses, and we are beginning to collectively resolve problems of health and education.

The communal villages are centres of collective production and centres of political, social and cultural life, which will permit us to industrialise, urbanise and socialise the rural areas. In sum, the communal villages are essentially centres of organised life, collective life.

Naturally, the existing co-operatives have encountered various problems — material problems. For example, we need to develop techniques to permit us to make the most of our natural resources, such as the construction of small dikes and dams to control the course of rivers and use them for irrigation. There are still problems in developing techniques to fight against natural calamities, like floods, droughts, hailstorms and insect plagues, whose effects we can protect against or even wipe out.

Q:— What about the role of the state farming sector?

A:— Development is proceeding quickly. We already have 130,000 hectares producing cotton, rice, maize, potatoes, peanuts and alfalfa under the control of state farms.

The state farms are centres for the diffusion of advanced techniques of use to the co-operatives — the best seed for each kind of soil, the most advanced cultivating techniques, the highest quality fertilizer. They are also centres of scientific-technical training for peasant co-operative members, centres of high productivity and high revenue.

Q:— What is the role of private capital, both local and international, in the industrial, agricultural, and commercial sectors of Mozambique?

A:— In industry, agriculture and trade the private sector plays an important social role. Private sector activity, however, must serve the interests of the national economy, in that private entrepreneurs must use their means of production in accordance with the objectives fixed by the state and in line with the goals of the National Plan.

We believe that there is a place in our economic development effort for the participation of other countries, of international firms and of foreign capital in general, as long as their activity fits within our economic policy objectives, is in conformity with the principles and priorities of our development plans and adds to the value of our human and material resources.

Our state has enacted legislation to govern the minimum conditions for setting up new businesses and defining their rights and obligations. When an en-

terprise is established, it receives a statute which outlines the firm's lifetime, the rules governing export of profits and technical assistance transfers, its integration into the national plan, and other conditions which permit the profitability of the project, thus benefiting both the investor and the People's Republic of Mozambique.

At the beginning of any project, the parties agree upon conditions that make it possible for the Mozambican state to acquire, after a specified period, the foreign share in the business.

Q:— In spite of the unemployment problem, there does not seem to be a great deal of crime in Maputo, most policemen are unarmed, and people freely walk the streets at night. How do you account for this, and will it last?

A:— One of the fundamental characteristics of a social society is the establishment of co-operation and brotherhood among men where man stops preying upon other men. The struggle against the causes of crime — the social situations that produce crime — is an integral part of the struggle to build a socialist society.

During the war, we practically eliminated crime in the liberated zones. At the same time, it constantly increased in the regions occupied by enemy, especially in the large cities and areas controlled by the fascist colonial army. The unemployment, the idleness which was forced on the people in the concentration camps called "protected villages", the systematic contempt for women, the indifference to elements of colonial policy which encouraged crime.

At our moment of victory, there were in our country thousands of prostitutes and drug addicts, drug trafficking and gambling networks, gangs of professional thieves. These networks had many links with the colonial police, especially the political police, and functioned as informers for the Western secret services.

Our struggle against crime has three components — the political struggle, the economic and social struggle, and administrative measures. Its objective, rather than punishing the delinquent, is to reform him and, above all, to wipe out the causes of his delinquency.

Soon after victory, during the transitional government, we launched wide-scale campaigns to organise and involve the people in the struggle against crime. The newly formed Dynamising Groups played a fundamental role in those campaigns.

Simultaneously, we took administrative steps to close establishments where criminals and delinquents tended to congregate and opened re-education centres for prostitutes, drug addicts, petty criminals, pimps and drug dealers. From the beginning, most of the gang leaders changed their nationality and left the country.

In the re-education centres delinquents learn professions and develop good work habits. Already many thousands have been reformed and reintegrated into society.

Statistics from the capital demonstrate the kinds of results we have already achieved. They are especially significant because, at one time, the capital was the major centre of crime in the country. Before independence about 1,500 homicides were committed each year.

In 1977 there were 171 homicides, and in 1978 there were 83, of which only two involved robberies. The rest were crimes of passion, crimes motivated by superstitions, or quarrels provoked by drunkenness. From 1977 to 1978 corporal offenses dropped from 329 to 234 for all of Maputo Province. Thefts have also declined considerably, from almost 5,000 incidents in 1977 in the city of Maputo to about 4,000 for the whole province in 1978.

For creation of many new jobs through the development of suburban farming zones around the major cities and increased industrialisation, the improvement of the general level of education and culture, the growing social pressure against drunkenness, the increasing responsibility felt by citizens toward their society, the restructuring of the police forces and their improved relations with the masses, and the development of vigilance groups are all fundamental factors which permit us to be optimistic that crime in our society will be virtually eliminated in the relatively near future.



President Samora Machel

Moreover, men have not been able to accept the ideas that women are their intellectual equals. This is a serious problem which we must overcome. In the developed countries, are women considered the intellectual equals of men? Of course not. They are still considered inferior. Here in Mozambique the problem is compounded by the continued vitality of sexist practices within the "traditional" societies and of illiteracy, superstition and the passivity of women who continue to accept their inferior status. Obviously, we still have many obstacles to overcome.

Q:— Turning to production and the economy; the Third Congress of Frelimo in February 1977 established production levels in the industrial and agricultural sectors to be reached by 1980. Given the lack of skilled technicians, the lack of capital and economic sabotage which plagued Mozambique immediately after independence, are these projections likely to be achieved?

A:— The Third Congress defined economic recuperation as the immediate essential objective. This, in fact, production targets for 1980 correspond to the highest levels of production ever reached in each sector during the colonial period.

At the present moment, the prospects of fulfilling these objectives are, in general, good.

In the agricultural sector we expect to exceed in the 1979-80 season the Congress production targets for maize, rice, potatoes, cotton, sunflower seeds, tea, citrus fruits

settlers who abandoned the country — and establishing priorities for industrial recovery. We have defined strategic sectors and set up state administrative structures to oversee them, and we have set clear objectives for production under new socio-economic conditions.

Thus, for example, we have transformed the cement industry into an exporting sector, we have begun to produce agricultural implements, and in the textile, shoe and furniture sectors we have reduced the number of models and simplified the production process in order to increase production and ensure that our people's needs are satisfied at prices they can afford to pay.

We have also established training programmes at all levels to improve the skills of both the directors and the workers and have progressively introduced planning and scientific control of production in priority sectors.

The statistics reflect the success to date of our economic recovery and industrial reorganisation. From 1977 to 1978 industrial production increased by 20 per cent and industrial productivity by 15 per cent, and we expect production this year to rise by another 23 per cent.

Worker direction of national industry has also begun to be felt. Workers participate in discussions of the purposes of production, and control of the results of production is increasingly in the hands of workers who, through their representatives, have access to all information needed to control production. The direction of enterprises is also being assumed by persons of working class origin, and