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UFAHAMU

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VOLUME IX, NUMBER 2, 1979

CONTENTS

Editorial Notes	2
IN MEMORIAM: <i>Death of a Freedom Fighter</i>	5
Contributors	8

ARTICLES

Ngugi wa Thiongo's <i>Petals of Blood</i>Ntongela Masilela	9
Land Issue in Kenya Politics: Pre-and Post-Independence Development.....Jessie R. Gaston	30
A Historiographic Appraisal of Kenyan Coast History.....Leslie Schaffer	61
The So-Called National Bourgeoisie in Kenya.....Horace Campbell	86
Afrispace.....Martin Rothblatt	131

ISSUES

<i>From Apartheid & Imperialism to Total Liberation in Africa</i> A.A.A	7
Call Us Ms.....Zarina Patel	78
Jobless in Nairobi.....Chelagat Mutai	119
On Marginal Areas and Peoples- The Kenyan Case Towards Definitional Clarity.....G. Ngugi Njuguna	127
Political Repression in Guyana: <i>The Working Peoples Alliance</i>L.A.C.A.I.P	139

POEMS

<i>Aspirin Cures</i>Wanjiku Matenjwa	59
<i>Does a Rich Man Ever Die?</i>Hakim Hooks	29

ART

<i>Freedom Torch,</i>	4
<i>Herdsmen</i>Hezbon Owiti	126

BOOK REVIEWS

Books Received	152
----------------	-----

<i>Self-Reliance in Kenya: The Case of Harambee,</i> M.P. Mbiti and R. Rasmusson.....G. Ngugi Njuguna	144
<i>Ethnic Problems of the Tropical Africa- Can they be Solved?,</i> Rosa N. Ismagilova.....Jean Damu	147

EDITORIAL NOTES

As in 1974, the present *crisis of capitalism* is having a devastating impact on the developing world, especially Africa where some of the world's poorest nations are located. This is a much more serious recession than that of the mid-1970's. Economic indicators in the Western capitalist countries are showing a downward slump in their growth rate; particularly in such crucial industries as steel and shipbuilding.

At the same time the rate and level of profit continues to be extremely high and the majority of the *multi-national corporations (M.N.Cs)* continue to reap tremendous profit in the middle of this recession as a result of their economic activities in the Third World. We are witnessing economic mergers unparalleled in modern history as *monopoly capitalism* further consolidates. Nevertheless, this is a recession to everybody because the two unwelcome companions to capitalism; *unemployment and inflation* are becoming completely unmanageable.

In the past, encouraged by the liberals, the M.N.Cs as the principle force of contemporary capitalism had attempted unsuccessfully to resolve the contradictions of capitalism by political means and *technological* revolution. The increasing and expanding role of the capitalist governments in the interest of private capital further worsened the problem of inflation. The continuing government spending in the armament industry demonstrates the fact that this inflation is nothing but a *redistribution* of the social wealth. Only a few gain, but most, particularly those on fixed incomes, lose. The technological revolution for a brief period was supportive of the imperialists. But even then it could not ensure high growth rates or resolve inherent contradictions. Technological innovation in the electronics and computer industries has led to the displacement of entire segments of workers. The continuing workers' dispute with the *Times* (of London) has similar characteristics. As Marx said, *technology is not the source for social renovation for capitalism, but the root of even deeper contradictions and crisis.*

The uneven form of development of capitalism continues to underdevelop the Third World nations because of the *unfair* nature of international trade, and international financing. Whereas inflation and unemployment in the Western capitalist countries is creating hardship there; in the developing world they have put the basic necessities of life beyond the means of a large segment of their population. Consequently, the Third World countries are asking nothing less than the *decolonization of the world economy*, A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER.

The implications of the political demands of the representatives of the Third World from capitalist countries are manifold to all parties in the world. They are particularly important to individual countries in the developing world, like Kenya. As the international negotiations on the *codes of conduct* regarding M.N.Cs continue, countries like Kenya should re-evaluate their relationship with these bodies. As the new regime gets "fresh mandate" from the *Wananchi*, and as part of their continuing moves to re-enter the arena of international politics the government of Kenya should exact maximum benefits from the M.N.Cs. Besides the politics, the government should increase its involvement in economics for a variety of interests: the workers, the country's environment, stable and rising (with inflation) prices for exports, further integration and strengthening of African economies, etc.,.

Today the capitalist countries and their agencies like the M.N.Cs need the Third World countries more than ever. The United States, for instance now exports more to the developing world than to the European Economic Community, Japan and the Socialist countries combined. Countries like Kenya are already part of that trade structure and therefore have a potentially strong basis for negotiating a new code of conduct for continuing relationship. Technology transfer and financial and other assistance should contribute towards resolving the present problems; not create new ones. We have reached the historical juncture when we can discriminate between the various M.N.Cs. on the basis of their relationship with apartheid South Africa and its front-states of Rhodesia-Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Certain oppressive ideologies and policies in some government institutions should be made part of Kenya's *history*. In spite of the country's impressive *anti-colonial* struggle, it inherited certain, by nature *oppressive*, colonial institutions and obligations as a result of the independence bargain. In to-days Kenya, all that is a barrier to our socio-economic growth and stability. The nations hard won political freedom should be defended for all in the society. The state apparatuses should actively fight all forms of ethnic chauvinism, sexism, & discrimination against the poor. The increasing and continuing role of women in the *healthy* development of the nation should be further encouraged by removing man created obstacles. Questionable action like wife battery, rape and discrimination should be made more severely punishable by law. The executive arm of the government should put its *prestige* and *influence* behind the enactment of the *Marriage Bill* which will be fair to all parties. This legislation is as important to the Kenyan feminists as is the *Equal Rights Amendment* to their counterparts in the U.S.A.

Freedom Torch, Hezbon Owiti.



IN MEMORIAM : DEATH OF A FREEDOM FIGHTER.

The African Activist Association is deeply saddened by the death of one of Africa's greatest sons, *ANTONIO AGOSTINHO NETO*, first president of the People's Republic of Angola. President Neto died on September 10, 1979, from cancer.

Neto was born in Kaxikane (near Luanda) on September 17, 1922. After completing his primary and secondary education in Angola, he worked as a health functionary, a position which put him in close touch with the deplorable conditions of health care provided for the Angolan people under Portuguese colonialism. During this period, Neto became active in the Angolan cultural revitalization movement of the 1940's as a poet and political critic of Portuguese colonialism. He soon acquired the nickname "poet of protest". By 1951, Neto was jailed for publishing a book of poems critical of Portuguese colonialism.

After release from jail, Neto left Angola to study medicine in Portugal. As a student, he established links with the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist movement in Portugal. These contacts broadened and reinforced his political outlook, and taught him that the struggle of the Angolan people would have international support and recognition. It was also in Portugal that the initial links were forged among the leading elements of other anti-colonial movements from the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique, Guine and Cape Verde. Although imprisoned again, before and after completion of his medical studies, the implacable Neto (and his comrades) succeeded in breaking through the political isolation imposed on oppressed peoples by imperialism. Important interests were shared and developed with anti-imperialist movements and progressive countries in the rest of the world, especially the socialist countries.

The fruits of internationalist solidarity were clearly demonstrated in 1975 when the armies of racist South Africa, and mercenaries sponsored by the United States invaded the new Angolan republic on the eve of its independence. President Neto, at the very hour of peril, called upon the fraternal assistance of Cuba and the Soviet Union to help the young government materially repel the jackals of imperialism attempting to turn back the clock and halt the tide of African liberation and social transformation. While Pretoria and Washington shouted hypocrisy and slander at this noble example of proletarian internationalism, the world praised it and gave it support.

The liberation of Angolan under the leadership of Neto and the MPLA marked a critical turning point towards final victory for the national liberation movement of southern Africa

in general. The last member of the triumvirate (Cabral, Mondlane, and Neto) that initiated the long struggles of liberation against Portuguese colonialism has physically passed on, but the legacy of comrade Neto, his unselfish dedication to the anti-imperialist movement in Africa and the world will continue to inspire and to serve as a great moral and political force. In this way his life will continue to further the struggles of his comrades in Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES. VICTORY IS CERTAIN!!!

A LUTA CONTINUA

VITORIA E CERTA

* * * * *

The African Activists Association are pleased to announce the selection and election of a new Executive Committee as of October 17, 1979.

Chairperson Mahmood Ibrahim

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