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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTELLECTUALS IN  
THIRD WORLD AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTELLECTUALS IN SOCIALIST SOCIETIES AND  
THOSE IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES.

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## 1 BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

In discussing the relationship between intellectuals in socialist countries and those in the Third World countries it is imperative to underline certain historical facts. For one, real socialism as a practical socio-economic formation emerged only 70 years ago with the Great October Socialist Revolution. 70 years in the life of any known historical epoch is an insignificant time period. It is even shorter when we consider the world socialist system as a whole which established itself only after the socialist revolutions that followed the weaknesses in the imperialist camp following World War II.

The significance of the youthfulness of the world socialist system lies in the fact that there are very few countries in the world which have attained the level of development of developed socialism. Few countries can be categorised as developed socialist societies. A few others belong to the era of those countries that realised the socialist revolution in the 1950s and early 1960s which have within a very short time propelled their backward societies to relatively medium levels of development which they would never have achieved within the same time frame had they remained under the chains of capitalism and imperialist dominance. The remainder of the socialist societies are really still very young and are in the early transitional phase between capitalism and socialism. These are mostly those countries where the power of the exploiter classes were overthrown in the late 1960s and the 1970s. In other words, when we discuss the relationship between intellectuals in socialist states and those in the Third World we must be mindful that a lot of the existing real socialist societies belong to the Third World as a matter of historical fact. We must, therefore, be clear in our discussion and point out that most of the relationships that we are examining are those between developed socialist societies, such as the USSR, GDR, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the "Third World" which includes a lot of socialist countries such as Mongolia, Cuba, China and the DPRK as well as those in the early transitional phases such as Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique.

However, given the tremendous potential provided by the socialist revolution to production and productivity that cannot be matched by capitalism under the same conditions<sup>(1)</sup> the analysis in this paper to a large extent will treat Cuba, the DPRK and, to some extent, China as "developed". The "Third World" is used to include all the underdeveloped non-socialist and the developing socialist countries, neo-colonial societies and those following progressive national democratic revolutionary positions. The "Third World" also includes the remaining colonies and colonies of special types in Southern Africa and elsewhere.

Having clarified what we understand by "socialist" and the "Third World", the next question is what the paper covers and how.

The paper attempts a brief and generally tentative analysis of the concrete conditions under socialism and how this creates intellectuals of a new and different mission from the "intellectual" of and in the bourgeois society. It then proceeds to examine the concrete dialectical and historical links between these new-type intellectuals and those of "Third World", which is defined in its diversity above. We conclude by summarising past experiences and projecting future prospects in the relationships in so far as they relate to the anti-imperialist struggles. The concentration is on Africa although the coverage of other "Third World" regions is adequately made.

Once established all the socialist revolutions put their intellectuals into the work of transforming the political consciousness of the masses as well as raising the scientific and technical forces of production. The socialist revolution, however, is a world phenomenon not a chauvinistic "natural" happening. It produces and enhances proletarian internationalism. This is where the concrete links with the rest of the world, particularly the oppressed and the newly victorious peoples of the Third World come in..

The Great October socialist Revolution, for example, produced the basis for the establishment of the first University ever for political and academic training of intellectuals drawn from among the leadership of the working class movements from the colonies and semi-colonies dominated and oppressed by imperialism. This institution was the Communist University of the (Peoples) Toilers of the East. In a speech he delivered at a meeting of the students of the University on May 18, 1925, J V Stalin said:

....We all know that these comrades thirst for light and knowledge. The task of the University of Toilers of the East is to forge them into genuine revolutionaries, armed with the theory of Leninism, equipped with the practical experience of Leninism and capable of conscientiously fulfilling the immediate tasks facing the liberation movement in the colonies and developing countries.(4)

The "toilers of the east" were mainly the African countries. He talked in his speech of Asiatic and among other nations, those parts of Soviet Union in the Asiatic continent, India, China, Morocco and Egypt. South Africa was always involved at this stage. This is recorded in the very historical records of revolutionary parties like the South African Communist Party (see, South African Communists Speak: Documents from the History of the South African Communist Party 1915-1980, Inkululeko Publications, London, 1981) and in the recent open interview given by the current deputy director of the Moscow-based Africa Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Dr Victor Goncharov, to a local journalist, Moeletsi Mbeki (The Herald, July 27, 1987, p 6).. A Reznikov's work : The Comintern and the East : Strategy and Tactics in the National Liberation Movement (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1984) also amply deal with this history.

The role of the revolutionary Soviet intellectual that emerged from the Great October Socialist Revolution was to serve the cause of the revolution in the Soviet Union and, where and when depicted and deployed by the Party and the new state of People's Power, the course of developing the intellectual and revolutionary cadres from the oppressed nations many, who constitute the "Third World" today. The revolutionary intellectual of the new socialist revolution was, however, different from the maverick progressive scholar from the imperialist nations who is guided more by personal initiative and supported by personal or private material means to ally with the cause of the oppressed nations. The new revolutionary socialist intellectual was and still is and will always be during the socialist phase, a "guided missile" who is part and parcel of a socially planned society's contribution and internationalist support for the oppressed and exploited masses all over the globe. He could not be an individualistic loner who struggles against and in hidden antagonism with thousands of others like himself or herself for recognition and for individual or personal creativity and style but not to the extent of bourgeois anarchic "freedom" to engage in all sorts of empty "revolutionary" theorising which leads to concoctions of ideas about how society develops and should develop.

Since the Great October Socialist Revolution the high pace at which the socialist revolution has occurred in different countries with different conditions has meant that each socialist revolution has added something similar and something new and novel to the whole role of the socialist intellectual and his or her relation to the intellectual enterprise in the "Third World". As socialism also grows and matures it brings into the fore new possibilities and tasks for the intellectual in the socialist states, whether they be committed communists as party members or supporters of the revolution but who remain non-party members. The fact that the intellectual in socialist societies can either be those who have chosen to be members of the revolutionary parties or those who are not further explains the reason why one cannot have absolute uniformity in ideas among intellectuals in socialist societies.

From the Marxist-Leninist dialectical laws of social development, even if they were all members of the revolutionary parties, society is a unity and contradiction if different persons and no two people can be exactly the same. They will and do to a large extent share the dialectical and materialistic world outlook since in the final analysis there are only two unionist philosophical world outlooks - the idealist, of which the bourgeois world outlook is the dominant, and the dialectical-materialism of Marxism-Leninism. A contemporary of Lenin, Plekhanov, deals with this adequately in his classic work "The Development of the Monistview of History", in G Plekhanov, Selected Philosophic Works, (in 5 vols,), Vol 1, 1977 (Moscow, Progress Publishers).

The point here is that even within the monist Marxist-Leninist world outlook just as in the idealist bourgeois world outlook, there exists objectively internal variety of viewpoints. A "Forward" to a recent publication by Chinese scholars points this out. In China's Socialist Modernization edited by Yu Guangyan and published by Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, (1984) it is made clear that "(a) Although individual contributions, of course, have given their own view points, they have given a faithful account of the economic development in China". This is of course not to say that given the rather vacillating character of the Chinese socialist revolution since the mid 1960s, the variety of points of view may not be actually contradictory and even antagonistic. However, to confirm the existence of certain levels of internal contradictions within the Marxist-Leninist viewpoints, Victor Goncharov's interview, cited above, notes Goncharov's differing point of view with another soviet scholar, Gleb Starushenkig over the immediate future prospects in the south African liberation process. The former rejects ideas about the institutionalisation of the so-called "group rights" which the later apparently entertains.

In short then, we see the socialist revolution as creating new types of scholars/intellectuals who are part and parcel of the process of the advancement of socialist theory and practice. They are free from back-breaking mortgages, rents, share-holding in exploiter monopolies and all the burdens that are part of the progressive scholar in personal glory.



His other scholarship was to be part of an integrated plan. In this he or she assumed a form of "official approval" since in publishing and disseminating his ideas these could only be done through the party, the state or people's co-operative venture. The scientific work was, therefore, to be articulated within changed material basis with new production relations. This allowed and allows capitalist societies. Their energies are released and channeled in a planned manner and hence they become natural allies of scholars/intellectuals in the Third World countries who are either struggling to overthrow colonial domination, neo-colonial chains or to construct newly established socialist systems. The Western scholars however progressive they may be are conditioned differently and in many ways are made to struggle against their own ruling classes to build alliances with the Third World. The Progressive Western scholar because of the scattered productive forces concentrated in private lands has also the "freedom" to express ideas which they may genuinely think from the subjective points of view to be useful to intellectuals in the Third World in the struggle against imperialism when in reality the ideas may only be bourgeois and petty-bourgeois reformist prescriptions conditioned to extend the life of imperialism. In the legal field, the so-called "Critical Legal Studies Movement" and the earlier one, the "Law and Development" school in the USA are good examples.(5)

Also of significance is the fact that the scientific world outlook of Marxism Leninism is the driving force of the socialist revolutionary intellectual with clear appreciation of the law governed process of historical development and hence understands the historical reality that their role is not to "export revolutions" because scientific socialism in theory and practice teaches that revolutions are made by the masses of any given country depending on the concrete conditions prevailing. Dr Goncharov's interview cited above also makes this point clear. This reality often conditions the socialist scholar to be rather hesitant in criticising the existing policies of the newly independent states since they understand that national independence in their published works the socialist scholars particularly those from the USSR and the GDR who are sometimes the most hated by the imperialist camps do not come out condemning neo-colonial regimes as much as the few, and isolated western progressive scholars do.

If looked at in the context of the weak and often delicate relations between these countries and the newly independent and still neo-colonial states in Africa and Asia, the cautious positions of scholars from these particular socialist states are explainable.

It should be born in mind, however, that whereas scholars from some advanced socialist societies may be cautious about exposing openly the worst of the governments in the newly liberated countries, in my experience they are definitely aware of the weaknesses and mistakes of such governments although they may not put them to print lest their states be mistaken to be promoting dismissive lines of the newly liberated states. Also it is clear that in dealing with the historical personalities who spearhead national liberation in the Third World, whether as statesmen or intellectuals, the socialist scholars are quite forthright in revealing the true ideological lines, however popular they may be, of the Third World Leadership.(7) One may, however, notice that they tend to publicise these assessments only after the death of such leaders-- obviously for tactical reasons. These areas require services comradely debates.

We now Proceed to examine the historical context of the links and interaction between socialist intellectuals and intellectuals in the Third World.

### 3 THE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE CONDITIONS AND CHARACTER OF THE-LINKS AND INTERACTION BETWEEN SOCIALIST INTELLECTUALS AND INTELLECTUALS IN THE THIRD WORLD

Since we have established that the role of the revolutionary socialist intellectual is to provide the intellectual arsenal for the struggle against all forms of exploitation of man by man and in particular the fight for the overthrow of the capitalist system, it stands to reason that the revolutionary socialist intellectual both in person and in his or her intellectual productions is considered an arch-enemy by the and self-determination are transient pre-conditions for socialist revolution(6) and therefore those countries which are independent but have not successfully carried out social revolutions should not be isolated and driven into the hands of imperialism. This is where many scholars/intellectuals in the Third World of Marxist-Leninist persuasion sometimes express some misgivings about what they view to be "uncritical" nature of some socialist scholars when it comes to reviewing the performance of newly independent states.

It is true that bourgeoisie. Since the bourgeoisie still control the larger part of the world, in population and land area, either in the form of developed capitalism, politically independent but economically dominated neo-colonial countries and colonies, it again stands to reason that the revolutionary socialist scholar from developed or emergent socialist states is persona non grata and his/her work criminally "seditious" in most of the Third World countries. The spectre of communism has been and is haunting all of the non-socialist Third World States, including those of the likes of Tanzania during Julius Nyerere's leadership which accepted experimental or still experiment with all sorts of utopian brands of "socialism".

Objectively, therefore, the mutual influence and interaction between the revolutionary socialist scholars from socialist states and the scholars in the Third World is confined to the revolutionary "rebel" section of the Third World intellectuals and even this at clandestine levels. Very few colonies and neo-colonies allow free interaction between the two.

The other area of difficulty with a definite historical basis is the fact that the developed and near-developed socialist states were never among the colonial imperialist powers. The historical links, including linguistic and cultural ties, were not there and hence have to be specially created and nurtured where-ever possible. In the book edited by Yu Guangyuan, cited above, it is stated in the Forward that:

This book is intended to inform readers abroad about the economic construction in China's drive to modernization. When I discovered from my contact with colleagues abroad that they lack material published in their languages on China's economy, I suggested this book to the Foreign Languages Press and set about pooling the contributions of a number of economists. The result is this book.....

This expresses clearly one of the objective historical constraints in the interaction between scholars in socialist states and those in Third World countries.

But the new states of the working people - the socialist states - have always been aware of these problems and quite early established publishing houses such as Progress Publishers (USSR) and Foreign Languages Publishing Houses in Hanoi and Beijing.

Initially these concentrated in publishing the classics of Marxism-Leninism, which has helped to revolutionise the thinking of societies all over the world. With the development of the material conditions under socialism there has been an upsurge of other more general and particular works. For example, in the 1980s Progress publishers started a series on "Real Socialism : Theory and Practice" where it is engaged in co-production with publishers in a number of other socialist countries, some of them Third World countries. The series is in philosophy, constitutional law, economics and sociology, brings together prominent soviet analysts and international groups of writers from socialist countries and is published in English, Spanish and Portuguese. (Information from the cover page in G Popov, Management of Socialist Production, Moscow, 1986). The trend is, therefore, changing but even so this must be read against the background of the diversity in languages spoken in Third World countries as well as the high level of illiteracy and ignorance to which the masses are condemned under colonies and neo-colonies by imperialism.

Popular magazines and journals such as "Socialism: Theory and Practice", "New Times", "New Dawn" (USSR), "Asia, Africa, Latin America", "GDR News", "Law and Legislation in the GDR" (GDR), "Prisma", "Gramma" (Cuba), "Beijing Review" (China) "Vietnam Studies", "Vietnam Courier" (Vietnam), "Korea-Today" (DPRK) and many others, all form the concrete platforms within which direct mirrors of the socialist world and its struggle against the decaying but rabidly vicious imperialist world as well as the advances made in socialist societies are communicated to the Third World intellectual and literate workers and peasants. Other academic journals published in socialist countries also exist which publish specifically about Third World countries or the world at large. Socialist intellectuals also interact with interested Third World intellectuals through international organs such as the "World Marxist Review" and similar journals. They also interact in persona and through the sharing of tasks within international organisations and international professional associations. It requires more specialist indepth studies to come out with concrete information about all these links and forms of mutual interaction.

As indicated earlier, the maturing of socialism in the countries that achieved socialism earlier has had positive influence in all parts of the world. Not only are those leading socialist states now able to share some of their rich and qualitatively higher cultural heritage with the rest of the world, they are increasingly taking a vanguard role in the transformation of backward socialist and progressive countries in the area of science and technological construction. A brief review of the role of Soviet science and technology in concrete fields of production in Southern Africa was recently revealed in the paper by Dr Victor Gontcharov under the title, "Soviet Union and Southern Africa : The Issues of Ensuring Regional Security" which he read at the Conference on Regional Security in Southern Africa, Harare, 8-10 June 1987. He pointed out the role of Soviet scientists are playing in the areas of construction of hydro-electric schemes, as well as carrying out of complex researches on hydrogeological, hydrological, soil studies and geobotanical fields. Similar activities, including provision of doctors and teachers are now commonplace in countries that are not compelled by the hostile imperialist forces to "keep the commies out". It is, therefore, a manifestation of extreme forms of ignorance to claim, the way some petty-bourgeois intellectual running dogs of imperialism do, that the East only supplies arms during national liberation but run away or have nothing to offer thereafter. If the East is not visible in the areas of concrete economic and cultural areas upon the attainment of independence, the reasons lie in the actual as opposed to the declared policies of the governments in those countries.

Developed socialism has also multiplied and diversified many times the modest efforts that started at the University of the (Peoples) Toilers of the East. In special universities such as Patrice Lumumba People's Friendship University in the USSR, specialised wings within the Academies of sciences directly under the Parties' control, Polytechnics and ordinary educational institutions in socialist states provide excellent and affordable training opportunities for tens if not hundreds of thousands of cadres from the Third World, including liberation movements. These are all official institutions given the nature of socialist political economies and are not institutions which do business by selling education to those who can afford them.

Some of the people from Third World Countries are forced by circumstances to go and donate their hard-earned monies in exchange for certificates, some which are not worth the paper they are printed on in imperialist countries.

In spite of such realities, anti-communists in the Third World specialise in discriminating against graduates from socialist universities under the pretext that education in the socialist universities are of lower standards. All these lead to the protection of decadent bourgeois world outlook that permeates many an "intellectual" trained in the West as copy-cats of the bourgeois interests. Their tactics of terrorising those trained in socialist societies undermines the general role socialist intellectualism can play in our societies. And we are the worse for it since serious scholars in the West, particularly those in the sciences know very well how they benefit from interaction with socialist scholars.

#### 4. BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

This topic required more time for research than I was able to give to it. Although substantiated, a lot of the points made or views expressed require and do have rich source materials to concretely substantiate them.

However, as a "working paper" we have shown why from a methodological and theoretical points of view, it is necessary that in examining the relationships between intellectuals in socialist and those in Third World countries a clear class and political economy perspective is useful. It helps us to get to the root of the causes of the current phase of the relations we seek to explain.

Substantively, we have demonstrated that socialism as a historical phase begins and grows at different rates and under different conditions that the various countries find themselves. Flowing from this is the concrete reality that socialism and the world socialist system started from disadvantageous positions, however, within

Socialism has proven in practice that it is the natural ally of the Third World. Its intellectual material force is used and has been used to dislodge imperialist stranglehold through colonialism in many countries. The number is always increasing. Also the immense intellectual force of socialism is helping the newly independent states, whether socialist or only progressive, to transform the centuries old conditions of underdevelopment that imperialism had maintained in these countries. The older neo-colonies are also using the intellectual force of socialism to reconsider their relations with the imperialists. The revolutionary genius of socialism is helping more and more people in oppressed societies to take up courage to struggle for the defeat of the old society and for the creating of the new. Indeed, peoples' democracies produce peoples' democratic intellectuals and intellectualism.

The task is not merely to use the new intellectuals and intellectualism created by socialism elsewhere. The task is to use our intellectual alliance and solidarity with them so that we can expand the length of the frontiers that separates the old and aged capitalist world and the new and vigorous socialist world. We can only do this by joining the masses and working with the masses to make social revolutions. Where colonialism is still in force, like in South Africa and Namibia, intellectualism only makes sense if it is directed towards the destruction of the fascist apartheid system and the creation of truly independent and non-racial democratic South Africa and Namibia. The socialist intellectuals through their voluntary solidarity committees, the workers' parties and governments are unconditionally involved in this struggle. We must, however, start by taking sides, either on the side of the minority exploiters and oppressors or on the side of the majority of the oppressed and exploited masses. There is no such a thing as a "neutral intellectual" in societies divided into antagonistic social classes and strata, in a world divided between capitalism and socialism.

FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>See Chne Junsheng, "Why China Must Stick to Socialism", Beijing Review Vol 30, January 26, 1987.
- <sup>2</sup>V I Lenin Selected Works (Moscow, Progress, 1977) 499
- <sup>3</sup>See Kim I L Sung, Historical Experience of the Building The Workers' Party of Korea (Pyongyang, Korea, 1986).
- <sup>4</sup>J V Stalin, Marxism and the National and Colonial Question : A Collection of Articles and Speeches (London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1941) 206
- <sup>5</sup>See "Three Perspectives on Critical Legal Studies", Havard Law Bulletin, Vol 38, No 4, Summer 1987, p22-23; J Gardner, Legal Imperialism: American Lawyers and Foreign Aid in Latin America (1980) and Trubeck and Galanter, "Scholars in Self-Estrangement: Some Reflections on the Crisis in Law and Development Studies in the United States", Wisconsin Law Review, 1062 (1984)
- <sup>6</sup>See, for example, Pyotv Manckha, Problems of Africa Today (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1983), in particular, the concluding chapter.
- <sup>7</sup>See for example the two books: R Ulyanovsky, Present-Day Problems in Asia and Africa: Theory, Politics, Personalities (1980) and Fighters for National Liberation - Political Profiles (1984), all publications of Progress Publishers, Moscow.





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