

An important task before African statesmen is therefore the creation of conditions conducive to the establishment of stable and progressive governments. Scholars can assist in the search for justice and stability by raising and commenting upon basic issues concerning the sources of legitimacy and authority for the new states and the participation of citizens in the running of their own affairs. Two articles appearing in this issue do raise such basic questions, and introduce a debate to which many scholars should contribute. This journal will welcome examination of African political systems which aim to identify how the basic functions of government are performed in each of them. We solicit studies of the operation of particular political and administrative institutions and of the decision-making process at all levels.

Africans are members of a growing international community. African states cannot be isolated or insulated from it. Given the limitations imposed upon them by the existing distribution of power in the world, the African nations must find new methods and measures for furthering their own interests, and enriching the community. At the same time, they must make new efforts to promote and strengthen African unity and mutual co-operation. Scholars in the field of international politics are encouraged to use the forum provided by this journal to discuss ways and means by which this may be accomplished.

Particular attention will be paid to the phenomena of imperialism and neo-colonialism. Articles analysing it and exposing governments and interest groups whose policies subordinate the genuine interests of Africa to foreign interests will be published in this journal. For too long Africa has been dominated and exploited by the forces of imperialism and neo-colonialism for their own benefit and its peoples discriminated against on grounds of their race and colour alone. In addition the interpretation of significant events in African politics has been monopolised by foreign "experts". This journal will explore alternative African solutions to African problems and appeals to African scholars to contribute their knowledge and understanding of their continent and its people. Concepts like self-reliance and socialism will be discussed and analysed in an effort to give them concrete meaning. Emphasis will be placed on the originality and relevance of ideas to the African scene.

The Department of Political Science of the University of Dar es Salaam is the originator of this journal. Editorial responsibility is vested primarily in a board consisting of faculty members and students of that Department. One person each from the Departments of Political Science at the University of Nairobi, Makerere University and the University of Zambia have agreed to be associate editors. In addition, there are regional editors from other parts of Africa and from other Continents who have an advisory responsibility.

CHE AND CONTINUOUS EDUCATION

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Che Guevara was not like other ordinary politicians for he never believed in holding a high position in power after the revolution was successful. To him a position in power did not matter as much as the revolution itself. He would not hold too long to power, yet he would hold on to a revolution until the revolution was a success as in the case of Cuba, or until he lost his life.

Che's death meant he did not succeed in his longing to liberate the whole of Latin America. Yet he left behind him a great contribution to socialism in this century. His more famous understanding of the strategy of guerrilla warfare should not obscure the contribution of his idea of learning. As he has said many times and most forcefully in *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, socialist society was "a huge school for educating the individual", and his theory of guerrilla warfare makes even the armed struggle for socialism into a learning process.

Che starts to talk of this process of education on the very battlefield before the armed struggle is carried through to a successful conclusion.

At this level he stresses the importance of the relationship between the guerrilla fighters and the peasants. Both have much to teach each other. Che pointed out that those who first dream of the possibility of revolutionary change are not usually men whose spirit has been crushed by years of grinding poverty and toil. He admitted that none of the famous group of guerrillas who arrived in the *Granma* and settled in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra in order to overthrow the Batista regime in Cuba knew rural life from inside. "None of us who . . . *learned to respect the peasant* and the worker living with him had a peasant or working class background" (our italics). The learning of this respect came out of sharing the hard life of the peasant in Cuba, as "an experience felt rather than known". It is

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experience that gives us our values and a new experience means new values. Up in the mountains respect for life replaced respect for property, as Che remarked that :

"Hunger, what is called real hunger, was something none of us had experienced. But we began to know it in the two long years in the Sierra Maestra. And then many things became very clear.

"We, who at first punished severely anyone who touched the property of even a rich peasant or a landowner, brought ten thousand head of cattle to the Sierra one day and said to the peasants, simply, 'Eat'. And the peasants, for the first time in years and years, some for the first time in their lives, ate beef.

"The respect which we had for sacrosanct property right to those ten thousand head of cattle was lost in the course of armed battle, and we understood perfectly that the life of a single human being is worth a million times more than all the property of the richest man on earth. And we learned it : we, who were not of the working class nor of the peasant class."¹

Che points out that the guerrillas should learn the ways of the peasants, for the peasants are the base for a successful guerrilla campaign. The guerrilla soldier must learn how to co-operate with the peasants—which means understanding how they think and adapting oneself to them—for if the peasants do not co-operate with the guerrillas no armed struggle will succeed. The guerrillas depend on the peasants for most of their supplies, from food to the people who must join the revolutionary forces. In this co-operation the guerrilla leaders learn to live like peasants and the peasants learn to live like soldiers. This also often means on both sides unlearning the bad habits of the past.

Thus at first the guerrillas may find it distasteful to eat the food supplied to them by the peasants, but learning to live off horses and monkeys, or even to eat day after day the coarse monotonous diet of the countryside was a valuable lesson to men softened by city middle class life. On the other side there was the guerrilla Camilo "who had a little alcoholic burner and he used to cook cats and offer them as a delicacy to new recruits who joined us. It was one of the many tests of the Sierra, and more than one failed this preliminary 'examination' when he refused to eat the cat proffered." In this way the peasant learns to eat strange food as well. In eating the strange food served him by the guerrillas the peasant may break the taboo of his tribe and break out of the limitations imposed on him by the past. These taboos are inhibiting. To break them is at one point to break through the whole range of inhibitions which have kept the peasants from realizing their strength. New food means overcoming primitive fears of what is strange and unknown and comes from the outside. It means beginning to accept the new world which the guerrilla fighter has brought to the doorstep. It is, for the peasant, his first taste of revolution.

¹C. Guevara, "On Revolutionary Medicine", speech, 19 August, 1960.

While the partisan leader learns he teaches. In his manual *Guerrilla Warfare* Che systematizes this process and says :

"The guerrilla fighter will be a sort of guiding angel who has fallen into the zone . . . The land and property of notorious and active enemies of the revolution should pass immediately into the hands of the revolutionary forces. Furthermore, taking advantage of the heat of the war—those moments in which human fraternity reaches its highest intensity—all kinds of co-operative work, as much as the mentality of the inhabitants will permit, ought to be stimulated.

"The guerrilla fighter as a social reformer should not only provide an example in his own life, but . . . he will also make use of what he learns as the months or years of war strengthen his revolutionary convictions, making him more radical as the potency of arms is demonstrated, as the outlook of the inhabitants becomes a part of his spirit and of his own life, and he understands the justice and the vital necessity of a series of changes, of which the theoretical importance appeared to him before, but devoid of practical urgency.

"This development occurs very often, because the initiators of guerrilla warfare, or rather the directors of guerrilla warfare, are not men who have bent their backs day after day over the furrow. They are men who understand the necessity for changes in the social treatment accorded peasants, without having suffered in the usual case this bitter treatment in their own persons. It happens then (I am drawing on the Cuban experience and enlarging it) that a genuine interaction is produced between these leaders who with their acts teach the fundamental importance of the armed fight, and the people themselves who rise in rebellion and teach the leaders these practical necessities of which we speak. Thus, as a product of this interaction between the guerrilla fighter and the people, a progressive radicalization appears."² (Our italics.)

This is why the legendary twelve who remained from Castro's original eighty-three men could win the revolution in Cuba. Castro was able to recruit fighters from among the peasants. Moreover, the peasants continued their co-operation until the revolution succeeded. In Bolivia this was not the case. The peasants did not support the guerrilla soldiers and the armed struggle was a failure. Learning goes together with commitment. The peasants learn the new way of life of the guerrilla soldiers and eventually join them in the struggle. This is the life blood of the revolution.

Che then points out another level of education. In this case, he says that the guerrillas should learn from every mistake. In South America people have learned from Castro's victory that revolution is possible, but they must also study that victory in detail when they make their own revolution. As a demonstration, Che himself studied all the mistakes made during the fighting in Cuba. Revolutionary history should be a lesson to revolutionaries. Che's *Episodes of the Revolutionary War* was intended as a teaching

²C. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, undated, no publisher's name, pp. 44-45.

manual to other guerrilla movements. Whenever they lost a battle Che would analyse the reasons why they lost and would try to correct these mistakes to avoid more failures. At the beginning, for example, when they had just made their disastrous landing and were being harassed by Batista's forces as they struggled out of the marshland and swamp, it was easy for them to be followed by Batista's soldiers because they left behind them a trail of sugar cane peelings after they had eaten. Che learned from this mistake that whenever the guerrilla soldiers moved, they should cover up their trails. In the diary he left in Bolivia Che summarized every month the facts and figures which he knew spelled defeat for his guerrillas and probably he knew they were the facts that gradually took the shape of his own death. Yet he did not seek to soften them. On 31 August, 1967, he makes his usual analysis of the month:

"Beyond a doubt, it was the worst month we have had from the point of view of the war. The loss of all the caves with their documents and medicines was a hard blow, above all psychologically. The loss of two men in the last days of the month and the subsequent march on horseback demoralized the men . . . My sickness spread doubt in some more and all of this was reflected in our only skirmish, in which we should have caused the enemy some loss instead of only one wounded . . . We continue without any sort of contacts and without any reasonable hope of establishing them in the near future. We continue without incorporating the peasants, a logical thing indeed, if the little contact we have had with them lately is considered . . . We are at a low moment in our morale and in the legend of the revolution."³

He continued to record the history of defeat as truthfully as he could because only the truth could be of service to other revolutionaries. If his own age and physical unfitness, his own anger with the group, his occasional loss of self-control were contributing factors to their low morale Che included them. It was the only gift that was not degrading to offer those who came after him. During his last month in the Bolivian jungle, Che describes a guerrilla movement that is falling apart. The clarity with which he notes the symptoms of the disease he knows is killing him is the only use he can make of defeat.

(1967)

"August 8 . . . At night I got everybody together to make the following points: we are in a difficult situation: Pacho is getting better but I am a human wreck and the episode of the little mare proves that sometimes I have begun to lose my self-control.

August 14. Black day . . . there was a broadcast at night which gave the news that they had taken the cave where our party was going. . . . They also captured documents of all sorts and photographs. It is the hardest blow they have inflicted on us; somebody talked. Who? We don't know that.

³C. Guevara, *Bolivian Diary* (London: Jonathan Cape/Lorrimer, 1968), p. 136.

August 17 . . . We kept on losing and mistaking our way until we arrived at the Grande river at 16.30 and camped there. I thought we might go on by moonlight, but the men were very tired.

August 18. We left earlier than usual, but we had to cross four fords, one of them a little deep, and we had to make trails at certain points. Because of all this, we got to the stream at 14.00 and the men dropped down to rest as if dead. There wasn't any more activity. There were clouds of flying insects in the area and it continues to be cold at night. Inti told me that Camba wants to quit; according to him, his physical condition doesn't allow him to go on, and he cannot see any future in the struggle. . . .

August 25. . . . Seven army men came within a few paces of our position . . . we will attack them tomorrow. . . .

August 26. Everything went wrong; the seven men came, but they separated, five going down river while two were crossing. Antonio, who was responsible for the ambush fired too soon and missed, allowing the two men to escape to call up reinforcements . . . I was so furious that I lost control of myself and treated Antonio very roughly. . . .

August 30. The situation became agonising; the machete men were fainting, Miguel and Dario were drinking their own urine, and so was el Chino, and the horrible results were diarrhoea and cramps. . . ."⁴

One mistake the guerrillas made was to underestimate the differences between Bolivia and Cuba. To copy too slavishly the strategy of even a successful revolution was the wrong way to learn from the heroic past. His French admirer Régis Debray who visited Che in the Bolivian mountains was struck by the prevalence of this theorizing among revolutionaries and called for a *Revolution in the Revolution?* This appeal began: "We see the past superimposed on the present, even when the present is a revolution", and he went on, "In that sense, all the theoretical works on people's war do as much harm as good".⁵ It was fortunate, he added, that Castro had not read the military writings of Mao Tse-Tung before he landed on the coast of Cuba for he was forced to invent out of his own experience a strategy that conformed exactly to this new terrain. The essence of the Cuban revolution, Che once told his unit in Bolivia, lay in its rebellion against oligarchy and against revolutionary dogmas and he would be grieved that his conviction of the importance of guerrilla warfare has itself become a dogma.

Any belief that there is only one way to make a revolution is destructive and the magical prestige of guerrilla war is in danger of becoming an impediment to the liberation movements. There are many other ways to resist tyrannical regimes, especially in highly urbanized and highly industrial societies. Commenting on Debray's own over-emphasis on rural "focoism" Robin Blackburn and Perry Anderson assert that:

⁴*Bolivian Diary, passim*, pp. 126-135.

⁵Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?* (Penguin, 1968), p. 21.

"The destitute shanty towns and wretched working-class districts which surround every Latin American city surely provide a social basis for some urban form of struggle"⁶

while Simon Torres and Julio Aronde recall that:

"the hardship of the guerrilla does not justify ignoring the rigors endured by the clandestine urban fighter. . . ."

There is much that could be done to disrupt factories and urban services that is not now being done because people are tied to the myth of a small group of men with guns in the mountains. To say that there is work for other men to do is not to slight the courage of those already in the hills or those training to join them, but they need support. More thought must be spent on an "intermediate strategy" to be carried out in the towns while the guerrilla movement gains momentum or even sometimes instead of it. As Régis Debray argued, "Sacrifice is not a political argument and martyrdom does not constitute proof. When the list of martyrs grows long, when every act of courage is converted into martyrdom it is because something is wrong. And it is just as much a moral duty to seek out the cause as it is to pay homage to the murdered or imprisoned comrades."⁸ Few traditions are more compelling than a revolutionary tradition but guerrilla warfare is not the only method of social change.

Che was very sensitive to the accusation of adventurism. "My friends are calling me a new Bakunin and deploring the blood spilled and that which will be spilled", he wrote sadly in his diary.⁹ With his usual courage Che himself wondered if he were not some terrible Pied Piper of the revolution leading the bravest and best to their death, for it was in his name that people were embarking on guerrilla activity and were being wiped out by the enormously strengthened repressive forces of South American governments. It was therefore always an occasion of guilt and self-examination for Che when a friend died. What was the use of such a death? Che argued that even the closest death had to be made use of as a lesson for the future. Guilt was unnecessary as long as success was possible but love and mourning for the dead must not prevent the movement from seeing that their leaders had weaknesses and that they made mistakes. Before he left Cuba, Che heard of the death of Julio Roberto Cáceres Valle, 'El Patojo' as he was called in Guatemalan slang. He had worked with Che in Cuba in the Department of Industry; for a while they had even shared a house, but he was not happy to live in Cuba while his own country remained oppressed and exploited.

"El Patojo had no military training", wrote Che, "he simply felt that it was his duty to return to his country and fight, weapon in hand, in

⁶"Régis Debray and the Latin American Revolution", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 26.3, July-August, 1968, p. 28.

⁷*Ibid.*, page 48.

⁸Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?* p. 86.

⁹*Bolivian Diary*, p. 120.

an attempt to imitate our guerrilla warfare. We held a long conversation, rare at the time. I limited my recommendations to three points: constant mobility, constant mistrust and constant vigilance. Mobility: never stay in the same place, never stay more than two nights in the same place, never stop moving from one place to another. Mistrust: at the beginning, do not trust your own shadow, never trust friendly peasants, informers, guides or contact men. Do not trust anything or anybody until a zone is completely liberated. Vigilance: constant guard and scouting, setting up camp in a safe spot, and above all, never sleep with a roof over your head, never sleep in a house that can be surrounded. It was a synthesis of our guerrilla experience, the only thing I could give my friend. Could I tell him not to do it? By what right? We had tried something when it was considered impossible, and now he was convinced that it was possible.

"El Patojo departed, and a short time later we heard about his death . . . Once again there is the bitter taste of defeat. The question left unanswered: Why not profit by the experience of others? Why weren't these simple instructions obeyed? Every effort was made to learn exactly how El Patojo had died. The exact facts are still unknown, but some say that the zone was badly chosen, the men's physical condition was below par, they were too trusting, and above all, there was not enough vigilance. The repressive army came upon them by surprise, killing a few; the men were captured and others, like El Patojo, were killed in the battle. Once the guerrillas lost cohesion, the rest was probably an open manhunt. . . .

"Once again, young blood has been spilled on American soil, in the struggle for liberty. Another battle has been lost. Let us take time off to cry over the fallen comrades while we continue to sharpen our machetes. Based on the unfortunate as well as the valuable experience of our beloved dead, let us adopt the firm resolution not to repeat mistakes, and to avenge the death of every one of them by winning battles and attaining liberation."¹⁰

After victory the swift recognition of error was the only way the new and inexperienced society would stop itself lurching off in the wrong direction, and the only way to save the government from an arrogant belief in its own infallibility. When mistakes are made they are at once reflected in a decline in collective enthusiasm; political initiative falters, economic productivity falls off, society begins to stagnate and to go backwards. "The road is long and full of difficulties," wrote Che. "At times we wander from the path and must turn back; at other times we go too fast and separate ourselves from the masses; on occasions we go too slow and feel the hot breath of those treading on our heels."¹¹ The process of trial and error continues; to solve one problem is often to create another.

Directly after the revolution the spirit of the Sierra Maestra pervaded the government offices of Havana. "*Guerillerismo*" transferred the experience of the armed struggle from the mountains into the political and administrative institutions and the solution to specific problems was left entirely to the free will of each of the leaders. Chaos and confusion followed as

¹⁰Guevara, *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*, London, 1962, pp. 101-103.

¹¹Guevara, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, (Havana, 1967), London 1968, p. 26.

these "administrative guerrillas" came into open conflict, bewildering the masses with their conflicting orders and counter orders. After a painful year the Cuban government looked for escape in the strong bureaucratic structures developed in the early socialist states. But the backlash was too strong and the reaction too great, and soon centralization overly curtailed the initiative of local leaders. Now there was a too mechanical compliance with directives and the revolution began to suffer from the contrary ailment of "bureaucratism".

Che believed that Cuba's swollen bureaucracy lacked inner motivation. When the bureaucrat was not governed by the desire to serve the state and to solve its problems as they came before him, he was content to fill out forms that salvaged his sense of responsibility and established a written defence against any possible charge of negligence. These files of paper on his desk left him free to go on vegetating and made him a secure fortress to defend himself against the equal irresponsibility of others. Moreover, in attempting to destroy the guerrilla style of working without sufficient administrative experience there were dislocations which slowed down the flow of information from below. The people were unable to bring pressure to bear upon the bureaucracy while instructions from above were also slowed down and on other occasions were distorted into veritable gibberish by people who repeated them without understanding. The absence of a body of technical knowledge made it very difficult for inexperienced bureaucrats to come to a decision. Lacking the skill and authority to solve a problem, government officials took refuge in a long series of meetings which decided nothing until the problem either solved itself or it became necessary to pick any solution no matter how unsuitable. "In these cases," wrote Che, "bureaucratism, in other words the dead weight of red tape and of indecision having to do with the development of the whole society, is the fate of every one of the affected bodies."¹² Cuba had to think once again to correct this new evil which it had brought into being to correct the old.

The new socialist society is essentially built up through educating the old society in the new values and also preparing the young generation as the foundation of the new regime. Che said that socialist society was "a huge school where new consciousness was obtained through education". Che further maintains that it is the spread of this new consciousness that enables the new society to compete with the past. He realized, as David Caute said, that "Batista (the king, the tsar, the Kuomintang) are negligible enemies compared to bonapartism and bureaucracy—the hook worms which linger for years in the entrails of the triumphant revolution".¹³

In this respect, Che says that education will be in two modes or forms. There is the indirect education of formal teaching in schools and universities which comes to the individual from outside. There is also direct

¹²Guevara, "Against Bureaucratism", *Cuba Socialista* No. 18, February, 1963.

¹³*Viva Che*, contributions in tribute to Ernesto Che Guevara, edited by Marianne Alexandre (Lorrimer, 1968), David Caute (England), p. 54.

education which the person acquires through his own observation and experience. Indirect education is also obtained from the party information services and from cultural and ideological institutions. In these places people are educated by those members of the society who are better informed. There are crèches and free nursery schools in Cuba for children of working parents from their forty-fifth day. Children go to free schools, often in the deserted houses of the rich in former luxurious suburbs of Havana, where they learn to read and write and encounter the new values; and there are also adult education centres for the purpose of educating the old.

In 1961 during the euphoria following the defeat of a C.I.A.-inspired invasion at the Bay of Pigs, Cuba embarked on its year of education. It was to be the year in which to achieve the impossible — to eradicate illiteracy in the countryside in one broad stroke: One Year against Illiteracy. Students from the high schools and universities poured into the countryside to spend the summer months with its old people to whom they taught not only the alphabet but also their enthusiasm for socialism and the revolution. It liberated many students for the first time from parental control and the strict discipline of convent schools, and it also liberated the countryside from years of neglect and isolation. Its success in terms of eradicating illiteracy was impressive, its "direct" educational value for everyone concerned was immense. Perhaps most importantly, it taught mutual respect between the formally educated and the non-educated, destroying the prejudice that the uneducated are stupid and the educated sly and cunning, selfishly using their learning to make their way in the world.

Che imagined the training of the active labour force taking place at every level simultaneously and he hoped that at the same time there would be going on in Cuba programmes for eliminating the last vestiges of illiteracy still found in the most remote areas and follow-up courses for the newly literate; then these should be followed by courses in workers' education for those beyond a third grade education; courses in minimum technical skills for workers at a higher level; extension courses to turn skilled workers into assistant engineers; university courses for every kind of professional personnel. "*The aim of the revolutionary government is to turn our country into a huge independent school.*"¹⁴

Cuba was overhauling its society under extraordinary difficulties. Open attacks from the U.S.A. and its prolonged blockade meant that a complete change of technology took place in a period of severe shortage of raw materials and food and a mass flight of the country's few qualified technicians. In those conditions it was essential to develop industrial skills quickly throughout the population. Cuba's most pressing need was probably for more courses in the minimum technical skills like typing and accounting which if badly done could bring the new state machine and the new

¹⁴Guevara, "Against Bureaucratism", *op. cit.*

nationalized industries and state farms to a halt. But none of these types of education was more dignified or more worthwhile than any other. The number of Cubans attending university courses would be fewer than the number attending literacy courses. But Cuba's leaders insisted that this must not be allowed to generate feelings of student privilege. In 1960, eighteen months after the revolution, Che noted that in Havana a group of newly graduated doctors did not want to go to the country's rural areas and demanded extra pay before they would agree to go. From the point of view of the past, Che said, this was the most logical thing in the world. It was perfectly easy to understand and Che claimed that he was just the same when he had first graduated from medical school; but in the new socialist Cuba these old attitudes had no place. In six or seven years he said the students would go with enthusiasm to help their suffering brothers, but now was the time when the revolution had still to be made by the people brought up in the old ways because as regards direct education, Che clearly points out that the individual learns by himself through personal experience. Adult education is self-education. The individual sees what is happening around him and he gradually adapts himself to the new way of life and the new social values that exist. The individual realizes the necessity of being incorporated within the new society. He cannot afford to remain in solitude and isolation for he needs the help and support of the society. For some, said Che, "the process is a conscious one; the individual continually feels the impact of the very social power and perceives that he does not entirely measure up to its standards. . . . compelled by a sense of inadequacy he educates himself."¹⁵ For others it is imperceptible and unconscious.

In order for this process of education to be a success there must be good leadership. Individuals will imitate what the leaders do. Che therefore insisted that they must be *exemplary*. For the people to follow leaders whom they love and admire was a much more effective form of mobilization than coercion. But how the leaders actually live is far more of an educational process than the speeches that they make or the directives which come out of their offices. The people see from the way their leaders live the things they really value. If they live luxuriously then the people understand that their leaders truly believe that luxuries are the best things in life and that the good life is the life that is full of them. Che himself gave up wealth and power and many people have learned from him that wealth and power are not enough to fill a life. Even the life of the expert is an example. As well as the skills which the worker learns from the expert there is a silent education in the nature of the good life as led by those who appear more knowledgeable. The leaders are the teachers of the "huge school" that Che talks about: what the people learn from them will decide what kind of society there will be. In promoting this process of education Che pointed to the importance of the party and of

¹⁵Guevara, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, op. cit., p. 25.

party cadres. Che believed that the principal aim of the party should be to educate the people. He maintains that the party has the duty of providing the people with the new ideology, to make them conscious and aware of the new values. At the beginning the government cannot allow the people complete political freedom, but it is the party's role to educate the people in understanding of the revolution so that they may have that freedom and participate themselves ever more widely at the expense of the narrower leadership of the party.

In an article on "The Cadre: Backbone of the Revolution", that appeared in *Cuba Socialista* in September 1962, Che stressed that "The political apparatus also had to make an intense effort in the middle of the work of building a structure, to give ideological attention to *the masses who were coming into contact with the Revolution, and who were very anxious to learn.*" (Our italics.)

Che insisted that the cadres were not a revolutionary elite. They were not to be a vanguard, isolated and separated from the masses; a few chosen spirits whose hands had been untied in order to push through revolutionary social changes. This idea, so attractive to many students in underdeveloped countries was totally alien to Che. "The cadre policy was clearly set up as a synonym of mass policy," he wrote. "The watchword was to establish contact with the masses once again." The cadres were there to prevent the government and the people from drifting apart. A cadre was someone who had reached a sufficient level of political understanding to interpret the general directives issued by the central government, to assimilate them and to transmit them as ideas to the people. However, there is a danger that cadres are bureaucrats with a more exciting name. Some of the cadres chosen and trusted by the government had not been able to understand the government's intentions and had vulgarized and distorted its purposes. Others had become lifeless bureaucrats or were corrupted by the temptations of power. But others had succeeded triumphantly. In choosing them the government would be wise to rank their personal qualities above everything else. Often the best were those who had no great theoretical knowledge but had been tested under fire. For all of them, said Che, the crucial common denominator is political awareness. This does not mean that the cadre gives uncritical support to the activities of the government, but rather reasoned support and a great capacity for sacrifice. "Its mission is one of vigilance, making sure that the great spirit of the Revolution does not disappear or doze or slacken its rhythm. It is a sensitive responsibility; it transmits what emanates from the masses, and instils in them what the party teaches."

In his fine essay, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, Che said that the institutionalization of the revolution had not yet been achieved. There was not yet a political and social structure which responded to this image of society as a process of continuous education. Fidel Castro, as Che saw, is a past

master in the almost intuitive way he keeps his ears open to public reaction so that he does not lose contact with the people, but the absence of a political apparatus means that in practice too many important decisions in Cuba have to be taken by him. "It is personal rule carried to an extreme degree."¹⁶ And with no national form of discussion and with an over-controlled and adulatory press there is not yet a *systematic* method of correcting his mistakes before they reach the level of popular discontent. Nevertheless, Castro is leading Cuba in the direction that Che hoped it would go. When the revolution took power and the exodus of the "totally domesticated" took place, those who were left, whether revolutionaries or not, set off on a new road. The road led to a completely new kind of society — towards the twenty-first century man whose moral re-education was complete and who was a "new man" free of the corrupting taint of money and motivated only by his duty to his fellow men. In *The Accumulation of Capital* that Rosa Luxemburg published on the eve of the imperialist war of 1914, she described the violence with which the invading imperialists forced a money economy upon the peasant societies of Africa and Asia. "There are more than forty Chinese Treaty Ports," she wrote, "and every one of them has been paid for with streams of blood, with massacre and ruin." Violence, she claimed, is the immediate consequence of the clash between capitalism and a natural economy which restricts the individual accumulation of wealth. Violently, capitalism flew in the face of every tradition of peasant justice to create space for its own growth. Castro, carrying out Guevara's intentions, seems to be attempting the superhuman task of forcing money into retreat. In Cuba more and more services are free, including recently, the public transport system in Havana. You do not pay to go on a bus and this is itself an education for peasants who discovered that, apparently, in the modern world you need money for everything. Castro is saying, "No, you don't". The modern world has at last the material resources to liberate men from the tyranny of money and permit their distribution consciously towards the relief of need. Even in a country as poor as Cuba it is possible to begin a free distribution of goods and services. To twenty-first century man it will be normality.

Che's legendary qualities as a guerrilla leader have made him a hero to all the liberation movements of Africa. When students demonstrate in Africa as in the rest of the world, they march behind a bearded portrait of Che. His Platonic image of socialist society as the Great School is less well known although many African leaders are struggling with the problems he describes. If the African countries are to overcome the negligence of their former rulers they face years of the hard work of national education.

Most of the vast population is still illiterate and cut off from the rich human experience contained in the written word and unable fully to participate in the machinery of their own self-government. Because of the increase

¹⁶Professor Hugh Thomas, "The Limits of Castro's Social Revolution", London *Times*, 19 February, 1969.

in population a recent United Nations report says that illiteracy in East Africa, for example, is actually increasing. Education is not new in Africa. Traditional society was a school whose rituals were a continuous process of moral and social education. But now the primary and secondary schools of the new nations have to transform this tradition and educate the children of Africa for a new society. Old people as well are learning to read so that they may see into the mysterious new world of their children which otherwise is closed to them. They are learning to write and do arithmetic so that they are not dependent on people prepared to cheat them and exploit their ignorance. Independence is very difficult for the illiterate, obliged to live with other men endowed with the power to read and write, and where there is dependence there is fear, and where there is fear there is intimidation and corruption.

"Consider the confrontation of a police constable and a farmer. The farmer is barefoot, and the policeman is wearing a pair of large shiny boots and this difference may stand as a symbol of their relative ability to protect themselves in modern West Africa. The police constable is literate, he has learnt (at some point perhaps) not only to adapt himself to a specific set of rules and regulations, but to wield them against others; he is an authority on the law, at least at his own level, he can arrest the farmer, or report him, and he has, again at his own level, innumerable official and semi-official contacts with officers of other branches of government service. The farmer is [relatively] unsophisticated. He is uncertain of the exact contents of the various laws that affect him, and uncertain how he stands in relation to them. He knows he should have a licence for his shotgun but cannot be sure that the one he has is still valid, or if the clerk who issued it cheated him with a worthless piece of paper. He knows he should have paid his taxes, but he has lost two receipts, and anyway there is something called a tax year, different from a calendar year, which "they" keep on changing, so perhaps he should have paid some more anyway. Even if he feels sure that he has committed no crime, he cannot defend himself against the policeman. To complain to the constable's superior would not be very much good in the face of the *esprit de corps* of the police. He can defend himself only by going to some other member of the literate class, a letter writer perhaps, or if the case is really serious, a lawyer, but has none of the necessary skills to choose a competent practitioner, and he may be so misunderstood that his real case is never put. Even if he has a good case and wins, it may not do him much good. All the policeman's colleagues will know about it and sooner or later, of course he *will* break a law. Much better give the policeman what he is asking for, or if he is not asking for anything, better give him something anyway so that when something does go wrong, he will be more likely to be nice about it. *A man does not*, says the Ashanti proverb, *rub bottoms with a porcupine.*"¹⁷

Africa needs a year of education. The new nations need to imitate Cuba and send their young students into the countryside in a vast popular movement to eradicate rural illiteracy. The socialist countries need not only to

¹⁷M. McMullen, "A Theory of Corruption", *Sociological Review*, (Keele), July 1961, pp. 181-361.

expand but also to change their educational systems, so that students are educated towards instead of away from the people.

Joseph Abruquah, a Ghanaian, has recently published a novel called *The Torrent*. It tells the sad story of Josiah Afful who lived in a remote Ghanaian village. He was a clever boy and his father sent him to live with an uncle at Cape Coast where he went to the Government Boys' Elementary School and won a precious scholarship to the Grammar School which was run by English missionaries on the lines of a nineteenth century British Public School. Every unpleasant aspect of those schools was carefully reproduced and Josiah, despite his thirst for education, spent his days learning the dead language Latin by heart in conformity with the aims of the missionaries who proudly claimed that "The task of the Grammar School was to transform *bush boys* into civilized men".

In contrast to such grotesque miseducation, African countries are re-orientating their schools towards new values. Tanzania's programme of Education for Self-Reliance says that the nation's educational system "has to foster the social goals of living together and working together for the common good . . . This means that the educational system of Tanzania must emphasize co-operative endeavour, not individual advancement; it must stress concepts of equality and the responsibility to give service which goes with any special ability . . . And in particular, our education must counteract the temptation to intellectual arrogance . . . It must also prepare young people for the work they will be called upon to do in the society which exists in Tanzania—a rural society where improvement will depend largely upon the efforts of the people in agriculture and in village development."¹⁸

In Tanzania at the TANU party's conference in 1969 the Minister of Health reported on the alarming picture of malnutrition in the countryside. Research carried on by his Ministry showed that in the West Lake, Tabora and Coast regions 40 per cent of all children die before they reach the age of five, and in every 100 able bodied people only 20 have the capability to work as physically and mentally developed men. A leading article in *The Nationalist* newspaper, Dar es Salaam, of June 5, 1969, warned that if the situation continued to deteriorate Tanzania would have a physically and mentally stunted nation "unable to work and unable to think". All the experts know that Tanzania is not short of nutritious foods.

"Take the West Lake region for example; every corner of that region is almost surrounded by the fish rich Lake Victoria where protein rich fish is readily available. Legumes of every kind grow in the region three times a year. Yet the people there do not 'traditionally' like to eat the fish; they do not like to eat 'wild' vegetables and the women hardly eat eggs or chicken itself. They only prefer their "bitoke"—bananas which are merely an abundance of water and a little starch.

¹⁸*Education for Self-Reliance*, policy booklet published in March 1967, *Ujamaa* by J. K. Nyerere, p. 52.

"Take the Coast region. There are plenty of vegetables, fruit, eggs and fish. Yet almost all these valuable foodstuffs are brought into the capital to be sold in exchange for money which is used for buying, among other things, rotten pieces of 'nguru' and 'papa' which in turn are used as sole relish.

"From this it can be seen that the problem is one of education."¹⁹

This is the kind of adult education that must be carried on in the Great School, for it is clear that unless we are going to write off the next generation, it must be the education of parents that will save the children, and this cannot now be done in school. Perhaps some of East Africa's fine Swahili poets with their tradition of pithy comment on contemporary events could make up some songs and poems which would make their way in the villages. Perhaps there could be classes in the maternity hospitals, and the village midwives would be a natural *cadre*.

The poverty stricken governments of the new nations of Africa have managed to do what the wealthy governments of the colonialists apparently found beyond their means and have provided new and largely free universities all over Africa. Laboratories, research institutes and universities are centres of learning which prepare students who can take the decisions which make freedom a reality, for it is as Che saw, a mockery of independence if a country's civil servants have to sit dumbly at meetings because they do not know how to do the business. The wide reading required for a diploma or a university degree widens the students' horizon by contact with foreign countries and produces citizens who cannot be duped by their ignorance of global complexities and are not maimed by the superstitions that flourish in isolation. The library brings in the world as the guerrilla fighter brought it to the countryside: but even the beautiful new public libraries have hardly begun to touch the population. Perhaps this is because they assume that those who approach their doors must already be at home in the secret world of books, but why should there not be literacy classes in libraries? What better place to learn to read than the University in its long vacation? In Manchester, English gypsies are living in the University grounds, using the baths and coffee bars of the Student Union while they and their children learn to read for the first time in classes run by the students themselves. As one of them said to the *Sunday Times*, "Now I don't feel like a dog no more."²⁰

Equally important and still absurdly undervalued are the technical schools and colleges, the trade schools, farms and workshops which are teaching the practical skills of an industrial system, which alone can lift the burden of poverty from the African continent. Popular discontent in Africa has risen against socialist regimes whose good intentions were thwarted by sheer incompetence and inefficiency. It is not possible to implement a new system of values if it is impossible to replace the acquisitive village trader by a co-operative shop because no one in the village can run it. Harbours,

¹⁹*The Nationalist* (Dar es Salaam), 5 June, 1969.

²⁰*The Sunday Times* (London), 4 May, 1969.

garages, factories and offices already teach those technical skills whose importance to developing economies writers like Dumont have underlined. Children growing up to handle objects and to know machines already show quite a different aptitude for modern technology and the care of machinery, but many more short and intensive practical courses could and should be offered by adult education centres. Tanzania's party college, Kivukoni, runs its own co-operative shop to give its students just such a living education and they will become the *cadres* that mediate between the people and the national party. The radio, in some countries television, the film and the novel all educate — very often the more so as they represent reality without obvious comment and leave it to the public to judge this reality for themselves. Chinua Achebe from Nigeria Kwei Armah from Ghana, Sembene Ousmane, the Senegalese film director, the Guinean dancers, the Makonde carvers are the teachers of their generation.

Nevertheless, this is still, as Che said, an indirect influence. The direct experience of submersion in the new society is the decisive education of every individual. Never before have so many people changed their most intimate ways of life so swiftly as in this century. All over Africa there are people learning to do new things which their parents did not dream of. They are also learning to do the old things in a new way since there are instincts and habits to unlearn which result from poverty and the distorted colonial past. The new countries should think of themselves as schools where adult education no longer refers to literacy classes and occasional public lectures but describes the efforts of a whole nation to decolonize and recreate a new principle of social organization. It does not end with the presentation of a diploma but refers to the gradual acquisition of the understanding that goes on throughout a man's life.

In the African countryside agricultural extension officers have learned that it is not enough merely to give orders, or even to offer sensible advice. If their advice is to be followed the expert must be *exemplary*, not only in demonstrating good results but in his relations with the farmers. His relations with them constitute their relationship with the new society. The lesson of change imposed by force and bureaucratic regimentation is that socialist governments are still the natural enemies of the peasant; and he will relearn his original skill of how to obstruct, resist and still survive.

In the direct education of experience the change in motivation is as important as the acquisition of a new technology. During the colonial period conditions of work were so bad and it was assumed that labour would always be so resistant that low productivity and high absenteeism were accepted as the natural course of things. In the independent nation, as Che said, "the struggle against absenteeism is an educational process" involving the change in the worker's image of himself and his place in society that only springs from increasing workers' control.

In every society there is failure to learn, failure to teach. African governments have to learn very quickly from their mistakes. They are too fragile politically to lose touch with the people and the consequences of ill-advised

policies are too catastrophic. They must be as honest with themselves as Che if they are to learn the facts of survival. The guide who does not know the path or who deliberately misleads the guerrilla leader endangers the entire guerrilla movement. It is equally essential that governments in Africa know what is happening in the countryside and bureaucratic efforts to suppress adverse reports or to deny popular unrest are too dangerous to be allowed. The people are the guerrilla army's eyes and ears and the two-way traffic between the party and its leaders must for the same reasons become a genuine reality. The party cell leader must feel this his first priority, as the guerrilla fighter knows it to be his. It is not so yet.

Che insisted that contact is essential to radicalization. Genuinely democratic party conferences, a representative national assembly and a free press are places of contact where the leaders teach and governments are educated by their citizens. In Cuba political freedom is still very limited and the press has been used too narrowly for purely propaganda purposes. An observer writes: "The Cuban press is a national calamity; it is not just an information medium; it is a defensive wall against pressure from below."²¹ The national assembly and the national newspaper can generate argument in which the whole nation meets. Decentralization will take the government out to the districts as "guerrillas" of administration who have seen the dangers of "*guerillismo*". If the people do not meet often and intermingle as Che had envisaged, there can develop in the socialist countries of Africa a forgetful and indifferent new class or an informal system of dual power in which the centre continues to work and even issue national directives in accordance with a socialist ethic while the peripheral areas protected by ignorance, rely on traditional local coercion. In Africa the local revolution is the one that really counts. The Russian revolutionary Leo Trotsky had realized that one must create socialism out of the materials left over from the demolished building of the old regime, but he had also imagined a revolutionary society as one that was continually changing its skin as change in one area of society fomented change in every other. It is impossible to over-estimate the explosive changes throughout the nation which are brought about by changes in rural family relationships. When the political party in Africa successfully attacks the fear of protein foods and witchcraft and women no longer do all the work it will liberate deep reservoirs of energy both in women and in men. All sorts of things will happen. It is unrealistic to sit down sadly and assume that national policies will inevitably die away in remote villages because there is no one there to understand and implement them. The creation of a socialist society in Africa depends on raising the standard of national education but simultaneously, as Che learned and taught, "there is nothing that educates an honourable man more than living in a revolution".

²¹Adolpho Gilly, "Inside the Cuban Revolution", *Monthly Review*, October 1964, Vol. 16, No. 6.