

WHO IS TO LEAD THE POPULAR ANTI-IMPERIALIST REVOLUTION IN AFRICA?: In Refutation of Issa G. Shivji's Petty-Bourgeois Neo-Marxist Line.

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INTRODUCTION

When in 1844 Karl Marx, then living in Paris, decided finally to break with Arnold Ruge - who was about to abandon the revolutionary struggle - Frederick Engels reported from Barren (Germany):

"It is impossible, he wrote to Marx, "to convince Jung and a multitude of others that a difference of principle exists between us and Ruge; they remain of the opinion that it is merely a personal squabble".¹ (stress added)

In September 1937, at the heat of intense revolutionary struggle in China, Mao Tse-tung launched a bitter attack on liberalism. He warned that liberalism, by rejecting ideological struggle and sticking to unprincipled peace, endangers the movement by:

"giving rise to a decadent, philittical degeneration in certain units and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary organizations".²

Mao's attack on liberalism and Marx's treatment of Ruge clearly demonstrate that both rejected a 'let-it-be' attitude towards erroneous views.

In East Africa within the last decade, an erroneous petty-bourgeois Neo-Marxist line has developed pretending to 'analyse' our society and to show the road to a 'correct revolutionary practice'.

Instead of immediately combating this anti-proletarian line and politically weeding it out, some people simply took a liberal and totally philistine attitude. They often resorted to the argument that unity was the important thing or that it would be 'dangerous' to attack the Neo-Marxists because it would 'alert the enemy'. The result has been that the Neo-Marxists continued to rear their heads and to engage in incessant provocations. But when the challenge was finally taken up by persons like D.W. Nabudere³, Y. Tandon⁴, A.B. Kayonga and S.M. Magara⁵ the previous provocations turned into hidden murmurs, sulk-

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ing, and (as we are told by a questioner of New University Echo⁶) some began to 'complain behind the doors' instead of engaging in principled debate.

All this goes to show that Neo-Marxists are lions only 'behind the doors', for they do not know what broad democratic struggle is. Nevertheless they are dangerous precisely because by blindly rejecting all operation above board, among the democratic and patriotic opinion they can only isolate themselves from the very popular masses whose task it is to liberate our countries. This, of course, is contrary to Marxism-Leninism and to proletarian practice. For in East Africa, as in all oppressed countries, the working class has great need for, and must mobilise the entire people - isolating only the tiniest minority which is totally and recalcitrantly wedded to the imperialist enemy.

Neo-Marxist theory cannot provide such a solution because even when paying lip service to Marxism, it is but a cover, since the Neo-Marxist line is alien to dialectical and historical materialism. Because of this fundamental philosophical and theoretical weakness it cannot provide any serious and rigorous analysis of a given situation. Because its analysis is inevitably faulty, it cannot understand the history of Tanzania and East Africa. Moreover, because it does not grasp the fundamental character of our epoch; the present situation; the place of East Africa in the world; the historically determined position of the different classes, and especially the proletariat, in a country such as Tanzania - because it cannot correctly fulfil this vital task, Neo-Marxism is not merely useless; it is a real danger to our oppressed peoples and classes. The lesson of the Latin American subcontinent is instructive, where Trotskyism and revisionism have bogged down for nearly a century a heroic people who had valiantly and successfully fought Spanish and Portuguese Colonialism.

Philistinism and liberalism must be abandoned because the mass of the people who expect to hear from those who identify with them feel betrayed and risk falling prey to the petty-bourgeois line of Neo-Marxists and other predators.

Take the case of Issa G. Shivji and his analysis of Tanzania.

In 1970 Shivji published an article in Cheche under the title The Silent Class Struggle⁷. A few years after that he wrote an unpublished

piece, Class Struggle Continues. Then in 1976 appeared Class Struggles in Tanzania.⁸

When in his Imperialism, State, Class and Race D.W. Nabudere showed concretely that Shivji is not a Marxist-Leninist but a Neo-Marxist and a Neo-Trotskyist a number of people including Karim Hirji⁹ and what he considers to be 'progressive circles' in Tanzania were shocked that Shivji's erroneous line had been uncovered and openly exposed. Since then, subsequent rejoinders have not only clarified some of these who had been genuinely confused by Shivji's Neo-Marxism but they have also left the defenders of Shivji in the cold. That is why they have had to rush indoors to grumble there. Nevertheless Shivji's writings continue to circulate freely. And since he has not openly repudiated any of his falsifications of Marxism and the proletarian position, we reserve the right to attack these errors with a view to annihilating them politically from the ranks of the anti-imperialist movement, in Tanzania and East Africa.

We intend to show in this contribution that on the question of the leadership of the present stage of the revolution, Shivji greatly caricatures the ideology of the proletariat; that he puts into question the revolutionary role of the proletariat; that in this way he opens the door for other classes to pretend to lead the popular anti-imperialist struggle; that this is partly a result of failure to correctly analyse the present epoch, and therefore, to identify the principal enemy of the oppressed people of Africa; that this can only lead to an incorrect assessment of the friends of the proletariat and hence to a fundamental error on the nature of the alliance which must be forged in the struggle; that Shivji has not correctly grasped the essence of either the Guinean anti-colonial struggle or of the Chinese revolution. In the final analysis, our aim is to show that Shivji's relegation of the leading role of the proletariat to that of the "leadership of the proletarian ideology" is counter-revolutionary; and that the leadership of any class other than the proletariat would be the doom of the struggle.¹⁰

1. SHIVJI DOES NOT UNDERSTAND IMPERIALISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION WITH REGARD TO TANZANIA.

The heart of Shivji's theoretical problem lies, really, in the fact that although he makes reference to it occasionally, he does not

have a scientific conception of imperialism; and because of this Lenin's and Stalin's as well as Mao Tse-Tung's analyses of the National question completely escape him.

Everyone knows that Tanzania as a country is a product of imperialism, arising during the colonial phase as remoulded and cemented during the neo-colonial phase. But what does this fact mean? It means that Tanzania was created when capitalism in Europe had already passed the stage of free competition; when monopolies had arisen; when industrial and bank capital had merged to form a new type of capital - finance capital. It arose, therefore, as part of the final division of the world by competing imperialist powers. These features of the period that led to the constitution of Tanzania mean that from the very beginning, the tendency developed towards the negation of any emergent national capital, since increasingly neither the constant part of capital nor, quite often, a great part of variable capital could ever be acquired from within Tanzania. This means that the financial oligarchy - that tiny section of what Shivji and other Neo-Marxists call the 'metropolitan bourgeoisie', and who live by clipping coupons from the stock exchange - was already the economically dominant and politically ruling section of the bourgeoisie. The colonisation of East Africa at the end of the last century and the constitution of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was part of the struggle by the financial oligarchy against the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. It formed part of their struggle for sources of raw materials, for cheap labour, for a wider market and as a back-yard for the export of capital. All these facts are clear from Lenin's theses on Imperialism, but Neo-Marxists either ignore it or do not see their importance. It is in this light that President Nyerere's often-quoted address to the Convocation of Ibadan University (November, 1976) cannot be quoted enough. In this speech, the Tanzanian President honestly and without reserve brought out the essence of neo-colonial imperialism. He said that when colonial oppression was liquidated, this was not the end of the road. Not only does the new Government find itself greatly limited by the inherited institutions but it further discovers "that it did not inherit effective power over economic developments in its own country". And the reason is clear. For the neo-colonies:

"(T)here is no such thing as a national economy at all! Instead, there exist (in the neo-colonies) various economic activities which are owned by people outside its jurisdiction, which are directed at external needs, and which are run in the interests of external economic powers. Further, the Government's ability to secure positive action in these fields... depends entirely upon its ability to convince the effective decision makers (i. e. the imperialist countries, 0-0) that their own interests will be served by what the Government wishes to have done".11

The President was rightly concerned about the seriousness of this situation. It is in the light of this that he put his finger at the heart of the problem of national oppression. To quote him again:

"Neo-colonialism is a very real, and very severe, limitation on national sovereignty".12

But how does imperialism operate in the neo-colonies? It does so by identifying and promoting local agents. Here again Nyerere as a patriot showed a much deeper grasp of the inner workings of imperialism than 'Marxists' in East Africa who talk of the so-called 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' as the enemy, rather than of imperialism operating through local compradore elements. He said:

"Some of our people identify their own personal interests with the existing neo-colonial situation. They are to be found among the local agents of foreign capitalists (note this, Shivji) and among the local capitalists who have developed in the shadow of large foreign enterprises".13

Does this not constitute a correct identification of the enemy of the Tanzanian and East African people as a whole? We submit that it does. We further submit that any attempt to play in the hands of imperialism by weakening the ranks of the anti-imperialist struggles through talk about the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' or even of identifying all local bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements (including small traders, handicraftsmen, rich farmers or capitalist farmers) as the "immediate enemy", without concretely analysing their links with foreign monopolies and therefore with imperialism, is Neo-Marxist¹⁴, unscientific and reactionary. In this way it will be impossible for the proletariat to constitute around itself a broad anti-imperialist united front in struggle, since the analysis reveals in dividing the ranks of the people and shielding the real enemy, i. e. imperialism operating through the local compradore class. The task of the Tanzanian Marxist-Leninists cannot be to invent imaginary

'enemies'; instead it is to concretely identify the compradore elements in production as agents of the principal enemy of the Tanzanian people.

In this respect Shivji brings nothing but confusion, especially in Chapter seven entitled 'UHURU and After: the Rise of the 'Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie', and in Chapter 8 entitled 'Arusha and After: the 'Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie' Forges Ahead'. Shivji identifies this so-called 'bourgeoisie' with the top echelons of the state-Ministers, Principal Secretaries and Managers of parastatal enterprises but even then he leaves things very vague and confused. The confusion in Shivji is so great that he has completely ignored the basic state but in production. The confusion turns into chaos when at page 69, our 'Marxist' talks of the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' as "the ruling sector of the petty-bourgeoisie". And yet Shivji tells us that the various sections of the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' are 'self-explanatory'.

Shivji's confusion in the analysis of classes is compounded by his total neglect of the national question, and therefore of the character of the present anti-imperialist struggle in Tanzania.

The Marxist-Leninist position is to look at the national question concretely and historically. In his analysis of Western Europe, Engels explained that nations emerged as part of the struggle by the bourgeoisie to liquidate feudalism and develop a national market in competition with the bourgeoisie of other countries. Whereas in primitive society, when classes had not yet emerged, social ties were founded on tribal links, thereby highlighting the language question; with the emergence of slave and feudal states territory, not ethnic ties, became the basis of the development of the State and the elimination of the primitive democracy of tribal society. This is analysed in detail by Engels in The Origin of the Family, Private property and the State. With the rise of the bourgeoisie, however, as Lenin correctly explained in his refutation of Rosa Luxemburg and other erroneous positions in The Right of Nations of Self-Determination,¹⁵ a historically concrete presentation of the problem must distinguish two periods of capitalism, each of which has its specific features. First of all:

"there is the period of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, the period when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw all classes of the population into politics"¹⁶ (stress Lenin's)

During this phase there is:

"the awakening of national movements and the drawing of peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population, into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general and for the rights of the nation in particular".¹⁷

This is what led to the constitution in Western Europe of states which, with few exceptions like Ireland and Switzerland, were also single nations.

The next phase, was the period of fully formed capitalist states with long-established constitutional regimes and a highly developed antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, i. e. the rise of imperialism. In this period:

"developed capitalism, in bringing closer together nations that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse, and causing them to intermingle to an increasing degree, brings the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working-class movement into the foremost".¹⁸

This epoch led to the constitution of multi-national states in Eastern Europe. It is also this imperialist phase of capitalism that led to the colonial expansion that brought about the establishment of most of the states of Africa today including Tanzania; and so it remains the epoch of the present neo-colonial phase of imperialist oppression.

J.V. Stalin not only developed Lenin's theses on the national question; he not only applied this analysis to the concrete situation of the Soviet Union - before the rise of modern revisionism - he further enriched Lenin's analysis of the national question as a colonial question and correctly summed up the tasks of revolutionaries in the oppressed countries in a number of brilliant expositions that are to be found in the collection Marxism and the National and Colonial Question¹⁹. If only Shivji had read and understood Stalin on this matter, he would have realized that when Mao Tse-tung advanced his thesis of the new-democratic revolution as a stage in the anti-imperialist struggle and as part of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle to impose its dictatorship over the exploiters during the advance towards socialism, he was resolving a problem that Shivji's neo-Marxist analysis cannot solve, namely what to do about the fact that Tanzania is a poor, agrarian, country greatly oppressed by imperialism. Mao Tse-tung showed the way out for all Marxists-Leninists in colonial, semi-

colonial and neo-colonial countries in his New Democracy.²⁰ It was on the basis of this scientific presentation of the national question that at the commemoration of the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Communist Party of China, Mao wrote On the People's Democratic Dictatorship²¹ in which he summed up the experience of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people as having been directed by the strategic aim of establishing:-

"the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the working class (through the Communist Party) and based upon the alliance of workers and peasants".²²

It is, thus, Shivji's lack of a correct position on the question of imperialism and his failure to realize that in none of the African countries has the national question been resolved (since it would require the leadership of the proletariat in a democratic, patriotic alliance to the exclusion of only the compradore classes) that leads him into blind and unprincipled attacks against important sections of the anti-imperialist united front that will have to be formed in struggle. It is further this error which makes Shivji stumble and fall in the face of the most heroic history of the Tanzanian working class and the anti-colonial national movement, and to this we now turn.

2. HOW SHIVJI DOWNGRADES THE ROLE OF THE TANZANIAN PROLETARIAT IN THE UHURU STRUGGLE.

To begin with, Shivji's notion of the proletariat is extremely strange for someone who calls himself a Marxist. Throughout Capital Marx insisted, and went ahead to demonstrate, that the proletariat arise as a result of capital-labour relation in production. To quote Marx himself:

"As simple reproduction constantly reproduces the capital relation itself, i. e. the relation of capitalists on the one hand, and the wage-workers on the other, so reproduction on a progressive scale, i. e. accumulation, reproduces the capital-relation on a progressive scale, more capitalists or larger capitalists at this pole, more workers at that. The reproduction of a mass of labour-power, which must incessantly incorporate itself with that capital for that capital's self-expansion which cannot get free from capital and whose enslavement to capital is only concealed by the variety of individual capitalists to whom it sells itself, this reproduction of labour-power forms, in fact, an essential of the reproduction of capital itself".²³

Marx concluded:

"Accumulation of capital is, therefore, increase of the proletariat".²⁴

Instead of looking at the emergence of the proletariat in Africa and its increase in the process of capital accumulation, which is taking place all the time and has been so ever since capitalism was introduced into the continent after the imperialist division of Africa and its colonial subjugation, Shivji prefers a static 'classical' definition, namely:

"a large (sic!) group of wage-earners employed in large (sic!) capitalist industry and constituting a substantial (sic!) proportion of the population".²⁵

Naturally, having presented us with this sort of artificial and static definition, he 'finds' that a proletariat 'did not develop' and 'could not' have developed under colonialism and today under neo-colonialism.²⁶

Nevertheless Shivji tells us that a class of 'wage-earners' did develop; and he even calls them a 'working class'²⁷ and identifies the sectors in which they emerged, namely:

"in the plantations, in the docks, in transport and commerce, and in construction, building, etc."²⁸

Shivji's stubborn and blatant rejection of the proletarian character of the Tanzanian and African working class is, of course, not in the least surprising - for they are aimed at down-grading its class role in the anti-colonial revolutionary struggle and therefore at denying the necessity for its leadership in the present phase of the anti-imperialist struggle. The latter aspect of Shivji's reactionary deviation we shall see, but how does he down-grade the role of the Tanzanian proletariat during the anti-colonial struggle?

Shivji's argument in Class Struggles in Tanzania is that throughout most of the colonial period the working class did not struggle against the colonial oppressor; did not fight for democratic rights and justice; and did not even organise, until after the Second Imperialist War when it allegedly succeeded to organise at long last. Moreover, argues our 'Marxist', the workers kept themselves out of the mainstream of the national anti-colonial movement until in 1958 the 'alliance' between TANU and the Tanganyika Federation of Labour (T.F.L.) was 'forged' when, according to Shivji, by that 'alliance':

"(t)he workers had thrown their lot (sic!) with the nationalist movement". 29

Shivji goes further and tells us that the only contribution the workers "probably" made to the independence struggle is when they organised strikes in "strategic" sectors of the economy.

Thus, what is but a culmination of a long process which from the earliest opportunity gave to the working class a leading role in the anti-colonial movement, Shivji takes as the beginning of the proletariat's participation in the struggle! This is Shivji's "dialectics" as applied to Tanzania's history.

Let us look at the naked facts.

Why was the TANU-T.F.L. alliance formed? Precisely because of all the classes that stood foremost in opposition to (colonial) imperialism, the proletariat - for this is what they were although Shivji seeks to deny it - had actually proved to be the most uncompromising, the most ruthless, the most determined enemy of colonial oppression, and that it was an essential component of the national movement. Shivji misunderstands Tanzania's history because he does not see the central fact that the anti-colonial movement (whether it took ethnic, religious, cultural or any other form) never really took off, never developed in a clear direction, never really threatened the colonial system until the proletariat - however weak or embryonic it might have been - gave to it a solid national, consistently anti-imperialist and democratic stamp. And the failure of the peasants in the Maji Maji struggle (1905-07) is but one example. Shivji is writing about 'class struggles in Tanzania, but deals with workers, in abstraction from the fact that without the proletariat the nationalist struggle was doomed to failure. Once the TANU-T.F.L. alliance was established, declares Shivji:-

"The workers had thrown in their lot with the nationalist movement and the wave of strikes during the 1950's was probably (sic!) instrumental in bringing about independence". 30

And he adds:-

"Thus, despite their numerical smallness, the workers' contribution, given their strategic role in the economy, cannot be belittled". 31

Now these two sentences are once again a caricature of Tanzania's history. It is, of course, true that the proletariat did not assume the

hegemonic leadership of the anti-colonial movement, because it failed to come out with its own Party. Nevertheless the working class did not simply 'throw their lot' with the anti-imperialist struggle and certainly its contribution to the struggle was not just confined to the fact that they occupied a 'strategic' position within Tanzania's economy. They were the national movement's most militantly consistent component as a class, whereas the other classes tended towards vacillation and compromise with the enemy. That the proletariat did not lead the national movement through its own party, but instead got incorporated in an amorphous 'alliance' with the petty-bourgeoisie was the cause of the present neo-colonial oppression of the country by imperialism, but it is a far cry from Shivji's underestimation of its role.

As far as 1924 a strike of joiners at Kwiros Mission had shown the militant character of this 'dangerous' class, in the eyes of the colonialists. Throughout the 1930's there were workers on sisal estates and other plantations. The warf labourers' strike in Tanga (1937) clearly showed the developing militancy and consciousness of the proletariat when 250 workers left work for two days and aroused sympathy from broad sections of public opinion. Two years later, the colonialists witnessed a highly, coordinated strike - not limited to Tanzania but linking workers at the docks of Dar es Salaam, Lindi and Mombasa. The workers were already beginning to see the international character of their struggle, right at the level of production, and therefore the need for solid internationalist links.

The working class struggle in Tanzania entered into the mainstream of the national anti-imperialist movement at least as far back as the 1930's, while Shivji imagines in his own head that it started with the TANU-T.F.L. alliances!

The consistently democratic, patriotic and militant character of the Tanzanian working class in the 1930's and the vacillations of the petty-bourgeoisie is very well illustrated by the political experience of an anti-imperialist democratic nationalist organization led by the petty-bourgeoisie called the Tanganyika Africa Welfare and Commercial Association (TAWCA).

In the mid-30's Fiah was a shop-keeper. He took to the promotion of the national movement very early in his life, and founded the

patriotic paper, KWETU as the mouth-piece of TAWCA. From the very beginning this Association did not hide its political aims:-

"Since the Africans are not represented in the Legislative Council, "said the proposed by-laws of the Association, "this Association, as the Central body, looking after the welfare of all Africans in Tanganyika Territory, would always watch carefully any laws proposed by the Government which may affect Africans and after consideration, would make such representations to Government, and Members of Legislative Council, as the Association consider proper in the interests of Africans... Every African is bound to obey the Association, whether he is contributing or not, just as he obeys the Government".³²

The more the Association became militantly anti-imperialist, however, the more repressive the colonial state became. The more the popular movement insisted on their democratic rights and freedoms the more the colonial state sharpened its carrot and stick policy. By 1936 Governor MacMichael reported to the Colonial Office:-

"Here we have a shopkeeper of doubtful antecedents... from Uganda who puts up by-laws which reeks of politics and bad digestion, conflict with liberty of the individual and the responsibility of Government to the people and show signs of a desire to achieve influence and subscriptions".³³

What happened to the Association and to its leader Erica Fiah is however, instructive in showing whether the working class in Tanzania simply 'threw in their lot with the nationalist movement' through the TANU-T.F.L. alliance on the eve of independence, as Shivji says, or whether all along they had championed and played a leading role, in the struggle.

What happened from 1936 is that the more the colonial state put down its feet the more the petty-bourgeois membership of the TAWCA wavered, vacillated and finally abandoned the Association. Those who remained now sought to water down its tone; to abandon the anti-imperialist, democratic and militant line by arguing that the Association 'must not' engage in 'politics'. Things became so disgusting to a consistent patriot like Erica Fiah that in 1939 he quit the Association. But to do what - to simply sit? Not at all. Fiah abandoned the petty-bourgeoisie to help organise the working class in the docks of Dar es Salaam.

Did Fiah leave the TAWCA to go to dockworkers for sentimental reasons? Not at all. He did it because in practice, in the field of practical politics, he had discovered the true nature of the petty-

bourgeoisie and the militancy of the proletariat. Engels once said of the petty-bourgeoisie:-

"They are extremely unreliable except after a victory has been won, when their shouting in the beer houses knows no bounds. Nevertheless, there are very good elements among them, who join the workers of their own accord".³⁴

Erica Fiah had discovered this fact that Engels had long talked about - but right in the field of political action.

Shivji does not see that the working class did not 'go' onto the side of the national movement only in the 1950's but had championed the Uhuru struggle all along. Shivji does not realize that in their economic struggles the proletariat in Tanzania had long ago discovered - at least some 20 years before the TANU-T.F.L. 'alliance' - that imperialism was the principal enemy of not only themselves as a class; but of the entire Tanzanian people. While he tells us that the working class's role in the anti-colonial struggle 'cannot be belittled' because of its "strategic role in the economy" Shivji precisely belittles the rôle of the proletariat in Tanzania's history. For it was not just the 'strategic role' of the workers in the economy that mattered. It was their position in production as suppliers of surplus value; their concentration in production (in comparison with other classes); their natural (i. e. inevitable) need to organise for economic struggles; and their unflinching demands for democratic rights for not only themselves but the broader masses of the population. These were the conditions that gave the working class their militancy; their uncompromising stand in opposition to imperialism, for self-determination and for democratic rights and freedoms. These were the factors that made the proletariat a major force in the independence movement a fact which Shivji realizes only vaguely, and too late.

That the other classes later on - and at the last moment - usurped this leadership role, has to be analyzed concretely in order to draw both positive and negative lessons from Tanzania's history. Shivji cannot do this important job because he does not seem to have seriously studied Tanzania's history either, and this because according to him, it would have taken him "too far afield".

This then, is the basis of Shivji's caricature of Tanzania's history and of the consistently revolutionary history of the Tanzanian proletariat.

Shivji says of the Tanzanian working class with a most derogatory tone:-

"Notwithstanding the workers' role in the Uhuru struggle, TANU never came under the influence of proletarian ideology nor were workers considered (Sic!) the leading force in the struggle. The trade union movement was basically structured on traditional (English) lines led by some elements from the petty bourgeoisie. If anything, the TANU ideology was essentially peasant-based".³⁵

The significance of this passage is, to be found in the statement in which Shivji goes so far as to dismiss - or at least down-grade the revolutionary character of the African proletariat. He says:-

"It is true that the small working class in the African countries cannot be considered to be the same as the European proletariat (who says they are Shivji!) or ipso facto (not, please!) revolutionary".³⁶

These two passages alone would need a book, entitled Anti-Shivji, to refute point by point any pretensions this 'Marxist' may claim for being, in his own words, one of those who are "imbued with proletarian ideology". It is difficult to imagine what proletarian ideology can permit anyone to doubt the historically-tested and proved revolutionary character of the African working class and of the Tanzanian proletariat in particular. Indeed what 'Marxism' can ever lead anyone into doubting - even for a single second - the revolutionary character of the working class wherever they may be? Only Shivji's Marxism. First of all, to say that TANU 'never came under the influence of proletarian ideology'; or that the workers were not 'considered' the leading force in the struggle, proves nothing about the concrete, objective, reality which is independent of Shivji's will but his subjective, idealist position which slanders the proletariat. If during the anti-colonial phase of the struggle the Tanzanian proletariat did not get to acquire and develop in a coherent manner their own ideology, i.e. Marxism-Leninism, this fact must be analysed concretely, in order to expose the factors that hindered it. In doing so, what is certain however is that sociological 'explanations', like those of Shivji, that ascribe all to the smallness or migrant nature of the proletariat in Tanzania will not do. It may be mentioned, for Shivji's benefit, that if ever he felt like examining this matter concretely as a true Marxist-Leninist, it would be useful for him first to start with a study - not just read or scan through - Lenin's What is to be done?

What Shivji does not seem to realize is that whether or not the proletariat was 'considered' the leading anti-imperialist force by other classes is of absolutely no importance in regard to the role it actually played. What is important is what was the reality which is that although it did not acquire leadership of the national movement, nevertheless it played a leading role, at least up to the period of the birth of TANU. Marx once said:-

"Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself (note!), so we cannot judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather by the contradictions of material life".³⁷

The contradictions of material life in Tanzania, and Africa generally, since imperialism introduced capitalist relations in our societies makes it that of all the classes that stood and continue to stand face to face with imperialism, the working class was and remains the most determined enemy of imperialism. The working class is the most uncompromisingly opposed to national oppression.

Shivji has not grasped this fact - and is forced to resort to eclecticism.

"(E)ven among the working class itself", he tells us, "there are certain sections which tend to be more conscious than others. These small sections can form the nucleus to influence others. In each concrete situation, revolutionaries have to find, in Cabral's words 'our little proletariat'".³⁸

We shall soon see that Shivji's references to Cabral border on opportunism because he has not at all understood this African patriot and because what Cabral says, far from proving his point, in fact, completely disproves it. For Cabral had an immense confidence in the working class. Whereas Shivji is unsure of its revolutionary capacity.

But what is difficult to understand from Shivji is how he can on the one hand say that there is no proletariat 'in the classical sense' in Africa;³⁹ and that the African working class is not, by its nature revolutionary⁴⁰ while on the other hand 'agreeing' with Cabral that we in Africa have to find 'our little proletariat'.

It is evident that Shivji is the very embodiment of contradictions. If there is any lesson to draw from eclecticism, it is that it can lead

to Shivjism, i.e. the worst forms of confusion in 'analysing' a neo-colony.

The Author of Class Struggles in Tanzania has told us that a proletariat "in the classical sense" did not develop in many African countries; he at least doubts the revolutionary character of the African working class; he has downgraded the revolutionary role of the Tanzanian proletariat during the anti-colonial struggle and simply taken a vulgar sociological explanation of the difficulties the working class organization faced at the time.

We need now to see why Shivji is taking such an openly anti-proletarian line in the name of the 'proletarian ideology'.

Shivji informs us that while the working class was faced with all sorts of set-backs:

"In addition, different structures (!) in the colonized countries have produced (note!) their corresponding strata (again note!) with revolutionary (!) potential".⁴¹

It is the first time we come across structures that are productive; indeed so productive that soon we see emerging from these structures 'corresponding strata', which have 'revolutionary potential'. This is Shivji's Marxism. Marxism not of classes but of productive 'structures' and 'strata'!

Although it is difficult for Marxists to understand what our analyst means by the above sentence, he himself is quite clear in his own mind as to what he means. Thus from this muddle, he draws the conclusion that:

"Therefore, depending on actual conditions in the concrete situation of each country, various alliances are possible for revolutionary action".⁴²

And why this escape from the working class and hurried rush to the issue of alliances? Who is going to form this alliance and which class will lead it? Regardless of the question of the leadership of the working class itself in the Tanzanian struggle:

"What is important", says Shivji, "is that such revolutionary strata are mobilized under the leadership (note!) of the proletarian ideology"⁴³ (the stress is Shivji's)

Clearly Shivji is determined to separate classes from their ideological positions; and we need to examine a bit more closely what this dualism means and inevitably leads to.

3. HOW SHIVJI SEPARATES THE PROLETARIAT FROM ITS IDEOLOGY.

To avoid confusion and misunderstanding, we need to point out that both Marx and Engels consistently stressed the importance of ideological and political education of the working class along the lines of a correct theory, if the proletarian struggle is to succeed. This is why Engels tells us in his Review of Marx's *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* which appeared in 1859 that:-

"After the defeat of the Revolution of 1848-49, ... our Party relinquished the field of emigrant squabbles... to the vulgar democrats. While these were chasing about their hearts' content, scuffling today, fraternising tomorrow and the day after once more washing their dirty linen in public, while they went begging throughout America and immediately afterwards started another row over the division of the few coins they had collected - our party was glad to find once more some quiet time for research work (to layout the Party's theoretical foundation", 44

Following in the example of these great teachers of the proletariat, Lenin said in What is to be done? that the importance of a correct ideological, theoretical and political line could not be overstressed because, first, the Russian Party was still young and had to settle "accounts with other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten (note Shivji!) to divert the movement from the correct path"; secondly, that being an international movement, the proletarian organization and the evolutionary party must make use of the experiences of other countries and do so critically in order "to test them independently"; thirdly, because the tasks that confronted the Russian Party" (had) never confronted any other socialist party before". It was in this connection that "the role of the vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory"⁴⁵ (Lenin's stress). How relevant Lenin's position is to the present situation in East Africa!

Shivji quotes a sentence from this most profound analysis of Lenin at the beginning of his book, but on reading the whole book one easily sees that his real teachers are not the Marxist-Leninists but Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, Charles Bettelheim, Nicos Poulantzas, A.G. Frank, Stavenagen and the host of 'independent' Marxists, and we appeal to the reader to check this for himself.

Stalin's success in mobilizing the Soviet working class and people to continue Lenin's line, advance socialist construction and defend the first socialist state from the hungry schemes of imperialism was only possible - in spite of some minor errors - thanks to his correct theoretical, ideological, political, and therefore strategic and tactical line in the struggle against the opposition, especially the Trotskyist and Bukharinist wings. As for Mao Tse-tung, his continual appeal for a correct line, his relentless struggles against both right and 'left' deviations, his numerous reports and writings on the need for political and ideological work among the masses, can be seen in each of the five volumes of his Selected Works that have been published so far.

All this said, however, we come back to Shivji and find that he begins by separating the proletariat from the proletarian ideology and then absolutising the role of the latter.

Two situations need to be distinguished here. First, there is the proletarian leadership of the struggle with their own ideology, i. e. Marxism-Leninism as its own ideological line. Secondly, there is the leadership of bourgeoisie or petty-bourgeoisie, camouflaged by slogans which pay lip service to the 'proletarian ideology', but which can obviously be nothing but a mere masquerade of 'socialism'. Shivji does not distinguish between the two, and ends up telling us that it is possible for any other class to lead the present anti-imperialist struggle in Tanzania with success, provided that its party is 'imbued' with proletarian ideology. This naturally leads Shivji to sink into the deepest oblivion of idealism.

Marx and Engels were absolutely emphatic about the revolutionary role of the proletariat and in the Manifesto of the Communist Party they did not say that this revolutionary role is due to the proletarian ideology but to its place in capitalist production.

"Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today", they wrote in 1847, "the proletariat alone (take note, Shivji!) is a really revolutionary class".⁴⁶

Why is this so? To quote Marx and Engels again:-

"The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, (note!) the peasant, all these

fight the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as a fraction of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, thus they defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat".⁴⁷

Shivji starts off by denying the existence of a proletariat 'in the classical sense' (whatever that means) in Tanzania and Africa while at the same time saying a working class exists. He proceeds to say this working class is not necessarily revolutionary and then sinks into the ridiculous position of defending the proletarian ideology but not the proletariat itself. The writer of Class Struggles in Tanzania is so afraid of real class struggle that he fears we might miss his utopian doctrine of the leadership of the proletarian ideology; hence he repeats the doctrine over and over with amazing zeal. He starts to expound this doctrine in his appraisal of the anti-colonial struggle under PAIGC⁴⁸. Again while completely misrepresenting the Chinese revolution, as we shall see, he says:-

"The important and decisive point is that the struggle was led by a party expounding proletarian ideology".⁴⁹

In the next paragraph we are again told:-

"As we have been emphasizing all along, class struggle is a political struggle for state power, and therefore what is important is that potential revolutionary classes and strata are organized for their political conflict under the leadership of the proletarian ideology".⁵⁰ (stress Shivji's)

In the next page, having for a second time quoted Cabral without understanding him, Shivji concludes:-

"Thus a large developed proletariat is not an essential condition for struggle against capitalism and the building of socialism. There exist in the African situation other strata - for example, lower sectors of the petty bourgeoisie (sic!!!) - with revolutionary potential, and these can be mobilized in alliance (note!) with the peasantry and the working class under the leadership of the proletarian ideology".⁵¹(again stress original).

Here Shivji totally fails to see the two phases of the Struggle and dashes straight to "the building of socialism". Nevertheless Shivji's theme is clear on at least two points:-

1. That in the struggle facing the African people today, the leadership of the proletariat is unnecessary; and

2. That the leadership necessary is not of the working class itself, but only "the leadership of the proletarian ideology"

He even suggests specifically that 'other strata' which he claims to 'have revolutionary potential' can be mobilized, with a view to establishing an 'alliance', through the ideology of the proletariat.

The question of alliances in class struggles is a vitally important one, for, numerous liberation movements have seen success crumble at the very last minute precisely because of having failed to make a correct appreciation of the classes in struggle; their concrete positions vis-a-vis each other; the principal enemy of each given moment; and therefore the revolutionary alliance of all the classes and forces within the society that can be united, in order to liquidate this principal enemy and advance the struggle a step further.

Engels stresses in Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, that during the phase of the rising bourgeoisie and the struggle against feudalism, it was in the interest of the working class and the peasants to ally themselves with the bourgeoisie in the struggle against feudalism. It was in the interest of the working class and the peasants to ally themselves with the bourgeoisie, even under the latter's leadership in order to liquidate the backward, autocratic feudal state, liberate the peasants and re-enforce and consolidate the proletariat itself as a class. Once this was achieved, the task of the proletariat was to unite with the peasants in order to crush the bourgeoisie and capitalist exploitation.

By 1856 however, when the correlation of class forces had fundamentally changed, Marx was writing to Engels:

"The whole thing (i. e. the struggle, 0-0) in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution try some second edition of the Peasant War. Then the affair (i. e. the revolutionary struggle, 0-0) will be splendid."52.

Marx's and Engels' theory of class alliances in revolutionary struggle are most clearly brought out in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte; in The Peasant War in Germany; in The Civil War in France; in the Peasant Question in France and Germany; in The Class Struggles in France 1848 to 1850 and in their correspondence.

So it is not Shivji who has discovered the question of alliances and he does not claim such a discovery. What he has certainly discovered - to the detriment of the African working class - is that

during the present epoch of the most intense imperialist oppression, the working class must not lead the popular front. The workers, Shivji tells us, are too few; full of migrants and may not be revolutionary. Therefore they must be bypassed. First, 'potential revolutionary strata' must be mobilized (by whom, we are not told) to the exclusion of the proletariat. Then, having done so, the peasants and workers can be brought in simply as tags, just to aid Shivji's 'revolutionary' classes and 'strata'.

Who are these 'revolutionary strata', these strata which are more revolutionary than the workers? Shivji does not enumerate them. But he gives us a clue when he suggests that:

"There exist in the African situation other strata - for example, lower sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie - with revolutionary potential..."⁵³ (stress added)

There we see the modern petty-bourgeois Narcissus looking at and falling in love with his own image in a spring! What is not realized, of course, is that in the same way as Narcissus pined away and transformed himself into something else - in his case a flower - so does our 'Marxist' stand the risk of transforming himself into the ideologue of some other class - the petty-bourgeoisie! And in effect Shivji declares himself the ideologue of the 'lower Sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie' though in Marxist attire. Thus beginning as someone 'imbued with proletarian ideology' we get someone imbued with the ideology of the lower sections of the petty bourgeoisie masquerading as a Marxist-Leninist.

The working class in struggle will find its leaders. Nevertheless Shivji's caricature of Marxism and proning of the silent dreams of the 'lower sectors' of the petty-bourgeoisie, and hence of the petty-bourgeoisie as a class-dreams that are completely unrealizable under imperialism domination - makes it most important for such proletarian leaders to pay heed to Engels' warning when he wrote in 1874:-

"In particular, it will be the duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world outlook, and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, since it has become science, demands that it be pursued as a science, that is, that it be studied".⁵⁴

Engels added:-

"The task will be to spread with increased zeal among the masses of workers the ever lucid understanding thus acquired and to knit together evermore strongly the organisation both of the party and of the trade union". 55

Having caricatured Marxism; slandered the African proletariat, and taken away all revolutionary content from the anti-imperialist struggle by considering it as a struggle 'under the leadership of the proletarian ideology' with the proletariat itself only as a tag, Shivji now turns around to 'defend' scientific socialism.

"Those who argue against the applicability of scientific socialism in Africa because the theory was based on a developed proletariat which does not exist in Africa are therefore expecting concrete conditions to conform to scriptures! This is not Marxism". 56

What a brilliant defence of Marxism! First of all you accept the bourgeois nonsense that a proletariat does not exist in Africa. Then you turn round to say we must not expect your so-called 'concrete conditions' (i.e. absence of a proletariat), 'to conform to scriptures! You then proceed to dismiss your own reasoning as 'not Marxism'.

The point is this:-

If there is no proletariat in Africa, then the struggle in Africa is not a proletarian one. And if the struggle is not a proletarian one, then for what do we need the proletarian ideology, i.e. Marxism-Leninism? Here the non-Marxist petty-bourgeoisie in Africa are far more consistent with themselves than the 'Marxist' Shivji. For they openly declare that there is no working class in Africa, and hence conclude that Marxism-Leninism is inapplicable to Africa.

Marx and other teachers of the working class again and again taught us that dialectical and historical materialism, i.e. the science of the proletariat, arose and can continue in existence only - repeat only - because the proletariat is there. Marxism is the ideology of the proletariat. No other class can consistently apply the proletarian ideology. Any attempt by anyone to divorce Marxism from the proletariat itself is reactionary because it seeks to present the struggle as being for but not by the proletariat themselves.

Shivji and his friends must accept one of two things:-

1. Either there is a proletariat in Africa; and therefore there is a proletarian ideology which is its arm against its enemies.

2. Or there is no proletariat in Africa; in which case let no one disturb the African people with the nonsense of being 'led' by the ideology of a class which is not there.

We put this point so sharply precisely because as we have insisted, the existence of a proletariat is not a question of numbers. It is a question of relations established in production and the tendencies established therein. This is so regardless of the specific characteristics this proletariat possesses in each country.

Shivji has to accept another thing, namely that for him to imagine that any other class can use the ideology of the proletariat and yet for such an ideology to retain its proletarian content is to sink into the depths of a utopian dream. The question as to where ideas, consciousness, knowledge - and therefore ideologies, philosophies and theories - come from is part of the ABC of Marxism.⁵⁷ We realize that it is not an easy job to stick to the view that all ideology is a product of a class and can only be used by that class. The fact that the petty-bourgeoisie, or any other class can claim to be 'led by the proletarian ideology' in any given situation does not - and cannot - mean that it is so. They are not to be judged by what they think of themselves. For example in the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels were able to identify three types of non-proletarian socialism of their time, - namely reactionary socialism; conservative socialism and critical-utopian socialism which gave birth to communism⁵⁸. Each of these belonged to a specific class or section of a class.

All of these trends represented a 'socialist' school. But to the proletariat what mattered was that they as a class could not serve themselves with the ideologies of other classes and expect to gain power.

In the same way, no other class can adopt the substance of the proletarian ideology. When the petty-bourgeoisie talk of socialism, they mean a totally different thing from what the proletariat understand by socialism. Substance must be distinguished from form. Shivji's failure to grasp this point leads him into deep trouble.

4. SHIVJI DOES NOT UNDERSTAND AMILCAR CABRAL OR THE LESSONS OF THE ANTI-COLONIAL ARMED STRUGGLE IN GUINEA-BISSAU AND IN AFRICA AS A WHOLE.

Starting from the late 1950's the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle in Africa advanced to the stage of popular and protracted resistance in a number of countries. In contradiction from the earlier armed movements in which the working class did not play a leading role (including the Mau Mau resistance in Kenya) the new phase of the anti-colonial armed struggle started in Algeria. With the defeat of French colonial imperialism, the people rose up in arms against Portuguese colonial oppression in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. This revolutionary wave is still rippling in the rest of Southern Africa while neo-colonial Africa is not far behind.

What was the character of this struggle?

First of all it was anti-imperialist; thus what was at issue was the solution of the national question.

But it was not a struggle against imperialism in a general, unspecified manner. Thus, secondly, it was a struggle to resolve the national question as a colonial question.

This means that in the struggle to organise and advance the revolution and defeat the enemy, it was possible to unite much broader section of the population, from a much wider political base than it would be possible in a neo-colonial or even a semi-colonial situation.

Nevertheless does it mean that the anti-colonial united front which emerged in these countries was an amorphous 'alliance' whose only uniting factor was 'the proletarian ideology'? Shivji thinks so and quotes Amilcar Cabral to support his case. He should read Cabral again! We shall quote his reference to Cabral in full before showing our author's total misunderstanding, and therefore misrepresentation, of Amilcar:-

"One important group in the town", says Cabral, "were the dockworkers (note!); another group were the people working in the boats (note again!) carrying merchandise, who mostly live in Bissau itself and travel up and down the rivers. Those people proved highly conscious of their position and of their economic importance and they took the initiative of launching strikes without any trade union leadership at all (note!). We therefore decided to concentrate all our work on this group. This gave excellent results (you

see!) and this group soon came to form a kind of nucleus (note, Shivji!) which influenced the attitudes of other wage-earning groups (sic!) in towns - workers proper and drivers (note!) who form two other important groups. Moreover, if I may put it this way, we thus found our little proletariat". 59

Amilcar Cabral is so clear!

On whom did the PAIGC rely to form the nucleus of the movement?

Cabral tells us that at first they concentrated on:-

- a) dockworkers; and
- b) people working in the boats.

He says that after the strikes they went on to organise:-

- a) "Workers proper" and
- b) "drivers"

Instead of taking the kernel of what Cabral tells us, namely that although it did not develop its own part, the working class played a leading role within the PAIGC movement, Shivji dashes out shouting:-

"What is important is that such revolutionary strata (imagine!) are mobilised under the proletarian ideology". 60 (stress original)

This shouting is futile because Cabral is not simply speaking of the ideology of the Guinean struggle. He is more concrete than Shivji and specifically tells us that this ideology was not an empty slogan but based on recruitment from within the ranks of the workers.

Shivji however is not satisfied to misinterpret Cabral once, he does it a second time informing us that he "cannot resist" quoting the Guinean patriot to support his undimensional and idealist view that:-

"(The leadership of the proletarian ideology) is truer still in the case of cadres who may have varied class origins. In fact, the leadership and the cadres (note!) may even come from bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes: provided they are imbued with proletarian consciousness (sic!) such traitors to their classes are only too common in history". 61

Once again Shivji has confused two issues, namely one, the need for the leadership of the proletariat as a class in revolutionary struggle; and two, the question of those individuals from other classes who - as a minute exception - join the working class Party and may even - as a still greater exception - become good Cadres and possibly occupy a leadership role therein. In either case, of course, one cannot have a working class Party without a proletarian ideology.

Moreover to Shivji the 'traitors to their classes' are not an exception but the rule. They are, indeed, so common that they must usurp the leadership of the proletarian struggle and make revolution on behalf of, and for the proletariat. Once again in Shivji we see a 'proletarian theory' which tells the proletariat:-

"Don't worry. You need not lead your own struggle as a class. There are many bourgeois and petty-bourgeois traitors to their class who will come to lead you!"

This, then, is Shivji's dogma. A dogma of 'proletarian ideology'. A dogma aimed at emasculating the working class struggle and betraying it to the leadership of other classes. Instead of drawing correct lessons from the short-comings of the past struggles of the African proletariat in order to fortify and develop proletarian militancy, the author of Class Struggles in Tanzania offers his services to the 'lower sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie!'

Such is Shivji the revolutionary!

The author's second quotation from Cabral refers to the stage when Cabral is talking about the recruitment and formation of cadres.

"We were faced with another difficult problem, we realised that we needed to have people with a mentality which could transcend the context of the national liberation struggle, and so we prepared a number of cadres from the group I have just mentioned, some from the people employed in commerce and other wage earners (note!), and even some peasants (note!) so that they could acquire what you might call a working class mentality. You might think this is absurd - in any case it is very difficult; in order for there to be a working class mentality the material conditions for the working class should exist, a working class should exist. In fact, we managed to inculcate these ideas into a large number of people - the kind of ideas, that is, which there would be if there were a working class. We trained 1,000 cadres at our party school in Conakry, in fact for about two years this was about all we did outside the country. When these cadres returned to the rural areas they inculcated a certain mentality into the peasants and it is among these cadres that we have chosen the people who are now leading the struggles". 61

Again not only does this go on to confirm that many proletarian elements played a leading role within PAIGC; but further, Cabral, who was not a member of a Communist or Marxist-Leninist party, turns out to be a concrete, to the point and consistent in his practice, whereas a self-styled Marxist preaches to the proletariat to accept the leadership of other classes through 'the proletarian ideology'.

5. HOW SHIVJI MISREPRESENTS THE PROLETARIAN LEADERSHIP OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

We now go to Shivji's reference to the Chinese people's struggle against imperialist oppression and feudal exploitation which ended in the victory of 1949.

Having brought out his doctrine of the leadership of the proletarian ideology, Issa Shivji continues:-

"Even the Chinese struggle was based (sic!) mainly on the peasants and not on the proletariat, though given the concrete conditions of China, the peasantry itself objectively, had revolutionary capacity. The important and decisive point is that the struggle was led by a party expounding proletarian ideology".⁶²

In this brief paragraph, the author has accumulated a mass of confusion, half-truths and down-right nonsense; and it is evident that Shivji's doctrine of proletarian ideology has turned into an obsession.

First, confusion - what does Shivji mean by the phrase that the Chinese struggle was "based" mainly on the peasants and not the proletariat? If by it he is speaking of a political leadership by the peasants, this is downright contrary to facts, as we shall see. If by it he means numerically more peasants took part in the Chinese revolution than the workers, then that is evident. China, as Mao Tse-tung realized quite early, (despite the fact that 'left' opposition from within the Chinese Communist Party made it difficult to see the significance of this fact), was a rural, agrarian country. Therefore most of the population consisted of peasants. How could the CPC lead the Chinese revolution to the end without fully allying the peasants to the working class? It could not. And this was precisely the heart of the struggle against the first left-opportunist line from August 1927 to the end of 1928.

Once this line was corrected, and especially once Mao's strategy of mobilizing the countryside to take the cities was accepted within the Party, the peasants became even more deeply involved in the struggle. Mao stressed again and again that the peasants and especially the poor peasants were the workers' most solid allies, the most powerful detachment against feudal oppression in the rural areas.

In his Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan

(1927) Mao wrote:-

"The poor peasants have always been the main force in the bitter fight in the countryside. They are the most responsive to Communist Party leadership".⁶³ (stress added)

By not bringing out what he means by his declaration that the Chinese struggle was mainly 'based' on the peasants and not the proletariat, Shivji creates confusion which lends itself to the interpretation that the Chinese revolution was a peasant revolution. By saying that the peasants constituted the "main force" of the Chinese struggle, Mao Tse-tung was not saying that this made the Chinese revolution a peasant revolution as a section of the Trotskyist movement has often declared.

Secondly, to say that the peasantry in China "objectively had revolutionary capacity" is to engage in a half-truth which arises from his abandonment of concrete and precise analysis. In his analysis of classes in Chinese society, and of the peasants in particular, Mao always stressed the fact that this was a class in disintegration. You had rich peasants, middle peasants and poor peasants. The rich peasants were on the rise towards the class of capitalist farmers, i. e. in the process of becoming part of the bourgeoisie. The poor peasants on the other hand were in the decline, being constantly pushed to the ranks of the proletariat. The latter was revolutionary; the other was most often hesitant, if not worse. In this situation what scientific content can one give to Shivji's blank statement that the peasants in China was 'objectively...revolutionary' in the absence of concrete analysis? Thirdly, Shivji is saying nonsense when he states that what was 'important' and 'decisive' in the Chinese struggle was that the CPC was "a party expounding proletarian ideology". Had this been the decisive thing in the Chinese Communist Party and not the actual proletarian composition and leadership within the Party, the revolution was doomed.

Chairman Mao specifically said that the revolutionary role of the Party could be undermined and the struggle compromised, by allowing too large a recruitment from other classes into the party, and especially into leadership positions. He gave concrete examples to illustrate this fact. In his analysis of Why is it that Red Political Power can exist in China? Which he wrote in October 1928, Mao Tse-tung said:-

"China is in urgent need for a bourgeois democratic revolution and this revolution can be completely only under the leadership of the proletariat". 64

And again

"Because the proletariat failed to exercise firm leadership in the revolution of 1926-27 which started from Kuangtum and spread towards the Yangtse River, leadership was seized by the comprador and landlord classes and the revolution was replaced by counter-revolution. The bourgeois-democratic revolution thus met with temporary defeat. This defeat was a heavy blow to the Chinese proletariat and peasantry and also a blow to the Chinese bourgeoisie (but not to the comprador and landlord classes). Yet in the last few months... there has been a growth of organised strikes by workers in the cities and of insurrections by peasants in the countryside under the leadership of the Communist Party". 65

Thus the working class's failure to exercise firm leadership through the Party led to a major, though temporary, set-back.

What was the Chinese Communist Party? It was, like all genuine and not bogus Communist parties, essentially a worker's party. You cannot flood a Party with all sorts of elements with non-proletarian, non-poor peasant backgrounds and expect it to retain a proletarian ideology as Shivji thinks. This is so even if this Party continues to mouth the most high-sounding vows that it is "imbued" with the best of Marxism-Leninism. This is precisely one of the basic aims and results of revisionism. To change the class character of the Party while paying lipservice to "proletarian ideology" the bourgeoisie and other classes place themselves in commanding positions of leadership, pushing away the core of the revolution - the working class.

In his The struggle in the Ching Kang Mountains, Mao wrote in November 1928 to show the dangers of other classes trying to take control of the struggle, even in such a body like the Red Army.⁺ Mao warned against the advisability of having too many lumpen-proletarians in the Red Army although, he pointed out, conditions then demanded that the struggle could not do without them altogether. For that matter, Mao explained, political training had to be intensified among the recruits from the other classes. He explained that the only way to rectify matters within the Red Army was:-

⁺(We need to remind the reader that Mao was not here even concerned with the class composition of the CPC itself, but only of its armed wing which was under the strict control of the Party).

- a) to abolish the mercenary system;
- b) to increase Party representation; and
- c) to consistently practice democracy.

In the same article, Mao showed the dangers of the intermediate classes. He went on, and Shivji must take careful note:-

"In the early days the small landlords and rich peasants scrambled to get on to government committees... Wearing red ribbons and feigning enthusiasm, they wormed their way... by trickery and seized control of everything, relegating the poor peasant members to a minor role. They can be cleared out only when they are unmasked in the course of struggle and the poor peasants assert themselves". 66

And again:-

"During the revolutionary upsurge (in June 1928, 0-0) many careerists took advantage of the Party's open recruitment of members and sneaked into the Party... After September the Party carried out a drastic house clearing and set strict class (note, Shivji) qualifications for membership". 67

What all these clearly show is that Shivji has 'drawn lessons' from the Chinese struggle - few revolutionary struggles have indeed been richer of lessons than this struggle - without in the least studying it. This is most dangerous. It misleads those revolutionary intellectuals who really seek to serve the proletariat. Shivji gives to these elements the impression that they can constitute themselves into a Party, in isolation from the very best vanguard elements of the proletariat, and wage struggle - so long as they are imbued with 'proletarian ideology'. How often have we been told that socialism is nothing more than an 'idea?' Let someone tell us the difference between Shivjism and the modern vulgar and naive "Socialism" of the petty-bourgeoisie besides, perhaps a little tinge of adventurism hidden in the corner.

It is finally necessary to dispose of the idea - for it is nothing but Shivji's fertile idea - that the Chinese struggle was simply led by a "Party propounding proletarian ideology".

Once again to refer to all the texts of Mao Tse-tung would fill pages, and there is no need to prolong the discussion. Just a few examples will do;

In the very first article that appears in Mao Tse-tung's Selected Works we have the following statement:-

"The leading force (note!) in our revolution is the industrial proletariat. Our Closest friends (note!) are the entire semi-proletariat and petty-bourgeoisie".⁶⁸

Thus Mao is absolutely clear about the leadership of the Chinese struggle. whereas Shivji wishes to reduce this leadership to that of an ideology.

One of the bitterest struggles the Chinese Communist Party had to wage was against an "ultra-left" group that controlled the Southern Hunan Special Committee around March 1921. This group accused Mao and other revolutionaries of desertion. Why? Because the latter were uncompromisingly opposed to their adventurism. What was the content of this adventurism? It was the slogan of:-

"turning the petty bourgeois into proletarians and then driving them into the revolution".⁶⁹

With this kind of Trotskyism - for that is what it was - of course the policy failed. But it was the CPC which had to pay its price. Those who think they have a role to play in the struggle of our people against imperialism must be extremely careful that they make correct, honest and serious analysis and not rush to the kind of Trotskyist conclusions to which Shivji leads us. Nobody has a right to mislead patriotic and democratic Africans into this kind of halfbaked fascination with ideas - because this is not the proletariat's hobby.

In his bitter attack of the "roving band theory" and "strategy" that had developed within the CPC by the beginning of 1929, Chairman Mao had to send out a circular letter on behalf of the Front Committee of the CPC on April 5, 1929. The letter said:-

"Proletarian leadership is the sole (note!) key to victory in the revolution. Building a proletarian foundation for the Party and setting up Party branches in industrial enterprises in key districts are important organizational tasks for the Party at present".⁷⁰

Mao said again:-

"(I)n the revolution in semi-colonial China, the peasant struggle must always fail if it does not have the leadership of the workers..."⁷¹

Now, given these reports after reports, given Mao Tse-tung's clarity and consistency - and we find not a single slip on the part of the CPC under his leadership - given the fact that this correct and revolutionary line was proved in practice by the success of the Chinese Revolution why does Shivji insist on slandering the Chinese Party? That we do not understand.

6 CONCLUSION

Sometime during his exile, before 1899, V. I. Lenin wrote three articles intended for the newspaper Rabochaya Gazeta which had been adopted as the official organ of the Russian Social-democratic Labour Party at its first Congress.

One of the three articles in question was entitled 'Our Programme'. In this concise and clear exposition of the Programme and political line of the R.S.D.L.P. Lenin wrote:-

"We take our stand entirely on the Marxist theoretical position. Marxism was the first to transform socialism from a utopia into a science, to lay a firm foundation for this science, and to indicate the path that must be followed in further developing and elaborating it in all its parts. It disclosed the nature of modern capitalist economy by explaining how the hire of the labourer, the purchase of labour-power, by a handful of capitalists, the owners of the land, factories, mines and so'forth. It showed that all modern capitalist development displays the tendency of large-scale production to eliminate petty production and creates conditions that make a socialist system of society possible and necessary. It taught us how to discern, beneath the pall of rooted customs, political intrigues, abstruse laws, and intricate doctrines - the class struggle, the struggle between the propertied classes in all their variety and the propertyless mass, the proletariat, which is at the head (note!) of the propertyless".72 (stress added)

Lenin went on:-

"It made clear the real task of a revolutionary socialist party: not to draw up plans for refashioning society, not to preach to the capitalists and their hangers-on about improving the lot of workers, not to hatch conspiracies (note again!), but to organise the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organization of a socialist society".73 (all the stress, Lenin's)

This passage sums up in the most lucid manner, and with remarkable brilliance the Marxist theoretical position. It explains scientifically historical materialism; the theory of class struggle; the nature of capitalist society, and the vanguard role of the proletariat in its liquidation. It does more. It shows the tasks of those non-proletarian elements who nevertheless consider that they take Marxism as the starting point of their theory and practice - which is to create the conditions that will enable the working class to take consciousness of themselves as a class so as to organise themselves and to lead repeat lead - the popular struggle up to the end.

This basic position of Marxism-Leninism is, however most distasteful to the ideological representatives of non-proletarian classes. They cannot imagine how the working class can lead the revolution. They cannot fathom how they have to be led by such an 'uncultured', propertyless class; how they must take a lower place and how the classes they represent must accept the leadership of the proletariat. Such were the representatives among others, in Russia, of non-proletarian classes, organised as the Narodniks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the Cadets. Such was the position of the ideological representatives of the land-lord, the bureaucrat-capitalist, and - at the beginning of the revolution - of the petty-bourgeoisie, including the peasants, in China. The trend has continued ever since, transforming itself from an isolated to a world-wide phenomenon.

Quite often, they even dare raise their anti-proletarian calumnies against the proletariat in the name of the proletariat itself and in the name of Marxism-Leninism! These are ideologies of other classes within the emerging proletarian and anti-imperialist movement. However, precisely because they speak from within; and because they pretend to speak in the name of the proletariat, they fabricate the most dangerous 'theories', 'doctrines' 'plans' 'political lines' and 'programmes'.

It is in this light that we must see Issa G. Shivji and his ideological followers. For they are part of the East African brand of the Neo-Marxist School - a school which historically emerged and developed in close association with the treacherous 'Marxism' of the Second International, flirted with modern revisionism and linked up with the various wings of the Trotskyist line.

We must resolutely reject and refute this petty-bourgeois 'Marxism'.

FOOTNOTES

1. Frederick Engels, Letter of the Young Engels, 1838-1845, Moscow, 1976, p. 205.
2. Mao Tse-tung, "Combat Liberalism", in Selected Works, Peking, Vol. II. p. 31.
3. Dan W. Nabudere, "Imperialism, State, Class and Race" (A Critique of Shivji's Class Struggles in Tanzania), Dar es Salaam, n.d. mimeo.

4. Yash Tandon, Letter to M. Mamdani and H. Bhagat of 18th July, 1976 Dar es Salaam, n.d. This was further developed in his review of I. Shivji's, Colin Leys and M. Mamdani's books - Y. Tandon, "Whose Capital and Whose State?", Dar es Salaam, March 1977.
5. A.B. Kayonga and S.M. Magara, "Nabudere the 'Kautskyite' and Hirji the 'Marxist-Leninist'", Dar es Salaam, n.d.
6. See: "Imperialism our Enemy No. 1", in New University Echo, Dar es Salaam, May 1977, Question 3, p. 3.
7. Issa G. Shivji, "Silent Class Struggle", first appeared in Cheche in 1970. It was later published with comments by various persons, by Tanzania Publishing House, 1973.
8. I.G. Shivji, Class Struggles in Tanzania, Heinemann/T.P.H. London and Dar es Salaam, 1976.
9. Karim Hirji, "The "Marxism-Leninism" of Professor D. Wadada Nabudere, Dar es Salaam, n.d.
10. We shall concentrate on pages 22-24 and 52-53 of Shivji's Class Struggles in Tanzania, although we have to look elsewhere in the book when Shivji is not clear.
11. Excerpts of this speech were reproduced under the title 'process of Liberation' in New Outlook, Dar es Salaam, No.5 (Sept/Oct. 1977) p. 5
12. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
13. Ibid. p. 6
14. That this glib talk about the 'immediate enemy' as a means of shielding the imperialist monopolies and dividing the ranks of classes and other forces that are oppressed by finance capital is Neo-Marxist is testified by the fact that it was imported from A.G. Frank in a debate on Latin America by John Saul. A. Gundar Frank, 'Who is the Immediate Enemy?' in Cockrift, Frank and Johnson, Dependence and Underdevelopment, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972, pp. 429-430; Saul's reference is to be found in his 'Who is the Immediate Enemy?' in Cliffe and Saul, Socialism in Tanzania, East African Publishing House, Nairobi, 1973, pp. 354-57.
15. V.I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", in Collected Works, Moscow, 1972, Vol. 20, pp. 395-454.
16. Ibid., p. 401
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. J.V. Stalin, Marxism and the National - Colonial Question.
20. Mao Tse-tung, "On New Democracy". in Selected Works, Peking, 1975, Vol. II. pp. 339-384.
21. Mao Tse-tung, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship", in Selected Works, Peking, Vol. IV, 1969, pp. 411-424.

22. Ibid., p. 422.
23. K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974 print, pp. 575-76
24. Ibid., p. 576.
25. I.G. Shivji, op. cit., 22-23
26. Ibid., p. 23
27. Ibid., p. 23 and further at pp. 52-53 in a section entitled 'Workers'.
28. See Shivji, p. 23 and also p. 53 where he gives a further elucidation of the same.
29. Shivji, op. cit., p. 52
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. "The Proposed By-Laws of the Tanganyika African Welfare and Commercial Association", encl. in Fiah to Northeote, 16 March, 1936 TNA SMP 22444/1/46-47 quoted in John Iliffe, 'The Age of Improvement and Differentiation' I.N. Kimambo and A.J. Temu, A History of Tanzania, E.A.P.H. Nairobi, 1969, p. 148.
33. MacMichael, Minute, 26 June 1936, TNA SMP 22444/1/69; quoted by J. Iliffe, op. cit., p. 148.
34. F. Engels, Preface to The peasant War in Germany, in K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works in 1 volume, Moscow, 1975, p. 240.
35. I.G. Shivji, op. cit., p. 53.
36. Ibid.
37. Lenin quotes this passage in his brief biographical sketch entitled Karl Marx, in Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1970, p. 38.
38. I.G. Shivji, op. cit., p. 53.
39. Shivji, pp. 22-23
40. Shivji, p. 53
41. Ibid., p. 23
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Frederick Engels, 'Karl Marx', "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", Review in Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Progress, Moscow, 1970, p. 221
45. V.I. Lenin, "What is to be done?" Selected Works, Vol. I, Moscow, 1970, p. 138.
46. Karl Marx, and Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1972, p. 44.
47. Ibid.
48. I.G. Shivji, op. cit., p. 23

49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., p. 24.
52. K. Marx's letter to Engels of April 16, 1856.
53. Shivji, op. cit., p. 23.
54. F. Engels, Preface to 'The Peasant War in Germany', in K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works in 1 volume, Moscow, 1975, p. 247
55. Ibid.
56. Shivji, p. 24
57. This issue is concisely and most admirably presented by Mao Tse-tung in four philosophical essays, namely "On Practice", "On Contradiction", "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" and especially "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?" See Mao Tse-tung, Four Essays on Philosophy, F.L.P., Peking, 1968.
58. K. Marx, F. Engels, The Manifesto of the Communist Party, Op. cit. Part III, pp. 60-73.
59. A. Cabral, "A Brief Analysis of the Social Structure in Guinea", in Revolution in Guinea, Stage I, London, 1969, p. 54.
60. I.G. Shivji, p. 23.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Mao Tse-tung, in Selected Works, Vol. I, Peking, 1975, p. 32.
64. Ibid. p. 64
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid. p. 92
67. Ibid. pp. 94-5
68. Ibid., p. 19
69. Ibid., p. 98
70. Ibid., p. 122.
71. Ibid., p. 123.
72. V.I. Lenin, 'Our Programme' in Collected Works, Vol. 4, Moscow (1972) pp. 210.
73. Ibid. p.210-11.