

THE COPY

2

AD-A228 543

# Marxism and Resistance in the Third World

Cause and Effect

Alexander A. Alexiev

DTIC  
ELECTE  
NOV 07 1990  
S B D

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A  
Approved for public release  
Distribution Unlimited

RAND

90 10 00 081

ISBN: 0-8330-0989-3

The RAND Publication Series: The Report is the principal publication documenting and transmitting RAND's major research findings and final research results. The RAND Note reports other outputs of sponsored research for general distribution. Publications of The RAND Corporation do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the sponsors of RAND research.

Published by The RAND Corporation  
1700 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90406-2138

R-3639

**Marxism and Resistance  
in the Third World**

**Cause and Effect**

Alexander A. Alexiev

July 1989

**RAND**

## PREFACE

This study was undertaken as part of a project on Origins of Anti-Marxist Resistance Movements in the Third World. The work was performed in the International Security and Defense Policy Program of RAND's National Security Research Division.

The report identifies and examines the factors that have encouraged the emergence of armed resistance movements against Marxist regimes in the Third World. In particular, it analyzes specific regime policies that have created widespread discontent and alienation. The findings of the study should be of interest to U.S. government analysts and policymakers concerned with anti-Marxist insurgencies, Soviet influence, and Marxism in the Third World.



Accession For	
NTIS GRA&I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification	
By	<i>per letter</i>
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
<i>A-1</i>	

## SUMMARY

A number of self-proclaimed Marxist regimes, many of which came to power with direct Soviet or Soviet-proxy military assistance, were established in the Third World in the second half of the 1970s. Countries in which such Marxist regimes took power included Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua.

While there have been many pro-Soviet governments in the Third World, the new regimes differed in that they not only subscribed openly to Marxist-Leninist ideology, but also embarked on the wholesale transformation of their countries along the lines of the Soviet political and economic model. In carrying out these policies, the new regimes frequently gave little consideration to prevailing conditions and/or their likely societal and economic impact. In virtually all cases, the policies soon engendered massive discontent that eventually spilled over into armed resistance.

The new Marxist regimes suffered from two major handicaps in their quest for domestic support and legitimacy: First, they were perceived as excessively dependent on *foreign patronage*, and second, they had a generally thin base of domestic support. Many of them had relied critically on *Soviet or proxy* assistance during either the takeover or consolidation phases of their rule. Several, including the regimes in Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Angola, depended on large-scale foreign military presence for their survival in power and were regarded by many of their citizens as little more than puppet governments.

Foreign military presence, as well as the pervasive societal militarization that is characteristic of most of the client regimes, has threatened neighboring countries and led them to support the anti-regime resistance. Sponsorship of various revolutionary and subversive movements by the Marxist regimes has had the same effect.

Domestic support for the new authorities has come primarily from a narrow urban base, which has limited the regimes' appeal among large strata of the predominantly peasant societies they govern.

Politically, all of the new regimes imposed the Leninist model of government, complete with a "vanguard" party and its other trappings, and vigorously pursued "scientific socialism" policies that have caused massive alienation. These policies have included attempts to penetrate and control society at all levels, accompanied by stifling political oppression and brutality, an uncompromising assault on established societal norms and traditional authority structures, and a concerted effort to severely circumscribe the role of religion.

The economic policies of the revolutionary regimes have been perhaps more responsible than anything else for the coalescence of armed resistance. All six regimes relentlessly pursued the goal of implementing the Soviet model of collectivized agriculture in the countryside. Their efforts in all cases have ended in dramatic and costly failure. Within a relatively short time, hunger and even famine were the rule of the day in most of the countries. This dramatic economic decline had already occurred before the resistance movements became a serious threat and before foreign assistance to them became a factor.

The disastrous economic policies of the regimes, coupled with political oppression, generated massive refugee populations that became rich reservoirs of support and sources of recruits for the resistance movements. The movements themselves enjoyed foreign support and, in most cases, sanctuaries as well, yet they have remained unquestionably indigenous, peasant-based, and of demonstrated staying power. They are likely to persist to one degree or another as long as the new Marxist regimes continue to pursue policies that alienate much of the populace. National reconciliation may be possible if the regimes or their sponsors undertake a radical policy shift. At present, however, the gulf separating regimes and resistance remains deep, and continued violence rather than reconciliation is the more likely prospect for the near term.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my RAND colleagues Paul Henze, Nikola Schahgaldian, and Jeffrey Simon for their insightful comments and criticisms on an earlier draft of this report. I am also indebted to Thomas Szayna for providing outstanding research assistance and to my editor Janet DeLand for her customary expert editorial advice.

## CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	iii
SUMMARY .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	vii
GLOSSARY .....	xi
Section	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. SOVIET STRATEGY AND MARXIST GAINS IN THE THIRD WORLD IN THE 1970s .....	5
III. THE NEW REGIMES: SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND THE QUESTION OF LEGITIMACY .....	8
Foreign Patronage .....	8
Problems with Domestic Support .....	11
IV. MARXISM IN THE THIRD WORLD AND THE POLITICS OF DISCONTENT .....	13
The Leninist Model Installed .....	13
Militarization .....	15
Political Oppression .....	19
The Assault on Traditional Society .....	23
Religion Under Attack .....	25
V. THE ECONOMICS OF HUNGER .....	29
Imposing the Marxist Economic Model .....	30
The Effects of the New Policies .....	45
VI. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS .....	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	51

## GLOSSARY

- ANC:** African National Congress
- ANS:** Sihanouk National Army, the military arm of FUNCINPEC
- Contras:** Nicaraguan resistance movement
- COPWE:** Committee for Organizing the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia
- Derg:** Ethiopian military regime established in 1974
- DISA:** The Angolan security service
- EPLF:** Eritrean Popular Liberation Front
- EPS:** Sandinista People's Army
- FDN:** National Democratic Front, the contras' political organization
- FNLA:** Angolan National Liberation Front
- FRELIMO:** Mozambican Liberation Front, currently the ruling party in Mozambique
- FSLN:** Sandinista National Liberation Front, currently the ruling party in Nicaragua
- FUNCINPEC:** National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia, the political organization of the ANS
- Khmer Rouge:** Cambodian Marxist resistance movement, formerly the name of the Pol Pot-dominated Cambodian regime which was in power from 1975 to 1979
- KPLNF:** Khmer People's National Liberation Front, Cambodian resistance movement
- KPRP:** Khmer People's Revolutionary Party, currently the ruling party in Cambodia
- MPLA:** Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, currently the ruling party in Angola
- MPS:** Sandinista People's Militia
- ODP:** People's Defense Organization (Angola)
- OLF:** Oromo Liberation Front, Ethiopian resistance movement

**PDDA:** People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, currently the ruling party in Afghanistan

**PMAC:** Provisional Military Administrative Committee, the ruling body in Ethiopia prior to the founding of the WPE

**RENAMO:** Mozambican National Resistance

**SPT:** Solidarity Production Team, a form of rural collective labor in Cambodia

**SWAPO:** South West Africa People's Organization

**TPLF:** Tigre Popular Liberation Front, Ethiopian resistance movement

**UNITA:** National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola

**WPE:** Workers Party of Ethiopia, currently the ruling party in Ethiopia

**ZANU:** Zimbabwe African National Union

**ZAPU:** Zimbabwe African People's Union

## I. INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the mid-1970s, a spate of self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regimes came to power in a number of Third World countries, including Angola, Mozambique, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan. In several of these countries, Soviet help—and at times, direct Soviet or Soviet-proxy military assistance—was instrumental in the ascendance of the radical regimes. Although the conditions conducive to a Marxist takeover were often created by fortuitous circumstance rather than Soviet design, the establishment of these regimes testified to the increased international assertiveness of the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1970s and led to a marked increase of Soviet influence in the Third World.

While there have been numerous pro-Soviet governments in the Third World, the new regimes were different in that they not only openly and vociferously subscribed to Marxist-Leninist ideology, but, under Soviet tutelage, they actually embarked on the wholesale transformation of their societies along the lines of the Soviet model of political and economic development. These efforts have resulted in failure in virtually every case, and most of the new Marxist states now find themselves in a precarious political and economic predicament.

Soon after coming to power, all of these new Marxist governments were faced with powerful anti-regime resistance movements, most of which exhibited a strong anti-Marxist coloration. For most of the past decade, these rebellions have posed a challenge to the very survival of the regimes. Indeed, in a number of cases, the continued tenure in power of the local Marxist authorities could be guaranteed only by a substantial foreign military presence along with large arms transfers.

As the 1980s draw to a close, however, the regimes' general inability to defeat the anti-Marxist resistance movements, their dire economic predicaments, and a certain retrenchment by the Soviet Union under Gorbachev from the aggressive support and cultivation of Third World clients make their long-term survival prospects less sanguine. At the time of this writing, the Soviets, having failed to defeat the Afghan mujahideen after nine brutal years, have already withdrawn from Afghanistan. A similar failure has led to imminent disengagement by the Vietnamese in Cambodia, while a negotiated withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola is being implemented, albeit under terms that are seemingly less promising for the resistance. In Ethiopia, the besieged and arguably moribund Mengistu regime has been forced to seek

negotiations with the Eritrean and Tigrean resistance movements which it can no longer contain militarily.

This is not to say that the Soviets are in a full-scale retreat in the Third World or that all of their Marxist clients are doomed. Moscow has continued to support most of them to one extent or another, and "reconciliation" solutions could certainly work to the regimes' benefit in some cases, for example, in Angola or Cambodia. Elsewhere, erratic Western support, as in Nicaragua, or hostility toward the resistance movement, as in Mozambique, seem to have given the Marxist regimes a breathing spell. Still, in no case could these regimes be considered either stable or holding great future promise. The nature and prospects of armed resistance against them will therefore continue to be relevant for the foreseeable future.

This study attempts to clarify the nature of anti-Marxist resistance movements by focusing on the determinants of armed indigenous resistance to Marxism in the Third World.

While there has been a general consensus among Western analysts about the growing challenge these movements have posed to the regimes over the past ten years, there is little agreement about their origins, nature, and prospects. Their sympathizers generally lump them together as "freedom fighters," while to the Marxist regimes and other detractors, they are "bandits" or "mercenaries" in the pay of foreign patrons. This crude dichotomy is not surprising, given the ideologically charged atmosphere surrounding the debate on this issue and the remarkable heterogeneity of the resistance movements themselves.<sup>1</sup> Some of them, such as the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and the Eritrean and Tigrean National Liberation Fronts in Ethiopia, are themselves Marxist, to one extent or another.<sup>2</sup> In Afghanistan, it is

---

<sup>1</sup>While a discussion of U.S. policies toward these movements is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that the polarization of attitudes regarding the anti-Marxist insurgencies has also been reflected in U.S. policy. For instance, even though the Reagan administration was generally on the "freedom fighters" side of the debate, its policies were ambiguous. The United States has steadfastly aided and supported only the Afghan resistance following the Soviet invasion of the country in 1979. The resistance movement in Angola did not receive American support for nearly ten years following the establishment of the Marxist regime in late 1975, after which a modest covert program of military aid, which reportedly continues, was undertaken. Aid to the Nicaraguan contras was provided at a fairly early stage of the anti-Sandinista insurrection, but it has been uneven and subject to considerable controversy in the U.S. Congress. In 1988, all military aid to the contras was suspended, leading to their near collapse as a fighting force. Support of the Cambodian resistance groups has been limited to a token \$5 million voted in by the Congress in 1985, while Washington has refrained from any involvement in Ethiopia. In Mozambique, U.S. policy currently seems to favor the Marxist regime, to which it provides economic aid.

<sup>2</sup>The Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF) is not only Marxist, but is also essentially a secessionist movement that predates the current Ethiopian regime. A detailed analysis of the EPLF's nature and objectives is presented in Paul Henze, *Rebels*

Islam, rather than a political ideology, that serves as the guiding philosophy and common denominator of the mujahideen resistance. Most of the other movements espouse democratic ideals, although in some groups, such as RENAMO in Mozambique, those ideals are inchoate, to say the least. The movements also differ organizationally, from the rigorously organized and disciplined UNITA, with its unitary political and military leadership, to the loosely structured Afghan resistance, organized around seven major national resistance parties and further subdivided into a dizzying conglomeration of regional, tribal, and independent groups.

But despite their considerable diversity, all the resistance movements have a number of important characteristics in common that warrant analytically treating them together and as an important political phenomenon. They are all indigenous, peasant-based, and opposed to Soviet-supported Marxist regimes. They are also of large scale and have demonstrated considerable staying power, most of them having been in existence for a decade or more.

This study examines a number of the factors that have contributed to the emergence and perseverance of armed resistance to the Marxist regimes in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua. While a detailed analysis of the nature of these resistance movements, their political ideologies, or specific prospects is beyond the scope of the study, the findings should be relevant to the debate over "freedom fighters" versus "mercenary bandits," and it may be of some policy salience as well.

The analytical focus of the study is the regime policies—political, military, social, and economic—that are likely to have engendered significant alienation and discontent. To the extent that the Marxist regimes' policies in these areas in all six otherwise quite disparate countries are remarkably similar, the analysis has been based on a comparative, rather than a case-study methodology.

The analysis is divided into four sections. Section II examines the factors underpinning the shift in Soviet strategy toward the Third World in the mid-1970s, which made possible the emergence of the new Marxist regimes. This section provides a background to the discussion of the nature of the regimes and Soviet involvement with them. Sections III through V deal with the factors and policies that have contributed to discontent and progressive alienation, leading to or reinvigorating armed rebellion. Section III analyzes foreign involvement in the installation and maintenance of the regimes in power and its

impact on domestic legitimacy. It also includes a discussion of problems in the mobilization of domestic support for the regimes. Section IV deals with the nature of Marxist regimes' political and social policies and their impact on society. Section V addresses the effect of the governments' efforts to introduce the Soviet economic model in their societies. Section VI summarizes some of the findings of the study and presents concluding remarks.

## II. SOVIET STRATEGY AND MARXIST GAINS IN THE THIRD WORLD IN THE 1970s

The successful establishment or consolidation of Marxist regimes in the Third World in the mid-1970s was often predicated on direct and forceful Soviet support and military assistance. Soviet willingness to provide such support and play a direct role in assisting Marxist liberation movements, in turn, stemmed from a significant shift in Soviet strategy in the Third World that took place at that time.

Soviet interest in what is now known as the Third World began to develop in the mid-1950s, following the de-Stalinization campaign and the coming to power of Nikita Khrushchev.<sup>1</sup> During most of the following decade and a half, Moscow's attitudes were governed by the so-called theory of "peaceful transition to socialism," which postulated that revolutionary elites in the newly emerging independent states in the Third World would promptly recognize the innate superiority of the socialist developmental model and would inevitably align their countries with those practicing "scientific socialism." What the Soviets needed to do, in this view, was to cultivate leading "revolutionary democrats" in the Third World and wait for events to take their expected course. Thus, throughout the 1960s, Moscow lavished attention and aid on self-proclaimed socialists such as Nasser of Egypt, Ben Bella of Algeria, Kwame Nkruma of Ghana, and Sukarno of Indonesia, hoping to eventually bring them into the fold of "real socialism."

Yet by the end of the decade it had become increasingly clear that the policy had not secured lasting gains. The "revolutionary democrats" had shown themselves to be opportunistic or had been overthrown and replaced by anti-Soviet elements.<sup>2</sup> With the sole exception of Cuba, no transition to Soviet-style socialism had been effected, and the vast amounts of military and economic aid provided by the Soviets had seemingly failed to secure significant payoffs.

---

<sup>1</sup>For a more detailed analysis of the evolution of Soviet policies in this period, see Alexander R. Alexiev, *The New Soviet Strategy in the Third World*, The RAND Corporation, N-1995-AF, June 1983.

<sup>2</sup>A series of serious setbacks for the Soviets began in 1965 with the overthrow of key Soviet clients Sukarno and Ben Bella, followed by Kwame Nkruma the following year and Modibo Keita of Mali in 1968. The failure of the Khrushchev policies was dramatically reconfirmed with the unceremonious expulsion of the Soviets from Egypt in 1972 and the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973.

These setbacks occasioned a thorough reassessment of Soviet policies in the early 1970s and eventually resulted in the formulation of a new and much more assertive strategy.

The rethinking of Soviet strategy and tactics for penetration in the Third World occurred at a time when a number of far-reaching changes in the "correlation of forces" between the Soviet Union and its main antagonist, the United States, were taking place. Taken together, these changes pointed to a major accretion of Soviet power and international status vis-à-vis Washington and a significant weakening of U.S. resolve to compete for influence worldwide.

Of particular relevance were the emergence of the Soviet Union as the strategic equal of the United States, ratified in the 1972 SALT I treaty, and its acquisition of a global power projection capability for the first time in Soviet history. At the same time, the United States, having just suffered a humiliating defeat in Vietnam and rent by internal divisions, was seen as retreating from global responsibilities and determined to avoid involvement in areas that were not considered vital, at almost any cost. The Soviets interpreted this retrenchment as a permanent trend sapping the will of America to compete, and they correctly assessed that their own interventionist policies in the coming period were not likely to be challenged directly by Washington.

*Under these new conditions of growing Soviet power and imperialist retrenchment, the Soviets rejected the possibility of "peaceful transition" to socialism and instead advocated the imperative of "direct revolutionary action" as the most promising way to socialism. "A revolutionary majority for the Third World," wrote noted Soviet theoretician Konstantin Zarodov, "does not result from the creation of representative and elected organs but is created in the course of direct revolutionary action by the masses . . . which goes beyond the bourgeois norms of peaceful conduct."<sup>3</sup>*

Having identified "direct revolutionary action," a euphemism for establishing socialist governments by force of arms, the Soviets postulated the theory that the ultimate success of such action would depend largely on direct Soviet support. Thus Soviet power would be needed to guarantee the success of revolution in the Third World. "It must be stated clearly," argued Boris Ponomaryov, Secretary of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and the man primarily responsible for Soviet Third World policy at the time, "that the national liberation movements could not emerge

---

<sup>3</sup>*Pravda*, August 8, 1975.

victorious, if the Soviet Union did not exist."<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the Soviets not only had to provide essential support to extant revolutionary movements, but they had to create the proper conditions for a socialist victory in areas where those conditions might not be present because of political immaturity or ideological backwardness. In the words of another leading Soviet expert, "History itself required that the Afro-Asian peoples be given powerful external revolutionary stimuli in order to awaken them for the political struggle for their rights, social progress and socialism."<sup>5</sup>

Along with the imperative of "direct revolutionary action," the new Soviet approach sought to devise strategies that would ensure the longevity of Soviet influence in the newly established socialist regimes. One of the important lessons Moscow learned from its failures in the 1960s was that Third World countries in which traditional societal and political authority structures prevailed sooner or later proved inhospitable to Soviet influence, even if they were led by "progressive" leaders.

The way to avoid such pitfalls, Soviet theorists now believed, was through the radical restructuring of Third World societies along the lines of the Marxist-Leninist model. The goal of establishing Soviet-type polities under close Soviet guidance, though by no means an easy task, was seen as offering two major benefits: First, it provided a ready-made model of control of the population by the Soviet-sponsored regime and thus diminished the likelihood of serious internal challenges, and second, it allowed the Soviet patron to penetrate the political system in the client regime and assure itself greater control over the country's political direction. Thus, the imperative of new Soviet clients in the Third World following the prescriptions of the Leninist model became a key objective of Soviet policy and perhaps an essential precondition for Soviet support. This political strategy was later to have a major impact on the political and economic fortunes of the client regimes.

---

<sup>4</sup>Cited in Alexiev, *The New Soviet Strategy*, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Anatoly Gromyko, *Afrika: Progres, Trudnosti, Perspektivii*, Moscow, 1981, p. 95.

### III. THE NEW REGIMES: SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND THE QUESTION OF LEGITIMACY

One of the major factors affecting the domestic legitimacy of most of the newly established Marxist regimes from the beginning was their excessive reliance on external sources to supplement their generally insufficient domestic political support. The nature of external involvement is a key variable determining popular attitudes toward the regimes and warrants a detailed examination.

#### FOREIGN PATRONAGE

A common characteristic of all six of the Marxist regimes analyzed in this study is a critical dependence on foreign assistance during either the takeover or consolidation phases of their rule. In some of the countries, the pro-Soviet elements could not have taken power without direct Soviet or Soviet-proxy military intervention.<sup>1</sup> For example, the Angolan takeover by the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) in November 1975 was accomplished with the help of tens of thousands of Cuban troops and massive Soviet arms deliveries;<sup>2</sup> and the installation of a Vietnamese-controlled pro-Soviet regime in Cambodia in January 1979 followed a massive Vietnamese invasion.

In other cases, Soviet/proxy assistance during the takeover period was less crucial, though still important, as in Nicaragua<sup>3</sup> and Afghanistan, and in some cases it was nonexistent, as in Mozambique and

---

<sup>1</sup>There has been some debate among Western analysts about whether the Cubans or the Vietnamese, for example, could justifiably be considered Soviet proxies rather than independent actors. The position taken in this study is that, given their complete military and economic dependence on the Soviet Union, neither Cuba nor Vietnam has the independent capabilities to undertake and sustain operations such as those cited above without Soviet assistance. They require Soviet approval of such actions and therefore act as proxies. This is, of course, not to say that proxy actions may not also serve their own independent interests.

<sup>2</sup>Fidel Castro stated in a speech on December 27, 1979, that in January 1976 there were 36,000 Cuban troops in Angola.

<sup>3</sup>For a discussion of Soviet/Cuban ties to the Sandinistas prior to the overthrow of Somoza, see Jiri Valenta and Virginia Valenta, "The FSLN in Power," in Jiri Valenta and Esperanza Duran (eds.), *Conflict in Nicaragua: A Multidimensional Perspective*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1987; and James LeMoynes, "The Guerrilla Network," *New*

Ethiopia. Nonetheless, Moscow's influence increased dramatically in all of the new Marxist states during their consolidation periods. Hundreds of Cuban specialists, including military and security service experts, began arriving in Nicaragua in July 1979, just a week after the overthrow of Somoza. Within six months of the Sandinistas' coming to power, the Soviet Union had established close party-to-party relations with the FSLN and was providing military assistance, while Cuban operatives were functioning in important positions in the defense and security ministries in Managua.<sup>4</sup> A similar process took place in Afghanistan, where Soviet experts and military advisers entered the country by the thousands following a successful Communist coup d'état in April 1978. By late 1978, Soviet military advisers were present in most Afghan units, at times down to the battalion level, while economic, political, and security experts assumed command positions in the PDPA (Afghan Communist party) administration. Less than a year after the PDPA came to power, the regime was widely perceived as little more than a Soviet puppet. Soviet influence in Ethiopia, which had been negligible in the early period of Derg military rule (1974-1975), began growing as the new leadership articulated its Marxist leanings, and by the end of 1976, Moscow had provided the Derg with \$385 million in arms.<sup>5</sup> The Vietnamese forces that invaded Cambodia in late 1978 were, at first, welcomed as liberators who had come to free the country from the bloody Pol Pot tyranny. Yet as it became clear that Hanoi had no intention of allowing the Cambodians to run their own affairs, but instead installed a client regime and began running the country in a neo-colonial manner, popular attitudes promptly shifted. Discontent over political oppression, forced labor, and economic misery, combined with a strong anti-Vietnamese nationalist backlash, created an explosive resentment that increasingly found expression in willingness to resist by force of arms. Indeed, as Hanoi began to pursue policies perceived as aiming at the Vietnamization of the Khmer people, anti-Vietnamese feelings became the common

---

*York Times Magazine*, April 6, 1986. The Soviet control of the Afghan Communist party before the invasion is documented in Anthony Arnold, *The Soviet Invasion in Perspective*, Stanford University, 1981.

<sup>4</sup>For details, see Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, Vintage Books, New York, June 1986; and Douglas W. Payne, *The Democratic Mask: The Consolidation of the Sandinista Revolution*, Freedom House, New York, 1985.

<sup>5</sup>Donald Peterson, "Ethiopia Abandoned? An American Perspective," *International Affairs*, No. 4, 1986, p. 637. Massive arms transfers and the introduction of large numbers of Cuban troops and Soviet military advisers over the following two years transformed Ethiopia into a Soviet client state.

denominator of resistance efforts—a fact that helps explain the continued viability of the discredited Khmer Rouge.<sup>6</sup>

Even more damaging in terms of legitimacy than foreign involvement in the takeover and consolidation stages of the new Marxist regimes has been the quasi-permanent foreign military presence seen by many as essential for the very survival of the Marxist regimes in power. Virtually all of the governments in question have required the continuous presence of large numbers of foreign troops and advisers to deal with domestic security problems. For instance, Cuban troops at various times peaked at 50,000 in Angola, 12,000 in Ethiopia, and 2,000 in Nicaragua. There were 115,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan and several thousand military advisers elsewhere. Vietnam had 150,000 and 60,000 troops in Cambodia and Laos, respectively, while more than 10,000 Zimbabwean and Tanzanian troops have been fighting on the side of the Mozambican government in its struggle against the anti-Marxist resistance movement RENAMO.

In most cases, foreign troops were deemed necessary even before the flare-up of anti-Marxist rebellions. This far-reaching dependence of the native regimes on foreign military assistance, for both acquiring and maintaining power, has served to erode their legitimacy as national governments in the eyes of many of their citizens. The national political authorities in at least some of them, e.g., Afghanistan and Cambodia, are widely regarded as little more than foreign puppets.

The significant foreign military and political presence in the new Marxist regimes has had yet another effect that worked to the benefit of the nascent resistance movements. Neighboring countries feeling threatened by a foreign military presence were more likely to be supportive of resistance movements that challenged that presence. This factor certainly figured prominently in the support provided by Thailand to the Cambodian resistance, Pakistan to the mujahideen, and South Africa to UNITA.

A closely related issue is the military and political support extended to various regional revolutionary and subversive movements by the pro-Soviet regimes. Nicaraguan arms deliveries to the Marxist insurgency in El Salvador, for instance, played a key role in the eventual U.S. decision to support the contras, as did Luanda's open assistance and provision of training facilities to the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the African National Congress (ANC) in

<sup>6</sup>For a detailed account of Vietnamese policies perceived by most Khmers as designed to result in the irreversible Vietnamization of their country, see Marie-Alexandrine Martin, "Vietnamised Cambodia: Silent Ethnocide," *Indochina Report*, No. 7, July-September 1986; and "The Military Occupation of Campuchea," *Indochina Report*, No. 3, July-September 1985.

Pretoria's pro-UNITA stance. UNITA also profited from the anti-MPLA resentment generated by the ill-fated Cuban-sponsored invasions of Shaba province in Zaire in the late 1970s. Zaire, Morocco, and some other African countries threw their support behind Savimbi after these incidents.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Mozambican support for the Rhodesian liberation movements ZANU and ZAPU in their struggle against the Ian Smith white supremacist regime reportedly led to Rhodesian support for Mozambican dissident elements and eventually resulted in the creation of RENAMO. South Africa's subsequent assistance to RENAMO was also conditioned, at least to some extent, on Maputo's support for the ANC. In Pakistan, the Kabul regime's advocacy and support for Baluch and Pashtun leftist subversives and separatists in 1978-1979 clearly facilitated Islamabad's decision to back the rebels.

There is thus ample evidence that while Soviet and Soviet-proxy patronage and military presence have been essential for the consolidation of the Marxist regimes in power, they have also undermined the domestic legitimacy of those regimes and have encouraged foreign support for anti-regime insurgents.

#### PROBLEMS WITH DOMESTIC SUPPORT

Apart from being perceived as foreign-sponsored, many of the newly established Marxist regimes have also suffered from a narrow domestic base of support and the fact that they are clearly not representative of the populations on purely ethnic and social bases. Most of the elites that came to dominate the new political structures in the subject countries came from the urban intelligentsia and the petty bourgeoisie, while the overwhelming majority of the population at large was made up of illiterate peasants. As a result, the regimes' cadres have often had only a vague comprehension of the societal norms and traditions governing the lives of the vast majority of their fellow countrymen or the problems confronting them.

In both Angola and Mozambique, a substantial portion of the post-emancipation regimes' functionaries were from the privileged *assimilados*, who ranked just below the Portuguese in the colonial pecking order and were generally despised by the rest of the population. In Afghanistan, the PDPA militants were drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of the detribalized intelligentsia and, as a group, could not have been more unrepresentative of Afghan society.

---

<sup>7</sup>For details, see Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, op. cit.

Frequently, the regimes' legitimacy as national actors also suffered because of the inability to surmount tribal or ethnic barriers that still characterized their societies. In Angola, the MPLA regime's tribal support, to the extent that it was present, was limited to the urbanized elements of the Kimbundu tribe, which made up less than 30 percent of the population. The rest of the major tribal groups—the Ovimbundu, Bakongo, Chokwe, and others—were strongly antagonistic to the MPLA. An understanding of the tribal dynamics of Angolan society alone can provide significant insights into the failure of the Luanda regime to mobilize popular support and the success of UNITA. Similarly, in Mozambique, FRELIMO drew support largely from the Makonde tribe in the northern part of the country and made few inroads among other groups. FRELIMO had no presence to speak of in the entire southern half of the country. In Ethiopia, the ruling Derg refused to address, or even understand, the legitimate grievances of Eritreans, Tigreans, Oromos, Somalis, and others and thus exacerbated their anti-regime, and in the case of the Eritreans, separatist tendencies. In Nicaragua, the gross insensitivity of the Sandinista regime toward the autonomous traditions and strivings of the Miskito, Sumo, and Rama Indians on the Atlantic coast of the country led to their brutal suppression and armed rebellion.

## IV. MARXISM IN THE THIRD WORLD AND THE POLITICS OF DISCONTENT

After establishing themselves in power with Soviet assistance, the new Marxist regimes proceeded to introduce a set of policies that collectively aimed at the radical transformation of their societies along the lines of the Soviet model of "scientific socialism." These policies, which were remarkably similar in all six countries under discussion, despite those countries' widely divergent historical and socioeconomic backgrounds, contributed decisively to popular alienation from the Marxist elites and facilitated the emergence of armed resistance. Several aspects of these "politics of discontent" are discussed below.

### THE LENINIST MODEL INSTALLED

While many of the revolutionary movements that came to power had been reluctant to acknowledge their Marxist sympathies prior to the takeover, for fear of frightening away potential supporters, such caution was no longer needed once they were in power. Most of them now openly proclaimed their intentions to establish orthodox Leninist one-party states with complete monopoly of power vested in a "vanguard" party. In Mozambique, this happened during Independence Day ceremonies in 1975, when FRELIMO leader Samora Machel informed his fellow Mozambicans that all power would thenceforth be vested in FRELIMO and the government would simply be "the executive wing of the party at the level of state."<sup>1</sup> In the same manner, in an independence ceremony speech, MPLA President Agostinho Neto asserted, "The organs of state of the People's Republic of Angola will be under the superior guidance of the MPLA and the primacy of the movement's structures over those of the state will be insured."<sup>2</sup> In Nicaragua, where a broad popular front with the participation of all political tendencies had succeeded in overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship in July 1979, the Marxist FSLN moved quickly to usurp power. Barely two months after the takeover, the Sandinistas were openly articulating

<sup>1</sup>Radio Lourenco Marques, July 1, 1975 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 128, July 2, 1975).

<sup>2</sup>Radio Lisbon, November 10, 1975 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 218, November 11, 1975). The official proclamation of the MPLA as a Leninist vanguard party took place at its first congress in December 1977. FRELIMO underwent the same metamorphosis at its third congress in February of the same year.

their objectives to "place all revolutionary forces under the authority of the FSLN . . . in order to transform it into the party of the Sandinista revolution" and "to achieve recognition of the FSLN leadership as the monolithic, strong and capable vanguard of the revolution."<sup>3</sup> Even in Ethiopia, where the military junta that overthrew the Haile Selassie regime in 1974 had not originally been overtly Marxist, a radical political shift to the left began taking place as Soviet influence grew. By late 1976, the "direction and leadership" of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) were said to have been set up "along Marxist-Leninist principles,"<sup>4</sup> while PMAC Chairman Mengistu stated a little later that "our fundamental goal is to bring all progressive forces and progressive mass organizations together with a view of founding a proletarian party."<sup>5</sup> The actual foundation of such a party was delayed because of bitter factional strife and because Mengistu and other PMAC leaders feared that the civilianization of political power might lead to a dilution of their control. The Committee for Organizing the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia (COPWE) was formed under Soviet pressure in 1979, but the proclamation of the "vanguard" Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) did not take place until September 1984.<sup>6</sup>

The trend toward one-party hegemony was observed also in Afghanistan with the ascendance to power in 1978 of the faction-riven PDPA. The PDPA, however, fell under complete Soviet control following the Soviet invasion in late 1979 and could no longer be considered even a semi-independent actor—a dubious distinction it shared with the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP) that was installed as the "vanguard" in Cambodia by the Vietnamese army in January 1979.

What soon became characteristic of all these parties was their dogmatism and their striking ideological subservience to the Soviet Union. In contrast to many other revolutionary movements in the Third World, they had little use for non-Soviet types of socialism, as the following statements by top leaders from three countries evidence: "We reject the idea that there can be an 'African socialism' or a 'Mozambican socialism'," argued Samora Machel of Mozambique, "We consciously affirm that there can be no socialism other than scientific

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Douglas Payne, *The Democratic Mask*, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>4</sup>Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service in English, December 30, 1976 (FBIS-SSA, No. 1, January 3, 1977).

<sup>5</sup>Radio East Berlin, Domestic Service, February 23, 1977 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 37, February 24, 1977).

<sup>6</sup>Characteristic of the regime's insensitivity to its people, the lavish celebrations of WPE's founding took place while the Ethiopian countryside was being ravaged by the devastating famine of 1984-1985.

socialism."<sup>7</sup> In virtually identical terms, MPLA president Agostinho Neto affirmed that for Angola there could not be "a European or an African socialism, but only scientific socialism, which has become a reality in a considerable part of the globe."<sup>8</sup> "Our objective," argued an Ethiopian functionary in a similar vein, "is socialism and our choice is irreversible. Moreover, when we speak of socialism we have in mind scientific socialism, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and the dictatorship of the proletariat."<sup>9</sup>

This subservience, coupled with noisy espousal of doctrinal precepts such as dictatorship of the proletariat, democratic centralism, the class struggle, and proletarian internationalism, which made little sense in the Third World, where there was but a tiny proletariat and little in the way of a classical exploiting class, hardly contributed to the regimes' popularity.

Once the party's hegemony of power was firmly established, the other fixtures of the Leninist model followed shortly. "Transmission belt" organizations for workers, women, youth, and children were set up, and party monopoly over the means and sources of information became a reality. An elaborate system of internal security, often supervised by Soviet or Soviet bloc advisers, and complete with neighborhood watchdog committees, was built up, and pervasive political control over the armed forces was instituted. With only minor variations, this close approximation of the Soviet political model was set up in all of the new Marxist states.

## MILITARIZATION

Another characteristic of Soviet-style socialism that promptly became a prominent feature of the new Marxist regimes was the pervasive militarization of their societies. As in all other Marxist regimes, militarization, a sine qua non of the Leninist system of government, occurred whether or not an external military threat existed.

Within a short time after coming to power, all of the new regimes embarked on building sizable regular armies and a variety of paramilitary forces designed to facilitate internal control. Compulsory conscription was introduced, armies were placed under direct party

<sup>7</sup>Cited in David E. Albright (ed.), *Communism in Africa*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1980, p. 125.

<sup>8</sup>O. V. Matishin, *Afrikanskaya revolyutsionaya demokratiya*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1981, p. 149.

<sup>9</sup>Barkhanu Baikh, "Razbiv okovii feodalizma," in Konstantin I. Zarodov (ed.), *Perspektivii i trudnosti borby v Afrike*, Mir i Sotsializm, Prague, 1977, p. 106.

control, and a large share of the national budgetary resources were placed at the disposal of the military at a very early stage.

In Angola, all citizens, male and female, were ordered to register for military service even before the MPLA takeover in November 1975. Universal conscription was formally introduced in February 1976.<sup>10</sup> In Ethiopia, a call-up of youth 18 and older was announced in March 1975, and youngsters between the ages of 14 and 18 were ordered to undergo military training. In Mozambique, two-year mandatory military service for both sexes was introduced in March 1978.<sup>11</sup> The situation was more complicated in Afghanistan and Cambodia, where the existing armed forces largely collapsed as a result of the Soviet and Vietnamese invasions, respectively. The present armies of the countries have been staffed primarily by means of forced recruitment. In Nicaragua, the FSLN proceeded to build the Sandinista People's Army (EPS) as its own power instrument almost immediately after coming to power. Its intentions to introduce obligatory military service and use "the power and weapons of the Sandinista People's Army to assure that progress is irreversible" were articulated in the "72 Hour Document" in September 1979.<sup>12</sup> Because of concern about U.S. reaction, however, the Sandinistas did not formally introduce compulsory conscription until 1983.

Simultaneously with the building up of the conventional forces, the regimes began creating sizable internal security paramilitary capabilities to complement the security service apparatus. These paramilitary forces usually took the form of armed militias. In Angola, special "vigilante brigades" were organized as part of the large-scale People's Defense Organization (ODP), which was to become the main instrument of the MPLA in its struggle against assorted internal reactionaries. The vigilantes' task was defined as rooting out dissent, crime, and "all forms of alienation."<sup>13</sup> The rapid buildup of the ODP alongside the conventional forces and the Angolan security service (DISA) was intended to "mobilize the whole population for defense" and allowed President Neto to boast confidently in 1977 that "in 2 years time we shall have a people's defense of a kind unprecedented in

---

<sup>10</sup>See Radio Luanda, Domestic Service, October 28, 1975, and February 11, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 209, October 29, 1975, and No. 30, February 12, 1976).

<sup>11</sup>Agence France Press, March 22, 1975; and N. I. Gavrilov, *Narodnaya respublika Mozambik*, Moscow, 1986, p. 73.

<sup>12</sup>See "The 72-Hour Document": *The Sandinista Blueprint for Constructing Communism in Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., February 1986.

<sup>13</sup>Radio Luanda, Domestic Service, December 24, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 250, December 28, 1976).

Africa." This process, it should be noted, took place at a time when the UNITA threat had been largely eliminated.

The FRELIMO regime in Mozambique set up similar "people's vigilante groups" designed to "engage in a struggle against reactionaries seeking to destroy worker-peasant power." More specifically, they were to combat "erroneous ideas and ideological deviations, and tribalism, regionalism and racism." By August 1978, 17,000 "patriots" were reported to have been organized in 560 vigilante groups in Maputo province alone.<sup>14</sup> In Ethiopia, a people's militia of half a million men was said to have been organized and armed "on the initiative of the oppressed masses" by mid-1976. Like the forces in the other countries, its tasks consisted primarily of internal control. Its objectives were reported as "resisting imperialism and crushing internal and external reactionaries and elements opposed to national unity."<sup>15</sup>

The struggle against counterrevolutionaries was also the main objective set for the Sandinista People's Militia (MPS) which was formed in December 1979. Even though the contras had not yet come into existence and other "counterrevolutionaries" were few and far between, the MPS, according to FSLN plans, was expected to reach a strength of 300,000 armed members—roughly 10 percent of the entire Nicaraguan population.<sup>16</sup>

The development of powerful military establishments in the new Marxist regimes was accomplished, at significant cost, with large arms transfers from the Soviet Union and under the direction of Soviet, Cuban, Vietnamese, and East European military advisers and technicians. Within a few short years of their coming to power, most of the Marxist regimes had acquired military capabilities unheard of by their predecessors and quite unprecedented in terms of relative size and degree of development. Angola, for instance, had emerged as a military superpower in sub-Saharan Africa by 1978, with over 200 tanks, 500 armored personnel carriers (APCs), and about three dozen combat aircraft.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Mozambique had been equipped by 1978 with some 150 Soviet tanks and 47 modern Soviet combat aircraft, although it is unlikely that the country had personnel with the requisite military

<sup>14</sup>See Radio Maputo, Domestic Service, August 9, 1978 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 156, August 11, 1978).

<sup>15</sup>Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service, June 20, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 120, June 21, 1976).

<sup>16</sup>Douglas Payne, *The Democratic Mask*, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>17</sup>See *The Military Balance 1978/1979*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1978, pp. 45-46.

skills to effectively deploy them.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the most dramatic case of pervasive militarization occurring under a Marxist regime was that of Ethiopia, long an independent country with well-established military traditions. Just prior to the Derg takeover, in 1974, Ethiopia, though beset with armed rebellions in Eritrea and the Ogaden, maintained an army of 45,000 men. Five years later, the armed forces of Marxist Ethiopia had expanded fivefold, to 250,000.<sup>19</sup> During the same period, military allocations as a percentage of the government budget grew almost threefold, from 13.7 percent in 1974 to 35.1 percent in 1979.<sup>20</sup> This familiar pattern was also observed in Nicaragua, where, following a visit to Moscow in March 1980, top Sandinista leaders publicly declared their goal of building a modern army of 50,000 men, nearly five times larger than the feared National Guard of Somoza.<sup>21</sup> Despite some caution to avoid the possibility of a U.S. reaction, the FSLN has clearly exceeded its goal; the Sandinista armed forces numbered close to 80,000 by 1987 and were equipped with modern Soviet tanks, APCs, and gunship helicopters.<sup>22</sup>

The wide-ranging militarization process that took place in Third World Marxist states had several important implications. In most of the countries analyzed here, it began before resistance movements had become a factor and therefore cannot be justified by the regimes' legitimate defense imperatives. The militarization was, however, carried out during a period of rapidly worsening economic conditions, which were undoubtedly exacerbated by the burden of inordinate defense outlays. According to MPLA President Neto, for example, Angola's defense expenditures between 1975 and 1982 amounted to a staggering \$10 billion.<sup>23</sup> Only the last two years of this period were marked by intensive UNITA activities.

The buildup of large-scale armies, much in excess of apparently legitimate defense needs, like the excessive foreign military presence, had the effect of threatening neighboring countries and making them sympathetic to anti-regime resistance movements. The resistance elements eventually profited also from the alienation caused by rigid conscrip-

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 47

<sup>19</sup>See Paul B. Henze, *Arming the Horn: 1960-1980*, Working Paper No. 43, Woodrow Wilson International Center, Washington, D.C., 1982, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>21</sup>Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, *Dictators and Double Standards*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982, p. 78.

<sup>22</sup>See Gordon McCormick, Edward Gonzalez, Brian Jenkins, and David Ronfeldt, *Nicaraguan Security Policy: Trends and Projections*, The RAND Corporation, R-3532-PA&E, January 1988, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup>L. L. Fituni, *Narodnaya respublika Angola*, Nauka, Moscow, 1985, p. 95.

tion laws and forced recruitment, which often resulted in unwilling draftees fleeing the country.<sup>24</sup>

### POLITICAL OPPRESSION

Armed with this elaborate apparatus capable of executing the will of the political leadership, the new regimes began carrying out policies that soon generated widespread discontent. Political oppression of real or imagined enemies became commonplace, its magnitude often reaching unprecedented levels. Hundreds of thousands of putative opponents of the regimes were herded into "reeducation" or "relocation" camps, patterned on the Soviet labor camps, which were established in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua. In Afghanistan and also in Cambodia, where most of the jails were under direct Vietnamese control, conventional prisons were used.

In Mozambique, eight-year sentences were meted out for "spreading rumors," and students were sent to reeducation camps for having long hair. In that country alone, 100,000 people were estimated to have served in the "reeducation" camps by 1978.<sup>25</sup> Several regimes "reeducated" high school and university students by sending them to work in the fields for various periods of time. In Mozambique, where FRELIMO claimed the right to decide on the future careers of high school graduates, the graduates were required to work in the countryside for two years.<sup>26</sup> The revolutionary regime in Addis Ababa went a step further and declared the children of "oppressors" to be ipso facto reactionaries themselves and threatened that "stern measures will be taken against them. . . . The class of the oppressors does not differ, whether child, adult or woman—they are all enemies of the broad masses of the people."<sup>27</sup>

In Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia, strikes were officially outlawed, and freedom of choice in employment was severely restricted.

<sup>24</sup>Obligatory conscription became a major source of discontent in Nicaragua, for example, where thousands of draftees preferred to flee the country rather than serve in the Sandinista army. Many of them were eventually recruited by the contras. See James Bock, "Military Draft Brings Resistance in Nicaragua," *Baltimore Sun*, February 18, 1985; and Robert McCartney, "Waiting in Honduras: Nicaraguans Fleeing War and Draft Form Support Base for Guerrillas," *Washington Post*, September 6, 1985.

<sup>25</sup>*Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 1979; and Agence France Press, November 2, 1974.

<sup>26</sup>Agence France Press, March 9, 1977 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 46, March 9, 1977).

<sup>27</sup>"Statement by the Provisional Military Government: The Enemies of the Movement of the Broad Masses of the People Will Be Identified," Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service, February 28, 1975 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 42, March 3, 1975).

Forced resettlement of the unemployed into the countryside was also practiced on a wide scale. This was necessary, said Ethiopian authorities, "since the unemployed can collaborate in counterrevolutionary activities." A similar justification was given for forcibly removing rural dwellers fleeing to the cities because of lack of food and sending them back to the countryside: It was declared necessary because those people had "fled from rural to urban areas, where they are hatching counterrevolutionary plots."<sup>28</sup>

In virtually all of the new revolutionary states, coerced "volunteer" labor was introduced on a large scale in the best Stalinist tradition. Mozambican employees "volunteered" to spend their vacations working in factories at FRELIMO's demand even before the formal emancipation of the country, in "order to demonstrate the worth of manual labor." Later on, citizens were asked to volunteer a day of work to clean the country and another day to help subsidize the FRELIMO congress, support the MPLA in Angola "overcome its difficulties," and contribute to assorted other causes. In one of the more exotic volunteer campaigns, President Machel ordered each Mozambican to kill thirty flies a day.<sup>29</sup>

In Angola, Luanda workers were said to have voluntarily extended their work hours to 11 p.m., and thousands were volunteering "supplementary effort" in assorted public works, to bring in the harvest and other socially beneficial activities. Those who were unenthusiastic, "passive," and "lazy" were declared "agents of the traitors of the people" and "subject to revolutionary justice."<sup>30</sup> Ethiopian government workers had their annual vacations canceled "in order to carry out properly their national obligations" and because "in accordance with the philosophy of Ethiopian socialism . . . we have no time to waste on relaxation."<sup>31</sup> The PMAC, like many of the other regimes, also introduced what amounted to confiscatory regulations. In March 1975,

---

<sup>28</sup>Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service, October 31, 1977 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 21, November 2, 1977).

<sup>29</sup>See *O Seculo*, Lisbon, May 6, 1975 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 92, May 12, 1975); Radio Maputo, Domestic Service, June 25 and October 7, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, Nos. 125 and 197, June 28 and October 8, 1976).

<sup>30</sup>See Radio Luanda, Domestic Service, September 20, 1976, and June 13, 1977 (translated in FBIS-SSA, Nos. 114 and 185, September 22, 1976, and June 14, 1977), and Radio Havana, Domestic Service, August 23, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 166, August 25, 1976).

<sup>31</sup>Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service, April 8, 1975 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 69, April 9, 1975).

Ethiopians were required to pay a "temporary surtax" equivalent to one month's gross income, as well as a drought-relief surtax.<sup>32</sup>

"Voluntary" work assumed particularly massive and brutal proportions in Cambodia. Soon after the Vietnamese invasion and the installation in power of the Heng Samrin regime, tens of thousands of students, civil servants, and employees were volunteered for two months of work in the fields, combined with political indoctrination to enlighten the peasants about the advantages of the new collective form of labor, known as Solidarity Production Teams (SPT), being introduced in the villages. Large numbers of Cambodian civilians were also recruited after 1979 on a "voluntary basis," i.e., without pay, to work under Vietnamese army supervision on military construction projects.<sup>33</sup>

Volunteer work on defense projects became a nightmare for countless Khmers, beginning in July 1984, when the Vietnamese began building the so-called "bamboo wall," a series of defensive fortifications along the Thai border designed to prevent resistance infiltration. Hundreds of thousands of Khmers were recruited and sent to the border for periods of three to six months. Work on what the Cambodians called the "KS" project was essentially slave labor, and conditions in the malaria-infested and heavily mined border regions were appalling and dangerous. A minimum of 50,000 "volunteers" were estimated to have succumbed to yellow fever alone by the end of 1986, prompting Western observers to begin referring to the campaign as the "new genocide."<sup>34</sup>

In carrying out their radical socialist schemes, the Marxist regimes used methods whose brutality easily surpassed anything experienced under the old colonial or authoritarian regimes they replaced. In Angola and Mozambique, flogging, torture, and public executions in town squares became acceptable and widely practiced methods of dispensing revolutionary justice. In Ethiopia, a particularly brutal campaign of "red terror" was initiated in late 1976. "A thousand reactionaries will die for every revolutionary murdered," warned PMAC

<sup>32</sup>Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service, March 13, 1975 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 51, March 14, 1975).

<sup>33</sup>See Marie-Alexandrine Martin, "Cambodge: une nouvelle colonie d'exploitation," *Politique Etrangère*, Summer 1985.

<sup>34</sup>Phillippe Paquet, "Un nouveau genocide," *La Libre Belgique*, May 26, 1986. For a detailed description of the "bamboo wall" campaign, including interviews with former "volunteers," see Esmeralda Lucioli, "Le Cambodge à L'Ombre des Bo Dais," Paris, June 1987; also Lucien Maillard, "Malaria Decimates Border Workers Teams," Agence France Press, August 27, 1985; Jean-Claude Pomonti, "Le Mur Vietnamien," *Le Monde*, May 5-6, 1986; and "Forced Human Bondage," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 22, 1985.

Vice Chairman Atnafu Abate in early 1977.<sup>35</sup> While it is not clear whether any "revolutionaries" were murdered, the "red terror" claimed as many as 10,000 lives, and four times that number were reported languishing in jail as late as 1981.<sup>36</sup> People were shot on the slightest suspicion of anti-government attitudes and, at times, seemingly at random. In March 1977, the PMAC reported, "Many reactionaries have been wiped out for refusing to be searched. . . . Details," the statement continued flippantly, "will be disclosed in the future."<sup>37</sup> Parents of executed students reportedly were required to pay \$150 for the bullets used to kill their children prior to being allowed to collect and bury the bodies.<sup>38</sup> Some of the political transgressions that were punishable by death during this period were listed by Mengistu himself as follows:

At this stage of the revolution, the calling of strikes, the sabotaging of machines in factories and the raising of ephemeral, self-centered questions mean passing a death sentence on one's life.<sup>39</sup>

A similar situation obtained in Afghanistan, where the PDPA conducted a reign of terror in six successive waves of purges after coming to power in April 1978.<sup>40</sup> Between that time and the Soviet invasion in December 1979, the regime's terror campaign resulted in the "disappearance" of 50,000 persons, not counting the victims of bombardments, according to the PDPA's own admission in early 1980.<sup>41</sup>

In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas employed a variety of methods to intimidate and suppress political opposition, ranging from intimidation and beatings by organized gangs of Sandinista thugs known as *turbas divinas* (divine mobs) to political murders carried out by internal security forces as part of a "special measures" campaign. Thousands of purported opponents of the regime were subjected to judicial persecution by special tribunals that were not bound by conventional legal rules and that enjoyed full discretion as to criteria on evidence and

<sup>35</sup>Cited in Tom Farer, *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa: The Widening Storm*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., 1979, p. 60.

<sup>36</sup>*Le Monde*, July 14, 1981.

<sup>37</sup>See "PMAC Statement: Reactionaries Are Being Killed in the Successful Operation," Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service, March 24, 1977 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 58, March 25, 1977).

<sup>38</sup>Radio Omdurman, Domestic Service, March 31, 1977 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 63, April 1, 1977).

<sup>39</sup>Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service, September 24, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 188, September 27, 1976).

<sup>40</sup>See, for instance, Louis Dupree, *Red Flag Over the Hindukush: Part V, Repressions, or Security Through Terror Purges*, American Universities Field Staff Reports, Asia, No. 80, 1980.

<sup>41</sup>M. Centilivres-Demont et al., *Afghanistan: La Colonisation Impossible*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1984, p. 199.

guilt. Large-scale oppressive measures were also carried out, as in the case of over 10,000 Atlantic coast Indians whose villages were burned and who were interned in special camps for suspected anti-Sandinista activities.<sup>42</sup>

### THE ASSAULT ON TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

Perhaps even more important than the direct political suppression of perceived enemies, in terms of generating widespread alienation, were the determined and often heavy-handed attempts at social engineering that were undertaken at the expense of established societal norms and behavior. Usually couched behind slogans calling for the creation of the "new socialist man" and a "humane socialist society," these campaigns sought to establish central control throughout the population and entailed nothing less than a wholesale assault on traditional society. To the extent that most of the countries discussed in this study continue to be characterized by overwhelmingly rural and often tribal population bases, the brunt of the regimes' social engineering zeal has been felt in the countryside.

The main objectives of the regimes' social policies, particularly in countries where tribal and patriarchal relations still prevailed, such as Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia, were to dismantle traditional authority structures and undermine the strong extant loyalties to clan and tribe, as well as spiritual traditions. "Our fundamental task," according to MPLA President Neto, "is that of transforming tribalized man, full of racial and class complexes, into a truly free man."<sup>43</sup> To achieve the task of penetrating rural society, according to a Soviet Third World expert, the ruling parties "took measures to neutralize the influence of the traditional authorities on the population."<sup>44</sup> Such measures included the dispatch of thousands of young functionaries and propagandists into the villages for the purpose of undermining the authority of the traditional village chieftains and the tribal nobility. In Mozambique, these "dynamizing groups" were reported to be "purging reactionary elements from the political and administrative arena" through "open ballot in mass meetings" in an atmosphere of "mass political ferment." Such enthusiastic dealings were said to have resulted,

<sup>42</sup>Political oppression by the FSLN is detailed in Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, op. cit.; *Human Rights in Nicaragua Under the Sandinistas*, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., December 1986; and Martin Kriele, *Nicaragua: A Report*, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Mainz, 1986.

<sup>43</sup>Radio Luanda, Domestic Service, May 24, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 102, May 25, 1976).

<sup>44</sup>L. L. Fituni, *Narodnaya respublika Angola*, op. cit., p. 79.

in one case, in the removal of 700 tribal chiefs and "other traditional authorities who had sought to maintain their grip over their former subjects."<sup>45</sup>

Even more radical schemes were concocted to bring about the transformation of the countryside and facilitate political control. For instance, in Mozambique, a plan to break up traditional villages and resettle the peasants—more often than not by force—in large "communal villages" was initiated in 1975 and was carried out with much brutality for a number of years.

Often the breakup of traditional society was pursued through a series of radical reforms. A case in point is Afghanistan, where the PDPA introduced a package of reforms in late 1978 that, taken together, aimed to destroy the cohesion of social and economic relations in the Afghan countryside. These included a radical land transfer reform, the abolition of traditional village credit arrangements, the setting of a minimum marriage age, the reduction of the customary bride price, and the introduction of mandatory education based on a Marxist curriculum. Some of these reforms, if moderated and introduced over a long period of time, could have played a positive role. Unfortunately, the regime was more interested in dividing and remolding rural society than in improving the lot of the peasants. Indeed, the reforms were intended, in the words of the Afghan minister of agriculture, as "tactical decrees designed to bring the class struggle into the villages" where "there has been no tradition of popular struggles or of independent peasant movements."<sup>46</sup>

Taken together, the reforms were seen by the overwhelming majority of the Afghans, including those who stood to profit by them, as tantamount to a regime declaration of war on society and were rejected violently. Armed resistance to the regime began spontaneously and almost immediately.

The assault on traditional society and tribalism accomplished little but generated a tremendous reservoir of anti-regime hostility wherever it was carried out. Such hostility was easily transformed into support for the Marxist regimes' adversaries. Commenting on the MPLA political strategy in the villages, a Soviet observer noted that "because of their low social consciousness, the peasants do not understand the

<sup>45</sup>See Daniel Fogel, *Africa in Struggle: National Liberation and Proletarian Revolution*. Ism Press, San Francisco, 1982, p. 251.

<sup>46</sup>Centilivres-Demont et al., *Colonisation Impossible*, op. cit., p. 195. Details on the Afghan reforms are provided in Olivier Roy, *L'Afghanistan: Islam et Modernité Politique*, Seuil, Paris, 1985, pp. 113-129; and Louis Dupree, *Red Flag Over the Hindukush: Part III, Rhetoric and Reforms, or Promises! Promises!* American Universities Field Staff Reports, Asia, No. 23, 1980.

objectives of the party at times. Moreover, many traditional chieftains maintain ties with the reactionaries from FNLA and UNITA.<sup>47</sup> In Mozambique, as early as a year after FRELIMO's takeover, the leadership of two of the country's largest tribes that had previously supported the regime, the Makonde and the Makua, began calling on their people to rise up against the regime and destroy it.

### RELIGION UNDER ATTACK

The new Marxist regimes' unrelenting hostility to religion was yet another policy that undermined popular support. In countries where religion was deeply rooted in the population, such as Afghanistan and Nicaragua, the atheistic attitudes of the regimes were a major factor in the crystallization of active opposition.

Although most of the new Marxist regimes provided repeated verbal guarantees of freedom of religion during their struggles to come to power, it became evident as soon as they had taken over the reins of government that none of them were prepared to tolerate organized religion as a legitimate institution. In this, the new Third World regimes were no different from established Marxist governments, which have always seen religion as an ideological opponent and a competing authority structure whose influence had to be severely circumscribed.

Within months of coming to power, authorities in the new regimes began openly expressing their opposition to religion in all of its forms and intimating that the churches might be guilty of counterrevolutionary sympathies. In Angola, only a few months after independence, President Neto accused some of the leaders of Christian and non-Christian religions of being "at the service of imperialists who are against the MPLA." To him, a given religion's legitimacy was determined by its support of or opposition to the MPLA. Religions that were seen as not supportive of the MPLA, he warned, "must disappear from here."<sup>48</sup>

A campaign was launched against the Catholic church in particular, in which the church was accused of counterrevolutionary activities, and its activities were gradually restricted. The campaign was accompanied by a program of atheistic propaganda and oppressive measures against believers that had taken the form of open persecution by early 1978. A pastoral letter signed by all the Angolan bishops in January 1978 protested the systematic violations of religious freedom, discrimination

<sup>47</sup>L. L. Fituni, *Narodnaya respublika Angola*, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>48</sup>Radio Luanda, Domestic Service, May 18, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 99, May 20, 1976).

against believers, and state-sponsored "sacrilegious profanization of churches."<sup>49</sup> The MPLA, however, continued its campaign against religion, and in March 1978 the politburo decreed a ban on "churches and religious organizations promoting disobedience and disregard for laws," outlawed church lay organizations, prohibited the construction of new religious facilities, and clamped tight censorship on religious publications. Within a little over two years of the MPLA takeover, organized religion in Angola had been severely emasculated.

A similar process took place in Mozambique. After initial assurances that freedom of religion would be respected, the FRELIMO leadership embarked on a campaign of intimidation and repression of religious organizations and their adherents. As in Angola, the Catholic church, being the largest, was singled out for abuse. It was openly accused by President Samora Machel at his swearing-in ceremony of "very serious complicity in the brutal rule of colonialism" and of having "contributed greatly to the cultural and human alienation of the Mozambican, in order to turn him into a subjected instrument and object of exploitation and to break any manifestation of resistance."<sup>50</sup> Somewhat later, Machel warned: "The primary role played by the Catholic church in the oppression of the Mozambican people may hinder the opening of a new chapter in relations between Mozambique and the Vatican and make dialog difficult."<sup>51</sup>

Open persecution promptly followed. The teaching of religion was banned, church publications were abolished, and thousands of church officials and believers were sent to "reeducation" camps. Though the Catholic church remained the primary target of the regime, other religions were not exempted from persecution. The practice of Islam was also severely curtailed, and Muslim lay organizations were abolished in 1976.<sup>52</sup>

A more sophisticated, though no less determined, approach to neutralizing religion as an alternative authority structure to the regime was taken by the FSLN in Nicaragua, a country with a devoutly religious population. Aware of the tremendous popularity of the Catholic church and its leader Archbishop Obando y Bravo, who had impeccable anti-Somozista credentials, the Sandinistas attempted to weaken the church and divide its adherents by organizing a "popular" church as a counterweight to the official hierarchy. This "popular" church was

<sup>49</sup>Radio Vatican in English, January 21, 1978 (FBIS-SSA, No. 16, January 24, 1978).

<sup>50</sup>Radio Lisbon, Domestic Service, June 25, 1975 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 124, June 26, 1975).

<sup>51</sup>*L'Unita*, Rome, July 2, 1975.

<sup>52</sup>Radio Maputo, Domestic Service, March 26, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 62, March 30, 1976).

staffed by radical priests, a majority of them foreigners, who subscribed to "liberation theology" and were much more interested in promoting the Sandinistas' Marxist agenda than in tending to the spiritual needs of the Nicaraguan people.<sup>53</sup> Yet despite strenuous regime efforts, the "popular" church failed to have much impact, and the loyalty of the vast majority of Nicaraguan Catholics remained with the traditional institution. The Sandinista harassment of the church increased and included censorship of church broadcasts and publications, expulsions of priests, and various provocations organized by the *turbas divinas*. Still, the Nicaraguan church refused to be intimidated, continuing to maintain its independence and speak out against regime transgressions.<sup>54</sup> It thus remains a powerful obstacle to the regime's plans to install a thoroughly Marxist system in Nicaragua. Nonetheless, the Sandinistas' efforts to suppress religion have contributed considerably to the growing alienation of the Nicaraguan people.

It is in Afghanistan, however, that the relationship between the regime efforts to suppress religion and armed resistance is perhaps most clearly established. As part of its campaign to radically restructure traditional Afghan society, the PDPA targeted Islam early on. Less than three weeks after the takeover, it dropped the traditional Islamic invocation preceding government decrees, an act seen as a provocation by devout Muslims. A much greater and perhaps irreparable provocation was the regime's decision in June 1978 to replace Afghanistan's traditional Islamic green flag with a Soviet-like solid red flag.

By the fall of 1978, the regime had embarked on a murderous assault on Islam and its servants, whom it correctly saw as its main opponents in the countryside. A significant percentage of the 50,000 or so victims of the PDPA reign of terror in the year preceding the Soviet invasion were members of religious institutions.

---

<sup>53</sup>The regime's policy with respect to the church was articulated in the following passage in a programmatic document:

With the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church, we should strengthen relations on a diplomatic level, maintain generally a careful policy which seeks to neutralize as much as possible conservative positions and to strengthen our ties with priests sympathetic to the revolution, while at the same time, we are stimulating the revolutionary sectors of the church.

See "*The 72-Hour Document*": *The Sandinista Blueprint for Constructing Communism in Nicaragua*, op. cit.

<sup>54</sup>For instance, the church took strong exception to regime efforts to use the educational system for Marxist indoctrination, criticized government mistreatment of the Miskito Indians, and has consistently refused to denounce the anti-Sandinista insurgents as counterrevolutionaries.

In the cities, the regime had targeted for execution members of the high clergy and Muslim scholars and students, while in the villages, the victims included local religious dignitaries and members of the Sufi orders. Thousands were summarily executed. In January 1979, some 200 members of the Mojaddidi clan, spiritual leaders of the Naqshbandiya Sufi order, were arrested in Kabul, and all male members were shot. In June, several hundred Muslim fundamentalists who had been arrested earlier were executed in one night. The Shi'ite clergy also became a special target, and countless officials throughout the Shi'a stronghold of Hazarajat fell victims to the regime's fury.

It was undoubtedly in reaction to the anti-Islamic frenzy of the Communist regime that prominent Afghan Muslim leaders began calling for a Jihad (holy war) against the Kabul rulers in early 1979. Several months later, the insurrection, which had started spontaneously in different parts of the country, had already assumed the uncompromising character of a religious war against an infidel government.

The "politics of discontent" practiced by the Marxist regimes aggrieved, to one degree or another, sizable numbers of people from virtually every stratum of society and created a vast reservoir of alienation. Together with the disastrous economic conditions (discussed below) created by the regimes, they also precipitated, as most Marxist regimes inevitably do, large waves of refugees that became sympathetic recruitment pools for the nascent resistance movements. Within a few years of the coming to power of the Marxist regimes, when armed resistance was just beginning in most places, the combined refugee population from the six countries was more than 2 million. It stands presently at well over 7 million, comprising more than 90 percent of the world's refugee population, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup>This figure includes some 5 million Afghans in Pakistan and Iran, 1 million Ethiopians in Somalia and Sudan, 260,000 Cambodians in Thailand, 300,000 Nicaraguans in Honduras, Costa Rica, and the United States, and several hundred thousand Mozambicans and Angolans in Malawi, Zaire, Namibia, and South Africa.

## V. THE ECONOMICS OF HUNGER

All of the new Marxist regimes are presently characterized not only by their rigid adherence to Leninist dogma, but also by a state of dramatic economic failure. Although the countries of the new regimes were underdeveloped, and some were in fact among the poorest countries in the world prior to the establishment of Marxist rule, a decade or more later their economic fortunes have progressively deteriorated until they have reached near-catastrophic conditions. In several countries, starvation conditions have become a seemingly permanent feature of the economic landscape, and large-scale famine is warded off only by massive shipments of food from international humanitarian organizations.

The regimes themselves have sought to attribute their economic decline to external factors, such as the economic impact of insurgencies, hostile economic policies on the part of the West, the exodus of European settlers, and/or droughts and unfavorable climatic conditions. These factors have undoubtedly contributed to the economic malaise to one degree or another. Yet a careful examination of all contributing factors leaves little doubt that the primary cause of the precipitous economic decline of the new Marxist states is the regimes' own economic policies—policies that were driven by a dogmatic zeal to impose the orthodox Soviet economic model, with little consideration of existing economic conditions or likely economic and social consequences. In most cases, these policies proved to be disastrous failures long before anti-Marxist insurgencies began having a serious disruptive impact. In fact, the failure of doctrinaire Marxist economics contributed as much as anything else to the popular alienation that galvanized armed resistance. Ironically, the self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regimes ignored the advice of Lenin himself, who, faced with a similar situation in trying to consolidate the revolution in Russia in the early 1920s, recognized the dangers of radical economic change and warned:

What is to be done, then? [We could] try to completely prohibit, block up any development of private, non-public exchange, i.e., trade, capitalism, . . . which is inevitable when millions of small producers exist. Such a policy would be stupid and suicidal for the party that were to try it. Stupid, because this policy is economically impossible; suicidal, because parties trying that kind of policy fail unavoidably.

Or (the last possible and the only sensible policy) we abandon forbidding or arresting the development of capitalism but instead try to

direct it into the channel of state capitalism. This is economically feasible, for state capitalism is present, in one form or another, wherever there are elements of free trade, and capitalism in general.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin, of course, had no innate sympathy for capitalism whatsoever, but he realized that the precipitous imposition of socialist economics would bring ruin to the teetering Soviet economy of the time. So instead, he chose the partial and temporary restoration of capitalism and in 1922 introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), which brought a degree of economic recovery to the Soviet people within five short years. It was not until 1928, when Stalin embarked on his brutal campaign of collectivization, now admitted to have been a disastrous failure even by Soviet economists, that the Soviet people paid the full price for the policies that Lenin warned against.<sup>2</sup> The new Third World Marxist leaders opted, with full Soviet support and blessing, for the Stalinist solution and were soon rewarded with similar results.

### IMPOSING THE MARXIST ECONOMIC MODEL

The economic philosophy of the nascent Marxist regimes essentially boiled down to an uncritical and wholesale adoption of the Soviet model of economic development. Their economic policies thus focused largely on the implementation of this model. These policies, however, as in the Soviet Union in Stalin's time, did not address economic desiderata alone, or even primarily, but were designed to facilitate the imposition of political control over the peasantry—the traditional *bête noir* of Marxist ideologues.

There were, of course, numerous differences among the individual countries in the pace and degree of implementation of Marxist economics, which depended on the extent of the regimes' consolidation of power and other factors. The process advanced most rapidly in countries such as Angola, Mozambique, and, to a lesser degree, Ethiopia,

<sup>1</sup>Vladimir I. Lenin, "On the Tax in Kind," *Complete Works*, Politizdat, Moscow, Vol. 43, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup>That Stalin's collectivization and *dekulakization* policies were directly responsible for the catastrophic famine in 1932-1933 that claimed some 10 million human lives has been well established by Western scholars—most notably by Robert Conquest in his seminal *The Harvest of Sorrow*, Oxford University Press, 1986. Lately, under Gorbachev's *glasnost* policy, Soviet officials and experts have also started implicitly admitting the disaster that collectivization brought about. In one example, an article in the party theoretical organ *Komunist* presented data showing that in 1932, five years after the beginning of forced collectivization, the production of meat, milk, and eggs had fallen by between one-third and one-half, as had yields for all major crops, and implied that this decline was not unrelated to the famine. See Otto Latsis, "Problema tempov v sotsialisticheskom stroitelstve," *Komunist*, No. 18, 1987, p. 7.

where little opposition faced the regime immediately after the takeover. In Nicaragua, the FSLN faced considerable opposition in the economic and political realms, and the process of economic restructuring was correspondingly slower. In Afghanistan, the eruption of mass resistance soon after the Communist takeover interrupted the imposition of the socialist economic order, since the government lost control of much of the country's territory at an early date. In Cambodia, much of the socialist economic transformation had already occurred under the Pol Pot regime and had only to be reaffirmed under the new Vietnamese-controlled regime. Nonetheless, all of these regimes subscribed zealously to the Soviet economic model and pursued it with all the resources at their disposal. Ironically, the new Third World regimes embarked on their experiment in orthodox Marxist economics at a time when the failure of that philosophy was becoming increasingly evident throughout the socialist community, and efforts to modify it were being made from Eastern Europe to China.

The economic policies of the Angolan regime provide a perfect example of the practice and failure of doctrinaire Marxist economics in the Third World. Angola is a huge country (twice the size of Texas), amply endowed with good land and natural resources and having a very small population (about 7 million). During the years of Portuguese rule, despite colonial exploitation, Angola was able to not only feed its population but also export sizable quantities of foodstuffs, oil, and diamonds. In the decade preceding the Communist takeover, Angola had achieved remarkable developmental progress. Between 1966 and 1973, its yearly GDP (gross domestic product) growth had averaged an enviable 9.8 percent; for the years 1970-1975, the same indicator had risen to 10.4 percent, almost twice as high as the 5.5 percent average growth of the developing countries as a whole.<sup>3</sup> The country's prospects appeared bright indeed. According to a Soviet source that could hardly be accused of pro-colonialist bias, "It was thought that thanks to the accelerated development of capitalist relations in the country, the obsolete economic structures were dying out and Angola could reach the economic level of a medium developed capitalist state in a relatively short period."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, a Western study completed in 1969 concluded, "In a decade or two, Angola could overtake Portugal in the basic indicators of economic development."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>L. L. Fituni, *Narodnaya respublika Angola*, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>4</sup>L. L. Fituni, *Razvitie ekonomiki nezavisimoy Angoli*, Nauka, Moscow, 1981, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Hudson Institute, *Angola: Some Views of Development Prospects*, Vols. 1-2, New York, 1969.

This positive economic picture, however, did little to discourage the MPLA from pursuing its plans for a radical transformation of the Angolan economy along Marxist lines once it came to power in November 1975. In fact, the MPLA's economic objectives became clear even before it took over the reins in Angola. MPLA leaders had publicly expressed their commitment to "restructuring of the means of production" as a matter of philosophical principle in the early 1970s. By the spring of 1975, as they achieved a dominant position in Luanda, more specific plans with respect to the future socialization of the economy were being discussed by MPLA president Neto and others.<sup>6</sup> The first nationalizations and collectivizations in MPLA-controlled territory took place in the summer of 1975, and private bank activities in Luanda were suspended by an MPLA minister in the transition government at about the same time.<sup>7</sup> It was such measures, it should be noted, coupled with increasingly strident rhetoric about expropriations and retribution against "colonial exploiters," along with the influx of thousands of Cuban and other "internationalists," that seriously undermined the confidence of Portuguese settlers about their future in Angola and precipitated their exodus. This exodus, which deprived independent Angola of sorely needed skilled labor and managerial talent, was thus, at least in part, the result of the MPLA's economic philosophy and policies. The causes of the settlers' exodus were similar in Mozambique, where, in the words of a top FRELIMO functionary, "After the nationalization of education, health, rental property and other government measures, the engineering and technical cadres (the vast majority of them being white) began leaving the country."<sup>8</sup>

The full-scale implementation of the Marxist economic model began in earnest after the final defeat of the regime's opponents in early 1975.<sup>9</sup> In February, a law was enacted decreeing the nationalization of all land. A month later, another nationalization law gave the government the right to expropriate any company, domestic or foreign, if its activities did not "correspond to the interests of the reconstruction of

<sup>6</sup>In April 1975, Neto stated that a future MPLA government would take over control of large enterprises and the banking and insurance industries (Agence France Press, April 20, 1975).

<sup>7</sup>Michael Wolfers and Jane Bergerol, *Angola in the Front Line*, Zed Publishers, London, 1983, p. 132; and Radio Lisbon, Domestic Service, August 15, 1975.

<sup>8</sup>K. I. Zarodov, *Perspektivii i trudnosti borby v Afrike*, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>9</sup>Following a number of encounters in early 1976, the combined Cuban/MPLA forces had inflicted crushing blows on UNITA, which had disintegrated as a military force by March. Savimbi and only a handful of close associates had retreated to the remote southeastern corner of the country to plan a guerrilla war. UNITA was not to emerge as a significant, albeit regional, threat to the regime until 1980.

the national economy." The process of nationalization of industry and collectivization of agriculture was pushed at a torrid pace, with little consideration given to economic rationality. A year later, the 2,000 largest Angolan enterprises were state-owned, and state and collective farms had been set up on land previously owned by Portuguese interests. At an October 1976 plenum of the Central Committee of the MPLA, the regime boasted that the "basis of socialist society had been constructed" and "socialist production relationships" had been established. "For the People's Republic of Angola there is only one developmental road," assured the plenum's guidelines, "the road of construction of socialist society on the basis of the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin."<sup>10</sup>

Yet even by that time, the Angolan economy had begun to show signs of inexorable decline. Shortly after the plenum, Angolan industry was reported working at 30 to 50 percent of capacity and declining further.<sup>11</sup> Many peasants who had been forced to sell their products directly to the state at state-determined prices reverted to subsistence agriculture, and production declined precipitously. Food shortages plagued the cities, bringing about rampant inflation and a serious deterioration of the standard of living. Strikes and unrest began to appear in town and countryside alike.

As discontent spread, the regime tried to stem the economic decline by instituting oppressive measures. These measures included the forcible repatriation of peasants from the cities to the countryside and an economic sabotage law that decreed jail sentences of up to eight years for crimes such as striking and "passive resistance to work."<sup>12</sup>

The economic deterioration continued, however, and by the time of the first congress of the MPLA in December 1977, agricultural output had declined nearly fivefold from its pre-independence level, while construction, mining, and private trading were reported to be "practically at a standstill."<sup>13</sup>

Despite these serious problems, the MPLA continued to push its dogmatic Marxist prescriptions. Its draft program, approved at the congress, mandated further acceleration of the "socialization of agriculture," "expansion of the socialist sector of the economy," and "increas-

<sup>10</sup>Cited in L. L. Fituni, *Narodnaya respublika Angola*, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>11</sup>Radio Luanda, Domestic Service, November 22, 1976 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 227, November 23, 1976).

<sup>12</sup>Agence France Press, July 3, 1976.

<sup>13</sup>See L. L. Fituni, *Narodnaya respublika Angola*, op. cit., p. 94; and Radio Luanda, Domestic Service, December 4, 1977.

ing the state's influence on the management, planning and control of the national economy."<sup>14</sup>

Predictably, the Angolan economy declined further, despite a spectacular \$2 billion per year improvement in the country's foreign revenues in the early 1980s—the result of growing oil exports managed by U.S. companies. By 1984, Angola had to import almost all of its food, hunger was widespread, and near-famine conditions obtained in large parts of the country. The magnitude of the economic disaster was acknowledged even by the regime, which admitted that “the level of agricultural production has not in the least satisfied the minimal needs of the population in food and raw materials for industry,” and “an extremely serious situation obtains in the sphere of population supply with basic necessities, medications and health care.”<sup>15</sup>

Government policies and economic results were quite similar in Mozambique. Though perhaps not quite as richly endowed as Angola, Mozambique also has ample natural resources and great economic potential. With less than 30 percent of its suitable land cultivated, it was able to export sizable quantities of cashew nuts (its main export), cotton, sugar, tea, and copra. Even under the conditions of colonial exploitation and unequal distribution of income in favor of the Portuguese settlers, the country experienced rapid growth. Its per-capita GNP, for instance, grew from \$216 in 1970 to \$389 in 1974, an average rate of growth of close to 15 percent per year. Industrial production during the same period increased by 11 percent per year on the average.<sup>16</sup>

The economic intentions of the new regime were clearly articulated as early as Independence Day (June 25), 1975, when the country's first constitution was inaugurated. It proclaimed the state sector as the “dominant and leading” sector of the economy and stressed the need for collectivization in agriculture and a planned economy. The nationalization of all land was decreed less than two months later, and an ambitious program for the collectivization of the countryside by setting up a system of state farms, production “cooperatives,” and village “communes” was announced at the same time.<sup>17</sup> The FRELIMO program of collectivization involved massive, and usually coercive, resettlement of large numbers of peasants, most of whom had traditionally

<sup>14</sup>See “Draft Program of the MPLA,” *Jornal de Angola*, November 27, 1977 (translated in JPRS-SSA, No. 1858, January 4, 1978).

<sup>15</sup>“Communique of the Central Committee of the MPLA,” ANGOP, Luanda, June 23, 1984.

<sup>16</sup>N. I. Gavrilov (ed.), *Narodnaya respublika Mozambik*, op. cit., pp. 81, 113.

<sup>17</sup>Agence France Press, August 22, 1975.

lived in small, scattered communities. As in Angola, economic rationale seems to have played, at best, a subordinate role in FRELIMO's collectivization schemes. "The collectivized villages," asserts a regime document, "represent our variant of socialization in the rural regions." They are particularly important, argued a Soviet observer approvingly, because they "make possible political-educational work among the peasantry and the education of the new Mozambican man."<sup>18</sup>

Collectivization was pushed vigorously, and by 1983, some 1.8 million Mozambican peasants had been herded into 57 large state farms, 350 production cooperatives, and 1,350 communal villages.<sup>19</sup>

Nor was the rest of the economy spared the regime's reformist zeal. In February 1976, decrees were passed mandating the nationalization of industry, housing, private health care, and education. Banking followed somewhat later. By 1977, a central planning apparatus had been set up, and the economy was proclaimed socialized.

As in Angola, these policies promptly led to economic decline and deteriorating living conditions. The collectivization scheme proved to be a disastrous failure almost immediately, and food production dropped precipitously. Even observers highly sympathetic to FRELIMO's program began admitting its disastrous consequences. A Soviet publication which had earlier praised Mozambique's "great successes in the radical restructuring of the colonial economy" noted somberly:

Because of a number of subjective and objective reasons, the created state farms proved unprofitable. For the same reasons and also because of insufficient financial support the cooperative sector turned out unproductive and many cooperatives ceased to exist. As far as the communal villages were concerned, they have not yet reached the stage where there are production surpluses for sale and because of that they are often not in a position to satisfy their own needs for food.<sup>20</sup>

In a little more than a year after Mozambique achieved independence, the production of its main agricultural commodities had declined by one-third or more. This was true not only of the main export items, such as cashews, cotton, and sugar, which were traditionally produced on large, Portuguese-owned plantations, but even more so in the case of staple foods such as maize, rice, and beans produced by Mozambican

---

<sup>18</sup>Cited in N. I. Gavrilov, *Narodnaya respublika Mozambik*, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 106.

peasants. By 1983, Mozambique produced only about 10 percent of the maize and wheat and 20 percent of the rice harvested in 1973.<sup>21</sup>

Ineluctable economic difficulties and "serious shortages of basic foodstuffs" were openly admitted by FRELIMO by mid-1977. By the beginning of 1978, the "shortages" had led to a national crisis of hunger, which was said to be of "enormous proportions" in some districts.<sup>22</sup> President Machel himself began to speak of the presence of "hunger, nakedness and misery," but his proposed solutions for these ills included nothing more imaginative than continued collectivization and party reorganization.<sup>23</sup> His other solutions included greater use of "volunteer" labor and "rigorous legislation for the repression of economic crimes such as crimes of economic sabotage, crimes connected with bad management of the people's property and crimes of negligence, abuse and laziness."<sup>24</sup>

A similar process took place in Ethiopia, although over a longer period of time, and eventually resulted in an equally dismal economic predicament.<sup>25</sup> Six months after coming to power, the ruling Derg veered sharply to the left and proclaimed its intention to establish socialist forms of economic management. A programmatic document issued in December 1974 heralded Ethiopia's socialist orientation under the slogan "Ethiopia Tikdem" (Ethiopia First) and postulated that "resources that are either crucial for economic development or are of such character that they provide an indispensable service to the community will have to be brought under government control or ownership."<sup>26</sup>

Soon thereafter, in January 1975, the nationalization of major businesses, banks, and insurance companies was carried out; a sweeping land nationalization law two months later set the stage for the socialization and radical restructuring of Ethiopian agriculture.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Table 4, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup>Radio Maputo, Domestic Service (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 18, January 26, 1978).

<sup>23</sup>Radio Maputo, Domestic Service, November 11, 1978 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 220, November 14, 1978).

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>This discussion of Ethiopian economic and political policies relies heavily on the extensive writings of my friend and RAND colleague Paul Henze, and on numerous conversations with him.

<sup>26</sup>Cited in Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service, February 7, 1975 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 29, February 11, 1975).

<sup>27</sup>For the text of the law, see "Nationalization of Rural Land Proclamation," Radio Addis Ababa, Domestic Service, March 4, 1975 (translated in FBIS-SSA, No. 45, March 6, 1975).

The first step toward collectivization was taken with the mounting of a massive campaign to press the villagers into peasant associations. Some 60,000 students, teachers, and military were mobilized and sent to the countryside to proselytize the peasants on the virtues of the new order. By January 1976, there were over 20,000 peasant associations, with some 5 million members. As in the other Marxist regimes, more advanced forms of socialist agriculture, such as state farms, were also implemented, as were compulsory deliveries to the state and rigid price controls. The regime's objectives, of course, went beyond mere agrarian concerns and aimed to ultimately secure the political penetration and control of the conservative Ethiopian peasantry. The radical campaign in the countryside, according to a Soviet expert, envisioned the establishment of "obligatory ties between the villages and the state apparatus" and was bound to facilitate the beginning of a "cultural revolution in the village."<sup>28</sup>

Nonetheless, the establishment of the Soviet economic model in the countryside proceeded at a slower pace in Ethiopia than in Angola and Mozambique, probably because the Derg had not yet been able to fully consolidate its power. The inability of the Ethiopian junta to quickly collectivize agriculture may also explain why agricultural production in Ethiopia did not immediately decline as precipitously as it did in some of the other countries.

But decline it did. According to a 1985 study of the Ethiopian economy conducted by a group of Soviet economic advisers, the agricultural sector of the GDP, which had experienced an average growth of 2.5 percent in the period 1970-1975, declined by 9.8 percent in 1976 and 11.5 percent in 1977. As the Derg intensified its efforts to press the peasantry into the collective mold, the situation continued to deteriorate; by 1983, per-capita grain production had decreased by almost 20 percent and exports had fallen by two-thirds.<sup>29</sup> A large-scale famine followed in 1984-1985, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives before being alleviated through the provision of \$2 billion of Western emergency aid. Even though a major drought was a significant contributing factor to the calamity that befell Ethiopia, there is little doubt that the radical policies pursued by the Marxist regime before and during the famine were the major cause of the catastrophe.<sup>29</sup> Neighboring Kenya, for instance, which experienced an even more

<sup>28</sup>G. Galperin, "Efiopia: revolutsiya prodalzaetsya," *Azia i Afrika Sevodnya*, No. 7, 1975, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup>For an excellent analysis of the regime policies that contributed to the famine, see Paul B. Henze, "Behind the Famine: Anatomy of a Revolution," *Encounter*, June, July-August, and September-October 1986; and Dawit Wolde Giorgis, "Power and Famine in Ethiopia," *Wall Street Journal*, January 12, 1987.

disastrous drought in the same period, was able to prevent a famine because of its more efficient private agriculture and a series of effective preventive measures.<sup>30</sup>

The tragic famine did not in the least cool the revolutionary fervor of the Derg. On the contrary, the regime used the circumstances of the famine to further promote socialist agriculture. Since 1984, this objective has been pursued through the twin policies of resettlement and "villagization." Resettlement began originally as an effort to move famine-stricken populations from the environmentally degraded northern highlands to underpopulated areas in the southwestern regions of the country. While there is a sound rationale and historical precedent for such a policy, if it is well thought out and conducted on a voluntary basis, the resettlements initiated by the Derg in 1984 with direct Soviet assistance were neither. More than 600,000 people had been moved by 1986, many of them against their will, and settled in poorly prepared sites that often lacked rudimentary facilities. Moreover, it appears that the new settlements are regarded by the regime as an intermediary step to full collectivization. Thus, most forms of private commercial activities, trading, and practicing of crafts are prohibited, as is the building of churches and mosques.<sup>31</sup> The settlements are directly managed by party functionaries whose objectives are likely to go beyond simply assuring the economic welfare of the settlers. In the apt words of a Western observer who visited several settlements:

I found it difficult to escape the feeling . . . that the hard-core WPE ideologues' goal for these resettlement areas would be to operate them as vast state farms with brigades of smiling workers singing revolutionary songs and chanting socialist slogans while joyfully implementing the Central Planners' directives, leading communal lives uncontaminated by either religion or private commercial activity, and spending their evenings and weekends at party meetings condemning laggards and foreign imperialists, and endorsing resolutions calling for higher quotas in the next year's plan.<sup>32</sup>

An even more direct route to collectivization is the villagization campaign carried out in some of the most productive regions of the country, such as Hararghe province, which were largely unaffected by the famine. The ostensible objective of this campaign, which so far has affected 3 million people, is to settle peasants in larger villages in order

<sup>30</sup>For an account of the Kenyan experience, see Paul B. Henze, "The Example of Kenya," *Encounter*, July-August 1986.

<sup>31</sup>An eyewitness account of conditions in the settlements is provided in Paul B. Henze, *Ethiopia: Contrasts and Contradictions*, The RAND Corporation, P-7389, October 1987.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9.

to improve the quality of life of the rural population. The new villages, often constructed in shoddy, army camp style, are supposed to afford the peasants better health care, education, agricultural advice, and consumer goods. In fact, except for a few showcases, such amenities are generally lacking, and given the economic predicament of the regime, they are not likely to be available in the foreseeable future. Thus, Ethiopia's current rulers seem to be interested in the villagization scheme mainly because it facilitates their direct control over the peasant population and agrarian production as well as the eventual transition to a fully socialized countryside.

Just as with the resettlement campaign, villagization is often coercive and entails considerable hardships. Villagers are allowed to keep and cultivate their land, although most of them are now much farther away from it, but no private commercial or trading activities of any sort are allowed in the villages. In most cases, virtually all the possessions of the peasants, including animals, are registered and nationalized, and "voluntary" work without compensation is widely practiced.<sup>33</sup> Religious facilities and practices are not allowed.

As a result of these regime policies, Ethiopia's agriculture, although most of it is still in private hands, has been seriously undermined and is progressively unable to feed the country's rapidly growing population. At the time of this writing, yet another famine is looming on the horizon.

The economic policies of the Marxist regimes in Afghanistan and Cambodia played a relatively smaller role in fomenting discontent, because of the specific circumstances in these countries. Nonetheless, both regimes faithfully followed the prescriptions of the Soviet economic model.

In Afghanistan, the PDPA had little time to accomplish much along these lines, since only six months after coming to power it was faced with a growing rebellion, and soon thereafter it lost control of much of the countryside. Still, it attempted to push a radical land reform designed to "liquidate parasitic land ownership" and took decisive steps toward collectivization.<sup>34</sup>

The Vietnamese-dominated government installed in Cambodia in early 1979 also had little use for non-Marxist economic policies. The social and economic shambles left behind by the murderous Pol Pot regime was further aggravated by the consequences of the Vietnamese invasion. The invasion, which disrupted the rice-sowing season and

<sup>33</sup>See "Ethiopia: Villagization," *Africa Confidential*, June 4, 1986.

<sup>34</sup>According to a Soviet source, by the spring of 1979, 800 cooperative farms had been created and some 40,000 hectares had been set aside for state farms. See A. D. Davidov, "Borba za agrarnuyu reformu v Afganistane," *Narodi Azii i Afriki*, No. 5, 1979, p. 12.

was conducted in a scorched-earth manner, triggered a famine that, by some estimates, may have claimed as many as 350,000 civilian lives.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the ruinous legacy of the Pol Pot regime, which had instituted complete state control in industry and forced collectivization in agriculture, the new regime did not deviate from the orthodox Marxist prescriptions; it was not deterred even by its awareness that Pol Pot's "voluntaristic economic experiments" had "deeply discredited the very idea of collective labor."<sup>36</sup>

Almost immediately following the demise of Pol Pot, the Cambodian peasants throughout the country spontaneously destroyed the village communes into which they had been forced and reverted to their traditional methods of private agriculture. Their newly gained freedom was short-lived, however. Within two months after the invasion, the new authorities introduced a new collective labor form called the Solidarity Production Team (SPT), envisaged as both units of production and administrative control, and began methodically recollectivizing the countryside. In the somewhat cynical words of a Soviet expert, "Already in February/March 1979, thousands of families began voluntarily joining the first SPTs because . . . they had realized that only on the basis of collective labor would it be possible to rebuild what had been destroyed by Pol Pot."<sup>37</sup>

The new collectivization scheme was based on three different kinds of SPTs. In the most liberal kind, called Type 3, the state distributed parcels of land for cultivation to each team (usually made up of 10 to 15 families) and to each family within the team. The means of production were held in common, but the individual family kept the harvest it produced. The family, however, was required to sell a considerable portion of its production to the state at artificially low prices—up to four times lower than the market price—and to further provide a "patriotic contribution" for the military and a "voluntary contribution" for defense of the border of five to ten kilos of rice per month, depend-

<sup>35</sup>See Stephen J. Morris, "Vietnam's Vietnam," *The Atlantic*, January 1985. Morris and others have argued convincingly that this famine could have been prevented if the Vietnamese had granted permission to international relief organizations to supply food directly to the starving populations. Instead, fearing that the retreating Khmer Rouge might also benefit from such aid, they denied that there was a problem. Vietnam's Soviet patrons performed an even more astonishing feat of political disingenuity at the time by denying that there had been an invasion. According to one Soviet expert, for instance, Pol Pot's "band of usurpers" was "swept away by the wave of people's revolution." See E. V. Vasilkov, "Kampuchiya, krakh maoistkogo eksperimenta," *Problemy Dalnego Vostoka*, No. 2, 1979, p. 48.

<sup>36</sup>D. V. Mosyakov, "Puti resheniya prodovolstvenoi problemy v Kampuchiya," *Problemy Dalnego Vostoka*, No. 3, 1986, p. 60.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 61.

ing on the region.<sup>38</sup> Those who could not meet their delivery quotas to the state were denied shopping privileges at convenience stores run by the government in the villages.

Despite such severe limitations, the Type 3 SPTs were regarded with suspicion by the government as capitalistic and were gradually transformed into "higher" forms of collectivized labor. Whereas in 1979 they represented 70 percent of all SPTs, by 1986 only 10 percent of the rural "teams" were in the Type 3 category.<sup>39</sup> It is quite likely that they will disappear altogether in the not too distant future.

In the Type 2 SPTs, which are more progressive and currently comprise about 60 percent of the total, both labor and means of production are collective, but the peasants are allowed to cultivate small plots of land for their own needs in their free time. As in the Type 3 SPTs, they are required to sell roughly one-third of their share of the harvest to the state and to provide various "patriotic contributions."

The ideal model of collectivization, which the regime strives to impose throughout the country, is Type 1. Under this scheme, in which the collectives closely resemble the communes of Pol Pot times, all labor is collective and all production is delivered to the state, which then distributes rice and basic commodities to the team members, depending on labor days worked and the member's age (i.e., whether he or she is an adult, an adolescent, or a child). Although, these SPTs, which currently comprise 30 percent of the total (there are about 15,000 of them), are clearly the least productive, the government is determined to eventually convert all the other types to this model.<sup>40</sup>

The reasons for this collectivist zeal, as in the other countries discussed, have less to do with economics than with regime imperatives to solidify political control over a recalcitrant populace. Discussing the virtues of the SPTs, and particularly Type 1, a Soviet expert spelled out their importance as follows:

The SPTs are being gradually transformed into a political organization of the Cambodian peasantry, called on to translate into life the decisions of the KPRP and the government of the People's Republic of Cambodia, to mobilize the peasants in the struggle against the Pol Pot elements and other counterrevolutionary forces, for the

<sup>38</sup>For an insightful and detailed analysis of the agricultural policies of the Samrin regime by a Western relief worker with years of experience inside the country, see Esmeralda Lucioli, "Le Cambodge," *op. cit.* A useful, if biased, analysis by a Western Marxist is provided in Irwin Silber, *Kampuchea: The Revolution Rescued*, Line of March Publications, Oakland, California, 1986.

<sup>39</sup>Esmeralda Lucioli, "Le Cambodge," *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup>For a discussion of the regime's long-term plans along these lines, see D. V. Mosyakov, "Puti resheniya," *op. cit.*, p. 64.

strengthening of the security of the country and the support of the genuinely revolutionary forces in the countryside.

The KPRP's concerted efforts notwithstanding, there is as yet little evidence that the collectivization campaign has solved the regime's economic or political problems. Though agricultural production has risen significantly since the devastation wrought by Pol Pot, Cambodia, formerly a rice-exporting nation, is still far from being able to feed itself. Even in the best year to date (1982-1983), the rice harvest of 1.3 million tons is reported to have been about 20 percent below the population's food requirements. Refugees who continue to stream into Thailand testify that malnutrition and hunger are present throughout the country and may have become more severe since 1984.<sup>41</sup> The Phnom Penh government's urgent appeals to international relief organizations for food aid over the years, most recently in 1986, seem to confirm the worsening of the situation.

Nor does the regime appear to be particularly successful in assuring the political loyalty of the rural population and their acceptance of collective agriculture. The Soviet scholar quoted above, writing in 1986, implicitly admitted peasant resistance to regime policies by asserting, "Some peasants have not yet completely understood the fundamental difference between the SPTs and the 'communes' of Democratic Cam-puchea. They do not yet understand that the main goal of the SPTs is raising the standard of living of the people."<sup>42</sup>

The Marxist economic mentality also found quick expression in Nicaragua upon the ascent of the Sandinistas to power in July 1979. The negative impact of Marxist economic philosophies and collectivist agrarian policies was likewise promptly felt and, coupled with oppressive political policies, began influencing the loyalties of large numbers of Nicaraguans within a relatively short period of time.

Like several of the other countries discussed in this study, Nicaragua has excellent economic potential. A relatively large (the size of Wisconsin) Central American country with a very small population (about 3 million), it has large tracts of uncultivated fertile land, a temperate climate, and abundant water resources. Much of this potential was not utilized in the years prior to the Sandinista revolution, under the politically oppressive and corrupt Somoza dictatorship, and a majority of the Nicaraguan peasants continued to live at or near subsistence levels.<sup>43</sup> The grinding poverty in the countryside and the

<sup>41</sup>Esmeralda Lucioli, "Le Cambodge," op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>42</sup>D. V. Mosyakov, "Puti resheniya," op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>43</sup>For a detailed analysis, see Philip Warnken, *The Agricultural Development of Nicaragua*, University of Missouri Press, 1975.

arbitrary and repressive policies of Somoza in the cities combined in the 1970s to create explosive discontent that eventually led to Somoza's overthrow. Nonetheless, Nicaraguan agriculture, the country's economic mainstay, had managed a respectable growth rate of 6.7 percent in the 1960s and early 1970s, and a viable export sector had been developed in cotton, coffee, beef, and sugar, which offered brighter long-term economic prospects.<sup>44</sup>

The FSLN, which had quickly established its domination over the non-Marxist elements in the anti-Somoza coalition that toppled the dictator, revealed its economic intentions within weeks of coming to power. They pointed unmistakably in the direction of state control and collectivism, although no precipitous rush to nationalization and collectivization followed. Instead, the Sandinistas pursued policies that gradually emasculated the private sector and severely undermined private agriculture. As everywhere else in the Marxist Third World, economic policy pursued not only economic, but political and ideological ends as well. As the Sandinista economic plan for 1980 explained: "We are setting on a road to build not only a New Economy, but also a New Man."<sup>45</sup>

In the industrial realm, government control was facilitated through the introduction of a spate of laws giving the state the power to control directly foreign trade, the exchange markets, and financial and credit institutions and to impose wage and price controls. The state-owned sector of the economy gradually expanded to about 50 percent of the total, although the power of the regime over the businesses that remained nominally in private hands was such that its overall control of the economy was no longer in doubt. By 1984, Sandinista ideologue Bayardo Arce could justifiably boast that "any investment project in our country belongs to the state. The bourgeoisie no longer invests—it subsists."<sup>46</sup>

Sandinista policies in agriculture, the backbone of Nicaragua's economy, were more assertive and ultimately much more damaging to the economic prospects of the country, as well as more relevant to the fortunes of the contra resistance that became a significant factor beginning in late 1982.

Soon after coming to power, the Sandinistas confiscated all landed estates owned by Somoza and his associates, which amounted to almost a quarter of the arable land. In addition, the regime began to con-

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>45</sup>Cited in Forrest D. Colburn, *Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua: State, Class, and the Dilemmas of Agrarian Policy*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1986, p. 123.

<sup>46</sup>Cited in *Human Rights in Nicaragua*, op. cit., p. 49.

fiscate large land holdings that did not belong to Somozistas, usually under the justification that they were not run profitably, and those of absentee owners. All told, the confiscated land made the government the owner of about a third of the available land.<sup>47</sup> Most of this land, however, was not distributed to landless peasants, as FSLN propaganda had repeatedly promised prior to Somoza's overthrow, but was used to form large state farms.<sup>48</sup> Alongside the state farms, numerous collective farms known as Sandinista agrarian communes (CAS) were also set up. A year after the overthrow of Somoza, their number had grown to more than 2,500.<sup>49</sup>

Simultaneously with the confiscations and the setting up of state and collective farms, the regime enunciated a number of regulations that effectively gave it pervasive power over all aspects of the rural economy. Among them were the establishment of state-run export monopolies for all important export commodities, a government monopoly on the purchase and sale of grain, and agricultural rent control. Private agriculture was essentially put at the mercy of functionaries who were staunchly opposed to it on ideological grounds.

Regime policies boiled down to preferential treatment for the state and collective sector and an uneasy relationship with the private sector that was tolerated because of the dire need for export revenues and food production. The rhetoric of the regime, however, made it abundantly clear that private agriculture was a transitory phenomenon in revolutionary Nicaragua, and was doomed in the long term. Needless to say, faced with such uncertain prospects, constantly threatened with expropriation, and harangued in countless other ways, private agriculture—and especially its most productive export sectors—began declining, as the state and collective sector turned in its typical uninspired performance.

By 1982, the year before the resistance picked up steam, all of the main agricultural exports had declined in comparison with 1978. In the case of the most important one, cotton, and also beef, exports had decreased by more than 50 percent.<sup>50</sup> A similar, though less dramatic, decline of about 20 percent was registered in the same period in the

<sup>47</sup>Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>48</sup>Distribution of non-Somozista land did take place mostly to agricultural cooperatives, but some land was also granted to individual peasants. Interestingly enough, the latter distributions accelerated in the northern parts of the country in 1983 and 1984 as the *contra* threat increased. This was an indirect, but telling, Sandinista admission that its collectivist agrarian policies were driving the peasants into the resistance camp. See Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, op. cit., p. 290.

<sup>49</sup>*Gosudarstvenii sektor v ekonomike stran Latinskoj Ameriki*, Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1983, p. 145.

<sup>50</sup>See Forrest Colburn, *Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua*, op. cit., Table 16, p. 125.

production of staple grains such as maize and beans.<sup>51</sup> There is reason to believe that even these figures officially reported by Managua may have in fact been overstated. A government economist in Managua had reportedly stated that actual maize production in 1982 was only 40 percent of pre-revolutionary levels.<sup>52</sup> More important, the general economic decline, coupled with rampant inflation under conditions of government-controlled wages, caused significant deterioration of the standard of living of Nicaraguans, both urban and rural. For instance, by 1982, rural wage earners had already lost 46.9 percent of their purchasing power in comparison with 1978.<sup>53</sup> Since then, the situation has become even worse. The evidence would seem to indicate that the Sandinistas, like their Marxist brethren elsewhere in the Third World, had quickly managed to wreak economic havoc and bring their people to the brink of hunger. In this case, it had taken less than three years. The fact that an effective armed resistance emerged at about the same time may not be merely coincidental.

### THE EFFECTS OF THE NEW POLICIES

This analysis of the economic policies of the new Marxist regimes, particularly in the agrarian realm, leaves little doubt that those policies precipitated a dramatic decline in the economic well-being of the people and served as a catalyst for widespread discontent and opposition. Added to the effects of political and religious oppression, such discontent easily transformed itself into armed resistance.

Once resistance movements became active on a large scale, of course, the effects of civil war also had a strongly negative impact on the economy. In virtually all cases, however, resistance efforts did not become a serious factor until after the economy went into a tailspin.

The cause-and-effect interaction of radical Marxist policies and armed resistance can be established beyond reasonable doubt. It is perhaps summed up best, if unwittingly, in the following remarks by a Soviet admirer of the radical regimes:

It would be naive to think that carrying out the revolutionary reforms in practice, and especially the agrarian reforms, is a peaceful and painless process. The experience of a number of developing countries shows that, the more radical the direction of the revolution, the more active the reaction of internal and external reactionary

---

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., Table 14, p. 99.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., Table 15, p. 114.

forces, which resort to provocations, terror, inflamed religious and tribal passions, and armed struggle and sabotage.<sup>54</sup>

There is little question that in all of these countries, the economic policies of the Marxist regimes not only precipitated economic decline, but also generated widespread discontent and opposition. Glimpses of the popular resistance were occasionally provided even in the controlled media. For example, serious discontent and opposition to the party collectivization campaign was openly admitted by MPLA President Agostinho Neto at the first MPLA congress. There were also widespread reports of refusal by Mozambican peasants to join the new "communes" and slaughter of their own livestock (as also happened in the Soviet Union during forced collectivization). In Ethiopia, numerous peasant revolts against the confiscation of their land were denounced in the regime media. Party speeches and media reports abounded with references to malcontents, saboteurs, counterrevolutionaries, and paid agents of imperialism. Though much of this rhetoric could be dismissed as propaganda, the economic misery and alienation of a substantial part of the population certainly created a ready reservoir of support for those willing to mount an armed challenge to the Marxist regimes.

---

<sup>54</sup>G. Galperin, "Efiopia: revolutsiya prodalzhatsya," op. cit., p. 13.

## VI. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In the mid to late 1970s, a series of new regimes espousing Marxism as their guiding ideology were established in the Third World, many of them with direct Soviet or Soviet-proxy assistance. Within a relatively short time after coming to power, however, most of these regimes were challenged by armed resistance movements. Today, nearly a decade later, vigorous resistance movements are still in existence in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua, and these movements seem to pose an increasingly serious threat to their regimes. In at least some cases, such as Afghanistan, the resistance movements seem to have a good chance of succeeding.

Although we have lumped them together as "anti-Marxist" for the purposes of this study, these resistance movements are in fact quite diverse. Some of them have Marxist antecedents themselves. They are also quite heterogeneous in their ideological motivation, organizational makeup, military capabilities, and ultimate political objectives.

Despite these differences, they have enough key characteristics in common to justify treating them analytically as a single phenomenon. First, they all fight against Marxist regimes closely affiliated with the Soviet Union. In addition, they are all indigenous in nature, peasant-based, and large-scale. Although most of them enjoy considerable foreign support, and many have sanctuaries as well, that support did not materialize in most cases until the resistance had become firmly established and had acquired a critical mass. Foreign assistance with weapons and supplies is of vital importance for the military performance and prospects of the resistance movements, but there is little evidence of significant foreign involvement in their internal political and organizational affairs or in combat. Nor can foreign assistance explain their ability to attract large numbers of followers and recruits inside their countries. They are thus unquestionably indigenous movements, and the reasons for their success in mobilizing popular support and their continued viability lie in indigenous conditions.

This study has attempted to examine the most important of these factors. The following four appear to be the key determinants of alienation from the Marxist regime, leading to support for anti-Marxist resistance:

- Foreign involvement.
- The alien nature of Marxist systems.
- Oppression and social engineering.
- Economic mismanagement.

**Foreign involvement.** Direct military involvement by the Soviet Union or its allies has been a key factor in the installation or maintenance in power of most of the new Marxist regimes. In some cases, such as Afghanistan and Cambodia, the massive foreign military intervention was sufficient in itself to galvanize opposition and armed resistance. In other cases, popular alienation stemmed from a pervasive perception that the local regimes were controlled by foreign interests and unable to survive on their own. The sizable foreign military presence, as well as the pervasive societal militarization, characteristic of many of the new states has also prompted neighboring countries threatened by that presence to become supportive of the anti-Marxist resistance movements.

**The alien nature of Marxist systems.** The wholesale imposition of the Leninist political model by all of the regimes examined here has become a major source of discontent. Essentially, a nineteenth century European political philosophy, Marxism, with its emphasis on class struggle, proletariat, and political indoctrination, has proved, at best, incomprehensible and irrelevant to the existential concerns of the overwhelmingly peasant Third World societies that became its targets.

**Oppression and social engineering.** The large-scale and often arbitrary oppression of perceived enemies undertaken by the new regimes has alienated a large number of politically conscious elements. The regimes' determined assault on the values and social norms of traditional society and religion has been perhaps the main reason for the alienation of the rural masses.

**Economic mismanagement.** Another key factor that has generated massive popular disaffection across the board has been the singularly inept economic policies of the Marxist regimes. Their often brutal efforts to effect a socialist transformation of rural society through land expropriation, collectivization, and pervasive state control have brought about economic chaos and have earned the regimes the enmity of a substantial part of their rural populations. The imposition of the Soviet economic model has also resulted in serious dislocation and discontent in the cities, where much of the original support for the regimes resided. The disastrous economic predicaments in which all of the new Marxist regimes currently find themselves continue to generate opposition to the regimes and sympathy for the resistance.

The analysis of the above factors suggests strongly that the nature and policies of the Third World Marxist regimes are themselves the main cause of the alienation and discontent among large strata of their populations that were eventually channeled into armed resistance. As long as the regimes and their policies remain unchanged, large-scale discontent is likely to persist, and so are the anti-Marxist resistance movements. Although some form of national reconciliation is perhaps possible in the future, should the regimes and their patrons significantly modify their policies, the gulf between the regimes and their opponents is presently so great that the prospects for continued violence appear more realistic in the near term.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albright, David E. (ed.), *Communism in Africa*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1980.
- Alexiev, Alexander R., "The Soviet Stake in Angola: Origins, Evolution, Prospects," in Dennis Bark (ed.), *The Red Orchestra: Africa*, Hoover Institution Press, 1988.
- , *The New Soviet Strategy in the Third World*, The RAND Corporation, N-1995-AF, June 1983.
- Arnold, Anthony, *The Soviet Invasion in Perspective*, Stanford University, 1981.
- Baikh, Barkhanu, "Razbiv okovii feodalizma," in Konstantin I. Zorodov (ed.), *Perspektivii i trudnosti borby v Afrike*, Mir i Sotsializm, Prague, 1977.
- Bock, James, "Military Draft Brings Resistance in Nicaragua," *Baltimore Sun*, February 18, 1985.
- Centilivres-Demont, M., et al., *Afghanistan: La Colonisation Impossible*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1984.
- Christian, Shirley, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, Vintage Books, New York, 1986.
- Colburn, Forrest D., *Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua: State, Class, and the Dilemmas of Argarian Policy*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1986.
- "Communique of the Central Committee of the MPLA," ANGOP, Luanda, June 23, 1984.
- Conquest, Robert, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Davidov, A. D., "Borba za agrarnuyu reformu v Afganistane," *Narodi Azii i Afriki*, No. 5, 1979.
- "Draft Program of the MPLA," *Jornal de Angola*, November 1977.
- Dupree, Louis, *Red Flag Over the Hindukush: Part III, Rhetoric and Reforms, or Promises! Promises!* American Universities Field Staff Reports, Asia, No. 23, 1980.
- , *Red Flag Over the Hindukush: Part V, Repressions, or Security Through Terror Purges*, American Universities Field Staff Reports, Asia, No. 80, 1980.
- "Ethiopia: Villagization," *Africa Confidential*, June 4, 1986.
- Farer, Tom, *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa: The Widening Storm*, Carnegie Endowment, Washington, D.C., 1979.

- Fituni, L. L., *Narodnaya respublika Angola*, Nauka, Moscow, 1985
- , *Razvitie ekonomiki nazavisimoy Angoli*, Nauka, Moscow, 1981.
- Fogel, Daniel, *Africa in Struggle: National Liberation and Proletarian Revolution*, Ism Press, San Francisco, 1982.
- "Forced Human Bondage," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 22, 1985.
- Galperin, G., "Efioopia: revolutsiya prodalzaetsya," *Azia i Afrika Sevodnya*, No. 7, 1985.
- Gavrilov, N. I. (ed.), *Narodnaya respublika Mozambik*, Moscow, 1986.
- Giorgis, Dawit Wolde, "Power and Famine in Ethiopia," *Wall Street Journal*, January 12, 1987.
- Gosudarstvenii sektor v ekonomike stran Latinskoi Ameriki*, Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1983.
- Gromyko, Anatoly, *Afrika: Progres, Trudnosti, Perspektivii*, Moscow, 1981.
- Henze, Paul B., "Behind the Famine: Anatomy of a Revolution," *Encounter*, June, July-August, and September-October 1986.
- , "The Example of Kenya," *Encounter*, July-August 1986.
- , *Ethiopia: Contrasts and Contradictions*, The RAND Corporation, P-7389, October 1987.
- , *Arming the Horn: 1960-1980*, Working Paper 43, Woodrow Wilson International Center, Washington, D.C., 1982.
- , *Rebels and Separatists in Ethiopia: Regional Resistance to a Marxist Regime*, The RAND Corporation, R-3347-USDP, December 1985.
- Hudson Institute, *Angola: Some Views of Development Prospects*, Vols. 1-2, New York, 1969.
- Human Rights in Nicaragua Under the Sandinistas*, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., December 1986.
- Kirkpatrick, Jeane J., *Dictators and Double Standards*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982.
- Kriele, Martin, *Nicaragua: A Report*, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Mainz, 1986.
- Latsis, Otto, "Problema tempov v sotsialisticheskom stroitelstve," *Komunist*, No. 18, 1987.
- Le Moyne, James, "The Guerrilla Network," *New York Times Magazine*, April 6, 1986.
- Lenin, Vladimir I., "On the Tax in Kind," *Complete Works*, Politizdat, Moscow, Volb 43.
- Lucioli, Esmeralda, "Le Cambodge a L'Ombre des Bo Dais," Paris, June 1987.
- Maillard, Lucien, *Malaria Decimates Border Workers Teams*, Agence France Press, August 27, 1985.

- Martin, Marie-Alexandrine, "Vietnamised Cambodia: Silent Ethnocide," *Indochina Report*, No. 7, July-September 1986.
- , "The Military Occupation of Campuchea," *Indochina Report*, No. 3, July-September 1985.
- , "Cambodge: une nouvelle colonie d'exploitation," *Politique Etrangère*, Summer 1985.
- Matishin, O. V., *Afrikanskaya revolyutsionaya demokratsiya*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1981.
- McCartney, Robert, "Waiting in Honduras: Nicaraguans Fleeing War and Draft Form Support Base for Guerillas," *Washington Post*, September 6, 1985.
- McCormick, Gordon, et al., *Nicaraguan Security Policy: Trends and Projections*, The RAND Corporation, R-3532-PA&E, January 1988.
- The Military Balance 1978/1979*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1978.
- Morris, Stephen J., "Vietnam's Vietnam," *The Atlantic*, January 1985.
- Mosyakov, D. V., "Puti resheniya prodovolstvenoi problemy v Kampuchiiya," *Problemy Dalnego Vostoka*, No. 3, 1986.
- Paquet, Phillippe, "Un nouveau genocide," *La Libre Belgique*, May 26, 1986.
- Payne, Douglas W., *The Democratic Mask: The Consolidation of the Sandinista Revolution*, Freedom House, New York 1985.
- Peterson, Donald, "Ethiopia Abandoned? An American Perspective," *International Affairs*, No. 4, 1986.
- Pomonti, Jean-Claude, "Le Mur Vietnamien," *Le Monde*, May 5-6, 1986.
- Roy, Olivier, *L'Afghanistan: Islam et Modernité Politique*, Seuil, Paris, 1985.
- "The 72-Hour Document": *The Sandinista Blueprint for Constructing Communism in Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., February 1986.
- Silber, Irwin, *Kampuchea: The Revolution Rescued*, Line of March Publications, Oakland, California, 1986.
- Valenta, Jiri, and Esperanza Duran (eds.), *Conflict in Nicaragua: A Multidimensional Perspective*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1987.
- Vasilkov, E. V., "Kampuchiiya, krakh maoistkogo eksperimenta," *Problemy Dalnego Vostoka*, No. 2, 1979.
- Warnken, Philip, *The Agricultural Development of Nicaragua*, University of Missouri Press, 1975.
- Wolfers, Michael, and Jane Bergerol, *Angola in the Frontline*, Zed Publishers, London, 1983.