

PS

April 1, 1986

Dear Saikou

It was most exciting for me to get your two letters -- both of them came the same day -- which kept memories flowing back to 1962, when I was in the Gambia and, of course, Dixon Colley was my host. (I am enclosing two of the reports on the Gambian youth, one of which was written by Nyasawoo, who was a Gambian in the U.S. on a scholarship and with whom I was very friendly. Is he still around? He was using a pseudonym, of course, but Dixon would know his real name. We would appreciate it greatly if you, too, will send us reports. Indeed, part of your letters to me will appear in the next issue of NA, but will not carry your name. Do you want to check a pen-name?)

As you say, although nominal political independence was won by Gambia from British imperialism, it is still a neo-colonialist regime, especially after the capitulation to Senegal. The point is that both world nuclear powers, the U.S. and Russia, are never for genuine, national revolutions except if their national interests are not directly involved. Thus, Russia sounds very revolutionary when it comes to Africa and Latin America, and even there they make double-deals, always sticking with the state power that won. Thus, ~~Russia~~ Russia and Cuba -- were all for Eritrea for many years, but the minute Ethiopia aligned with Russia, Eritrea was forgotten. Or take Afghanistan. They had their own revolution, real, genuine national independence, and so you would have thought that a revolutionary world be with Russia against U.S. But does Russia pay attention to the fact that Afghanistan wants independence from everybody? The most shocking event of all in this period was when the world masses were for Vietnam against the U.S. and for Russia and China. But when the big powers decided on a deal, Russia and China kept convincing Vietnam to capitulate, and now Russia and China are on opposite sides. I can't go into greater detail -- we have written a great deal on it and will send you some material under separate cover, especially because, so far as I am concerned, the Hitler-Stalin Pact, which gave the green light to World War II, was proof enough that Russia had been transformed from a workers' state to a state-capitalist society in the Stalin period.

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The point at issue is not the past, but the present. The fact that the year, 1962, when I was in Africa and we all fought so hard for independence, is the year of your birth (isn't it?), shows that you are not part of that awful world but are one with the new stage of African Revolutions. But I, being very much older, have experienced the Black dimension as crucial and as the one that ends as "accept" American civilization from the moment I arrived in the U.S. as a child. That means as a very young youth I was part of the birth of the American Negro Labor Congress and wrote for the Negro Guardian, the very first National Negro organization and paper in the U.S. It is not that past that needs to be remembered, but the fact that when World War II came the Communists suddenly decided that the Negro in America had to put self-determination aside and support the "Allies" against fascism in World War II. It was then that I broke not only with Stalinism, but Trotskyism, and not only abandoned the theory of state-capitalism but finally returned to Marx's Marxism, which, at first, he called "a new Humanism." This is where Frantz Fanon and we, from different parts of the world, said that there must be an independent path to freedom which both Black and white revolutionaries must call "a new Humanism."

Frantz Fanon is so great, not only because he was a tremendous revolutionary, gave up his French citizenship for the Algerian revolution to become an African, ~~but was a great philosopher of freedom~~ and though he was with the revolution at all times, did not contradict as though they were opposite, critique of the revolutionary leadership and self-critique. Here is what I mean. Note in the new edition of Frantz Fanon, Soweto and African Black Thought (as well as in the original edition) that we show that Frantz Fanon is the greatest of philosophers, Black or white, and that whether the Black dimension is in Africa or the Caribben or in apartheid South Africa, it must confront the relationship of leadership to masses. What made Steve Biko so great was, again, not just courage and martyrdom, but the fact that he projected unity of the revolutionary struggle as global concept, seeing an affinity between Soweto, the Caribben and American Black thought, and refusing absolutely to choose between either Russia or the U.S.

In a word, revolution itself cannot be fully successful without Marx's philosophy of revolution.

We are happy to include a copy of the Constitution of Mass and Letters Committee, and we will send you under separate cover both a Francis Bacon pamphlet and my pamphlet on Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Stalinism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions.

I am sure you will not mind that I would like to send a copy of this letter to my dear friend, Diana, who was the one who brought my work to your attention.

Yours for freedom,

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