

African politics: forgotten wars and the election in Zimbabwe

by Paul Creelman

Steve Griffiths, reporter for a left wing newspaper, lectured Monday night on the political situation in Africa.

Reporting for the Forge, official paper of the Worker's Communist Party, Griffiths has travelled in Africa for four weeks in Zimbabwe and Eritrea, talking to guerilla fighters, political leaders, and ordinary people.

Griffiths criticized the coverage of the Zimbabwean election by the commercial press:

"Most of the journalists there spent most of their time in the hotel bar, and only bothered to come to the daily press conferences held by the British."

Since the information given out at these conferences was obtained directly from the head of the Zimbabwean police, there were a lot of unconfirmed reports in the press coverage, stated Griffiths.

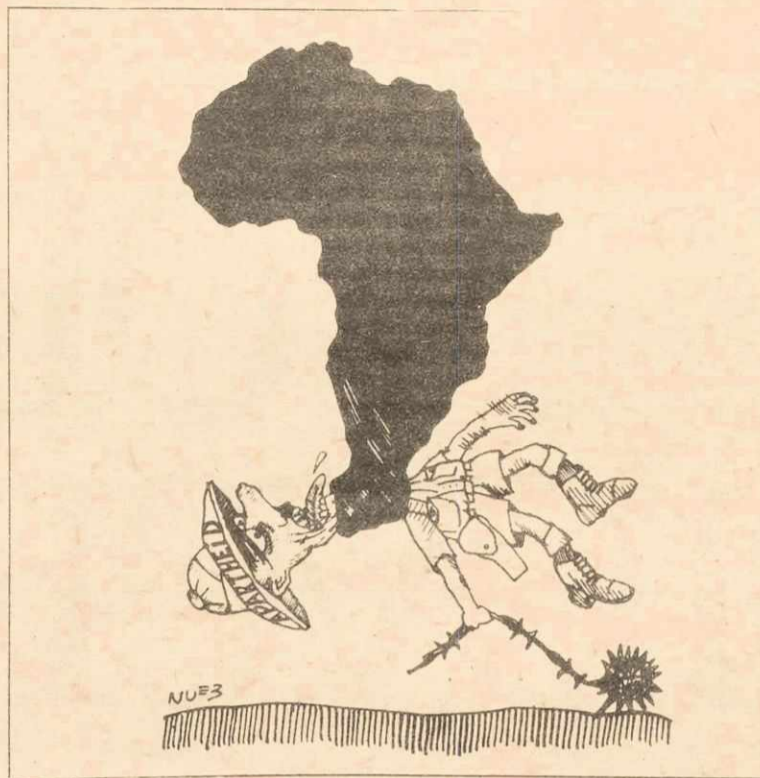
"If the police said that Mugabe's ZANU fighters had exploded a bomb and killed some civilians, well then it

was duly reported next day by all the press members present."

"I talked with a white farmer's wife during the campaign, and asked her to explain how Mugabe got 250,000 people to attend his rally if all the things said about him were true. She said that every single one of those people were forced there at the point of a gun! They really believed that he ate babies, or whatever."

"In the end, though, the white people in Zimbabwe were the victims of their own propaganda. The morning after the election, I approached four white soldiers on the street to ask them what they thought about the election. They just turned away from me, they wouldn't talk. Things hadn't gone their way."

Since his election in March of this year, Robert Mugabe's government has introduced a number of left-wing reforms, including land re-distribution. Recently, Mugabe again threatened to expropriate land under-utilized by white farmers without compensa-



tion.

Griffiths also spent much of his time in Africa among the

Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) in Eritrea.

The EPLF is fighting for the

independence of Eritrea, which was annexed by Ethiopia in 1962.

Griffiths commented bitterly on the Soviet support for the Ethiopian aggression, and on use of UNICEF supplied foodstuffs for the use of the Ethiopian Army.

"The Soviets don't even want to admit that they're involved in this war, but evidence isn't hard to find," stated Griffiths as he showed slides of Soviet T-55 tanks and Soviet-made bombs left over in the battle zones.

Griffiths also showed slides of remains of a Soviet army camp before the withdrawal of General Petrov's forces.

Commenting on Eritrea's strategic position on the Supply lanes for tanker-transported oil from the Middle-East, Griffiths explained that this was the reason for Soviet involvement in the Ethiopian offensive, and also cites the strategic importance of Eritrea as the reason for previous U.S. involvement in Eritrea in the 1950s, when U.S. naval bases were established in Eritrea.

Malraux: The Royal Quest

by Jenn MacLeod

Andre Malraux — French art scholar, writer, philosopher and politician — embarked, in 1923, on an intense archaeological quest in Indochina. Thirty-three years later, leading Malraux scholar Walter Langlois retraced the writer's path through Cambodia, discovering for himself the art and people that had so captivated Malraux.

Presently on faculty at the University of Wyoming, Professor Langlois brought to Dalhousie last week a vivid record of his Cambodian experiences in a presentation of slides and commentary entitled "In Search of Malraux's Royal Way."

There are three "royal ways" explained Langlois. The first is the historical — a series of temples and roads built between the 7th and 14th centuries to link the expansive South East Asian empire.

The second is Malraux's novel of 1930 entitled "The Royal Way" which is based on his quest, at the age of 22, for the historical route, especially the temple Banteay Srei.

The third, of course, is Langlois' pursuit of Malraux's experiences. Langlois obtained a fellowship from the American government to teach English at the Lycee Sisowath in Phnom Penh in 1956.

A man of great sensitivity and immense intellectual prowess, Andre Malraux developed at a young age a profound sense of anguish at the history of human suffering. Langlois, in one of his many literary works concerning Malraux, writes that, "such intense intellectual anguish and the need to probe some of the non-Western answers to the human condition were profound motivating for his trip to Asia." Malraux had devoted himself thus far to literature, art and philosophy and had written that we can only know ourselves through comparison with different cultural backgrounds and traditions.

Langlois' presentation offered a detailed account of the Cambodian culture as he found it, but which, he reminded us, has been severely uprooted in recent years. Describing scenes of the Cambodian landscape, architecture and religious and artistic ceremony, Langlois frequently identified the events and structures that Malraux would also have witnessed. In particular, Langlois offered a vivid portrait of the temple Banteay Srei which became the focus of Malraux' quest. Malraux had extracted one of the hundreds of exquisite sculptures that decorated the temple remains, and was arrested by the French colonial

authorities when he attempted to return to Europe with the treasure. The subsequent trials and bureaucratic entanglement only served to intensify the anger and disgust that Malraux already felt toward the colonial system and its treatment of the Cambodian people.

Malraux became something of a political reformer and co-founded the opposition newspaper L'Indochine, later renamed L'Indochine En-

chainée. Twenty three issues were published before the paper was suppressed for its anti-Colonial content. By the end of 1925, Malraux returned in frustration to France where the social and political concerns that he had developed in Indochina expanded into a broader struggle for reform in the French government itself.

Nevertheless, the Indochinese experience had been a "major monument in his life," writes Langlois. It

had transformed him from an "intellectual dillentante into a social revolutionary."

Langlois concluded his presentation with the observation that Malraux had found in art the answer to the anguish he felt over the human condition and the meaning he sought to human life. Malraux, says Langlois, was devoted to the capacity he saw in the human being to create beauty that rivals the creations of God.

Faculty petitions against foreign student critic

SASKATOON (CUP)—Over 150 faculty members at the University of Saskatchewan are petitioning for the removal of a colleague as head of his department and as a member of several committees because of his criticism of foreign students and instructors.

However, the board of governors chairperson says Dr. T.B. MacLachlan will not be penalized for statements he made in the April issue of university affairs, the publication of the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada.

MacLachlan said the presence of foreign students and landed immigrants in classes causes difficulties for Canadian students and that the language problem of some foreign instructors "totally destroys (their) teaching effectiveness."

MacLachlan also said visa

students and landed immigrants "all drive new cars (and) have no need to work in the summertime in order to earn funds."

More often than not, said MacLachlan, the teaching responsibilities of professors from foreign countries "are secondary to other interests that they have in particular faculties."

MacLachlan, department head of obstetrics and gynecology, also supported the controversial TV presentation the campus giveaway, a segment of CTV's public affairs program W5. The show alleged that visa students were crowding out Canadian students in some universities. He had not seen the program.

Christine Pasterhank, chairperson of the board of governors, said no action will be taken against MacLachlan because he expressed a personal viewpoint in the letter

and did not write as a representative of the university.

"There is no evidence that MacLachlan's attitude denied anyone promotion or tenure", she said, in response to the suggestion that he be removed from those committees.

Dr. B.S. Ranshawa, the professor who organized the petition against MacLachlan believes an attack was directed at people of Oriental and Asian origin.

"It's a mistake on his part to call people who have emigrated from their motherlands and taken up Canadian citizenship "foreigners", he said. "This is putting them in the place of second class citizens."

"I agree you have to have a certain level of competence in the language but we can set up mechanics for this without making generalizations."

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