

REVIEW ESSAY: *Guerilla Struggle in Africa: An Analysis and Preview*, by Kenneth W. Grundy. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971. Pp. 204.

African Liberation Movements: Contemporary Struggles Against White Minority Rule, by Richard Gibson. London: Oxford University Press, 1972. Pp. 350.

One can often tell a great deal about the views, biases and politics of an author by his choice of language. When it comes to discussing Southern Africa, where the lines are sharply drawn, it is especially easy. Newsreels in South Africa describe the struggle between "patriotic Portuguese troops" and "terrorists." The vocabulary in Dar-es-Salaam does not include such terms. Instead we have "colonialists" and "freedom fighters." Yet it is possible to accept one vocabulary over another, as both authors under review have done, and still present significantly different views, aspirations and analyses. But even this shows through in the selection of word, phrase and metaphor.

Ken Grundy's book, *Guerilla Struggle in Africa: An Analysis and Preview*, as indicated by the subtitle, is oriented towards the scholarly community, catering to its desires for objective analysis and its recent taste for futurology. But Grundy is too good a scholar to fall victim to these constraints and demands. He carefully recognizes and acknowledges the impossibility of objectivity in his presentation of the value conflicts involved in the struggle, siding firmly with the "freedom fighters" and those who see them as such. Moreover, he readily admits the limitations of projection and writing the history of the future, and engages instead in an admittedly fanciful speculation about the year 1990 which does much to reveal his biases and attitudes towards the struggle. Indeed, the chief value of his study is neither in the theoretical sections on the causes and nature of guerilla struggle and civil violence, nor his too brief and superficial accounting of the struggles now in progress. His contribution is in the speculative projection of a solution to the South African situation. It is there that the biases and limitations of the academic community's approach to political violence become manifest. But more on this after a turn at Gibson's book.

Richard Gibson is an Afro-American journalist, and like Grundy his sympathies are evident in his title, *African Liberation Movements*. Gibson clearly and distinctly announces his position on the struggle against racial domination as that of a "brother" and a "militant." But in his choice of subtitle and in his presentation of material throughout the work he goes much further in indicating his political biases and attitudes within that framework. And these attitudes differ from Grundy's and many other sympathetic observers of the struggle for African liberation in many crucial dimensions. Gibson's identification of the struggle as "against white minority rule" is the prelude to a systematic attempt to cast the struggle as fundamentally a movement of black against white, motivated and best organized around an ideology of racial and national emancipation. This not only distinguishes his position from that of the observers alluded to above, but from many of the leaders of liberation struggles as well. I am not attempting to ridicule or slight his position. I believe that it is a shortcoming of the scholarship and propaganda on the liberation struggles that such a perspective, which underlies so much of the controversy on the nature of nationalism and national liberation struggles, has gone virtually unrepresented in the available information on the "contemporary struggles."

Gibson's book presents a great deal of data, not readily available, on a wide range of movements, running from the long and distinguished history of the African National Congress to recent developments in a movement to liberate the Canary Islands. Just in terms of the scope and depth of coverage, Gibson's journalism is deserving of academic plaudits. But Gibson often takes a position on the movements which is contrary to the prevailing attitude of those western academics and journalists, like Basil Davidson, who have covered the liberation struggles and made them accessible to American and European readers to date. His position can best be described as Pan-Africanist. First, it is highly critical of the influence of Soviet communist ideology and material support within the various liberation organizations, tending, for instance, to condemn the "Moscow-line MPLA." Second, he consistently favors those groups like UNITA, which are occasionally described as being pro-Chinese and which appear to Gibson to be led by more thorough-going nationalists in their independence of foreign supporters and concentration on a peasant-oriented ideology of "people's war." He presents,

I believe, a strongly argued, if somewhat weakly evidenced, presentation of the Pan-Africanism vs. Communism debate about African nationalism. What can we learn from his exposition?

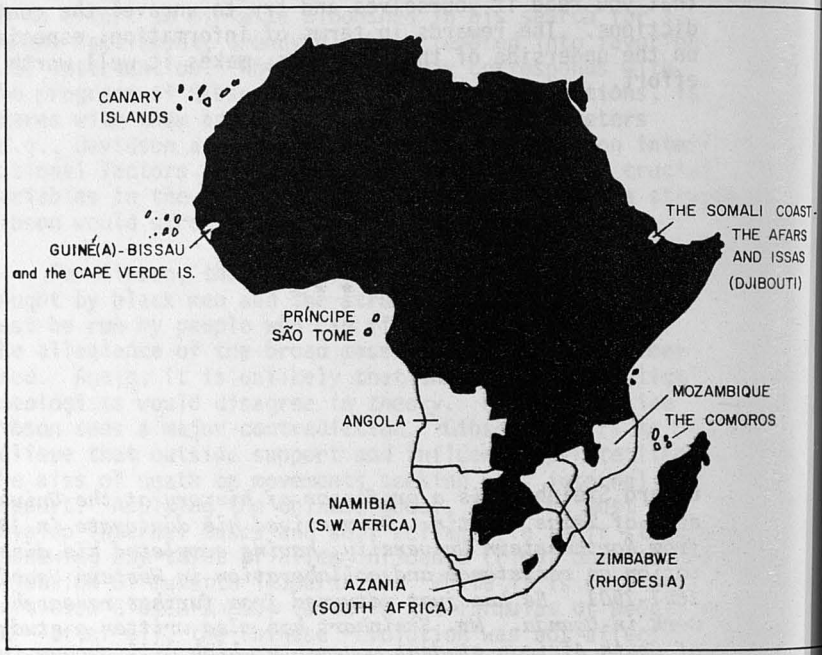
First, returning to Grundy's book briefly, I think we must take a cue from Gibson and recognize that the scholarly community has an evident bias for an internationalist, if not a pro-communist, perspective. Grundy's ideal-real compromise solution of the Southern African situation involves increasing international pressure, including the highly unlikely and possibly prejudicious economic and military interference of the United States. In an effort to minimize bloodshed in his search for a humane settlement, Grundy has been tempted into favoring U.S. intervention. While this hardly corresponds with the programs of Gibson's "Moscow-line" organizations, it shares with them and with their western interpreters (e.g., Davidson and Chaliand) a strong emphasis on international factors and supports as important if not crucial variables in the successful outcome of the guerilla struggles. Gibson would strongly resist such an emphasis.

For Gibson, the black liberation struggle must be fought by black men and the struggle in each territory must be run by people who can first and foremost gain the allegiance of the broad masses of those to be liberated. Again, it is unlikely that the "internationalist" ideologists would disagree in theory. But in practice Gibson sees a major contradiction. Gibson appears to believe that outside support and influence operate like the kiss of death on movements seeking mass internal support. Applying the Chinese model, Africans must develop internal bases and self reliance in their struggle, eschewing any taint of alien influence (right down to the rejection of mulatto leadership). While it is easy to criticize Gibson's easy faith in the formulas of people's war--after all, the Chinese revolution was not affected by the Japanese invasion and the international war during which it developed--it is harder to simply dismiss his contention that the refined, internationalist, and socialist ideals of ANC, FRELIMO, MPLA and PAIGC are unassimilable by the peasant masses and hence barriers to their participation in the national struggle. We simply know too little of their successes and failures in this area. Similarly, we know little of the results of the Pan-Africanist movements (PAC, UNITA, COREMO), who are relying on a more strictly nationalist appeal. Certainly,

Gibson raises an important problem for the consideration of both "objective" scholars and would-be supporters. Perhaps the impossibility of giving support to "indigenous movements" without tainting them means that we "militants" from North America are constrained to support only those movements who will accept our aid and thereby demonstrate their "internationalist" perspective. "Brothers" from North America and elsewhere may have an option not open to militants in that their aid can be directed from a 'pan-Africanist' perspective and therefore leave no taint of "outside influence." Somehow, it comes out sounding like special pleading. I can only recommend that you read it yourselves and try to unravel the contradictions. The rewards in terms of information, especially on the underside of the struggles, makes it well worth the effort.

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AREAS STILL UNDER WHITE RULE