

Revolution recipe

Economic apartheid also must end

Revolutionary upheaval may result in political change, but if it doesn't bring about economic reform as well, it often results in more upheaval.

In South Africa, major political reforms came this summer. Most of the legal pillars of the oppressive apartheid system were taken off the books.

Black South Africans now have the right to go where they please, the right to choose a profession and other political freedoms.

The problem, however, is that very few are able to use those rights. Legal apartheid may be gone, but economic and social apartheid continue to plague the nation.

That inevitably is a prescription for more revolution, which continued to erupt Monday and today in a strike by millions of blacks. At least 17 people were killed in related violence. An estimated 50 to 80 percent of black workers have been taking part in the strike.

Ostensibly, the workers — organized by the African National Congress and the allied Congress of South African Trade Unions — were protesting a new tax imposed by the government.

Those groups are opposing the introduction of a value-added tax last month. They said the government had no right to introduce the 10 percent tax without input from blacks.

But the strike had larger themes.

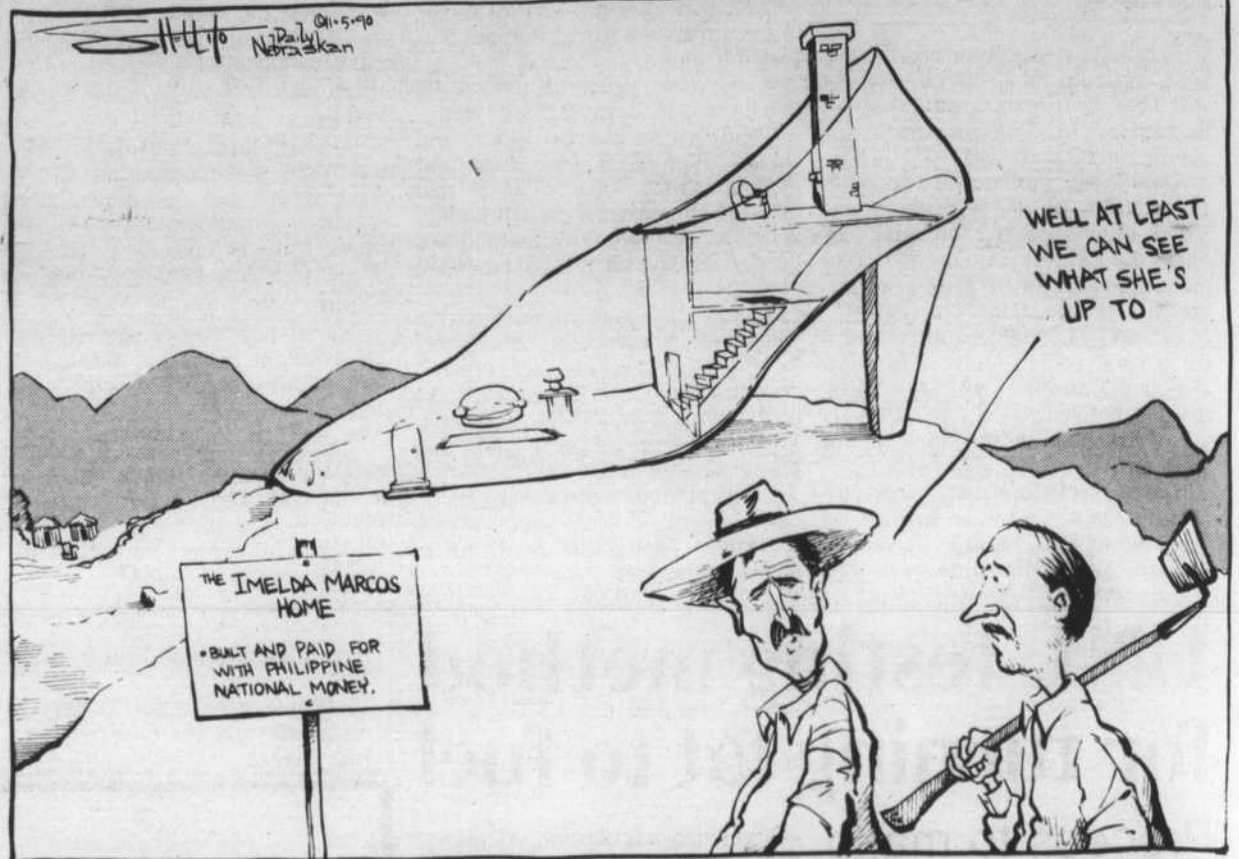
"The organized working class has today and will tomorrow strike a body blow to apartheid," said Jay Naidoo, general secretary of Congress of South African Trade Unions.

That blow, and similar ones, eventually will topple apartheid. First, however, this week's events must be backed by further legislation. As with U.S. efforts to eliminate economic apartheid, that may mean arguments over quotas and affirmative action. As in the United States, that may mean abuses and overreactions of the system — as well as continued foot-dragging and frustration.

The strike, The Associated Press reported, gave rise to a curious sight Monday — white supervisors unused to cash registers, normally manned by blacks, struggling to serve customers in Johannesburg shops.

That symbolic scene promises to be repeated often as South Africa struggles to erase apartheid's effects. If the transition is to be successful, it must be repeated.

—E.F.P.



GARY LONGSINE

Supposed epidemic not seen

Some years ago in a dormitory that shall remain nameless, I randomly was assigned a truly offensive roommate.

Without going into too much detail, I'll just say that intolerant, brain-dead and violent are three adjectives that could be applied fairly.

Faced with the unpleasant potential of living an entire semester with this monster, I gave some thought to the control that I had over my situation. I didn't want to move out because the only rooms left on campus were on the noisiest floor of the rowdiest dorm. Besides, the housing department doesn't like to let people move just because they don't like their roommate. You need a good reason.

So, I thought, if I don't want to move, I need to give him a good reason.

I bought candles, some white sand, a rubber chicken and some fake blood. Then I went to the library and checked out the most outrageous books on the occult that I could find and left them lying open on my desk and bed.

I wore an upside-down cross as a necklace for a week, kept the rubber chicken carefully hidden, alternately played Mozart's "Requiem" and the soundtrack from "The Omen" and waited. Then Saturday night came.

The Victim always went out drinking and always came home between 1:20 and 1:40 a.m. At 1, I made a pentagram with white sand on the floor in the middle of the room, lit a candle at each corner and hung the rubber chicken — smeared with fake blood — from the ceiling. I stripped to a pair of shorts and sat in the middle, with fake blood on my hands, neck and face.

The final touch was the satanic tape. It was actually a recording of a poem, read aloud from a Latin translation of Biblical poetry. The English translation begins "Your belly is like a heap of wheat."

Read in Latin and piped through a reverberation amplifier and an equalizer, this lovely celebration of fertility became a spooky thundering echo of Satan.

I heard the keys in the door. It opened.

"What the . . ."

On cue, I turned my head to the door. With my best raspy, possessed voice, I wheezed, "GhheetOuuhhht!" He got.

Pardon the redundancy if I say he never spent another night in the room and had his things out three days later. The housing department can be very kind, especially to a frightened teenager who is convinced that his roommate is the right hand of darkness.



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People are predictably frightened of the unknown. And, if my experience is any indication, it's not too terribly difficult to take advantage of this fear.

Some people carve careers out of this fear, lecturing on the Satan circuit and selling books to large crowds. They claim that Satanism is on the rise in America. They claim that as many as 50,000 murders are committed each year in the United States in satanic rituals conducted by as many as 10 million Satanists.

Where are these millions of Satanists? There are fewer than 5 million Mormons, and I've met several. There are about 250,000 heroin addicts, and I've seen some of them, too.

I did meet someone who claimed to be an ex-Satanist. He was a 16-year-old boy, proselytizing on a corner downtown with a regular corner Bible thumper.

It was Halloween and I was in costume. I was "a hippy, going as an Afghan." The blanket, not the Asian nationality.

As I was walking by, he handed me a pamphlet and said to me eagerly, "I was a Satan worshiper. I used to bash babies' heads in and drink their blood."

I said, "Why haven't you turned yourself and your fellow Satanists over to the police?" and, "Why is it OK for you to be an ex-baby killer and not OK for me to walk to a downtown bar on Halloween in costume?" and, "Where are all the outraged mothers whose babies you stole for your rituals?"

He didn't really seem to hear me, but anxiously repeated his startling claim and insisted that I needed to turn to Jesus.

His wide-eyed urgency convinced me. I firmly believe that he thought he was a baby-blood-drinking Satanist turned to Christ. But I still haven't met an actual Satanist.

I did talk to Satan though, that same night. On the way home from the bar, I took a different route and ran into the Church Lady.

Church Lady: "Satan! Satan! Yoo-hoo! Mr. Satan, could you spare us a moment of your time? I've got a serious non-believer here, doesn't even believe in you. I know you're busy planning fall fraternity parties and what-not, but you've got just as much at stake here as we do."

Satan: (Appearing in the form of George Burns, in a puff of red smoke) "Sure, I've got a few moments. I am omnipotent, you know."

Gary: "Uh, thanks, Mr. Satan. It's good of you to take time off your busy schedule. I'm sure you must be pretty busy with elections coming up and all."

Church Lady: "So tell us, Mr. Satan, how did you get to be Satan? Is it a job you asked for, were there try-outs or did you just kill the previous devil?"

Satan: "Actually, it's His idea of a joke. I was the first angel to ask, 'If God is all powerful, can he make a rock so big that he can't lift it?' He said, 'All right, smarty pants, find out for yourself,' and here I am."

Church Lady: "Hmm . . . I see . . . So, you were smarting off in choir practice. Serves you right. Now, about this satanic worship. Tell us about that. Mr. Longsine doesn't believe there is a rising wave of satanic conspiracy in this country taking over day care centers and rock music. What do you think, Mr. Prince of Darkness?"

Satan: "Well, I generally monitor the writings of Skeptical Inquirer magazine on the topic, as I consider the pursuit of truth to be my greatest enemy. It says that the FBI statistics pretty clearly rule out thousands of secret satanic murders. But really, I don't understand why I get all this great press."

"The other day, I saw a speaker on campus who claimed there was a correlation between drug activity and Satanism. Maybe so. There is also a definite overlap between drug activity and college. Do I get credit for college, too? I don't want it, thanks."

Longsine is a senior international affairs and economics major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Professor asset to university

After reading Professor Joyce A. Joyce's guest opinion ("UNL basking in mediocrity," DN, Oct. 29) and Rich Ervins' letter ("Professor shows contempt for students, their ideas," DN, Nov. 1), I thought it only fair that I write this letter in support of Joyce.

In the second semester of the 1990-91 school year, I took Joyce's class in black women authors. It was one of the best educational experiences that I have had at this university, especially in the English department. Not only did I read some of the best literature ever written, but I was also granted a chance to see the world through someone else's eyes, a chance I don't normally get in my other classes. I wrote in my evaluation of Joyce that I believed that the class should be made a general requirement for all students because Joyce provides knowledge that students need and don't always get.

I think it is also important that I say that I am a white male student and in no way was I ever threatened or made fun of in class discussions, which I participated in quite often.

I think that what has happened to Joyce is a perfect example of how our educational system runs. The object of the game is to "get 'em through." Whether they get an actual education or not, I guess, comes second. Nothing has been achieved by these students passing this class except that they have taken another step toward graduation without the education that they pay for and deserve.

The last point that I would like to make is, what right does anyone have to regrade the tests that Joyce gave to her students? Does that person know exactly what she was looking for in her questions? I see this as a direct abuse of Joyce's rights.

Joyce is an incredible asset to this university and to the English department. I hope that the inexcusable actions that were taken against her in no way jeopardize her wanting to stay at this university. It would be a terrible loss of a tremendous professor and an education that we both need and deserve.

Patrick Piper
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