Editorial: the Review, Intellectuals & the Left in Africa

Retrospect and Prospect: Ten Years of ROAPE
Although our first Editorial ten years ago was not intended as a Manifesto, it is perhaps instructive to look back to it as an indicator of what we aimed to do, and how far we lived up to the aims. There we set out the naively ambitious objective of outlining 'an analysis and the devising of strategy for Africa's revolution'. Probing further the nature of that revolution, we were perhaps equally simplistic. In those parts of Africa still colonially-dominated, it was a clear-cut matter of armed liberation struggle by the masses that offered the prospect of going beyond neo-colonialism. Outside southern Africa, the same concept defined its nature — an ill-defined struggle against 'neo-colonialism', which in turn, it was hinted, involved resistance to the encroachment of imperialist powers, multinational corporations and all their works, but also an (unspecified) 'internal' dimension.

In trying to see what this broad concern implied in terms of an agenda, we first set out the specific context in which a 'socialist, liberation strategy' had to be sought — again stressing the emerging international contradictions: the emergence of multinational corporations, the challenge to US hegemony and growing inter-imperialist rivalry; the climate of detente between East and West; and the (then impending) economic crisis. Given this perspective there was a specific call for contributions on these kinds of topics: investigations of what particular western capitals and imperialisms were up to as far as Africa was concerned; studies documenting the forms of 'African dependency'; (radical) analyses of crucial problems (like the famines then as now laying waste the Sahel and the Horn); plus 'Briefings' in the form of official documents, statements by popular movements, exposes of capital and state enormities, and 'debates' pieces. The actual mix of contributions that we have published has not been confined to these themes only — the state and class forces have also been prominently discussed — but they have certainly featured very much on our agenda. The exception, curiously enough for a journal based in the metropolis, has been the first topic. Apart from the odd article on US (toward the Horn, Angola), French (the military) and Soviet (in the Horn) policy calculations we have published little in the way of studies of the specifics of the 'strategies of imperialist powers and of monopoly capital' and 'Africa's changing position in the international division of labour ... (and the great powers') spheres of influence ...'. Perhaps this should be an area for us outsiders to concentrate on as more radical writing occurs within Africa?
If we in fact use this backward look as a way to pose the question of future emphases in our work, what is first striking is how radically that 'international context' has changed in the last ten years. Most striking wherever we turn in Africa are the massively debilitating effects of a world economic depression whose magnitude would hardly have been credited in 1974 — a topic which was appropriately at the centre of our 1983 conference at Keele (reported on later).

There is an obvious need to document the modalities of the slump and its impact on Africa and the manner in which they interplay with crises of a more domestic origin like the current drought. But the crisis of global capitalism also invites consideration of two basic issues in the years ahead: what kinds of restructuring are likely to emerge as capital’s way out of the crisis, with what implications for African countries? and, what alternative strategies are available for African peoples and states to cope with the crisis and its effects?

Perhaps equally disturbing has been the shift from Detente to a ‘New Cold War’: tensions which are being in part played out in Africa and which pose the ultimate threat of nuclear obliteration for us all. It will surely be necessary to explore these issues, and also how new possibilities and new dangers arise as a result of the contradictions as well as collaborations between the USA and Europe and Japan.

Paralleling the increasing threat of war from the global tensions, and in part a by-product of it, is the glaring phenomenon of the militarisation of Africa: the continuation and spread of military regimes; the dramatic growth in arms, arms supplies and arms expenditure — the continent’s only growth industry; and the onset and threat of wars between and within African states. Tackling these issues will in turn need some theoretical advance on a marxian tradition which has little to say in explaining war, beyond simply equating it with imperialism.

Another area for priority attention that is related to the economic crisis, and the ‘stabilisation’ measures forced on African countries, as also to militarisation, is the increasingly repressive character of many states. What is called for is not only documentation of their abuses but a reconsideration of the importance of the issues of ‘democracy’ and of ‘human rights’ to the left and the realisation that these are neither unimportant ‘bourgeois’ values, nor are they charges to be levelled against capitalist-oriented regimes but excused in ‘progressive’ ones.

Any list of headings for contributions that are concerned with special ‘problem areas’ or the conditions of the people has still very much to include the problem of famine that was highlighted in our first Issue and will be a main focus of our next. What is particularly striking in all the recent international concern about famine in Africa is how the issue of causes and origins — why it is that people are dying of starvation — is obscured rather than illuminated in all the media treatment.

Missing from our 1974 list but a theme that just cannot be ignored is the issue of women. At one level this means attention to the particular problems and conditions of women — how they are affected by the famine, by economic crisis, by development projects. But this dimension must be a feature of other levels of analysis: a realisation that the treatment of ‘gender’ is as necessary a part of analyses and conceptual frameworks as ‘class’; a realisation that, if we are to take it on board in our work, means not only devoting space to such issues but situating them as integral and central parts of all analyses.
Another area of relative neglect in our columns that needs to be given more prominence is — politics! All too often 'political economy' approaches are heavily accented toward the latter word. Apart from the methodological error of the resulting tendency to 'economism', this emphasis gives a blinkered approach to what is happening, and what is possible, in the political realm, and also ignores the new popular movements which are becoming an increasingly significant feature of African politics — a blind spot partly remedied in this Issue.

A final item that must go on any future agenda is that which underpins the others. What approach is going to inform 'radical' work on any specific topic? Insofar as our early editorial positions smacked of a ‘dependency’ approach which simply put Africa's condition of ‘underdevelopment’ down to ‘imperialism’, it could perhaps be excused as there was no other theoretical perspective available then. Now the years of accumulated criticisms of the ‘underdevelopment’ thesis and the endless debates around it would make any simplistic ‘dependency’ perspective far less tenable. Apart from the questions it begs, it has proved an inadequate guide as to ‘what is to be done?’ It has been used as a basis to argue against the necessity of a two-stage revolutionary process — first the national (or bourgeoisie) democratic — and instead for an immediate socialist revolution, as it was originally by Gyunter Frank. But the very same intellectual framework is used to justify support for, as by Samir Amin, ‘nationalist’ economic policy pursued by almost any type of regime. But if this political ambiguity merely underwrites the seriousness of the intellectual critique mounted against it, the various left or ‘marxist’ attacks have served essentially to pull down dependency theory but have singularly failed to replace it with an alternative ‘development theory’, and one that can meaningfully illumine policy issues for the left in Africa. Indeed the most trenchant critique of dependency — that in the Warren tradition — sometimes seems to imply prescriptions for action not unlike those of Amin: support for nationalist capitalist development. Thus the task that is our focus in this Issue — what strategies for the left in Africa? — must from time to time refer back to square one to ask: What is the basic problem or contradiction? Answers will thus require us to continue to give space to theoretical debates, and particularly to seek for contributions that seek to transcend not only ‘dependency’ theory but the whole impasse that the development debate has reached. A synthesis is needed!

The Commitment of the Intellectual
If a major concern of the Review has been to promote advances in theory, the aim — even if not always realised — was to do so so as to clarify political work. That is why we are pleased that the one article in this Issue most concerned with ideas, by our French editorial colleague, Jean Copans, traces the intellectual history of ‘class’, the category that is the basis for struggle. But as he points out, a thorough linking of theory with practice, also requires a close link between those engaged in the two kinds of work. But there have been obvious limits to how close those of us most directly involved in producing the Review can be to on-going struggles — as the Briefing 'Inside ROAPE' confesses; and when we started publication there was but the embryo of an intellectual left in most of Africa. This, as we shall now see, has changed dramatically and so it is perhaps overdue that we assemble views about the role that ‘intellectuals’ — and despite the connotations it is hard to come up with another term for those in Africa likely to
sit down and read wordy articles in a foreign language — do and might play in the political practice of the continent.

The 1970s in fact saw a vigorous blossoming of the spread of Marxist perspectives, of left intellectual debate and radical scholarship in Africa. The University of Dar es Salaam was full of lively debate in the years after 1968. Dakar had had the kind of vigorous intellectual climate which fostered a commitment to Marxist ideas even before that. After 1975 many radical scholars congregated in Maputo. In Nigeria the groundswell came later but was marked enough for a lively Marx centenary conference to attract an audience of hundreds. Kenyan scholars began to spearhead a critique of capitalist trends in their country and we were privileged to publish an Issue (No.20) devoted to their work.

The latters' influence had contributed to a climate where students were prominently involved in protests and in celebrating (prematurely) the attempted coup of 1 August 1982. Ten are still serving long prison sentences. And in a very recent flare-up, reported on as a Stop Press item, students have been killed. Universities in Khartoum and Lusaka have been closed more than once after protests, some of which have represented radical challenges to government policies. It was from the student body that a vigorous 'left' emerged in Addis Ababa to play a crucial role in the events after the empire was overthrown in 1974. This last was something of a case apart, however. Generally in the 1970s, the ferment was mainly limited to the realm of ideas, it was students and intellectuals only that were radicalised, and protest was largely confined to campuses — even though many governments were so weak that they felt threatened even by that, and thus often over-reacted.

The main emphasis of this Issue is to explore the prospects for what happens when those with marxist and socialist ideas seek to engage not just in polemics but in some meaningful political practice. It will review some notable experiences where radicals have moved off campus, as with the movement, MOJA, whose work in Liberia we have approvingly monitored over the years. We will delve into the debates about what constitutes meaningful political practice in some particular contexts such as Ghana, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Sudan. That in turn will bring us up against a fundamental issue — what political strategy for the left? and the vigorous and often acrimonious debates around that topic.

Before we go on to explore how contributions to this Issue illuminate these themes, it is worth reflecting on the character and style of debating. To any outsider, one of the striking features of the ‘radical’ academic disputations that go on in many parts of Africa is their very bitterness — although the vehemence with which opposing views are discussed is perhaps only greater in degree from similar left polemics throughout the world. It is worth pausing for a moment to ask what it is that explains this vitriol and whether it is necessary. It is tempting to put it down to the fact that radical debate has originated in academic circles and the style of it may thus reflect the intellectual arrogance of typical academics, and/or the cultural trappings of their privileged class background (the appropriateness of the adjective in the term petty bourgeoisie!) — tempting because these characteristics, on this analysis, may be expected to dissolve with a healthy dose of the realism, as opposed to abstraction, that could come from
political work with the working classes.

It may be, of course, that those who aspire to follow Marx feel they have to adopt the most extreme varieties of his abrasiveness — see the proud boast in the 'Tanzania debate' that we deal with below, that they are untramelled by 'bourgeois politeness'. But before justifying an unedifying form of argumentation via personal abuse — and the point is that such name-calling is unedifying — by claiming it to be 'marxist', it is worth reflecting how far such excoriations in the great man's writing were a result of the middle-aged bad temper of a man with piles who didn't suffer fools even when not in pain, rather than of the rigour of his analysis and its ability to expose 'false' conceptions. Whether academics are polite to each other would not matter very much but if they rely on the 'put down' as a method of discourse, they will alienate non-intellectuals. And, unfortunately, the insistence on the exclusive 'correctness' of one faction's position and the vehement and arrogant intolerance of other 'lines' has also too often been translated into mindlessly violent attempts to 'quieten' those with differences. Such bully-boy debating may be the first step to errors like the now widely-acknowledged mistake of one section of the left in Ethiopia in adopting the tactics of violence and terror against the military rulers (leading to their equally uncompromising counter-terror) from 1976, for instance, or the readiness to try to mount coups rather than pursue other avenues to power depending on mass support, even against 'progressive' regimes, that are more ally than foe, as in Ghana in 1982 — a case we will return to. The most chastening lessons are those to be learnt from the tragic experience of Grenada. There the inability of factions in the New Jewel Movement to transcend differences through an open dialogue where they actually spoke and listened to each other and through a political process that allowed broader popular involvement to resolve such differences, lead to a descent into personalised faction in-fighting and conspiratorial manoeuvrings, and in turn led to the unforgivable murder of Maurice Bishop and his colleagues and the even more unforgivable invitation for the US invasion. The conduct of their politics gave the US both the excuse and the circumstances, of a confused and divided people, to intervene.

We can't, of course, dismiss all polemicising or even the actual political antagonisms to which they give rise too lightly. Different analyses, even of a more general theoretical sort — e.g. over whether national capitalism is emerging and is or is not progressive — do lead to diametrically opposed political alliances and stances. But often the matters at issue are either differences at an abstract level whose bearing on political action is far from obvious or is ambiguous, or differences over tactics, about the best way to proceed, where someone who disagrees is not thereby a class enemy. To that extent some of the acrimony is not strictly necessary. Moreover, any honest person who has taken part in the last few years in the debates about, at one level, development theory, or at another level about policy or tactics for struggle must admit that most of us have been mistaken as often as we have been right. A readiness to admit one's fallibility is one starting point for an honest and comradely exchange of views. We more than ever feel we want to commit the Review to being a forum for debate but one conducted as a dialogue, characterised by a tone that encourages people to listen and not just expound, to watch for areas of agreement and common ground and not simply polarise differences, and thus take some of the unnecessary, sectarian vehemence from debate without losing the passion of commitment.
The 'Dar es Salaam Debate' and the Role of Intellectuals in Tanzania

One site in Africa where there was a heady climate of radical debate already in the late 1960's was Dar es Salaam and indeed that was an important stimulus to the formation of this Review. Those experiences, marking the second of three stages, are analysed in the extracts we reprint as a Briefing of a speech by the late Prime Minister, Edward Sokoine, in which he explores the role of intellectuals. In the late 1970's the left on "The Hill", as the campus was called, became polarised over what came to be called 'the debate on imperialism'. Much of the polemics it gave rise to have, only recently, been gathered together in a collection of 32 articles that are worth considering in some detail here.* This debate seeks to raise theoretical issues relating to the ideological direction of the struggle of the peoples of Africa and other neo-colonies the world over. Among the central issues raised are imperialism and the national question, the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure, the neo-colonial state, and the classes in the neo-colonies. The eventual publication of this volume coming six years after the original papers is still most timely given the deepening global crisis in capitalism when there is need for both reflection and re-opening of the debate about organisation, tactics and strategy.

The stimulus for the debate was prompted by the works of Issa Shivji (Class Struggles in Tanzania, etc.) and M. Mamdani (Politics and Class Formation in Uganda) on the one hand, and D.W. Nabudere (Political Economy of Imperialism, etc.) on the other. The central theme in all these contributions is that in the struggle for socialist construction in neo-colonies, it is essential to identify which classes constitute friends and enemies of this revolutionary process.

Of the two major positions, Shivji suggests that it is the international bourgeoisie who control the Tanzanian economy through the agency of a local economic bureaucracy (the bureaucratic bourgeoisie). The social base of this stratum lies not internally but externally, in the international bourgeoisie. He sees the principal antagonistic contradictions as those between imperialism and the masses. In turn, this is 'inseparably' tied to a secondary contradiction one between the 'economic bureaucracy' and the revolutionary leadership. The resolution of the principal contradiction — that must involve an end to 'co-operation' with international monopoly capital — would logically weaken and destroy the secondary contradiction. The prerequisite for the resolution of both contradictions would be the creation of a revolutionary vanguard, characterised by an alliance of strata like the lower petty-bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the proletariat under a proletarian ideology.

The second position advocating a national democratic revolution, but which fails to see a social revolution as an inseparable and necessary concomitant, is advanced by Nabudere. Whereas he sees the local managers as agents of imperialist finance capital, he considers the economically dominant class in the neo-colonies is simply the world bourgeoisie. He therefore argues for a national anti-imperialist united front of all classes.

The exchanges in the debate claim to be ‘vigorous’, ‘sharp and uninhibited by bourgeois politeness or hypocritical applauses’; in fact they are punctuated with verbal violence and abuse which in many respects deflect from the real issues. While they give a world view — which must never be ignored — they fail to make thorough ‘concrete analyses of concrete situations’ in the neo-colonies. Undoubtedly this limits the effectiveness of the debate.

The fundamental question as to what strata control state power is never adequately resolved. In an introduction to the volume, A.M. Babu, the former Minister, briefly hints at a non-dogmatic alternative position. He gently reminds the readers that ‘without tackling this question (i.e. state power) there is a danger that the essays might be dismissed as irrelevant and will be relegated to academic circles only’. He reminds Shivji that the concept of a ‘bureaucratic bourgeoisie negates any dialectical process in the formation of classes’. These emerge out of the economic base — not the state (or superstructure). He asks Nabudere whether there can be ‘an international ruling class, a class outside the nation-state? An ‘international ruling class’ only exists at the level of abstraction. He rejects this position since ‘the proletariat cannot lead a revolution against an unseen (enemy). It must have an identifiable, local and existing class to marshall its forces against’. With justification, Babu sees Nabudere’s proposition as indicative of certain characteristics among some African ‘Marxist’ intellectuals. He scathingly notes:

Whereas African Marxist intellectuals tend to be reluctant to categorise fellow-Africans as the enemy, the new generation of African working class tend to be less so inhibited. The reason is that in general the intellectuals come from the same stratum as those who now comprise the ‘ruling class’, whether these are in politics or business. They share the same background, they went to the same schools, they shared the same passion against colonialism and racial oppression, and so on. It is inconceivable for the intellectuals to think of them as their enemies, until, perhaps, when they send them to detention camps or subject them to personal or political humiliation.

It is intriguing to ask how far Babu’s charge of the lack of consideration of the realities of state power has to do with the failure of this debate to reach the working class, the peasantry or the lower ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie. Given the abstract mould in which this debate was conducted, it is inconceivable that those who suffer from poverty, hunger and misery had any clue of what was happening at the Hill: As one contributor, Joakim Mwami, observed, at the time of this debate Marxist ideas were ‘confined chiefly to a few Marxist academicians who, incidentally, happen to have no mass base whatsoever’. There was, he continued, ‘a great chance for opportunistic theories and tendencies among these academicians to emerge in one form or another, to flourish, to endure and even to pass unchecked’. Other short contributions, like Ole Parsalaw’s, see the aloofness of theorists like Nabudere as being measured by and a result of their being primarily concerned with their intellectual opponents rather than Africa’s problems. They also remind readers, that the debate ignores the political significance of African theorists like Cabral. In a similar vein, Lupa equates the aloofness of some contributors to an implied ‘Eurocentrism’ of metropolitan academics (compare Copans’ argument here). Thus the arrogance of such intellectuals creates ‘a neat division of labour where the people are put in their right place’. ‘No doubt’, he adds, ‘this neatness will continue until such time when the people themselves will decide what events are of major historical significance for them. That time has yet to come, and then, probably the
gratuitous services of Professor Nabudere and his fellow academics would become redundant'.

What then can be said about the significance and outcome of this debate? Recently, in the new magazine African Events (October 1984), Babu has identified two positions. First, he notes that:

Among most intellectuals you noticed a mixture of various trends of socialist thinking, a confused amalgam of nineteenth century radicalism and modern neo-Marxism pre-occupied with questions of state, class and society, all from the point of view of bourgeois radical academics who until recently had refused to accept Marxian approaches to social problems. They have thus brought to the debate all that has made the bourgeois world outlook what it is, using Marxian terminology to emphasise their trendiness, but at the same time muddying what is at issue.

Second is another group influenced by Western European social democracy and thus concerned with welfare, charity, etc. These have a distaste for wealth he notes, but are equally muddled. Thus to talk of concrete strategy and tactics alarms both groups. For the workers, the peasantry, the craftsmen and the national section of the capitalist class, as distinct from the comprador bourgeoisie, Babu noted a clear awareness of the gripping conditions of under-development. To them, his argument of utilising capitalism in the construction of socialism might make a lot of sense. It is precisely these strata that most of the contributions to the debate were not addressed to. But this is by no means an underestimation of the debate. That it took place is in itself significant.

A further disappointing limit is that the participants rarely bother to spell out what political positions, in the context of a ‘socialism’ in Tanzania that all agreed was confined to the rhetorical, but was for some ‘camouflage’, for others misguided idealism. This corresponded to the actual practice of many of the university people at that time: divorced from the party, from any social let alone political interaction with the people, essentially bystanders. There were always some exceptions to this rule however, and in the 1980’s there is a new mood that has gained impetus in Tanzania for radical intellectuals not to ignore everyday political activity. Some of them have chosen to act as a ‘left’ within the party (CCM), acting as a visible entity and offering some coherent view. Others remain implacably opposed to such ‘collaboration’ with an essentially ‘capitalist’ regime. We very much hope to update this retrospective view of Tanzania in future issues by bringing news of these recent trends.

The Left Experience in Africa

Purely academic Marxism is, however, not the only variety around any longer. In the last few years an array of explicitly left groups have emerged in many parts of Africa and several of them have attempted to greater or lesser degrees, and with varying success, to reach out to develop some roots among the exploited parts of the population, to forge links between revolutionary intellectuals and those engaged in struggle through their daily lives. Such groups and the possibility of dwelling on and comparing their experiences were scarcely conceived of ten years ago. In now presenting the experiences of some of them, in discussing the political strategies being outlined in thought and practice, and looking at some of the debates around them herein, we are aware that we may be only uncovering the tip of an iceberg and leaving out some notable cases. So please send us other contributions, documents and responses to what is said here.
The last issue of the Review, on the Horn of Africa, contained a piece by Addis Hiwet which, among other issues, provided a retrospect on the Left in Ethiopia. He first, stressed the strength of its historical tradition, and then went on to offer a critique of the positions taken after the 1974 revolution by both of the organised tendencies: MEISON that was prepared to work with the military rulers, and EPRP which set in motion an armed struggle and thus the counter-terror. With hindsight it is hard to deny Hiwet’s conclusion that both strategies were mistaken, but one would like to hear what then and now could be a more viable alternative. We know some further contributions to this debate are promised and would welcome them for future issues.

The arguments in the Ethiopian case are potentially instructive to the left in other countries. One of our contributions in the Briefings offers a perspective on contemporary Ghana that takes up a position of direct opposition towards the ‘progressive’ military regime headed by Rawlings. The author, Zaya Yeebo, in fact had a ministerial position in the early days of the setting up of the Provisional National Democratic Council (PNDC); he was responsible for Youth Affairs. Along with others that he identifies as ‘the left’ he fairly soon gave up on the new regime and, after losing out in some of the political battles and playing a direct role in the traumatic events of October to November 1982, they have exiled themselves from the country. Yao Graham gave a very well-received talk at the ROAPE conference at Keele in September, which we hope to publish, representing a different position on the left — of those who have taken a more demanding approach, one of involvement in the new structures, specifically with the popularly-based Defence Committees, while maintaining a principled stance critical of some aspects of government policy. The options of people like him may have to be reassessed after the abolition in November 1984 of the National Defence Committee, of which he was a member, which coordinated local and work-place Committees. The substantive differences in their analyses of the present conjuncture seem to lie in the different weight they give to the ‘objective’ factors operating in Ghana — the depth of the present crisis and the limits that the economic conditions, class forces and the political climate pose to any more radical transformation of Ghana before recovery is mounted — as opposed to the political ‘will’ of those who are, or ought to be, ‘committed’. Yeebo’s argument is very much of ‘the revolution betrayed’ kind, but even its own logic would seem to have demanded some self-critical remarks, for either trusting Rawlings in the first place or for allowing themselves to be out-maneouvred. A more objective critique, albeit from spectators, might suggest it was adventurism of Yeebo and others in late 1982 to try, seemingly, to wrest the power into their own hands — with little in the way of any popular support. It was those events which did so much to set the Rawlings’ ruling group against this part of the left, and it was their isolation and their exodus plus the divisions in the left that enabled first their group and then late last year other progressives active in the Defence Committees to be picked off one at a time — classical tactics to which Lefts often expose themselves.

In neighbouring Burkina Faso there is a not dissimilar situation with a ‘progressive’ military in power. The document extracted here offers some evidence as to where the army people around Sankara stand — a welcome material given the general ignorance in the English-speaking world of events in this land-locked, extremely poor country. The introduction by Victoria Brittain gives events since August 1983, and the relations between the military rulers and
the tiny left civilian groups there, some historical context. Again the issue is
posed of what stance the left should take towards a progressive military regime.
One difference with the Ghana case, though, lies in the nature of those military
leaders: it is clear that Rawlings et al are merely well-meaning populists and
nationalists; the argument is whether it is better to work with them, accepting at
this stage some inevitable limitations, or to simply oppose (though even then
there is the question of whether best done from exile). In Burkina, judging from
the document, the Sankara group seems to have a clearer grasp of radical ideas
and of possible transformations, even if cautiously pursued, so they offer
themselves as an alternative left to the civilian mini-groups and not just a possible
ally presiding over a temporary alliance of crisis management like Rawlings.

Both of these situations are different, as well as similar, to that in Ethiopia. Aside
from distinctions one can usefully draw between Rawlings' populist reformism,
Sankara's regime, and the Derg (now with its attendant democratic centralist
'Workers Party'), there is the more crucial difference that there has been some
kind of social revolution in Ethiopia. Whether this is seen as a result of, a prelude
to, or despite the Derg, it means the Left there has to define itself in relation to
that revolution and its possible further advance and not just to the military
regime.

Liberia presents yet further variations. One or two figures from the emergent
Left there, like Nga Tipoteh the President of MOJA, were also involved in an
administration following a coup — though in his case he was shanghai-ed into
office and the Doe regime has long given up even the pretence of a progressive
stance. But MOJA continues to use what political space exists between
detentions and rumours of false coups to operate in opposition inside the country
and through open political means. The whole experience of MOJA, which are
featured in Nos.14 & 20, deserves fuller treatment as it is one of the earliest
groups which built effective working links between radical intellectuals and the
people and also developed a mass-based 'politics' which was not simply
conspiratorial. The Briefing from Dr. Tipoteh offers some perspective on recent
events in Liberia and the predicament of the left there.

If a variety of other experiences are to be learnt from, that of the Sudanese
Communist Party, one of the oldest left parties in the continent, must certainly
be taken on board. The SCP had to confront a seemingly similar situation of a
'progressive' military coup in the late 1960s, to debate the issue of how far to
collaborate with it, but then to withstand the repression when the Numeiry
regime turned on them in 1970. We have already featured some of that
experience in our special Issue (No.26) on Sudan, and it is instructive to look back
on contemporary reports of those events like that in Ruth First's Barrel of a Gun.
Here we include a further statement in Briefings which throws light on some of
the strategic issues that are involved in defining appropriate forms of struggle.
Also instructive is the review article by Addis Hiwet of a recent scholarly work,
but one that raises issues very germane to an ongoing debate about the SCP's
strategy for the Sudan, based as it has hitherto been on a preparedness to ally
with a 'national bourgeoisie', a class whose very existence Babiker questions.
Lastly here we commend the article reviewing Central American experience.

The Nigerian Left Debate
Nigeria is the final case we will consider here though we are only able in this issue
to present one side of a vigorous and important debate, and that only briefly, in
the extracts from the ‘Open Letter’ from one of the senior figures on the left in
Nigeria. As with the other countries where we have not given equal space to the
different positions, our selection of one view does not mean our ‘endorsing’ it, so
we hope several debates will be sparked off. Nigeria represents different
circumstances — first, that of a multi-party system, and now a military regime
far from ‘progressive’. Even so the debate might be instructive to others outside
Nigeria.

Debates about appropriate political practice for the left in Nigeria stem from the
(unpublished) minority report by Yusufu Osman and Segun Osoba, members of
the 1978 Constitutional Commission in which they condemned the draft
constitution as no more than ‘provisions for the formal and dubious
accountability of one set of members of the bourgeois political class to
another . . .’

Faced with a return to civilian rule under such terms, the real question that
followed was: What was the possible strategy for socialists? Did they form a
Socialist Party? Several problems with this. One was that socialists were
themselves clustered into particular regions, with various ideological and other
political divisions, so that there was no single socialist movement which could
move into action. It had to be constructed. The second was the constitutional
prohibition on the new Nigerian Labour Congress taking a direct part in politics,
so there wasn’t that sort of readily available institutional base in the labour
movement. In fact at the very beginning a number of separate socialist parties
were announced, but none of them really offered the prospect of becoming the
focus for the political initiative of all Nigerian socialists — as the ‘Open Letter’ we
print in Briefings makes plain. In the end none of them were accepted by the
Federal Executive Committee; and in fact none of them did show the sort of
national organisation which was required for a party to be registered.

So the question then arises, having moved through those stages:- does one
associate with one of the existing political parties or not? The likely candidates
are the PRP in the North, which can be described as a petty bourgeois party, and
indeed would be by its supporters and opponents, or the UPN in the South, led by
Awolowo, which is clearly a bourgeois party in terms of leadership, background,
and orientation, etc.

It is worth emphasising that the PNP provided a vehicle for the mobilisation of
opposition to the dominant oligarchy in the North — by farmers, petty traders,
factory workers, clerks, a whole broad range of people (for more on this
alignment of class forces see ROAPE 13), and particularly in the rural areas their
focus was on the fear of the return to the old days of the various extortionate
practices of the old aristocratic officials. Thus the central issue in the political
mobilisation of the PRP relates to Kaduna and Kano states, even though there
were other issues. But the point is that there was very genuinely a class
mobilisation. To some extent PRP’s massive victory in Kano was over the party
which regarded itself as entitled to hold power.

The further question then arises for those socialists who wanted to involve
themselves in PRP: how to translate the policy of the PRP into effective action?
In the case of Kaduna they ran into the problem that the reactionary NPN
dominated the assembly, that could then be used to block measures from the PRP
governor. The problem in Kano was the split that developed between Aminu
Kano (leader of PRP) and the Governor, and in a sense that posed a real danger of descent into the sort of politics characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie, of seeking the sort of access to office hitherto blocked by the aristocracy.

The further question then follows: does the party try to form and try to establish itself as the basis of a national radical opposition or does it seek to get the best terms for itself in the states where it holds power by allying itself with a dominant party at the national level? There are very real problems about them both. The problem about the second is that that way the PRP becomes effectively another party of patronage. In a sense what the PRP was doing was that it saw itself as seeking to abolish feudalism. What abolition meant quite honestly was the substitution of their patronage network for the aristocratic patronage network, which is perhaps a significant egalitarian and democratic change, but still means operating through patronage. So the question is: 'Do socialists go in for using the politics of patronage to shift access to power and opportunity to a wider range of people, not directly to the masses admittedly', or do they stand outside and say 'the sort of politics of patronage and communalism for allocating resources in which Nigerian politics has been replete is anathema, and socialist politics have to be organised on a quite different basis'. The problem about the 'abstentionist' alternate is who do you align with because even with the best will in the world it is difficult to see the southern parties as other than parties representing the bourgeois interests organised at the level of a particular state. The general point which emerges is that there is a very real question as to whether socialists should take part in a process of politics based on patronage even when mobilisation of political support is on a class basis. The first problem with the PRP arose from the fact that it was only able to get substantial support in two states, and in both on the basis of opposition to the ruling northern oligarchy. The second issue which arises is the question of the nature of that northern oligarchy. The issue is not whether the northern oligarchy is the dominant element in Nigeria as a whole, or whether the dominant party in Nigeria is a national bourgeoisie in which there is a (dominating) northern element. I think from the point of view of the PRP and its supporters their presenting the northern oligarchy as the immediate enemy had enabled them to seek an alliance with the bourgeois parties of the South who actually saw the ruling NPN as the party of northern domination. From the point of view of radicals in the South, however, this lead to a mis-identification of the dominant group by reference to its northern character rather than to its national character as the 'naira party'.

Thus the two issues that are stressed by the Left in the PRP are a) that of participation in politics — hard to gain say, and b) their analysis of Nigeria in terms of the northern oligarchy. This latter argument seems to reflect two perspectives: that of northern progressives identifying the 'immediate enemy' as their own enemy, and it did look like an oligarchy. But this argument appealed to southern bourgeois parties as an analysis which seemed to give a progressive cast to their own politics. But for southern radicals that posed problems, for on this analysis their own enemy turned out to be relatively 'progressive'. Both of these are very real issues, and the last in particular is not easily resolved.

Another equally real issue has now to be faced with the disaster of the resumption of manipulative politics, the manipulation of elections, and the failure of electoral politics. Now what has to be faced is a military regime which talks about 'work' and 'discipline', which locks up its critics, particularly progressive
journalists. Whereas before, the very existence of the PNP with its own newspaper that exposed such incidents as the massacre of peasants at Bakalori, prevented the ruling party from having a monopoly of politics, now the military claims an effective monopoly of political decision-making. In a sense the present military regime is much more coherently repressive and authoritarian than the NPN would ever be. What then are socialists to make of this current military regime? It clearly does not have an economic programme. It does some of the things that the IMF wants it to do; it doesn’t do others, like devalue. It doesn’t have a coherent political programme, either, because the programme of the last military government was to create that particular structure of electoral politics that has so abysmally failed. In this context it is important to ask what alternative programme are the socialists putting forward? Beyond just opposing the repression of an authoritarian regime, where do they look beyond to? Are they to look towards re-engaging in a period of civilian politics? Is there any alternative which will be better for socialists than the earlier pattern of civilian rule? These are real dilemmas, but ones that take us back to those raised in the early debates as to the Left’s strategy.

It is not our place to offer solutions, or even to pretend these issues can easily be resolved but what might be instructive for those who might want to consider and learn from Nigerian experience is to isolate the dilemmas it throws up. We can attempt a list:

1. Should Socialists support petty bourgeois parties if they are capable of mobilising in part on a class basis — even if, as with the PRP experience which was far from salutary, the confusions and contradictions characteristic of petty bourgeois politics are inevitably going to arise?
2. How to identify the dominant group in Nigerian politics: as a national oligarchy, as the northern oligarchy, or as the national ruling class made up of an alliance of different sectional interests?
3. What sort of political context is best for the development of a coherent socialist movement: that of electoral civilian politics, that of opposition to an oppressive military regime?

It has to be added that socialists have taken up different issues on these very real dilemmas, not surprisingly. But they have then gone in for bitter attacks on those who adopt different tactics and strategy, often accusing them of every ideological error and political and even personal crime in the book. But shouldn’t people realise the dilemmas are very real ones and it is no solution for socialists to spend their time attacking one another rather than to find some basis for clarifying the issues and developing coherent policies capable of generating wide support.

* * *

There are of course many quite different types of situations that the Left in other African countries has to contend with. There are the out-and-out reactionary and repressive regimes, where opposition is demanded without question: the issue is how to organise. On the other extreme, there are ruling parties that swept to power in national liberation struggles whose practice can no longer be considered above criticism: what space is there, then, for ‘critical support’? And there remains the special, crucial case of South Africa where present circumstances — the Nkomati accords and their depriving any guerilla struggle of outside sanctuary, but the massive mushrooming of internal protest and organisation — suggest that creative debate about strategy that is not stuck in inherited ruts may be timely. *Lionel Cliffe & Shubi Ishemo (with Gavin Williams on Nigeria)*
JITENDRA MOHAN

In our last number, we recorded the untimely death of our friend and co-editor Jitendra Mohan. What follows is a fuller tribute to his life and work.

Jitendra's life was characterised by his unwavering commitment, both intellectual and political, to the struggles of the peoples of the Third World against colonialism and tyranny and for independence and democratic socialism. Although we and our fellow-editors on the ROAPE editorial working group knew him principally for his work in and on Africa, he was also active on other fronts. As an Indian one of his main concerns was always the political struggles in his homeland — in recent years he had returned there for a brief spell and had considered returning for good at one stage. In the event he stayed in England but was active in the groups based in Britain campaigning at one stage, over the creation of Bangladesh, and later against Indira Ghandi's state of emergency. Elsewhere in Asia, Jitendra took a keen interest in events in Indochina and in recent years was to be found once more active with a rather unpopular campaign (on the left, that is) against the Vietnamese involvement in Kampuchea, but also, it should be added, against the Pol Pot tyranny. But he maintained his African interests and support for left struggles there. When a group of left Ugandans in exile from Amin found that they needed printing facilities for their magazine, Forward, Jitendra was on hand to organise the facilities and help with the printing.

Jitendra's association with ROAPE began in 1975, three years after the journal was initiated and a year after it began publication. Although invited to join much earlier, he was always very suspicious of the kind of journal ROAPE might be or become. He feared it might turn into yet another academic journal and that, based in England and largely run by non-Africans, it would lose any contact with the struggles of the peoples of Africa. For him the importance of such a journal was that it would break with the academic tradition and would document and analyse people's struggles with the objective of assisting their progress. The journal should, he thought, deliberately seek out work by those active in struggle in Africa, or work that dealt with attempts by workers and peasants and their movements to liberate themselves from authoritarian oppression and lay the foundations for independent socialist advance. We had several discussions with him, persuading him that this was precisely the journal we had intended ROAPE to be, and persuading him that he could play an important role in ensuring that in fact ROAPE became such a journal. When Jitendra finally joined us he took responsibility for the fourth number on Imperialism and Peoples War, a number which contained the text of a speech by Samora Machel, an analysis of Ugandan politics by Mahmood Mamdani, and an account of workers' struggles to
gain control of decision-making in a Dar es Salaam factory by Pascal Mihyo. It was no accident that Jitendra should be the main editor of a number which was centrally concerned with people's struggles and that was written by the nationals of the countries in which these struggles occurred. A main thrust of Jitendra's subsequent contributions at meetings of the editorial working group was that we must continually seek out such material and that the journal's output should be dominated by it.

He sustained his position on ROAPE for five years. His wife Judy had joined the journal's office in Sheffield meanwhile, so that when Jitendra wrote to the editors resigning from the EWG, he characteristically shrouded the resignation with his dry wit. 'One J. Mohan is quite enough' he wrote. Of course the differences with the majority of the EWG ran quite deep. We had published at various times articles which endorsed the position taken by the MPLA in Angola and by the ANC in South Africa on the developing crises in these countries. Rightly or wrongly, Jitendra read this as the line of the journal. As he did later in the case of Kampuchea, Jitendra opposed the view that one country, in this case Cuba, and by implication the USSR, could help impose by force a particular political solution on another country. That solution could only be determined by the different groups involved, representing as they did different popular interests. For him, the MPLA did not have the support of the vast majority of the people. At least UNITA, if not the FNLA, were movements with some degree of popular support. Reconciliation between these groups was in the nationalist interest, but what was happening was intervention on behalf of a pro-Moscow movement by a Soviet surrogate to further its superpower interests in the region. All that would happen would be counter-intervention by the US and the people of Angola would be the ones to suffer. Looking at the situation in Angola today, there are many who disagreed with Jitendra vehemently then, who might now grant that there was force to what he said, or at least that there were complexities in the situation not always recognised.

Jitendra was persuaded to rejoin the EWG three years later. Once more we were able to convince him that ROAPE was moving in the general popular direction he would support even if not on specific emphases and that his contribution was needed. With his scholarly style, his passion for books and his wide knowledge of the literature, he was a singularly appropriate person to take over the job of Reviews Editor. He began this new task with characteristic energy, and had plans for major review articles well in hand at the time of his death. In particular he was keen to seek out reviews and review articles by African theorists and activists and we hope to see the results of that policy in future numbers of ROAPE.

In retrospect, perhaps Jitendra's most original contribution was that he made while teaching in the Ghana of the early and mid-1960s. He was one of the first to introduce socialist ideas to the students there and he subsequently published his analysis of the Nkrumah period in the Socialist Register in 1966 and 1969. For him, the positive side of 'nationalist parties' like the Convention Peoples' Party lay in the fact that 'the social distance of leadership from the African masses was considerably less than that of the African elite, which enabled it soon to (become) ... a national movement'. However, the shortcomings he pointed to were first, the tendency to under-emphasise the contradictions and differentiations within the country, and to 'seek to subordinate them to the general and over-riding interest of the nation as a whole'. Second, where 'Nkrumah's failure was total ... (was in not) combining political control with democratisation of structures' — vital 'if the socialist experiment is to succeed'.

This concern with the relationship between national and class struggles was to resurface in the editorial Jitendra wrote to our number on Imperialism and Peoples
War. '... the liberation movement (for national independence), or the national struggle which it leads (is not nor) can ever be “above” or free from the mundane reality of class contradictions and class struggle. Rather, as the experience of Mozambique, Angola and Guine-Bissau amply attests, the class struggle is reflected in, and indeed waged through, the struggle between differing or opposed lines over the objectives, methods and perspectives of the liberation struggle itself'. For Jitendra, the African people were articulating through their leaders and movements (note which way round he phrases the relationship — the people first) a theory specific to their situations, while leaders like Cabral and Machel were leading an armed struggle of a united people ‘for total independence even while the class struggle goes on within its ranks’.

A few years later, Jitendra, engaged in a polemic with what he saw was a particular interpretation of nationalist movements and regimes in many articles that had appeared in ROAPE, an interpretation which, as he saw it, tended to discount, misunderstand, or impugn their achievements, their growing strength and their authenticity, ‘all because they are felt to be ideologically inadequate or “impure”’. He eschewed what he saw as a strong tendency in western Marxists to label those African states which did not appear to be in the front-line of revolution in Africa, as ‘neo-colonialist’. This feeling about revolutionary purity led western Marxists to support particular groups or particular governments because they had a clearer commitment to Marxism-Leninism than others. He saw a coincidence of interest here, as most of these groups and governments were also supported by the Soviet Union and its allies, admittedly with different objectives in mind. Yet he argued that these movements and governments were not all ‘“neo-colonial” puppets or mortally fearful of “revolution” but... they can see that an absolute and exclusive pursuit of a military solution, given its logic in the context of superpower rivalry, would not only frustrate the objectives of the African liberation struggle, but could also put into jeopardy the independence and unity, precarious though these be, of the African countries in general’.

Throughout this polemic was to be found Jitenda’s constant concern with the question of the role of the superpowers, and of the Soviet Union especially. Hostile as he was to the machinations of the US, he was even more hostile to what he saw as Soviet pressure on Third World governments to follow particular strategies, which would be most likely to benefit Soviet strategic interests and which might well destroy the fragile unity of independent states and thus play into the hands of either superpower. This view of superpower struggle and of the USSR’s role in it was often mistakenly seen as a slavish following of the Peking line. For Jitendra, however, it was a matter of putting the national independence struggle first, and of allowing class contradictions to be played out in the framework of non-interference by outside regional or world superpower interests.

Last but not least, Jitendra will be remembered by many of his students, both at Legon and at Sheffield, as a totally committed and conscientious teacher. Unwilling to engage in the rat-race of academia, Jitendra was, for the sake of gathering together the intellectual support for the struggles he supported, continually involved in a process of revising, rethinking and updating his teaching material. More recently, he had, together with his colleague Ankie Hoogvelt, steered through the University of Sheffield a Master’s programme in Third World Studies — ‘an interdisciplinary study of national development and liberation, with a new approach to country-specific project work’. The focus on national development and liberation once again emerges as a constant theme. We are pleased to report that programme will go ahead.
At his death he was working on this number of the Review. The themes it deals with and its structure and authorship owe a great deal to Jitendra’s concerns and his vision. We on the editorial working group will miss him greatly for his incisive and often trenchant comments on articles submitted, for his role in building up our Reviews Section, for his unfailing generosity and lack of personal animus even in the midst of disagreement, for his ideas about the conception of future numbers and for his constant concern to keep us on the right track by transcending the academic world and committing ourselves to the cause of the peoples of Africa.

Lionel Cliffe & Peter Lawrence
The Commitment of the Intellectual

Ngugi wa Thiong’o

We are proud to reproduce here an interview with the well-known Kenya author, made by Obi Bini, London, 3 May 1983.

QUESTION: You have devoted much effort at combating the cultural domination of the peoples of Africa. Why do you place so much emphasis on the struggles of the cultural front?

NGUGI: I think the cultural impact on Africa, on these countries which have been dominated by imperialism, has been under-emphasised, although it is so crucial in explaining the attitudes and struggles in Africa and the Third World today. The way I see it is this: imperialism has three basic aspects. The first and primary aspect is, of course, economic. Imperialism, during the colonial or neo-colonial stage, wants primarily to control the productive forces of the people, that is, the natural resources and what their labour produces.

But to control the people economically imperialism finds it necessary to have political control. That is, it imposes judicial systems, political systems, military systems and institutions designed to control people directly, particularly during the colonial stage. But in history, economic and political control have never been complete without cultural control. You see, in my view culture is the carrier of a people’s values. And the values a people hold — as the basis of their self-identity as a people — is the basis of how they look at themselves collectively and individually in relationship to the universe. So the aim of cultural control is in fact to control how people look at themselves; to control the basis of their self-identity as a people.

Imperialism, of course, did this through educational institutions, through literature, religion, dances, everything. And they did this to make the colonised look at themselves through the cultural eyeglasses made in Europe. It has meant the colonised look at themselves through the eyes of the dominating nations, the dominating classes, and so on. If you look at yourself through the eyes of the person dominating you, then it means you are not really in a position to resist, or oppose him. That is why cultural control is so important. A slave is not a slave until he accepts that he is a slave.

Unfortunately, the colonial phase of imperialism did produce an African elite with the mentality that was in harmony with the needs of the ruling classes of the imperialist countries. And often it was this African elite, nurtured in the womb of
imperialism, with the cultural eyeglasses from Europe, that came to power or who held the reins of power during the neo-colonial phase of imperialism. And it means that this class, because of the cultural-mental outlook it took from the imperialist ruling classes, does not see any contradiction between itself and the needs of the ruling classes of the imperialist nations.

In fact that goes so far as to say that cultural control, as a means of economic and political control, is the most dominant factor, during the neo-colonial phase of imperialism, and we as an African people must address ourselves to this if we are really serious about the liberation of the productive forces of African people.

QUESTION: You said in one of your essays that African writers must become 'literally guerillas' in the people's struggles against imperialism. What does that mean for the African writer, and what are the demands on a writer choosing such a path?

NGUGI: First of all, what did I mean by this? Now, you find that in a situation where one race dominates another, and one nation dominates another, where one class dominates another, there are two types of intellectuals, broadly speaking. There are intellectuals of the dominating race, or the dominating nation, or the dominating class. And these intellectuals are not necessarily recruited from the dominating nation, race or class. They can be recruited from even among the members of the dominated nation, race or class. By this kind of intellectual, I mean the intellectual who rationalises a world view or an outlook which is in harmony with the needs and positions of the dominating nation, race or class. In other words, this kind of intellectual, whether he is conscious of it or not, is expressing a world view that does not contradict, or is not a threat to, the dominant position of that class, nation or race.

Now, put it this way: when for instance an intellectual argues that human nature does not change; even if he did not think that he was consciously defending the position of the dominating person, in that particular situation of the dominating and the dominated, the world view that nothing changes is philosophically in harmony with the needs of the dominating person who, of course, does not want to see any changes and therefore of course, views history, philosophy and education as a reflection of no need to change.

On the other hand, you get other intellectuals who express a world view which is in harmony with the needs and positions of the dominated class, race or nation: in other words, who rationalise a world view which reflects the need for change. And this need for change is not an abstraction for the person who is dominated, that is, for a person who has been set upon, it is part of the objective reality of that situation for him to want changes, whether he believes this change is possible or not. So, those intellectuals of the dominated classes or nations, of course, can also be recruited from any classes.

I was looking at colonial history and I saw that the colonising classes had in fact recruited many of their intellectuals from sons and daughters of peasants, from sons and daughters of factory workers. And you find these sons and daughters of factory workers with a university education really expressing a world view which in fact is in harmony with the needs of those who dominate their mothers, their fathers, their sisters, and so on. And they do not see that they themselves are in fact part and parcel of those forces now dominating their mothers, their sisters, their brothers.
But in the same way that imperialism has its intellectuals, the working class and peasantry have also their intellectuals. And it is necessary for an intellectual who really wants to contribute to the liberation of the African people — that is, the liberation of their productive forces and their genius — to put his intellectual resources at the service of the people; to make sure that whatever he articulates, in writing, in lectures, in essays, everywhere is in harmony with the needs of the struggling classes in Africa — that is, their struggle for the liberation of their productive forces so that he who produces is he who controls that which he produces.

QUESTION: A writer could produce creative works or other intellectual works that accurately and correctly articulate the needs and positions of the working classes and advocate change in their circumstances. Is that enough?

NGUGI: It is important that the writer is able to do this. It is very, very important. In fact if they were able to do this, if the majority of intellectuals in Africa who had been to universities, schools and so on were to do this, that would be a very important step. That would be a revolutionary step. But in fact, in my view there has not been enough of this kind of person who can accurately, correctly and artistically reflect the needs of the struggling people. Of course if you were to accurately describe, and accurately take the position of the struggling masses, this would inevitably lead you to a choice of options as to where to work, with whom to work, whether to work with the masses or with those exploiting the masses and so on. So I think that step of accurately reflecting the needs of the struggling masses is very, very important and can guide the intellectual in his choice of actions.

QUESTION: In your book Detained, you said that you learned more from the experience of working with the peasants and workers in the Kamirithu Community Education and Cultural Centre than your years in the universities. Can you explain that?

NGUGI: Whenever some people have read that particular statement, they have tended to say: ‘You must be joking. Learning from peasants and workers? What can they teach you?’ But the fact is, you look at colonial education, it tended to alienate the educated from his immediate environment. Look, for instance, at the way I was brought up in school. We were punished for speaking our mother tongues in the school compounds. Take that for instance.

If you punish a child for speaking his mother tongue what are you really doing to the mentality of that child? You are really making him hate the language which was the basis of his humiliation, and by extension hate the values carried by that language and also dislike or look down upon the people who created a language that was the basis of his humiliation. This means that he was in fact distancing himself from himself and his immediate environment.

On the other hand, when anyone of us did very well in English language, we were praised very highly, were given very high marks, were given standing ovations. We became heroes. But then, what did that do to this child? Obviously, it made him look up to English language as the most important tool of one’s being, and by extension it made him have positive attitudes toward the values, philosophy and culture carried by that language. And of course, by extension, he looked up to the people who created a language which was the basis of his new heroic status. In other words, a knowledge of English language became the standard of one’s, or
the measure of one’s intelligence and abilities. That one example shows you how one was alienated from one’s own language, and was made to look externally to other people’s language, values and the culture that the language carries.

Take another example: religion. Just as a matter of general attitude: if you look at religion it taught a child to know that which was farthest removed from himself. Even today you find African people or any people for that matter who have absorbed Christian doctrines; who know every single detail about heaven and god and Jesus Christ, and even about how people will be dressing, what kind of clothes people will be wearing in after-life — presumably white clothes, but they know nothing about what is in front of their eyes, what their eyes can see, what their ears can hear, what their fingers can touch. But that which their eyes cannot see, their ears cannot hear, their fingers cannot touch, they are sure of in every detail.

The same is true when it came to the teaching of geography; rocks and rivers of Europe first, nothing about rivers and the valleys and hills from our own countries. In history we know the whole history of England from the times of Queen Elizabeth through British victories in the Second World War. Very little about our own histories which in fact were often taught as if they started with the colonisation of Africa, and so on. With those few examples, you can see that they all had one object: to alienate oneself from one’s immediate environment, and so by implication identify with Europe.

In my case, it became a shocking confrontation with that reality in 1977. Since 1961 I have been writing plays, novels in English language. And although my novels and plays were talking about the struggles of peasants and workers, nevertheless I found it necessary to express these struggles in a foreign language. When I started work at Kamirithu Community Education and Cultural Centre, and started working with peasants and factory workers for adult literacy and in theatre, I was naturally confronted with the issue of language. If you are working in a peasant community what language are you going to use? In this case, we chose the language of the immediate community in which we were working.

When we came to theatre it was the same question. If you are going to have plays and dramatic set sketches for people in the villages and so on, what language are you going to use? At the end, of course, we opted for the language of the community. But the moment we wrote our plays and dramatic sketches in that language, we came to the painful reality — or not-so surprising reality — that the peasants and factory workers knew much more about their language than we did. It was shocking to me when as they started taking the scripts and reading them, sometimes they would laugh at the awkward way in which we had used language. And they would comment and say, ‘You are doing very well, you are trying very hard. But this is not how you use language. An old man does not speak like this. An old man uses this and that kind of proverb. Oh, you want that passage to have effect — these are the kind of images you use’, and so on.

So now, I who had been previously a Professor of English and Literature at the University of Nairobi, was now being taught the ABC of my language, its operations, its images and how to use it effectively in the delineation of a character and the internal psychology of those characters.

Again, when it came to theatre, you had to ask yourself what content, and of
course we were to have the kind of theatre that reflected the real histories of the people. That is, their heroic struggles against colonial and neo-colonial oppressions. The moment we did this, and in a language which they understood, of course the rules were once again reversed. Because, obviously, the people knew their history much better than we did. Often some of the people who took part in our theatre were the very people who had actively participated in the Mau Mau guerilla warfare against the British colonial settler presence in Kenya.

Some of them had made guns, some of them had done intelligence work, others had done actual fighting, so they knew this history much better. And often, they would stop in the course of our discussion of a play and discuss among themselves the various reminiscences, or the various battles in which they had participated. And again we had to learn from the people. We were actually learning the history we had helped to create.

Again, when we came to write on contemporary problems of the workers in a modern factory, I discovered that I had never been in a factory in my life. So I was writing about factories and workers from a position of abstraction. Since the participants in our theatre were factory workers themselves, they were able to correct us on so many things. For instance, one worker was very surprised that in discussing one particular factory near our place, we had not mentioned that workers were killed by conditions in that factory, and that they had not been paid compensation for even some of the serious damages they had undergone while working with some of the dangerous gases in that factory. One worker literally slipped off his shirt to show us his body which was full of white and black blotches. And he told us he had not been paid compensation. Then he turned to us and said: ‘Why have you left out this kind of reality in a factory?’

When it came to writing about exploitation, again we could only talk in generalities, abstractions. But they were able to work out by how much they were being exploited in that factory. The factory we used was a shoemaking factory. I remember one time when workers in a particular department said: ‘Look, in one day, one morning, we from this particular factory are able to make enough shoes to pay for all the salaries of the 3,000 workers from the factory for a whole month. So, for whom are we working for the rest of 29 days?’

When later the play became successful, some of the people who came to see the play said it was very, very good indeed. ‘But Ngugi and his colleague Wa Mirii were writing as if Karl Marx was born in that village’. The fact is, who knows much more about the conditions in which he is working, Karl Marx or the worker living in those conditions? Now you can see the alienation of our education — that a worker who is in a factory does not quite know enough about the conditions under which he is living; a peasant who is working in a plantation, or who is having his crops stolen by the middleman does not know the reality of the conditions in which he is living!

That is why for me, this work at the Kamirithu Community Education and Cultural Centre in 1977 — although it led to my political detention for a year, and has led to subsequent problems with the Kenya neo-colonial regime — was so crucial. For me, it was a complete education, and I shall never regret having involved myself with the peasants and factory workers in Kamirithu in Kenya.

QUESTION: At what point in your life and work did you become convinced of
the necessity to consciously commit yourself to the cause of the people’s struggles?

NGUGI: In a sense, it has always been instinctively there. My parents, like the parents of most of the people of my generation were peasants and they had taken part in the struggles of the people of Kenya. But I’ll say that in terms of consciousness, this has been a gradual process, a process which is not complete even. In other words, I see it as a process which has been going on all the time, a process of self-liberation through immersion in the work of the people.

But of course, what has happened to me, as a result of that, for instance my political detention in 1977, and my subsequent problems with the current regime in Kenya — has convinced me more and more about the correctness of the positions I have taken artistically, in my work in theatre and fiction.

QUESTION: You are one of many Intellectuals in Kenya who are facing severe repression and mounting persecution by the government. What is the crime of these intellectuals?

NGUGI: There’s no doubt in my mind that Kenya has been a model neo-colony. By this, I mean that Kenya is a country whose people have had a heroic history of struggle: To the extent that they were, I think, through the Kenya ‘Land and Freedom Army’, among the first people in the British empire to wage a war for independence through armed struggle.

But at the same time, the British colonial regime in Kenya had managed to recruit an elite that had absorbed the outlook of the British ruling class. And this elite was given the dominant positions in administration, in all the key sectors, let’s say, of the new independent regime. Now, it meant that Kenya, on acceding to independence, never actually broke with the colonial economic structures. And if you don’t break your links with imperialism, then it means the same political and cultural problems that were there during the colonial era will continue during the neo-colonial era. In other words, if you don’t break with the economic structures of colonialism, which means the exploitation of the vast majority of people, then politically such a regime will become more and more alienated from the people, because it will be doing exactly what the colonial state was doing. When a regime becomes more and more alienated from the people, it tends to become more and more repressive as a way of maintaining its dominant position in that country. That’s what has happened to the Kenya regime.

All centres of democratic expression have been repressed. In Kenya, the regime cannot allow, does not theoretically allow more than five people to meet without a licence. In other words, theoretically, if more than five people were to meet without a licence they could be arrested. The fact that they are not arrested when five people are meeting, is not for lack of laws and power in the regime to do such a thing.

Another example. In Kenya, a theatre group has to be registered and even then, each play that they perform has to have the regime’s licence. Now, the regime does not allow people to organise on their own terms, and the destruction of the Kamirithu Community Education and Cultural Centre open stage built by the people themselves, is an example of the regime’s hatred of any initiatives taken by the people.

Parliament in Kenya, or the national assembly, has become no more than just a
mouth piece of the ruling regime. The University was the only centre, broadly speaking, of democratic expression. That is, the university, by purely maintaining the liberal bourgeois ideals of freedom of expression, the right to receive different opinions, was being seen as being more to the left, not because the university was actually moving to the left, but by the fact that the regime has been moving so far to the right that the liberal position, the liberal ideals of the university, were becoming, or were being seen as a threat to the regime.

So, I will say that the crime of all these people who are now in prison is really the fact that they expressed opinions that were seen to be different from that of the regime.

Let me give you an example. No country has a right to give its territory or to offer its territory as a military base to another country without consulting the people. And the Kenya regime has given the United States of America military facilities in Kenya, but the Kenyan people were not consulted; the Kenyan Parliament was not consulted. In fact up to now the Kenyan people have never been told officially that the regime has given the USA military facilities. Yet the American people have been told this by their Congress. So Americans could debate and have opinions on the military facilities offered their government by the Kenyan regime. But the Kenyan people who could be affected by the presence of the US military personnel in Kenya, were not consulted.

The regime has gone so far to the right as to become contemptuous of the people of Kenya as a whole. The regime has become completely anti-Kenyan in its stance, and this has been exemplified by this offering of Kenyan territory for American military use without consulting anybody in Kenya.

QUESTION: There are many young Africans, young students and intellectuals who find inspiration from your work and who face several obstacles in their desire to do artistic work for the people. What message do you have for them?

NGUGI: My advice here will be very simple. And that is, to go back to the people. When I say that, I mean literally that we have a lot to learn by working with the people in factories, in community centres, in the rural areas and so on. By working with the people, I mean directly working with the people. We have a lot to learn from our languages, from our philosophies and so on. When I say this, I don’t mean this in an exclusive sense. I mean it is using our immediate environment as a base for our take-off, or as a base for our assimilation of whatever is necessary to our struggles.

Special Issue on Health

ROAPE is planning an Autumn 1985 issue on the political economy of health and related issues. Contributions are invited on such topics as: health and development, health and the state, health and the family. Ideally we would like the issue to cover a cross-section of geographical/linguistic zones, cases and political settings, as well as more theoretical pieces. Accounts of interesting innovations in health care in Africa are most welcome. Copy by the end of June, please, to the ROAPE office.
The Marxist Conception of Class: Political and Theoretical Elaboration in the African and Africanist Context

Jean Copans

When the white people came to our country, we had the land and they had the bible; now we have the bible and they have the land.

(South African saying quoted by Eduardo Mondlane, late President of FRELIMO)

This paper is concerned with the problem of ‘exporting’ key terms and conceptual frameworks to Africa from Western societies where they were developed and to an understanding of which they were designed. It follows the historical journeys of the notions of class and class struggle — through their application by Marx and ‘classical’ Marxists, by African leaders of political movements, by the early generations of African writers, by ‘neo-Marxist’ Africanists. It explores contemporary analyses of pre-capitalist and today’s capitalist societies and explores the paradox that the familiar classes associated with ‘classical’ capitalism are quantitatively under-represented and that other classes that are often seen as mere ‘legacies’ are preponderant in African society. The working out of the political significance of the class structure has been inhibited by the purveyors of theory: ‘neither African political leaders nor Africanists’ really operate as what Gramsci called ‘organic intellectuals’. So ‘class’ remains an imported, ‘luxury’ item.

The Problem Stated
The historical expansion of capitalism on a world-wide scale is not only an economic, political or even cultural phenomenon. It is also an intellectual one: the discovery that the study of ‘the others’ is in fact a progressive alienation of the identity and culture of these ‘others’. The recent critical history of Western views on on-European societies and cultures recalls this situation quite bluntly (see Asad and Said). The exportation of concepts forged exclusively from European realities is no speculative and innocent enterprise. It was made possible, and afterwards maintained, through all those processes of domination and exploitation which have linked the south and the north for the last 500 years. But revolutionary movements and national liberation movements have called this process into question and have even tried to make it serve aims other than those for which it was originally designed. It is therefore impossible to carry out a purely academic and scientific examination of this phenomenon of the exportation of concepts. The historical and epistemological analysis must be completed by analysis of the dominant and dominated ideologies, of the levels of political action and of the nature of social movements.
This is a very complex process: new realities have to be understood through dominant theoretical paradigms, which are shot through with ethnocentric and ideological prejudices, conceptual tinkering and simple ignorance. Marxism as a social, ideological, institutional and theoretical framework is of course subject to the same tendencies. This holds for the works of Marx and Engels, the revolutionary Third World leaders. Moreover, a distinction must be drawn between the usage of a complete theoretical system and the symbolic reference to particular terms or concepts.

This paper concentrates on the Marxist concept of class (social class, class within relations of production and particularly class struggle), because it is a very common notion and therefore the more relevant for our demonstration. It has been deployed with much success, having been used in two sets of contrasting ways. On the one hand, it is a tool of scientific analysis and of political and ideological practice; on the other, it is applied to capitalist societies and to pre- or non-capitalist societies. Of course other notions such as ‘nation’ or ‘people’ are also widely used but their scientific rather than political usage is still tentative, as Basil Davidson has recently shown in his *Africa in Modern History* (1978). Specific terms have in fact been coined for non-European societies. The theoretical framework in which these terms are situated is European, but the exportation of concepts involved is implicit, since such terms as ‘tribe’, ‘caste’ or ‘tribalism’, for example, do not derive from Western societies. The confrontation of these concepts and that of class is a classical theme in Western sociology and anthropology.

**Marxism and non-European Societies**
The social and historical background of the application and practice of Marxism in non-European societies may be briefly sketched. It has always been written from the point of view of the Western world, where theory is elaborated, and never from that of the ‘Orient’, where it is applied.

1. **The Aims of Marx and Engels**
Though perhaps a hackneyed topic, the specific characteristics of non-European societies were the subject of little real analysis. Perry Anderson’s position on the ‘Asiatic mode of production’ offers a radical critique: that the information underlying this concept was completely ideological and had misled Marx. Two types of concerns emerge from Marx and Engels’ writings. First, the theoretical and historical discussion of the forms that preceded capitalist production’, and second a more political critique of the nature and the effects of the colonial forms of capitalism. But all this research, thought and hypothesis are more or less explicitly linked to an analysis of the capitalist mode of production. The existence of past modes enabled Marx and Engels to justify the historical and transitory character of the capitalist mode of production, or to qualify it as a specific and superior mode that expands on a world scale and subsumes all former modes of production. Thus the geography of their analysis is sketchy: India is discussed at length, but sub-Saharan Africa is ignored.

2. **The Colonial Revolution**
Not much is to be found in the world of Bolshevik leaders and thinkers on the nature of social classes and social structures of the ‘Orient’. The activists of the ‘World Revolution’ are more concerned with ideological conflicts and their
relationship to the Soviet revolution — a very natural but unfortunate position. In assuming the avant-garde role of the working class, the revolutionaries say nothing about the more controversial sociological reality of its absence. The denunciation of the bourgeoise cannot be taken for a class analysis even if it is presented as such.

3. Stalinist Confusions and Perversions
This period is the most important for the understanding of our project. It has produced the diabolical conjunction of a particular analytical mode and political and ideological opportunism. Theoretical analysis is subordinated to the strategic, diplomatic and even social interests of the USSR. Its isolation from the intellectual centres of the Western world also explains in part, the impoverished and dogmatic analyses of the Third World.

Some lessons from the African Case
The African case is, for several reasons particularly illuminating with regard to the conditions of the exportation of European notions and Marxist usages of class. Sub-Saharan African societies are the most recently ‘discovered’ and the least well known among the Third World, and also the ones which have been transformed the least by the colonial revolution. Local societies and indigenous cultures are extremely diverse; the complexity of the forms of capitalist development is a contemporary demonstration of this variety. Any extrapolation based on a specific empirical case therefore encounters great theoretical difficulties. Capitalist history is so recent that the debates pertain to the very existence of these new relations of production, and therefore of new classes. To understand and describe the classes generated by capitalism one must analyse also the ancient social forms. This, of course, raises the as yet unanswered question: has Africa’s history been one of class struggle?

The African field has been a great asset for Marxism both for understanding the past (historical and economic anthropology) and for understanding the present (political economy and sociology). Unfortunately (or fortunately?) these two approaches are directed to different societies and states, and their convergence is not yet in sight. This opposition is expressed in the differences between the francophone and the anglophone social sciences.

IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS
African Marxism began as a political and ideological instrument. National liberation movements, some post-colonial states and some ‘Marxist-Leninist’ parties (whether in power or in opposition) justified or explained their programmes by referring to Marxism (and therefore to a ‘class analysis’). Explicit contradictions appeared when rigid and dogmatic brands of Marxism, either the vulgar and economistic materialism of the Stalinist period from 1930 to 1960 or Maoism after 1962, were applied to the specific characteristics of Africa. Being crudely imported, without any rethinking or reformulation, because their use was the symbol of a just cause, the notions of class and class struggle turned out to be mere slogans which camouflaged opportunistic practices. The analysis of the local social structure was so dogmatic and abstract that no one could understand which interests the organisations referring to them represented exactly.
Of course these reflections are much better understood when situated within the evolution of the international communist movement. The nature of this relationship is well-known: the marked dependency of ‘revolutionary’ parties and leaders towards the communist parties of the colonial metropolis or towards the centres of international communism (Moscow and Beijing). The misunderstanding of the class structures of colonial societies is not surprising after all, for have Marxists not been unsuccessful in their efforts to explain adequately fascism, Stalinism and the structure of the so-called socialist states (with the exception of some works of Gramsci and Trotsky)? Nevertheless some older writings indicate positive or negative usages of the concepts of class and class struggle and it is necessary to review them before dealing with their more recent and scientific elaborations.

N’Zula and the Soviet Africanists

The book by A.T. N’Zula, I.I. Potekhin and A.Z. Zusmanovitch, *The Working Class Movement and Forced Labour in Negro Africa* marked the nascent interest in sub-Saharan Africa among the Third International, its related organisations and Soviet social research. R. Cohen’s excellent introduction explains this history quite clearly. In the early 1930s sub-Saharan Africa was largely taken to mean South Africa. A large white *working class*, a thorough *proletarianisation* of Africans and proper *Communist Party*: such an African society was easily comprehensible to Leninist and post-Leninist Marxism. The conception of a black proletariat and a landless peasantry was then generalised to other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. The most developed Capitalist society in sub-Saharan Africa thus confirmed a traditional and unchallenged Marxist analysis, even though when applied elsewhere it often led to serious misunderstanding.

The ‘Marxist’ and ‘Communist’ Theoreticians of National Liberation Struggle

The works of these political thinkers and leaders are quite well known and one can consider their writings as personal rather than collective contributions. One can find a very complete and subtle analysis of this literature in Y. Bénöt’s books, *Ideologies des indépendances africaines* (1972) and *Indépendances Africaines, Ideologies et Réalités* (1975). The reference to the concept of class is conjunctural. For example in 1948 G. d’Arbousier in his report to the Coordinating Committee of the Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA — the Pan French-African nationalist movement) declared: ‘The community of interests characteristic of the populations of sub-Saharan Africa does not imply the non-existence of social classes and of various social categories whose interest are divergent and even contradictory.’ But three years later, in 1951, a year after the separation from the French Communist Party (PCF), the RDA journal, *Afrique Noire* published the following opinion: ‘Class struggle, the very basis of communism, has no raison d’être in a country whose society is not a divided one.’ This position was also that of Sekou toure in 1959:

We had adopted Marxism insofar as it applies to Africa. . . . Marxism can be applied in all its doctrinal aspects by the international working class when it concerns itself with class struggle, but this latter element has been removed to allow all African social categories to engage themselves in the general anti-colonialist struggle.

Throughout all the literature of that period, such an ambiguity was always present: the formal affirmation of the existence of classes (and, in appropriate
cases, a dogmatic and empiricist description of the classes of the capitalist mode of production) in the colonial situation, but a strong opposition to any class perspective on pre-colonial ... or post-colonial societies. Since USSR by definition had no classes, why should a 'socialist' Africa rooted in a classless past have such exploitative structures? In N'krumah’s words ‘All non-socialist societies are composed of two large class categories: ruling classes and dominated classes’. Since class struggle was, and still is, conceived as an anti-imperialist struggle, we find no precise reference in this literature to specific indigenous classes. A brief survey will be convincing enough.

Class Struggle in Africa by Kwame N'krumah
Classes do exist; since there is struggle, oppression and exploitation, classes must exist. ‘Some have suggested that the social classes that exist elsewhere in the world are unknown in Africa. Nothing is further from the truth. Africa today is the field of a very violent class struggle’. But Engels and Stalin still inspire theoreticians; the former Ghanaian leader doesn’t seem to have read the lessons of history: ‘There are five types of relations of production: communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism ... Class struggle is the result of private property and of the decline of a communitarian type of society in favour of slave or feudalistic societies’.

This abstract description of classes in colonial and neo-colonial Africa provides us with a schematic model. Sometimes we might find some interesting and altogether surprising theoretical affirmations such as ‘In Africa, the peasant masses constitute the largest part of the working class and potentially the fundamental element of a socialist revolution. But these masses are dispersed, unorganised and generally speaking non-revolutionary’.

West-African Economy by Osende Afana
The author, a later leader of UPC of the Cameroun, speaks also to the subject of social classes. Beginning with the birth of private property, his demonstration is based on Lenin and Mao. He raises the problem of pre-colonial, then capitalist classes and provides us with a table of classes and of their divisions (following mostly Mao): landlords, rich, middle and poor peasants; bureaucratic, comprador, middle and petite bourgeoisie; semi-lumpen and ordinary proletariat. He concludes:

The dividing line between social classes in Western Africa is not precise in any way: these classes are very young and they have established extremely complex relationships between themselves and with the social organisations of the decaying primitive community (including tribe and clan). Keeping these remarks in mind, some want to deny the very existence of social classes and therefore that of class struggle in West Africa. The History of Social Classes in West Africa (Mali and Senegal) by Majhemout Diop.

This is the most detailed book on the topic and it is both sociological and political. But unfortunately a dogmatic and eclectic interpretation, the uncritical utilisation of ‘bourgeois’ empirical and statistical data and political opportunism (see, for example, the appreciation of the role of the marabouts, the Islamic leaders in Senegal) are mingled in an unrigorous manner.

Revolution in Guinea by Amilcar Cabral
Cabral’s thinking on the topic of classes is well-known. He rejects a simplistic anti-imperialist view and tries to understand indigenous ethnic realities without
automatically using the Marxist model of pre-capitalist societies. But class struggles without classes, on the one hand, and petite-bourgeoisie without class relationships, on the other (how could one read otherwise the debateable theory of the historical suicide of this class?), are unMarxist innovations and can be viewed as subjective and opportunistic. But his writings definitely suggest an undogmatic view of social reality, and this is already an important advance.

This sketch should be completed by two other literary and revolutionary bodies of work: that of the second wave of socialist states such as Congo, Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe; and that of the programmes of Marxist opposition parties to neo-colonialist states, as, for example, in Senegal, where half a dozen Marxist-Leninist parties are legally authorised. Though the social and ideological situation of these two groups has little in common with that of the authors we have already reviewed, we can propose the same kind of criticisms. Their uniformity (despite the variations between African societies) and their conformity with a non-African model of analysis and practice tell us much about the social and intellectual constraints determining the conditions of production of Marxism in sub-Saharan Africa.

'SCIENTIFIC' WORK ON 'CLASS'

Let us now turn to the so-called scientific forms of Marxism. It goes without saying that all these general points concerning the specific historical and political conditions in which Marxism and, in particular, class analysis came to be introduced also apply generally to specialists in African studies. N'Zula, Potekhin and Zusmanovitch symbolise very clearly the connections to be made and the conjuncture. In any case, the use of the term 'class' extends beyond just a Marxist framework of analysis. 'Class' is a sociological concept of wide applicability and has many non-Marxist meanings in different circumstances. Moreover, European academics are rooted in practices or political positions which influence their theoretical formulations. The development of the French Marxist school of economic anthropology and the Kenyan, Tanzanian and South African debates (in ROAPE and elsewhere) are all good examples of these points. The works of Africanists citing Marx as an authority have bearing on a considerable number of societies, both former and contemporary. We will distinguish between those analyses with a bearing on the real pre-colonial past from those that are more pertinent to the effects of capitalist development. In fact, paradoxically, one of the innovations of Marxist theoreticians has been to locate pre-colonial social classes in societies customarily spoken of as being 'classless'. These works allow us, on the one hand, to expose the weakness of the positions of African revolutionary leaders hide-bound by the constraints of presenting an anti-capitalist unity, the Stalinist model of the five stages and the disputes about a bureaucratic socialist order. On the other hand, they permit us to understand better the specific features of classes produced by a capitalist development of external origin.

Classes in Pre-colonial African History

The use of 'class' in African anthropology and history has given rise to two slightly different lines of approach. One bears on the definition and construction of new modes of production and the other on the location of generic classes based on age or sex. Chronologically, the first Marxist efforts sought to transcend the
dogmatic formula of five stages or types of modes of production, first of all by expanding the traditional concept of the mode of production. For example, researchers asked themselves if there was only one type of feudal or slave mode of production, if 'primitive communism' refers to all classless societies. But this is a dangerous exercise, for through tampering with the nature of classes and productive forces, the original definition becomes misrepresented. The first innovation consisted in rethinking the well-known concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP).

The existence of village communities (without classes?) exploited by a state apparatus (a class?) seemed in fact to correspond to the model of certain African societies, notably in West Africa. The Asiatic Mode of Production thus served as a Trojan horse for a class analysis of ancient Africa. There remained, however, the question of great hydraulic operations . . . which didn't exist in sub-Saharan Africa! Top rescue Africa, and Marxism, Coquery-Vidrovitch offered us a version of the AMP called the African Mode of Production, in which long distance trade takes the place of large-scale public works. The empiricism of this solution did not, however, resolve the problem of relations of production and thence of classes.

More rigorous efforts were then devoted to the definition of relations of production or exploitation and not simply the control of surplus. Here it is the slave mode of production that received most attention. But this very singular mode of production was not capable of embracing tribal (or ethnic) and village realities. Terray and Rey thus invented the 'tribal village' and the lineage' modes of production. This raised an important question: do systems that are more or less egalitarian contain classes, and, if so, which classes? In a very good study (in Bloch, 1975), Terray tried to answer this major question. For him, the concept of class is central to Marxism. But classes defined by relations of production are not just recruited in any way whatsoever and in any case not only by reference to those relations of production. There are classes to which recruitment is fixed or closed and those to which recruitment is open. Thus natural differentiations, such as age, sex and race, may serve in constructing classes. Accordingly, by integrating these dimensions of class consciousness and class struggle, one arrived at a typology of modes of production 'based concurrently on the nature of classes which are necessarily implied by different modes and on the nature of conflicts between these classes'. This approach is not unanimously agreed, hence the fierce arguments concerning the class nature of the two most frequently employed 'natural' categorisations, age and sex. The lineage mode of production implies, in effect, that the categories of elder and younger are classes. As for relations between the sexes, feminist anthropologists have always initiated these discussions, but here too, there are numerous different hypotheses. In short, pre-colonial African societies are, in their most elementary forms, subjected to a bombardment of formulations about classes. These are often rhetorical, but together they show the advantage of removing Marxism from its economistic elements.

Classes in Africa under Capitalism

Obviously the question of the a priori existence of classes raises fewer issues in the contemporary period. Nevertheless, the circumstances of the articulation and the dominance of a unique mode of production in relation to a variety of modes makes research into such issues much less easy than it would at first appear.
Research began by making an inventory of the evidence of the existence of capitalism: a monetary economy, production geared towards the market, private ownership of the land, industrial proletarianisation. Since capitalism exists in Africa, the classes of capitalism have to be there too. But as it is above all the rural areas that have been transformed, researchers sought to local the ruptures in class structure that have occurred there.

As for the genuinely capitalist realities, it stood to reason that they were casually capitalist! This position bolstered by the determining ideological factors already outlined led to the following paradox. It was classes typical of capitalism which were the least well-known in sub-Saharan Africa: bourgeoisies, bureaucracies, business people, the proletariat, and the unemployed were still rare beasts. So in order to be able to better understand these different formulations of class, a model that is both chronological and typological would seem indispensable.

**Classes and Capitalism in Orthodox Marxism of the 1950s: Exportation of the European Model**

Colonial Africa was a capitalist Africa. But researchers were too little acquainted with African societies and the colonial economy to dare escape from the stereotypes borrowed from the European model and classical imperialism. Certainly the peculiarities of African capitalism were evident: a peasantry undergoing differentiation, and the weakness of proletariats and bourgeoisies. Moreover, reliable information was hard to come by and its heterogeneity made comparisons difficult. Barbe's introduction to his study *Les classes sociales en Afrique noire* emphasised this point. Nevertheless, politics became either all-important or censorious. All empirical research was made relative to the Communist project of an alliance of classes under the leadership of the party of the working class: Woddis, Suret-Canale, Barbe, Soviet analysts all remained quiet on this. One of the best known of the latter, Potekhin, himself admitted: 'In the great majority of African countries, the differentiation of the peasantry into classes remains insignificant'. In fact it seemed impossible to explain capitalist Africa by reference only to capitalist relations. Both anthropological research (see above) and sociological research of modernisation theory undercut to some extent the evidence for classes.

**Classes in modernisation Sociology**

These sociologists had in common, not their theoretical conceptions, but their refusal to apply Marxism. They certainly cannot be blamed entirely insofar as they sought to understand why modern African societies differed from those of Europe. For the most dialectical amongst them, a class analysis had only a limited bearing because classes are still in the process of being formed. Take, for example, the analyses of the influential French writer Georges Balandier. He first threw light on the distinct features yet interconnections of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. He also noted that the peasant masses still remained largely outside of classes, the proletariat was virtually non-existent and the groups in power were defined more by their political than by their economic position. This methodological doubt was empirically salutary, but Balandier treated societies only according to appearances or their own conceptions of social relations. In other words, he sought to reject the obvious ethnocentrism of concepts linked to Western reality (and capitalism) and to resort to more neutral or specific terms. Having in mind the dogmatic version of Marxism which
prevailed at the time sociologists took exception to an economic reductionism: ideologies, relations of power, groupings and states had for them a material existence in reality. Professional incomes and occupations were possibly amenable to explanations in terms of class, but social relations as a whole were not. In short there was very little about classes in this cocktail — a bit like the olive stone in a dry martini.

The Macro-Economic Model of Dependence of the 1960s
The renewal of Marxist thinking in the 1960s was especially marked at the level of theories of imperialism and thus of international capitalist exploitation. These analyses naturally concerned relations of production and thus classes, especially since some of these theoreticians were obliged to review national development plans. Charles Bettelheim and Samir Amin come especially to mind. The latter certainly sought to produce a theory of class, beginning with his well-known work Accumulation on a World Scale and continuing through Class and Nation. This theory took the form of the concept of 'peripheral capitalism'. If the Third World was characterised by a distinctive mode of production, its classes necessarily had their own specific features; these were in part, both defined and reproduced through the particular characterisations of 'local' history and sociology. Samir Amin also used anthropological knowledge in order to produce a non-European concept of capitalism. But an economist's eclecticism and a Maoist political and ideological perspective on colonial revolution limit his work to the macrosociological level. His concept of class embraces such different empirical material that its wide application is problematic.

1970s: The Neo-Marxist Empiricists
The end of the 1960s was a turning point. The principles and objectives of theoretical Marxism had been renewed. African capitalism had become a specific object of study. In other respects, the diversity of research increasingly prevented any continent-wide or Pan-African generalisations. Anyway the new national liberation struggles in Algeria and Portuguese Africa had given rise to new ideological reflections on the role of classes. There was, for example, the powerful influence of Fanon. This 'renewal', first 'radical' and then neo-Marxist, was above all of Anglo-Saxon origin (USA, Canada and Britain). There were various reasons for this: the English-speaking countries were clearly more developed with regard to capitalist relations and the visible role of classes; research was based on an empiricist tradition, political activity was pragmatic (there was no need to conform to a particular model of the Communist Party). It was therefore left to academics to take the greatest theoretical and militant initiatives. It is sufficient to refer to ROAPE to give some idea of the vigour of this current of thought. Despite the many debates that run through this work, I am not acquainted with any synthesis of it. I will therefore limit myself to a brief typological summary by class in order to show that despite certain defects, (the effect of Poulantzas, for example) these studies are the first to lend an empirical and historical consistency to the concepts of class and class struggle, as applied to African societies.

a. Rural Classes. Research into economic anthropology, peasant studies and the sociology of rural development have made it possible to understand more thoroughly the mechanisms of rural differentiation. It is in this area in a broad sense — including the relationship to the world economy, to the state and to the
ecology of the environment — that we find the greatest number of studies and the most sophisticated theoretical analysis. Obviously, research has concentrated on the peasantry as groups of producers linked to the new market economy. The existence of social stratification, appropriation of land, accumulation of wealth and commodities, and the employment of migrant workers in pre-capitalist production units all demonstrate the transformation of the former conditions for the reproduction of classes (relations between older and young for example). But none of it necessarily shows the existence of new rural classes. Of course, 'kulaks' appear here and there according to circumstances, and indigenous capitalist entrepreneurs can even be seen as part of a rural bourgeoisie; but it seems that it is often social categories who have accumulated wealth outside of agriculture (merchants, businessmen, office workers) who play this role. Opposite them a rural proletariat is being formed. But its forms are extremely diverse, and the process of migration in particular places agricultural workers within other social formations. Moreover, the break with the original conditions of reproduction is never complete. Finally, the way in which the peasantry have been structurally dispossessed could lead to a general proletarianisation of a large peasant stratum. Subordinated to state mechanisms of control of prices and basic commodities, and integrated into vast projects in which they become labourers (even if not formally paid), these peasants could, putting it bluntly, become marginal, especially in the wake of the increasing imbalances in both the environment and production of foodstuffs. All these facets of rural classes appear in the new relations of production. But the diversity of environments of pre-colonial and colonial histories and of national class formations makes it impossible to construct a general schema of the appearance and reproduction of classes in rural areas. (I leave to one side the special case of reserves and peasantries in South Africa).

b. Urban Classes. But it is not only the peasantry that is exploited. Sub-Saharan Africa is becoming increasingly urbanised, and its towns comprise a whole range of specific groups and classes — somewhat reminiscent of certain aspects of the sociological and cultural composition of European towns in the 18th and 19th centuries. The most impressive, yet most fluid group is the so-called informal, 'casual', marginal petty commodity production sector. But even the use of Marxist economic concepts cannot specify the shapes of classes. For here we have a totality of relations of production and reproduction: town/countryside; industrial, salaried and petty commodity sectors; child and female labour. From migrant labourer to the unemployed and thence to the worker, there are innumerable routes. But the sociological, and even historical, existence of the worker has begun. After the brief debate over 'labour aristocracy', class positions and locations and worker ideologies and actions have brought out the characteristics of a proletariat, even if the non-proletarian social milieu is an important counter-active factor in this process of class formation. It is perhaps with regard to this class that the best research has been carried out into the forms of class consciousness and political ideology. 'Workerism', the roots of which lie in the new history and sociology of the European working class, seems absent from this problematic.

The Dominant Classes. Compared to the heterogeneity of the subordinated classes, both urban and rural, the dominant classes seem more homogenous. This is merely an illusion arising from the fact that the dominant classes are relatively small. This does not, however, make their analysis any easier, primarily because
of their position in the relations of dependency: puppet and comprador bourgeoises have long been the subject of debate. The key however, to any understanding of the functions and forms of the dominant classes is the state. While it may be relatively easy to appreciate the effects of the state upon the peasantry, it is much more difficult to define its economic and sociological functions. The weakness of Marxist analysis in respect of the state is well known; the difficulties of empirical research are often insurmountable. We should not therefore be surprised at the strength of the new dogmatism in the shape of the cult of Poulantzas. Instrument of metropolitan or local dominant classes? vehicle for the creation of a bureaucratic bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie? an autonomous institution (the over-developed state of Hamza Alavi or John Saul; the Bonapartist state of Leys or Beyart)? basic structure in the reproduction of capitalist relations of production? — whatever the definition of the state, it remains indisputably the unavoidable subject of all this analysis of class and of classes. The question of the nature of the state leads us to the question of neo-colonial capital and its bourgeoises. The Kenyan debate (see ROAPE 18, 20, and 22) demonstrates the importance of these questions and the necessity for an historical and economic analysis of the processes of accumulation. The industrial bourgeoises have been the subject of more research than the bureaucratic groups or classes, a fact which is closely related to the silence, censure and ambiguity about the nature of the bureaucracy in general and in particular in the so-called ‘new’ states. Nevertheless, we have come a long way from the study of elites in the 1960s: African bourgeoises are political, economic and scientific realities.

National Class Structures and Class Struggle. It is not enough, however, merely to identify and describe classes. Classes cannot exist without relations between them, whatever these may be, and without a site of class struggle. But this site is that of all the classes in the social formation (not to mention the foreign/metropolitan bourgeoises), which makes much more complicated the picture which one could derive from the monographs already mentioned. This area has been fairly well studies at the level of formal political life (elections, parties, ideologies). But this perspective has been increasingly criticised for failing to integrate culture, les modes populaires d’action politique. Theorising of political practice or of ethnic politics has lagged behind, because the social, symbolic and institutional heterogeneity of the political field and the overlapping of class processes at regional and national level make it almost impossible to construct an explanation based on a range of determining elements at the national level. For this reason, the ideological differences between writers may lead to contradictory analyses of the political relations between classes at the national level: Tanzania, Kenya, Angola and now Zimbabwe have been the subject of much debate on this question in these columns and elsewhere. This has not stopped some from trying to analyse the whole of a national formation, but the general tendency towards speculative or historical rather than practical or programmatic research makes such efforts brilliant exceptions. One again the South African case has been subject to the best treatment, but its particular class structure has certainly contributed to that.

Conclusion: For the Autonomy of Marxism in Sub-Saharan Africa The contrast between political classes and scientific classes is striking but it is not unique to the African situation. The point of departure for analysis renders impossible any a priori synthesis between a ‘good’ line with no theoretical value
and a ‘good’ theory incapable of contributing to struggle either because of its esotericism or because of its alien origin. The anti-imperialism which inspires the strategies of African theoreticians has curiously led them to neglect what gives these strategies their strength, namely their capacity for social mobilisation. Anti-imperialism derives from macro-political, economic and sociological explanations. Since it is the struggle which is important, it is the class structure of these struggles which must be the reference point for political analysis. It is therefore normal to give special emphasis to the anti-imperialist classes in their class relations with imperialism. Everything else is secondary, and even more so because classes are the ideological vectors of social positions defined *a priori*. So non-imperialist realities are thought of as survivals to be eliminated or as proof of the subversive power of the class enemy. Just as development experts condemn traditional ways of thinking which they hold to be obstacles to change, so Marxist politicians deny that which is ‘secreted’ within the anti-imperialist forces, precisely for fear of appearing to give way to opportunism.

It is nevertheless true, however, that the tools for understanding these processes did not exist ready-made in the corpus of classical Marxist and Communist theory. The refusal to theorise actual social and ideological practices has therefore both been intentioned and involuntary. The point of departure of the social sciences is at the other extreme. Sociological empiricism regarding what is specific about Africa, for example, leads to an epistemological dualism which by its very nature can do no more than record classes and class struggles on the one hand, and, on the other, hope that such analyses will be useful. Marxism hesitates therefore between the magic formula (its equivalent of the equation $E = mc^2$: ‘the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle’) and conscientious and empirical enumeration (the equivalent of the period table classification of chemical elements by Mendeleyev; ‘the concrete analyses of concrete situations’). At the bases of these cleavages there lies a fundamental divide: that which confines political practice to Africa and reserves the elaboration of theory (good or bad) to the West.

The elaboration of the concept of class conceals, in fact, a crucial silence: the class silence of both the political and scientific producers of class analysis. This silence bears certainly upon the function of intellectuals and notably of revolutionary intellectuals. But neither African political leaders nor Africanists are Gramscian organic intellectuals. The first are by their very nature members of the dominant classes; the second are not African. The a-patriate, ‘floating’ intellectual, who may commit suicide, the one of whom M Marneke spoke and whom Cabral dreamed of, is an historical nonsense. It is not possible to transcend by any means whatsoever one’s origins and class barriers. Without — in the case of the political leader — a definition of the relationship between the intellectual and masses and — in the case of the Africanist — a definition of the relationship between the exteriority of theoretical consciousness and social processes, class analysis will remain a victim of dogmaticism, voluntarism and idealism. The two paths criss-cross each other but cannot yet reach a synthesis. No one knows if we need a new Marx or a new Lenin (there is no shortage of Stalins or Maos). Moreover, there is nothing to protect us against a new Capital, one equally unfinished in which once again the concept of class would be stammered out.

No, what is missing in terms of the relevance of the concept of class to Africa is the democratic experience of political debate and theoretical reflection. Imported
by Africans, or re-elaborated by foreigners, the concept of class is in no sense
derived from autonomous political experience which might enrich its
formulation. Marxism remains simply an imported product in the hands of
specialists in the import and export ideas. Now a luxury product, it will not
become an item of popular consumption simply through changes in its labelling or
packaging. It must be appropriated theoretically and practically, and this can
only result from a process of reflection linked to the social practice of the
exploited classes. This is in fact the meaning of the appeal by the African
philosopher, Houtondji, for the autonomy of politics and for a reading of Marx in
the context of specific historical situations:

The real problem is to liberate the theoretical creativity of our people, to liberate it by giving it
the means to be put effectively into practice, beginning with open inquiry and proceeding
through free discussion in which the most diverse theories can be formed and rejected. When
all is said and done, philosophy in the active sense of the word is at first nothing but that; a
great public debate to which everybody contributes. Everything else follows — everything,
including science.

Bibliographic Note

This paper was presented in January 1982 at the colloquium ‘Endogenous groups in world
perspective: the imperatives of endogenous development’ held in New Delhi and Sponsored
by the Fernand Braudel Center (SUNY, Binghampton), the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme
(Paris) and the SSRC (New Delhi). It was written with two audiences in mind: non-Africanists
and non-anglophone researchers. We have selected our references accordingly: Marxist
anthropology: see the works of Cl. Meillasoux, M. Godelier, P. Ph. Rey, E. Terray. overviews
economique, Courants et Problèmes, (Maspero, Paris, 1976), and M. Abélès,Anthropologie et
marxiste peut en cacher une autre’, in J.C. Delannoy (ed.), Actualité du Marxisme, Vol.1,
Anthropos 1982 and J. Copans, ‘In search of lost theory: Marxism and structuralism within

The key English translations of this work include: E. Terray, Marxism and ‘Primitive’ Society,
(Monthly Review Press, New York, 1972) and ‘Classes and Class Consciousness in the Abron
Kingdom of Gyaman’, in M. Bloch (Ed.), Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology, (Malaby,
London, 1975); Cl. Meillassoux, Maidens, Meal and Money, (Cambridge University Press,
Cambridge, 1981); and the collection, D. Seddon, (Ed.), Relations of Production: Marxist

On Western views of the ‘East’, see T. Asad, (Ed.), Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter,
1978).

On ethnic groups: J. Copans, ‘Mode de production, formation sociale ou ethnie: les silences
d’une anthropologie marxiste’, Documente de Travail No.4, CEA, EHESS, 1982; J. Copans,
‘Ethnies et régions dans une formation sociale dominée: hypothèses à propos du cas
sénégalais’, Anthropologie et Sociétés, 2, 1, 1978; J.L. amselfle and E.M. Bokolo (eds.), Au cœur
de l’ethnie, (La Découverte, 1984); H. Ossébi, Affirmation ethnique et discours idéologique au
Congo, Doct. 3é cycle, 1982, Paris V. Precolonial classes: J. Suret-Canale, Afrique noire,
occidentale et centrale, (Editions sociales, 1958); CERM, Sur le ‘mode de production
asiatique’, (Editions Sociales, 1969); ‘Premières sociétés de classes et mode de production
asiatique’, Recherches internationales à la lumière du marxisme, 57-58, 1967; Cl.
Slavery in Pre-Colonial Africa, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977); J. Bazin et E. Terray
(eds) Guerres de lignages et guerres d’Etat en Afrique, (Editions des Archives
Contemporaines, 1982).

Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya
c/o 78 Stroud Green Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 3EN Tel: 01 272 4889

BRIEFING

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BEATEN TO DEATH AT PRAYER MEETING

On Sunday 10th February at least twelve students were killed and more than 150 injured (65 of them seriously) by the Kenyan police. A prayer meeting at the sports grounds of the University was encircled by armed police while others in plain clothes mingled with the students. Six students leaders were arrested.

Tension began at the University a week earlier. This followed a sudden government decision to expel eight students. The students boycotted lectures for four days while seeking explanations for the expulsion of their leaders.

On Sunday students gathered at the University sports grounds for an interdenominational service. From all accounts, the gathering was entirely peaceful and was even attended by numerous disabled students on wheel chairs.

At the sight of armed police, students started to disperse but were headed back. Suddenly police attacked the students using truncheons, tear gas and machetes. Plain clothes police seized Julius Mwandawiro NGHANGA and Philip TIROP and other student leaders. On 14th February, five students appeared in court on charges of taking part in an illegal meeting. They were: Mohamed Kharnis MAZULI, Henry Maha NOIGIRIGI, Evan Mutende CETENGA and Patrick Luthunga LUMUMBA. The whereabouts of Philip TIROP are not known.

Mr. Mwandawiro NGHANGA also faces six separate charges of convening public meetings and of trespassing.

On 12th February the government closed the University. The University of Nairobi was only re-opened last October after a 14 months closure.

We ask you:

1) To send letters and telegrams condemning the murders to:

President Daniel arap Moi
P. O. Box 40130, Nairobi

Hon. Mwai Kibaki, Vice-President
P. O. Box 30197, Nairobi

Mr. Joseph Koinai, Vice-Chancellor
University of Nairobi
P. O. Box 30197, Nairobi

Mr. Simon Njoroge,
Chief Secretary
P. O. Box 30130, Nairobi

And a representative of the Kenya Government in your country.

2) To make urgent appeal to President Moi for the release of Mwandawiro NGHANGA and other student leaders.

In late 1982 Captain Blaise Compaoré waited on the tiny airstrip of Bobo Dioulasso for a quick word during a stop-over of the internal flight which Captain Thomas Sankara was taking to Upper Volta's capital Ouagadougou. Captain Sankara was secretly carrying a draft document of the ideological basis for a new regime which he was to discuss on behalf of their group with various other political and military groupings opposed to the repressive military regime of Colonel Saye Zerbo. (Extracts follow from that document, which now, revised, forms the ideological background to the Sankara regime — the Political Orientation speech of October 1983.) Captain Compaoré had one question for his friend, 'what is this coup you are organising tomorrow?' It was the first Sankara had heard of the military coup which was to result within six months in, first, his being appointed Prime Minister, and, second, his arrest. On 4 August 1983 in another coup, the group themselves seized power and proclaimed an ambitious revolutionary break from the past.

In the volatile politics of Upper Volta, Sankara, Compaoré and Captain Henri Zongo and Major Jean Baptiste Lingani already in 1982 represented a force which could not be excluded from any attempted change which was to have a hope of succeeding. But that November coup — another round of musical chairs — took the four by surprise. Its authors needed their names to rally the soldiers, but did not want them in positions of influence. Nine months of confusion, contradictions, and finally a paralysis of power, ushered in their present revolutionary regime of the National Revolutionary Council (CNR).

At first sight few countries on the continent would appear less likely centres of revolution. But repressive and corrupt military regimes in power for nearly twenty years produced a well-developed left alternative current within the military. Clandestine political work over ten years lies behind the current high hopes of internal transformation and unambiguous anti-imperialism.

Upper Volta, one of the poorest and smallest of French colonies, became independent in 1960. The first President, Maurice Yameogo, headed an incompetent civilian government full of French advisers long imbued with the fatalism that nothing could ever change Ouagadougou, much less the impenetrable rural areas around it. Six years later, Lt. Colonel Sangoulé Lamizana, seeing that one thing easily changed would be the President, seized power, made himself a General and ruled for fourteen years.

The major event of those years was the great Sahel drought of 1973. Landlocked
Upper Volta saw many thousands die uncounted in the villages of the north on the fringe of the Sahel’s semi-desert. Thousands of nomads from neighbouring Mali and Niger drifted south into the country in search of pasture and water. Neither government nor aid agencies were capable of meeting or even monitoring the disaster. After it, largely under French influence, the seven Sahelian countries came together in the Inter-State Committee to Fight Drought (usually known by its French acronym CILSS) to study aid projects, to fight desertification, and to apportion the huge funds which flowed in after approximately 100,000 people died. But the estimated $7.45 billion committed failed dismally even to begin to address the desperate underdevelopment of France’s former colonies in the area — Upper Volta, Niger, Mali, Senegal and Mauretania. The CILSS headquarters in Ouagadougou became part of the aid donors’ self-perpetuating bureaucracy. General Lamizana and his wretched country drifted farther and farther apart. (The process of the degradation of power is described below in the Political Orientation speech.)

Neo-colonialism was essentially no different in poverty stricken Upper Volta than in better-endowed, more economically developed former colonies such as Senegal, Ivory Coast, Kenya or Uganda. But with very little capital coming into the country (the only manufacturing plants are two breweries and a moped assembly), it was the ruling military and civil service who were the power base of the neo-colonial state. The business class was very small and deeply intertwined with the army and bureaucracy. Dependence on the former colonial power was almost total as the French were the determining influence in all foreign aid allocations on which the country’s budget was run. More than one million Upper Volta citizens work in neighbouring Ivory Coast and their remittances are one of the few foreign exchange sources.

Under Lamizana the rural areas, where approximately 95 per cent of the six million population live, were largely forgotten. The villages have a medieval atmosphere, untouched by modern life, which makes a mockery of any serious statistics. Education was so neglected that even now it is conservatively estimated that 95 per cent of the population is illiterate. Health care provisions were equally shameful. As in all the countries of the Sahel agricultural yields continued to fall as drought continued and agricultural practices remained unchanged. No infrastructural investment was made.

But in the urban areas, particularly the capital, there was a high level of political activity mainly around the various trade union groupings and among students. Throughout the 1970s opposition to Lamizana and criticism of the state of the country were voiced with increasing vigour in mostly clandestine meetings and numerous pamphlets and analyses. The regime was completely discredited, and three coups d'état were in preparation by November 1980 following strikes and demonstrations.

Colonel Saye Zerbo who seized power was a tough nationalist with no ideas for social change. He managed a token clean-up of corruption before setting his regime on the same road of political alienation as Lamizana’s. He barred political parties and unions in an attempt to restore order and depended even more than Lamizana on foreign aid as the deus ex machina which could hold the country’s economy together. It was significant that Colonel Saye Zerbo was sufficiently aware of the fragility of his government and its lack of popular support, to invite,
and when that failed, to order, Captain Sankara to join his government as Minister of Information in 1981.

Since 1974 Captain Sankara had been the focus of a new mood among junior officers and soldiers in the elitist, highly educated and deeply conservative Upper Volta army. At Po on the Ghana border, (which nine years later was the garrison from which Captain Blaise Compaoré launched the 4 August coup), Captain Sankara organised the commando unit under him in a new way. The soldiers were encouraged to integrate with civilians — they worked together, formed an orchestra and played together. It was an unheard of change in attitude. Senior officers responded to what appeared as a threatening current of revolutionary ideas by sending Sankara to the front in the border war with Mali. Meetings and pamphlets discussing progressive ideas and experiences of other countries rippled through the military as well as civilian groups through Lamizana's time. From 1975 Sankara and a handful of other officers, notably Compaoré, Zongo and Lingani, were in contact with civilian leftists. The civilian left was organised in several small groups — African Independence Party (PAI), Union of Communist Struggle (ULC), Voltaique Revolutionary Communist Party. Sankara and the others attended meetings and congresses of the parties, and of unions and student groups, in civilian clothes. This period of extremely difficult clandestine political work laid the groundwork for the military/civilian revolutionary alliance which took power in August 1983. But at the same time the seeds were planted of the severe strains within the left which erupted in the first Sankara government and were later resolved by the detention of two well-known civilian left leaders. They were the Ministers of Information and Foreign Affairs, Adama Toure and Arda Diallo, of whom more later.

The Saye Zerbo government, the Military Committee for Reform and National Progress (CMRPN), was considerably more repressive than Lamizana's had been. Political activists of all kinds were arrested or harassed. The Sankara group within the military were not ready for any trial of strength. For Sankara to have disobeyed the order to join the government in 1981 would have led to his arrest and possible disappearance. He agreed to serve as Minister for six months. He became known as the ‘phantom minister’, never appearing on radio or television, never giving interviews or being quoted. But the press was transformed. Journalists were quietly encouraged by him to criticise, to investigate, to give coverage to the activities of unions, progressive organisations, students, etc. Feeling relatively safe under the Minister's wing, a number of journalists learned during this period outspoken habits and honesty rare in the profession. New political programmes were introduced on radio and television. In the repressive atmosphere of Ouagadougou at the time this freedom was an extraordinary phenomenon. The myth of invincibility which had grown up around Sankara during the Mali border war grew. The minister bicycled to work every day, another phenomenon, while the rest of the government almost openly filled their pockets (as would emerge during the public trials of 1984). On his last day in office in early 1981 Sankara gave a televised press conference in which he roundly denounced the practices of the regime in power and resigned. He was immediately assigned to the small provincial town of Dedougou without any command function. The other officers of the group were dispersed to other provincial towns by the Colonels in power. During 1981 several of them including Sankara served some months in prison.
Throughout 1982 political ferment mounted. Even the French who remained deeply involved in their former colony had begun to search for an alternative to Colonel Saye Zerbo. Repression could no longer contain the situation. Several approaches were made during this period to members of the Sankara group asking them to organise a coup. They refused on the grounds that any new regime would just be a variant on the old and therefore doomed to failure unless it was organised around a specific political programme. Work on the Political Orientation document continued but was extremely difficult in this period as the main people in the group were in different military camps spread around the country. Clandestine communication was possible for them, however, as the presence of Compaoré on the Bobo airstrip in early November shows.

It was at this point of political tension and uncertainty that the November coup took place. Both Compaoré and Sankara went on to Ouagadougou after their airstrip conversation. They had decided to participate in the planned coup as their group would inevitably be assumed to be behind it and another attempt made to break them if it failed and Colonel Saye Zerbo remained in power.

In fact Saye Zerbo was so utterly discredited that even the guards around him surrendered without a fight. But the coup's authors had organised nothing, not even a leader. Overnight uncertainty and tension gripped the capital. Sankara and Compaoré drafted a brief statement to be read on the radio saying a Council for the People's Safety had taken over. But no one knew who the CSP really was. It appears that one of the key men behind the coup, Colonel Gabriel Yorian Somé (who was killed in an attempt to overthrow Sankara after the 4 August 1983 coup) was close to French influences who favoured a return to power of the old civilian first President, Maurice Yameogo. In the course of the night the mood of the soldiers in the capital made it clear that Colonel Somé's own ambitions for a leadership position could not be fulfilled. The Sankara group deliberately held back. The leader finally put forward, by Somé and the military right, was a nervous apolitical military doctor, Jean Baptiste Ouedraogo. Some was Army Commander. The ruling Council consisted of 120 soldiers, including the key members of the Sankara group. Major Jean-Baptiste Lingari held the Secretaryship of the CSP.

The CSP was as unstable in power as it had been uncertain in the seizing of it. After less than two months of vacillations on every issue Ouedragago asked Sankara to take the post of Prime Minister. In his speech on taking office Sankara struck a note of ideological clarity absent from all previous CSP declarations. He denounced 'the autocratic and dictatorial power' of the Saye Zerbo regime and declared that the CSP had seized power 'to rid the country of humiliating dependent and exploitative relations', and 'by giving the people confidence in their own capacity to change their circumstances ... to bring the people food, clean drinking water, clothes, housing, schools and health'. Echoes of Amilcar Cabral were clear.

In the turbulent two months between the November coup and Sankara's entry into the government, relations between the military left group and civilian progressives, particularly in the unions and among the students, were close and frequent. However it seems that leading members of Lipad (La Ligue Patriotique pour le Developpement) saw the rise of the progressive group in the military as a prelude to a progressive government which would inevitably be led by Lipad — itself an outgrowth of the Parti Africaine de l'Independence. Lipad-PAI had been
significant in all left opposition in Ouagadougou in the past. But Lipad's intellectuals such as Adama Toure and Arba Diallo, and the group's only leader with any mass following, Soumane Toure, Secretary General of the left trade union grouping Confederation Syndical Voltaique (CSV), underestimated both the popularity and the power of the Captains. The intra-left rivalries which threatened the stability of the Sankara regime in mid-1984 began to fester during this earlier period when the civilian left got its first intimations of powerlessness.

But that latent power struggle was far from the minds of the Captains during the dramatic early months of 1983 when their very survival was at stake. The contradictions within the CSP opened. Sankara made an uncompromising anti-imperialist speech at the non-aligned summit in Delhi and an ill-advised visit to Libya which both frightened the right and their allies abroad and gave them the excuse of regional destabilisation they wanted. The right plotted a coup in early March which would have involved the elimination of the majority of the CSP during a meeting. The attempt was delayed only because Sankara himself was late getting back from Tripoli. But one of those involved in the plot confessed before a new date was set and that coup was aborted.

The ideological differences and resulting poor relations between Head of State Ouedraogo and Prime Minister Sankara were common knowledge. Sankara spoke to a massive public meeting in late March which exploded in passionate support for him and his ideological position which he, as usual, clearly restated. On 14 May at Bobo Dioulasso the last public meeting was attended by both men. Sankara spoke first, as usual without notes, and promised that the CSP would not curb the impetus or the speed of change. The crowd responded cheering, clapping, shouting Sankara's name. When the Head of State took his place at the microphone silence fell and the crowd melted away still shouting Sankara's name.*

Three days later one of the most audacious neo-colonial interventions in post-colonial African history took place. On 16 May Guy Penne, the French President's counsellor for African affairs arrived in Ouagadougou. Unusually no journalists were allowed at the airport to meet him. Even more unusually he spent the night at the French ambassador's residence rather than in an official guest house.

At 4.00a.m. on the 17th Captain Sankara's house was surrounded by tanks, armoured cars and two dozen soldiers. A dozen armed guards burst into Major Lingani's house and arrested him. The dozen who went for Captain Compaoré were less successful — in a sudden change of plan he had stayed the night in Bobo Dioulasso. All Ouagadougou's arsenals were sealed off. After two hours Sankara told his own guards to give themselves up. He was arrested, and in the course of that afternoon taken to the airport and flown to the remote northern town of Ouahigouya. The national radio announced drily that the CSP had been restructured. No word of the arrests was made public.

A military chase for Captain Compaoré began in the early morning, but he had left Bobo at 5.00a.m. and by late morning was safely at Po with the commandos.

*The Malien journalist Mohamed Maiga who died in Ouagadougou in December 1983 was an eyewitness of many of the events of 1982 and 1983 which he recorded at length in Afrique Asie.
whose loyalty was to him and Sankara, not Colonel Somé Yorian and Head of State Ouedraogo. In Ouagadougou itself the military situation was equally polarised when Captain Henri Zongo, commanding the Guillaume camp, refused to order his 90 men to surrender. From Po Compaoré sent Colonel Somé a message ending ‘free them or we’ll come and get them’. They were freed.

The reactionary wing of the military had lost control. It was to be ten weeks before the progressive wing were to take it. This period is important in evaluating the Sankara regime’s claim that the August revolution was more a people’s seizure of power than just a military coup by a fraction of the army. In the capital students and school children marched in the streets demanding Sankara’s release. At the end of May he was freed into a semi-house arrest. Union leader Soumane Toure was among those arrested in the few days when it appeared that the regime planned a trial of strength with the left. Lipad leaders were among the prominent handful of leftists who went underground. In June and July Po took on the air of a second seat of government as streams of people made their way south to ask Compaoré and Zongo what was happening and, in many cases, to ask for military training. Ouagadougou had lost direction and authority. The seizure of power on 4 August by the Po commandos led by Sankara, Compaoré and Lingani was the inevitable end of the untenable CSP regime.

The first Sankara government included civilians from all the significant Marxist groups. Lipad demanded, and received, the portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Information, Equipment and Supplies and two others. The issue of the group’s historical role which they believed gave them the right to be considered as primus inter pares became an underlying tension in the regime.

The first open criticism of the Revolution came from right wing leaders of the teachers’ union (SNEAHV) in late September. The teachers were subsequently sacked en masse after a provocative strike intended as a trial of strength with the military. The regime’s response came in a sharp statement from the Secretariat of the Revolutionary Defence Committees (CDRs) which was already emerging as the power-house of the Revolution.

Lipad had put forward the trade union leader Soumane Toure as their candidate for the powerful position of Secretary General of the Revolutionary Defence Committees (CDRs). But instead a young Captain, trained in the United States and France and little known in Ouagadougou, was chosen. Captain Pierre Ouedraogo had, immediately after the August coup, taken over the responsibility for Ouagadougou airport. On his own initiative and without any authorisation he turned it into an impregnable, highly disciplined fortress. This dynamic enterprise, sustained over several weeks earned him the Secretary General’s position which turned out to be crucial to the popular mobilisation and the basis of the regime’s chances of success. It was also central to the power struggle between Lipad and the CNR which unfolded in May 1984, and ended with the detention of the two Lipad Ministers. Lipad fought hard for control of the CDRs, especially in the capital. Failing to gain control of them Lipad leaders began to attack them.

On the May anniversary of Sankara’s arrest by the previous regime an anti-imperialist demonstration was planned for the capital. It was organised by the CDRs and prominence was to be given to students as they had been so important
in the events of the previous May. But the day before the planned demonstration
the Minister of Youth and Sports, Ibrahim Kone, a member of Lipad, organised a
separate, and as it turned out, rival demonstration of youth. Among the small
crowd were a group who shouted ‘down with the CDRs’. The Minister was sacked
the next day.

In several interviews with foreign journalists including Agence France Presse,
Radio France, Afrique-Asia and The Guardian during May and June, Information
Minister Adama Toure said that unless a party based on Lipad was
immediately formed and given the leadership the regime would degenerate into
chaos. Several Lipad leaders said openly: ‘it’s them (the military) or us’.

Paralysis of government business, and considerable tension (exacerbated by an
aborted right wing coup plot for which seven people were shot) continued until
Sankara announced the dissolution of the entire government in late August. In
the new government the important Foreign Affairs portfolio went to Basile
Guissot, a member of ULC, and only one Lipad man was reappointed, Michel
Tapsoba at Water Resources. Adama Toure and Arba Diallo were given jobs in
the countryside on the crash rural development programme.

But within a few weeks both men had been arrested and Soumane Toure had
been sacked from the civil service. In an earlier phase of the revolution in
September 1983, Lipad had tried to organise symbolic direct take-overs of
powerful institutions such as the Town Hall and the national electricity company.
Such confrontational tactics were considered to be confusing and demobilising
and were severely discouraged by the military. But in October 1984 Lipad started
the same tactic again. By then dangerous support for disruption was coming
from the right, and support for Lipad on the left in the trade unions and the
university had melted away. Significantly there was no popular reaction either to
the sacking of Soumane Toure or to the detention of the two Ministers. The
political in-fighting in the capital during 1983/84 appeared to have been virtually
ignored by the people themselves both in Ouagadougou and the rural areas.

The CNR’s creation of Revolutionary Popular Tribunals (TPR) after 4 August
made a reality of Sankara’s ideological stand over the previous decade. In less
than a year, in open Tribunals in all major towns, and carried live on the radio,
the citizens of Upper Volta heard Heads of State, Ministers, bureaucrats and
business magnates of every previous regime exposed as thieves. Colonel Saye
Zerbo for instance was gaoled for eight years, one of more than 100 of the old
elite to be convicted. Fines, repayments of money stolen and prison terms were
important signs that the CNR meant every word of their radical rhetoric. But the
TPRs’ most important contribution to the new era was in breaking the mystique
of power which had held Upper Volta’s 95 per cent illiterate masses in thrall to
one of the smallest and most exploitative elite classes in post-colonial Africa.

An unprecedented explosion of popular confidence and creativity was seen in
myriad small development initiatives across the country. From the forming of an
anti-apartheid movement in the university and seminars on imperialism by the
women’s police, to the building of villas, airstrips and dams in the remotest
corners of the country there was evidence everywhere of a transformation of
people’s lives by their own initiative. Particularly remarkable was the extent to
which the regime’s progressive words on women’s position and the need to
change it were seized and acted upon.
On the first anniversary of the Revolution the name Upper Volta was changed, marking a symbolic break from the colonial legacy of fatalism and under-development. The new name, Burkina Faso, meaning roughly 'the republic of honorable people', expressed the new reality. In the second year, with the problem of political unity apparently solved at the centre, the regime's focus was to make as definitive a breakthrough on the economic front towards agricultural self-sufficiency as had been made on the domestic political front.

Footnote: Much of this history is based on private conversations with several members of the CNR and left organisations. The membership of the CNR is secret. I therefore do not name the sources, but thank them warmly for their time and patience.

THE COMMITMENT OF THE INTELLECTUAL

Paul Baran

The desire to tell the truth is therefore only one condition for being an intellectual. The other is courage, readiness to carry on rational inquiry to wherever it may lead, to undertake 'ruthless criticism of everything that exists, ruthless in the sense that the criticism will not shrink either from its own conclusions or from conflict with the powers that be' (Marx). An intellectual is thus in essence a social critic, a person whose concern is to identify, to analyse, and in this way to help overcome the obstacles bariring the way to the attainment of a better, more humane, and more rational social order. As such he becomes the conscience of society and the spokesman of such progressive forces as it contains in any given period of history. And as such he is inevitably considered a 'troublemaker' and a 'nuisance' by the ruling class seeking to preserve the status quo, as well as by the intellect workers in its service who accuse the intellectual of being utopian or metaphysical at best, subversive or seditious at worst.

The more reactionary a ruling class, the more obvious it becomes that the social order over which it presides has turned into an impediment to human liberation, the more is its ideology taken over by anti-intellectualism, and superstition. And by the same token, the more difficult it becomes for the intellectual to withstand the social pressures brought upon him, to avoid surrendering to the ruling ideology and succumbing to the intellect workers' comfortable and lucrative conformity. Under such conditions it becomes a matter of supreme importance and urgency to insist on the function and to stress the commitment of the intellectual. For it is under such conditions that it falls to his lot, both as a responsibility and as a privilege, to save from extinction the tradition of humanism, reason, and progress that constitutes our most valuable inheritance from the entire history of mankind.
On the first anniversary of the Revolution the name Upper Volta was changed, marking a symbolic break from the colonial legacy of fatalism and under-development. The new name, Burkina Faso, meaning roughly 'the republic of honorable people', expressed the new reality. In the second year, with the problem of political unity apparently solved at the centre, the regime's focus was to make as definitive a breakthrough on the economic front towards agricultural self-sufficiency as had been made on the domestic political front.

Footnote: Much of this history is based on private conversations with several members of the CNR and left organisations. The membership of the CNR is secret. I therefore do not name the sources, but thank them warmly for their time and patience.

THE COMMITMENT OF THE INTELLECTUAL

Paul Baran

The desire to tell the truth is therefore only one condition for being an intellectual. The other is courage, readiness to carry on rational inquiry to wherever it may lead, to undertake 'ruthless criticism of everything that exists, ruthless in the sense that the criticism will not shrink either from its own conclusions or from conflict with the powers that be' (Marx). An intellectual is thus in essence a social critic, a person whose concern is to identify, to analyse, and in this way to help overcome the obstacles barring the way to the attainment of a better, more humane, and more rational social order. As such he becomes the conscience of society and the spokesman of such progressive forces as it contains in any given period of history. And as such he is inevitably considered a 'trouble-maker' and a 'nuisance' by the ruling class seeking to preserve the status quo, as well as by the intellect workers in its service who accuse the intellectual of being utopian or metaphysical at best, subversive or seditious at worst.

The more reactionary a ruling class, the more obvious it becomes that the social order over which it presides has turned into an impediment to human liberation, the more is its ideology taken over by anti-intellectualism, and superstition. And by the same token, the more difficult it becomes for the intellectual to withstand the social pressures brought upon him, to avoid surrendering to the ruling ideology and succumbing to the intellect workers' comfortable and lucrative conformity. Under such conditions it becomes a matter of supreme importance and urgency to insist on the function and to stress the commitment of the intellectual. For it is under such conditions that it falls to his lot, both as a responsibility and as a privilege, to save from extinction the tradition of humanism, reason, and progress that constitutes our most valuable inheritance from the entire history of mankind.
The 'Political Orientation' of Burkina Faso

Thomas Sankara

Extracts from President Thomas Sankara's address to the nation in Ouagadougou on 2 October 1983 — 'the 'Political Orientation Speech'.

People of Upper Volta, male and female comrades of the revolution, this year, 1983, our country has lived through intense events which have left an indelible impression in the minds of many of our citizens. During this period our people's struggle has had its ups and downs.

Our people waged a heroic struggle and finally triumphed on the historic night of 4 August 1983. For almost two months now, the revolution has been irreversibly under way. For two months, the fighting people of Upper Volta have come together as one person behind the National Revolutionary Council (CNR) to build a new, free, independent, and prosperous Upper Voltan society — a society free of social injustice, free from domination and exploitation from international imperialism.

I ask you now to look back with me to learn the necessary lessons and to work out correctly the revolutionary tasks facing us now and in the immediate future. In giving ourselves a clear understanding of past developments, we will strengthen ourselves in our struggle against imperialism and against reactionary social forces.

Where have we come from? Where are we heading? These questions demand clear and firm answers if we want to move forward confidently towards even more resounding victories.

The August revolution was not just a revolutionary coup against the reactionary alliance of 17 May 1983. It was the outcome of the Upper Volta people's long struggle against their eternal enemies. It was a victory over international imperialism and its national allies. It was a victory over shadowy and retrograde forces of darkness. The August revolution was the culmination of the popular uprising against the imperialist conspiracy of 17 May 1983 which had tried to hold back the rising tide of the democratic and revolutionary forces in the country.

This uprising was symbolised in part by the brave and heroic attitude of the Po commandos. Correctly they totally opposed the pro-imperialist and anti-people power structure of Major Jean-Baptiste Ouedraogo and Colonel Somé Yorian. At the same time the uprising brought together a block of popular democratic and revolutionary forces who with soldiers and patriotic officers organised an
exemplary resistance. A real movement of popular resistance sprang up after the reactionary and pro-imperialist provocation of 17 May 1983. This popular movement created the conditions for 4 August 1983.

In fact the 17 May imperialist plot launched a regrouping of democratic and revolutionary forces and organisations. During this period they mobilised themselves and took a number of initiatives which would have been unheard of before. The popular demonstrations of 20, 21 and 22 May were echoed nationally. They were concrete proof of the people's, and above all of our youth's, commitment to the revolutionary ideas defended by the men who reaction had treacherously brought down. May was the real prelude to the upheavals which opened up the class contradictions in our society.

The August revolution was the outcome of all these social contradictions which could no longer be snuffed out by compromise. The overwhelming majority of our people back the August Revolution. In it they see their great hope of finally satisfying their hopes of democracy, freedom, independence, real progress. Our people count on the CNR to restore the dignity and greatness of our country which have been mocked by 23 years of neo-colonialism.

Those 23 years of exploitation and imperialist domination have left a grim legacy. We face a hard task in building a new society stripped of the malpractices which kept us poor — both economically and culturally.

During the 1960s France was under pressure on all sides: embarrassed at Dien Bien Phu, in enormous difficulty in Algeria. National sovereignty and territorial integrity was granted to our country. This token retreat of French colonial imperialism was the beginning of victory for the people over foreign exploitative forces. But to imperialism it was just an alteration in the form of domination and exploitation of our people.

The change did however bring about a shift in classes and social formation and the establishment of new classes. The intellectual petit bourgeoisie of that period chose to ally with the most reactionary forces of traditional society. They scorned the masses who had been their springboard into power and undertook to organise the political and economic foundations of the new forms of imperialist domination and exploitation.

Imperialism feared the increasing radicalism of the people which threatened to turn into real revolution. They thought they could head this off and keep control through our own nationals. Our own nationals took over the foreign domination and exploitation. The entire operation of the neo-colonial society rested on this kind of substitution.

In essence neo-colonial and colonial societies are not the slightest bit different. The colonial administration was replaced by a neo-colonial administration identical to its predecessor. The colonial army was replaced by a neo-colonial army with the same characteristics, functions, and the same role of guardian of the interests of imperialism and its national allies. The colonial school was replaced by a neo-colonial school which set about the same objects of alienating our children from our country and reproducing a society devoted to imperialist interests and to serving the footmen and local allies of imperialism.

Our own nationals undertook the systematic looting of our country with the support and blessing of imperialism. They used the crumbs of the loot which fell
to them to transform themselves gradually into a parasitic bourgeoisie unable to control their appetites. These people were guided only by their personal interests. They did not hesitate to use the most dishonest methods, corruption on a grand scale, theft of goods and public funds. Influence-peddling, property speculation, favouritism and nepotism were the order of the day.

That is the explanation of how they amassed such riches — cash and goods — on the backs of the people. Not content to live off the fantastic profits which they got from the shameful exploitation of their dishonestly acquired property they moved heaven and earth to get their hands on state power. Then they used the power of the state for more theft. A full year never went by without them going for luxurious holidays abroad. Their children left the country for prestigious schools abroad. At the slightest sign of sickness all state resources were mobilised to organise expensive care in luxury hospitals abroad.

All this went on before the very eyes of our brave, honest people suffering in miserable conditions. The riches of our country provided paradise for this minority, but the majority, our people, lived in hell.

Within this majority the salaried workers, in spite of their regular income, fell into all the traps of capitalist consumer society. Their salaries were eaten up before they even drew them. They were caught in a vicious circle. In their unions, struggles were waged to improve their working conditions. Sometimes the neo-colonial powers were obliged to cede under the pressure of these struggles. But they only gave with one hand in order to take away with the other. So for instance a 10 per cent wage increase would be announced with great fanfare and at the same time tax changes would be made which simply took away all the benefits. After five, six or seven months the workers would realise they had been tricked and organise new struggles. Seven months was always enough breathing space for the reactionaries in power to work out new strategies. In this endless struggle the worker was always the one to come out at a loss.

Among our vast majority are the peasants — 'the wretched of the earth'. Peasants are expropriated, harassed, imprisoned, and humiliated every day. However, it is their work which produces riches. Their produce keeps our fragile economy going. It is their work which provides the honey for those of our people who have used our country as their personal honeypot. It is these very peasants who suffer the most from our lack of infrastructure, of roads, buildings, health services.

These peasants, the source of our wealth, suffer most from the lack of schools and educational equipment for their children. It is their children who will swell the ranks of the unemployed after a brief time in schools which teach them nothing about their own reality and their own country. Illiteracy is highest among them (98 per cent). Those who have the greatest need of knowledge, to improve their productivity, are the very ones who profit least from the investments made in health, education and technology.

The youth of our countryside, like all young people, are extremely sensitive to social injustice and want to see progress. Driven by despair they leave the countryside and thus deprive it of its most dynamic elements. The urban centres of Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso are magnets for these young people. They hope to find work there and also to be able to take advantage of what modern facilities we have. But the lack of jobs makes them idle and therefore open to all
the vices which come with idleness. Finally, in order not to end up in prison, they flee abroad where the most shameful forms of humiliation and exploitation lie ahead. But has our society really given them any other choices?

After 23 years of neo-colonialism this is the situation here in our country — paradise for some and hell for others.

The National Revolutionary Council assumed responsibility for establishing a new order and restoring our country to its rightful place as a prosperous and respected country. The parasites, who profited from colonial and neocolonial Upper Volta, are and will always be hostile to the changes ushered in by the 4 August 1983 revolution. They remain attached by an umbilical cord to international imperialism. They are and will remain the defenders of their privileges acquired by their allegiance to imperialism. No matter what we say or do they will remain as they are and will continue with plots to regain their lost kingdom. We should never expect a change of mentality and attitude on the part of these nostalgic citizens. They are not sensitive to the voice of the revolutionary class which is fighting against exploiters and oppressors.

These enemies were identified by the people during the revolution. They are:

First, the bourgeoisie who were part of the state bourgeoisie or the comprador bourgeoisie and a middle-level bourgeoisie:

The state bourgeoisie: these were politicos and bureaucrats. The political monopoly allowed them to enrich themselves in a scandalous fashion. They used the state apparatus just as a capitalist uses the forces of production to exploit his workers. This section of the bourgeoisie will never willingly renounce their old ways and quietly watch our revolutionary changes get under way.

The commercial bourgeoisie: this group is closely linked to imperialism. The end of imperialist domination means to them the end of the chicken who lays the golden eggs. That is why they oppose the present revolution as strongly as they can. In this group we find the speculators and saboteurs who hoard goods and thereby starve our people.

The middle-level bourgeoisie: this group, although linked to imperialism, is also its rival for control of the market. But as it is not strong it is always being squeezed out by imperialism. Although it therefore has serious contradictions with imperialism this group tends to ally with imperialism because it is afraid of our people. In fact as imperialist domination in our country prevents these people from playing the real role of a national bourgeoisie some of them at any rate may be favourable to the Revolution. They may identify with the people. However one must be wary of completely accepting such people as all kinds of opportunists can flock to the Revolution for various motives.

Second, the old-fashioned forces whose power comes from the traditional feudal structures of our society. The majority of these forces put up a firm resistance to French colonial imperialism. But since we regained our national sovereignty they have made common cause with the reactionary bourgeoisie to oppress our people. These forces have kept the peasant masses in a down-trodden situation and abused them in all kinds of electoral frauds. These reactionary forces have used all the decadent values of our traditional culture which are still alive in the rural areas to preserve their own interests. These interests are of course identical to those of imperialism and opposed to those of the people. These reactionary forces
are of course opposed to the revolution precisely because it seeks to bring
democracy into the countryside and make the peasants themselves more
responsible. It seeks too to bring within the peasants' grasp the chance of
learning which can lead to their economic and cultural emancipation.

The revolutionary forces are made up of:

1) Our working class: this class is young and small, but has already proved that it
really is a revolutionary class in its continuous struggles against the owners. In
this revolution it is a class with everything to gain and nothing to lose. In the neo-
colonial society this class has had no means of production to lose, no piece of
property to defend.

2) The petit bourgeoisie: this is a large and unstable section of society which
vacillates between the people and imperialism. The majority will end by joining
the masses. Among the various groups are: small shopkeepers, petit bourgeois
intellectuals (civil servants, students, private sector employees), and craftsmen.

3) The peasantry: the majority are small farmers working on their own farms.
Since the introduction of capitalism in our country land held collectively has
become less and less common. Trading relationships and private property have
replaced community interdependence. In this new situation created by
capitalism's penetration of our countryside our peasants have taken on bourgeois
relations of production. So, in truth, our peasants can be counted as part of the
petit bourgeoisie. The currents of progress and modernisation have completely
bypassed our countryside — so economically and culturally backward. It has just
been a reservoir for reactionary party politics. However, from a numerical point
of view this class is the principal force of the revolution and certainly a prime
beneficiary.

4) The lumpen-proletariat: this category of people, because they are out of work,
can always be bought by reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries to carry out
their dirty work. If the revolution can convert them by giving them useful
employment they could become fervent defenders.

The Character of the August Revolution
The various revolutions the world has seen do not resemble each other at all.
Each one has its authentic character distinguishing it from others. Our
revolution, the August Revolution, is a case in point. It takes place in a backward
agricultural country. The weight of tradition and of the ideology of a feudal
society weigh heavily on the masses. It is a revolution in a country which changed
from colony to neo-colony under the domination and exploitation of imperialism.
It is a revolution in a country which still lacks an organised and militant working
class with a conception of a historical mission. We have no tradition of
revolutionary struggle. Our revolution was born in a tiny country and at a time
when the international revolutionary movement is withering day by day without
any immediate hope of forming itself into a block to encourage or support young
revolutionary movements.

The August Revolution is a democratic one. Its first tasks are the ending of
imperialist domination and exploitation; the purging of social, economic and
cultural habits which keep our country in its backward state. It will be built on the
involvement of all the people. They are mobilising themselves around the
democratic and revolutionary structures which will support their interests over
those of reactionary allies of imperialism. Instead of the old state machinery a new machine is being built to guarantee the democratic use of power by the people and for the people.

Our Revolution is an anti-imperialist one, but it is a revolution which has to be made within the bourgeois economic and social structure already outlined. The bourgeoisie of under-developed countries under capitalism is marked by a congenital incapacity to revolutionise their societies as the European bourgeoisie did in 1789, that is when it was still a rising class.

These are the characteristics and the limitations of the Revolution which began here on 4 August 1983. By understanding it clearly and defining it exactly we can guard against the dangers of deviation and excesses which could hinder the success of the revolution.

The revolution's object is to give the people power. That is why the very first act of the revolution, after the 4 August Proclamation, was to call on the people to form Revolutionary Defence Committees (CDRs). The National Revolutionary Council (CNR) believes that for this to be truly a people's revolution it must destroy the neo-colonial state machinery and organise a new machine which guarantees the people's sovereignty. The question of just how that power will be exercised or how it should be organised is the primary question the revolution must confront.

The history of our country has been dominated by the exploitative conservative classes. They exercised an anti-democratic dictatorship by their control over politics, the economy, ideology, culture, administration and justice. The primary objective of the revolution is to take power out of the hands of our national bourgeoisie and their imperialist allies and put it in the hands of the people. This means that the people's democratic power will be able to oppose the anti-democratic dictatorship of the reactionaries who backed imperialism.

The CDRs should be seen as shock troops who can attack any area of resistance. They will build us a revolutionary country. They will carry the revolution into every province, every village, every public or private business, every home, everywhere. CDR militants must take on new ways of seeing things and new ways of behaving in order to set an example to the people. While making the revolution we must at the same time transform our own personal qualities. Without such personal transformation of those who set out to build the revolution it will be practically impossible to create a new society which does not run on corruption, theft, lies and individualism. We have to bring our acts into line with our words and study our own behaviour so we are not open to attack from counter-revolutionaries.

If we keep constantly in mind that the interests of the people come before our own we will not make mistakes. Some militants dream the dreams of counter-revolutionaries, hoping to profit from the CDRs. They have to be denounced and fought against. We have no room for stars or publicity-seekers. The quicker such tendencies are stamped out the better for the revolution. To us the revolutionary is someone who knows how to be modest, but is also completely dedicated in the tasks given to him. He or she carries through the tasks without showing off and without expecting any return.

The August Revolution did not come to install yet another regime. The revolution
came to break with all the regimes we have known. The revolution's ultimate objective is to build a new society in our country. In this new society all our citizens with a revolutionary consciousness will build their own happiness, a happiness which will be great as the effort put in. To do this the revolution will set in motion a complete upheaval in all sectors of economic, social and cultural life no matter how much this may displease the conservative and backward-looking sectors of our society.

From now on the philosophy of revolutionary transformation will take over in the following sectors:

1) the national army
2) the politics of women
3) economic transformation or building the economy.

The defence of our country's revolution cannot be left to one group of men however competent they may be. The people would not want that. The people themselves, once aroused by the revolution, will defend this country themselves.

Our revolution is in the interests of all those who are oppressed or exploited in the society we have today. Women's domination by men comes fundamentally from the political and economic structures of our society. The revolution, by changing the social order which oppresses women, will create the conditions for her true emancipation. Both women and men in our society are the victims of oppression and domination by imperialism. Their struggle is therefore the same one. Revolution and women's emancipation go together. It is no act of charity or flight of humanitarianism to talk of women's emancipation. It is a fundamental necessity for the triumph of the revolution. Real liberation for women is having responsibility and being involved in various productive activities and different people's struggles. Real liberation of women will force respect and consideration from men. Women's liberation, like all freedoms, has to be fought for — it is not just given out. It is up to women themselves to make their demands and organise themselves so that they are met. The Democratic People's Revolution will create the necessary conditions for our women to fulfill themselves. Is it conceivable that we could end the system of exploitation, but keep more than half the society — the women — in chains?

The CNR realises that building an independent, self-sufficient, planned national economy means a radical transformation of our society. It means the following major reforms: land reform; administrative reform; educational reform; reform of production and distribution in the modern sector of the economy. All the shackles of traditional socio-economic structures which oppress peasants must be abolished.

Agriculture will be made the underpinning of industrial development. This can be done by giving food self-sufficiency its real meaning. It is too often said as an empty slogan. The struggle against nature will be hard, but other countries no better endowed have had miraculous successes in agriculture. The CNR does not lull itself with illusions about huge sophisticated projects. On the contrary, lots of small projects will turn the country into one big field, a series of farms. We will struggle against those who have made our people go hungry — speculators and agricultural capitalists of all sorts. We will ensure against the imperialist domination of our agriculture in its orientation, in the theft of resources, in the disloyal competition against our local resources by fancy imported goods. Fair
pricing policies and agro-industrial units will protect peasants by ensuring them year-round markets.

In the near future, when programmes for the various sectors are drawn up, the whole country will be a vast work place where every one of us of working age will be involved in the battle for prosperity. Ours will be a country where the people themselves are the sole masters of all material and immaterial riches.

Finally we must place our revolution within the world revolutionary process. Our revolution is an integral part of the worldwide movement for peace and democracy against imperialism and all kinds of hegemony.

We will have diplomatic relations with all countries regardless of their political and economic system on the basis of the following principles:

— reciprocal respect for independence, territorial integrity and national sovereignty;
— mutual non-aggression;
— non-intervention in internal affairs;
— commerce with all countries on a footing of equality and reciprocal advantage.

Our solidarity and strong support go to all national liberation movements fighting for independence and the liberation of their people. This support goes especially to:

— the people of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO;
— the Saharan people for the recovery of their national territory;
— the Palestinian people for their national rights.

In our struggle the anti-imperialist African countries are our objective allies. And the current regrouping of neo-colonial powers on our continent makes it imperative to draw closer to our allies.

— Long live the Democratic People's Revolution.
— Long live the National Revolutionary Council.
— Motherland or death, we shall overcome.
‘Learn from Others, Think for Ourselves’: Central American Revolutionary Strategy in the 1980s

William Bollinger

The different revolutionary struggles under way in Central America are enriching strategic thinking throughout Latin America — and may hold lessons for other regions. Eschewing reformism, on the one hand, and pat formulae imported from struggles elsewhere, on the other, new strategies have been evolved, often combining different tactics in a creative synthesis; new kinds of class alliances have been forged that also involve women, and Indian and black minorities. These advances have been made possible by, and have in turn strengthened, a unity of different parties and tendencies of a previously fragmented Left. The unity is itself a product of a consensus around the new strategies, reached through self-criticism and frank debate — but depends on each group giving up the claim to monopolise the vanguard.

After almost three decades of serious division, marked by many reverses and several historic defeats in the class struggle, the Latin American Left is undergoing significant change. Although political conditions vary among countries, the Left generally is re-emerging in national life at the head of powerful popular, democratic and working class movements. Obstacles to further unity remain, but the trend is toward Left consensus on major questions of revolutionary strategy. The Central American revolutionary experience since the late 1970s has been a catalyst for this process of ‘rectification’ of the Latin American Left.

Historical Context
The Cuban Revolution had a similar impact on the Left a generation earlier, but one impaired by the severe political and ideological divisions then plaguing the international communist movement. The coincidence of the path-breaking Cuban example with the split in communist ranks produced a Latin American ‘new Left’ dominated by Guevarist (guerilla foco) and Maoist tendencies which proved incapable of guiding the revolution. As these currents fell into disarray, most older Communist Parties (CPs) remained consolidated around reformist strategic conceptions. The fragmented Left was incapable of defending popular movements against the tide of military dictatorship which swept much of the hemisphere in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the Left’s nadir was reached with the historic defeat of the Unidad Popular (People’s Unity government headed by Allende) in Chile in 1973.

Latin America’s communist parties met in Havana in June 1975 to begin to reassess questions of revolutionary strategy in light of current conditions. No
breakthroughs were achieved. The conference’s concluding declaration omitted serious self-criticism of the reformist orientation with which most CPs were still associated; the analysis of the Chile debacle was shallow; and the general outlook on revolutionary conditions in Latin America was pessimistic. Not only was the revolutionary upsurge in Central America not anticipated, but the anti-imperialist and revolutionary potential of the Peruvian military regime was vastly exaggerated, suggesting that military-led nationalist reformism might typify the strategic path for revolution in the period.

While the report made manifest the continuing political and ideological crisis of the Latin American Left, the fact that parties from throughout the hemisphere had collectively begun to address questions of theory and strategy was a positive development. Furthermore, this move came amid very favourable changes in the international correlation of forces. Foremost was the US defeat in Vietnam. A national liberation movement, guided by a seasoned and united communist vanguard, defeated the United States in a prolonged war, and the US populace acquired a strong phobia against military intervention in the Third World. In addition, the Soviet Union had achieved military parity with the United States, freeing the socialist bloc from Cold War nuclear blackmail and leaving it free to expand its economic and political intercourse with Africa, Asia and Latin America. United States’ inability to intervene militarily in Angola, together with the new light which the MPLA’s struggle cast on China’s policies, was the most revealing event of this period.

Present Framework

The 1970s pessimism was broken by the Sandinista triumph in Nicaragua in 1979. Much of the Left — most certainly the Soviet Union and the conventional Latin American CPs — was taken by surprise, much as the fall of Batista in Cuba had been unexpected twenty years before. Indeed, the Nicaraguan CP (called the Socialist Party) was even more divorced from the Sandinista revolution than the Cuban CP had been from the 26 July Movement. But, unlike the 1960s fragmentation, the impact of successful revolutionary struggle in Central America has been to speed the process of political rectification and unity throughout much of the continent.

The Central American revolutions, though still unfolding, have enriched strategic thinking in Latin America at almost every level — from class analysis itself to conceptions of revolutionary class alliances, stages of the revolutionary process, forms of struggle, the role of women and indigenous peoples, the importance of the international context, and the vexing problem of Left unity.

Besides the Central American experiences, four other important factors frame strategic thinking in the mid-1980s: the dramatic changes in socio-economic conditions associated with Latin America’s rapid industrialisation, the devastating impact of the international economic crisis on the hemisphere, the rise of broad-based democratic movements against military dictatorship in South America, and the growing threat of direct military intervention by the United States. The first three have quickened the maturation of conditions favourable to the left's re-emergence in national life, while the last threatens to embroil Latin America in a tragic regional war with unknown consequences.

Amid this ferment, in April 1982, 35 Latin-American revolutionary organisations (not just CPs) met in Havana to collectively assess basic questions of
revolutionary strategy — in a notable spirit of frankness, self-criticism and unity. The conference was specifically devoted to theoretical consideration of the 'general characteristics and particularities of the revolutionary processes in Latin America and the Caribbean', including the class character and stages of the revolution, armed struggle, and the problem of vanguard fragmentation and Left reunification. The Havana conference discussion will be frequently referred to in the review of strategic questions below.

Class Analysis and Revolutionary Alliances

An area in which the Central American process has been especially illuminating is the conception of revolutionary class alliances, especially given the diversity of conditions found in Guatemala (large indigenous population), Nicaragua (weak working class, relatively large and diverse petty bourgeoisie) and El Salvador (more extensively proletarianised). The capacity of the Latin American Left to develop a class analysis to guide revolutionary strategy had been seriously undermined in the 1960s. The 'new Left' Marxism, embraced dependency theory and tended toward voluntarist action by isolated revolutionary focos (armed bands). Maoists dogmatically espoused pat formulas, vastly exaggerating the extent to which which Latin America remained predominantly feudal or semi-feudal.* Many CP's fell into economism, giving priority to trade union struggles and mostly ignoring other popular sectors which encompassed the vast majority of unemployed and semi-proletarianised workers. For their part, Latin America's small and divided Trotskyists generally ignored the region's particularities, fetishing a socialist political programme as a test to keep bourgeois and petty bourgeois forces out of the revolutionary movement.

From the Central American experiences emerges a conception of popular revolution against the alliance of imperialism with the local ruling class or oligarchy. No popular struggles are ignored due to preconceived assumptions about the importance of trade unions or a narrow understanding of 'working class'. No social class is automatically excluded from the revolutionary alliance, although it is firmly understood that popular revolution is based primarily among the struggles of workers and peasants.

There is no consensus in Latin America on what to call this revolutionary alliance. Conditions in different countries naturally suggest somewhat different formulations, and there are significant differences among groups in each country over its precise conception.** But the term 'popular' is almost universally

---

*Latin America's accelerated industrialisation and proletarianisation of recent years, with explosive growth of cities, has undermined the appeal of Maoism ('Surround the cities with the countryside'). While there are Maoist remnants in many countries, most have dropped their more dogmatic lines and quietly downplayed their anti-Sovietism. Only in Peru is there a notable Maoist organisation, although sensational press accounts have vastly exaggerated the strength and significance of Sendero Luminoso. Sendero offers no serious military or political threat to the Peruvian regime. Both Washington and the lame-duck Belaúnde regime feel threatened by the electoral challenge from the Left Unity coalition and the social democratic APRA party, and thus see fit to focus national and international attention on Sendero.

**The three Sandinista tendencies, for example, each placed different emphasis on certain social sectors. One group was based primarily among peasants and small farmers ('prolonged people's war'), one targeted the organised working class (proletarios), and the third conceived of the broadest alliance of social forces (los terceristas). In retrospect, each group contributed meaningfully to the general strategy.
employed and understood to be much more inclusive than 'working class'. Because the imperialist/ruling class alliance compromises national sovereignty and limits or attacks the democratic aspirations of all other classes, the 'popular' alliance is oriented toward a national democratic revolution.

Another issue which the Central American revolutions helped clarify is the relationship between legal and illegal forms of struggle. A legacy of the new Left in Latin America was the mechanical equation of revolutionary struggle with armed struggle, and the counter-notion of reformist tendencies that would have armed struggle deferred indefinitely until certain general revolutionary conditions prevailed. The CPs routinely labelled as 'adventurist' almost every armed strategy, including that of the 26 July Movement in Cuba and the Sandinistas. This legacy was overcome in Central America itself only through painful experience. Some of the most effective forms of struggle in forging revolutionary consciousness and a broad popular front proved to be illegal but non-violent campaigns, such as the seizure of factories or public buildings. The combination of legal and illegal forms, the development of tactics to circumvent legal confines, coupled with the struggle to open up and exploit 'political space' under repressive regimes, were essential to allow participation of all sectors and prevent the regime from isolating the most revolutionary forces from popular movements.

By contrast to the 1975 meeting, communists attending the 1982 Havana conference were self-critical of their past inattention to the role of armed struggle. No-one argued that the 'peaceful road' was the most probable revolutionary route for Latin America; nor did those with 'new Left' origins exhort a call to arms for its own sake. Instead, there was a rich discussion of the interplay between legal and illegal forms of struggle, the relationship between armed struggle and mass action, and the importance of legal actions and opening of 'political spaces' under dictatorships to creating better conditions for armed insurrection.

Role of Women and Indigenous Peoples
The Latin American Left has traditionally been conciliatory toward machismo — to the serious detriment of revolutionary movements. The need to protect the Latin American revolution from 'US and European bourgeois feminism' was often given as an excuse to ignore or minimise serious problems of sexism. By reproducing roles and relationships which oppressed women within Left and popular organisations, a strategic revolutionary force was squandered, many women activists became demoralised, and ideological standards for male cadres were compromised. The experience of the Cuban Revolution in the 1960s did not greatly challenge these patterns, since the Cubans took up the question of women's oppression in the context of constructing socialism, after the seizure of power.*

*A related problem is the strong homophobia, no doubt linked to machismo, which also afflicts Latin American society. Homophobia in the Latin American Left was complicated by the anti-homosexual line adopted by the Cubans in the early years of the revolution. The Cuban position was an outgrowth of popular revulsion against male and female prostitution and other forms of commercialised sex in pre-revolutionary Havana. Homophobia was left intertwined with revolutionary campaigns against bourgeois life-styles. Homophobia does not seem as strong in the Central American Left, and there is evidence of at least some efforts to correct anti-homosexual discrimination in the revolutionary ranks.
The Central American movements have gone far in breaking with this legacy. Most revolutionary organisations explicitly condemn male chauvinism, attempt to combat it among cadres, and view women's full participation as strategic to the revolutionary process. Substantial numbers of women are integrated into the armed struggle and hold political-military leadership positions.

Central America also provides lessons on the incorporation of indigenous and racial minorities into the revolutionary process. The Sandinistas have been self-critical for the way they minimised the special conditions of Indian and Black minorities on the Atlantic coast and mishandled their integration into the revolution. In Guatemala, by contrast, revolutionaries were successful in rooting themselves in Indian communities, taking up the special oppression of Indians as a revolutionary question. (In retaliation, the Guatemalan military unleashed a genocidal terror on the Indian highlands, driving thousands of refugees into southern Mexico). The Guatemalan experience has important implications for other countries, particularly the Andean nations with large indigenous populations.

At the same time, the emergence of a Black movement in Brazil, where the Left has traditionally down-played the significance of racism and correlations between racial oppression and class strata, may at last force the Latin American Left to give theoretical attention to the continent's racial particularities and consider the struggle against racial oppression a strategic revolutionary question.

Seizure of Power
Prior to the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua in July 1979, the Salvadoran revolution was already maturing, and the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS) underwent an important political rectification process which led to its joining four other organisations in the formation of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN).* In January 1982, several months prior to the Havana conference, the PCS published a critical assessment of the party and the Latin American communist movement in general. Written by party general secretary Schafik Jorge Handal, the article addressed fundamental aspects of revolutionary strategy and suggested that similar rectification was under way in other Latin American CPs (see Bibliographic Note). Handal argued that the major failing of the Latin American communist movement was its tendency to lose sight of the seizure of state power as its key strategic objective.

*Due to the political and ideological importance which the Salvadoran communist movement has taken on within Latin America, certain particularities of the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS) bear noting. All five Salvadoran revolutionary organisations today part of the FMLN have some historical relationship to the PCS, founded in 1929 by Farabundo Martí and the country's main trade union leaders. In 1932 the PCS helped organise and lead one of the most important mass insurrections in the history of Latin America. Though ending in a defeat and brutal massacre at the hands of the Salvadoran oligarchy and military, the events illustrated a particular boldness and militancy which has characterised urban and rural workers in a country where class lines have been so sharply drawn. The lessons of 1932 were still being digested by Salvadoran communists when the Cuban victory in 1959 put the question of armed struggle back on Latin America's revolutionary agenda. Furthermore, the tenacious opposition to reform by the coffee-planter wing of the Salvadoran bourgeoisie served as a partial objective check on reformist illusions within the party. After a reformist junta was overthrown in 1962, the PCS prepared for armed struggle through the Frente Unido de Acción Revolucionaria (FUAR), in which current PCS general secretary, Schafik Jorge Handal, was a leader. During this period, the Salvadoran Left was spared the organised influence of the sort
The Latin American CPs, said Handal, placed too much emphasis on the role of the socio-economic programme, abdicating concern for the question of state power to other Left groups. In this regard, he pointedly contrasted the example of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions, led by non-CP organisations, with the defeat of the Unidad Popular (UP) in Chile, in which the Chilean CP played a central role. Whereas the 20 July Movement never made its political programme (or winning of the majority of Cubans to it) the key to the triumph of the revolution, the UP coalition's official reform programme became a straitjacket. In Chile, 'no-one had a solid orientation toward really trying to resolve the problem of state power or to defend Allende's government.' Handal noted that many Left critics did not properly combat this reformism. They, too, fetishised the socio-economic programme, demanding it be more socialist, rather than focusing on the problem of how and when to seek power. In making this unusual public assessment of the historic 1973 defeat in Chile, Handal was giving voice to conclusions reached within the ranks of the communist movement far beyond El Salvador, as the Havana conference confirmed. Discussion there emphasised the need to transcend sterile counterposing of the 'mystique of arms' against the 'mystique of the programme'.

Two-stage Revolution
Such re-thinking about the popular character of the revolution, the breadth of class alliances and the problem of state power inevitably raises the question of stages in the Third World revolutionary process, an issue which Handal also addressed and for which there is an ample Marxist literature dating back to Lenin. 'Two-stage revolution' is not a term commonly employed on the Latin American left today, perhaps because it has a dogmatic ring of some preconceived formula. But the Vietnamese experience and the stress which the Vietnamese party placed on the conception of a national democratic stage of revolution has been widely studied in Latin America — especially in El Salvador. The Cuban experience, said Handal, gave new evidence that the Latin American revolution is won in two phases; first through mobilisation of the people under the banners of democracy and anti-imperialism; and then subsequently through demonstrating to the masses that the democratic and anti-imperialist objectives can only be secured and defended through the construction of socialism. The
ultra-left viewpoint, associated in Latin American with both Trotskyism and sectors of the ‘new left’, demanded direct implantation of socialism with, as Handal put it, ‘no prologue’. The right or reformist error within the communist movement was to lose sight of what he described as ‘the essential and indissoluble connection’ between the two phases, in practice conceiving of them as two separate revolutions. Furthermore, he said, the Latin American CPs became complacent about their own leadership of the democratic phase of the revolution, adopting a mere support role, ‘in order to assure the range and breadth of the participating democratic forces.’

The 1982 Havana conference witnessed considerable political struggle over the exact character of each of the two revolutionary stages, with debate centring on the implications of the heritage of economic backwardness and dependence in underdeveloped countries.

**International Outlook**

As the influence of Maoism and dependency theory have waned, anti-Sovietism, narrow conceptions of autonomous development, and exaggerated notions of revolutionary self-reliance have receded in Latin America. The Central American revolutions have highlighted the importance of both the Socialist bloc, the anti-intervention movements in the imperialist countries, and solidarity movements throughout Latin America as strategic allies of the revolution. Even as Washington seeks increasingly to overcome the Vietnam legacy and to be free to deal with Central America as it did with Grenada, and despite unfavourable geographical conditions, the Sandinistas, FMLN and Guatemalan revolutionaries have worked creatively and tirelessly to flank themselves with progressive international forces. Gone are superficial notions of a mere ‘rearguard’ abroad. The strategic importance of the international correlation of forces can only grow more evident as the United States purposefully stakes the credibility of its position as world power on its ability to contain revolution in the hemisphere.

**Left Unity**

The trend toward political consensus on such issues opens the path toward forms of Left reunification in Latin America. Organisational and political fragmentation are an objective reality not easily overcome in the best of circumstances, but the trend is unmistakable. Both CPs and most other Left forces now recognise they have no exclusive claim as vanguard. A Brazilian representative at the 1982 Havana conference labelled as ‘anachronistic’ any pretention to monopolise leadership of the revolution by one Left group or party. Indeed, most Left organisations in Latin America today seem reconciled to the probability that organic reunification of the vanguard will only be possible after the seizure of power.

Nevertheless, the Havana conference deliberations emphasised that unity of the vanguard on key questions of revolutionary strategy is not optional. On the contrary, the example of Chile was cited as evidence that strategic disunity in the quest for power can be fatal. The strategic unification of the three Sandinista tendencies in the late 1970s, as well as the unification of five organisations in El Salvador’s FMLN, have been instructive. The Chilean and Peruvian Lefts have also advanced considerably in this direction. Handal noted that the Latin American CPs must put ‘party building’ back on their agendas, engaging in a principled struggle for political unity with other Left organisations.
Conclusion
These trends in the direction of Left ‘rectification’ are more advanced in some countries than others. Even CPs which have issued self-critical assessments and formerly embraced the new strategic outlook encounter serious difficulties in overcoming their past. In El Salvador, for example, Handal noted that, at the time of the party’s rectification, almost 90 per cent of the cadre had been trained ideologically and politically under the old reformist general line.

But the aversion to serious self-critical reflection, the sectarian unwillingness to acknowledge other organisations within the vanguard, and reluctance to debate central questions of revolutionary theory as applied to the concrete reality of each Latin American country, have all been broken. As Cuban delegate Jesús Montané Oropesa put it in his inaugural address to the Havana conference: ‘There is nothing more practical than good theory.’ The road ahead is not identical to that of the Soviet Union, Cuba, or even Nicaragua, though study of each illuminates revolutionary strategy. Or, as Montané concluded, ‘Learn from others, think for ourselves.’

Bibliographic Note

The Review is especially pleased to publish this article by an editor of our sister journal Latin American Perspectives. The author is also director of the Inter-American Research Centre, 1835 South La Cienega Blvd., Suite 230, Los Angeles, CA 90035, USA.

INFORMATION DESK
As part of a joint effort between the US-based relief agencies Grassroots International and Mercy Corps International, a temporary office for the collection and dissemination of information on the current drought emergency in Eritrea and Tigray has been established in Khartoum. The office, known as the Information Desk, has involved the co-operation of the relief agencies Eritrean Relief Association and Relief Society of Tigray. The Information Desk will focus on the situation in the refugee camps in Sudan’s Eastern Region, the continuing exodus of peasants across the border into Sudan, and the famine situation in Eritrea and Tigray. The desk will also work to collect information on the response of the various relief agencies to the crisis.

The primary goal of the Information Desk is to increase public awareness in the United States of how the crisis is affecting peasants in the non-government held areas of Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as how it is affecting the Sudanese government and people. The desk was established in January 1985 and is a 6-month effort.

For more information, contact: Information Desk, c/o Acropole Hotel, PO Box 48, Khartoum, Sudan.
Debates

GHANA: DEFENCE COMMITTEES AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Introduction
The coup of 31 December 1981 which brought Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings to power for the second time, opened the floodgates to the most intense and bitter class struggle witnessed in the post-independence period. The coup was initially hailed as representing a victory for progressive forces and heralding a new dawn in which workers and peasants would play a vanguard role in the process of revolutionary transformation. The subsequent outcome has seen one of the most dramatic ‘U-turns’ of any government in all post-independent African history. The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) has turned its back on its origins, initial objectives, and social base, and invalidated all possibilities of a genuine revolutionary transformation.

This paper seeks to raise wider questions of both revolutionary theory and practice: who can and must lead the national democratic revolution, the viability of a so-called non-capitalist path of development, and the inherent ideological contradiction between reactionary populist nationalism and revolutionary social transformation. Here we shall dwell principally on the peoples’ and workers’ defence committees (PDCs/WDCs), now committees for defence of the ‘revolution’ (CDRs), to show that if these committees were supposed to resolve the fundamental question of state power in favour of the workers and peasants and as a result to lay the basis for social transformation, the reverse has in fact happened. The intense class struggle has resulted in the polarisation of left-wing forces, a weakening or complete decimation of emerging left-wing organisations and a strengthening of the hold of reactionary forces over the state. Hence we see the recent dissolution of the National Defence Committee (NDC) and the renaming of defence committees as a capitulation of the Rawlings regime to the interests of finance capital and local reactionary forces. This capitulation is part of the efforts of the right-wing both within and outside the regime to consolidate petty bourgeois rule and to weaken organised labour and left-wing forces.

The call for the formation of PDCs/WDCs after the coup was a direct response to the failure of parliamentary democracy and a deteriorating national situation. The brief three months period of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) in 1979 had been followed by the People’s National Party government whose incompetence and corruption contrasted sharply with the AFRC period. The AFRC era can be credited with heightening political awareness, which had
first developed during the military dictatorships of Acheampong and Akuffo, among the urban working class, youths and students. Their potential for national reconstruction could be tapped only within a political context in which their interests were seen to be paramount and the political leadership seen to be sincere and accountable.

Past regimes in Ghana had regarded the slightest desire of the exploited masses to participate in the political process with suspicion and hostility. Since the right-wing coup of February 1966, all subsequent regimes came to be seen by the masses as dictatorships by the privileged classes. This gradual realisation culminated in the widespread national resistance against the Acheampong and Akuffo military dictatorships in the second half of the 1970s. This struggle was largely led by petty bourgeois elements with the active involvement of small but weak left-wing groups. It culminated in 1979’s June 4 uprising by the junior ranks of the armed forces, and this partly explains the populist character of the AFRC. Since it lacked a revolutionary vanguard, the uprising was largely confined to the barracks, and the political currents it generated channelled the developing political consciousness into a movement which was essentially populist. In order to grasp the difficulties which the PDC’s/WDCs faced, it is important to understand the shortcomings of the AFRC period, because developments in that period greatly influenced later developments.

During the AFRC era, spontaneous groups consisting mainly of students, members of youth associations, unemployed elements and urban working-class groups emerged as independent, voluntary, anti-corruption and price control squads. The character and purpose of these groups reflected not merely the immediate concerns of ordinary people but even more important, the effect of the 4 June uprising on the actions (labelled ‘revolutionary actions’) of the AFRC. During this period, however, what the AFRC conceived as ‘revolution’ and sought to achieve did not correspond to what the exploited sections aimed to achieve — that is a radical solution to the economic crisis. In fact Rawlings consistently reminded the workers that June 4 was a ‘moral revolution’. The AFRC consciously sought to channel the emerging revolutionary consciousness into a populist consciousness.

Soon after the 4 June uprising, junior officers of the Police Force staged their own ‘uprising’, one which though having none of the violence of the soldiers, was even more profound than the uprising of the soldiers. They arrested the most corrupt senior police officers and set up Junior Ranks Police Associations. The reaction of the AFRC was immediate. They forcibly released the arrested officers, disbanded the Junior Ranks Police Associations and transferred their leaders to distant stations. A similar move by the Prisons Officers was also crushed. We hope to demonstrate below that the AFRC’s reaction to the Junior Ranks Police Associations and the voluntary price-control and anti-corruption squads bears similarities to the PNDC’s attitude towards PDC’s.

After the AFRC handed over power to Dr Limann and his People’s National Party (PNP) it quickly became evident that bourgeois democracy could not accommodate the fundamental interests of the masses. The PNP devoted most of its efforts and energies not to advancing the the aspirations of the people, but to disarming their political consciousness. There was, for instance, the question of the status of the voluntary price control squads that were part of the legacy of AFRC rule. To the PNP and other parties opposed to the AFRC, the squads were
unconstitutional. But since popular feeling supported the AFRC, the PNP was compelled, albeit on paper, to promise the continuation of the 'moral revolution'. This they could neither disband nor ignore without serious political consequences. Consequently, the PNP manipulated these groups by re-naming them 'vigilantes', infiltrated them with its own party activists, and emptied them of every possible 'revolutionary' or democratic content. They became terror wings of the PNP and were used to intimidate political enemies. Soon they became discredited and collapsed.

However another and possibly more important aspect of the AFRC legacy was the emergence of progressive organisations such as the June 4 Movement (JFM) and the Peoples' Revolutionary League of Ghana (PRLG) dedicated to advancing the cause of the 4 June uprising and the popular aspirations of the masses. After his forced retirement from the Armed Forces, Rawlings joined the JFM. These movements tried to organise students, workers, peasants, soldiers and the urban unemployed to resist the efforts of the PNP government to reverse the gains of the 4 June uprising.

It is important to grasp the contradictory character of those political organisations which sought to mobilise popular support behind the 31 December coup. Largely as a result of their association with Rawlings and the AFRC these associations acquired a populist character. But this populism also co-existed with a genuine revolutionary tendency emerging from the student activism of the pre-June 4 uprising. The revolutionary tendency, however, was weaker than the populist tendency. This contradiction became manifest in the struggle over the composition and character of the PDCs/WDCs. On 4 June 1981, Rawlings on behalf of JFM called for the formation of ‘Revolutionary Committees’ throughout Ghana. Underlying this call was the broader question of the democratic participation of the ordinary people in the national political and economic issues.

The main ideas behind the formation of the ‘revolutionary committees’ were spelt out in the first edition of the organ of the JFM, the *Workers Banner*, published in September 1981:

... whether there will be adequate food for all the people or not cannot be determined merely by working harder, or going back to the land as some self-centred politicians tell us. It will be decided principally by who effectively wields state power — the rich men or the poor workers, soldiers, policemen and farmers — the power to determine who should get what share of the national wealth. This is the crux of the matter, the hub of the whole question. Any discussion of the problem of how the people of Ghana are to free themselves from their present dilemma which does not take this as the point of departure is meaningless.

In the same article the role and functions of the revolutionary committees were clearly spelt out:

These committees of the ordinary people will hold mass meetings such as durbars of the other ranks in the barracks or people's congresses in the towns and villages, on the farms, in the factories, mines, shop floors, everywhere to debate national issues and take decisions affecting the lives of the ordinary people. That is why the people's committees represent the highest form of democracy — grassroots democracy — because through them all the people will participate in taking vital decisions and in running the country. This way, power will not be concentrated at the top any more, and nobody at the top can enslave us because there is no way anybody at the top, whether he is a saint or a devil can do what he likes. Budget proposals will be debated by the farmers in their villages, the workers in their factories, mines and on the shop floors, the soldiers in their barracks and their collective decisions will become the law of the day.
The revolutionary committees differed radically from the 'vigilantes' of the PNP. Even though the government indicated that ‘vigilantes’ might even take up production as one of their functions, that never happened. The revolutionary committees were structures whose membership reflected their political character. They were for the defence of the interests of the working class and peasants.

It was against this background that the call for PDCs was made by Rawlings on 4 January 1982. Some of the earliest committees were offshoots of these efforts. In the Limann era, some 'left-wing' groups like the New Democratic Movement were opposed to these efforts. Despite being advocates of radical politics, they had a deep-seated fear of 'people's power' and the threat it posed to the existing socio-economic order. Such people described these modest efforts as 'confrontationist', 'anarchist' and 'ultra-leftist'. This charge of 'ultra-leftism' was later used as a convenient excuse by the right- or left-wing opportunists to persecute leading members of the United Front comprising the JFM and the PRLG.

**Post 31 December 1981**

It will help illuminate understanding of later events and struggles to recount the little known developments that surrounded the formation of the PDCs/WDCs and their Interim National Co-ordinating Committee (INCC). In the early days of the coup, policy was decided on an *ad hoc*, haphazard manner by informal caucuses around Rawlings. Not even the formation of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) changed the structure of the regime in any significant way.

One of the first contentious issues concerned the name of what were envisaged to be grassroots revolutionary organs. Rawlings, after a session with a caucus of right-wing senior army officers, decided that he was going to call for the formation of 'Peoples Defence Assemblies' (PDA).* This was strongly resisted by some of his JFM colleagues who had happened to chance on a statement which was to be released to the press to that effect. The progressives had insisted that the organs be called Peoples Defence *Committees*. Behind this seemingly semantic difference lay wholly different conceptions of the role that these organs were to play and which social class could join them.

Another important battle occurred on the occasion of the formal inauguration of the Interim National Co-ordinating Committee (INCC) of PDCs/WDCs. The entire progressive faction within and around the PNDC agreed on the urgent need for such a body to co-ordinate the activities of the PDCs because of the numerous problems which were already becoming evident with many of the committees. Arrangements had been concluded for the inauguration by Rawlings. Proposed members of the INCC and members of the mass media had gathered in the conference room awaiting the arrival of the Chairman when a totally unexpected problem arose. Captain Kojo Tsikata, Rawlings' closest adviser, who had raised no objection to the previous arrangements in connection with the INCC, suddenly began to argue violently against the very idea of the INCC. Capt. Tsikata insisted tht there was no need for Rawlings to inaugurate a co-ordinating secretariat as had initially been suggested. The name of the co-

---

*Whatever else, this was an insensitive decision because the initials PDA remind people of the notorious Preventive Detention Act of the Nkrumah era.
ordinating body was amended to accommodate this apparently sensible objection. It was to be a co-ordinating committee. But this concession did not satisfy Capt. Tsikata. He argued further that the PDCs should develop spontaneously without a PNDC-appointed body to co-ordinate them, which he equated with control from above. Tsikata did not accept that the spontaneity of the masses had to be balanced by conscious guidance from the revolutionary leadership if the scattered actions of the masses were to be moulded into a constructive revolutionary force. This alternative position was advanced by Chris Atim, then PNDC member responsible for PDCs.

Despite the stalemate, the INCC was finally inaugurated. But its functions were to be strictly limited to providing logistical support to the PDCs in their independent work. However, the most serious public accusations made later by Rawlings and his supporters against the INCC have been not that the INCC tried to control the PDCs but that it did not control them enough, that the PDCs had become ‘anarchist’ and were acting in ways that threatened the PNDC and the ‘revolution’ itself.

In the formative days of the PDCs/WDCs there were disturbing reports of how discredited elements such as former vigilantes, political activists, criminals, rich businessmen, chiefs, well-known kalabule (corrupt elements), etc., were taking advantage of the total spontaneity of PDC formation to hijack PDCs/WDCs for furthering their own activities, terrorising their opponents and the defenceless masses and enriching themselves. In some factories and industrial units, managers formed WDCs and made themselves chairmen. The first WDC was the Ghana Cargo Handling Company at Tema where the Managing Director constituted a WDC by inviting three representatives each from the workers, middle level personnel and management as well as himself as Chairman, an example which soon began to multiply wherever the workers were too weak to prevent it. In the villages, chiefs and landlords rushed to form PDCs. They used them to settle long-standing family feuds or land disputes in their favour, and for ejecting tenants and collecting rent. In Akropong, for instance, a chief insisted on forming a PDC comprising the members of the council for elders for settling a chieftancy dispute and in opposition to that of his ‘subjects’ who insisted on proving his misuse of public funds meant for a health clinic. In the Eastern Region town of Ningo a businessman bribed the police PDC to beat up people who questioned his business deals. Furthermore, there was a widespread trend for landowners and businessmen to hire soldiers and policemen to harass the working people and many deaths occurred as a result.

On the other hand, progressive organisations and the advanced sectors of the working class made use of the WDCs to advance their own class interests. Such PDCs/WDCs came into conflict with the existing social relations and power structure. Their activities included price control checks, exposing corruption in their work places, mobilising to defend workers’ rights, securing democratic rights for themselves, providing political education, guarding against sabotage, anti-smuggling exercises and border patrols.

However, due to the spontaneous way in which these organs came into existence, and the absence of any organised, coherent revolutionary leadership, there was little appreciation of concrete realities and the objective limits of popular action imposed by the country’s material situation. As a result, there was a tendency to blame workers and so-called ‘ultra-leftist’ or ‘super-revolutionaries’. In so doing,
the PNDC (which came to mean Rawlings and Kojo Tsikata) abdicated its responsibility to the Ghanaian masses. The initial insistence, therefore, that the INCC should not attempt to control or guide the PDCs/WDCs has to be seen in its context: because of the objective situation at the time, the masses had not gained sufficient confidence vis-à-vis their exploiters to pose a serious and immediate threat to the status quo. The overriding fear of the petty bourgeoisie both within and outside the regime was that INCC intervention, due to the domination of the INCC by revolutionary organisations, would help tilt the balance in favour of the emerging revolutionary trend.

The Peasants

One fundamental difference between a coup (a mere change of power at the top) and a genuine people's revolution is that coups tend to concentrate on winning immediate support by making populist appeals to the working class while ignoring the rural areas where patient and painstaking organisational work is often required to win the support of the peasants. Experience in Ghana has shown that peasants hardly respond to radio announcements of changes in government in the manner in which the urban workers do. The peasantry constitutes about 65 per cent of Ghana's total population. It is therefore inconceivable that a genuine social revolution can be waged without their participation, and in particular that of the poorest strata. The response of the peasantry to the December coup was slow, suspicious and generally cynical. Unlike their urban counterparts, many of them saw it as 'these soldiers again'. Moreover, since the peasantry is not homogeneous, their responses differed at various stages.

The rich peasants, big commercial farmers, chiefs and landlords, live by exploiting agricultural labourers and the poor peasants. Many of them are rural-based but some are also absentee landlords who live in the urban areas and have connections with the comprador or bureaucratic elements of the dominant classes. Apart from owning farms, some of them are involved in the trading sector. Like the leading functionaries in the state structures and comprador sections, they opposed the PDCs/WDCs because they constituted a real threat to their economic and political hegemony.

Some middle peasants joined the defence committees and in certain cases tried to use them to settle land disputes or other personal scores with the rich farmers, chiefs, landlords or their labourers. They also resented the anti-imperialist stance of the defence committees and other progressive organisations associated with the regime, partly because some of them were beneficiaries of 'aid programmes' in the agricultural sector such as the Upper Regional Agricultural Development Programme (URADEP).

A last group comprises the poor peasants and agricultural labourers many of whom are migrants from Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. The poor peasants produce mainly for subsistence and are, in most cases, indebted to rich farmers and moneylenders to whom they pledge their farms or its produce. Recently too, as a result of the intrusion of agribusiness, some poor peasants have lost their lands to South Korean firms (in Oyarifa), to firms like Tate and Lyle (in Tono), to rich farmers, bureaucrats, senior army officers and absentee landlords. These dispossessed peasants had hoped that the regime would intervene on their behalf and joined the PDCs for this purpose. The agricultural labourers remain the most
exploited. They have low wages, they are non-unionised, and are socially and politically marginalised.

The upper and middle strata of the farmers were quite hostile to the PDCs. Because of the political and ideological hegemony of these strata in the rural areas, their attitude had an influence on the poorer peasants. In some areas of the Upper East region, the poor peasants have been radicalised by the incursions and seizure of irrigated land by absentee landlords and rich farmers. These peasants were quite enthusiastic about the coup. Some of them expected to regain their lands. In the Vea-Gore area, for instance, peasants demonstrated to regain their lost lands, but received no favourable response. Another factor which alienated the peasants further was the arbitrary sale of their farm produce by soldiers, some over-zealous PDCs and members of the Youth and Students' Task Force. The victims of these excesses were the same poor peasants who had always been victims of past military 'revolutions'. In some cases, corrupt chiefs and landlords deliberately misinformed the peasants about the role of the PDCs. As a result, the few PDCs in the rural areas were dominated and controlled by students, teachers, etc.

The Army/Police
Another area in which the development of PDCs/WDCs faced serious setbacks was in the army and other armed sectors like the police. Prior to the coup, Rawlings had extolled the virtues of military participation in politics and in the struggles of workers in other parts of the world. In the first edition of the Workers Banner the lead article noted that:

in Holland and Italy have gained the right to form their own ranks committees and to take part in national affairs. Dutch soldiers can now go on strike to enforce their rights and Italian soldiers can attend workers' meetings to take part in political discussions... Soldiers have gone to workers' meetings and explained the conditions within the military and to urge greater solidarity between the working-class and the enlisted ranks for the purpose of supporting each other's struggles... our soldiers and policemen have to realise that the workers' struggle is their struggle... Must Ghanian soldiers stand and watch their colleagues arrested, tortured and booted out or jailed on false charges while they have the power and constitutional right to resist such injustice?

It was with such amazing promises to the other ranks that Rawlings and others recruited them for the coup. But with the success of the coup, Rawlings and senior officers like Brigadier Quainoo (Army Commander) tried to make the formation of PDCs in the military virtually impossible. They insisted on the inclusion of senior officers in army PDCs. In fact they wanted the army PDCs to be under the control of unit commanders. Despite this opposition, the INCC trained some soldiers as army PDC cadres at the Afienya Cadre Training School. During one such session, the soldiers quizzed Rawlings at length on the political direction of the process and their reservations about his style of 'revolution', something which Rawlings saw as a potential problem. Later, the forces' commander decreed that army PDCs could not act without the consent of their unit commanders: a return to the old order. As a result they have suffered even worse setbacks than their civilian counterparts. But like their civilian counterparts, they needed direction which would have given concrete meaning to the emerging radicalism which was fast becoming a factor of Ghana's politics.

Nevertheless, their participation in national politics at the level of PDCs could
have been meaningful under certain conditions. Their politicisation would have made them participate in national development and in a restructuring of the whole military institution that would have taken into account the role of the other ranks and the non-commissioned officers. Such a restructuring would have removed oppressive laws and democratised the institutions of violence without sacrificing discipline. In the absence of this, any isolated attempts by army PDCs was seen as 'anarchistic'. Thus a non-politicised army is the best and most useful instrument of a petty bourgeois populist regime. Every effort was made to stall any attempt at politicisation. In some cases, some PDC organisers were barred from entering the barracks to educate the troops.

**PDCs/WDCs in the Class Struggle**

The attempt by the regime to depoliticise the PDCs/WDCs must be seen within its overall strategy and particularly its relationship with foreign capital. Its three-year Economic Recovery Programme launched by the regime is incompatible with workers' power. The programme was formulated with the 'advice' and 'guidance' of the IMF and is based on hopes of massive funding from the IMF and other international lending agencies. As part of this programme, the regime accepted for implementation the standard stabilisation programmes — devaluation, reduction in public expenditure (i.e. social services), price increases in petroleum products, etc. The success of IMF stabilisation programmes also depends on the existence of a regime willing to repress the legitimate demands of workers. Since 1983, there have been five devaluations, relaxation of price controls, the sale of state enterprises, and a wage freeze. The rate of inflation resulting from these policies is the highest in Ghana's history.

It was in the context of the economic crisis that the December 31 process was reversed. It became official policy to strip the PDCs/WDCs of their revolutionary content. Henceforth, so declared Rawlings, 'every Ghanaian is a member of the PDCs/WDCs'. Early in 1983, the National Defence Committee (NDC) was reconstituted to reflect the new character of the PDCs/WDCs and the regime itself. Rawlings was still Chairman but this time, it included chiefs, councillors, top bureaucrats, PNDC Secretaries and the functionaries of the state security. Since then, emphasis has been on production and more production. No politics and no interference in the affairs of government. As, Rawlings curtly declared, 'The character and the commitment of the individual is more important than the class from which he or she comes . . .'

But the task of demolishing the PDCs/WDCs has not been easy. Such attempts have fuelled and intensified bitter class struggles between the regime and workers, and between workers and their management. Cases in point include the attack on the judiciary by Accra-Tema workers in June 1983, the Pioneer Food Cannery conflict over unlawful dismissals (a struggle which led to the dissolution of the co-ordinating secretariat of Tema WDCs), Bunsaso Tyre factory, Allied Foods, Ada Salts, and Tono Irrigation Project. Such struggles and others before them had won workers representation on management boards known as Interim Management Committees (IMCs). In the words of Rawlings, the PNDC is no longer 'interested in people defending their own interests. We are not interested in workers-management confrontation.' As part of this trend, the IMCs have also been replaced by the Joint Consultative Committees (JCCs) which are different in both function and composition from the IMCs. This move has been condemned by the Trade Union Congress and WDCs. The TUC has also condemned what it sees
as a capitulation to the IMF and the difficulties which workers face as a result. It has therefore demanded that government stops negotiating with the IMF.

These moves by the TUC and the continued efforts by WDCs/PDCs to defend their collective interests, meant that efforts by the regime to remove PDCs/WDCs from left-wing control were far from successful. The final act has been the dissolution of the NDC in late 1984. In the words of Rawlings, ‘the NDC was dissolved because it could not focus the energies of its committees into positive action. (It was only) steeped in theories and no action . . .’

Prior to this final act, the PDCs/WDCs were in a state of decline and despondency. Rawlings admitted that ‘something is lost . . . that something is the fire of enthusiasm’. This he attributed to ‘the government’s corrective economic measures . . . the reconciliation policy’. A writer in a Ghanaian weekly, *Sports Guide*, put it this way: ‘all of a sudden PDC meetings are not attended. Even when attended, it is on the instigation of such notices as: “meeting: two cakes of soap, one bottle of cooking oil, one tin of butter = C87.00”. So some people’s defence committees are gradually turning into people’s defence of commodities’.

The dissolution of the NDC and even of the PDCs/WDCs are expressions of Rawlings’ petty bourgeois efforts to defeat workers’ power and to rid the regime of workers’ or left-wing influence in order to create a ‘Bonapartist’ state machine necessary to implement a neo-colonial economic programme. The efforts of the regime will be to legitimise petty bourgeois rule and the ascendance of the reactionary forces.

As the present state does not provide the right channels for workers and peasants to participate in the political process, trade unionism is the only avenue open to the workers; and they are likely to revert to the traditional forms of protest. It also means that economism is once more becoming the dominant tendency within the working class movement and there is ample evidence that this is happening. In the rural areas, ethnic movements and religious groups are strengthening their hold over the peasantry.

In conclusion we can say that the experience of Ghana raises the wider issues of who can and must lead the national democratic revolution — the working class and peasants or the petty bourgeoisie? It also points to the limits of populist nationalism which, rather than being a potential revolutionary force may be a specific mode of adaptation of a neo-colonial state in crisis to the logic of international capital.

Zaya Yeebo

---

**THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE AND RESEARCH**

**Introduction**

The question I have been asked to discuss is: *What should be the relationship between the national liberation struggles in Southern Africa and the priorities determined by these, on the one hand, and research and writing on the other?* This, of course, is only a specific variant of a more general question which has a
as a capitulation to the IMF and the difficulties which workers face as a result. It has therefore demanded that government stops negotiating with the IMF.

These moves by the TUC and the continued efforts by WDCs/PDCs to defend their collective interests, meant that efforts by the regime to remove PDCs/WDCs from left-wing control were far from successful. The final act has been the dissolution of the NDC in late 1984. In the words of Rawlings, 'the NDC was dissolved because it could not focus the energies of its committees into positive action. (It was only) steeped in theories and no action...'

Prior to this final act, the PDCs/WDCs were in a state of decline and despondency. Rawlings admitted that 'something is lost... that something is the fire of enthusiasm'. This he attributed to 'the government's corrective economic measures... the reconciliation policy'. A writer in a Ghanaian weekly, *Sports Guide*, put it this way: 'all of a sudden PDC meetings are not attended. Even when attended, it is on the instigation of such notices as: “meeting: two cakes of soap, one bottle of cooking oil, one tin of butter = C87.00”'. So some people's defence committees are gradually turning into people's defence of commodities'.

The dissolution of the NDC and even of the PDCs/WDCs are expressions of Rawlings' petty bourgeois efforts to defeat workers' power and to rid the regime of workers' or left-wing influence in order to create a 'Bonapartist' state machine necessary to implement a neo-colonial economic programme. The efforts of the regime will be to legitimise petty bourgeois rule and the ascendance of the reactionary forces.

As the present state does not provide the right channels for workers and peasants to participate in the political process, trade unionism is the only avenue open to the workers; and they are likely to revert to the traditional forms of protest. It also means that economism is once more becoming the dominant tendency within the working class movement and there is ample evidence that this is happening. In the rural areas, ethnic movements and religious groups are strengthening their hold over the peasantry.

In conclusion we can say that the experience of Ghana raises the wider issues of who can and must lead the national democratic revolution — the working class and peasants or the petty bourgeoisie? It also points to the limits of populist nationalism which, rather than being a potential revolutionary force may be a specific mode of adaptation of a neo-colonial state in crisis to the logic of international capital.

Zaya Yeebo

**THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE AND RESEARCH**

**Introduction**

The question I have been asked to discuss is: *What should be the relationship between the national liberation struggles in Southern Africa and the priorities determined by these, on the one hand, and research and writing on the other?* This, of course, is only a specific variant of a more general question which has a
long history — that is, the political role of intellectuals and intellectual work. In this debate, the question of the autonomy of intellectuals from political direction has been central. The pressure from states and governments on intellectuals and the institutions in which they work (universities, research organisations and the like) to carry out work of an applied nature required by the state, is ever present, although its intensity, character and degree of success depends on a complex structure of conditions. The increasingly successful pressure on British universities by the Thatcher government is a case in point.

Naturally, for those in radical opposition to a government and its policies, resistance to the state’s attempts to limit fundamental and critical research is the more appropriate response.

Does this mean, conversely that where the regime is a regime of national liberation and, perhaps, socialist in orientation, intellectuals and institutions of research and learning, must give up their critical role, restrict their research and writing to practical and other problems defined by party and state? In dealing with this question Maputo’s Centre for African Studies in their 1981 document, Strategies of Social Research in Mozambique: The Case of the Centre for African Studies, stated:

For their part non-Mozambican researchers ... although they have a certain advantage in training and research experience, also have difficulties in contributing to an activist conception of research. There is the difficulty of moving from a work experience which makes critique and opposition the most important role of the radical researcher to one in which analysis is critical in form, because it operates within a perspective of social transformation, but has to confront actual problems of the transformation process.

Despite the fact that this statement is somewhat ambiguous, it does pose explicitly the question of the critical role of researchers who are not opposed to a regime, but, in fact, are organically connected to its goal of social transformation.

Although these remarks apply to the case where state power is already held, directly comparable issues are raised for us in the period of the struggle for national liberation — particularly since the relationship established between research and political priorities, as defined by the national liberation organisations in this period, may well influence the way that relationship is constituted in the period after state power has been achieved.

There are some complex problems involved here and I want to touch on some of these, in part by reference to Mozambique and in part by reference to issues which seem to be pertinent to the South African and Namibian situations.

The Question of Research Autonomy
I would like to begin the task of formulating a conception of the relationship between the liberation movements’ definition of the political priorities and research and writing by first discussing two positions which are either incomplete or inadequate.

Insofar as research is carried out at the direct behest of the liberation movement and in terms of its analysis of the current situation there is clearly a close harmony between research and political priorities. The movement has an inexhaustible need for research which provides a full and systematic factual description of the conditions of the people, of state strategies and so forth. Such work is obviously vital for propaganda and publicity, for the preparation of
materials for political mobilisation, for the writing of important documents for the UN and other bodies and to support the policy documents of the movement. A great deal of research and writing of this kind is produced by support organisations and by individuals committed to the movement. This much is clear and unproblematic. But if the role of research and writing is to be restricted entirely to providing the materials for and confirmation of already defined policies, then this is to reduce research to a purely ideological function and to deny any autonomy or value to intellectual work and hence to the critical yet essential function of such work.

One traditional and strongly held answer to the threat of the subordination of intellectual work and research to already defined political objectives, is the unqualified argument for autonomy. Although this argument may take a number of different forms, for present purposes I want to refer briefly to two different formulations of this position. On the one hand, social research is held to be an ethically and politically neutral, value free, objective practice which develops in terms of its own autonomous rationality and logic. Its research priorities are generated internally, not by practical needs and not by ideological considerations. Indeed, science must be guaranteed protection from political intervention. By contrast, on the other hand, another view denies the possibility of value free social science and asserts that social research is and must be relevant to political and social concerns, particularly to the struggles in southern Africa. Nonetheless the practice of science in the educational and research institutions is assumed, implicitly or explicitly, to produce superior knowledge and therefore, to provide firmer foundation for decisions about research priorities which are politically pertinent than those entailed in the policies of the liberation movement.

Both views are fundamentally flawed because they assume that research topics are derived in a pure form from the 'logic' of scientific work. They differ only in that the second view asserts that social scientific research generates the questions which politically need to be asked. The problem with both these approaches is their failure to grasp the conditions, to which we are all subject, which affect the practice of social research. Social theory and modes of investigation, no less than topics of research are conditioned by their social setting as well as by the internal structure of the science. The establishment of dominant theories and research practices, the selection of subjects for research and the knowledge generated are the outcome of struggles within science through which the extra-scientific pressures are mediated. The latter relate to the structures of power and influence within the sciences and in the political sphere, the allocation of resources, the structure of ideologies, career patterns within the social sciences, the conceptions which become acceptable to journal editors and book publishers, the topics of 'professional' conferences and the like.

To negate these forces, which are extremely pervasive, working as an individual researcher, is enormously difficult and is probably never fully accomplished even by the most committed academic. But that task cannot be accomplished at all unless the issues are explicitly confronted and argued, for what it requires in the first place is that the priorities of the liberation movement be placed in the forefront. This is by no means to suggest that the argument must lead back to the position, which I have already questioned, in which research and writing are seen to be the mere handmaiden of priorities determined by the ideology and policies of the liberation movement. It seems clear that in order to arrive at an adequate
approach the simple opposition between the autonomy of social research and its reduction to an ideological function must be abandoned.

Liberation Struggles and Research Priorities
The first point that needs to be made is that theory and analysis, and hence the research priorities to which they give rise in the liberation movement, are always problematic. That is to say, neither the theory nor the analysis of the liberation movement can ever be regarded as settled but are continuously open to theoretical and empirical testing. This means that theory and analysis are a site of contestation within the national liberation movement. This understanding was expressed in 1982 by the Rector of the Eduardo Mondlane University in the following terms:

... theories ranged against the bourgeois social orthodoxies are (not) unproblematical. Theory is susceptible to different, even contradictory interpretations; theories incorporate tensions, and unresolved problems; to ignore them is to distort the character of reality and the lay within social reality at any perceived time and place. Theory for social change, must, irresistably ... be based on class analysis, on the analysis of social contradictions, but even within this common problematic there has inevitably to be fine and persistent analysis and re-analysis.

And the CEA echoed this in its Strategy paper:
Frelimo's strategy "... implied discussion and debate based on knowledge of the concrete conditions and it challenges received wisdoms."

It is precisely in the struggle for theory and analysis that social research has a crucial role to play. But how are the topics for research to be determined?

Shula Marks ends her tribute to Ruth First in the Journal of Southern African Studies with the following:
Back in Mozambique as Director of Research at the Centre in 1978, she devoted her attention to a multi-disciplinary and many faceted analysis of Mozambique's development strategies ... Her great clarity and intellectual vigour, her eye for the essential research targets ... contributed to what was ... an exceptionally creative period in her life and an invaluable contribution to Mozambique's political and economic future.

It is in no way to detract from Ruth First's outstanding work at the Centre to suggest that this tribute both over-personalises Ruth's role and misses the fact that the selection of research issues, indeed the relationship of the centre to Frelimo and the state was the product of a struggle both within the centre and the party and between them. The Strategy document expressed clearly the fact that the CEA took as its starting point the policy of Frelimo, not the 'essential research targets', as perceived by an individual:

The study of socialist transition, based on a class alliance between peasants and workers, defined by Frelimo, has affected the research of the Centre ... in three principle ways: first, in the choice of research problems, secondly, in the unity of research with teaching and the application of research; and thirdly, by setting the analytical unity within which the research is conceived and executed, and within which the Centre operates as a whole.

In this sense, the priorities defined at the political level became also the priorities of social research. But, and this is the fundamental point which cannot be overemphasised, not as conclusions but as starting points for investigation. It is this conception which marks the specificity and contribution of the CEA.
The CEA gave effect to this approach by carrying out research which began with Frelimo policy and ended by questioning that policy — for example in relation to the collectivisation of agriculture and the policy of large scale industrial development, to mention only two areas.

To go outside of the Mozambican situation, it can be said that since the determination of political priorities by the liberation movement is based upon social theories and empirical analysis which may be incomplete or even erroneous, research has a role to play in the investigation of the foundations upon which political strategies are formulated.

In our situation the fundamental objective of the political struggle is the winning of state power. The strategies aimed at gaining that objective, of course, have to be based on analysis of the current period. It seems to follow that research and writing should be concerned predominantly to elaborate, clarify, criticise the movement’s analysis of the present. Yet paradoxically, historical research on southern Africa far exceeds research and writing on the present period and conjuncture; indeed, even the briefing documents collected together for this conference on Namibia show the the same bias.

Now, I do not, of course, wish to suggest that no historical research is relevant to the contemporary struggles. Nor, however, can it simply be accepted that all and any historical research is ipso facto important and relevant. Indeed, I would argue that a great deal of historical research is motivated by the researcher’s interest and made possible by the conditions prevailing within the academic sphere and has little relevance to the massive problems of the contemporary period which remain un- or under-researched. Whatever its long term importance for the culture and lives of the people of our countries, the study of the ‘general’ histories of our countries must, at present, be subordinated to that history which demonstrably contributes to an analysis upon which strategies are or should be based. And, I would add, similar considerations apply to theory and other related work. Yet, this still leaves undefined the issues which call for investigation in the current conjuncture. It is not possible to attempt to discuss the host of questions which need to be investigated. Instead, I want to touch briefly on three points.

In recent years, in much of the writing on southern Africa a great deal of importance has been attached to the description of the experience, consciousness and struggles of individuals. This work is quite specifically undertaken as an antidote to the supposed static nature of what is termed structural analysis. It is, of course, not possible to enter into the debate between these theoretical approaches here. I merely wish to make the following point. Insofar as the social researcher is concerned with the consciousness etc. of individuals in the present situation, interviews of individuals by the researcher is the major means of investigation. The inadequacy of this mode of data collection, particularly in highly charged political situations controlled by oppressive regimes, has often been noted. In my view the acquisition of knowledge of the ‘consciousness’ and propensity to struggle of individuals is a political not an academic research function. It depends above all upon the links between organisation and masses and is the fundamental condition for successful struggle. Research by means of questionnaires and interviews conducted by academics has, whatever their intentions, a totally different function and a totally different connotation.
Over and above this there is another different, but related aspect. Research which is descriptive of individual 'experience' is unable to provide an account of the structural constraints which contain and, indeed, even condition the content of those experiences. To a considerable degree, the national liberation movements through their organisations and through the activities of other organisations are well aware of what we might call the level of consciousness. What is more difficult and what tends to be considerably under-developed is the analysis of the concrete structural conditions — and this is so precisely because such an analysis entails looking 'beneath' the myriad individual acts of persons, parties, organisations and governments — which contextualises the events and allows their significance to be evaluated.

It is true that men and women make their own history and, in southern Africa, the making of that history is the task of the national liberation organisations and their allies — a task which depends on the active support of the popular masses. But how to make that history does not depend on the mere invocation of will — the failure of the strategy inspired by Regis Debray in Bolivia is perhaps a dramatic illustration. The formulation of viable strategies and the calculation of political possibilities cannot be made without an analysis of the structural conditions of the period and of the conjuncture, no matter how deep the movement's understanding is of the way in which people experience their oppression or of their propensity to political mobilisation.

I have already argued that the latter is knowledge which derives directly from political organisation. The former, the structural analysis, is also a task for the national liberation movement, but it is the priority task for researchers and it is here that they can make their most significant contribution.

At least two issues of fundamental importance, which require a structural re-analysis have emerged over the past decade.

i) The first of these concerns the relationship between racism and capitalism. Liberal thinking asserts an eternal contradiction between racism and 'rational' capitalism. We, for our part, assert that racism is an essential element in the development of capitalism. And in southern Africa, that has undoubtedly been true, although particular forms of racialism may not always have favoured all sections of capital. But is it necessarily so at all times and in the same degree? Does Zimbabwe not raise a question mark? And what are we to make of the partial, but substantial, deracialisation of the division of labour in South Africa? And what of the changes in the position of the black petit-bourgeoisie; the tri-cameral parliament?

This is neither to suggest that some smooth and unilinear tendency is manifesting itself nor to suggest that the liberation movements have been anything but correct in exposing the 'reforms'. Nonetheless, the question remains: what are the changes which are occurring within the capitalist political economy which is generating certain contradictions with the established institutional and ideological order? These contradictions are not necessarily manifested in conflicts and are not themselves producing change, rather they are generating arenas of new forms of conflict and new possibilities. Of great importance in this regard is the question of class alliances and this raises, more urgently and more immediately than before, the issue of the relationship between the national struggle and the socialist struggle.
ii) The question of class alliances also leads to a second point. What we have to avoid is the danger that our rejection of the ‘reforms’ will lead us away from analysing their effects. Here it is first to be noted that the policy of reform has emerged in a period in which there has been a radical transformation of the South African political structure: the 1960s was characterised by the virtual obliteration of the extra-parliamentary political terrain; in that context ‘reforms’ (however limited or revolutionary their connotations) could neither be demanded nor offered. The 1980s is characterised by a reconstituted extra-parliamentary terrain (and, indeed, however emasculated, a parliamentary terrain in the form of the tricameral parliament). In this context, reforms come once more on to the agenda, and this opens the way for strategies of incorporation as well as possibilities of the national liberation movement reaching new heights of organisation and opposition. This, then, raises for our movements a vital area of research — what are the structural limits of reforms? What are the transformations in ideological and political structures? What are the factors generating new definitions of interests and what are the sources of opposition to these? etc.

Conclusion

I do not mean to imply that this exhausts the list of important questions to be researched. I have already argued that ‘what is important?’ is an on-going question which has to be discussed and contested within the organisations and between the organisations and those researchers who regard themselves as organically linked to the liberation struggle. Indeed, the question of the relationship of research to the political has itself to be continuously posed.

What I am arguing is that under conditions of struggle for state power the priorities of that struggle must determine the use to which limited research resources should be put, subject always to the critical role of which I spoke above.

When one contrasts the relative dearth of analytical writing about the present situation produced by the movement and those who support it, with the superb information-collecting activities of the ANC News Briefing, IDAF and other bodies, it becomes clear where the priorities have been.

The fault lies, in part, with the liberation movements themselves because they neither encourage nor pressurise sufficiently. If they did so it might become possible, in UK at least, to overcome the highly atomistic activities of individual researchers who tend to be isolated by their conditions of work and to establish collectively organised research geared to deepening our grasp of the rapidly changing and increasingly complex conditions in southern Africa.

Harold Wolpe

---

ZIMBABWE TRADE UNIONISTS DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

Since 1 March, the Zimbabwe security policy have detained some 14 trade unionists, in Harare and KweKwe, under ‘emergency powers’ taken over from the white minority Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith. All those detained have been active in campaigning for democratic trade unions under workers’ control, and in organising socialist workers’ education. They include: RABI DOWN, activist in the Workers’ Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU (General Engineering and Metal Workers’ Union); S. HYAMHUNGA, President of GEMWU; NICHOLAS MLAUZI, member of the Harare Municipal Workers’ Union; DAVID HEMSON, a teacher, a former trade unionist in South Africa who was banned by the apartheid regime, a founder of the Southern African Labour Education Project (SALEP), and a member of the British Labour Party; DARCY DU TOIT, a teacher, a refugee from South Africa, co-worker in SALEP, and a member of the Dutch and British Labour Parties; and his wife ANNEKE POPPE, a Dutch citizen, also a teacher, co-worker in SALEP, and a member of the Dutch and British Labour Parties.

We call on you, and your trade union branch, or organisation, to make immediate representations to the Zimbabwean High Commissioner, Zimbabwe House, 429 Strand, London WC2R OSA. Telephone (01) 836 7755.
Briefings

PARTY STRATEGIES ON THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN THE SUDAN AND ON THE SOUTHERN QUESTION

In the last three years, the economic and political crisis in the Sudan has deepened. Despite the increased repression, manifestations of popular resistance as exemplified by the strikes in the North and the armed struggle in the South have posed a most significant challenge to the dictatorial regime of Nimeiri. In the paper we emphasise, as has been done by the progressive forces in the Sudan, that the crisis centres around the fundamental issue of what path should be followed for the transformation of Sudanese society. The position of the right-wing political parties, on the other hand, has been based, both before and after Independence, on what could be termed ‘liberation but not development’. They perceive the independence of the Sudan only in political terms and leave the essential features of the colonial socio-economic structures to be reproduced. Their only achievement has been the so-called ‘Sudanisation’ of the leading posts in the socio-economic structures. It is against the backdrop of the crisis that we seek to examine the positions held by the various political parties and their social bases. Of particular importance, we seek to situate the Southern Sudan Question in the struggles of the democratic forces at the national level and to determine the challenges it poses to the regime and its right-wing opposition in the North.

On the Question of the South
In August 1955 a company of the Equatorial Corps stationed at Torit in Southern Sudan, and composed of Southern Sudanese soldiers mutinied, killing Northern officers and soldiers. The mutiny was suppressed but most of the rebels fled to the bush, forming the nucleus of the Southern guerilla resistance (Anya Nya I). This mutiny started an era of civil war which lasted for 17 years. The mutiny was a manifestation of a long historical process. As an ex-colony, the Southern Sudan bears similarities to other situations where the colonial state pursued a policy of divide and rule. It was the brainchild of British colonialism and was designed to nurture conditions for the future disintegration of the newly independent state. It was no coincidence, therefore, that the trouble started just four months before Sudan’s political independence.

Contrary to common belief, the origins of the Southern Question do not lie in the ethnic, religious, cultural, and political heterogeneity of the Sudan. Rather, they are situated in the 19th century Turko-Egyptian domination of Sudan when
European slave and ivory traders with their armed Arabic-speaking servants penetrated the South. The disastrous socio-economic and political consequences of the slave trade on African societies are too well-known to recount here. The most important result of this period for the future of the Sudan was, as the late Joseph Garang, the South's leading Communist, put it, that 'while in consequence of Turko-Egyptian and Mahdist rule social progress was arrested in the South . . . trade flourished in the North, towns appeared along the Nile, and on the Red Sea. This was the beginning of the uneven development between the two parts of the country,' and therefore, 'the cause of the Southern problem is the inequality which exists between North and South by reason of an uneven economic, social and cultural development.'

The process which began during the era of Turko-Egyptian domination was reproduced during the period of British colonialism. In fact Britain sealed off the South from the North by enacting legislation prohibiting the movement of Southerners to the North and vice versa. Contacts between the adjacent Arab and Nilotic societies were severed through forcible population removals involving the transfer of the Nilotic population 100 miles to the south and the Arab population 100 miles to the north. A no-man's land emerged. The British policy of divide and rule succeeded; and as in India, Nigeria, Ireland, etc., the seeds of a post-colonial civil war were sown.

The Position of the Sudanese Left on the Southern Question
The Sudanese Left and Right have had opposing positions on the Southern Question. Whereas the Right sees it as a military problem that should therefore be resolved through military means, the progressive forces see it as essentially a problem of uneven development that should be resolved through far-reaching programmes of socio-economic development. On the eve of independence, for instance, the South had only five university graduates, one secondary school, five junior administrative officers, no doctors, engineers, agronomists, no industries, and in short, no significant economic projects.

While recognising the ethnic, cultural, and religious specificity of the South, the progressive forces in the Sudan firmly hold the view that these do not constitute the root cause of the problem. They situate the problem in the colonial epoch and hold the successive post-colonial right-wing regimes responsible for its reproduction. In this context, the alliances between the dominant social forces in both regions highlight the problem of the South as integral to the struggle of the entire Sudanese people for social progress. As comrade Joseph Garang noted, 'The tragedy of the South is that since independence . . . Southern leaders commanding majority support have persistently maintained alliances with landlord/big business groups in the North, forces which were never genuine on the solution of the Southern Problem (see ROAPE 26, Special Issue on Sudan, for a parallel statement by Garang).

Since 1956, the Communist Party of Sudan (CPS) and other progressive forces, have consistently maintained that the Southern Question cannot be solved in isolation from the national situation. It has held the view that the capitalist path of development adopted by successive post-colonial regimes has reproduced the conditions of underdevelopment and inequalities between regions. Like other sections of the Left, it has emphasised the necessity of economic independence as a prerequisite for the dismantling of the colonial legacy, as well as for the
reduction of the rate of exploitation by the neo-colonial institutions and ultimately for the fostering of favourable conditions for socio-economic progress.

This position was adopted in 1969 when the new regime issued what came to be known as the 9 June Declaration on the Southern Question. The Declaration was, de facto, the CPS' programme for the South. It was drafted by the late Joseph Garang (not to be confused with Colonel John Garang, the present leader of the SPLM, Sudan People's Liberation Movement), and broadcast to the nation by none other than Nimeiri. It granted regional autonomy to the South within a united Sudan and called for an intensified socio-economic development of the region. In contrast to the secessionist policies of the right-wing Anya Nya I movement, the progressive forces in Sudan concur with the correct line of the SPLM that the solution to the Southern Question lies not in secession but within the context of a united, democratic and socialist Sudan.

The Left and the Nimeiri Regime Part Company
In 1969, the leaders of the coup d'état declared a socialist-oriented programme, an anti-imperialist policy, and friendly relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The CPS saw the coup d'état as a petty-bourgeois action which had the potential of being transformed into a social revolution. It accorded qualified support to the new regime and specified that this support was conditional on the continuation of the regime's declared programme. This qualified support, however, was short-lived.

The first challenge to the regime came from right-wing parties: the Umma Party and the Muslim Brothers who, in March 1970, waged an unsuccessful armed assault on the regime. For the Left, however, disagreement with the rightist members within the Command Council of the Revolution (CCR), the highest governing body, lay in two related issues. First was how best to tackle the fundamental issue of socio-economic development; and second the so-called Tripoli Charter calling for the union of Libya, Egypt, and the Sudan. The CPS opposed the latter plan and instead called, as a priority, for the consolidation of the new regime's achievements and the solution of the Southern Question. The CPS argued that the proposed union, based on an agreement between the leaders of the three countries, was not valid unless it was done through the democratic participation of the masses.

The response of the Right was swift. In November 1970, it staged a coup within the CCR and expelled its three prominent left-wing members — Hashim El-Atta, Babiker El Noor, and Farook Hamdalla. In February 1971, Nimeiri declared war against the CPS and 'communism'. He launched a witch-hunt against Communists and their sympathisers.

The Leftist Coup 1971
In July 1971, the three leftist ex-members of the CCR staged a coup d'état led by Major Hashim El Atta. Shortly before that, Comrade Abdul Khaliq Mahgoub, the CPS General Secretary, escaped from prison. The leaders of the coup declared their commitment to scientific socialism, agrarian reform, the liberation of the Sudanese economy from domination by foreign monopoly capital, and the democratic solution of the Southern Question. It called for the formation of the National Democratic Front as the only political forum capable of realising the potential of the social forces — viz. the working class, poor peasants,
revolutionary intellectuals, soldiers, and the Sudanese national bourgeoisie (as distinct from the comprador bourgeoisie).

The coup lasted only three days. Most leaders of the CPS were executed or imprisoned. Prominent among those executed were CPS General Secretary Mahgoub, Sudanese Workers Federation (SWF) Secretary General and Vice-President of the International Workers Federation, El Shafie Ahmed El Sheikh, Joseph Garang, CPS Politbureau member as well as many military leaders. To this day, their graves are unknown to their families and comrades. Internal and external reaction acted to end the popular coup d'etat. Prominent among the latter were agents of the British state, a British transnational company with interests in Sudan and Southern Africa, and a neighbouring North African regime. These forces were involved in the hijacking of a British airliner in which Babiker El Noor (the Head of State designate) and Farook Hamdalla were travelling. They were handed over to Nimeiri and executed. This act of piracy irreparably damaged the effectiveness of the coup.

Thereafter the regime moved to 'legitimise' itself by forming the so-called Sudanese Socialist Union as the sole political party in the country. It dissolved the CCR and established the Presidency — duly filled by Nimeiri. It abandoned the Five-Year Plan which was drafted with the assistance of Soviet experts. It opened the door to foreign and domestic capital by enacting a generous Investment Act.

Under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and Emperor Haile Selassie, its policy towards the Southern Question was to accommodate itself with the right-wing Anya Nya movement. The Addis Accord only stopped the war temporarily. In the Accord, the regime and its accomplices did not address themselves to the fundamental issue of the war: that of initiating far-reaching socio-economic development programmes to resolve the inter-regional inequalities. It is no surprise that the war was to resume later.

The Social Bases of the Political Parties
The most striking feature of the Nimeiri regime has been its unconditional alliance with foreign monopoly capital and its domestic agent, the comprador section of the Sudanese capitalist class. Both right-wing and left-wing opposition to the regime have had to relate to this feature in varying forms.

Right-wing parties emerged under the influence of religious sects. The Ansar and Khatmiya sects have been influential in the Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party respectively. The Umma Party represents the interests of the rural bourgeoisie, big landowners, and semi-feudal elements. During the struggle for independence, it advocated closer ties with Britain. The Democratic Unionist Party represents the interests of the urban bourgeoisie and a section of the intelligentsia. It advocates closer ties with Egypt and the Arab world.

The third, the Islamic Charter Front (Muslim Brothers Movement) is the most reactionary of the right-wing parties. It has performed ideological functions for other parties such as the Umma and the SSU led by Nimeiri. It has no roots in the Sudanese working class and peasant movements. It is confined to the student movement and a small section of the intelligentsia. It is essentially a petty-bourgeois movement.
To the left of the right-wing parties is the small, but progressive, Republican Party. It has no base among the working class and the peasants. Its influence is stronger among the intelligentsia. Its leader, Mahmoud Mohamed Taha who, at the age of 76, was executed by the regime on 15 January 1985, was a highly respected Koranic theoretician. He rejected Islamic dogma and sought to apply the teachings of the Koran in the context of the modern world. He and his party were never opposed to socialism and in fact believed that the solution to the crisis lay in the adoption of socialist programmes. They staged a courageous and principled opposition to the Islamic Sharia — the ideological basis of the regime and its Islamic Charter Front supporters. He tirelessly advocated a political solution to the Southern Question. His death is not only a loss to all the Sudanese progressive and democratic forces, but above all a clear sign of desperation on the part of the regime and the right-wing parties.

The CPS was formed in 1946. It has a strong base in the working class and peasant movements. Before and after independence it significantly contributed to the establishment of the Sudan Workers Federation and the Gezira Tenants Union — the country’s biggest trade unions. The two most influential posts in the SWF and the GTU were held by leading communists until the second military coup in 1969. They also represented the Trade Union movement in the progressive Alliance cabinet which followed the 1964 October Revolution. The CPS attracts a great majority of the intelligentsia and in 1965 it captured eleven out of the fifteen parliamentary seats reserved for graduates.

Right-wing Opposition to the Regime
The regime and its right-wing opposition have one thing in common. They serve the interests of foreign monopoly capital and are therefore opposed to socialism. The opposition, however, has displayed vacillating and opportunistic tendencies shown in periods of open hostility and of open collaboration with the regime.

One manifestation of unity among right-wing parties was the formation, in London, of a Libyan-financed Sudanese ‘National Front’ comprising the Umma Party, the Democratic Unionist Party, and the Islamic Charter Front (Muslim Brothers). In 1975 they attempted a coup and in 1976 they infiltrated a Libyan-trained armed unit into the Sudan. Both these moves were unsuccessful. This forced the leadership to change tactics. Under the patronage of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, they were urged to reconcile themselves with Nimeiri on the grounds that they were all Muslims and avowedly anti-communist.

The right-wing unity suffered a split as a result of the unilateral decision of the leader of the Umma Party, Sadiq El-Mahdi, to sign the ‘National Reconciliation Agreement’ with Nimeiri. El-Mahdi and the leadership of the Muslim Brothers returned to Sudan, but one of the leaders of the Umma Party, El-Sharif Hussein El-Hindi, confirmed his on-going struggle against the regime, maintaining that reconciliation was only possible with the full restoration of democratic rights, including the dismantling of arbitrary laws such as the State Security Law and the State Security Organisation. A subsequent agreement signed between him and the regime was never implemented.

The so-called ‘national reconciliation’ was short-lived. The regime’s support for the Camp David Accords signed between President Sadat and the Zionist state led to the resignation of El-Mahdi from the SSU and the cabinet. But the Muslim
Brothers continued their support for the regime, and consolidated their influence by taking control of senior positions within the SSU and the cabinet. Thereafter their ideological functions for the regime became increasingly dominant.

**Mass Uprisings against the Regime**

From the beginning of the 1980s, the regime was plunged into a political crisis, overshadowed by a deepening economic crisis. The frequent IMF-sponsored devaluation of the Sudanese pound and the decline in living standards were fiercely resisted by the Sudanese working class movement. In January 1981, the strongest wave of resistance nearly toppled the regime. In its own self-defence, the regime staged a coup by dismissing senior civil servants, military officers, as well as First Vice-President Abdul magid Khalil.

The manifestations of the working class resistance were clearly directed at the regime. The riots in Darfur, for example, were directed at the appointment of a new Governor who was forced to stand down. In the El Obeid riots against food shortages, the masses burnt down the SSU headquarters, police vans, as well as shops of well-known black marketeers. They seized the hoarded grain and distributed it freely. In August 1982, a student uprising against increases in sugar prices forced Nimeiri to relent.

In June 1983, the judges unanimously submitted their resignations in protest against the dismissal of 44 of their colleagues for alleged corruption. Consequently in September 1983, the regime introduced the Islamic Sharia, not because of religious conviction but as a response to the judges' strike and, above all, widespread popular resistance.

In conjunction with its repressive measures throughout the country the regime exacerbated the Southern problem by dividing the South into three regions, a move which was considered by many Southerners and other Sudanese democrats as a violation of the Addis Accord. A guerilla army, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and its political wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) were formed under the leadership of Col./Dr. John Garang. Since then, the SPLA has carried out a courageous struggle against the regime, forcing the American oil company Chevron to halt oil exploration in the South. A French company CCI, was similarly forced to spend its work in the construction of the Jongeli Canal.

Khartoum University teachers declared their intentions of boycotting the 1983/84 exams unless their working conditions were improved substantially. The Vice-Chancellor and the University Council were forced to agree to their demands. For similar reasons, doctors went on strike in February and March 1984. Significantly, too, their demands went beyond the struggle for the improvement of their working conditions. They demanded the restructuring of the Sudanese health services to serve the interests of the masses. They declared that unless their demands were met, they would resign en masse. Nimeiri threatened them with severe penalties (including death) if they did not call off the strike. The doctors rejected this intimidation and the regime retaliated by detaining the members of the doctors' union executive committee as well as some left-wing activists for three days. Nimeiri was forced to meet them and to accede to some of their demands. The Engineers' Union threatened to strike and their
demands were immediately met. The Accountants' Union went on strike for ten days in April 1984.

The regime considered these waves of strikes a move by the Left to overthrow it. It therefore declared a state of emergency, established twelve military courts in the capital alone, and invested full police powers in the armed forces. Nimeiri and his supporters have entirely lost the support of the Sudanese people.

In the wake of the powerful resistance of the Sudanese working masses, intellectuals, sections of the national bourgeoisie and the Southern nationalities, the lessons of the Sudanese post-colonial history are clear. The opportunism of the right-wing 'opposition' has been exposed. Their intrigues against the progressive forces in the Alliance cabinet after the 1964 October Revolution, their vacillation and open support for the regime after 1969 have eliminated the possibilities of their co-operation with the progressive and democratic forces in the post-Nimeiri period.

The mood in the Sudan after the wanton killing by the state of Taha is such that the author prefers to sign himself simply: 'A Sudanese Activist'.

* * *

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NIGERIAN LEFT
(BEFORE THE COUP)

This letter is written to honour the political wisdom of Comrade Bala Mohammed, a genuine revolutionary combatant and a Marxist, who joined the People's Redemption Party in order to be practical, identified himself with the correct faction of that party at a time when an inner-party struggle became inevitable, carried the banner in the front line against imperialism and local reaction, and went down fighting in the class struggle among the people. While all that happened, some of his 'Marxist' friends were writing some jaundiced stand-offish phrases against his revolutionary wisdom.

Why Join the PRP?
The Marxists who sit in their armchairs to attack the PRP are not right. Of all the different 'lines' for Marxists in Nigeria, the most correct for the present phase is joining and working in the PRP. There are a number of reasons for this. First, the 'Marxists' are not doing politics at all who are not in the PRP. They are merely criticising the bourgeoisie, not mobilising the people against the bourgeois establishment. The time for merely criticising the bourgeoisie in Nigeria is past. One has to find a platform for going into action. Bala Mohammed through significant action became more a threat to the bourgeois establishment than all the criticising Marxists put together. This is why reaction killed him in political action. For Nigerians it is better to think of the death of Bala Mohammed and its whole significance than to celebrate the death of Marx or Lenin.

Second, the programme of the PRP is definitely not merely a democratic one but a revolutionary one. The PRP by its programme seeks the total abolition of imperialism, feudalism and capitalism. It seeks the substitution for the present day neo-colonial state of a new social order. This order is defined as one in which
demands were immediately met. The Accountants’ Union went on strike for ten days in April 1984.

The regime considered these waves of strikes a move by the Left to overthrow it. It therefore declared a state of emergency, established twelve military courts in the capital alone, and invested full police powers in the armed forces. Nimeiri and his supporters have entirely lost the support of the Sudanese people.

In the wake of the powerful resistance of the Sudanese working masses, intellectuals, sections of the national bourgeoisie and the Southern nationalities, the lessons of the Sudanese post-colonial history are clear. The opportunism of the right-wing ‘opposition’ has been exposed. Their intrigues against the progressive forces in the Alliance cabinet after the 1964 October Revolution, their vacillation and open support for the regime after 1969 have eliminated the possibilities of their co-operation with the progressive and democratic forces in the post-Nimeiri period.

The mood in the Sudan after the wanton killing by the state of Taha is such that the author prefers to sign himself simply: ‘A Sudanese Activist’.

* * *

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NIGERIAN LEFT (BEFORE THE COUP)

This letter is written to honour the political wisdom of Comrade Bala Mohammed, a genuine revolutionary combatant and a Marxist, who joined the People’s Redemption Party in order to be practical, identified himself with the correct faction of that party at a time when an inner-party struggle became inevitable, carried the banner in the front line against imperialism and local reaction, and went down fighting in the class struggle among the people. While all that happened, some of his ‘Marxist’ friends were writing some jaundiced stand-offish phrases against his revolutionary wisdom.

Why Join the PRP?
The Marxists who sit in their armchairs to attack the PRP are not right. Of all the different ‘lines’ for Marxists in Nigeria, the most correct for the present phase is joining and working in the PRP. There are a number of reasons for this. First, the ‘Marxists’ are not doing politics at all who are not in the PRP. They are merely criticising the bourgeoisie, not mobilising the people against the bourgeois establishment. The time for merely criticising the bourgeoisie in Nigeria is past. One has to find a platform for going into action. Bala Mohammed through significant action became more a threat to the bourgeois establishment than all the criticising Marxists put together. This is why reaction killed him in political action. For Nigerians it is better to think of the death of Bala Mohammed and its whole significance than to celebrate the death of Marx or Lenin.

Second, the programme of the PRP is definitely not merely a democratic one but a revolutionary one. The PRP by its programme seeks the total abolition of imperialism, feudalism and capitalism. It seeks the substitution for the present day neo-colonial state of a new social order. This order is defined as one in which
production relations are redefined to abolish all exploitation of man by man. This new order is to be brought about by a people's state, a people's democratic dictatorship. Quite frankly, I do not know what else the 'Marxists' say they want in the name of a revolutionary programme. I have the impression that they want the name 'Marxism' or 'Leninism' and some phrases such as 'class struggle' and 'proletariat' instead of a programme that the masses can understand. They want the verbal forms, not the essence of a revolutionary programme. The non-PRP 'Marxists' are infantile and subjective.

Third, the 'Marxists' who disdain the PRP may mouth the phrase 'imperialism', but they are not concerned with imperialism at all. In Nigeria, imperialism exploits not only the working class but the peasantry. As Chinese, Algerian, Vietnamese, Cuban, Guinea-Bissau, Angolan etc. examples have shown, the peasant force is a tremendous force. If there is a radical peasant backed movement in the country opposed to the imperialist-feudal-comprador capitalist status quo, it has a tremendous anti-imperialist significance. The armchair 'Marxists' who cannot see this may be anything they like to call themselves, but they are not Leninists at all. As Lenin insisted, there is no special form for a worker-peasant alliance. The alliance takes place or can be made to take place daily by concrete acts. If the Nigerian Labour Congress is holding its convention and the 'peasant' PRP even so much as sends solidarity greetings to it, that is the initiation of a worker-peasant struggle against the bourgeois establishment. Instead of placing themselves in a position to utilise such developments, the 'Marxists' snap their fingers and wait for 'class struggle' and 'revolution'. No one can wage a mass-based revolutionary struggle in Nigeria against the feudal-imperialist-comprador establishment without detaching the peasantry from the on-going bourgeois campaigns for the consolidation of the status quo. This struggle to make the mass of ordinary people in town and country turn from the status quo is what the PRP was founded for and what it has attempted to do so far.

Fourth, the non-PRP 'Marxists' have a special form in their minds for the growth of a socialist movement. In their undialectical minds there must first be a 'Marxist party' to 'lead' the revolution. If such a party does not exist, one must not fight even where the daily experiences of the masses prepare them for political struggle against feudal rule and the nouveaux riches. To our stereotyped 'Marxists', let it be pointed out that there was no 'Marxist party' for Augustino Neto, Samora Michel, Amilcar Calbral, Mengistu and the Sandinista militants to join. In Cuba there was a Communist party for Fidel Castro and his associates to join, but happily they did not. That party was as dogmatic, sectarian and blind to the revolutionary potentialities of a broad anti-establishment people's movement as Nigeria's 'Marxist' parrots are . . .

Fifth, in Nigeria now it is impossible to mobilise the broad masses without parliamentary politics. One ought to do the politics of one's own country. Not to do so is to suffer isolation. The aims of parliamentary politics and even its styles are many. The people's party can choose its own aims and forms. The anti-PRP 'Marxists' are very comfortable to watch the bourgeoisie, the imperialists and the feudal chieftains dominate the country's politics year in, year out. Short of a military coup d'état, how they are going to get into their 'revolution' without practical and meaningful ideological and political contests with the National Party of Nigeria, the Nigerian People's Party and the Unity Party of Nigeria.
beats one's imagination completely. If the 'Marxists' were practical and well-oriented revolutionaries, they would know that they also need a parliamentary platform, that is, a national forum for reaching the people and pitching their own solutions — in real political combat — against the solutions (or non-solutions) of the NPN-NPP-UPN bourgeois fraternity. They would know that one cannot fight the NPN in a Nigerian village with quotations from Marx that have not been brought into relation with Nigeria's type of parliamentary politics. They would know that without involving themselves in the on-going parliamentary struggles, they cannot bring the masses from parliamentary to extra-parliamentary forms of struggle — from the known to the unknown.

Sixth, the People's Redemption Party is a daily school for the masses and for the Marxists. One learns of the bourgeoisie of one's own country, not in text-books but in combat. No one has a static consciousness. Some workers are reactionary. Some petty-bourgeois persons can abandon petty-bourgeois consciousness. If university lecturers can become 'Marxists' there is no reason why others cannot. Some peasants are traitors and others not. All romanticism and subjective a-priori presumptions are ended in practice. In the PRP struggle so far, many experiences have been gained, many lessons have been learnt, the radical masses have been led to test many things and draw many conclusions. Every PRP man or woman who has been active comes out richer than the 'Marxist' who wants to take up 'class struggle' only of his own making, on his own terms.

Do PRP difficulties justify the Sectarians?
Some anti-PRP 'Marxists' used the difficulties and splits in the PRP as 'proof' of the validity of their contention that the PRP is simply petty-bourgeois and 'not the answer'. The existence of difficulties in the PRP says nothing by itself against the correctness of Marxists not merely joining it but also actively organising it. The collapse of a revolutionary effort does not ipso facto prove its incorrectness. Otherwise, making a revolution would be as simple as writing a 'Marxist' paper for a group of students.

What should we conclude if Marxists form their fanciful 'non-Marxists not wanted' party and the Federal Electoral Commission, the CIA, the police, bourgeois agents provocateur, imperialist journalistic megaphones, etc., all move to smash it, split it, or sow confusion in it? Indeed, it is only on paper that 'the unity of the party' is a romantic birthday gift.

A 'Marxist-Leninist party' in Nigeria may have romantic attractions for those who have never initiated, led, organised or belonged to one. I was a leading and untiring activist in all the parties I helped to pioneer. Anyone who is dreaming of an immediate Marxist-Leninist party without first honestly, maturely and meticulously examining the reasons for the failure of these efforts and others made by people like Una Akpan, Amaefule Ikoro, Ikenna Nzimiro, Gogo Nzeribe, Amanke Okafor and Wahab Goodluck either does not know where he is or is simply fooling around. At any rate, in spite of the crying need for a Left rally, that rally has not taken place. Why?

PRP and Class Struggle
Again, some of these anti-PRP 'Marxists' find it very convenient and very 'correct' to remain in the universities, earn their pay steadily, and at best interact only with students in their own universities. These universities are bourgeois, are
financed by the bourgeois state and are even dominated by imperialism. Again some of these 'Marxists' find themselves very 'correct' and very 'revolutionary' when they undertake to organise the elitist Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). They claim that it is more 'correct' and 'revolutionary' to use up a 'Marxist's' time in organising this body which is devoted to the economic struggles of a petty-bourgeois-oriented labour aristocracy than to plough one's time into a revolutionary political movement to which is attached hundreds of thousands of radical poor people, a movement struggling to detach the poor as a whole from bourgeois, imperialist and feudal ideologies and from their political organisations. They find themselves more at home with the elitist ASUU where people speak the same language, live in the same glass-windowed houses, eat the same kind of breakfast, fly in airplanes, enjoy the same elite jokes, and have the same characteristics as their bourgeois or petty-bourgeois selves than to join a political party that is frankly a *talakawa* party and frankly a revolutionary party by its program and by the commitment of most of its leading cadres . . .

**Beautifying the Armchair**

The 'Marxists' should know that it is men who transform situations. The first impression a young intellectual gains from historical materialism is that situations transform themselves when the 'objective conditions' exist. Of course, they learn that history changes through 'class struggle', but the 'class' to them is an abstract force. Very often the young intellectual is not able to read the class struggle going on before his eyes, because his 'Marxism' lives in the air, is not yet historical, not yet concrete, not yet practical. No situation merely creates itself. It is men who create or transform situations, men of action, utilising opportunities for action opened up by history.

The problem with anti-PRP Marxists is that they see the issue as that of merely joining the PRP which, to them, means merely tailing, arms folded and mouths shut, behind Ikoku, Aminu Kano, or someone else. The element of active involvement active organisation, bringing one's own influence to bear on situations through action, educating and mobilising the masses by one's own initiative, and using the excellent political platform afforded by the PRP — this activity element — is absent altogether from the way they see things. The PRP is not a question of who should read the holy texts: Aminu Kano or the 'Marxists'. The question is that of involvement in mass mobilisation in a direction antagonistic to the bourgeois dispensation . . .

**Conclusion**

As we wrote this letter which was intended as a tribute to Bala Mohammed we heard of the death of Aminu Kano. Pointing fingers at the PRP will not help at all. No one prevented anybody from floating any party of his own wish and making it a mass party before the PRP emerged. The 'Marxists' rather consumed themselves year after year, as they still do, in infantile 'struggles' against one another. Let them continue with their impotent 'criticisms'. Those in the PRP know whom to attack: the capitalists, the imperialists, the feudalists and their fellow travellers. They know also what to do: organise the masses against the NPN, the NPP and the UPN which are the practical political instruments of the exploiting classes.

In my own opinion those who joined and worked for the PRP and are now in other parties for no fault of their own ought to return to the PRP and let us work.
It is better to work in an organised mass movement whose program is clearly opposed to imperialist, capitalist and traditionalist exploitation and clearly poses the alternative of an exploitation-free social order. And no one can deny that the PRP is a mass movement or that its programme is of this character.

Eskor Toyo

* * *

CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN LIBERIA
ISSUED BY DR TOGBANAH TIPOTEH, PRESIDENT OF MOJA — LIBERIA, 19 OCTOBER 1984

On the eve of the Presidential elections in the United States of America, it is highly important indeed to draw the attention of the international community to the demands for civilian rule in Liberia, a country where the United States government’s influence is overwhelming indeed. The Liberian people do realise that the principal role in the determination of the destiny of Liberia lies within their hands. However, the people of Liberia, preferring peaceful change to violent change continue to seek the assistance of others particularly the United States government, in the interest of facilitating the realisation of a smooth and peaceful transition to civilian rule.

The truth of the matter is that the inherently undemocratic and brutally repressive rule of General Samuel K. Doe will not last a week longer without the continual support of the United States government. As the Doe regime has no significant support within Liberia, it can only sustain itself through support from foreign sources. The overwhelmingly dominant foreign source of support for the militaristic Doe government comes from the United States government. Since the military regime came into power through a bloody coup d'état on 12 April 1980, the United States government’s development aid and military assistance to the undemocratic government of Doe have increased unprecedentedly by 1,200 per cent and nearly 1,000 per cent respectively.

On 31 August 1984, in the midst of some of the most violent government repressive acts in Liberian history, the United States government declared its confidence in the ability of the Doe regime to successfully implement the promise to return Liberia to civilian rule through the holding of free and fair elections. The thrust of the reporting in the most influential quarters of the international press leaves the international community with the impression that the Doe government is making good progress with respect to keeping its promise to return Liberia to civilian rule. Perhaps it is the case that these highly influential elements in the international press do not have access to the facts related to the current political situation in Liberia.

We of MOJA-Liberia, the parent organisation of the Liberian People’s Party (LPP), take this opportunity to provide evidence to demonstrate that the Doe government has no interest whatsoever in returning Liberia to civilian rule through free and fair elections. We intend to show here and now that General Samuel K. Doe is bent on keeping himself in power indefinitely by crushing his opponents through whatever violent means necessary. History recalls that within a few days following the 1980 coup d'état, workers and students’ groups under
It is better to work in an organised mass movement whose program is clearly opposed to imperialist, capitalist and traditionalist exploitation and clearly poses the alternative of an exploitation-free social order. And no one can deny that the PRP is a mass movement or that its programme is of this character.

Eskor Toyo

CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN LIBERIA
ISSUED BY DR TOGBANAH TIPOTEH, PRESIDENT OF MOJA
— LIBERIA, 19 OCTOBER 1984

On the eve of the Presidential elections in the United States of America, it is highly important indeed to draw the attention of the international community to the demands for civilian rule in Liberia, a country where the United States government's influence is overwhelming indeed. The Liberian people do realise that the principal role in the determination of the destiny of Liberia lies within their hands. However, the people of Liberia, preferring peaceful change to violent change continue to seek the assistance of others particularly the United States government, in the interest of facilitating the realisation of a smooth and peaceful transition to civilian rule.

The truth of the matter is that the inherently undemocratic and brutally repressive rule of General Samuel K. Doe will not last a week longer without the continual support of the United States government. As the Doe regime has no significant support within Liberia, it can only sustain itself through support from foreign sources. The overwhelmingly dominant foreign source of support for the militaristic Doe government comes from the United States government. Since the military regime came into power through a bloody coup d'état on 12 April 1980, the United States government's development aid and military assistance to the undemocratic government of Doe have increased unprecedentedly by 1,200 per cent and nearly 1,000 per cent respectively.

On 31 August 1984, in the midst of some of the most violent government repressive acts in Liberian history, the United States government declared its confidence in the ability of the Doe regime to successfully implement the promise to return Liberia to civilian rule through the holding of free and fair elections. The thrust of the reporting in the most influential quarters of the international press leaves the international community with the impression that the Doe government is making good progress with respect to keeping its promise to return Liberia to civilian rule. Perhaps it is the case that these highly influential elements in the international press do not have access to the facts related to the current political situation in Liberia.

We of MOJA-Liberia, the parent organisation of the Liberian People's Party (LPP), take this opportunity to provide evidence to demonstrate that the Doe government has no interest whatsoever in returning Liberia to civilian rule through free and fair elections. We intend to show here and now that General Samuel K. Doe is bent on keeping himself in power indefinitely by crushing his opponents through whatever violent means necessary. History recalls that within a few days following the 1980 coup d'état, workers and students' groups under
the leadership of MOJA members demonstrated in their thousands calling upon the Doe government to return Liberia to civilian rule. Within a few weeks after these demonstrations, the MOJA leadership through Dr Amos Sawyer, advanced to the Liberian government the details on initiating the process of returning to civilian rule by first establishing the National Constitutional Commission with the responsibility for drafting a new national constitution. It was under this mass pressure that the National Constitution Commission was established with Dr Sawyer as its Chairman. Thus, the Commission was set up not because of the Doe regime’s interest in the return to civilian rule but on account of the massive demonstration of the demands from a wide cross-section of the Liberian people.

Seeking revenge against MOJA on account of its leadership in the institutionalisation of the process of the return to civilian rule, Head of State Doe sought to physically eliminate the MOJA leader by publicly implicating him in the alleged August 1981 Weh Syen attempted coup d'état. The MOJA leader was mistakenly presumed by General Doe to have already returned to Liberia from an official trip abroad on the night immediately prior to the announcement of the alleged attempted coup. The then Vice Head of State, Major-General Weh Syen, and four other members of the defunct People’s Redemption Council (PRC) were executed after a completely bogus two-day trial under the military tribunal. The MOJA leader remained out of Liberia and resigned from the government on 16 August 1981.

When the National Constitution Commission completed the draft constitution, Head of State Doe made another attempt at aborting the process of the return to civilian rule by declaring that the government lacked the capacity to finance the remaining part of the process. The Commission then proceeded to open a bank account to receive funds from contributors in support of completing the process of the return to civilian rule. Financial contributions to the Commission’s bank account began to flow therein. Suddenly General Doe announced that his government had found some additional funds for the Commission to continue its work. It was only then that Head of State Doe grudgingly accepted the Draft Constitution from the National Constitution Commission. Therefore, it was mass pressure, as reflected in the contributions (small and large) to the Commission’s bank account that pushed General Doe into finally accepting the Draft Constitution. In another revengeful posture, for the full public view, Head of State Doe unceremoniously dissolved the National Constitutional Commission prior to the completion of its legally constituted mandate.

The ban on politics, which signalled the inherently undemocratic nature of the Doe regime, was initially scheduled to have been lifted on 12 April 1984. Again, General Doe took action to further frustrate the Liberian people by announcing a delay in the lifting of the ban on politics. Mass communications (people-oriented) channels were immediately put into effect, sounding a clear and stern warning to government that no further delays in the lifting of the ban on politics would be tolerated by the Liberian people. It was only in the face of such widespread dissatisfaction and protest about the delay in the lifting of the ban on politics that the ban on politics was finally lifted on 26 July 1984. The identical non-governmental mass communications channels had predicted in early July that General Doe would in fact lift the ban on politics near the end of July 1984, only to continue his reign of terror on an unprecedented scale.
Acting with his usual gross contempt for the Liberian people, immediately following the lifting of the ban on politics, Head of State Doe did institute a wave of violent repression without precedence in Liberian history. Continuing his campaign of revenge against MOJA, General Doe proceeded to order the arrest and detention of Dr Amos Sawyer and other members of the Organising Committee of MOJA’s political party, the LPP, on 19 August 1984. Although there are ten groups which have declared their intentions to register as political parties in Liberia, Head of State Doe considers LPP to be his most formidable obstacle to maintaining himself in power indefinitely. General Doe expected that all of the fake *coup d'état* designed and implemented by him, the executions of innocent people, mass arrests and detentions would have terrorised opposition and potential opposition groups from announcing their intentions to register as political parties. Therefore, when Head of Stage Doe announced the formation of his party, the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), and observed that nine other groups made announcements about forming their respective political parties, he turned once again to his favourite terroriser, the fake attempted *coup d'état*.

General Doe, the chief proponent of violent change in Liberia, accused Dr Amos Sawyer and others of MOJA, an organisation with a solid unbroken record of fifteen years of leadership in the struggle for democracy through peaceful change, of plotting to violently overthrow the government of Liberia. Were it not for the overwhelming massive pressure from inside Liberia as well as from over eighty countries of the world, Dr Sawyer and nearly all of the other detained would not have been released from detention by now. The raping, killing of several persons and the wounding of over 100 people by the government forces on 22 August 1984 at the University of Liberia, brutally atrocious as they were, did not dampen the courageous resolve of the Liberian people to work for the long overdue end to military rule in Liberia.

Official government releases to the international press on the release of Dr Sawyer and others from detention on 6 October 1984 included the name of Mr Dusty Wolokolie of MOJA and the LPP Organising Committee as one of those having been released. However, it has been confirmed through Liberian sources that Mr Wolokolie remains under detention, charged anew with violation of decree number 88A which empowers security forces to arrest and detain anyone up to 1986 for spreading false information. In ordering the further detention of Mr Wolokolie under a clearly undemocratic decree, General Doe expects to further terrorise LPP supporters and decrease substantialy Liberian and international protests against political repression in Liberia. Doe is of the view that as Mr Wolokolie is not as well known as Dr Sawyer, national and international pressures on the Doe regime for the release of Wolokolie will be relatively weak. What General Doe fails to understand is that people who struggle for democracy will defend the rights of anyone in any place and at any time. Thus, the struggle to free Wolokolie from detention immediately goes on with all of our resources and commitment. We continue to be grateful for the immense show of solidarity in the struggle for democracy in Liberia that comes from individuals and organisations throughout the world. In this struggle for democracy, we are mindful, with appreciation, of the positive contributions made by international press people in the pursuit of the truth.

In the struggle for democracy in Liberia, the most glaring truth is that United
States government support for the militaristic Doe regime is clear the overwhelmingly dominant obstacle to the return to civilian rule, rule through free and fair elections. The presentation of this truth cannot be over-emphasised. The current political situation in Liberia offers a clear and present opportunity for the United States government to take a small step that can lead to a giant leap forward in the drive for a smooth and peaceful return to civilian rule in Liberia. In the midst of United States government calls for democratic reforms in Nicaragua and its efforts to involve all shades of political views in the process of elections in El Salvador, we are not unmindful of the stern warning given the Doe regime by the United States Congress’ House Appropriations Committee on 13 September 1984. We remain appreciative of the actions of this Committee with respect to warning the Doe government that further United States government financial support of the Doe regime would not be forthcoming were Doe to continue his efforts at maintaining himself in power indefinitely through the elimination of opposition to his undemocratic and repressive rule by any violent means necessary.

In view of the persistent refusal of General Doe to resign from public office, while insisting that public officials with political aspirations must resign, MOJA, in the name of patriotic and democratic citizens throughout Liberia, calls upon the United States Congress to take action to ensure the withdrawal of United States government support of the Doe regime in Liberia.

*   *   *

INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

An Address by the late Prime Minister of Tanzania, Edward Sokoine, on the Tenth Anniversary of the Institute of Development Studies, October 1983.

According to development theories, a country cannot develop without generating debates on how that country can pave the way for its development. One of the main roles of intellectuals in Tanzania is to lead such debates and also to create a communication line between the University and other institutions of learning on one hand and the political leaders and centres of Party and Government decision-making organs on the other.

As far as intellectual debates are concerned, after 1967 Tanzania become temporarily a political Mecca for liberal and socialist progressives from all over the world anxious to see a challenge to neo-colonialism. Praise of President Nyerere and Tanzania was dished out almost generously, particularly by socialist academics who exploited the new situation to prove the relevance of Marxism-Leninism to the African realities. Indeed, foreign intellectuals poured into Tanzania to research on Ujamaa and the prospects it could offer to other developing countries. But before this period, the intellectual community in Tanzania had made several contributions related to development strategies.

It is perhaps necessary to divide the contribution of our intellectuals into three main periods. The first period begins in 1964 and ends around 1970. The second one starts from 1970-78, and the third one begins around 1978 to our present time.
States government support for the militaristic Doe regime is clear the overwhelmingly dominant obstacle to the return to civilian rule, rule through free and fair elections. The presentation of this truth cannot be over-emphasised. The current political situation in Liberia offers a clear and present opportunity for the United States government to take a small step that can lead to a giant leap forward in the drive for a smooth and peaceful return to civilian rule in Liberia. In the midst of United States government calls for democratic reforms in Nicaragua and its efforts to involve all shades of political views in the process of elections in El Salvador, we are not unmindful of the stern warning given the Doe regime by the United States Congress' House Appropriations Committee on 13 September 1984. We remain appreciative of the actions of this Committee with respect to warning the Doe government that further United States government financial support of the Doe regime would not be forthcoming were Doe to continue his efforts at maintaining himself in power indefinitely through the elimination of opposition to his undemocratic and repressive rule by any violent means necessary.

In view of the persistent refusal of General Doe to resign from public office, while insisting that public officials with political aspirations must resign, MOJA, in the name of patriotic and democratic citizens throughout Liberia, calls upon the United States Congress to take action to ensure the withdrawal of United States government support of the Doe regime in Liberia.

*  *  *

INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

An Address by the late Prime Minister of Tanzania, Edward Sokoine, on the Tenth Anniversary of the Institute of Development Studies, October 1983.

According to development theories, a country cannot develop without generating debates on how that country can pave the way for its development. One of the main roles of intellectuals in Tanzania is to lead such debates and also to create a communication line between the University and other institutions of learning on one hand and the political leaders and centres of Party and Government decision-making organs on the other.

As far as intellectual debates are concerned, after 1967 Tanzania become temporarily a political Mecca for liberal and socialist progressives from all over the world anxious to see a challenge to neo-colonialism. Praise of President Nyerere and Tanzania was dished out almost generously, particularly by socialist academics who exploited the new situation to prove the relevance of Marxism-Leninism to the African realities. Indeed, foreign intellectuals poured into Tanzania to research on Ujamaa and the prospects it could offer to other developing countries. But before this period, the intellectual community in Tanzania had made several contributions related to development strategies.

It is perhaps necessary to divide the contribution of our intellectuals into three main periods. The first period begins in 1964 and ends around 1970. The second one starts from 1970-78, and the third one begins around 1978 to our present time.
The first period is characterised by intellectual aloofness and self-styled elitism. The ideas of this period centre on individual rights and elite recognition in society. It was also during this period that the concept of the 'Hill' gained currency (as the name for the University — Eds.)

This Hill concept reflected the ideas of the ivory tower. One could say, our intellectuals were building castles in the air. They were completely detached from the peasantry and workers, the source of their very survival. The novelty of this time was bureaucratic expansionism and legalistic justifications, arrogance and selfishness. It is possible to conclude that the ideas of this period were counterproductive. This, clearly, culminated in the episode of 1966, when they challenged the state on the basis of individual rights as the concept of National Service was extended to institutions of higher learning.

The second period emerged in the aftermath of the Arusha Declaration, crystallising in the 1970s with a new intellectual rigour and vitality. Fortunately, the Hill by then had attained its full independence from the University of East Africa. It was expected that the intellectuals would now concentrate on the problems of socialist transformation in Tanzania. This period experienced the development of new constructive ideas warning the state on the policies which had been adopted. Perhaps, it is fitting in this context to recall the great thesis of our beloved brother the late Professor Justinian Rweyemamu. He had warned us on the problems of perverse industrialisation as a result of the reliance on import substitution strategy.

It is, equally fitting, at this juncture to recall the contribution of the late Professor Rodney, on *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. His work provided the background for serious studies in the field of Development Studies in general and the problems of Tanzania in particular. The idea of our brothers Rweyemamu and Rodney have not only been cherished by Tanzania but by all those interested in the problems of underdeveloped countries of the Third World.

We were also provided with great explanatory ideas of the origin and the role of the *Maji Maji* revolution in the historical development of our nation. It is also fitting, therefore, to pay tribute to our late Brother Gwassa for his contribution in this regard. (An ex-Director of IDS — Eds.)

I also must mention that it was during the same period that our Brother Shivji developed his great thesis on the silent class struggle in Tanzania. We must accept this as some serious intellectual contribution.

I would also like to pay tribute to all other individuals, academics, students and institutions, who have in one way or another, contributed towards the process of intellectual development at the Hill. During the same period the Hill also received some intellectual infusion from people like Szentes on theories of underdevelopment and Henry Bernstein, John Saul, Clive Thomas, and others. I am tempted to characterise this period as the most productive in ideas at the Hill. Whether the State made use of these ideas generated around this period is a different matter. But the intellectuals fulfilled their role.

The third and last period of our discussion began with the intellectual disaster of 1978. The intellectuals at the Hill seemed to have been obsessed with the ideas of the earlier period or totally disenchanted by then. A strong debate developed in which two schools of thought emerged. These two schools appear to me not to be
exactly independent of each other, but two variants of the Marxist-Leninist school. Given the intellectual environment at the Hill at that time, I do not consider this to be an accident. It was a natural outgrowth of an intellectual process. We may, however, raise questions as to the contribution of the effect of this on our socialist transformation process. Indeed, the debate might have been a socialist debate, but the outcome was certainly not socialist. Yet we have to accept this as in inevitable process of the development of intellectual ideas.

Two things emerged out of this episode of 1978. Immediately after the incidents* the intellectual community seemed to have retreated from its fundamental obligation to the Tanzanian society, namely, to generate ideas. Following this, the Tanzanian intellectual community has remained at large in matters related to its role in socialist transformation. Ndugu Chairman, I would like at this point to pose two legitimate questions. Why is the Tanzanian intellectual in retreat? How can our intellectual community be brought back to the mainstream of the debate on socialist transformation in Tanzania?

There is also a new development in this direction. When Tanzania began experiencing economic difficulties as a result of world-wide economic depression, especially from 1973, the same intellectuals both at home and abroad who hailed the Arusha Declaration in 1967 began condemning the Tanzania model. They associated the country's economic ills as being a result of the policies of socialism and self-reliance. We have been told that our inability to adopt scientific socialism has inevitably led to the retardation of our economic development and halted our socialist transformation process . . .

Mwalimu has more than often emphasised the fact that the intellectual is part and parcel of the society to which he belongs. In examining the role of intellectuals in our society, it is important to ask ourselves whether or not our intellectuals serve the interests of the masses. In performing services to the people, the Tanzanian intellectuals who are part of the society will always be expected to remain within the society and can never be a separate entity. It is the duty of our intellectuals to resist unhealthy tendencies of arrogance and superiority.

I wish to caution that intellectuals the world over are sometimes accused of being perfect at theorising. Taken out of their theoretical world they prove to be ineffective. They criticise and yet they offer no solution, especially when specific tasks are assigned to them. Our intellectuals must avoid being good theoreticians and yet proving to be bad practitioners. While their work is to generate and disseminate ideas, they should also ensure the practical application of those ideas in national reconstruction and development.

There are so many issues which our intellectuals could address themselves to, for instance, to ask themselves whether the law-and-order-keeping bureaucracy we inherited from the colonial period could be effective in bringing socialist transformation in Tanzania.

There is the problem of the villagisation programme which was undertaken in order to create centres of development and service to the rural masses of

*After demonstrations against increasing top salaries, some 400 students were expelled — (Eds.).
Tanzania. Although the villagisation programme had been carried out, the villages have not been transformed into production centres but rather into administrative centres contrary to the original concept of creating them.

There is the problem of low productivity in our agriculture, livestock keeping, fishing and other sectors of production because of a serious lack of technology at the village level. There is the problem of locating extension service officers either at the village level or leaving them hanging at divisional or ward level. Answers to these problems are crucial to our development.

What I have been attempting to say from the beginning is that our intellectuals have a major role to guide the masses of peasants and workers of Tanzania through the complexities of building a modern nation. We have to provide scientific answers to questions militating against our development. We have to solve the problems of food, housing, clothing, health, footwear, sanitary conditions and create a culture and technology relevant to our people's values. It is needless to reiterate that education has offered you positions of leadership in our society, but it has not given you the right to over-ride or ignore the interests of the masses. This is a challenge facing our intellectuals, public officials and political leaders. We have always to bear in mind that we are servants of people and not their masters. If we hold that principle faithfully the masses of peasants and workers of Tanzania will trust us. A departure from this principle would lead to their withdrawal, thereby creating a serious danger of a ruling autocratic bureaucracy. Neither the intellectuals nor political leaders could survive in the event that such a situation should occur.

In conclusion, I wish IDS further success in producing and moulding intellectuals who will faithfully put unselfishly their services to the peasants and workers of Tanzania.

* * *

INSIDE THE REVIEW OF AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY
By some anonymous editors

Since the Review was founded a decade ago, the personalities and political positions of its editors have always remained somewhat opaque and the composition of the Editorial Working Group (EWG) has continually changed. There has been no 'cult of personality' around the journal. We imply no criticism of the individuals concerned to say that this was quite unlike, say, the close links between Perry Anderson and the New Left Review, Baran and Sweezy and Monthly Review or Immanuel Wallerstein and Review. These journals came to represent a particular tendency, or became the principal outlet for writers in a particular tradition. The editors of ROAPE always had a much looser and less direct relationship toward the journal. Many of us have published no more than one article in the journal.

Our less intimate relationship to ROAPE can also be evidenced by the sheer numbers involved: a dozen or more on the EWG, two on the Editorial Staff, thirteen Overseas Editors and another dozen or so Contributing Editors. Individuals in the last two categories have had a fitful relationship with the EWG.
Tanzania. Although the villagisation programme had been carried out, the villages have not been transformed into production centres but rather into administrative centres contrary to the original concept of creating them.

There is the problem of low productivity in our agriculture, livestock keeping, fishing and other sectors of production because of a serious lack of technology at the village level. There is the problem of locating extension service officers either at the village level or leaving them hanging at divisional or ward level. Answers to these problems are crucial to our development.

What I have been attempting to say from the beginning is that our intellectuals have a major role to guide the masses of peasants and workers of Tanzania through the complexities of building a modern nation. We have to provide scientific answers to questions militating against our development. We have to solve the problems of food, housing, clothing, health, footwear, sanitary conditions and create a culture and technology relevant to our people's values. It is needless to reiterate that education has offered you positions of leadership in our society, but it has not given you the right to over-ride or ignore the interests of the masses. This is a challenge facing our intellectuals, public officials and political leaders. We have always to bear in mind that we are servants of people and not their masters. If we hold that principle faithfully the masses of peasants and workers of Tanzania will trust us. A departure from this principle would lead to their withdrawal, thereby creating a serious danger of a ruling autocratic bureaucracy. Neither the intellectuals nor political leaders could survive in the event that such a situation should occur.

In conclusion, I wish IDS further success in producing and moulding intellectuals who will faithfully put unselfishly their services to the peasants and workers of Tanzania.

* * *

INSIDE THE REVIEW OF AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY
By some anonymous editors

Since the Review was founded a decade ago, the personalities and political positions of its editors have always remained somewhat opaque and the composition of the Editorial Working Group (EWG) has continually changed. There has been no 'cult of personality' around the journal. We imply no criticism of the individuals concerned to say that this was quite unlike, say, the close links between Perry Anderson and the New Left Review, Baran and Sweezy and Monthly Review or Immanuel Wallerstein and Review. These journals came to represent a particular tendency, or became the principal outlet for writers in a particular tradition. The editors of ROAPE always had a much looser and less direct relationship toward the journal. Many of us have published no more than one article in the journal.

Our less intimate relationship to ROAPE can also be evidenced by the sheer numbers involved: a dozen or more on the EWG, two on the Editorial Staff, thirteen Overseas Editors and another dozen or so Contributing Editors. Individuals in the last two categories have had a fitful relationship with the EWG.
At first, there was little doubt that some 'big names' in the African studies 'left' were needed to lend some gravitas to a fledgling enterprise, which had neither commercial backing nor a publisher to advertise and distribute it. The late Thomas Hodgkin would not, we imagine, have thought it particularly distressing to be described as a benign, avuncular figurehead. Other Contributing Editors have not wanted to play so passive a role. They have occasionally intervened in matters of editorial policy (Archie Mafeje on South Africa and Basil Davidson on Angola are two examples that come to mind). Some have contributed to the journal (Claude Meillassoux, Jean Copans and Colin Leys) and one or two have generously offered gifts to keep us afloat in the remarkably rare moments of economic crisis.

Our Overseas Editors are again a mixed group. A few were ex-members of the EWG who migrated abroad for greater or lesser periods (Ruth First to Maputo, Dianne Bolton to Canberra, Meredith Turshen to Rutgers). Others have had long-standing political or personal relationships with members of the EWG, reflected in the occasional 'farming out' of editorial responsibility to them. Other Overseas Editors have also been valiant supporters of the Review. Bjorn Beckman has been one of our most widely cited contributors and has personally sold thousands of pounds worth of subscriptions. While not wishing to underestimate these contributions to the work of the journal — without which it could not have survived and prospered in the way it has — there is no doubt that the effective unit of decision making is the EWG. How do we characterise this group? It comprises a little more than a dozen members now, yet only five (Chris Allen, Lionel Cliffe, Robin Cohen, Peter Lawrence and Gavin Williams) have survived from the original founding group. And given that Chris has been locked in his Scottish fastness and that Robin has been away in Trinidad, it is probably true to assert that only the remaining three have had a continuous impact on editorial policy.

Changes in the EWG have not been due to enormous ideological rifts which have led editors to stomp out in organised factions. There were some who saw the 'ex-Tanzanians' as ultra-left in the early days, but this remained a largely unspoken split. Of course, individuals could and did make their views known. Jitendra Mohan left for some years on a disagreement over our undiluted MPLA stance on Angola. Archie Mafeje has sent more than one sizzling cracker through the post over our South African material. For the most part, however, editors have left as they have assumed other responsibilities, interests and commitments. New members of the EWG, with new ideas and new enthusiasms, have similarly found their way into our fold. This fairly easy, unsystematic exit and access has been relatively successful in allowing individual members to tailor their other changing commitments to work on the Review and vice versa, and also in ensuring the continuity and regeneration of the EWG through the continuous recruitment of new members.

It is difficult to convey to the outsider the informal — yet not totally formless — organisation of the EWG. It’s a bit like a slowly rolling long-distance caravan, which, despite the presence of a handful of the original team, has in many respects a looseness of structure and function that makes it difficult to distinguish the camels from the riders. Unlike, say, Capital and Class where a constitutionally agreed rotation of editors takes place, editorial democracy in ROAPE is more organic. Editors take or refuse to take responsibility for
particular issues, papers are sent slowly round two circuits for opinions. Firm editorial positions and administrative measures are sometimes agreed at one meeting only to slide into a nebulous 'perhaps' area at the next. Editorial meetings are convened with greetings, jerks and sighs — with alternating states of determination, resignation and commitment — as editors come in, or phone fragmentary apologies. The editors responsible for the particular issues discuss the proposed articles, briefings and other contents with the rest of the EWG under the shadow of a fixed number of pages and relatively fixed printing schedule. Then the bulk of the day is devoted to reports on the articles in hand, which have previously circulated to editors within either or both of two regional circuits, and planning future issues.

When we read that the editors of the Review collectively 'think' this or 'represent' that, we can therefore only breathe a weary sigh. Of course such characterisations cannot be rejected out of hand: it may well be that the observer sees more of the game than the players. For example, a review published in this issue suggests that a book edited by Gavin Williams and Chris Allen reflects 'the politics of The Review of African Political Economy'. Yet Allen and Williams' book can hardly be held to have such a representative status: very few of the editors of ROAPE are represented in its pages. Just as the two editors disclaim their book's association with the Review so the rest of us might want to disown them! Nevertheless, Gurnah's characterisation of the politics of ROAPE is to some extent complemented by some of the opening comments by Bill Freund in his recent (and to be applauded) introductory materialist analysis of African history. Freund draws attention to the centrality of ROAPE in opening out the leftist debate to Africanist scholarship and also invokes our first editorial as evidence of a commitment to radical analysis.

Our own recollection of that first editorial is that it didn't quite have the ex-cathedra status ascribed to it. In practice, all editorials are written by one, two or at the most three editors, and although there is a well-established practice of circulating the typescript, not all of us agree with all that is said. But because that first editorial remained unsigned (subsequent editorials were generally initialled or signed), readers could legitimately assume it represented a consensus of the whole EWG. In fact, this was not necessarily the case, even though one of our Contributing Editors (the late Bill Warren, who had written the opening shot of his attack on dependency theory ‘Myths of Underdevelopment' in the New Left Review a year before) was sufficiently alarmed at the tone to leave the ranks. In any event, none of the EWG was even then a dedicated dependista, and none sought the mechanical transposition of underdevelopment theory to the African continent. The whole trade-centred, macroscopic approach characteristic of dependency theory became ever less congenial to most editors — who had spent long periods of their life doing research into urban workers, state bureaucracies and rural movements. So even though two issues were devoted to multinationals (No.2) and general theories of underdevelopment (No.1), the major trajectory of the journal came to lie elsewhere. Issues were produced on African capitalism (No.8) and the State (No.5), for example, and numerous articles concerned workers and peasants. These and other articles published in the Review have attempted to develop an adequate radical analysis of precisely those features of the African scene to which dependency theorists have given little weight, namely the local state, the national bourgeoisie and working class, and class formation and action.
The truth of the matter is that the factors shaping the EWG are more varied and complex — and relations among members of the EWG have been more friendly — than many commentators would imagine. A partial list of the most important factors which have contributed to the work of the EWG might include the following elements.

We were nearly all disillusioned with a pure anti-colonial or national struggle. This seemed to us to guarantee nothing in the conventionally decolonised areas except ‘flag independence’. Some of us toyed for a time with notions of a progressive political leadership (like Nyerere), but all were interested in more fundamental social changes ‘from below’. Where national liberation struggles or settler regimes were involved, a more complex two-stage or fused stage theory might be applied. But in no case were we simply satisfied in endorsing a purely national struggle.

Two or three of us were on the unorthodox wing of orthodox communist parties either in Britain or South Africa. There were at least two who were influenced by ‘extramural leftism’. The particular ethos can perhaps be summarised in a phrase — ‘scholarship combined with service to the left’. Analogous experiences of another two of us in workers’ and party schools in Johannesburg have also influenced the somewhat didactic tone occasionally adopted in the editorials.

Experience of the early stages in pursuing **ujamaa** in Tanzania was a major point of reference for a third of the first EWG (Lionel Cliffe, Peter Lawrence, Fred Bienefeld, Katherine Levine). The lively debate and comradeship in the years when the academic left in Dar still talked to each other, of self-organisation and experience of low budget publishing had given the ‘Tanzanian Group’ a particular coherence, a set of common concerns. Although never really a faction, they were an identifiable ingredient in the first editorial mix.

Four of us — Ruth, Chris, Gavin and Robin — were white Africans. In fact, none of us knew each other until we met in West Africa or the UK. All had lengthy periods of residence in other parts of Africa, three in Nigeria. Only Ruth managed to keep a continuous input into the politics of southern Africa, but none of us felt completely detached from our roots. Like the Tanzanian group, the white South Africans had no programme and didn’t collude, though they tended to press for a consensus in the journal’s pages in favour of the mainstream liberation groups in southern Africa.

Co-operative work in Africa reinforced the influence of aspects of the western ‘counter-culture’ to which we were intermittently exposed. The *Review* was committed initially to working without a division of labour between mental and manual work. Thus, with the first four Numbers of *ROAPE* the editors were directly involved in pasting up and letrasetting. Subsequently, however, the combination of economic logic — it didn’t make sense to lay out an expensive rail fare to have an editor lick stamps in central London — and a strong enough financial base led, not without regret by some, to all type-setting and printing being centred safely in the hands of Nottingham’s Russell Press. In fact, a full co-operative could not possibly work without residential contiguity of the editors, so inevitably the work fell disproportionately on one or two people. But one basic feature of self-reliance remained. Unlike most journals, we have not put ourselves in the hand of a publishing house. We have denied ourselves any subsidy thereby but also avoided our subscribers having to meet the profit, the
overheads and recompense for their services at a fully commercial rate that publishers demand. This means that a lot of ‘publishing’ tasks — detailed editing of scripts, readying them for the printer, layout etc. — are done by the editors or, more often, our editorial staff who have done this work plus the whole distribution side for little more than out of pocket expenses. Though never having any financial or editorial interest in the Review, our friends at Merlin Press on the Isle of Dogs were invaluable in the first years in giving us goodwill, packing bookstore orders and providing a mailing address. After an initial period during which the Review was administered from Brighton, Katherine Levine took over the administrative work before leaving to found her own press, Onyx. Subsequently, the ROAPE office reached its present oasis in the basement of a progressive bookstore in Sheffield.

Another ingredient in the mix is what might be called ‘respectable’ left scholarship. This was exemplified best in one of the organic roots of the journal, a mimeographed occasional publication by Chris Allen called Radical Africana (circa 1972-74). This combined Chris’s passion for collecting an extraordinary number and variety of references with his commitment to servicing the emerging generation of marxist scholars. Radical Africana, which then became the pages of Current Africana appended to the journal, was an important reason for the journal’s success. Because it clearly was more scholarly and more comprehensive than any other available bibliography, it beat conservative scholarship at its own game and fed the hungry appetites of the new generations of graduate students. In addition, several members of the EWG, regardless of nationality or background, are now senior staff in British universities. Their work on ROAPE is almost inevitably influenced by politics in Britain, the British university environment and the role of both the United Kingdom and its universities in the international economy.

New editors have already made an enormous impact in several areas. Without Carolyn Baylies, the material on the Sudan would not have made such a contribution. While we always had a rhetorical commitment to feminism, our mammoth special issue (No.27/28) would not have seen the light of day without Carolyn, Pepe Roberts and Doris Burgess. Francis Snyder, Shubi Ishemo, Morris Szeftel, Carol Barker and Tina Wallace have recently begun to develop further work in the areas of law, health political movements and refugees as well as taking their turn in editing issues. Without Barry Munslow, our coverage of southern Africa and Lusophone areas would have been much more limited.

We have been committed to a post-nationalist social transformation, seeking much more than Nkrumah’s political kingdom. We have seen our task as furthering this social transformation by developing a critique of contemporary African post-colonial regimes (including nominally socialist ones), aiding the liberation movements, and opening the pages to more authentic expressions of socialist alternatives. Of course we have been limited in what we could do by the fact that we were and are a journal, not a political party or tendency. As a journal, all we could do was persuade, not directly organise, to provide space for debate not offer a ‘line’. We have sought, however, to establish at least a plausible brand of left scholarship with a readership being not so much the ‘Africanist’ community as activists and undergraduate and graduate students, who were to challenge the prevailing tepid liberalism of African, European and American academia — and our pricing policy has been set accordingly, although
the very real problems of distribution have limited our access in reaching a broader audience in Africa. All of us sought to make the journal relevant to political struggles in Africa — rather than simply doing solidarity work in the UK (not, incidentally, the major area where the journal circulates). The ‘extramural leftism’ and other experiences in popular and party educational programmes have to some extent helped us to reach a readership beyond the confines of academia, though the same tradition has also limited our political practice. This strange mix of elements has combined to produce what is in terms of circulation and viability at least, a ‘successful’ journal.

In several areas, however, we have thus far failed to develop our potential. The Editorial outlines some of the concrete themes that have been underplayed in the material we have carried. In addition, we have not yet involved as editors enough black Africans living in Africa. Though logistically difficult while production is in UK, recruitment and meaningful involvement of editors who are closer to the action needs to be a major priority for the future. Second, we aim to publish more articles by African activists particularly, and (to some extent) scholars, in the next decade. We have still done so more than most journals, but redoubled efforts in this direction are needed — by us in ROAPE (for at last we are in the healthy position of getting enough material to be selective), and, we hope, from prospective contributors in Africa. A third, important question raised in Issue No.1 was the possible ‘repatriation’ of the journal. But still no country on the continent as yet offers conditions that sufficiently guarantee production facilities and freedom to operate for the journal to find a permanent home. But ‘left’ publishing in Africa is emerging and as it does if offers us the choice of migrating, quietly folding, or redefining our role. We hope, however, that as long as the journal continues to be published in the UK, interested support and activist groups in Africa will take responsibility for particular issues, as with our Kenya Issue (No.21). Each of these crucial matters concerning the working relations between western and African academics and activists is extremely complex, each clearly deserves further debate and discussion. These issues are in turn related to, but cannot be collapsed into, the intellectual relations between African Marxism — and unlike ten years ago such a thing definitely has a lively existence — and western Marxism, at a time when both are actively developing. We would especially welcome contributions from readers on these issues.

Of equal importance, our political practice has been poorly developed. This is an unfortunate but perhaps inevitable consequence of our editorial style of work. The EWG operates in a context of acceptance of a wide range of editors' political practice; in political parties, CND, feminist groups, trade unions and solidarity groups. Correlatively, any political practice based on the journal itself has been very difficult to sustain. We've made some partial efforts to overcome this — e.g. convening a biennial conference, the first on Zimbabwean independence, the latest on Africa and the Recession. We've also, of course, run individual campaigns for imprisoned comrades, including at one point one of our own editors, and allowed our pages to be used for progressive political campaigns. Solidarity work has also often been reflected in ROAPE. But one new objective might be to set up study groups and clubs in Africa and elsewhere which have a continuing association with the journal and which can use its pages for furthering their objectives. We've totally failed to develop such groups or to relate (except intermittently) to trade union and other popular organisations in Africa.
Another important, related problem is that ROAPE has probably reached a rough equilibrium in its income. The journal attracts enough new subscribers to cover increases in printing and postage costs and to replace any loss of subscriptions, but this is barely sufficient to keep the journal flourishing. Some priority must be given to reducing the amount of unpaid labour time given to the journal by its editorial staff. Yet, a crucial issue remains with regard to reaching new groups of readers, for we cannot now afford to discount further on our student and African prices in order to reach those who can't currently afford the journal. A good number of copies are in fact so distributed without any real hope of receiving full payment, largely because of foreign exchange difficulties. The EWG is currently considering this problem, and it would welcome suggestions and views of ROAPE readers.

ROAPE has consistently carried the most challenging political commentaries available on Africa and initiated a number of the crucial debates. We've forced all but the most obscurantist Africanist scholarship on to the defensive. But we should not exaggerate our importance, nor should outside observers imagine that we stand for some clear and coherent political programme. We have tried to be self-critical in highlighting some of our failings. Our readers have never been slow to speak their minds. We'd like to hear from them about the direction of the Review for the next ten years.

* * *

ROAPE CONFERENCE ON 'WORLD RECESSION AND THE CRISIS IN AFRICA'

The third conference organised by ROAPE was held at the University of Keele on September 29 and 30, 1984. In all, forty six papers were presented in three plenary sessions and nine workshops; about two hundred people from Britain, North America, Europe, and Africa participated. This report will concentrate on the plenary sessions.

The keynote speaker of the first plenary was Giovanni Arrighi whose paper 'Stagflation and Labor Market Regulation in Historical Perspective' started from the premise that unemployment is increasingly 'inefficient' in depressing money wages and that the rate of growth of money wages is no longer at the same level as the rate of growth of productivity. An adjustment has therefore occurred in prices to bring wages into line with productivity. This price adjustment is a central fact of the current crisis and means that an inflationary pattern of labour market regulation has replaced the previous deflationary pattern.

Capital's response to heightened industrial conflict in western Europe in the late 1960s was to shift the locus of industrialisation to the periphery. Africa (including South Africa but with the partial exception of Nigeria) was bypassed because it did not offer the optimal combination of access to elastic supplies of labor at low wages, access to large markets warranting the use of mass production, entrepreneurs capable of servicing industrial growth, and political regimes capable of sustaining the foregoing conditions.
Another important, related problem is that ROAPE has probably reached a rough equilibrium in its income. The journal attracts enough new subscribers to cover increases in printing and postage costs and to replace any loss of subscriptions, but this is barely sufficient to keep the journal flourishing. Some priority must be given to reducing the amount of unpaid labour time given to the journal by its editorial staff. Yet, a crucial issue remains with regard to reaching new groups of readers, for we cannot now afford to discount further on our student and African prices in order to reach those who can’t currently afford the journal. A good number of copies are in fact so distributed without any real hope of receiving full payment, largely because of foreign exchange difficulties. The EWG is currently considering this problem, and it would welcome suggestions and views of ROAPE readers.

ROAPE has consistently carried the most challenging political commentaries available on Africa and initiated a number of the crucial debates. We’ve forced all but the most obscurantist Africanist scholarship on to the defensive. But we should not exaggerate our importance, nor should outside observers imagine that we stand for some clear and coherent political programme. We have tried to be self-critical in highlighting some of our failings. Our readers have never been slow to speak their minds. We’d like to hear from them about the direction of the Review for the next ten years.

* * *

ROAPE CONFERENCE ON ‘WORLD RECESSION AND THE CRISIS IN AFRICA’

The third conference organised by ROAPE was held at the University of Keele on September 29 and 30, 1984. In all, forty six papers were presented in three plenary sessions and nine workshops; about two hundred people from Britain, North America, Europe, and Africa participated. This report will concentrate on the plenary sessions.

The keynote speaker of the first plenary was Giovanni Arrighi whose paper ‘Stagflation and Labor Market Regulation in Historical Perspective’ started from the premise that unemployment is increasingly ‘inefficient’ in depressing money wages and that the rate of growth of money wages is no longer at the same level as the rate of growth of productivity. An adjustment has therefore occurred in prices to bring wages into line with productivity. This price adjustment is a central fact of the current crisis and means that an inflationary pattern of labour market regulation has replaced the previous deflationary pattern.

Capital’s response to heightened industrial conflict in western Europe in the late 1960s was to shift the locus of industrialisation to the periphery. Africa (including South Africa but with the partial exception of Nigeria) was bypassed because it did not offer the optimal combination of access to elastic supplies of labor at low wages, access to large markets warranting the use of mass production, entrepreneurs capable of servicing industrial growth, and political regimes capable of sustaining the foregoing conditions.
The second speaker was Bob Sutcliffe who set out in empirical detail the economic realities of the crisis in subsaharan Africa (excluding South Africa). Sutcliffe concludes that one can have a debt crisis without being deeply in debt, that Africa has been forced into more repeat agreements with the IMF than any other continent, and has therefore had to accept economic policies dictated by the IMF.

The third paper presented was by Munslow et al., 'The World Crisis', which reviews data similar to those presented by Sutcliffe. The authors assert that the crisis in Africa has enhanced the power and influence of the IMF, 'the last resort of countries unable to procure loans elsewhere'.

A Second Plenary dealt with the World Bank and IMF Policies towards Africa. The first paper of the afternoon plenary was by John Loxley, 'IMF and World Bank Conditionality and Subsaharan Africa'. He outlined the crisis in its by now familiar terms: chronic food shortage, negative income growth, balance of payments deficits, acute import compression. Loxley maintains that, whatever the stated intentions, the function of IMF conditionality is to restore the rate of profit in industrial capitalist countries by reducing the value of both constant capital and labor power. IMF conditionality helps turn the international terms of trade against Third World countries. The author finds no evidence for the assertion that countries adopting IMF programmes do better than those without IMF programmes in terms of balance of payments, inflation, savings and investment.

Ajit Singh's paper is entitled, 'The Crisis of the World Economy and Economic Development in Africa: A Commentary on the IMF/World Bank Policy Programme'. This paper is a detailed, closely argued questioning of the IMF's recommendation that certain countries devalue their currency.

Kighoma Malima, the Tanzania Minister of Finance and Planning, spoke about 'The Tanzanian Response'. Addressing first the problem of foreign exchange needed to finance imports, he noted that developed countries have used exchange rates to control their national economies, yet the IMF blames internal Third World country policies for their payments' imbalances. If all developing countries are in same boat, how can individual policies be blamed? The existence of unequal exchange means that ever-cheaper commodities are sold to buy ever-more-expensive manufactured imports. In the case of Tanzania, oil, spare parts, and tractors must be imported. If Tanzania could buy oil from the Saudis by paying shillings deposited in a Tanzanian bank, foreign exchange problems would be different. Agriculture supports exports but imports are needed. Even for fertilizer produced in Tanzania some inputs need to be bought.

In 1977 the IMF advised the Tanzanian government to use its foreign exchange reserves (it had surpluses as a result of the coffee boom). As a result of IMF recommendations, imports were liberalised and controls reduced. Within twelve months reserves were exhausted. In 1979 the IMF said, 'now you are ready for a standby agreement'. But the Tanzanian government felt the conditions attached were too difficult to accept. There were six conditions presented as a political package, and they amounted to destabilisation: 1) exchange rate adjustment, 2) positive interest rates in terms of inflation, 3) dismantling of price controls so prices can rise, 4) reduction of government expenditures, and a wage freeze, 5) privatisation of the economy and the dismantling of the parastatals, and 6) liberalisation of imports and removal of exchange controls.
A Third Plenary dealt with 'The Politics of Crisis'. Jean-Marc Fontaine, in his rather difficult paper 'Repressive Development Models? An Empirical Approach', addressed the issues of militarisation and repression in the Third World. He attempts a statistical analysis of export factors and correlates high violence countries with exports of manufactured goods and the import of foodstuffs (e.g., Latin America).

Dave Moore spoke on 'World Recession and the Crisis of the State Classes: Perspectives on the Organisers of Hegemony in Advanced and Peripheral Social Formations'. He argues that the ruling classes must create new hegemonic forms of capitalist rule and to do so they are relying upon 'state classes' (the new petty bourgeoisie) in both the Third World and advanced capitalist countries.

Robin Luckman spoke on militarisation, recession and cold war (no written paper). He believes that the IMF is a profoundly political organisation with economic and political leverage of economic coercion. He began with definitions: 1) militarisation of the state apparatus means the consolidation of authoritarian rule behind civilians, 2) militarisation of resource allocation means spending to import weapons (in the last ten years the growth of arms imports has been rapid, 8-9 per cent annually; arms imports are now comparable to total aid flows and are a crucial component of both the debt crisis and the import squeeze), 3) armed conflict means withdrawal of large regions and millions of people from production (in Africa, South African destabilisation is the most significant conflict, representing a constraint on and obstacle to development), 4) growth of foreign military in Africa means intervention by the forces of major metropolitan powers (the British have created a new intervention force; there is a large infrastructure of bases, etc.). Foreign powers are present in a structural sense in that they introduce African states to arms and international military technology. There are foreign military training and assistance programs, counter-revolutionary war courses, and direct military intervention by foreign powers. The recession aggravates these problems by intensifying social contradictions within state and society (class struggle). The economic restructuring imposed by the Bank, the Fund, and other donors means the restructuring of social and political forces. US aid policy evaluation documents argue for closer relationships between military and economic aid (Berg was the advisor to the US government on this evaluation). Luckham sees a revival of the cold war and its systematic extension to the Third World. In the current strategic documents of major powers, the horizontal escalation of the arms race is legitimised and the Big Powers carry out strategic sales missions for their arms production industries. There is also a relationship between military spending and the domestic crises of the Big Powers. There are cyclical sectoral crises and arms production is proposed as a solution. The prominent role of the USSR needs rethinking. South Africa holds a special role as a sub-imperial power. There are hegemonic cycles at the global level, which collide and interact with social and radical forces in Africa.

Yao Graham (New Democratic Movement, Ghana) spoke next on economic crisis, class struggle, and mass organisation in Ghana (no paper). From the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, there was a demobilisation of the masses. Petty bourgeois rule characterised this post-colonial period. The overthrow of Nkrumah occurred in the midst of an economic crisis. From the mid-1970s the ruling bloc searched for a proper balance with imperialism. The decline of the Ghanaian economy was rapid, the third fastest decline in world. The economic condition explains the
emergence of new organisational forms and the anti-imperialist stance of today. Inflation in Ghana matched that of Argentina, GDP was down 30 per cent while population growth was 2.5 per cent per annum. Political instability and struggle marked the mid-1970s. Graham traced mass political development to this crisis. Attempts at new political stability were met by struggle in the petty bourgeoisie, a struggle that spilled over to the armed forces. The peasantry were marginalised from political struggle and the working classes emerged as Marxist. The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council in 1979 was anti-comprador; there was no control of the class struggle, or of corrupt indisciplined elements in the military. The turning point came in 1982. The labour movement, which had been bureaucratised and corrupt, was reformed. It represents 900,000 workers. The student movement of 1976-79 was coopted by reactionaries and defeated in 1983.

Muhammed Babu ex-minister in Tanzania was an unexpected participant. His present concerns are 1) neglect of dialectics and retreat to formal logic, as reflected in the conference papers; 2) brilliant analysis but no synthesis — what do we do next? 3) lack of theory by practitioners and lack of practice by theoreticians, as was obvious in the discussion and in practice.

In addition to these plenaries there were seven Workshops at which a further 30 papers were presented.

Meredeth Turshen

The 1984 ROAPE Conference: Comments and Criticisms

ROAPE editors have received several letters both in praise and in criticism of the Conference. We have also had two relatively brief discussions in which we have talked about how to respond, especially to the criticisms. Clearly, the best response would be to satisfy the critics by better conception and organisation of the next Conference, and indeed we have begun to work on that.

In the meantime this brief report is intended to share the criticisms and to invite suggestions as to how best we might organise the next conference. There were three major criticisms: first, that it was a white, male affair; second, that it over-emphasised the macro-economic issues to the exclusion of discussion on the effects of the crisis on everyday life; and third that too many papers and too many plenary sessions with elitist panels reduced the amount of discussion time to a lower than acceptable level. The first criticism emphasised the relatively few African participants presenting papers, and the under-representation at the Conference of political and other groups engaged in day-to-day struggle inside Africa. Related to this was the view that there were too many ‘great men’, knowledgeable about the world crisis, but with little recent awareness of what was going on in the villages, townships, households and families of Africa. Many of those working on these latter issues are women, but their representation on the panels was limited. This resulted in a conference strong on world crisis, but weak on its impact on urban and rural Africa.

These points are well taken, especially in regard to our failure to involve the movements in struggle. Had not postal services, airlines and one government intervened adversely, we would have had five more speakers from Africa, but perhaps this would not have significantly altered the critics’ main point.

The over-emphasis on macro-issues was a result of two factors: first, the title of the conference lent itself to this; and second, the crisis itself has resulted in less
funding being made available to conduct the micro-level studies. Clearly we got the balance between the macro and micro-level issues rather skewed, but unfortunately the balance of work being done and coming in to us is equally skewed, and we then compounded any such bias by highlighting the general in the plenaries and consigning the several case studies we did receive (see list above) to smaller workshops.

The question of balance between plenary and workshop sessions at conferences is a constant problem. Certainly the plenaries did militate against discussion from the ‘floor’, certainly there was an insufficient number of workshops, and certainly the number of papers given severely curtailed discussion time. However, authors did not keep to deadlines, even for abstracts, thus making it impossible to select out keynote and background papers, let alone to send out papers in advance — a financially prohibitive task anyway. The answer to these problems is first, a much longer pre-conference planning period — we are beginning to plan the next conference now; second, the pre-circulation of abstracts; and third, the pre-publication in ROAPE of the main papers, so that they can be more fully discussed at the conference.

Finally, it must be said that the vast majority of letters received were full of praise for the conference. ‘Brilliant’, ‘stimulating’, ‘exciting’, ‘successful’, ‘the best conference ever’, are just a few of the comments from black, white, female and male alike, and they were not just referring to the Saturday night disco! People did come to see the ‘names’ and to talk to them, and, although I haven’t done the count of the registrations, there was a high level of female and black participation especially among the student population, for whom registration and residence fees were heavily subsidised — and I suspect that is unique for conferences on Africa held in the northern hemisphere. This is not in any way to downplay the criticisms. Our intention is to plan the next conference with very early deadlines, with deliberate soliciting of material, with fewer papers and with much more small group discussion. Advertising for the 1986 Conference on ‘Popular Struggles in Africa’ will begin soon. Watch this space!

Peter Lawrence

There can be no need to introduce ROAPE to our readers but should I say that it is my favourite journal on Africa (You are a traitor, Jean! N.D.L.R.) For many readers, of course, it is just a radical journal, neo-Marxist, a teeny bit ‘boy-scout’, militant, not really a scientific journal. Yet most of the great debates about contemporary Africa have taken place on its pages: the nature of the State, the forms of capitalist development, the droughts, social class (bourgeoisie, peasantry, proletariat), the political ideologies and the political parties. What is most useful to us as scholars of Francophone Africa is the information and the theorising about Anglophone Africa: the issues on Nigeria and on Southern Africa are indispensable to any bibliography on these subjects. But I think that the most important thing about ROAPE is something else again. Despite any mistakes in its commitment, in its theorising, its empirical research is always directed explicitly to the problems of elaborating strategy. This is often difficult to formulate and I think that the comrades in ROAPE are the only Africanists who try to think through what the struggle for socialism in black Africa really signifies. For us the problem may seem to have worn thin because all ‘our’ Francophone experiments have failed or have gone with the wind: Guinea, Mali, the Congo, Benin not to speak of the Senegalese illusion. That is to say that for good reason scepticism is indispensable and one of the reasons for the existence of Politique Africaine is precisely to provide something to read (and to think about) other than slogans.

— Jean Copans, Politique Africaine, 11.5, 1982
Reviews

Capitalism and Political Strategy in the Sudan: a Critical Review*

One of the greatest political assets of the dominated classes in the Sudan is the existence of a communist party — the second oldest in Africa and one of the best organised in the Arab world. Though the two cultures intersect in the Sudan, the country’s political vocation has been predominantly Arab oriented, a reflection of the dominant culture. This biased, at times chauvinist, orientation is all the more disastrous for the Left. The incapacity of that Left to define the vocation of the Sudan has been like an albatross hanging round its political neck. The latest and most exciting Marxist study on the reality of the country by a militant intellectual further confirms this. The delineation of the vocation of the Sudan deserves serious debate.

Furthermore, post-colonial Sudan has been undergoing considerable capitalist transformation which has engendered a flourishing and cohesive bourgeoisie. The current, seemingly well-entrenched gangster bourgeois regime has, in the last 15 years defeated two communist-inspired or supported coups. The regime is a living carapace for the ongoing capitalist transformation of the Sudan.

This context poses the issue of political strategy — and the only viable political opposition on the Left is the Communist Party of the Sudan (CPS). The latter’s strategy in the class struggle has therefore immense significance that goes beyond the Sudan. In neighbouring Ethiopia one of the greatest ‘bourgeois-democratic’ revolutions has occurred in the absence of a communist party. The role a long-established, organisationally resilient communist party will play in the coming revolutionary struggle in the Sudan has yet to be seen: whether that party will be a liability or an indispensable asset for the working class movement. Meanwhile the history of that party has to be thoroughly and critically examined. The ideological struggle for the delineation of the appropriate political strategy is therefore a burning question.

In this context, Fatima Babiker Mahmoud’s original and fascinating study on the Sudanese ruling class is a most welcome contribution to the ongoing debate. Her intervention has already stirred the ideological milieu and will hopefully advance the terms of the debate.

The importance of the book cannot be sufficiently underlined: a reasoned, engagee analysis, without doubt the most significant theoretical intervention by a Sudanese Marxist in the country’s politics. It is a comprehensive analysis of the formation and transformation of a flourishing and solid bourgeoisie. It analyses with a wealth of empirical data the historical origins, composition and dynamic of capital accumulation of the class. Moreover, it establishes as fact that there is, in the full sense of the term, a ruling capitalist class in the Sudan. This in itself is a considerable achievement. This said, the way the author has gone about doing this, the issues she touches on the way, and her political conclusions are, we submit, contentious. After a brief presentation of the contents, this review hopes to show the significant conceptual flaws, elisions, silences, ambiguities and inconsistencies of the book.

I

The aim and scope of the study is succinctly stated:

The book is organised in seven chapters (chapter 8 being a brief conclusion). The first chapter surveys the main features of ‘the political economy of the Sudan’ — colonial and post-colonial. Chapters 2 & 3 explore the main spheres of ‘private capital accumulation’ — trade, agriculture, industry, finance and services in 20th century Sudan. This is further supplemented by chapter 6 where two factors — regional and ethnic — are discussed in relation to capital accumulation. Here the author positively explodes a pervasive shibboleth: kinship, extended family, zakat, etc., far from discouraging or impinging on capital accumulation have instead been skilfully employed to further capital accumulation: kinsmen become agents, are advanced loans on joint ventures, kinsmen of capitalists are employed, mafia-style, in disciplining and policing fellow workers on the shop floor (p.120).

Chapter 4, 5 and 7 are very much related, and deal with three main characteristics of the Sudanese bourgeoisie:

1. The social composition (immigrants and indigenous), the geographical origin and the scale of capital accumulation is lively illustrated through ‘individual case histories’ (chapter 4): some started as merchants, some already belonged to the dominant pre-capitalist ruling houses, and, the western Sudan seems to have produced a good number of ragged-trousered merchants who later transformed themselves into thriving, prosperous capitalists. (It is interesting to note that 27 per cent of the 100 richest Sudanese businessmen are illiterate — Table 5, p.196). Here one encounters some very dynamic and astute capitalists fully atuned to the work of Mammon.

Undoubtedly they were the major beneficiaries of independence. In the post-colonial period they fully transformed themselves into a cohesive bourgeoisie. The state was a powerful asset in extended accumulation. The bourgeoisie went into all sectors of capitalist activity — agrarian, industrial, commercial, financial, etc.

A fascinating fact emerges from the case histories: in contrast to the diversity and disparity of their social origins, years of common and compulsive poaching —
and success — in capital accumulation has now been consummated in the bedroom: a network of business partnerships further cemented by conjugal relations (pp.76-79). A common religious profession — Islam — and the privileges the latter bestows on the affording Macho have further rendered the bourgeoisie more cohesive. (Given the dynamism of Sudanese capitalists, the constitution of bourgeois capitals as social capital is of considerable significance for capitalist development in the Sudan. The author, contrary to her evidence, seriously underestimates this potential.)

2. The result of decades of, for some puritanical, accumulation is their current developed, enriched bourgeois social being — education, health, housing and nutrition (chapter 5). These capitalists have carved out their own la dolce vita ‘comparable in many respects to that of their counterparts in Europe.’ The other face, the mirror image of their enriched bourgeois social being is the social immiseration of the dominated classes — their starvation wages, derelict cottages, bidonvilles, illiteracy . . . The best way of summarising this fascinating chapter is to say that early Victorian capitalist society is alive and well in the Sudan.

One Sudanese capitalist, speaking for his class, stated to the author: ‘Education is now as important as politics for a Sudanese businessman’ (p.110). And, consequently: of the 5,000 Sudanese pursuing education in Britain, ‘less than 1,700 are government scholars, the rest studying privately’ (p.107). For a sense of proportion: ‘The minimum cost of private education is about £3,000 per annum in England and somewhat more in the United States. The cost of educating one member of a family in England is equivalent to 100 times the annual per capita income in the Sudan’ (p. 109).

Finally, the political history and the knack for politics of the Sudanese bourgeoisie are discussed in chapter 7. That bourgeoisie, fully-fledged and dynamic as it is, is directly engaged in politics: 84 per cent of the cases studied belonged to one of three bourgeois parties; the remaining 16 per cent ‘either pro-government or did not disclose’ (pp.143, 144): the difference between these parties being more of degree of conservation than anything substantial. In the face of an organisationally resilient communist party and political developments in the region, the Sudanese bourgeoisie is instituting the sharia regime. Moreover, these bourgeois personalities are not mere bona fide members of their respective parties: they are the founders and constitute the leaderships. And, furthermore: ‘In addition to their party affiliations, the businessmen studied also had varied relationships with the state apparatus: 78 per cent of the cases studied knew present ministers and deputy ministers personally; 32 per cent were found to be close friends of ministers and prominent army officers during various periods since 1956: 8 per cent were members of minister’s families; 8 per cent had influence in banks, either through membership of the boards of directors or through members of their families working in banks; 8 per cent had partnerships with ex-ministers or employed them as senior executives in their establishments’ (p.144).

What does it take to overthrow such a tough, cohesive and developed bourgeoisie?

II

Social biography of the bourgeoisie as a class is the greatest forte of the book.
Some of the limitations also derive from this approach. Indeed, Fatima says a great deal about the bourgeoisie but a great deal less about the development of capitalism as such: capital formation and capitalism are not one and the same thing. Reading the book one cannot fail to be impressed by the achievements of the bourgeoisie in the Sudan, but is not so sure about the extent of capitalist development in that country. The latter requires a different approach and a different conceptualisation.

The book lacks a systematic conceptualisation of the state — both colonial and post-colonial. The consequences of this: the significant role of the post-colonial state in the capitalist transformation of the Sudan is underplayed; the discussion of post-independent Sudanese class politics is superficial. Furthermore, the cavalier treatment of by far the most burning source of internal political crisis — the regional ‘Southern’ question — makes it the most superficial aspect of the whole study. The absence of any coherent account of the ecology and demography of the Sudan is further illustrative of the social biographical approach of the book: the only map is helpful only in locating place names mentioned in the text. In short, it is in the course of a marvellous survey of the origins and development of indigenous capital that the author expresses certain assumptions on categories of the Sudanese social formation — capitalism, non-capitalist relations, etc. It is to these assumptions, though nowhere rendered explicit, that we now turn.

Contrary to her declaration, the author does not ‘delineate’ her concepts. There are only formal definitions — social class (Lenin), mode of production (Laclau), ‘development’, herculean but futile attempts to distinguish between ‘economic growth’ and ‘economic development’, assumptions about ‘development and underdevelopment’... The unconceptualised discourse of the author as to what constitutes capitalist society is best and most strikingly illustrated in her eclectic usage of mutually contradictory sources — Ernesto Laclau and Gunder Frank. She employs both with equanimity, damping down the significant differences between them.

The debate between the two deals with major and distinct issues — the logic and nature of capitalism as a mode of production, and the actual history of capitalism in a given social formation (including the exogenous forces). These two should not be confounded. This is not at all clear from Fatima’s analysis. Her assertive characterisation of the Sudanese social formation is derived from the fact of a capitalist ruling class. Nowhere does she expatiate on her understanding of capitalism. Such understanding cannot be assumed or taken on trust. The supposed dominance of the CMP in the Sudan is discussed, actually itemised through the market and money relations that somehow conjoin the capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production and the increasing cleavage, disparity between rural and urban areas. Urbanisation, markets and money relations... plus... an able social biography of the bourgeoisie do not add up to capitalism. They are the pre-conditions of the development of capitalism. While legitimately attacking one shibboleth, Fatima propounds another one: she rightly rejects dualism but claims that the Sudan is a fully integrated social formation without giving us the supporting analysis.

To show, in materialist analysis, the dominance of the CMP in the Sudan one has to conceptualise capitalism, show the formation of an integrated capitalist internal market — its demographic, spatial and structural relations. In other
words, how generalised commodity production, more specifically the CMP, has displaced, dissolved, transformed the non- and pre-capitalist relations and the dynamic — actual and prospective — 'co-existence' between modes of production.

Fatima, while adopting Laclau's formulation of what constitutes a mode of production, overlooks his more important conceptual category of 'economic system' and, moreover, the relationship between the two categories — in other usages, the relationship between mode/s of production and social formation. Laclau puts us on the right track when he chides a certain Marxist current of thought for failing to move 'simultaneously' at the level of modes of production and at that of economic systems, and that its most frequent mistakes derive from a unilateral use of one or other of the two levels.'

Nonetheless there is no difference between, say, the young Engels' The Condition of the Working Class in England and Fatima's study on the Sudanese bourgeoisie as far as what capitalism engenders. The disciple lacks the consistency and coherence of the Master. The key word in her very first sentence is a metaphor for socialism and equality: 'It is banal but nonetheless true to say that the overriding concern of Third World countries is development'. Her borrowed 'Frankish' definition of development is too vague. One can read it as a metaphor for socialism or as a populist conception of 'development', or in strict materialist discourse it could be made compatible with capitalist social development. On occasion she sounds more a radical populist than Marxist. Criticising the alleged failure of state investment policy to entice foreign capital, Fatima writes:

A more common feature of this legislation was the presumption that economic development can be achieved by inviting local and foreign capitalists to invest ... Moreover, the concession did not specify in which rural areas capitalists should invest ... The concept of development used in these acts seemed identical to that of growth. The idea was absent that economic development in a country like the Sudan might be implemented within an overall plan specifically aimed at developing the less developed regions of the country and setting down the number and nature of the desired investment schemes and the priorities of their location (pp.67-68).

Here we have vagueness of expression. Terms like 'growth' or 'underdevelopment' and 'development' are apparently used as metaphors for capitalism and socialism respectively. The Table (p.69) illustrates the global advantages to the US of foreign capital investment and not the 'underdevelopment' of the Sudan. Furthermore, the above quotation is arrestingly ambiguous: it falsely indicts the bourgeois state for pursuing, of all things, capitalist interests! It imposes an illusory demand on capitalism — the adoption of a planned economy to level regional disparity.

Capitalism is transforming production relations in the Sudan, deepening social differentiation and regional disparity. Classes are formed and transformed — the enriched development of bourgeois social being and the immiseration of the social being of the dominated classes are all inscribed in and integral to the capitalist transformation of the country. To transform the society in favour of the dominated classes one has to grasp the changes underway. If what is meant by 'economic development' as against 'economic growth/underdevelopment' is that the demands, needs and aspirations of the dominated classes cannot be fulfilled under capitalism, one has to say so. In that part of the continent Marxist militants, to be politically effective, have a lot of non-materialistic discourse to
unlearn: witness the record of the Ethiopian Left. In this respect comrade Fatima's lapses are typical of all of us.

The author's eclectic discourse on capitalism is reflected in these two illustrations:

1. After reminding us of 'the distinction between the classic form of capitalism that developed in western Europe and the forms of capitalism that developed in the Third World', she opines, 'In Europe, while exploiting the proletariat, the European bourgeoisie usually played the historical revolutionary role of massively and rapidly advancing the development of the forces of production' (p.4). It is further suggested that such a revolutionary role by the bourgeoisie 'in the Sudan, as in most Third World countries, was hampered by colonialism and neo-colonialism' (p.5).

The Communist Manifesto in fact offers a grand celebration of capitalism as such — the civilisation that would create the material and class foundations to realise the socialist project. The trail of devastation — the famine and evictions — in the course of the constitution of the capitalist system was revolutionary and welcome. It dissolved everything that was solid, slow-paced and patriarchal of pre-capitalist societies. Wherever the system does this — 1840s Europe or post-colonial Sudan — it's welcome.

Marx and Engels' celebration of the contribution of the bourgeoisie fully applies to capitalist Sudan as well, and with even greater significance — the rule of the Sudanese bourgeoisie being reckoned in scarce three decades: 2½ cheers for the Sudanese bourgeoisie which, 'while exploiting the proletariat' is indeed playing a historically limited, provisional revolutionary role of 'massively and rapidly advancing the development of the forces of production'. The real and complete revolution depends on the mobilisation of the dominated classes against capitalism.

To fight capitalism in the Sudan one need not deny, indeed one ought to recognise, its achievements. Its relative development — material and class relations — has made its overthrow possible: factories, plantations, villas . . . to nationalise. Is the Sudanese CP poised to play the role of what Engels called 'the hangman' of capitalism?

2. Though her own study shows an impressive, essentially national bourgeoisie, she nevertheless forces a condemnatory characterisation on it — 'comprador'. This non sequitur is directly tied to her conception of capitalism, equating it with 'underdevelopment' — a term she nowhere explains. The potentials of capitalist development is, if anything, underestimated.

Her characterisation of the bourgeoisie, like her 'economic growth', 'economic development' has a streak of a populist attitude to capitalism. It is wonderful that she indicts what she calls the 'comprador' bourgeoisie for pursuing capitalist interests:

The research undertaken suggests that among the capitalists studied the term 'national' is not applicable. Both the established entrepreneurs and those newly recruited from the state bureaucracy were motivated by capitalist interests rather than national considerations. This was expressed politically through their party affiliations and the positions they took in the political struggle throughout the period under study (p.46).

What are 'national considerations'? For the bourgeoisie the pursuit of capitalist
interests and 'national considerations' are one and the same — coeval. The political history of the Sudanese bourgeoisie — their co-existence with colonial rule — is not an argument for characterising the current ruling class as 'comprador'. The author seems to be oppressed by the excruciatingly reactionary political biography of the leading magnates of the Sudanese bourgeoisie. In the pursuit of class politics they have created parties — of course right-wing. But to characterise them as 'comprador', 'un-national' is to resort to aesopian language. Moreover, when one analyses the formation and transformation of social classes one should not be burdened by continuum: one should grasp the break. However much that bourgeoisie is composed of well-known personalities/families of pre-capitalist origin, this has very little significance in the analysis of the contemporary composition of the class. In fact, the third generation Sudanese capitalist is a more dynamic and purer capitalist than his pioneering ancestors.

The discussion (chapter 7) on the post-colonial state and the structure of politics is journalistic: the structure, ideology, constituency, alignment and dominance of the various parties in state and society are not properly examined.

The Communist Party has played a significant role in the political life of the country. Fatima's discussion of the party is, on major points, arrestingly circumspect. In the context of her political conclusions this is a severe flaw. After all and as she herself correctly suggests, the CPS is, in the Sudanese conjuncture, the Left — in any case, the decisive component of that Left. Therefore, a critical and sober examination of the history and political strategy of the party is essential in the delineation of the appropriate political strategy of revolutionary struggle in the Sudan. A circumspect attitude is most unhelpful: what is needed is lively, ruthless but responsible criticism. Unlike the frozen bigotry of the Ethiopian Left such a debate is not only essential but also possible among the Sudanese Left.

Post-colonial Sudan has undergone four major political crises — 1958, 1964, 1969, 1971; and faces a major, persistent problem of regionalism. Fatima's comments on these political crises are unilluminating:

1. In mid-1969 the military seized power in a coup successfully organised by the Free Officers Organisation. Of the 10 members of the Revolutionary Council two were communists. Of the 21 ministers that formed the Council of Ministers there were 'four well-known members of the CPS who were appointed without the consent of the Party' (p.140). The prime minister was the candidate of the Left in the election that did not take place on account of the preventive coup d'état. All political parties, including the CP, were banned.

A number of questions are left unanswered from her account. What was the relationship of political forces, the conjuncture, on the eve of the coup d'état? The composition of the coup regime seems, from her account, a net gain for the Left. However, the relationship between the party and the coup regime is obscure: the party was 'represented' by four ministers and two members of the ruling junta, and possibly more fellow travellers. Why didn't the party recall the 'gang of four'? Did they join and remain with the junta in defiance of the party? What were the positions and options of the party?

The junta soon degenerated by purging the radical and communist elements from its leadership. The response to this degeneration was the 'rectification' counter-coup staged in July 1971 by a 'group of pro-communist army officers' (p.141). The
author’s account of the defeat of this regime — it lasted a mere 72 hours — is partial and one-sided. How was it staged? What measures did it take to retain power? And what about the role of the party?

The victorious Right was ruthless in its dealing with the party as the three-day-old regime was composed of dilettantes. It was a great tragedy for the Left. The CP lost a part of its seasoned leadership — Abdel Khalig Mahjoub, the much respected and able general secretary and others were executed in prison.

2. Since then under the carapace of a gangster bourgeois regime capitalism has made further inroads into the Sudan. For the Sudanese Left the crisis of 1971 is too tragic, too grim to be glossed over. It is an experience that ought to be properly assessed and the lessons drawn.

Fatima’s conclusion is explicit: ‘the strategy advocated recently by the Communist Party of the Sudan is misconceived. In considering the whole of the Sudanese capitalist class as a “national bourgeoisie” the CPS overlooks the fact that there is no contradiction between the interests of the capitalists studied and those of foreign capital’ (pp.151:152). The difference between the two strategies is not however, that significant: Fatima does not reject alliance with the national bourgeoisie. Whereas the party apparently considers the ‘whole of the capitalist class’ as belonging to the national bourgeoisie, Fatima excludes the big bourgeoisie from that classification and sees them as a ‘comprador and dependent bourgeoisie’. For this reason the composition of the ‘whole of the capitalist class’ deserves closer examination by the protagonists in search of the ‘real ally’.

However, an apparently explicit anti-capitalist strategy seems to have been broached by Abdel Khalig Mahjoub. His ideas, though relegated to a footnote, are approvingly cited by the author:

In his 1970-71 prison notes, the former secretary of the CPS... discussed the question of the democratic alliance briefly, and clearly stated that the alliance does not include big capitalists but only the petty bourgeoisie (handicrafts) and small industrialists and retail traders. He clearly stated that the democratic revolution necessitates the eventual liquidation of capitalist relations. These notes were circulated in 1973 as a basis for the discussion within the party as a guiding document for the programme that is to be adopted by the forthcoming Fifth Party Congress” (p.147, n.11).

Some very fundamental issues are canvassed here. If one follows the logic of this line of thought one would be spared the unnecessary detour into ‘national considerations’ ... An anti-capitalist strategy fundamentally rests not on whether the bourgeoisie is national, comprador, foreign but has to rest on the premise that the aspirations and fundamental demands of the dominated classes cannot be met under capitalism.

Here it should be stressed how the political strategy of Sudanese communists will have immense significance that goes well beyond the Sudan. They have their own experience and world revolutionary movements to assess in the delineation of appropriate revolutionary strategy.

We now come to a final major contentious issue. Fatima Babiker’s discussion of the Southern problem is the most superficial part of her book. Her discourse on ‘tribalism’ is pretty widespread among the Sudanese Left and radical, Marxisant opinion. For this reason it deserves extended commentary.
Right at the outset of independence the political conflict in the South flared up. The absence of a viable format of state and the chauvinism, perceived and real, of the dominant Arab-Islamic culture in Khartoum was resented by the Southerners. The crisis persisted for decades. A protracted armed struggle was waged by the Anyanya in the South. Finally, in 1972, a reasonably acceptable modus operandi was reached and peace was restored.

Recently two developments have upset that political arrangement causing the present recrudescence of military conflict: (1) the Khartoum regime's high-handedness in the affairs and the structure of the regional assembly in the South and the re-division of the Southern administrative constituency; (2) the introduction of Sharia Law:* despite the regime's formal and hollow attempts to allay the ingrained fear of Southerners that the writ of that repressive ecclesiastic law would be confined to the Islamic north, this has not, understandably enough, gone down well among Southerners. Hence Anyanya II. Now the political crisis of legitimacy, not merely of the regime but of the state is acute.

In fact, the Sudanese bourgeoisie is skilfully exploiting nationalist discourse: the introduction of Sharia law has popular approval in the north, though it is threatening the country with fragmentation. The record of bourgeois rule in the Sudan has hitherto been a record of crisis of state. It hasn't yet hammered out a vocation for the Sudan: committed to Islam and the Great Arab Nation, closer alliance and prospective union with the Egyptian nation-state . . . and trying to maintain the unity of the Sudan. Indeed the crisis of state is a major political issue in the Sudan.

Let us see how Fatima Babiker has approached the southern regional question. The author does not offer any coherent analysis as to how the Sudan as a territorial unit was constituted. She simply sets off from, as it were, Year One — 1898. And her discussion of regionalism is crudely economistic. If issues like the women question and regionalism were so easily reducible to class then, there are no autonomous questions to examine and accordingly no solutions to search for. Nowhere does our author discuss the nature of the post-colonial state-system as a major source of the regionalist movement — the crisis of state. Neither her class reductions nor her usage of ‘uneven development’ shed proper light on the regionalist movement. We are simply offered the following explanation:

In dealing with the southern population, most Sudanese and foreign scholars have been concerned mainly with the ethnic and the racial composition of the south. For an analysis from a political economy perspective, while not disregarding the importance of the racial minority question, the most important issue is not the Southerners as racial beings but as productive beings. It is the process of capital accumulation that created the conditions for uneven development between the two regions. The separatist policy enforced under colonial rule was only a manifestation of one factor of this process (p.28).

Others might be guilty of apparently undue concentration on the ‘ethnic and racial composition’ but her ‘political economy perspective’ (whatever this is) is a

---

*In the wake of this law militant Muslim fundamentalists were running amock: graffiti declaring war on ‘communists and christians’ appeared in Khartoum. The Sharia now used in defence of bourgeois property: shop-lifting has already cost the amputation of limbs. The poverty that capitalism engenders and the desperation it drives its victims to have become objects of hollow moral platitudes.
non-political, crude economism. Furthermore, the colonial power might have pursued a 'separatist policy' but what is the record of the post-colonial regimes in overcoming inherited 'separation'?

The regional question cannot be 'solved' by concessions and palliative state expenditure. It has to be tackled as a political question and requires a viable state-system. Yes, the 'uneven development' of capitalism has resulted in the migration of labour from south to north; it has also sent the rebellious and politically minded into the bush. This question illustrates how the Sudan is as far from being a materially and politically integrated social formation. It will be a great tragedy for the dominated classes in the Sudan if the regional conflict were to persist for lack of a viable state system. The position of the Communist Party on this question will determine its political image and fortune in the South: it has yet to win the confidence of the people in that region.

Fatima's terms — 'tribes', 'tribalism', uneven development' — dodge the political aspect of the question. Furthermore, her discourse is reflective of her source. Mafeje's piece is positively questioning, but only offers the pre-condition for the creation of appropriate discourses. While legitimately questioning the relevance of 'tribe' and 'tribalism' to Africa, he still sustains their usage — unable to replace these terms by alternative conceptual categories.* It was merely Mafeje's insistence on class analysis that captivated Fatima and not the substantial ambivalence of his discourse. The theoretical demolition work on 'tribe' and 'tribalism' has yet to be undertaken.

The uncertain discourse of Mafeje and Fatima's views are not exceptional. Marxist opinion in Africa hasn't yet tackled the issue.* The so-called 'tribal' question has immense significance in the structure and conduct of politics not only in Africa but the world over.

Over the last decade a lively and fruitful debate on the post-colonial state and social formation in Africa has taken place. It is high time that the full significance of the 'tribal' question was raised.** Mafeje's plea for universalism can be adequately met through a proper and nuanced extension of the rich Marxist legacy on the question.

It is on the basis of this legacy that the Communist Party of the Sudan is called upon to analyse thoroughly the roots and character of the raging nationalist and regionalist movements in that part of the continent, and propound political

---

*Archie Mafeje, 'The Ideology of 'Tribalism', Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.9, p.2 (1971). See his definitions of 'tribe' and 'tribalism' ibid. 259-59. The most he could say is that 'regionalism' is displacing 'tribalism' and the need to combine 'regional particularism' and class formation in any analysis (p.261).


**Despite the fetishistic aspect of the debate the question of nationalities is better posed in Ethiopia. The alleged Marxism of the various leaderships of the regionalist and nationalist movements has assured them carte blanche, uncritical support by radical and Marxisant commentators: the latter's support of nationalism in multi-national Ethiopia and their pursuit of the chimera of 'tribalism' in the rest of Africa is part of the crisis in theoretical discourse.
positions befitting of Marxists.

This review has tried to show the major and significant flaws of *The Sudanese Bourgeoisie: Vanguard of Development?* However, our criticism does not deter us from underlining the importance of Fatima Babiker's contribution. It is a serious work that deserves critical discussion by Marxist militants. It is work of this nature and the criticism it invites that advances political struggle. You cannot beat a theoretically informed concrete analysis of a concrete situation. A genuine revolutionary Marxist movement should always strive to overcome the hiatus between theory and politics — but not by crudely politicising theory.

Addis Hiwet

* * *

**Whither Paradigm?**


This book represents a whole generation of interdisciplinary Marxist and radical development studies. In the generation's heyday in the mid-'70s, Aidan Foster-Carter triumphantly declared it to represent the new 'paradigm'. In many people's eyes, the authority of this radical framework, replaced the capitalist and racist oriented modernisation theory. But this book also, in a broad sense, reflects the politics of *The Review of African Political Economy*; which, as if to bear out Foster-Carter's announcement, started in 1974. Though the *Review* did not initiate the new era, it consistently contributed towards it. Lastly, the book celebrates not just a period of radical social analysis, but also the social history of those involved.

Thus, in these various ways, by attempting to compile a textbook of this material, Allen and Williams also uniquely illustrate this paradigm. In that case, I shall briefly reflect on the contribution made by radicals in their analysis of other societies. The new position is thus formulated in the *Review's* first issue (p.1):

This review is published with the express intent of providing a counter-weight to that mass of literature which holds: that Africa's continuing chronic poverty is primarily an internal problem not a product of her colonial and her present dependence.

By this statement, the *Review* broke tradition with the previous ways of viewing Africa. In the 1850s David Livingstone thought colonialism, capitalism and christianity was what Africans needed. In 1950, modernisation theorists agreed. They argued that all three confront and defeat retrogressive African traditions. They were convinced that the combined influences of 'rational' colonial administration and a protestant ethic would engender into traditional societies a capitalist achievement orientation. This orientation would lead to capitalist modernisation, to modern science and technology and to universalism; all of which would drag Africans into a modern and better world.

**Enters the New Paradigm**

Radicals helped to discredit modernisation theory, by showing that their arguments had a class interest and that they were disingenuous and ineffective. In their place they promised socialism as a real alternative to imperialism. They
argued that African people would not increase their standards of living by inviting in Western capitalism. Quite the contrary, the Third World was historically underdeveloped and is now impoverished by capitalist exploitation. Similarly, the radicals recognised that while this exploitation was capitalist, it was also regional, where profits from one part of the world consistently flowed to another.

Thus, in the aftermath of the colonial struggles of the 1950s and early 1960s, Foster-Carter’s announcement seem to once again be borne out by the way that young people from all parts of the Third World sought after Marxist and radical academics to supervise their post-graduate and development theses. They hoped that the radicals would show them the way forward. They were flattered by the radical endorsement of their past and continuing colonial and anti-imperialist struggles. They were encouraged by the open, critical and academic legitimation that progressive Western intellectuals gave to their countries’ experiments. They welcomed the socialist alternative which politically suited them and correctly identified their concerns. But these students were also impressed by the socialist arguments because they brought with them an intellectual excitement of the post-Stalinist era. An excitement which incorporated student radicalism of 1968 and the writings of Third World revolutionaries like Mao, Castro, Cabral, Fanon, Che. At this time appeared an enormous amount of socialist material about the Third World, which most of us hungrily and gratefully absorbed. Allen’s and Williams’ book must be viewed within this historical background and must be understood as an attempt to retrospectively compile a selection which captures those challenging arguments and represents their excitement.

The Review and the New Era
The analytical theme of many of the radicals is aptly represented in the first editorial statement of the Review:

We must comprehend African reality at a number of levels . . . not simply see Africa as the reflection of imperialism . . . the dynamic of African societies (is) . . . a complex result of internal and external forces which distort and limit the development of the forces of production and capitalism.

Interdisciplinary development studies radicals thus dissociate themselves both from modernisation theory and from Stalinism. They recognise the role that imperialism plays in the Third World but they also recognise that Third World men and women, classes, societies, are not passive absorbers of change; nor are they passive objects of analysis. Allen’s and Williams’ book too, strongly represents this approach. It is clear that this is their strategy by their selection of material. They include sections on peasants, women, urban poor, and millenarianism. The piece by Meillassoux precisely discusses the relationship between capitalist relations and indigenous trade; which by no means was thought to proceed in a particular programmatic direction. Similarly, Williams’ own excellent essay and Cohen’s crisply describe the various ways in which peasants and urban poor take charge of their lives and protect themselves against attacks by international imperialism and the state. Others too, in one way or another recognise the tension between ‘internal and external forces’. Again, the paradigm and the Review (No.3, p.2) reject Marxist reductionism and capital logic which tend to emphasise external influences:

Productivity for independent and self-centred growth can be released only where the mass of
people are willing to mobilise themselves, and this they will be willing to do only with non-exploitative forms of social organisation.

But the Review editorial also insists that internal forces must be aware of imperialism, must fight and if possible defeat imperialism.

The great victories won by Indo-China peoples and by peoples of Portugal's African colonies, have proved once again that the people's revolutionary war alone can break the power of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Change that takes place there, as much involves what there is, as what is done to what there is. Thus the destiny of the Third World quite largely depends on the action of its people against imperialism. Allen and Williams represent this view by their selection. But if the book reflects the general politics of the paradigm and of the Review, it similarly reproduces many of their difficulties too.

Conflict Within
In the Review as much as in the book there seems to be a general assumption that the mere mention of these two aspects of Marxist theory, the confluence of internal and external forces, achieves the required theoretical balance for analysis and strategy. While most people do recognise this not to be the case, many of the essays in the Sub-Sahara Africa and the Review do not appear to radically recognise that such placement rather than reflecting editorial coherence, realistically reflects its theoretical difficulties.

The intention is of course not simply to study Africa 'as the reflection of imperialism'. These writers try to avoid capital logic, which presents Africans as passive objects of study. Instead they present people of Africa as dynamic makers of their history. And yet, a number of articles consistently suggest that, for example, the Tanzanian petty-bourgeoisie not only exploits the peasants but in fact its own historical role is to serve international capital. Without wanting to deny it that role, its function in a modern African state is clearly more complicated than that. It is difficult to sharply separate out bureaucratic and mass interest in many of the Third World countries. The context is diverse and ambiguous. For example, in Nicaragua or Cuba, bureaucrats who clearly exploit peasant surplus, also co-ordinate the national and the class struggle. In these conditions it is sometimes hazardous to dogmatically polarise class and nation. People often trip up in this way because they have not actually worked out to their own satisfaction, how the internal forces relate to the external ones. Thus, with the same stroke, they deny that peasants control their destiny and return to absurd arguments about fractions of capital.

It is necessary to recognise clearly this internal conflict, not for academic but for political reasons. For a return to capital logic has serious implications for analysis and strategy. In that situation African resistance becomes unimportant. Internal forces and struggles are reduced to corruption, or the misbehaviour of bureaucrats; the lack of development is blamed on that misbehaviour. In these analyses African leaders always appear as corrupt or stupid. They are rarely analysed as confronting crushing imperialism. Take for example Cohen's article which gives a detailed account of Third World resistance and success against capitalism only to conclude (p.131) that they show a 'lower level of consciousness but can be seen as part of an incremental chain leading towards a "higher" more politicised, form'. Or Hodgkin, who first gives a detailed account of popular resistance of Mahdist movements and then patronisingly discusses them as
utopian when compared to Marxism (p.99-100). There were other examples too, the most notable being the essay by Wim van Binsebegen (p.101).

The consequence of such analysis would not be to radicalise the peasants or the working classes in Africa against their leaders and bureaucrats, as so many radicals immodestly believe. The consequence is to discredit those leaders. This way of seeing African leaders is not dissimilar to the way in which union leaders are perceived by radicals in Britain. In both cases, capitalist exploitation is blamed either on their non-revolutionary activities, or their reformist compromises, or simply their corruption. But by concentrating our analysis on these kind of issues, we are in fact making two errors. The first error is we make union leaders and African leaders responsible for capitalist exploitation. Secondly, we forget the ambiguous nature of the petty-bourgeoisie in Africa, and our own role as petty-bourgeois (in the exploitation of both the British working-class and the African peasants) in Britain. It sometimes appears that these accounts lose sight of the main enemy, which I believe to be the international bourgeoisie and imperialism. Clearly, no-one is looking to stop radicals from criticising trade union leaders and African leaders, that is not the point. But it should be proportional to the more important issues which concern us.

I do not mean to imply that there has been no soul searching about these matters before. Such debates never end, and various responses are the result. Some analysts deliberately ‘turned inward’ back into European traditions and concerns, either by once again adopting modernisation theory or by ‘going back’ to Capital. The solutions that I favour are those recently adopted by the Review (Nos. 20, 26, and the issue on women). In all three there has been a drift of editorial control from being didactic — if my previous arguments about internal conflict stand — to ‘dialectical’; where there is more of a two-way system with those of the Third World. I fear no such attempt was made (apart from pieces on women) by the editors of Sub-Sahara Africa.

Thus, I think that firstly, the book is the poorer for being ‘expatriate’. By missing out African writers the editors are not only increasing the ambiguity of their role as experts of the Third World, they are actually missing the information and the perspective they could have got from those writers. As it is (I say unfortunately) the book appears as if radical intellectuals from imperialist countries are once again lecturing Africans or at best lecturing about Africans. Furthermore, if they included African writers, or even better Sub-Saharan African writers, they would quite likely have been more successful in avoiding Eurocentric theory; which would probably have also allowed us to see more clearly how Africans themselves deal with imperialism and how they struggle amongst themselves. Discussions about corruption, then, would have appeared less voyeuristic and more an account of a struggle.

It would not do to suggest that such writers are scarce, given that the discipline itself is built on the work of Third World revolutionaries. Can we not find new ones because revolutions and struggles have stopped, or have our attitudes changed? But even when there are no obvious candidates, it is then up to Allen and Williams to find them.

Second, obviously the idea of compiling a general textbook would be very good, if there were not so many collections already easily available and if the essays they used were not equally as easily available in longer versions. Perhaps such a
compilation as theirs would have been more useful if it contained some significant essays of old, with a number of new essays which are evaluative, critical, or discursive. As it is, the book — even as a textbook — does not seem to have any clear theme or objectives and what there is fails to captivate the excitement of that period.

Third, such a book could have provided an interesting contemporary social and political history of Foster-Carter's paradigm, by perhaps answering the rhetorical question posed as the title of this review.

I shall conclude by answering my own rhetorical question 'whither paradigm'? The radicals will survive as such if they continue to ensure that (1) they do not get sucked back into homely but often racist axioms of Western philosophical thought, either of the Left or of the Right; (2) the best way to ensure that is by not only re-working our concepts, but also by examining our social practices. Progressive intellectuals in imperialist countries can really contribute to Third World struggles against imperialism by making room for Third World people to speak for themselves. It is by listening to them criticise each other in the way they understand their class and social conflicts that we can learn from them. In short, we need to listen to the way they define their problems and how they suggest to deal with them. This does not preclude Western intellectuals from debating with them on various issues, but it does perhaps call on those intellectuals to show a little more modesty and be a little less didactic in those debates. In the last analysis it is the Africans who face and struggle with imperialism there. It is they who are daily engaged in imperialist wars and suffer famines. Western intellectuals can engage with them about what they are doing, but they cannot lecture them about how to do it, because they don't know the half of it. For the Third World the situation is a difficult one. They welcome Left intellectuals as allies, but they also recognise them as part of that system which oppresses them. Any future direction this paradigm takes, radicals should remember that.

Ahmed Gurnah

* * *

We are grateful to Ahmed Gurnah for reviewing Sub-Saharan Africa, which we edited. We are surprised that he identifies the book with 'the politics of the Review of African Political Economy'. Although we are proud to have been editors of the Review since its inception, we did not think its politics to have been so singularly coherent that our own choices of material, or anyone else's, could reflect it. We only included one item from the Review itself. Nevertheless, in his own review of our book, Gurnah quotes more extensively from the Review than from the book, so that it is not always clear which he is referring to.

Apparently we (the editors, our contributions, the Review, its contributors?) '... sometimes ... lose sight of the main enemy' which Gurnah believes to be 'the international bourgeoisie and imperialism'. Oddly, this view reflects just that paradigm with which the author identifies the founding of the Review. Of course, neither the Review nor our book have restricted ourselves to contributions sharing this paradigm. In particular, as Gurnah says of our book, we have been concerned to show how African peasants, workers, women, and even the African bourgeoisies have acted to shape developments and resist subjugation. African
governments clearly do bear some responsibility for the consequences of their policies for the people of the countries they govern. This is as true for Tanzania as it is for Nigeria or South Africa, none of whose governments merely 'serve international capital', as Gurnah himself points out of Tanzania, and none of whom, with the arguable exception of South Africa, meet the needs of international capital very well. The main enemy may well be 'the international bourgeoisie and imperialism', even if it did not appear that way to most Nigerians in 1983. Whether or not this is in general true seems to be a matter of belief. We take the view expressed by our late comrade, Ruth First in The Barrel of a Gun:

For many, the indictment should not be of Africans, whatever their record, but of the outside forces responsible, ultimately, for the plight of the continent. That indictment stands. It cannot be framed too often. But that approach, too, on its own, is a form of patronage; for it makes the African ever victim, never perpetrator.

Gurnah says that 'this book is the poorer for being expatriate' and that we should have found 'Sub-Saharan African writers'. In selecting items we tried to produce a coherent selection of writings which both described and helped to explain the experiences of people in African societies. We did not choose according to the nationality of the authors. As it happens, a number of contributors, apart from the editors themselves are from Africa — Brett, Marks, Trapido, Cohen, Mubanga, van Onselen, Gorden, O'Meara and Dudley. The majority, like Gurnah, are teaching in academic institutions in the UK, though others are working in Maputo and Johannesburg. Most of them are white. Perhaps that is what he is objecting to?

Chris Allen and Gavin Williams

* * *

* * *
Current Africana 27


This number of Current Africana consists entirely of theses, which have been omitted from recent listings. Almost all English-language theses, but only certain others, can be obtained through University libraries, on inter-library loan; the number cited beneath the author’s name will be needed by the borrowing library. Abstracts are available for most American (and some other) dissertations, in Dissertations Abstracts International (DAI), Series A; a reference to this is given where appropriate.

B. THESES

1,2 GENERAL, GENERAL AFRICA

1. Dobson, A
   A study of inflation in South and East Africa, M.Sc., Bath, 1977

2. Delroy, S H

3. Janus, CG
   The establishment and adaptation of primarily British-influenced universities in West and North Africa. Oxford, 1980, 435pp

4. Cunliffe, S A
   The politics of international economic aid to independent Africa. Liverpool, 1982, 412pp

5. Saasa, O S
   The control of transnational corporations in . . . Tanzania and Zambia. Southampton, 1982, 460pp

6. Ngayap, P

7. Forner, C

8. Youssif, M
   La cooperation arabo-africaine: mecanismes et problematique. Mem. DEA, Bordeaux-IEP, 1981, 155pp

9. Belias, N

10. Ziemer, K
    Poltische Parteien in frankophonen Afrika. Heidelberg, 1977, 325pp

11. Koulatoloum, P
    La cooperation militaire entre la France et les etats africains et malgache d’expression francaise. Paris 1, 1979, 278pp

12. Masolo, D A
    The development of philosophical discussion in Africa. Gregorian Univ, Rome, 1980, 245pp

13. Nouaille-Degorge, B

14. Ebongolo, V
    L’Afrique noire et l’etat d’Israel. 3eme cycle, Bordeaux-CEAN, 1980, 234pp

15. Otayek, R W
    La politique africaine de la Libye du 1.9.69. 3eme cycle, Bordeaux: CEAN, 1980, 281pp

16. Mouanga-Mbadinga, J V
    Societe africaine, violence et ideologies. 3eme cycle, Paris 10, 1981

17. Mvogo, D
    Problematique de la militarisation des regimes politiques en Afrique (Benin, Congo, Togo, Zaïre). Clermont 1, 1981

18. Faure, Y A
    De l’edification institutionelle a la construction de l’etat en Afrique noire postcoloniale. 3eme cycle, Bordeaux 1, 1982

19. Decraene, P
    Bilan de deux decennies d’indépendances africaines. Paris 11, 1982

20. Adebo, T
    Ideological trends in the political thinking of . . . sub-saharan Africa. Lund, 1982, 205pp
21 Mintah, J
Le syndicalisme et ses effets en Afrique. 3eme cycle, Paris 8, 1982

22 Ngoy Nduba, K
Le principe de l'intangibilité des frontières africaines issues de la colonisation. Reims, 1982

23 Sandaogo, B
Les conflits de frontières en Afrique. Poitiers, 1982

24 Rochlin, J F

25 Wilson, E J
The politics of energy parastatals in Zaire and Nigeria. Berkeley, 1978

26 Omoka, W K
Structural and cultural aspects of a social science dependency in Africa. Kent State, 1980, 189pp; DAI, 41,8 (1981) 3750

27 Miller, J D

28 Osia, K

29 Williams, M W

30 Kaloko, Z A
Economic cooperation of subsaharan Africa. Maryland, 1980, 266pp; DAI, 42,8 (1982) 3673

31 Gerrard, C D

32 Lokulutu, B M

33 Onyefulu, T O
'Eurafrica': neocolonialism or interdependence. Florida SU, 1982, 673pp; DAI, 43,6 (1982) 2061

34 Traxler, E E
French relations with francophone Africa in the postcolonial era. S. Carolina, 1982, 579pp; DAI, 43,7 (1983) 2446

35 Olou, S Lo

36 Abudu, P B

37 Anthony, C G
The transfer of agricultural technology to East Africa: international organisations and the politics of mechanisation and Maize. Berkeley, 1982, 333pp; Ibid., 2782

38 Robbins, C A

39 Martin, G

40 Auma Osolo, A

41 Said M el S

42 Gerstein, I
The periods of capitalism: a contribution to the marxist theory of imperialism. Brandeis, 1983, 397pp; Ibid., 1221

43 Levy, B D

44 Philipp, G
3. WEST AFRICA (see also 50, 135)

47 Coulibaly, V La philosophie africaine et le marxisme dans l’expérience de la construction de la socialisme en Ghana et Guinee. 3eme cycle, Paris 1, 1979
48 Williams, J E S The educated and professional elite in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone 1885-1914. UCLA, 1980, 176pp; DAI, 41,8 (1981) 3689

3a. NIGERIA (see also: 25, 43, 277)

52 Musa, B F U Changing strategies in Nigeria’s development policies. M.Sc., Swansea, 1980
56 Ekwueme, A I Nigerian housing policy. Strathclyde, 1978, 698pp
57 Onah, F The impact of direct foreign investment in the Nigerian economy 1961-73. Liverpool, 1979
58 Karshi, S S The impact of the tin mining industry and the need for planning (in Jos). Liverpool, 1979
59 Anikpo, M Ibo ethnic identification in Jos. Cambridge, 1979, 373pp
60 Clarke, R J M Agricultural production in a rural Yoruba community. London, 1979
63 Schiltz, M Rural-urban migration in Igenina: the changing relations of production in an agricultural community in NW Yorubaland. London, 1980, 211pp
66 Wardle, W A A history of BCGA 1902p39, w.s.r.t. its operations in N Nigeria. Birmingham, 1980
68 Abudu, F F Analysis of income distribution in W Nigeria. Liverpool, 1980
69 Ubeku, A K
D 44297/83

70 Fashoyin, O
D 39315/82
The political economy of inflation and incomes policy in Nigeria. Sussex, 1981, 379pp

71 Ekpenyong, S
The small scale labour force in Port Harcourt and Calabar. Birmingham, 1981

72 Karanja
D 44297/83

73 Chapman, N
D 70419/81

74 Odejide, A F
D 38638/81

75 Ahiazu, A I

76 Sola Kasim, A
D 45450/83

77 Abbije Suku, B
D 48850/84

78 Elegalam, P O
D 42564/82
The oil industry in the development of the Nigerian economy. 1958-77. Bath, 1982, 523pp

79 Lawal, O O
D 49999/84
Professionalism in Nigerian leadership since 1948. Loughborough, 1983, 679pp

80 Brynin, C M
D 48323/84
Conflict and communication: class and ethnic bases of conflict and the mass media in Pakistan and Nigeria. City Univ., 1983, 525pp

81 Hafeez, C A
The role of trade unions and developing countries, w.s.r.t. Pakistan, India and Nigeria. Free Univ., Berlin, 1978, 321pp

82 Onyuku, W A

83 Wewe, N
Die Miarbeit Nigerias in den Vereinten Nationen als Indikator fuer sein Aussenverhalten. Salzburg, 1980, 528pp

84 Okowa, W S

85 Nwokedi, O C
Les relations du Nigeria avec les pays francophones voisins. Mem. DEA, Bordeaux, 1980, 109pp

86 Nwokedi, O C

87 Idode, J B
Bureaucracy's role in rural development in Nigeria: Bendel State. Carleton, 1979

88 Ekekwe, E N
Class formation and the changing structure of the state in Nigeria. Carleton, 1980; DAI, 41,10 (1981) 4484

89 Nwabugwuochu, A

90 Fakolade, A A
Policy development in urban and regional planning in Metropolitan Lagos. Waterloo, 1982; DAI, 43,9 (1983) 3135

91 Shenton, R W
The development of capitalism in N Nigeria. Toronto, 1982; DAI, 43,12 (1983) 4003

92 Ozo Eson, P I

93 Fasehun, O
Nigerian politics and the roles of Nigeria in the OAU 1962-76. Rutgers, 1979

94 Oni, S B

95 Obong, S I


Consociationism as an approach to political integration: Nigeria. Tulane, 1980, 293pp; Ibid., 4821


Transportation development in Nigeria 1884-1975. Cornell, 1980, 250pp; Ibid., 5267


US policy towards Nigeria 1960-78. Wisconsin, 1980, 452pp; Ibid., 842

Nigerian relations with the US. Catholic Univ., 1981, 366pp; Ibid., 843


Resistance to change in political and administrative systems: the Nigerian experiment. S California, 1982, 259


Whelan, W P 8224490
Dike, E 8225809
Ekong, C I B 8228745
Job, T O 8228750
McCray, J H 8306917
Ogunnika, Z O 8303568
Gana, A 8307572
Utomi, P O 8308012
Oguji, O N 8311633
Agbola, S B 8315980
Nwankwo, J C 8313190
Adegboro, C 8315979
Sanusi, H O 8315965
Ihenachor, H A 8323123
Sambo, W A 8325906
Ijere, J A 8324731
Ndu, J O 8325714
Agbougu, A E 8325906
Lennihan, L D 8327251
Bendega, J T 8327179
Coles, C M 8323369
Kolawole, V A 8307572
Opia, A K U 8315980
Mba, N 8315979

Linkages in domestic policies and foreign policy behaviour. Claremont, 1982, 303pp; Ibid., 2437
Mechanisms of tension management: inter-ethnic relations in Kano City. New School, 1982, 311pp; Ibid., 3720
Nigeria and foreign monopoly capital 1966-78. Columbia, 1980,
Bureaucratic power and the public policy process. Indiana, 1982, 268pp; Ibid., 281
The pattern of MNC manufacturing investment in Nigeria. Temple, 1983, 248pp; Ibid., 222
The housebuilding industry in Osogbo. Penn, 1983, 226pp;
Agrarian policy implementation in a cocoa producing region: class relations and participation in the policy benefits. Wisconsin, 1983, 318pp; Ibid., 856
The process of implementation in Nigerian bureaucracy: the Niger River Basin Development Authority. Penn, 1983, 217pp; Ibid., 887
State and capitalist development in Nigeria. Northwestern, 1982, 629pp; Ibid., 857
The role of traditional rulers in the governance of Nigerians in the C20th (w.s.r.t. Imo State). Claremont, 1983, 155pp;
Local organisations as mechanisms for rural development in Borno State. Michigan SU, 1983, 219pp; Ibid., 2244
Community leadership: power and influence in the former Ilorin NA. M.Sc., Ahmadu Bello, 1979
Women in S Nigerian political history 1900-65. Ibadan, 1978
PUBLICATIONS 1974-1984

Number 1: Development in Africa
Number 2: Multinational Corporations
Number 3: Classes in Africa
Number 4: Class Struggle & Liberation
Number 5: The State in Africa
Number 6: Merchant Capital/Neo-Colonialism
Number 7: Special Issue on South Africa
Number 8: Capitalism in Africa
Number 9: Southern Africa
Number 10: Peasants
Number 11: Southern Africa
Number 12: Mining and Mine Labour
Number 13: Special Issue on Nigeria
Number 14: New Colonialism and Military Rule: Ghana, Zaire & Liberia

Number 15/16: The Roots of Famine
Number 17: Debate in Kenya
Number 18: Special Issue on Zimbabwe
Number 19: Consciousness & Class
Number 20: Kenya: The Agrarian Question
Number 21: Peasants, Capital & The State
Number 22: Ideology, Class & Development
Number 23: Scandinavian Perspectives on Africa
Number 14: The French Connection
Number 25: Ruth First Memorial Issue
Number 26: The Sudan
Number 27/28: Women, Oppression & Liberation
Number 29: Resistance & Resettlement
Number 30: Conflict in the Horn
Number 31: Capital vs. Labour in West Africa

ORDER FORM

Subscriptions (3 issues per year, including postage and packing)

**Individuals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 yr.</th>
<th>2 yr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK and Africa</td>
<td>£8</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>£10/US$18</td>
<td>£19/US$24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa/Elsewhere airmail</td>
<td>£16/US$29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Issues</td>
<td>£3.50/US$6 each except no.29 which is £4.50/US$7.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 yr.</th>
<th>2 yr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK and Africa</td>
<td>£14</td>
<td>£25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>£16/US$35</td>
<td>£25/US$60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa/Elsewhere airmail</td>
<td>£22/US$46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Issues</td>
<td>£6/US$12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Rate</td>
<td>£5.50/US$10 (verification needed with payment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please start/continue my sub with issue

BOOKS FROM ROAPE

(all prices include postage and packing)

Never Kneel Down: Drought, Development and Liberation in Eritrea

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£4.95/US$9.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hell Hole Robben Island: Reminiscences of a Political Prisoner

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£4.95/US$9.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behind the War in Eritrea

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£3.50/US$7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

African Socialism in Practice: Tanzania

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£2.95/US$6.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State and Society in Nigeria

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£3.25/US$7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL

Cheques (US Dollars, on US banks, International MO or Sterling cheques) payable to ROAPE, 341 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2HP, England. Phone (0742) 752671. GIRO ACCOUNT No. 64 960 4008.

Name .................................................................
Address .................................................................

.................................................................
.................................................................
.................................................................