Obituary: Comrade Thembsile ‘Chris’ Hani

On Saturday 24 April 1993, Chris Hani was gunned down by an assassin belonging to the extreme white right wing, the AWB, in the driveway of his home in the northern suburb of Johannesburg. Hani was no ordinary South African. Martin Thembsile ‘Chris’ Hani was the Secretary General of the South African Communist Party, a member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress and, until recently, Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe — the military wing of the ANC. The motive could not have been more obvious; by striking at the very heart of the ANC/SACP alliance, the right wing sought to scupper the negotiations, and most importantly reverse the apartheid time clock.

Within minutes of the assassination, the militant youths, traditionally the recruiting ground of the ANC army, fired with rage and anger at the murder of their hero, were on the streets demanding retribution, and not surprisingly, threatening to go on rampage against whites. For the next 48 hours the country teetered on the brink of a bloodbath. The prospects of a democratic South Africa so painstakingly stitched together over the last eighteen months seemed destined to collapse, and the ANC which for decades had scrupulously pursued a policy of non-racism appeared on the verge of losing the initiative to the militantly anti-white elements of the Pan-Africanist traditions.

It was a tense forty-eight hours. Ultimately the political skills and moral authority of the older generation of the ANC tipped the balance. The ANC regained control and asserted its authority, thus averting the greater danger of an all-out confrontation in which only the right stood to gain. The mass anger was thus channelled into a show of political force never before witnessed in the history of South Africa and of the ANC. In the week following the assassination, 85 memorial services were held throughout the country in Hani’s honour attended by thousands of South Africans from all walks of life. His funeral was attended by well over one million people and was not only a fitting tribute to a great leader cut down in the prime of his life, it was an extraordinary demonstration of the stature of comrade Hani and his role in the liberation struggle in South Africa.

Comrade Chris, for that was how he was known, came from very humble peasant background in rural Transkei. His family background was quite similar to that of millions of oppressed South Africans. Unlike the majority of his country men and women, he had the opportunity to go to school, Lovedale High School, and Fort Hare University where he graduated with honours at the tender age of 19. With his education and intelligence, he could have served in any capacity in the fledgling Transkei bureaucracy which like other homeland bu-
reaucracies offered the only openings to the educated African elite.

Comrade Chris, however, turned his back from the fleshpots of bantustan privilege and chose the only realistic path available to the majority of black South Africans, the struggle to liberate his country from what he termed ‘tyranny and institutionalised oppression’. He joined the ANC at 15, the South African Communist Party at 19 and a year later in 1962, joined the ANC military wing, Umkonto we Sizwe (MK). He thus straddled the three major pillars of the liberation struggle in South Africa — the nationalist movement, the Communist Party and the MK.

Comrade Chris, thus followed in the footsteps of the stalwarts of the South African revolution — Bill Andrews, Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks, Yusuf Dadoo, Flag Boshielo, Mabhida and Joe Slovo and like the generation before him he towered over the liberation struggle at a relatively youthful age. But more importantly he provided the link between the elders of the struggle and the generation of 1970s, the militant youths who filled the ranks of MK and their township counterparts who, during the township uprising of the 1980s, were to answer the ANC call to render the apartheid state ungovernable.

He became a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC at the youthful age of 22, Commissar and Deputy Commander of MK in 1987, and in December 1991, in recognition of his contribution to the liberation struggle, was elected General Secretary of the SACP. He became a household name not only in South Africa, but throughout political activists circles in Africa and the world at large. At the time of his assassination he was the most popular South African politician after Mandela.

He cut his teeth in the ‘Wankie Campaign’ as a Commissar in the Luthuli Detachment in 1967. That campaign was a costly one for the ANC; many comrades were killed, many others were captured and were to stay in Smith’s prisons until the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980. Comrade Chris and a small band of survivors, however, fought their way into Botswana and were subsequently able to return to Zambia. It was the beginning of a military and political career which was to propel him to the highest office in the Party and Umkhonto we Sizwe, serving the ANC and the oppressed South Africans to the best of his ability.

He arrived in Lesotho in 1974 and it was here where he matured as a political strategist of unrivalled talent.
within the younger generation of the ANC leadership. Two years later came the Soweto uprising and the flooding of the small mountain Kingdom with young refugees looking for political home and direction. It was to be a momentous challenge for a young Party activist and an ANC representative. Chief Leabua Jonathan's Lesotho of the mid-1970s was not particularly friendly to the liberation movement, but it was not very hostile either. Papa Joe, as the chief was popularly known, was then at the beginning of his political about turn, a policy which was to lead to the severance of the umbilical chord which had tied his ruling Basutoland National Party (BNP) to its Pretoria patrons throughout the sixties.

It was this background which provided the circumstances of our first meeting. It must have been in 1977, for the Pretoria butchers had just murdered the black consciousness activist Steve Biko. The Committee for Action and Solidarity for Southern African Students in which we were active organised a mass meeting to protest this dastardly act; Comrade Chris was the guest speaker. It was the beginning of a close and fruitful association between the small solidarity group and the ANC in Lesotho and a great learning process for the majority of us. Thus in Lesotho, Hani the soldier was often compelled to wear several hats: the diplomat, the politician and occasionally had to crack the whip of discipline whenever the youthful band of refugees threatened to get out of hand. With time he produced a generation of ANC activists who stood head and shoulders above most of the rank and file. This was the quality of his leadership and discipline.

On the political front he had a working relationship with the BNP regime and thus created a political space which was essential to the ANC's continued existence in Lesotho. His most enduring achievement during this period, however, was his success in rebuilding the ANC and Party inside the country and strengthening the MK underground structures in the Cape Province and the Orange Free State.

Today, the reemergence of the ANC into the political centre stage starting from the mid-1980s is taken for granted. Occasionally, the western press alludes to the 'reinvention of the ANC' by the township uprisings of the 1984-86 period. Those of us who were privileged enough to witness these events at close quarters understand only too well that the seeds of the township uprising were planted in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and that the key players were the personnel in the forward areas like Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana. The result of these efforts were to be seen in the escalation of MK military activities inside the country particularly in the period 1980-85, and the escalation of mass action against apartheid, a combination of struggles which ultimately convinced the apartheid racists that they could no longer rule in the old way.

Comrade Hani left Lesotho at the beginning of 1982 for the ANC headquarters in Zambia. He served in Angola briefly where he will best be remembered for his role in quelling the MK mutineers. By the time of the Kabwe Consultative
Conference in 1985, he had been in the NEC of the ANC for 11 years. His meteoric rise from Deputy Commander of MK in 1984, Chief of Staff in 1987 and General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1991, was indeed, a recognition of his commitment to the ANC, the Party, and the struggle for the total liberation of South Africa.

This is why the apartheid racists hated him so much. To paraphrase comrade Slovo, the white political supremacists hated comrade Chris with a special venom. They tried to assassinate him several times in Lesotho. In one instance in 1981, the assassin, a young mosotho who had been recruited by Security Branch in Bloemfontein blew himself up while attempting to attach a bomb to comrade Chris' car. In 1982 when the racists invaded Maseru, knowing full well that he had left the country, they went after his family, killing a young mosotho woman whom they mistook for his wife Limpo.

Precisely for these reasons it matters little that comrade Hani’s assassin has been identified as a member of the extreme white right, less still that he is a rabid anti-communist. What matters is that for years the government has pursued precisely the same policies of eliminating the opponents of apartheid. The apartheid regime’s protestation of innocence remains unconvincing when over the last three years it has pursued a two-tiered agenda of organised assassinations and mass murders of innocent South Africans while purportedly engaged in negotiations to end apartheid. It might very well be that the direct agents of the state did not fire the four bullets, but they did little to prevent it. We are convinced that the elimination of Chris Hani was a well planned conspiracy and ultimately intended to serve the interests of a wider group than the narrow band of extremists who are at the moment willing to accept responsibility for it.

Hani was in the final analysis a humble, warm and understanding person. He was a disciplined soldier and a politician with his feet squarely on the ground. Above all he was a dedicated communist. He was not a theoretician in the mould of comrade Joe Slovo, but was a strategist of unrivalled quality. At a youthful age of 40, he had established a glittering military career and had become a legend in the South African townships. Most of us younger generation who had the opportunity to rub shoulders with him understood then how difficult it was to become a revolutionary and a communist. His death has left a void within the Party leadership, but more importantly, poses a serious challenge to the transition process in South Africa. He is the one person who could be said to have had the clout and the political credentials to carry the militant township youth with him. The role of an individual in a revolutionary process remains the subject of unending debate. But as South Africa takes a step towards democracy, the talents of an individual like Hani will be greatly missed. This is the challenge that faces the and the ANC.

_Hamba Khale i Qhawe la ma Qhawe!_

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Eritrea: A Country in Transition

Okbazghi Yohannes

This article raises questions about the future prospects for the economic and political transition in Eritrea today, for peace and cooperation in the Horn and for the ‘nation-state’ in Africa. It does this against the historical background of an illegally federated state and 30 years of armed struggle leading to an EPLF victory and the 1993 referendum.

The end of the war in Eritrea marks, not only the beginnings of restructuring the social organisation of Eritrean society, but also the structural transformation of the Horn as a whole. In this sense, the Eritrean struggle has played a pivotal role in providing a crucial external context for the realisation of the Ethiopian revolution. This strategic convergence of the Eritrean and Ethiopian revolutions will possibly serve as the catalyst for a regional transformation.

Nonetheless, the Eritrean military success poses two contradictory dilemmas which will have both immediate and long range consequences. The Eritrean victory represents, on the one hand, a further fragmentation of the international society in general and, on the other, of the state system in the third world in particular. This may have an enduring significance, especially if the Eritrean case is seen as precedent setting or as a premiere model for emulation by centrifugal forces elsewhere. Here, too, the Eritrean experience can readily lend credence to the coherence and legitimacy of the articulation and enforcement of the right to self-determination by military means.

These structural dilemmas pose many fundamental questions: what is the historic and regional significance of the Eritrean experience? how will Eritrea organise itself internally as it crosses the Rubicon of democracy? how will Eritrea define its external relations? will the Eritrean experience advance regional security and promote horizontal interpenetration within the Horn? what will be the structure and institutional character of this regional transformation?

Historical Background

If history is defined as tragedy, as often it is, there is no more tragic history than that of Eritrea. What makes the Eritrean case unique is that Eritrea is the only former colony that was denied the benefit of decolonisation owing to the power politics of the 1940s that pushed the UN to acquiesce in the allocation of Eritrea to Ethiopia.
The year 1941 was the turning point. The British ‘liberated’ Eritrea from the Italians and placed it under British military administration until its future could be determined at a peace conference after the war. Meanwhile, London reached the conclusion that it was in the British imperial interest to trade the territory to Ethiopia in exchange for the Ogaden, which was to be part of ‘greater’ Somalia under British control. Britain actively pursued this policy despite serious reservations expressed by some members of the foreign policy elite. Robert Howe, British minister to Ethiopia, for example, posed the fundamental issues in this way:

Could we, however, justify handing over Eritrea, which politically is a more advanced state than Ethiopia, to the emperor, when he is not yet able to administer his present dominions? If we can, should we not insist on the employment of foreign advisers in its administration? If we cannot, would a Sudan-Ethiopian condominium be feasible?

Although they were able to obtain the acquiescence of the US in their policy, the British met with strong resistance from France and the USSR at a peace conference in 1945. Consequently, in 1948, the four powers transmitted the Eritrean case to the UN for resolution. In fact, the transmission of the case to the UN generated an air of confidence and optimism among Eritreans that the problem would now be solved on the basis of the UN charter. According to the instruments of the UN, there were two solutions for the Eritrean case: the first was that the UN would assist the Eritreans in the realisation of their independence; second, if the above condition was not realisable immediately due to the inadequate preparation of the territory, then the Eritreans would benefit from articles 73 and 76 of the UN Charter that would place them under UN trusteeship until such time that the Eritrean people were ready for independence or to make any other informed choice.

Nonetheless, the creeping of power politics into the UN deliberation process pre-empt the materialisation of either option. There were three factors that militated against the Eritrean case. First, the overriding policy consideration of Britain was to consolidate its imperial network in the area by promoting the allocation of Eritrea to Ethiopia. Second, in the context of the strategic location of Eritrea commanding the western shores of the Red Sea, the US, too, actively sought the allocation of Eritrea according to its military security interest as defined then. After all, the US army was already in possession of the communications networks in Eritrea built by the Italians. Third, Haile Selassie astutely cultivated and deepened a relationship with both Britain and the US with a view to obtaining their unconditional support for the absorption of Eritrea into Ethiopia. In fact, at the time when the Eritrean question was on the UN agenda, Ethiopia had completed its evolution into an unofficial protectorate of the US. Thus, from the perspective of the West, there was no better solution than strengthening their regional base in the Horn by annexing Eritrea to Ethiopia.

This plan to annex, however, met with fierce resistance from two directions. First, eight Eritrean nationalist parties and professional associations gathered under one umbrella, the Eritrean Independence Bloc, to collectively demand
the immediate independence of the colony. The Western powers soon discovered that the mass following of the Bloc was so strong that the UN could not ignore the question of Eritrean independence entirely. For example, in a confidential communication to the British Foreign Office (30 July 1949), Robert Mason, the political adviser to the military administration in Eritrea, confirmed that anywhere between 65% and 75% of the Eritreans were in favour of independence. Mason added that

the Independence group by any reckoning must be in the majority. There is another factor which is perhaps not fully appreciated; that the anti-Ethiopian feeling of opponents of union is far stronger than the pro-Ethiopian feeling of its supporters. On the whole, therefore, it is the view of most people here with long experience of the country that the idea of independence has aroused more enthusiasm than the idea of union did. I agree with this view.

Such secret British documents reveal that the surging nationalism in Eritrea would prove to be insurmountable unless something was done to contain it. The problem was compounded by the fact that the pro-Ethiopian unionist party was plagued by defection and corruption and its political viability was in doubt. After all, the UN was preparing to send a commission of investigation to Eritrea to ascertain the wishes of the people there. In the context of these developments, both Britain and Ethiopia began an effort to reinvigorate the unionist party and to undermine the political base of the Independence Bloc. As part of the strategy, Britain sent Brigadier Stafford to coordinate the Anglo-Ethiopian offensive in Eritrea:

The important thing is that we have now substantially reduced the number of Christian non-unionists on the plateau. Following this, I have turned to the task of persuading Moslem leaders on the plateau, at least, to break away from the Independence Bloc. I hope within the next few days to be able to inform you of the formation of yet another political party favourable to our cause.

Stafford added that his next task was to make sure that the coopted elements were 'primed in the right answers to give to the [UN] Commission when it gets to the job of ascertaining the wishes of the population. I have no reason to believe that my activities have attracted any particular attention' (FO 371/80984, 16 February 1950).

If Stafford's activities seemed to go unnoticed, it was because they were carried out from underground and with great skill. The Ethiopian interference was overtly blatant. In addition to pouring millions of dollars into Eritrea to finance the unionist party and to bribe the waverers, the emperor sent a contingent of Ethiopians led by five ministers to Eritrea. The presence of the Ethiopians in such a large number became a matter of embarrassment to the administration such that Brigadier Drew advised London to restrain Ethiopia from excessive intervention in Eritrean politics. As he wrote:

The continued intense and open intervention by the emissaries from Addis Ababa in the internal political field has now reached a stage for some considerable embarrassment to
the administration . . . each [emissary] has been assigned a different political party to work upon. Their activities are carefully organized (FO 371/73846, 10 August 1949).

The British ambassador to Ethiopia, however, disagreed with Drew’s conclusion. He argued that the movement toward Eritrean independence had reached such a dangerous point for Ethiopia that it had to use all means to thwart the eventuation of Eritrean independence. As he wrote:

it is quite natural that the Ethiopian government should make these special proselytizing efforts at a moment when, as we ourselves have not failed to point out to them, the local political situation is roughly evolving to their detriment. If they can by such efforts put a stop to the defection from the unionists to the independence camp, it will be politically well worth their while to do so (FO 371/73846, 26 August 1949).

In any case, in light of the tense political situation in Eritrea, Britain, the US and Ethiopia finally became convinced that complete absorption of Eritrea by Ethiopia was unattainable short of political havoc. Seeking the acquiescence of the UN in such a plan also appeared to be a risky undertaking. The dilemma was resolved when the US engineered a federation formula as a ‘half loaf’ approach to the problem. In full recognition of the political reality at the UN, Washington cleverly crafted the Federal Act in a way that conveyed the impression that Eritrea would enjoy the status of co-equality with the Ethiopian state. Consequently, the federal plan was adopted by the UN and Eritrea was transferred to Ethiopia.

Patterns of Strategic Convergence and National Divergence

Despite the illegality of the process by which Eritrea was linked to Ethiopia under the Federal Act of 1952, the outcome of the process offered a window of opportunity for both countries to develop mutually beneficial economic relations with an economic unit that was now larger than before. Possessing a strong industrial base and relatively well developed human resources, Eritrea had a lot to offer in terms of strengthening the nascent forces of capitalism in Ethiopia. Capitalising on the untapped market in Ethiopia, Eritrea, too, could expand its industrial and commercial operations in a way that could have a spread effect on the agriculturally poor regions of northern Ethiopia. This process of horizontal interpenetration could have organically linked Eritrea to northern Ethiopia.

By the same token, the above process could have been complimented by the transformation of the agriculturally rich regions of southern Ethiopia into agro-commercial centres supplying raw materials and foodstuffs to the northern regions and Eritrea; their prosperity could have been secured. Simply put, the potential for both the horizontal and vertical integration of the two economies was enormous.

In fact, it was precisely the potential of Eritrea for Ethiopia’s modernisation
efforts that was frequently cited by US and British officials as an argument in favour of union. British Ambassador Dan Lacelles, for example, argued that the Ethiopian emperor was trying hard to modernise his country and that the addition of Eritrea to his empire would ‘leaven the mass’ and would put Ethiopia on the track of faster modernisation.

Ethiopia is admittedly a very backward and primitive country. The acquisition by her of the greater part of Eritrea will accelerate this process by leavening the mass. The need of the Ethiopian government for competently trained officials is acute. In these circumstances, can we be at all sure that it would be ‘morally wrong and politically an error’ to leaven the mass by giving this African territory (Eritrea) to another adjacent African state even if it does mean ‘economic and social regression’ for the territory in question? (FO 371/7344, 26 August 1949).

In retrospect, that assumption is in fundamental error for the simple reason that the two countries were at different stages of development which was the major source of tension and conflict. Eritrea had a viable pluralist political system and the new distributional coalitions were nurtured in competitive politics under British tutelage. In recognition of this reality, the Federal Act was explicit that Eritrea’s political system and institutions would retain their separate identity and that their constitutional character would be safeguarded. A portion of the preamble to the Act, for example, states that the association of Eritrea to Ethiopia would

assure to the inhabitants of Eritrea the fullest respect and safeguards for their institutions, traditions, religions, and languages, as well as the widest possible measure of self-government (UN Resolution, 2 December 1950).

In addition to the basic incompatibility that existed between the two economies, the political system in Ethiopia was anachronistic to the one in Eritrea installed under international supervision. In the absence of radical defeudalisation of Ethiopia’s agrarian structure and without providing a constitutional framework for democratising the country’s institutions, the federal arrangement that was supposed to govern relations between the two countries was doomed from the start. The emperor could not be sure that Eritrean nationalism and trade unionism would be contained and diluted before they were emulated by the forces of modernisation in Ethiopia itself and viewed Eritrea’s autonomous democracy and separate institutions with hostility.

The actions taken by the emperor between 1953 and 1956 reduced Eritrea to an Ethiopian province in all but name. A ban was imposed on all political parties except the unionist party, the syndicate of Free Workers of Eritrea, and the free press. The old hands of Eritrean nationalism were either thrown in jail or forced into exile. In 1956, Ethiopia committed one of its gravest errors by attacking the cultural institutions of Eritrea when it abolished Tigrinya and Arabic as the official languages of the territory and replaced them with Amharic. It was beyond the class limitations of the Ethiopian authorities to comprehend the fact that the contextualisation process set in motion by such actions was fuelling
Eritrean nationalism. Contrary to the emperor's expectations, the measure inspired even more intense loyalty for Eritrean nationalism. Even the original supporters of union with Ethiopia became disillusioned and joined the anti-Ethiopian agitation movement.

_A state which does not recognize the cultural [institutions] of its people, which represses the use of their languages, is engaged in a process of cultural genocide_ (Tubianna, 1983).

The trade union organisations, too, became an object of relentless Ethiopian assault. First, the organisational maturity of the syndicate of Free Workers of Eritrea and the lively trade union politics existing then were seen by the emperor as a dangerous model for emulation by the Ethiopian working class. In the emperor's calculations, learning from the Eritrean experience through contacts that might develop with their Eritrean counterparts, Ethiopian workers would, over time, demand the formation and legalisation of similar labour organisations, thereby challenging the basis and legitimacy of monarchical absolutism. Thus, as a measure of preemption, the emperor chose to promote obliteration of Eritrean trade unionism. Second, ever since its formation, the syndicate had become the strategic constituency of the Eritrean nationalist parties. The evolution of the relationship between Eritrean nationalism and trade unionism was so organically perfect that it was even obvious to the casual observer that the former could not be emasculated without killing the latter. In fact, when the activities of the nationalist parties were proscribed, it was the trade unions which carried on the banner of nationalism. In 1958, when Ethiopian authorities lowered the Eritrean flag and introduced Ethiopian laws into Eritrea, the Eritrean workers went on general strike, precipitating a showdown with the Ethiopian army in which over 80 Eritrean workers were killed and over 500 more were wounded.

As the working class in Eritrea persevered in its struggle, Ethiopia began to devitalise the Eritrean economy as a way of uprooting the basis of trade unionism altogether. Foreign investment was discouraged and many companies were forced into either shutting down their operations or relocating in Ethiopia. As Lefort (1981) observed,

_in fact, annexation killed Eritrea's economic dynamism if only because of the pillage that took place. Wholesale factories were disassembled and reassembled in Shoa. The pillage was one of the motors of modernisation of the Ethiopian economy in the 1950s._

More than anything else, the devitalisation of the economy hurt the Eritrean working class severely. Paradoxically, however, the ban imposed on the Eritrean trade unions ultimately benefited the Ethiopian working class. In light of the progressive destruction of the Eritrean economy, Eritrean workers flocked into Ethiopia following the relocated firms. In the process, they provided the much needed 'mass leaven' for the activation and mobilisation of the Ethiopian labour force. In fact, they played a pivotal role in the formation and evolutionary growth of the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions.
In addition to reinforcing the numerical significance of the Ethiopian labour force, the Eritrean workers provided the needed experience and skills in trade union politics, agitation and organisation. One of the robust ironies was that the fortuitous connection forged between the two working classes was transformed into a historical necessity for a joint struggle against the repressive order, thus marking the beginning of the strategic convergence of interests.

With a flush of realism, the emperor realised that, in the context of the presence of Eritrean workers in Ethiopia in large numbers, the only way to contain labour demands was by permitting limited trade unionism under government control and in September 1962, legalised their formation; that this act preceded the abrogation of the federal arrangement in Eritrea by only two months was no coincidence. It was intended to mute opposition to the act of terminating the federal relationship by showing signs of democratisation but also by creating an Ethiopian context, the emperor hoped to diminish the separate identity of Eritrean workers and dilute Eritrean nationalism.

This act provided for the creation of the Labour Relations Board, a government agency in the Ministry of National Community Development and was authorised to grant unions the right to strike, but only 60 days after the Board had intervened to settle the dispute and failed to do so. The right was granted to a union, not to the collectivity of unions. Moreover, the Board had the authority to arbitrate and even to staff the administration of CELU (Hess, 1970). The effect of such regulative schemes was that no strikes were allowed and were artfully crafted to fragment the unions and to prevent them from forging collective solidarity.

Notwithstanding such constraints, the unions kept up their demands for improved working conditions, better wages and treatment. For example, the number of disputes between unions and employers jumped from 137 in 1963 to 776 in 1965. Additionally, the stubborn visibility of Eritrean workers continued to be a nuisance to the Ethiopian government. In the early seventies, as the maturity and confidence of the unions grew, the government once again resorted to a divide and conquer strategy by requiring CELU to subdivide itself into three zones which was intended to promote effective government control of unions especially those in Eritrea which constituted one zone. Consequently relations between the zones proved to be fractious as they began to nibble away at the solidarity they worked hard over the years to build.

In 1973, after valid elections were held in Asmara, CELU declared the results null and void and single-handedly appointed union officers to run the unions in Asmara without elections or consultations. There was even a plan to dissolve the 25 recalcitrant unions in Asmara. The unions in Eritrea accused CELU of an ethnically motivated anti-Eritrean posture and of being used by the government. In fact, the division between Eritrean and Ethiopian workers became so acute that over 40 trade union organisations in Eritrea stopped paying their dues, accompanied by a threat to form their own labour confederation. The
division remained serious until it was overtaken by the events of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution.

This unfortunate division, initiated and orchestrated by the government, obscured the strategic relationship that evolved between the two labour forces. The presence of Eritrean workers in Ethiopia and their contribution to the formation and growth of CELU were of particular strategic importance from the Eritrean perspective. The agitation, mobilisation and organisation of Ethiopian workers with the participation and solidarity of Eritreans created conditions inside Ethiopia contributing to the awakening and radicalisation of other classes, especially the students.

Another element which received little or no analytical attention were the educated elements of the Eritrean petty bourgeoisie were so severely affected by the devitalisation of the Eritrean economy that they migrated to Ethiopia in large numbers in search of jobs. Lacking a pool of developed human resources, the emperor made effective use of them to staff lower and middle level bureaucracies, technical institutions and the like. All in all, on the eve of the Ethiopian revolution, there were close to 600,000 Eritreans working and living in Ethiopia. Their political presence was more important than their numerical significance in the sense that almost all of them were products of modern capitalism, committed to a democratic bourgeois order. To be sure, the Eritreans living inside Ethiopia became the bridge between the Eritrean struggle and progressive Ethiopians creating a crucial external context for the struggle in Eritrea as much as providing an equally critical context for the Ethiopian revolution.

Meanwhile, in 1960, realising the inevitable doom of the federal arrangement, Eritrean exiles in Cairo created the ELF with a mandate to initiate an armed struggle. During its initial years, the armed struggle had certainly experienced a number of setbacks, one of which was the bloody internal division that resulted in the creation of the EPLF in 1970. Notwithstanding such an unfortunate division, however, the armed struggle bounced back better organised and more resolved. One of the consequences of the armed struggle was that the war exhausted Ethiopia economically so that the structural contradictions began to ferment in the mid-1970s, deepening and widening the scope of the struggle. Unfortunately, Mengistu’s military coup aborted all possibilities of resolving the Eritrean question by peaceful means. The problem was compounded when the Soviet Union switched sides and offered its services to the regime as an international patron, replacing the United States. Obviously, there were divergent views on the motives of Soviet intervention, but their underlying motivation was no different from that of the United States.

First, the Soviets, like the Americans, believed that control of Ethiopia was crucial to controlling and dominating the region. The size of Ethiopia in population and geography as well as its economic potential made it appear more important than its neighbours. Second, the Horn of Africa was too important to be
left under Western control and the fact that it controls the western shore of the Red Sea, the northwestern quadrant of the Indian Ocean and the oil routes from the Persian Gulf to Europe and America. The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed this conclusion in 1978:

*The Horn of Africa is primarily of military, political and economic importance. The importance of the region is mainly because of its situation where the two continents of Africa and Asia meet. There are many good harbours in the Persian Gulf and in the Indian Ocean. Moreover, there are maritime routes which link the oil producing countries with America and Europe (Bondestam, 1980)*.

Analysis of Soviet regional priorities and options in the Horn suggests a striking symmetry in the fundamental assumptions, motives and objectives of the two superpowers. In addition to viewing the Horn as a crucial geostrategic asset for the exercise of control of the Red Sea basin, both superpowers sought to anchor their respective regional policies on Ethiopia, not only because of Ethiopia’s relative importance, but also because they wanted to maintain the non-Arab identity of the region. Consequently, the objectives and aspirations of the indigenous forces were viewed as antagonistic by the two external powers to their stated goals and interests. The alleged pro-Arab orientations of the Somalis and Eritreans, for example, were viewed in this light and had, therefore, to be contained or subordinated to the imperative of the territorial integrity of Ethiopia. The trading of Somalia for Ethiopia by the Russians and the initiation and implementation of a series of military encirclements and suppressions of the Eritrean forces were not accidental, but rather reflections of rational decisions and a well thought out strategy in keeping with Soviet motives and interests.

To be sure, the Soviet involvement evolved out of its desire to replace the United States as the dominant regional actor. Its move was a function of the geopolitical importance of the region as well as of its perception about its ability to impose its will on the indigenous forces by using its military capability. By irony of history, however, even though the relationship between the recurrent pattern of Soviet behaviour elsewhere such as in eastern Europe or Afghanistan and its involvement in the Horn was obvious, both the Eritrean nationalists and the Ethiopian revolutionaries failed to see the crucial distinction between Soviet geopolitical ambitions and its rationalising ideology. Rather than objectively analysing the shifts that were taking place in the relationships of regional and external forces, they interpreted the Soviet involvement as misunderstanding of the issues in the region as well as its ideological confusion about the nature of Mengistu’s regime. The net result of their relative political impotence in this respect was that they failed to exploit the international contradiction between the Russians and Americans in such a manner as to mobilise Western public opinion and possibly resources in their favour. They were to accept Western mediation and assistance ten years later, anyway.

Fortunately for the Eritreans and the Ethiopian revolutionaries, and contrary to popular anticipation, the new Ethio-Soviet partnership strengthened the strate-
gic alliance between them as they, of necessity, entered into a collaborative military relationship. From the military point of view, there were three events that produced the crucial turning points in the armed conflict. First, in February 1988, the EPLF scored a decisive victory against a 19,000 strong Ethiopian army at the battle of Afabet in northern Eritrea. The entire army was routed and three high ranking Soviet advisers were captured, marking the elevation of the armed struggle from one of defence to a counter-offensive one. Second, almost a year later, the EPLF and the TPLF (Tigray Peoples Liberation Front) joined forces against a military stronghold of the Ethiopian regime in northern Tigray, scoring yet another joint victory which led to the liberation of the province of Tigray, placing it under effective TPLF control. In the light of these two military setbacks, the moral basis and fighting capacity of the Ethiopian army began to erode, producing an internal military crisis and a political paralysis. A clear indicator was the May 1989 aborted coup against Mengistu in which over 200 high ranking military officers were arrested and many of them were hanged. Third, in early 1990, the EPLF overran the port of Massawa and achieved a quick victory. In retrospect, the battle of Massawa proved to be the mother of all battles, symbolising both the obstinate determination of the Eritreans and the barbarity of the war as Ethiopia demolished the city from the air using demolition, cluster and napalm bombs supplied by Israel. The battle heralded the inevitability of a total military victory. The victory was complimented by an agreement by several anti-regime Ethiopian movements to gather themselves under the Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPRDF) and fight for a multinational democracy in Ethiopia.

In this context, the Ethiopian regime made a last ditch effort to salvage the empire from utter collapse. As the Soviets retreated owing to the Ethiopia’s inability to pay for arms, Mengistu reactivated his surreptitious connection with Israel, trading arms for Ethiopian Jews. Moreover, as a precondition to Western intervention, Mengistu publicly announced his deathbed conversion to capitalism and subsequently pleaded with the United States to intercede. As Undersecretary of State for Africa, Herman Cohen, told a Congressional committee:

*Government officials urged the United States to help facilitate a peaceful transition. They affirmed a keen desire to include rebel groups and others in a restructured regime. The United States agreed with this goal and, after meeting with the EPLF and EPRDF rebel groups in Khartoum, invited the government and the groups to a meeting in London to help bring about the peaceful transition that all sides claimed to want (US Congress, 1992).*

The US expressed a willingness to help, but only on condition that Mengistu be removed from power and that a transitional government set up. As the combined EPLF and EPRDF forces closed in on the Eritrean and Ethiopian capitals on 21 May 1991, Mengistu fled the country for Zimbabwe, just one week before the London peace conference. The EPLF and the EPRDF, however, treated Mengistu’s replacement by General Tesfaye Gebre-Kidan with incredulity arguing that his elevation to the apex of power represented more a simulation in
style than a change in substance. After all, as commander of the Ethiopian army in Eritrea, Tesfaye had earned the dubious distinction of being the most ruthless campaigner against the Eritreans, and was the key instrument in foiling the May 1989 coup against Mengistu by betraying his co-conspirators and the conspiracy he helped to hatch. Thus, rather than placating the anti-regime forces as the US had hoped, his elevation to power made them even more determined to tighten their grips on the major cities.

Meanwhile, both the EPLF and the EPRDF agreed to participate in the US-brokered peace talks in London scheduled for 28 May. For the first time since the initiation of the armed struggle, the anti-regime forces began to negotiate from a position of distinct strength which was not necessarily amenable to US long term objectives. From the outset US objectives were clear. Washington saw its mediation role between the combatants as an opportune initiative for creating a condition of stalemate so that it could coerce both the EPLF and the EPRDF into accepting US prescriptions for settling the political questions in the area. Long standing US policy in the area has been one of being antithetical to any territorial redistribution of power in the region. In effect, this nullified Eritrea's natural drive for independence. Various public pronouncements made prior to the London conference support this analysis.

For example, on 22 May, just a day after Mengistu fled the country for Zimbabwe, a State Department spokesperson blamed the disruption of famine food distribution in Eritrea and Ethiopia on the ‘insurgents’ and intimated that henceforth they would be held responsible for the plight of famine victims in the area. This was part of a well orchestrated strategy to improve the international marketability of the so-called ‘restructured’ transitional regime, and to diminish the international visibility and military prowess of the EPLF and the EPRDF. Echoing this general theme, on 24 May, just three days before the London peace conference, Undersecretary Cohen himself declared that it was still the US position to help Ethiopia maintain its ‘colonially inherited boundaries’, implying that the Eritrean question would be resolved within the framework of Ethiopian unity (MacNeil-Leherer, 1991). The US position was essentially compatible with the goal the Ethiopian regime was seeking. The regime viewed the US mediation as prerequisite condition for Western intervention in the area in order to preempt a unilateral declaration of Eritrean independence and a seizure of power by the EPRDF in Addis Ababa. At any rate, events on the battleground began to unravel rendering the London peace conference inconsequential. ‘At that point, the Addis regime effectively ceased to exist and the delegation in London dropped out of the talks’ (US Congress, 1991).

In the context of these developments, the US cautiously retreated from its pro-status position and made a judicious policy adjustment. As Herman Cohen told the Congressional committee, the US abandoned its mediation role and began to play ‘a de facto advisory role’ to the Eritrean nationalists and the anti-regime Ethiopians. The London conference ended with the agreement that the EPRDF would organise a national conference no later than 1 July 1991 to define the
nature and composition of a transitional government. The London meeting also endorsed the formation of the Provisional Government of Eritrea and implicitly recognised the de facto independence of the territory.

For the first time the US grudgingly acknowledged that the Eritrean people were never given the chance to express their wishes on matters affecting their destiny. Undersecretary Cohen rushed to claim that the role the US played in the Ethiopian conflict represented the 'conscience' of the international community. But this claim should be treated with incredulity. For those fully conversant with the history of the area, the US was as much a part of the original problem as it was a supporter of the ancien regime by providing huge supplies of arms that were used against Eritrea with full US knowledge and complicity. Even as recently as January 1991, the US tried to use food aid as a political weapon against Eritrea. It ordered the cross-border operations of humanitarian food delivery from the Sudan destined for famine victims in Eritrea to be temporarily halted in an effort to force the EPLF into softening its position on the question of independence and accepting the US plan of territorial devolution of power within the framework of Ethiopian unity.

There were indications that seemed to suggest that the US was wavering on the question of Eritrean independence. For example, immediately after the London conference, Herman Cohen dissociated himself from ever using the term 'referendum' after he was confronted with the question of whether the US endorsement of a referendum for Eritrea at the conference represented a shift in US position. As he stated:

_I have not mentioned the term referendum. If you listened to my press conference on Monday, I did not use that term. I said that we endorse the concept of self-determination for the people of Eritrea. The question of referendum and how they will exercise their right of self-determination, I think, will depend on discussions between the EPLF and the government that comes out of the conference that will be held in Ethiopia_ (Cohen, 1991).

US traditional policy has hardly been pristine when it comes to the respect and implementation of self-determination, anyway. Its Janus-like position on the question of referendum masquerades the fact that it wanted to use the plan as a cooling off period during which conditions conducive for policy reversals by any parties including the US might emerge. In fact, this is exactly what Undersecretary Cohen communicated abroad:

_We hope that in the two years between now and the referendum there will be a degree of democracy and regional autonomy granted to all parts of Ethiopia to make them see the advantage of remaining associated with Ethiopia and will vote accordingly in their referendum_ (Cohen, 1991).

Cohen had been consistent all along on this matter. On 18 June 1991, before a Congressional hearing, he admonished:

_I would say that the less said about the Eritrean question, the better and that a Congressional statement at this time would probably not be helpful._
This raised the fundamental question of why the Eritreans accepted a referendum, a condition of stalemate, in the hours of their stunning victory. There are two plausible explanations. First, most probably they accepted the plan in deference to the unipolar status of the United States. From the Eritrean perspective, coming to terms with this reality would enable them to receive substantial aid for economic reconstruction of the country. The corollary is that it would facilitate a de jure recognition of Eritrean independence.

Second, the EPRDF had been perceived as a Tigrayan front with close ties to the EPLF, a perception that seemed to be undermining its national legitimacy, making its task of restoring law and order extremely difficult. Thus the rationale had been that immediate Eritrean independence would only aggravate the situation and that the EPLF agreed to a postponement of a unilateral declaration of independence. Undersecretary Cohen's 1991 statement to Congress reflects this rationale:

But there is general if tacit agreement that the long sought referendum and the final determination of Eritrea's status can await a more stable situation emerging in Addis Ababa. We welcome this disposition of the key parties toward realism. We have long believed that the issue of Eritrea's judicial status needs both time and an atmosphere of peace before it is approached. Forcing an early resolution of this matter is a recipe for disarray and discord.

In any case, Eritrea and Ethiopia formally agreed that the referendum would be held no later than April 1993. On the whole, the transitional government in Ethiopia remained firm on its revolutionary commitment to the Eritrean case.

Mapping The Future

Historical reflection has clearly established that the Eritrean situation is not a prima facie case for the trend toward structural fragmentation of the international society. The Eritrean experience is a classic example of an anticolonial drive for independence that was thwarted by higher considerations of international politics. But when it comes to predicting the future of independent Eritrea, one faces an uncharted territory. The Horn of Africa as a whole is a region that is as much politically recalcitrant as it is analytically unpredictable. Hence, presenting a useful road map about the future of Eritrea is not an easy task. Any pedagogical presentation of the case risks moral judgmentalism and analytical subjectivism.

The difficulty of the analytical endeavour is compounded by the state of confusion that currently exists in the world system. In the past we could, at least, point to two opposite directions which any emergent state or government might take: right wing authoritarianism sustained by the West or left wing authoritarianism supported by the Soviet bloc. But today those possibilities are nullified by the withering away of Soviet communism and the resurgent dominance of capitalism. The crisp comment that during the funeral of communism,
everyone jumps out of the coffin to join the procession summarises it all. It is fashionable to reject any ideological proposition that offers itself as an alternative to capitalism. The West is playing the vanguard role in manufacturing the marketing gimmicks for the new world order by packaging them in terms of unfettered capitalism, 'democracy' and 'human rights' as coterminous categories.

Given this objective reality, one can say with a sufficient degree of certainty that Eritrea will take the capitalist road, exuberantly embracing this trend. But whether Eritrea develops a democratic capitalism or any convoluted version of it remains to be seen.

**Economic Rehabilitation**

The economic destruction wrought by the 30 years of war in Eritrea are of startling proportions. Every bridge was blown up, every road torn up, every factory demolished and every city in the country faces decay. The Eritrean government thus faces the monumental task of rebuilding the economy and the country. The problem of rebuilding the country was compounded by land mines strewn throughout Eritrea by the Ethiopian army; the Eritrean anti-mine squad has successfully removed or detonated over 350,000 land mines and in the process over 30 fighters, 240 civilians, mostly children, were dismembered or killed (Parmelee, 1991). Drought has also been a component of the war; half of Eritrea’s livestock died in 1991 and, as a consequence, two million Eritreans were on the verge of starvation. The present situation grimly contrasts to the 1950s when Eritrea was a country of vigorous economic prosperity and productivity and a net food exporter.

The daunting problem facing the Eritrean government today is its rehabilitation efforts. Without a massive infusion of capital it will be exceedingly difficult to initiate this process. It was perhaps the recognition of this reality that prompted the EPLF leadership to delay the declaration of independence immediately after the war in anticipation that such a political concession would make things amenable to US economic intervention in Eritrea in the form of providing generous largesse. If this consideration heavily weighed in the minds of the EPLF leadership, the corollary that the EPLF abandoned its long held tradition of socialist self-reliance in order to allay Western concerns might shed light on why Eritrea would take the capitalist road of development.

There are fundamental questions about Eritrea’s ability to reconstruct itself economically. However, there is a vibrant sense of optimism in the country that the economic hardships would be overcome quickly. After the war, the entire fighting force of the EPLF was transformed into an economic task force charged with rebuilding the economy without pay for at least two years. In order to encourage inflows of capital and private investment, the government has pledged that Eritrea will nurture capitalism as the ‘only road to effective reconstruction’.
Consistent with this economic orientation, the Eritrean government has already begun selling state-owned small and medium firms to private entrepreneurs. But this emphasis on unfettered capitalism is not necessarily the answer to the exigencies of economic reconstruction. In the first place, the country is bankrupt and private capital is virtually nonexistent. In the absence of any degree of capital accumulation, there is little prospect of nurturing home-grown capitalism. Also, the general crisis of capitalism itself is currently not conducive to the inflows of foreign capital into Eritrea. One must not forget that the psychology of private investment is a crucial component here. The transitional character of Eritrean politics, the prospect of long-term stability, the level of skilled labour and the future orientation of the government toward the labour/management relationship are important considerations that will influence any investment package. There is also a large number of countries world-wide competing for the same international capital and most of them have long established credentials as generous hosts so as to receive investment priority.

Under these circumstances, the economic road Eritrea takes requires clear rethinking with primary emphasis placed on the agricultural sector. Even though the coastal regions of Eritrea are arid where vegetation is virtually nonexistent, western Eritrea (where Italian plantation owners prospered during colonial times) can be transformed into a region of large scale agro-commercial plantations. Using agro-technology and state guidance, the region can provide the basis for primitive accumulation. The region produced vegetables, fruits and oil seeds for both local and external markets until the war disrupted production and commercial activities in the 1960s. Eritrea can establish in a relatively short time a comparative advantage in this sector as its immediate neighbours on the other side of the Red Sea can provide a large potential market. Its proximity to the Arabian peninsula allowing for lower transportation costs will give Eritrea a relative advantage over long distance competitors.

Another region which mandates immediate attention is the plateau region. Constituting only 20% of the country's land mass, it houses over 50% of the country's total population. Traditionally, the bread basket of the country, but over the decades, a combination of war requirements and deforestation has diminished the agricultural potential of the region. The mode of land ownership was another contributory factor. Traditionally, kinship-based and communal ownerships were two distinct forms of land holding in the area until they were tampered with by the Ethiopian regime's agrarian policy. In the areas where the kinship-based mode of ownership was prevalent, the principle of primogeniture was absent and selling land was a cultural taboo that would invite a certain social ostracism. Under these conditions, the land had to be distributed among a number of inheritors. With the communal mode of ownership, land was collectively owned by the villagers and distributed every seven years to accommodate new grown-ups. Every land redistribution necessarily entailed a change in the size and location of plots. In either case, the result was rapid fragmentation of the land, making the inhabitants of the plateau region underemployed, not to mention the deleterious cycle of undernourishment.
and malnutrition. The trend in the region since liberation is toward restoring the traditional modes of land holding.

There are two ways out of this deleterious cycle. The first is to abolish both kinship and communal ownerships and promote privatisation of land, reversing the process of continual fragmentation and leading to the reaggregation of the small plots into large-scale units until they become agro-commercially viable. The downside of such a policy is that the process will produce a massive displacement of peasants who will then have to drift into the cities in search of a livelihood. Hence the policy mandates the concurrent initiation of a state-guided industrialisation drive in order to accommodate new arrivals. In the absence of international capital, the simultaneous execution of such a bifurcated economic policy is unlikely to produce palpable results. Moreover, privatisation of the agrarian sector in a capitalist fashion does not necessarily promote a harmonious relationship between nature and society in the countryside. Private capitalism by definition is driven by the urge for profit and demands that more and more land be reclaimed for production purposes. This will grossly undercut the urgent need to promote afforestation programmes in order to reverse the partial desertification of the country before it becomes completely uninhabitable. Without the reconquest of society by nature and without vigorous afforestation programmes, the agrarian rehabilitation of the plateau region will be virtually impossible.

An alternative approach would be to strengthen the communal mode of ownership. Each village would be economically autonomous, but would plough the land collectively and share the produce according to the principles of collective agrarian capitalism. The villagers' relationship with the rest of the economy will be governed by market rules. This method would promote quick reaggregation of the land into agriculturally viable units without having to dislocate any peasants. There is another advantage to it; the farmers would not be culturally alienated and thus willing to set aside portions of their land for reforestation. Given proper education and effective communication, they would begin to immediately appreciate that their future prosperity and indeed their survival are organically linked to reestablishing their connection with nature. The state can be helpful in this regard by providing extension services, education on seed improvements and use of fertilisers, afforestation programmes and similar support services.

Over time, each village will evolve into an agro-commercial unit, integrated into the whole economy in a capitalist fashion. Collectively the farm units will become self-sufficient in food production and will be able to supply the cities with foodstuffs. Moreover, they can supplement and compliment the agro-commercial plantations in western Eritrea and together can serve the engine of primitive capital accumulation. To be sure, the country could be well on its way to its long-term economic reconstruction.
Political Structuring

In the political field one faces uncharted territory when it comes to offering a useful political road map. The referendum was simply a formality intended to smooth over the political divorce between Eritrea and Ethiopia and to give it a democratic character. Many Eritrean’s would regard anything less than independence as a moral equivalent of unconditional surrender since one million Eritreans were either killed or injured as a result of the war.

In anticipation of inevitable independence, the EPLF began structuring a political framework for the country. The initial task was to emancipate the entire bureaucracy from elements of the Ethiopian regime and to dampen its regulations and institutional bottlenecks. When the EPLF marched into Asmara, there were around 93,000 Ethiopian soldiers and about 52,000 civilians — all connected with the military structure. The initial task was repatriatration and to ease the food supply. In the first two months after liberation and with the limited resources, the Provisional Government of Eritrea repatriated 126,000 Ethiopians.

Currently, the Eritrean government is engaged in refining the ideological basis of its raison d’etre and all indications are that Eritrea will pursue a political system consistent with commitment to the capitalist road. As early as August in 1991, Isaias Aferworki officially declared that Eritrea would nurture a multi-party democracy, an independent judiciary and a government kept in line by checks and balances. As he noted:

*The EPLF is a nationalist front embracing all sectors of society and many currents of thought. It will be a mistake to turn this broad front into a political grouping which will inevitably mean a one-party state in Eritrea. Who will compete against us? We are simply serving as caretakers during the transition (Aferworki, 1991).*

The commitment seems to be reassuring, but its implementation remains to be seen and raises fundamental questions: how is the EPLF going to break up into competing groups or parties? what will be the nature of political discourse during the break up of the EPLF? what role will religion and ethnicity play in the process? will elements of the ELF be allowed to reorganise themselves and function as parties without any degree of political molestation? Such questions will have to be carefully studied and a constitutional framework must be devised to contain defiant political behaviour that might ruin the political process.

The last question in particular mandates the search for scrupulous political innovation. The ELF was ejected from Eritrea in the early 1980s as a result of the bloody civil war between the two Fronts. Since then some ELF members have regrouped themselves into several factions and have sought refuge in some Middle Eastern countries. The Saudis in particular are providing both sanctuary and finance to some groups and are encouraging them to promote destabilisation inside Eritrea. Their ultimate goal is to introduce Islamic funda-
mentalism into Eritrean politics with a view to thwarting the emergence of a progressively secular state on the other side of the Red Sea. Recent anti-Eritrean orchestrations in various Saudi newspapers reflect the Saudi motivation. Furthermore, the Saudis have been trying to link religion and ethnicity in a way that would promote destabilisation and consequently frustrate the referendum in Eritrea. They have found this weapon in Sultan Ali Mirah, the traditional chief of the Afars, who returned to Ethiopia after 17 years of exile in Saudi Arabia. Upon his return, the Sultan publicly demanded that the Eritrean Afars be united with their Ethiopian brethren and at the same time pledged that he would reimpose the Sharia law upon his unified subjects.

It is worth noting that religion and ethnicity by themselves are not necessarily the cause of political conflicts. When they occur, they are rather the external manifestation of the incompleteness of capital accumulation. Colonial capitalism has brought the various segments of the Eritrean society together, but has not completely supplanted the traditional mode of production and existence. Simply, human relationships in Eritrea are not yet entirely transformed into property relations. Emotive factors such as blood, kinship and religious relationships still matter. If the Eritrean elite develops an instrumental view of the state as a means of wealth-creation and accumulation or if the state is perceived as such by the social and ethnic distributional coalitions, then those who feel economically excluded and politically disenfranchised will begin to invoke symbols to supplement whatever weapons they have against those who wield state power. Under these conditions, religion and ethnicity become an integral part of the agitation and struggle against what is perceived as an unjust political order. When reinforced by external agitation, these conditions can pose a very serious challenge to the fragile Eritrean political order. Therefore, the kind of political relations Eritrea maintains with its neighbours will be as crucial during its transition as its internal policies toward egalitarian democracy, political dialogue and reconciliation.

Regional Cooperation

How Eritrea defines and evolves its external relations will be one of the elements that merit close watching. The steps taken so far toward regional orientation by the leadership are refreshing with a clear understanding, both conceptually and politically, the strategic importance of putting a premium on a regional security framework. The hardly publicised diplomatic initiative undertaken by Eritrea to bring to an end the bloody carnage in Somalia, which claimed over 30,000 casualties, is a promising harbinger of Eritrea’s long-term regional orientation. Repeated official pronouncements substantiate this tendency. In a conference of businessmen and intellectuals, Isaias Afeworki reiterated that Eritrea would make the promotion of cordial relations with its neighbours a policy priority:

*Ethiopia is the first on our list, whether politicians here like it or not, because of geographical and cultural ties, mutual security and economic interests (Parmelee, 1991).*
Eritrea: A Country in Transition

With its vast natural resources, population size, international attractiveness and market potential, Ethiopia has all the makings to serve as the epicentre for regional transformation and Eritrea can serve only as a catalyst in this process. Recognising this reality, even the managers of the world capitalist system have continued to make Ethiopia the focus of their attention. A glaring indicator is that the transitional regime of Ethiopia after being in power for only eight months, successfully negotiated an aid package of $672 million with the World Bank, repayable over 40 years with a ten year grace period.

The Eritrean government has already begun translating its rhetorical pledges into reality. In January 1992, Eritrea and Ethiopia formally signed an agreement providing Ethiopia unhampered access to the sea through the Eritrean port of Assab, negating the argument that Ethiopia will be landlocked when Eritrea becomes independent; goods entering or leaving Ethiopia will move freely without the imposition of duties by the Eritrean government and Ethiopia will have a customs office at the port to regulate the nature and flow of its commercial transactions with the outside world. Ethiopia also has free access to Djibouti and can still augment its external connections by obtaining similar facilities at Berbera in Somalia and at Mombasa in Kenya, an idea in which all three countries had discussed in the past. From a regional perspective, connecting Ethiopia to as many states as possible in the area can promote long-term regional interdependence in ways that enhance their economic significance both within and beyond the region.

To be sure, the process initiated by the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments ought to be deepened and expanded to other spheres of economic cooperation, setting in motion a process toward regional integration, with various parts specialising in different production activities. The Eritrean and Somali coastal regions, for example, can specialise in manufacturing and energy related economic activities. On the other hand, the agriculturally rich regions of Ethiopia can concentrate on building modern agro-commercial production apparatuses. In this way, the states can avoid unnecessary duplication of production and competition for the same markets by providing homogeneous products and services.

But, as they say, economic questions are ultimately questions of politics. Theorising on regional stability, Ernest Haas had long proposed that economic integration was a function of the political will emanating from the elite. The European experience seems to validate his fundamental assumptions. The useful extrapolation one can make here is that the political elite in the Horn must have a thorough understanding of the ethnopoltical and economic dynamics of the region as well as the political will to undertake proactive measures toward promoting and nurturing internal democracy and external relations as the basis for future integration. Additionally, they must understand that substantial reduction and gradual elimination of all trade barriers, harmonisation of economic policies and deregulation of capital and labour movements are in the best interest of the countries concerned.
The political benefits that derive from the process toward economic integration are numerous, nullifying the tendency toward ethnic fragmentation in the region, especially in Ethiopia, by providing a wider scope of commercial intercourse for the various peoples in the Horn. As capital accumulation spreads and deepens throughout the region, one of the immediate consequences will be the emergence of a complex web of social interdependence that can render the vestigial thoughts associated with ethnonationalism obsolete. If the tendency toward ethnonationalism is contained and political stability achieved, the Horn can also be insulated against the recurrent pattern of external involvement in its affairs.

The Horn is known for its political recalcitrance and analytical unpredictability. At present, there are many forces that can undermine and even derail the cosy relationship that is evolving between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Elements of the old order supported by a galaxy of Amhara intellectuals gathered forces to thwart the implementation of the referendum in Eritrea. They also put pressure on the US and the transitional regime in Ethiopia to reverse their positions on the Eritrean issue and are indeed engaged in the construction of subterfuges to discredit the internal legitimacy of the regime by projecting it as a Tigrayan regime and as a proxy of the Eritrean government. The overarching purpose of such misrepresentations is to create a contradiction between the Oromo and the Tigrayans on one side and the Amhara masses and the Tigrayans on the other.

Such political orchestrations are having some effects on Ethiopia as the regime is facing substantial resistance from some segments of both the Amhara and Oromo population. In fact, the regime has been engaged in some military skirmishes with Moslem elements of the Oromo in the eastern region of the country since November 1991. If escalated, this problem can take on a dangerous socio-religious coloration. At the time of this writing (1991), eastern Ethiopia has remained tense owing to the combined insurgency of the Somalis and the Oromo. Whether this situation will subside or escalate remains to be seen. But it is important to note here that, constituting about 50% of the total Ethiopian population, the Oromos could well prove to be the most serious obstacle to the fragile multinational democracy in the country.

The Amhara opposition, too, has an organisational framework as the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP), which emerged in 1975 as a multinational marxist front, but has degenerated into an ethnically Amhara and politically right-wing organisation. It has adopted an overt anti-Eritrean posture and vehemently opposed implementation of the referendum. If the EPRP succeeds in mobilising sufficient forces among the Amhara population, then the country could well be on its way to a bloody civil war similar to the current situation in Somalia. Another factor of Amhara opposition comes from within the bureaucracy of the regime. When the EPRDF seized power, it retained the bureaucracy, rather than abolishing it, because it does not have trained personnel to staff it. The result is that the bureaucracy has stalled as the Amhara technocrats engage
in slow down activity. In order to keep the bureaucracy moving, the govern-
ment removed 49 top technocrats from their positions in November 1991. In-
deed, the action could further alienate the Amhara elements of the Ethiopian
political system. As the French expression goes, the main problem with the
Amhara elite is that; 'they learned nothing; they forgot nothing.' Simply put,
the elements of the old order have not yet learned anything from the 30 year
old war with Eritrea nor from the tragic experience of the Ethiopian revolution.
The reason is that they have not forgotten their old privileges and elite status
and continue to demand their restoration. Thus their obsession with the quest
for territorial domination may, if successful, result in total anarchy in Ethiopia.
This could have serious ramifications for future Ethio-Eritrean relations.

Another area of interest to students of Eritrean politics is the Arab world. By
necessity or by historical accident, the national revolutionary process has
brought Eritrea much closer to its Arab neighbours than otherwise it would
have as the gateway to both Africa and the Middle East. As a consequence, the
country has evolved a rich mosaic of Afro-Asian languages and cultures. The
potential for transforming its eastward orientation into positive economic and
political gains is great. By capitalising on its geography and proximity to oil-
rich Gulf States, Eritrea can indeed initiate a process of regional cooperation in
ways that would transform the country into a prosperous periphery of the
Middle East. Recent Eritrean diplomatic manoeuvres seem to capture the es-
sence of this interpretation.

Relations with the Sudan started on a good footing with borders between coun-
tries open for goods and people. Moreover, both countries have expressed in-
terest in broadening and deepening their economic, cultural and diplomatic
links. The Sudan was the first country to establish formal diplomatic represen-
tation in Eritrea in anticipation of the latter's independence. Of course, rela-
tions with the Sudan have one potential liability. Sudanese politics are best
characterised by a volte-face, the tendency to drift toward Islamic fundamen-
talism being the strongest. If this happens, Eritrea may not be able to avoid
falling on the slippery slopes of Middle Eastern politics. The chances are that,
under conditions of strained relations, the Sudan can serve as a springboard for
anti-Eritrean and anti-secular agitation.

In contradistinction to the Sudan, Egypt took an anti-Eritrean posture and in
the summer of 1991, made its intentions public to block the Eritrean case from
being discussed in any international organisation. In taking this position, Egypt
probably was acting on behalf of its regional ally, the Saudis, and its interna-
tional patron, the US. Since then, however, Egypt has retreated from its original
posture, dismissing it as an unfortunate incident. To validate its change of
heart, Egypt, too, has established an informal diplomatic representation in
Eritrea. Eritrean relations with Yemen are as cordial now that Eritrea has an-
nounced the formation of the Eritrean government as when they started. The
chances for durable relations between Eritrea and Yemen are great if only be-
cause of the latter's tendency toward political moderation. Traditionally,
Yemen was an important market for Eritrean goods and the prospect for developing a durable trading partnership between the two countries is great.

The Gulf States, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, are enthusiastic about Eritrean independence. In the past they have been the most consistent in the region in their support for the Eritrean struggle. Recognising the economic importance of the Gulf to Eritrea, a high level Eritrean delegation has visited the Gulf states and the reception they got was encouraging. But, the future attitude of the Gulf States toward Eritrea and the magnitude of aid they offer may depend on Saudi political behaviour and on their ability to resist Saudi pressure.

On balance, regional cooperation poses challenges and opportunities. The challenges stem from the simple fact that both the Horn and Middle East are volatile regions. The character of the political landscape in each country is unpredictable. At this stage, the opportunities are mere potential even though some initial steps have been taken toward regional cooperation. But Eritrea is well positioned to serve as a catalyst in the promotion of a cooperative regional framework with either its southern or eastern neighbour. But one final point needs to be emphasised. The sufficient development of political democracy is a prerequisite condition for the promotion of a co-prosperity zone in the area. This requires the formulation of prudent and coherent strategies and the judicious implementation of those strategies in ways that preclude discord and disintegration. To be sure, the future political viability and economic prosperity of Eritrea will be as much a function of its internal making as the success of its external relations.

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Bibliographic Note


The Agrarian Question and Politics in the ‘New’ South Africa

Richard Levin & Daniel Weiner

New right and neo-liberal ‘development’ discourses have heavily impacted on the politics of agrarian restructuring in South Africa. Mechanisms for resolving agrarian contradictions are being discussed and presented as abstract planning decisions to be made by agricultural and rural development experts. This legitimation of ‘neo-classicism’, if unchallenged, will reproduce and support current neo-apartheid forms of restructuring.

In this article, we argue for a process of agrarian transformation where rural political mobilisation and the establishment of viable agricultural production systems are complementary. The paper is not an exercise in proposing specific (top-down) ‘solutions’ or ‘models’, which has become a recent pre-occupation in South Africa. Rather, we write with the objective of supporting a process whereby democratic transformation in rural South Africa remains possible.

More than three years after the momentous events of 2 February 1990, the course of ‘the new’ South Africa is very uncertain; this period of negotiations has been dominated by the exploration for an appropriate future development path. With the collapse of ‘existing socialism’ in Eastern Europe, however, this search is increasingly being limited to imperialist-based strategies. The most recent fascination is with the so-called ‘Asian model’.

A primary contention of this paper is the need to look beyond neo-conservative, export-oriented, and technicist development ‘solutions’ which rely on bourgeois planning models and institutions, towards popular democratic strategies which combine policy formation with political struggle and participation. The crisis on the left should not blind us to the reality that peripheral capitalism has delivered little to the third world masses, particularly in Africa and Latin America. Viable solutions for overcoming socio-economic inequalities have not been found, despite the assertions of many new-right economists. In this article, we also argue that the agrarian question is being shaped by urban politics and urban interests and call for a greater recognition of the class content of contemporary debates and struggles around agrarian policy. Finally, widespread rural demand for greater access to agricultural, grazing and residential land, we contend, provides opportunities for political mobilisation around concrete programmes of national land redistribution.
The recent repeal of the land and group-areas acts and other major apartheid legislation has done little to alter rural power relations. Farmworkers and labour tenants are still losing their jobs and the limited access to land which they have, the bantustans have not been dismantled, and white farms continue to monopolise the land resources with the highest potential. Furthermore, agricultural parastatals in the bantustans remain repressive and grossly unpopular. These grassroots realities, which were punctuated by the recent drought, underscore the urgent need for structural change in South African agriculture. But in the present conjuncture, the balance of forces in agriculture remain very in favourable to white farmers in general, and core white farmers in particular; the one-quarter who produce three-quarters of total marketable surpluses. Some political space, however, is opening up for segments of the peasantry, victims of forced removals and black capitalist farmers.

The Agrarian Question in the post-February 2, 1990 Era

The Policy Debate

The transformation in the terrain of struggle associated with the De Klerk reforms has engendered policy debate on the nature of post-apartheid land and agrarian reform. The regime's White Paper on Land Reform (Republic of South Africa, 1991) paved the way for the repeal of major apartheid land legislation, while leaving agrarian property rights and social relations intact. Marcus (1991:14) summarises the White Paper quite succinctly in arguing that the reforms it proposes 'represent a minimal ameliorative reform package which operationalises 'new right' postulates through 'old order' assumptions and practices'. The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) — a major source of capital for rural development, modelled on the World Bank — has a neoliberal approach. In a major policy document entitled 'Agriculture and Redistribution: A Growth with Equity Approach' (Brand, Christodoulou, Van Rooyen and Vink, 1991), key DBSA ideologues argue that black smallholders should form the basis of more equitable agricultural growth. Affirmative action is central to their programme. Although they argue for 'equitable access to opportunities for all' (p.1) and for a 'democratic, non-racist and non-sexist' South Africa (p.2), their apparently progressive stance must be viewed in the context of their belief that 'the market mechanism should be the primary instrument for facilitating land reform' (p.28). Couched in terms of small farm development, DBSA economists believe in many new right assumptions. If implemented, the DBSA proposals will further accelerate black class formation and effectively reproduce core white agriculture. Despite the good intentions of some individual DBSA planners, the policies advocated would be likely to increase poverty; this, of course, is the opposite of the stated intentions. Another problem is that DBSA money is still channelled through unpopular and repressive bantustan agricultural parastatals. As long as the DBSA continues to associate itself with these apartheid structures, their desired role as an important post-apartheid development planning institution should be resisted.
The ANC's policy guidelines adopted in May 1992 call for a national programme of land reform and redistribution. The programme identifies the establishment of a land claims court as a major priority in order to 'address demands and grievances concerning land restoration and land rights including ownership' (ANC, 1992:26). It also includes a policy of affirmative action 'within a viable and sustainable economic development programme' where the major beneficiaries will be the 'landless, rural poor and women who have been deprived of rights to land through patriarchal systems of land allocation and tenure'. The programme advocates a major restructuring of agriculture with less reliance on plantations to allow for the diversification of agricultural production systems. It recommends a review of the 'unrestricted expansion of forestry, sugar and tobacco and other mono-cultural production systems on high potential agricultural land' (p.28).

An additional issue of importance in the ANC policy document is the question of property rights. The proposed Bill of Rights states:

*The taking of property shall only be permissible according to law and in the public interest, which shall include the achievement of the objectives of the constitution . . .

Any such taking shall be subject to just compensation which shall be determined by establishing an equitable balance between the public interest and the interest of those affected and will not be based solely on the market value of such property (p.8).*

This formulation leaves open several possible political outcomes including expropriation of land as part of a national land reform programme. Given the current balance of forces, however, a status quo resolution is quite possible too. Just compensation has often been calculated using 'market value' criteria, while the concept of the 'public interest' could have many meanings. There is also concern that the courts will represent the interests of the agrarian and urban bourgeoisie as past experiences around the world have demonstrated. South Africa must not be allowed to follow the undemocratic Brazilian route: gross human inequalities associated with the industrialisation of large farms, increasing corporate control of the physical resource base, the repression of peasants and rural proletarians, and an undesirably high rate of urbanisation are already unflattering similarities between the two countries.

These possibilities reveal contradictory class forces within the ANC as a political movement. The right to private property is one that has been denied to all black people until very recently. Entrenched property rights are in the interest of the urban-based black petty-bourgeois and emergent bourgeois forces generally. Nevertheless, an entrenched property clause in a Bill of Rights runs the risk of making it impossible to implement a land reform programme. This is because it will seriously undermine the capacity of a democratic government, given its limited resources, to acquire land for redistribution. Entrenched property rights are, therefore, not in the interest of the landless, the poor peasantry, farmworkers and labour tenants. Debates around private property rights lie at the heart of the agrarian question in South Africa, and are being defended by forces in the ANC and the regime itself. Speaking in Tokyo in June 1992, De
Klerk warned a gathering of top Japanese businessmen that the government would not compromise on 'certain fundamental principles', and that:

*One of them is the effective protection of property rights such as private property ownership, which must be elevated above arbitrary action by any future government* (The Star, 5 June 1992:3).

The possible role of petty-bourgeois forces within the ANC was made evident in a recent issue of *Enterprise*, a magazine of 'emerging black entrepreneurs'. Here, the DBSA proudly announced that exiles were 'back to fight poverty' (*Enterprise*, March, 1992:3). A recently returned ANC 'supporter' (p.6) employed by the bank affirmed the DBSA land policy position arguing that 'the bank has set out more consistently than any other organisation the requirements of land and agricultural reform in South Africa' (p.6). Institutions like the DBSA are powerful creations of the apartheid state, and in fighting for survival in a post-apartheid South Africa, have embarked on a systematic strategy of co-option of members of the black petty-bourgeoisie, including ANC members. This raises two very important issues:

1. the realignment of class forces under conditions of social transformation; and
2. the functioning of institutions in the transition process.

**Class Formation and Social Transformation**

Presently, various social classes exist in the countryside, but the legacy of apartheid repression has meant that diverse class forces have some important common interests, including the demand for greater access to rural resources and, more sympathetic state institutions. It must also be noted that apartheid tended to limit the extent of social differentiation amongst the oppressed majority in rural areas. Post-apartheid agrarian restructuring will both enhance and transform existing social differences and class formation, but this will take different forms, depending on the nature of rural struggle and the form of the post-apartheid state. Democratisation in the countryside will lead emergent petty-bourgeois and bourgeois forces to seek new strategies of accumulation. The new state and its institutions will play a large role in determining the form that class formation is likely to take. The more progressive and democratic the state, the greater the likelihood of conditions under which emergent petty-bourgeois and bourgeois classes will be able to accumulate from below without depending on a close 'individual-state connection' (Mamdani, 1988:84).

A major pitfall of bourgeois reformism in the current conjuncture in South Africa is, therefore, that it could stimulate forms of accumulation from above which are reliant on extra-economic forms of coercion and individual-state connections. The DBSA’s current approach which links bantustan agricultural projects and farmer support programmes to the parastatals, is likely to foster accumulation from above by comprador and bureaucratic bourgeois social
forces. The institution of the chieftaincy, for example, could be preserved and
developed while continuing to constitute an extra-economic force within the
accumulation process. Similarly, as elsewhere in Africa, a direct individual-
state connection could become a *sine qua non* for accumulation. The dangers
inherent in this approach, must be noted by the ANC if it is to prevent the
predominance of various forms of accumulation from above. It also casts doubt
on the wisdom of alliances with chiefs and certain bantustan state classes
around negotiations, especially since on the ground in many areas, ANC con-
stituencies are in conflict with these forces.

The politics of social differentiation and accumulation are, of course, quite
complex, and locally contingent. It is sometimes emergent petty-bourgeois and
bourgeois classes who are engaged in struggle with chiefs and the bantustan
state, and they are not necessarily reactionary. On the contrary, emergent
classes can contain progressive and democratic elements and be an important
social force to mobilise for an effective challenge to the agrarian status quo.

**The State and Institutions**

The failure of 'existing socialism' has led to a policy paralysis on the South
African left and a consequent over-reliance on existing neo-conservative and
neo-liberal 'development' institutions. It seems unreasonable to assume that
these institutions can successfully transform South Africa's agrarian produc-
tion relations without being fundamentally restructured.

The question of institutions is linked to the philosophy of development plan-
ing generally, and imperialist designs in the region specifically. As Fantu
Cheru (1989:ix) recently argued:

>A century after the Berlin Conference of 1885, which partitioned Africa, the continent is
once again being recolonized under the guise of Western-prescribed structural adjust-
ment and policy dialogue. The old Christian missionaries have been replaced by an army
of western neo-classical economists who peddle their free-market ideology, which, it is
hoped, will take Africans to the Garden of Eden. Their message has remained essentially
the same: Africa must always look to the West for its image and development. This need
not be so.

We believe that institutions that are fundamentally geared towards propagat-
ing capitalist production relations using unproved theories and politically
problematic policies are not in a position to successfully transform the apart-
heid space-economy. In this context, recent visits and subsequent reports by
various World Bank teams, and other international 'aid' agencies must be
viewed critically.

Existing state institutions in South Africa also need to be viewed with great
caution. Ongoing field-work in the Eastern and Northern Transvaal suggests
that prevailing state structures and institutions continue to work together to
oppress rural people. For example, in an interview with the chairman of the
Kangwane Agricultural Union for the Nsikazi region, continued anger towards bantustan agricultural parastatals was made evident. According to Mr P. Nkosi, Agriwane (Kangwane's agricultural parastatal) operates through unpopular chiefs and by-passes the farmers' union. He argued forcefully that their large-scale projects were turning blacks into 'ordinary labourers', and that their farmer support programmes have greatly increased farmer debt (Interview, 21 June 1992). According to Mr Nkosi, 'they [Agriwane] are trying to keep progressive farmers down. They put money in farmers' hands and then take it back'.

Similar objections were expressed in meetings with farmer union members in Lebowa. At a protest meeting of over 100 people in Mapulaneng, community members raised concerns over the activities of the Lebowa Agricultural Corporation's (LAC) activities in Zoeknog. The LAC liaises with local chiefs to force people into ambiguous contracts which often lead to land alienation and enforced proletarianisation. Sello Mashego, a farmers' union activist, commented that the present practices of the chieftaincy are neither democratic nor traditional. He went further in arguing that the real beneficiaries of many Lebowa projects are the chiefs and their supporters. Decisions on who to support, he claimed, are based more on political criteria than on farming skill (Interview, 21 June 1992).

A strong message from these (and other) interviews was that bantustan agricultural corporations need to be democratically controlled, and that some local black people feel confident that they can participate constructively in this process. Bantustan parastatals are viewed as 'white' institutions which are not intended to develop black agriculture; a large 'Rhodesian immigrant' presence reinforces this view. Within the broader community, there is also distrust over the intentions of the DBSA, and there appears to be an awareness that the DBSA funds these unpopular bantustan agricultural corporations. Our discussions with these farmers' union representatives, as well as landed and landless persons throughout the region, point to widespread disenchantment with the role of the state vis-à-vis existing agricultural institutions. Furthermore, while most black smallholders expressed the need for assistance, they do not want to be 'developed' and wish to participate actively in the process of transformation. It was also made clear to us that there is a strong demand for greater access to land and water; apartheid planners, it was pointed out, had a good understanding of local water drainage patterns.

On the issue of land, Mr Nkosi argued that:

_The playing field should be levelled: we need ways and means to occupy land. I cannot even afford the deposit for a farm. Some wealthy blacks are now buying farms for luxury. We cannot say that these are farmers'. When asked whether blacks have the skills to farm, he said half jokingly 'I've never seen a white farmer in South Africa. Blacks do most of the work'. For blacks, 'skills are not a problem' (Interview, 21 June 1992)._
In arguing further that the potential for black agricultural expansion is very high, he told us stories about white farmers who used to kick black farmers out of town, because according to him, they were able to sell high quality produce at cheap prices and had lucrative businesses.

The issue of black farming skills is complex and actual abilities are probably highly variable. Nevertheless our preliminary fieldwork indicates that urban conceptions of deskilled rural blacks grossly underestimate black farming capacity in South Africa. We are not arguing that there is a large peasantry waiting in the wings for liberation, but it is clear to us that development institutions that do not respect or understand local production potentials and the existence of indigenous knowledge are inappropriate for the task at hand. It is in this context that the DBSA's stated intentions to support local initiatives and the reality of repressive and technicist DBSA funding on the ground must be reconciled. If the DBSA wants to be taken seriously as a post-apartheid development-planning institution within rural communities, it must fight legitimately for the dismantling of bantustan agricultural parastatals and support genuine democratisation of existing projects.

**Summary**

Despite the convergence between the South African state and democratic forces in such important areas as private property rights and the preservation of core white agriculture, and alongside the growing international pressure for status-quo 'market restructuring', some political space for popular democratic agrarian transformation remains. The ANC's policy document for instance, does provide a framework for structural transformation, but this will depend largely on the degree of rural organisation and participation, as well as the willingness of a democratic government to support the majority of rural people. Urban-based policy makers must have a greater appreciation that rural demand for land is quite high. Furthermore, in the context of rapidly growing unemployment, demand for rural land can also be expected from people with urban jobs — returning migrants in particular. What then are the prospects for a democratic restructuring of South African agriculture?

**Towards Agrarian Transformation in South Africa**

The crisis on the left does not legitimise the planning institutions of the right. Mike De Klerk (1992) has recently argued:

> For policy makers and academics on the left, who for so long have been locked into critical analysis and for whom Marx and the experience of planned economic systems offer so few positive guidelines for practical policy formulation ... [policy] presents a particular challenge. It will no longer be good enough to sit on the sidelines and snipe. Nor will it help to rehash policies that have demonstrably failed elsewhere. New thinking and a preparedness to engage with those who have had to grapple at first hand with policy in the past will be required. For some, this may even mean 'going to work for the enemy' for a while to learn the practicalities of institutions (p.28).
We believe that this type of analysis is problematic. While 'new thinking' is necessary, we would argue that new thinking is often not really very new at all. It often amounts to a reversion to a doctrine of neo-classicism 'which associates the state with the free play of market forces' (Fine, 1992:73). Fine argues that the unbanning of the SACP-ANC has led to a resurgence of neo-classicism as the 'paramount mode of liberation politics'. From this perspective, the proposition of 'working with the enemy' must be treated with extreme caution. In any event, the enemy is part of the problem rather than the solution. It is unlikely that these people will help to liberate the rural oppressed and support squatters, the landless and near landless, as well as farmworkers and tenants in their struggles to access land from powerful people, corporations and interest groups. It is not only the left which needs new ideas when it comes to agrarian transformation. There is a need to critically engage with the failures of capitalism as well as socialism. This need not imply a wholesale rejection of any engagement with 'those who have had to grapple at first hand with policy in the past'. Rather it emphasises an awareness of the political dimensions of such engagement, since, as Fine has observed, the 'political strategy associated with neo-classicism has been to cement an alliance around a consensual programme of liberal reform from above and self-restraint from below' (p.74).

The remainder of this paper identifies central concerns for agrarian reconstruction in South Africa. It is argued that transformation is a process and not an event (Bernstein, 1992), and that along with much-needed research, programmes which can support the process of transformation need to be established. These programmes should incorporate — at a minimum — the following sets of issues:

**Agrarian Research**

The debate on land and agrarian policy is being conducted in an environment of great ignorance regarding what is really happening on the ground; in most cases, restructuring policies are being suggested without real knowledge of what is actually going to be restructured. This problem is slowly being redressed by service organisations in the field and several research projects which have recently commenced. The types of information needed are immense and beyond the scope of this discussion. However, we would argue that localised information on what people want and are capable of doing is of great importance. This includes community and household information on land use, agricultural and livestock production and productivity and, the types of inputs being utilised. But, the technical conditions of production must be understood within the context of community and sub-regional social differentiation; the social forces in the South African countryside are the product of a localised web of race, class, ethnic, lineage and gender processes which are mediated, in part, through differential access and control of natural resources. At a more macro-level, information is needed on the dominant farming systems and associated labour processes that presently exist and their potential for economic and political transformation. And finally, the research agenda must be truly participa-
tory and move beyond the conventional — and reactionary — treatment of poor rural people as merely objects of study.

Property Rights

The process of transformation is contingent on the ability of a democratic state to identify and access South Africa's natural resource base. The National Party's current proposals are aimed at closing off this option. The entrenchment of property rights in a Bill of Rights in post-apartheid South Africa runs the real risk of reproducing historical agrarian power relations. Historically, property rights have been the preserve of the white minority. These rights lie at the heart of white South Africa's fear of socio-political transformation. In responding to this fear, the ANC's policy document proposes the entrenchment of property rights in an ambiguous way that may or may not facilitate national land reform. The consequences of entrenching private property rights in the constitution, and leaving the issue of just compensation in the hands of the courts, however, are unpredictable and difficult to reverse (Bauman, 1992:104).

Moreover, as Budlender has noted, the courts are uncomfortable when dealing with policy issues centring on matters of substantial public interest. Judges, he argues

are also not well equipped to deal with those issues particularly in a changing society.
You do not have to believe that the judges are simply the representatives of the ruling class to believe that by their background and experience, judges will inevitably lean towards protecting familiar vested rights. Further, I doubt whether the courts are a suitable institution to decide what are really disputes about conflicting priorities in the use of the society's resources. Surely this is precisely the function of the political process (Budlender, 1992:215-6).

The ANC's legal and constitutional department needs to think more carefully about the consequences of entrenched private property rights and payment of just compensation for a national land reform programme. A starting point could be an investigation into deferred and non-cash payment of compensation, for example in the form of government bonds over 15 or 20 years. For seriously indebted farmers, just compensation could be linked to farm debt repayment. In the case of corporate plantation agriculture, is just compensation appropriate at all?

The current debate regarding property dwells on the rights of present property owners and, despite great political sympathy for the 'victims of forced removals', the issue of just compensation and property rights is being debated as it relates to the beneficiaries of apartheid. 'What is missing is a serious discussion of the right of the property-less to what they need for a decent life — because that, too, should be understood as a property right' (Budlender, 1992:213). Can the courts offer 'just compensation' to the generations who have suffered under colonialism and apartheid? The proposition — property rights for whom? — is a simple, but fundamental question.
At present, black people hold land under differing tenurial systems. The ANC (1992) argues that 'people should have security of tenure which does not necessarily mean individual ownership of land and the dwelling unit. Provision will be made for different forms of tenure' (p.36). It also asserts that subject to women not being denied access to land rights, 'the diversity of tenure forms in our country . . . shall be recognised and protected' (p.28). The aim here is to facilitate the development of a legal framework within which 'communal' forms of land tenure can be protected. Cross (1992) argues that presently, many communal systems 'have gone a long way towards transforming individual use of land into individual ownership of land', and that what 'remains with the community as a group is more properly a right of oversight rather than shared ownership' (p.5). This correctly suggests that the notion of communal tenure is a misnomer as the current basis of these systems is not communal.

In the broader African context, 'communal' tenure systems tend to be patriarchal forms of social regulation under the control of male elders. The transformation of the chieftaincy under colonial and neo-colonial social relations has generated new forms of oppression and domination in rural areas. The impact on lower-class women and households has often been severe. In Uganda, for instance, Mamdani (1987) has shown how in a context of inequality, the cooperative form of various 'traditional' practices has been transformed into fundamentally unequal relationships. In Swaziland, the chieftaincy, aristocracy and other 'traditional' relations lie at the heart of a regime of extra-economic forms of accumulation from above (Levin, 1990). It is important, therefore, when recognising different forms of existing tenure to note how they impact on the politics of production. Communal forms of tenure have the potential to become democratic if administered and allocated by popularly elected local bodies where women are properly represented.

Core White Agriculture

Also missing from the current policy debate is a serious discussion on the future of core white agriculture. Legitimate concerns over domestic food supply are often accompanied with false assumptions regarding the land-use characteristics and efficiency of the whole of white agriculture. It is still generally believed that core white agriculture utilises most of the potentially arable land available, while peripheral white agriculture underutilises potentially arable land. On the basis of this, among other, assumptions, land transfer involving core white agriculture is quietly been pushed off the agenda. As a result, there is a tendency to identify peripheral white agricultural land as the prime target for redistribution.

In previous work, we demonstrated that much of South Africa's highest potential agricultural land is being underutilised and used inappropriately for plantation agriculture and livestock grazing (Weiner and Levin, 1991:98). We also suggested that productivity differentials between 'white and black' agriculture in maize production are not as great as generally assumed. This work indicates
that the issue of 'inappropriate' land use must be taken seriously and put on the political agenda. Only half of the potentially arable white farm land in the relatively high potential eastern Transvaal and Natal regions is under crops or fallow. On the other hand, overutilisation of land is highest in the lower potential regions of the country and in sections of the maize triangle. Furthermore, timber plantations are occupying greater amounts of good land and there is much livestock and sugar production on land which is well suited for grain production. Throughout South Africa, there are situations where repressive and overly industrialised farms that grow non-food crops lie adjacent to — and within — bantustans that have high levels of landlessness, unemployment and malnutrition.

Domestic food production is fundamental to post-apartheid South Africa. If black farmers, on whatever scale, are to contribute more to domestic grain and livestock production they must have access to greater areas of better quality land. It is against this background that we are suspicious of populist advocates of black small-farm development who do not appear to be prepared to challenge the current monopoly of medium and high potential land. It must also be noted that current discussions about establishing mechanisms for redistributing land are unfolding in the context of the opposite process: a tightening grip of large-scale land owners on core white farming land and the expansion of estate and contract farming into the bantustans. This is one reason why the ANC's calls for reviewing white agriculture in high potential regions, and for challenging the agricultural monopolies generally, are of the utmost importance.

Considerations of socially appropriate land use need to be incorporated into the debate on agrarian restructuring. Identifying models is meaningless without access to more land of good quality. The issue of just compensation and a possible 'willing seller/willing buyer' type clause in the constitution is linked to the land-use issue. The Zimbabwe experience demonstrates that the 'willing sellers' tend to be in poorer agro-ecological regions. The 'willing buyers', therefore have limited choices. Agriculture, of course, is not just about politics and economics. Access to soil and water is central to successful agrarian restructuring. The material reality of current new-right and neo-liberal thinking is the reproduction of South Africa's historical political ecology.

Institutions

There is general agreement across a range of ideological perspectives that the institutions of apartheid need to be transformed in order to better service the needs of black rural people. Central to DBSA and neo-liberal thinking generally, is this very notion. Johan Van Zyl, Dean of Agriculture at the University of Pretoria believes that institutional transformation must be the centre-piece of agrarian reform in South Africa. Using Zimbabwe as a rare African success story, he argues that:
without question, there is little theoretical, conceptual, or empirical literature on rural institutions in Africa to guide policy makers on how to develop efficient and equitable institutions to serve communal farmers and herders. This explains why Zimbabwe’s experience over the past decade is relevant to South Africa (Farmer’s Weekly, 12 June 1992:13).

Indeed, the Zimbabwe experience is instructive (Weiner, 1989). Existing institutions were expanded to include black producers. Extension, credit, greater access to fossil-fuel inputs and markets, successfully stimulated smallholder production. But for the most part, these technicist forms of institutional transformation left historical agrarian relations intact. As is now well known social and spatial differentiation has intensified significantly since independence (Cousins et al, 1992). Zimbabwe’s current political crisis and chronic drought impact problem must be viewed against this background.

In South Africa, where the peasantry is much more marginalised than in pre-independence Zimbabwe, a primarily technicist and production-oriented institutional transformation is likely to generate even greater levels of inequality and to further empower the already powerful. Given the already highly skewed character of bantustan agricultural production, it will take much more than affirmative action programmes to truly overcome socio-economic inequalities.

We believe in institutions for structural transformation and sustainable development. Existing technicist institutions, continue to draw their inspiration from outmoded modernisation approaches to development. For example, Van Zyl (p.12) argues that ‘most communal farmers in Africa are at an earlier stage of scientific, institutional and human capital development than their counterparts in Latin America and Asia’. Certainly, African agricultural productivity needs to be enhanced and technology should be part of that process. This however does not mean that the experiences of agricultural development elsewhere in the periphery should be uncritically applied here. Van Zyl’s Rostovian notion of (capitalist) stages too simply assumes that western industrialised agriculture is desirable. A rapidly growing literature on sustainable agricultural development forcefully argues differently (Goodman & Redclift, 1991).

Institutions are historical products of definite power relations. The institutional structure of agricultural development in South Africa has been created to service the needs of the apartheid state. This is why the ANC’s policy document argues that the ‘present system of regulatory mechanisms, agricultural control boards and the operations of the parastatals will be reviewed and amended’ (p.33). But the ANC goes further in recognising that a more systematic transformation of agricultural institutional structures will be required in order for black agricultural producers to gain access to the sector.

The hidden monopolies and controls that exist in agriculture by virtue of the control linkages between agricultural credit, marketing, commercial co-operatives, the Land Bank and the SAAU, must be broken up to enable new farmers
to enter the sector (ANC, 1992).

Breaking the monopolies will require strong political will. Institutions for agrarian transformation in post-apartheid South Africa will have to move beyond the mere creation of the technical conditions of production to support new and presently emerging forms of democratic social organisation and land use. This will require a sensitivity to people's needs on the ground as well as critical non-technical components to production and productivity enhancement. Greater appreciation of indigenous knowledge and local natural resource use must be part of this effort. The reality that transformation is a process that will take time must also not be overlooked.

**Popular Participation**

Successful institutional transformation is not possible without popular participation in decision-making. The fact that current debates regarding agrarian transformation in South Africa are taking place in North America, Western Europe and conference centres in South Africa, with minimal involvement of South Africa's rural people, is a warning sign that a democratic resolution to the problem is not in sight. As Shivji points out:

The current debate on democracy in Africa is stimulating, but many views are rooted in liberalism, justify it in terms of 'development' or see it as an absolute good. Little attempt is made to situate it in historical processes of people in struggle, resulting in a mistrust of the masses ... The very way the debate is constructed must also be democratic and should reflect the people's own strivings, not the 'negative' models of the East, or the 'positive' models (and pressures) of the West (1991:79).

Shivji's comments underscore the urgent necessity for involving ordinary rural people in contemporary policy debates. Given existing constraints, the ANC has thus far initiated a democratic process of policy formation. Land commissions have been set up in each of the ANC's 14 regions to debate policy issues. These function with varying success, but it is not possible at this stage to estimate the level of grassroots participation within the commissions. The ANC also faces a major contradiction between its national negotiations strategy, and its functioning at a local level in rural areas. This is because, as noted above, the alliances forged in the negotiations process with bantustan and tribal leaders, often contradict the nature of popular struggles on the ground. This could become even more dangerous if negotiations are elevated to the movement's single strategic perspective. Developing a national rural organisational strategy which can respond to local needs is a major challenge facing the ANC and the democratic movement in the current period. It is a historical reality that the South African democratic struggle has increasingly been forged in an urban milieu, and this has led to a certain amount of urban bias in the strategies and tactics of the ANC and other liberation movements (Bundy, 1984). This legacy may yet prove to be one of the major obstacles to a democratic resolution of the
agrarian question. Programmatically, the ANC should gear itself towards helping urban people become more aware of, and sympathetic towards, rural needs. This need not be problematic since many households reproduce themselves through both urban and rural means.

Technicist strategies are a major threat to democratic rural-policy formulation; policy itself is all too often construed as a set of technical solutions. Productivity, narrowly defined, becomes the primary objective of rural development planning. Policy formation is as much a problem of social and political organisation as it is a process of technical change and diffusion. The overwhelming experience of the third world is that progressive policies, in the absence of political mobilisation and participation, tend to reproduce the status quo. Progressive policies can, however, provide an important framework favourable to popular struggles, and in this context, 'The Land' section of the ANC's (1992) policy document does provide auspicious conditions for genuine democratic social and technological transformation.

Race, Class & Agrarian Transformation in South Africa
Throughout the world there is an arrogance surrounding new right thinking — some economists believe that they have the solutions for third world economic development problems. These often lie in structural adjustment programmes for macro-economic planning. Third world governments it is argued, are guilty of not listening to first world experts. Imported to South Africa, the more extreme forms of this 'neo-classicism' (Fine, 1992) have a racist twist. For example, Henry Kenney of the Economics Department of the University of the Witwatersand recently argued that:

the ANC has a first year economics student's problem: difficulty grasping the connection between property and economic performance . . . the ANC is still hung up on the notion that redistribution will resolve black poverty. Evidence proves the opposite: economic growth causes inequalities to narrow (The Sunday Star, 7 June 1992:28).

We feel sorry for first year economics students who are taught by Henry Kenney. More seriously, and putting Kenney's patronising attitude aside, his understanding of development is ahistorical and factually incorrect. We agree with Saki Macozoma, an ANC spokesperson who responded to Kenney in arguing that

the experience of Reaganomics and Thatcherism is that savings did not go into reinvestment and new jobs, but into pleasure boats, resorts and further conglomerations.

The issues raised in this debate indicate that race and class are intertwined in contemporary policy debates. Advocates of new right thinking are more often than not white men in power positions aligned with third world ruling classes. The victims of structural adjustment programmes tend to be non-white. The idea that 'the market' should be the major mechanism for redistribution has no historical or empirical basis anywhere. The market remains an abstraction, and
it is certainly not free: it costs money to play. Furthermore, the Asian ‘market economies’ often seen as a model for South Africa, owe their ‘success’ in part to land reform and a strong state. Current new-right thinking in South Africa is adopting the export component of the Asian experience while ignoring other central dimensions of Asian transformation.

In South Africa, neo-liberal thinking, which is articulated by the DBSA amongst others, appears to have gone beyond racism in its transformation proposals. Their proposals, however, are likely to entrench forms of accumulation from above in South African agriculture despite other possible intentions. Affirmative action programmes will not level the playing field for more equitable market-led growth as suggested. Implicit in the notion of affirmative action is the assumption that black people are inferior farmers and that existing institutions, aside from their racial character, are unproblematic. Mamdani, commenting on the post-colonial experiences of African settler societies, argues that ‘affirmative action tended to strengthen and legitimate colonial institutions and practices by removing from them the racial stigma’ (1992:16). He also asserts that ‘embracing the language and vision of affirmative action’ runs the risk of obscuring the fundamental task of ‘institutional transformation’. New right and neo-liberal policies are likely to buttress comprador and bureaucratic elements of the emergent black bourgeoisie in the countryside and relatively productive black smallholders.

We are not arguing that emergent farmers should not be supported; indeed they could play a progressive role in agrarian transformation. But to truly generate democratic growth, agricultural restructuring must be broad-based and be built upon the range of labour processes that currently exist in the countryside. New forms of rural social organisation cannot simply be planned from above. Genuine social reconstruction involves transforming existing relations of production through the creation of conditions under which peoples initiatives can be supported. At best, a democratic state can create the conditions under which progressive alternatives can evolve. In such a context, a variety of agricultural and livestock production systems should be supported. For example, the existence of socialised labour in South Africa suggests that there might be some potential for developing worker self-management schemes. Input and tractor cooperatives which support individual smallholders and pre-cooperatives also might have significant support in a more sympathetic political and economic environment. There is also some re-colonisation of white farm grazing land abandoned during the 1980s droughts which needs to be investigated. The range of production alternatives, we believe, is greater than generally assumed.

The essence of our argument is that fundamental transformation of apartheid race, class and gender relations will require policies and programmes which go well beyond new-right and neo-liberal thinking. White agriculture has historically been oppressive, and related legislation has been at the centre of the development of apartheid. We are not arguing for the dismantling of the whole of
white agriculture; segments of white agriculture certainly have a role to play in ‘the new’ South Africa. We are, however, arguing for the creation of progressive democratic alternatives which can challenge the hegemony of white agriculture and truly support local production and reproduction initiatives. Fostering a rich peasantry and a class of black capitalist farmers on its own will not achieve this. The legitimation of neo-classicism will actually reproduce and strengthen neo-apartheid forms of transformation initiated by the 2 February 1990 De Klerk reforms.

To move beyond the undesirable material realities associated with neo-apartheid restructuring — for example, enhanced social differentiation, rapid poverty formation and, the reproduction of unpopular technicist planning institutions — the ANC should not succumb to unfounded white fears and threats from the international community. ‘Big capital’, both domestic and foreign is not truly concerned with the welfare of the majority of South Africans. An important counter to technicist and imperialist-based proposals for South African agriculture, therefore, lies in the further mobilisation and organisation of rural people. Land hunger in the South African countryside is real, and constitutes a powerful basis for popular mobilisation. Rural people are currently demanding land for residential, grazing and agricultural purposes. Returning migrants and the growing urban and rural squatter population often want land too; the land question is a rural and urban concern. In the present conjuncture, when the ANC views mass action as a pillar of struggle which complements the terrain of negotiations, the land question could become part of a powerful political programme to strengthen the organisation’s mass base. Land redistribution must be a central component of the ANC’s election campaign.

Land occupation should also be part of the ANC’s transformation strategy by, for example, providing a powerful counterweight to the De Klerk regime’s unilateral decision in 1992 to grant one million hectares of land to the bantustans. This would require strategic planning, community participation and incorporation within a broader national democratic strategy. One of the central lessons from Zimbabwe is that land needs to be struggled for. Presently almost half of the total area of Zimbabwe’s resettled land is land that was abandoned by whites during the liberation struggle. It is amongst the best quality resettled land in the country. In South Africa, the future of trust land, vacant land, unused and underutilised white farm land, highly indebted farms as well as inappropriately used plantation land, need to be put on the political agenda immediately. We also believe that restructuring agricultural parastatals in the bantustans — which occupy the best land in these areas — must also be part of the transformation process. The best way of ensuring that this agenda is fulfilled is to facilitate the participation of the rural oppressed whose expectations are extremely high in this current conjuncture.

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Bibliographic Note


Check on Socialism in Mozambique — What Check? What Socialism?

Michel Cahen

When I was asked to talk on the 'the check on socialism in Mozambique', my first reaction was to decline. After all, I have been trying for the last 15 years to explain that to talk of socialism in Mozambique has no meaning. It is true that the Frelimo regime declared itself officially socialist and marxist-leninist as early as 1977. But just because a regime refers to itself officially in a particular way, this is no reason for a social scientist — and particularly a marxist social scientist — to accept a blank cheque.

Nevertheless, many have simply accepted the founding myths of the People's Republic of Mozambique (PRM): the marxist-leninist credentials of the party, the socialist character of the social transformation, the popular character of power, the worker-peasant class nature of the state, and so on — all of which raise some problems regarding the basic concepts with which we should work.

Given this basic framework, it was only possible to discuss 'the errors' of the party and not its basic orientation, 'the inability of the state to follow the correct party line' and not the basic principle of the single party (poder popular), the inadequate support given to the communal villages and not the decision to create them. It was impossible to debate the existence or non-existence of a nation, a literacy programme that was only in Portuguese (and not in African languages), or oppressive anti-tribalism. And of course, the war that began to tear the country apart from 1977 onwards had to be seen as exclusively external — a war of aggression, and not a civil war.

More generally, there was an overestimation of the significance of political discourse in the characterisation of the state — 'the party in power is marxist, therefore the state is worker-peasant or socialist' — and confusion on different levels of analysis. A state is not defined by the official orientation of the party which controls it, but by the nature of the social relations which it regulates.

What is surprising is that so many Western and marxist sympathisers have abandoned their ABC of marxist state analysis in order to be able to say that Mozambique was socialist — until very recently. Previously it was said that the
state was socialist, had a ‘worker-peasant’ class character. When, after the introduction of economic liberalism from 1985 onwards, it became difficult to sustain this idea, then the state — which logically should have then acquired a bourgeois character — lost its class character entirely to become ‘a site of class struggle’. And when even that became untenable, it was accepted that a defeat had been experienced — but an external defeat, due to foreign aggression — and that a concomitant change had taken place in the character of Frelimo, which from being a marxist-leninist party had become again a nationalist petty-bourgeois formation. Again, this accepts too much of the political discourse.

Why insist so much on this? Because between 1975-1990 it has imposed a certain mode of analysis and made it impossible to raise certain issues; for example, the possible subversive value of democracy and ethnicity. It has considerably affected the analysis of the war, especially morally, and has prevented intellectuals from helping to resolve it: to accept the idea of a civil war (rather than a war of aggression) was already to play Pretoria’s game. This also applied to me, even if I was not a supporter of Frelimo: it was only in 1985 that I began to think, and only in 1987 that I began to write — still very carefully — that the war in Mozambique ‘was in the process of changing from a war of aggression to a civil war’. And if I wrote that, it was not because I had special sources, but because, not accepting the founding myths of the PRM, I could no longer understand what was happening! How could one explain that a rebel movement, created by the Rhodesians and then supported by the oh-so-powerful-and-expert-in-social-manipulation South Africans, had come to operate effectively over 95 per cent of the territory without any social base? How could one explain that there was no popular military resistance against this aggression, that this was a private war between the official army and the rebel military forces? Looking back, I know now that the transition from a war of aggression to a civil war took place between 1980 and 1982. But I also did not wish to play the game of the enemy.

It also bears heavily on contemporary analysis. Before, one spoke of the single party and there was socialism; now there is no longer a single party, and one no longer talks of socialism: there is a link between the two — a failure to understand the relationship between political democracy and the socialist perspective. My insistence on this matter may appear surprising, because socialism is no longer in fashion. But I urge you to stay alert and see a new socialist generation emerge in Africa. Fashions change, social reality remains, and social science does not have to accept the constraints of short term tendencies.

A Debate on ‘True and False’ Marxism in Africa?

I have often been criticised on the grounds that, when it comes to it, I have defined an abstract model of ‘true marxism’ in Africa in order, by contrasting it with the sad reality, to conclude that Frelimo has never been marxist or socialist, and that marxism there was nothing other than a discourse. I hope to have
shown that this is not the case at all. Everyone may have their idea of marxism and, of course, I have mine. But, I repeat, as a social scientist, I cannot accept as a blank cheque the ‘marxist-leninist character’ of the party, the ‘socialist’ nature of the transition, the ‘popular’ character of power, and the ‘revolutionary’ nature of justice. I must work with the social reality (and indeed I conclude that Mozambique remained a peripheral capitalist state) and, in this context, I am obliged to ask myself what is the historical function of the claim by the national elites to be marxist.

This is not then a matter of determining whether the party leadership employed a marxist discourse only for propaganda purposes out of cunningness; it goes much deeper than that. What are the social origins of this marxist political discourse? What explains the capture of the elite by this ideology and what is expressed by its particular orientation?

It is important, in this already more precise framework, not to prevent a discussion of the political nature of the Mozambican marxist discourse. It is too easy just to accept the ‘marxist-leninist’ label adopted in 1977 at the Third Congress of Frelimo. What did this marxism consist of? It is possible to identify five basic themes: a general discourse against exploitation directed equally at colonialism and capitalism and at the African social formation and ‘domestic’ mode of production (characterised as ‘feudalism’ and ‘obscurantism’); the legitimation of the single party as the crucible for the forging of the nation; a bureaucratic vision of democratic centralism as a mode of internal as well as external operation and paradoxically extended to all the society; a unifying vision of the nation without ethnic divisions and without ‘traditional’ social relations in peasant society; and finally, a vigorous developmentalism under the aegis of the state, ignoring the articulation of the various modes of production (capitalist and ‘domestic’), in which the population was to be ‘transformed’, but not itself to act, and was to participate in the life of the single party, but not discuss its merits.

But would this elite have been attracted to marxism if, in the heritage transmitted to it, there had figured, for example, the awareness of Austrian marxism (or of the Polish Bund, or indeed of the first Ukrainian Communist Party), regarding ethnic questions; the sensitivity to unfettered freedom of expression displayed by Rosa Luxemburg; the original version of democratic centralism limited to the party and permitting the existence of different tendencies developed in Lenin’s lifetime and defended thereafter by a segment of the trotskyists; or the sensitivity to the heterogeneity of civil society displayed by Gramsci?

It is not sufficient to ask about the ‘capture’ of the Mozambican Creole elites by marxism. The question must also be asked about their ‘capture’ by specific versions of marxism. To speak more crudely, what is the explanation and the function of their capture by stalinist manichaeism and at what level was this utilised? In fact, we must not continue to confuse levels of analysis. Mozambique has not been a stalinist state, even if the single party has mimicked, at the level of the political superstructure, the stalinist model.
A Return to the History of Mozambique’s Elites

The Lusophone heritage does not constitute a social or political entity in Africa; the Cape Verde Islands have little in common with Angola, which in turn is significantly different from Mozambique. The common feature, however, is a history of Portuguese colonial oppression, the oppression of a metropolis in which the fusion of banking and industrial capital to create finance capital was relatively little advanced, resulting first in a low level of productive investment in the colonies, second in strong mercantilist tendencies despite the rigorous monetarism of the Portuguese dictatorship, third in a preponderance of bureaucratic petty bourgeois strata (civil, military and church) in the colonial presence; and fourth in a strategy of settler colonisation.

This, combined in both Angola and Mozambique with a situation in which foreign capital controlled the main spheres of wealth creation, ensured that the petty white colons monopolised, to a degree rarely achieved elsewhere, all that remained which could provide an income. Until the beginning of the 1960s, for example, Africans could not be recognised as traders, while they were excluded to an increasing extent from the administration. In Luanda, there were even white shoe-shine boys and street newspaper vendors.

In Mozambique, there were fewer poor whites, but their concentration in the urban areas was even greater: seventy-five per cent lived in the two main cities and there effectively blocked any black social advancement. But in Angola, in Luanda particularly, while the pressure of the ‘small whites’ was very great and the African elites were restricted, they were only gradually restricted from a previously strong position. As the descendants of old slaving families, whether black or of mixed race, the Creole elite was in fact substantial. And Luanda remained the capital throughout the 20th century. In Mozambique, by contrast, the major concentrations of Creoles were in the north of the country, in the Zambezi valley, in Zambezia, in the Island of Mocambique, and in the Island of Ibo. But the developments of the 20th century were to marginalise these elites socially and politically: the capital was moved from the Island of Mocambique to Maputo, and the two great cities which developed thereafter were not the ancient colonial centres of Tete, Quelimane or Mocambique, but two places created out of nothing to serve the needs of the British hinterland — Maputo (Lourenco-Marques) and Beira, situated in the extreme south and the centre-south. As a result, the urban African elite had nothing on which to depend, no tradition. It was to be a Creole formation of the 20th century, entirely subordinated by the dynamics of modern Portuguese colonialism. This elite had no links with the production of goods and services — there were practically no black planters, no black traders, no black lawyers, just lowly office workers, employees in the commercial sector and health auxiliaries; there were practically no black clerics either. In short, a small elite (fewer than 5,000 assimilados for the entire country and a very small population of mixed race), very dependent on their salaries and on the state, but very marginal in any case. When Portugal began to Africanise its colonial administration during the 1960s, it Cape Verde-ised, but hardly Mozambique-ised. Certainly, the situa-
tion was to change during the 1960s and up to 1974, with a more substantial scholarisation, growth of black merchants and traders, etc. — a generation that is important today. But the elites who created Frelimo were those who were ten years old around 1940 to 1950.

The colonial structure of the country tended to inhibit north-south relations and even the local elite of Beira was to remain marginal within Frelimo and, feeling ill at ease there, to break away or to be violently repressed. The social character of this elite, its total separation from peasant or even urban artisan production, its concentration in the south (that is, in the service economy for the British hinterland), its ethnic distance from the main groups of the country — all combined with a situation characterised by armed confrontation against a dictatorship that was not simply colonial but also fascist — in my view explains its ‘capture’ by a very specific marxism. It was to imagine the Mozambican state in its own image: a universalistic, modern state, unencumbered by the domestic mode of production of the peasantry, in which the state itself — site of the elite’s own social reproduction — had a central economic role, characterised by a pathological mistrust of all manifestations of rural or urban social movement which it did not know; with the Portuguese language (its own!) as a unifying force and destroyer of ethnic identity; committed to a radical anti-tribalism cloaking the general hostility of the south Creole elites towards the old northern Creole elite, marginalised elements and to ‘traditional’ structures; and, finally, proclaiming the nation.

But stalinist marxism was effective in legitimising and establishing this nationalism. This was not a nationalism produced by a pre-existing nation, but a nationalism induced by a universalistic elite, the sole bearer of a Mozambican national consciousness. Unable to imagine the possibility of constructing a state without a nation, the elite sought to impose, through a uniformising oppression, national characteristics on a country without a nation. This nationalism was elitist and fundamentally anti-democratic. (In order to pre-empt misguided criticism, let me emphasise that the anti-democratic character of elitist nationalism in no way undermines the just foundations of the anti-colonial liberation struggles; but these were not national liberation struggles — their legitimacy, which was after all total — was essentially social. The confusion of these with the national revolutions of Europe in the 19th century — or even in the 20th century — is catastrophic). Stalinist marxism was effective in legitimising the struggle for a modern, Jacobin, European-type nation. This was not a marxism for a socialist transition, even if the project of constructing a nation was increasingly expressed, between 1968 and 1977, by means of a socialist discourse. The sincerity of the leadership is not in question — but they wished to construct a republic of bureaucrats and associated peasants in order to build a nation and not something else.

The Nature of Mozambican Radicalism (1975-1984)

For those who wish to see it, this nationalist and non-socialist aspect is very evident in the economic policies of Frelimo even before independence (25 June
1975). When it arrived in the capital (September 1974), it announced the dissolution of the elected workers' committees which had emerged, and replaced them with 'dynamising groups', which were party structures. It embarked on the nationalisation of schools, hospitals and funerals — that is, largely (with the exception of the petrol refinery) institutions not connected with the means of production. As regards funerals, colonialism had made a business out of death — the justification given for the nationalisation of funerals — but to ensure the safe return of the corpse to the village was equally one of the basic reasons for the existence of a number of African urban associations organised on the basis of regional origin. Somewhat later (in 1976), 'rented accommodation' was nationalised, certainly in part because of the speculation over accommodation left empty by the departing Portuguese but also in part as a typical means of restricting the emergence of fractions of the petty bourgeoisie with greater investment in business than the bureaucratic elite, notably the Indian-Pakistani community. Later still (1978) — extraordinarily late if you think of it from the revolutionary perspective! — the banks were nationalised: their coffers could have been emptied long before and, since the Portuguese revolution had nationalised its own banks in 1975, the nationalisation of banks in Mozambique meant that the banks of one state were now owned by another state — a bizarre situation.

No encouragement was given to urban production cooperatives to take the place of the little private enterprises abandoned by the Portuguese. Instead, there was a wave of micro-nationalisations (or 'interventions' which maintained the rights of the owners, should they return, which they are beginning to do today), and the nomination of administrative committees, despite an acute problem of cadres. The only urban cooperatives which were encouraged were concerned with consumption cooperatives; the only production cooperatives promoted were those in the countryside, where they were least suitable (only much later were semi-rural production cooperatives organised on the outskirts of towns — in so-called 'green zones'; these were relatively successful, with a significant number of women gaining a degree of security through their involvement. The land of these cooperatives is currently subject of intense speculation by well placed investors).

The Academic Association, a dynamic student organisation, was dissolved and replaced by the party youth organisation; the old corporate unions democra-
tised after 1975, were also dissolved in 1979, having been progressively re-
placed since 1976 by 'production groups'. Land taken from African peasants by European plantations and now abandoned was not returned to them but was transferred en bloc to state farms on which they were to become wage workers. A growing commitment to villagisation — without any economic foundation and conceived in an entirely urbanist fashion (geometrically criss-crossing roads, no respect for African traditions of building and design) — was pur-
sued. This programme had three major flaws: 1) agronomic, 2) social, and 3) political. First, the concentration of producers without a corresponding concen-
tration of the means of production (fertiliser, pesticides, irrigation) brought about either the rapid exhaustion of overworked soils (which it became impos-
sible to leave in fallow), or the exhaustion of the producers themselves (as a result of walking ten kilometres there and back to cultivate their previous fertile but scattered fields). Second, it resulted in deep social divisions with displaced lineages struggling first to have the village built on their land, and that of their ancestors, and then, if unsuccessful, falling under the dominance of the lineage on whose land the communal village had been built as a result of their lending the land required. Finally, confidence in the state dwindled when promises (of wells, dispensaries, schools, agricultural marketing, farm machinery, etc.) failed to be honoured but the dominant lineage was rapidly able to monopolise the local machinery of the party and the consumption cooperative (the conduit through which the meagre, yet all the more precious replenishment in manufactured goods could be achieved), thereby laying the basis for some of the divisions which emerged in the coming civil war. From the urban bureaucratic point of view, to regroup these scattered — ‘unorganised’ in the official jargon — peasants was in itself progressive! It was, however, counter-productive at all levels.

The nationalisation of wholesaling was announced to overcome the gap left by the departure of the Portuguese bush traders (and probably also to restrict the advance of the Indians and Pakistanis), but the selected strategy of developing capital-intensive heavy industry was unable to supply local markets with everyday goods, nor — as veritable technological islands — could they stimulate the surrounding peasant economy. But state farms and heavy industry monopolised almost the entire investment budget.

On the other hand, good relations were maintained with the major private companies which had decided to stay. A careful distinction was made between the ‘rebel Rhodesia’ and the ‘South Africa recognised by the international community’. Planning, copied by Soviet technical advisers from the Fourth Portuguese Development Plan, continued to be based on an assumption of growing relations with the Republic of South Africa. Hence the undertaking of major works in the port of Maputo and investment in the rail links with the hinterland, which could only be made profitable by transit across South Africa. Hence also the use of the funds accruing from labour migration to the mines of the Transvaal for substantial imports (of tanks and Bulgarian tractors, for example) rather than for rural development to reduce emigration.

In short, it was a policy hostile to society that was adopted; one which in so far as it was anti-capitalist was directed against small capital (Portuguese, Indian, Creole) rather than big capital, and one which in no way sought to reduce dependence on South Africa (membership of SADCC changed none of that). It was the absolute opposite of a Soviet New Economic Policy! Such a policy could not succeed and having failed to break with the international market simply fuelled the need to become more integrated, particularly after Mozambique had become super-indebted (1982) following the break-up of the agreements with South Africa on gold in 1978. However paradoxical it may seem, the economic basis of Mozambique radicalism from 1975-77 to 1982-84 had undoubtedly been gold provided at a preferential price by South Africa!
Contrary to what is widely believed, it was not the war of aggression that pushed 'marxist' Mozambique towards economic liberalism. The reverse is true: the non-aggression and good neighbour pact with South Africa (Nkomati, 16 March 1984) was a clear indication of a plan for the development of an outward-oriented economy capable of bringing in hard currency. The failure of South Africa to respect that agreement, continuing to support Renamo when Mozambique had expelled the ANC, prevented this process from being more rapid. If foreign investment was so limited at this point, it was not because Mozambique was 'marxist' — on the contrary, the foreign investment code of 1985 was ultra-liberal. It was the war which put off investors.

Generally, war and economic liberalism do not go well together. In the specific case of Mozambique, despite the war, the evolution towards liberalism has continued and even accelerated, not because of the breaking down of the Berlin Wall, but because of the inherent dynamic of the laws of the market and ever increasing dependence on external economic relations.

**External War, Civil war**

But, it could be argued, are not the considerable concessions given to Renamo by Frelimo a consequence of the war, and thus of pressure from outside? My reply is nuanced, but mainly negative. The topics that have been the subject of greatest difficulty in the negotiations with Renamo are not those in the economic sphere, but those connected with the division of power. For example, one might think that Renamo would want further privatisation; the reverse is the case — it is asking for privatisation to stop and for a retrospective consideration of those cases where Frelimo undertook privatisation. This is understandable; Renamo wants to be present at the division of spoils. Basically, there are no further economic differences: Frelimo has taken all the steps necessary itself and has systematically used them to empty the Renamo programme of any substance. Certainly, the economic liberalisation measures taken by Frelimo were taken under international pressure; but, as we have seen, not only as a result of such pressure — it is the economic orientation of Frelimo which has prevented it from breaking with the market economy and from reducing its foreign dependence.

*This war is a true civil war.* This has been hard to admit, for the moral reasons referred to at the beginning of this article (and is not always admitted by some). A comparison with Lebanon is instructive here. Everyone agrees that at the outset of the war in that country there was aggression by Israel against the Palestinian resistance. But the war has had such terrible effects on Lebanese society with the creation of innumerable armed militias, veritable warrior social forces with no other objective but their own reproduction by war — that if the aggression ceased, the Lebanese civil war would continue simply by virtue of its own grim internal logic. Mozambique is in this situation: those who believe that stopping the South African support for Renamo would end the war have understood nothing.
However, Tanzania made similar errors (for example, the Ujamaa villages) and has not experienced a war. Mozambique is paying extraordinarily dear for its disadvantageous geo-political situation; there is no doubt of that. But that does not enable us to explain why it is that the war extends throughout the entire country. Without Rhodesia and South Africa there would have been no Renamo, but rather uprisings or more probably an everyday and powerful passive resistance by the peasantry. But without the deep social crisis into which Frelimo policy had thrown the country, Renamo would never have found such possibilities for enlargement, it would never have grown beyond the small military group such as it had in 1977.

The nature of Renamo has been keenly debated going all the way from simple ‘armed bandits’ to ‘an opposition political party’. Two of the main arguments deployed to deny it any political character have been: first, the degree of violence used and second, the nature of its social and economic targets. In truth, the level of violence has been extremely high (attacks on buses, massacres of whole villages, mutilations, kidnappings), and the social and economic infrastructure of the country has been largely destroyed. This has been seen as proof of the intention of the apartheid regime to destroy Mozambique, or at least to make it an evident failure. I agree entirely with this, for certainly that has been the aim of the apartheid regime. But that does not mean that the war has not been transformed into a civil war. It is not the South Africans who have perpetrated the massacres, and the 20,000 Renamo troops are not paid mercenaries.

The extraordinary level of violence and destruction of infrastructure are one and the same thing, expressing a hatred of the state and that which represents it — whether that be the administration, the party, the communal village, the hospital, or whatever. The destructive impulses which come from outside have joined the impulses of communities which have been humiliated, denied, and oppressed, to break out of the orbit of the modern state. When the peasants experienced the state (administrators from the south) speaking to them not only in a foreign language (Portuguese) but in another strange language (‘down with tribalism!’); when they were obliged to ‘village-ise’ themselves without social or agricultural benefit for the simple purpose of building the state apparatus in the bush; when they felt the scorn for their religion (‘down with obscurantism!’) or its direct repression (banning of rituals); when they saw the humiliation of their legitimate traditional chiefs (‘down with feudalism!’), suppressed by decree the very day after independence; when they witnessed the state refuse its own currency, and implement a pricing policy which systematically favoured the urban population; and when they saw the dominant lineages clinging to the party; in short, when they recognised that this State which they had prayed for was not theirs at all — then they wished only to dissent, and some of them believing that the Renamo military movement would allow them to do just that.

The war has a terrible ‘ancient’ and ‘communal’ aspect. ‘Down with the state’ involves *ipso facto* ‘death to the people of the State’. But, one might object,
Renamo is capable of killing an individual to steal a bicycle, a watch, a sack, a pair of shoes, etc. — this is pure banditry; Renamo is certainly capable of that, but this is not banditry. There is no personal appropriation, no appropriation in favour of the group which perpetrated the deed; the smallest item of equipment seized from the enemy is reported by radio to the regional — even to the central — headquarters and then collected and redistributed within the organisation. We are dealing here with a struggle against the state and its people, a struggle for control of the population. Attacks on communal villages generally take place in three phases: the first involves a visit during which the president of the village (also the party secretary) is shot, if possible together with his entire family, and the peasants are called upon to return to their original scattered fields and homes; on the second visit, if the peasants have not obeyed or have been obliged by the authorities to return, the village is burned, and a select handful shot; the third time, the village is not only burned but the inhabitants massacred or taken off and reduced to servitude (forced to work for nothing for peasant families in areas which support Renamo, or taken for the armed forces).

But the army of Frelimo has done the same, and continues to do so: its main military activity has been to burn down the scattered homesteads of those who refuse to be concentrated in villages, to undertake vasculhas or raids on Renamo areas with the objective not so much of attacking its bases as ‘recovering’ its inhabitants. Today, with the assistance of international agencies and NGOs who believe they are doing the right thing, the relocation and concentration of ‘recovered’ peasants is being pursued in ‘development projects’ no longer referred to as communal villages but as rural cities; without any economic rationale and driven by a profound distrust of the ‘traditional’ social formation of the peasantry, this is all about physical concentration in order to control, to organise.

The Possible Future of Renamo

Renamo will remain marked for a long time by its external origins. It is, unlike UNITA in Angola, an entity supported by apartheid. At the outset, UNITA was a small anti-colonial political movement which created a political-military organisation to undertake its struggle against the Portuguese and against the MPLA. Its alliance with the Republic of South Africa in 1975 gave it the means to construct a real army and so to become, in effect, a state-in-formation within the framework of a political project, without losing its political-military identity and its representativeness within Angola. Renamo has a history that is practically the reverse of this: it began as a small, exclusively military force, which was to grow into a veritable ‘wild army’, in the sense that while an army is generally part of a state apparatus, this was a professional military force, a warrior social formation, without a state. And it is its intervention in the social crisis of Mozambique that has accorded it, little by little, its representativeness — even though its overwhelming characteristic has remained that of a military force. This does not make impossible, although it makes difficult, its transformation into a political party, if only because military leaders who have won a
war are not disposed to lose elections. *The predominance of the military aspect of Renamo is the persistent and concrete 'marker' of its external origin.*

In its attempt to make the transition to politics, 'the programme' (which has in fact been in existence for a long while, produced by its external delegations) will have little importance for Renamo. Basically, it will express a variety of social elements and communities — a sort of coalition of marginals which have been excluded politically and socially from the state, from the market and from development, not just since Frelimo's coming to power but in many cases since the beginning of the century.

**Renamo and the Third Force**

The very nature of Frelimo puts a brake on the transition towards the emergence of a political opposition, whether it comes from Renamo or a third force. In fact, Frelimo has not just been a single party, a party-state proclaiming the nation-state. As always, the announcement of the process of building the nation became the announcement of the nation itself, and *the site of production of national sentiment is the party*. The party is the nation in this country without a nation, and it has been, more than elsewhere in Africa, a nation-party because it was not one of those neo-colonial single parties which took power just after independence was granted in the sixties. It was a politico-military nationalist front which ran a profoundly legitimate guerilla war for ten years, not, at the beginning at least, operating according to the dictates of clientelism or ethnicity — even if the south was already dominant at its centre. Legitimate and 'nation-alising' — that was Frelimo.

As a result, even without being members of the party, many of the elite have been, and remain, legitimist simply because they feel themselves to be part of 'Frelimo's people', part of this nation-project. Certainly, the external aspect of Renamo served to reinforce the legitimacy of the nation-party. To move to civilian, non-armed opposition was not simply to move into political opposition; it was to exit from the imagined national schema, and from the socially constructed idea of the single source for the realisation of the nation.

The weakness of Creole groups outside Maputo, referred to earlier, reinforced this: the nuclei at Tete, Nampula and Quelimane have been so weak, and their ancient traditions maintained with such difficulty, that the small groupings they are currently creating are at present politically insignificant. But let us not rule out the possibility of surprises in this country where there have never been free elections: several of these small groups (the most important being UNAMO, the National Union of Mozambique — a splinter group from Renamo) are openly seeking to constitute a regional base, and it is not impossible that they will succeed — perhaps with the blessing of Frelimo which has stuffed them with its agents and might propose an alliance against Renamo. Only one group, however, seems — in political terms — worth considering; that is the PCN (National Convention Party), which has, with the aid of its
cadres, embarked on a genuine process of reflection. Not insignificantly, one of its leaders is Lutero Simango, son of Uria Simango, a former Frelimo leader from the centre of the country (the Chona-nau ethnic region) thrown out and then shot without trial after independence. In any case, since everyone is obliged to accept the market economy, these parties can only oppose Renamo and Frelimo on the basis of a critique of the past, or by expressing particular concerns derived from their specific social and geographical location. So, PALMO (the Liberal Party of Mozambique) is anti-white and against those of mixed race: its founders were black middle-level cadres from the centre of the country, who had received their education in the Eastern bloc countries (the whites and Mozambican mixed-race cadres, although the keenest marxist-leniinists, demanded and almost always obtained the best quality education, in the West). This also occurred in Angola. UNAMO (or at least its legal branch, now merged with the military wing of Gimo Phiri) is simply anti-white: its founders were traders (often Protestants) from Zambezia, a traditional mixed race area. Generally, the imposed consensus on the economic programme can only reinforce localist tendencies, expressions of ethnic affiliation and openly ‘tribal’ manoeuvres.

Towards Power Sharing

In the Rome negotiations, Renamo demanded recognition from Frelimo of the legitimacy of its military forces and refused to accept the conditions imposed on other parties (collection of signatures, etc.); it demanded a single army, but only after a cease-fire. On these two points, it gained what it wanted. The obstacles were directly related to the struggle for control over the population: Renamo wanted the elections to be preceded by the mandatory return of the peasants to their original scattered places of origin (there are three million refugees abroad and several million displaced persons in the interior), while Frelimo obviously preferred to keep them in the ‘rural cities’ which it controls. Frelimo wished international aid to go to these areas and not only to those of the state. Renamo also did not wish the Frelimo government to organise the elections; it wanted, at the minimum, an international commission or better still the creation of a transitional coalition government before the elections in order to ensure its involvement in the sharing of power, whatever the results of the ballot box. In my opinion, it is likely to gain its key demands, as the military situation is moving to its advantage (particularly as the Zimbabwean troops are now effectively confined to the Beira corridor and the official army is rapidly disintegrating, throwing off as it does groups of armed bandits.

What predictions can one make regarding the elections themselves? Mozambique is not like Cape Verde or Sao Tome, two other Portuguese-speaking territories where former single parties have been literally swept away after the first free elections, in 1991. Frelimo, the party-nation, will remain important, if only because of the fear of Renamo among the urban population — say 30 to 40 per cent of the vote. Renamo should also gain a significant proportion — perhaps around 30 per cent. And one should anticipate a whole host of small groups with local affiliations to figure; in short, two opposed blocs with a weak and
divided third force — a dangerous situation. Renamo has already demonstrated that it is not prepared to let go of power sharing.

But the greatest danger is from pure banditry — hundreds of thousands of Kalashnikovs have been introduced into this profoundly de-structured society, and a substantial de-socialised section of the population — from both the Frelimo and Renamo zones (in the case of the former including the army and the local militias) — has recognised that one can live better with a gun than without. In this context, there will be no miracle unless the return to peace is not followed by a lightning socio-economic development: either the state will succeed in killing off a significant number of these marginals or sufficient money will be found to give a $100 to everyone turning in their weapon, without questions asked and the weapons destroyed at once; or else banditry will take root, on a massive scale and remain for years. Various combinations of these different solutions are possible. But generally, the formation of a coalition government seems to me to be inevitable, with a programme accepted by the international community and clearly turning its back on the real interests of the Mozambican people. At least, however, they will have won the right to a pluralism of politics and of forms of organisation with which to try to defend themselves.

One thing that remains unclear is whether Frelimo has changed character again. Nationalist from 1962 to 1968, it evolved subsequently towards revolutionary nationalism between 1968 and 1975, to proclaim itself marxist-leninist in 1977. But, in 1989, it was the first state party in the world officially to abandon officially this label. Has it changed its character again? From a ‘marxist-leninist party of the workers’ and peasants’ alliance’ has it become once again a national inter-class formation? History does not permit such comings and goings. We have seen that it is necessary to set the proclamation of 1977 firmly in context to reveal that it expressed an attempt to seize the state more than anything else. Frelimo has always remained a nationalist formation (with the limitations discussed earlier on the meaning of the word ‘nationalist’ in a country without a nation). The political discourse has certainly changed, but there are strong elements of continuity: the national Jacobin project (a homogeneous nation), the choice of Portuguese as the language of instruction, a basic anti-ethnic tendency, and a taste for large development projects — all remain.

What has definitely changed, by contrast, is the social character of the elite in power: taking over the government when it was still entirely cut off from the means of production and exchange, when it saw with anger other more business-oriented fractions rival it, it consists today of persons who are concerned to feather their own nests and are often simply corrupt. Almost all the ministers are now ‘businessmen’. Consequently, any reference to marxism has lost its operational meaning, has lost its force as a universalistic legitimation for the bureaucratic fraction of the state. External factors have obviously played their part, the crisis in the East weakening those who remain most attached to the model of the single party-nation; but they have served to accelerate the process, not to generate it.
What kind of 'check' is this?

However shocking this may seem to some, there has been no transition to socialism in Mozambique, not even an attempt at a transition to socialism. There has been a transition from colonialism (in the very particular circumstances of the Portuguese empire) to neocolonialism. Paradoxically, it is the radical phase (1975-1984) which retained the greatest number of features inherited from the colonial state: the centralisation of the political-administrative structure remained intact; the territorial administrative framework remained exactly the same, without any relation to ethnic realities; corporatism (production committees) was maintained; Portuguese developed more in ten years than in the ‘five centuries’ of colonialism; the ‘civil servant’ ideal of the Portuguese man in the street was taken to its ultimate; the nationalist-stalinoid single party took the place of the fascist-senile single party, maintaining the authoritarian and paternalist relationship of the authorities with the population — and so on. The real break is taking place now: limitless economic liberalism is distancing Mozambique definitively from Portugal, a metropolis too poor to create a domain for itself, as France has managed to do in francophone Africa, and so making Mozambique into just another ordinary African country, not subjected to the neocolonialism of a particular metropolitan power but to the imperialist ‘centre’ in general with the only local counter-weight its dependence on South Africa.

Check, yes! check, to a project of peripheral capitalist development, bureaucratic and centralised, developmentalist, by the proclamation of a European-style nation. Breaking with this ideological orientation means trying to imagine a state without a nation, a democratic state which recognises the ethnic realities and issues associated with them, and also the importance of the people’s demand for democracy, within a socialist perspective on development. That should be the subject of another conference!

I believe that the Mozambicans might say, with the Sandinista leader Tomas Borge:

*What has happened in the East fills me with joy ... Now we can start from the right place, we shall not pursue deviations. The revolutionaries no longer have any reason to get it wrong from a strategic point of view as in the past. We can only gain from the developments in the East; the time of bureaucracy, of authoritarianism, is over, as is that of restrictions on the freedom of expression. Imperialism is clearly more aggressive, it thinks that it has won. It has not realised that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the states of the East constitute, not a victory for it but, in the longer run, a defeat. The fall of the Berlin Wall marks the beginning of the period of the destruction of imperialism, even if that seems but a dream today. The first stone of capitalism fell with the Berlin Wall. We have won the right to start again.*

The people of Mozambique also have won the right to start again!

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From Pseudo-terrorists to Pseudo-guerillas: the MNR in Mozambique

Anders Nilsson

The war in Mozambique has few similarities with any other historically known conventional war. It belongs to specific category which could be called wars of destabilisation. This has a bearing on the peace process which will exhibit various features which will distinguish it from normal patterns of ending wars. This article has two parts: the first outlines the history and the guiding military concepts of Renamo (Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana, MNR) and relates the war of destabilisation against Mozambique; the second analyses destabilisation as a specific kind of war and identifies the role of the pseudo-guerilla MNR in this war of destabilisation.

From Pseudo-terrorists to Pseudo-guerilla

A pseudo-terrorist unit is a military unit which, superficially, has all the characteristics of an insurgency group or organisation, but in reality is a highly trained unit of the counter-insurgency forces. Its two main tasks are to seek and destroy and to discredit the insurgents in the eyes of the supporting population, acting violently and arbitrarily in the name of the insurgents.

Such units are trained and equipped to mimic the insurgents until they have infiltrated their area sufficiently to achieve maximum results. The use of pseudo-units was principally developed by the British Army and the Special Branch in several counter-insurgency campaigns during the decolonization period from the 1940s to the 1960s.

The failure of the Portuguese operation Gordian Knot (the attempt to invade and reconquer the liberated zones of the province) seems to have accelerated the creation of various pseudo-terrorist units in Mozambique and Rhodesia (as it was). The threatening southward expansion of Frelimo’s guerilla war could not be halted by conventional counter-insurgency and the Rhodesians felt an increasing need for intervention within Mozambican territory to stop the growing activity of ZANLA. The efforts of Portuguese commanders in Angola to transform UNITA into its own puppet organisation, called Operation Timber, coincided with this development.
Although the strategy of using pseudo-terrorist units in counter-insurgency was developed in other parts of the world, its use against nationalist forces in southern Africa was not new. Already at the end of the sixties BOSS (Bureau of State Security, South Africa), PIDE (International Police for the Defence of the State, Mozambique) and CIO (Central Intelligence Organisation, Zimbabwe) had a joint planning commission for these kinds of activities. As Zambia at that time was harbouring nationalist forces from various countries it became a target for destabilising actions. In one document the joint commission proposed

*the creation of a climate of insecurity through isolated actions against civil servants, UNIP-officials etc. Action of indiscriminate shooting emanating from countries and territories of southern Africa can always be attributed to dissident Zambian elements whenever it happens.*

In a process similar to the one in Angola, where UNITA and Jonas Savimbi were linked to the Portuguese colonial army, great efforts were made to turn the entire the Zambian African National Congress and its president Harry Nkumbula into a tool of racist and colonial interests in the region.

But in Mozambique there existed no organisation that had any real prospects as an alternative to Frelimo. This is not to say that there were no dissidents around Frelimo. Some of those who had left Frelimo had rejoined in the Lusaka-based COREMO (Mozambique Revolutionary Committee); but this never took off as a political and military project. However, some of those in and around COREMO appeared on the fringes of the MNR in the eighties.

From 1970, the armed guerilla forces of ZANLA (in Rhodesia) increased their collaboration with Frelimo within Mozambique itself, first into the areas liberated by Frelimo in the province of Tete and later in Manica and Sofala provinces as Frelimo forces moved southwards. This collaboration took two different forms. On the one hand, civilian refugees could look for protection in liberated areas and could, as well as ZANLA guerillas, receive medical treatment. On the other hand, the liberated areas served as a vital rearguard for both regular ZANLA units and those ZANLA guerillas who had been integrated into Frelimo units. This was extremely valuable for ZANLA, but inevitably also drew the Rhodesian army and its special units into Mozambique to attack both ZANLA guerillas and the civilian population.

There are three distinct phases of the Rhodesian incursions. At the outset, as the Rhodesian security forces became aware of the growing collaboration between ZANLA and Frelimo, they started to deploy regular commando units which, with the tacit consent of the Portuguese army, were allowed to patrol inside Mozambique. However, the Portuguese army high command was very sensitive to any slights to their national pride and would not allow the Rhodesians to take over responsibility for attacks on ZANLA and Frelimo bases.

The second phase begins when the Rhodesians became increasingly worried about the failure of the Portuguese to stop Frelimo's advance, and ZANLA was
getting access to long stretches of the border; this became acute in 1972. One Rhodesian response was to intensify information gathering efforts and to introduce pseudo-terrorist units. (It might, or might not, be a coincidence that both the Rhodesian General Peter Walls and the Lieutenant-Colonel Ron Reid Daly, initial organizer of the Selous Scouts, had served in Malaya, where the pseudo-terrorist concept had some success in the beginning of the fifties).

The plan was that pseudo-terrorist units would dress in captured guerilla uniforms and be equipped with the same kind of weaponry as was associated with the guerillas. They would infiltrate into villages to identify ZANLA supporters. The Rhodesian Special Branch in particular supported this initiative. At first former ZANLA or Frelimo guerillas who had been turned against their former colleagues after capture were used. The first pseudo-terrorist unit started its operations in January 1973.

However, its success was not overwhelming and the Rhodesians came to the conclusion that these units needed ‘on the ground European supervision’. This led to a decision to form a special unit within the Rhodesian army, intended specifically for this kind of covert operations. This unit was baptised the Selous Scouts.

Parallel with development of the Rhodesian policy towards incursions, the Portuguese began to initiate their own version. The major Portuguese offensive, Operation Gordian Knot, was a failure. Now, using the same tactics Portuguese security forces perpetrated a series of ruthless actions against villages, especially in Tete Province. Instead of being aggressive and condemning these actions the Portuguese press became markedly sarcastic in reporting how Frelimo ‘liberated’ through massacres. This kind of reporting ‘coincides’ exactly with the period preceding the massacre of Wiriyamu in December 1972, and the extensive reporting from missionaries in the Tete province about increasing Portuguese cruelty in the villages.

Eventually, the Rhodesian and the Portuguese operations more or less converged in the period around Mozambican independence in 1974-75. Members of the Portuguese units fled to Rhodesia and the Rhodesians found themselves provided with new human resources for the continuing incursions into Mozambique. However, Mozambican independence created changes in the political and military environment and new circumstances came to determine the Rhodesian military presence in Mozambique. These changes precipitated the first qualitative transformation in the use of pseudo-units in Mozambique.

Until now the Rhodesians had acted more or less with consent of the Portuguese security forces. Border crossings were made in joint operations against common enemies. But after 25 June 1975 the Rhodesian incursions violated Mozambique’s national integrity and brought international condemnation. Consequently Rhodesian tactics changed. Before 1975, the Selous Scouts ran a fairly conventional counter-insurgency operation, using pseudo-terrorists to move around inside Mozambique in order to make contact with genuine gue-
rilla units and destroy them. After 1975 it became necessary to organise a cover for all such actions and this became the task of Ken Flowers of the CIO which had been more concerned with secret intelligence-gathering operations. The pseudo-terrorist strategy thus developed into a pseudo-guerrilla strategy.

The creation of a force which could seem to be operating as an authentic resistance movement resulted from the need to provide the Rhodesian government with at least a minimum of international credibility. As was suggested at the end of sixties by the joint commission: 'indiscriminate shooting... can always be attributed to dissident (Zambian) elements whenever it happens...' From 1976 any indiscriminate shooting could be attributed to 'dissident Mozambican elements'.

After 1975 the MNR served both the Rhodesian need to counter ZANLA activities inside Mozambique and the desire of the former Portuguese settler community in Mozambique to get rid of the new Frelimo government. However, this was not a mutually balanced collaboration between the Rhodesians and the Portuguese, rather a process in which the Portuguese 'hitch-hiked' a ride on the back of Rhodesian war machine. This is expressed very clearly in a letter written by Orlando Cristina:

*It is the Rhodesians who pay my salary and my stay here, as well as the maintenance of the Mozambicans who fight inside Mozambique. Without this support, we would all sit at the coffee bars in Lisbon dreaming about unrealistic struggles. Neither in South Africa, nor in Malawi can we organise a guerilla. This has been possible only through Rhodesia.*

**Destabilisation**

If the Rhodesians had created and baptised their pseudo-guerillas, it became the task of the South African military at the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 to refine and develop this instrument of destabilisation it had inherited from Rhodesia. The efforts to transform the MNR had two elements. On the one hand they introduced a markedly more ruthless approach to the use of rural terrorism as an instrument of political policy; on the other, more emphasis was laid on the development of international credibility in the MNR as a political alternative to Frelimo.

The result of the first 'improvements' of the performance of the pseudo-guerrilla MNR is well known and needs no further treatment here. But the efforts to create international credibility through a Mozambican leadership need a little further examination, as this has a direct bearing on discussions about the road from war to peace in Mozambique. A pseudo-terrorist unit within the framework of an army's infrastructure needs no political leadership or political credibility. But a pseudo-guerrilla movement needs some people who can represent it — internationally and diplomatically. Groups of exiled Mozambicans in different countries were sought in order to create a political face for the MNR. Some of these were dissidents from Frelimo's early days, some had left the
liberation struggle to create their own new lives in foreign countries and some were people who had left Mozambique during the first years after independence. What they had in common was their discontent and, for some, their hostility towards Frelimo. The creation of an ‘external wing’ of the MNR seemed to some of these an acceptable vehicle for their aspirations regarding Mozambique. By 1982 the first list of members in what was termed the National Council of the MNR was published. Only two had any known anti-colonial credentials: Artur Vilanculos and Fanuel Gideon Mahluza. The others were former Portuguese settlers, agents of PIDE or Portuguese soldiers.

The reluctance among exiled Mozambicans generally to engage actively in the MNR are to be found in the contradictory features of the MNR. On the one hand, the operational part of the MNR continued to be a military pseudo-guerilla unit, led and controlled by personnel of the SADF (South African Defence Force) Special Forces; on the other hand, people in the external wing publicly declared that they were in charge of an autonomous political movement, involved in a guerilla struggle against an oppressive marxist-leninist government. This was too contradictory for most exiled Mozambicans and their families. Although Vilanculos and Mahluza were presented as members of the National Council, it seems as if they (and many others) came to reject the role they were assigned — that of being the black faces which would legitimise the racist South African government’s destruction of their country.

Different Kind of Attacks

The destabilisation of Mozambique has not, however, been conducted solely and exclusively in defence of the apartheid system of South Africa. It contains a complex variety of objectives, techniques and actors. Although the defence of the apartheid system was initially a dominating feature, destabilisation as one form of preparation for the post-apartheid period in the region has grown in importance. These and other differences in the objectives of destabilisation are related to the different positions taken by different actors. In this context it might be useful to distinguish between the different kind of actions taken by the SADF against Mozambique. Some of them are clearly linked to the short term objective of defending white South Africa and its apartheid system from any externally based threat, while others fit better into the longer perspective of post-apartheid reconstruction of the political and economic pattern of the region. There are at least three different kind of attacks perpetrated by the South African forces against Mozambique.

The first involves attacks directed specifically at ANC targets inside Mozambique. The commando attack on ANC houses in the Maputo suburb of Matola in January 1981, as well as the bombing of the ANC office in Maputo in October 1984, are examples on this and constitute actions taken in defence of the apartheid system.
Another kind of attack is the SAAF raid on Matola in May 1983, as well as the nightly commando attacks on several houses in Maputo in May 1988. In Matola the entire suburb was targeted by shrapnel rockets from Mirage and Impala air fighters. In Maputo, houses and apartments were attacked and their Mozambican residents murdered, in spite their screams that they were not South Africans but Mozambicans. Allegedly, these attacks were directed towards ANC targets, but it seems as if the real target was not the ANC but Mozambican support of the ANC and other exiled South Africans. In the Mozambican press at the time, the SADF was ridiculed as incapable of hitting the right target, instead killing innocent Mozambicans. My interpretation is the contrary: the intended targets were hit — the intention was to create a climate of fear among the Maputo inhabitants living next door to South Africans or known ANC members; popular hostility against the ANC was anticipated as a result. In these first two attacks nothing was done to hide South African involvement.

The third kind of aggression against Mozambique has been the covert operation which has as its main instrument the pseudo-guerilla movement MNR. This includes every imaginable form of violence against the civilian population, including mutilations, massacres of bus passengers and hospital patients, plus the destruction of things essential to normal life, such as schools, health posts, rural hospitals, bridges and other infrastructures. Here, South Africa has been at pains to hide its involvement.

These three categories are all part of the destabilisation of Mozambique. But this direct aggression has not had the desired effect of putting an end to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa; furthermore, at the end of the eighties there was some growth in diplomatic and political obstacles in the way of South Africa’s overt aggression in the region. As the international community’s growing understanding that the apartheid system, for a variety of reasons, has to be abolished, the diplomatic condemnation of overt South African aggression in the region increased. Bit by bit, the political and the military leadership of South Africa has come to terms with the fact that the only eventual outcome in South Africa is the abolition of the apartheid system. Attempts to hunt down ordinary members of the ANC abroad have decreased and replaced by attempts to weaken the ANC at home in order to minimise its future influence in the post apartheid era. Thus, attacks on ordinary ANC residents in Maputo ceased, while people closer to the leadership were to be assassinated.

However, international protests and diplomatic action against South African military violence in the region have been generally limited to the first two kind of aggression described above. The third category — the South African use of the pseudo-guerilla movement MNR — has rarely been condemned by the international community. My interpretation of this is that the objectives of long term destabilisation through the use of a pseudo-guerilla movement are shared by large segments of the international community. It constitutes one part of the preparations for the post apartheid era in southern Africa.
Perspectives on the Post-apartheid Era

Let us look at a hypothetical spectrum of political and ideological development with regard to apartheid. At one end we place the initial and most rigid conception of the racial policy of apartheid; at the other end we put the total and complete abolition of any racial discrimination in South Africa. Along this spectrum, we will find many different positions, some of which over time are capable of overlapping and merging with others. It is the balance of power between the various forces, which defend different positions along this line, that will define the methods and arguments in defence of the system at any given moment. We know that the apartheid system defended by P W Botha was not the same system created by Verwoerd; and the political system, which F W De Klerk will defend politically in 1995, will not be the same one he is defending today. Individuals and political and economic forces will move along this spectrum and change their positions at an unequal rate. The rigid defenders of the original apartheid system will at any given moment defend a system of white and capitalist supremacy in South Africa and the region. As time goes by, the position in defence of exclusive white economic supremacy will become obsolete. But, the ultimate line of defence will be the survival of capitalism in southern Africa. This is obvious in the present international political environment, but this strategy was formed before the recent changes in the balance of power in the world system. The communist threat against southern Africa has for a long time been the ostensible reason for destabilisation policy. Although this threat is removed for the time being, the neo-liberal wave does not extinguish tensions about who will dominate the scene in post apartheid South Africa and in the region. At this point, where no one is defending apartheid and everybody is defending capitalism, there is still room for different positions about the kind of capitalism southern Africa will develop.

In any case, South African and representatives of transnational capital active in southern Africa are not very interested in the existence in the region of strong and consolidated nationalist governments which could coordinate themselves in a regional development strategy. These would constitute a threat, both to transnational domination and to a South Africa-based regional capitalism, even if they had no ambitions for socialist development at all. Thus, while South Africa’s direct attacks on Mozambique can be linked to the defence of apartheid, the overall pattern of destabilisation is congruent with preparations for the future defence of capitalist supremacy in southern Africa.

Changing Politics, Not Governments

So what is destabilisation? It is often used to refer to South African aggression against other countries in southern Africa. The word conveys very little of the reality: it says nothing of the suffering of those who are its victims. Instead it invites the impression that it concerns a certain type of political influence or activity, maybe a little aggressive, but not too far from diplomacy. It does not have any of the associations as ‘war’, ‘aggression’ or ‘terror’. This acceptable face
The MNR in Mozambique

is a condition for a general acquiescence in forced political change through destabilisation.

The destabilisation of Mozambique has not been conducted solely and exclusively in defence of the apartheid system of South Africa, but as a way of imposing political changes on the Mozambican government. There are, historically, various techniques used by an external power to intervene and change the politics pursued by a government in another country: invasion and incorporation in their own territory (Iraq/Kuwait); active military support in a coup situation (USA/Grenada); covert support to internal forces, which are trying to topple an existing government (USA/Chile); a variety of military, economic and political actions aimed at forcing the existing government to change its pursued politics (Mozambique).

In Mozambique the result of destabilisation is particularly severe because of the coincidence of two ‘needs’ — the global western ‘need’ to counter socialist expansion and the South African ‘need’ to defend its apartheid system. This has meant that the devastating activity of the MNR has been generally accepted by the international community.

The role of the MNR has been to bring about policy changes at government level in Mozambique: the complete disruption of productive and economic activities and the inability of the government to defend the population against senseless killings undermines the legitimacy of the government. Economic and political reconstruction on new and changed terms is the only possible response. The degree of implemented policy adjustments is the main indicator of the success of destabilisation. Because adjustments in economic and social policies will tend to influence the balance of power between different national class forces in the destabilised society, the outcome of destabilisation has its own dynamics, which tend to generate further changes in the direction of destabilisation.

The MNR has often been dismissed as a political force because it has no political programme. But the political objective of the MNR is not principally to take power at government level, but to be instrumental in changing the policy of the existing government. In an interview with the Washington Times, Alfonso Dhlakama stated that his final objective was not victory, but changes in Mozambican society.

Furthermore, being pseudo-guerilla there is no need for a political programme to guide the actions of the MNR. As its principal aim is not to gain political power it does not need support from any sector in the Mozambican society; the operational power of its external backers is sufficient to pursue its task. Since the objective is not primarily to change government, but to change policies, the peace after this kind of war does not need any military victors — the change is itself victory for the external forces of destabilisation.

The effective winners in Mozambican society are the economic and class forces
which are benefiting from the adjusted policies: those who are now able to
harvest the economic and political consequences of destabilisation without
personally having had anything to do with the MNR holocaust in the coun-
try-side.

Given its role in accelerating political, economic and social change the MNR
could be likened to a catalyst in a chemical process. A catalyst in a substance
which in a chemical reaction hastens the process but does not merge with any
of the other substances in the process. At the end, the catalyst can be separated
out from the new reality created by the merging of other substances; it can then
be thrown away or, in certain cases, be stored for future use. On what terms it
will be stored, seem to me be a basic question underlying the negotiations in
Rome. The objectives of the war of destabilisation are already achieved and
neither Dhlakama, Raul Domingos or Ululu, nor the brutalised, poor peasant
boys, who have been unpaid mercenaries in their own country are victors. In
fact, they are as much victims of the war as all those they have killed. However,
they would like to see the MNR as victorious.

It is quite possible that there was an original intention, in certain circles in
South Africa, in taking over the MNR from Rhodesia to use it to overthrow the
Frelimo government. Certainly, there are still some who would like to this hap-
pen. But the overthrow of the Frelimo government would almost certainly
mean the destruction of the conditions for a functional national government
and a totally fragmented society, i.e. a total bantustanisation of Mozambique.
This would give considerable scope for the exploitation of labour and natural
resources, but the absence of central structures, ability to organise the rehabili-
tation of the infrastructure and a credible deployment of international aid,
would probably outweigh any possible advantages. Only a minority (both in
South Africa and the United States) and well placed in the military and security
forces is prepared to let destabilisation continue until the complete collapse of
Mozambican society. It seems as if a majority of those who support the
destabilisation of Mozambique, consider it desirable to maintain some form of
national government. Two main options have emerged:

1. Reduce Frelimo to powerlessness by forcing it to accept the MNR as
an internal political opposition and let it enter into a future 'govern-
ment of national reconciliation';

2. Ensure that Frelimo changes its policies to comply with the strategic
objectives of destabilisation. Frelimo is needed to guarantee the
long-term implementation of the new policy pattern.

These two options could, for the sake of simplicity, be called the military and
the economic and realistically might overlap and change over time. The mili-
tary option, which also contains the sub-option of overthrowing the Frelimo
government, has its main backers in the South African military apparatus
which are considered conservative even by South Africa standards. Their po-
Political analysis is rooted in a pure cold war interpretation of the global political situation and their strategies have been built on the assumption that the complete removal of the 'communist threat' from southern Africa is the only possible defence of South Africa. This means getting rid of any radical or national government in the region. It is also relevant to note, in this context, that in the SADF there are a quite large number of individuals of Portuguese or Mozambican settler origin, who still carry intense feelings of bitterness and strong desire for revenge against Frelimo. Also in the United States this option has a number of forceful backers, both among ultra-conservative circles and in the security and intelligence community. The alternative can be called the economic option. This is essentially a continuation of the former South African policy of 'detente' which is aimed at maintaining hegemony through economic penetration of the region.

Accelerated economic expansion is now seen as vital to enable South African capitalism to emerge sufficiently consolidated from the period of turmoil which might accompany the eventual abolition of apartheid. In this version, Frelimo could stay in power in Mozambique, provided it were too weak to have any effective voice in the construction of post-apartheid southern Africa. Continuation of the process of devastation currently carried out by the MNR might well be counterproductive from this perspective, since it would not permit the economic rehabilitation programme required for the development and consolidation of a capitalist mode of production in Mozambique. In fact, it would destroy all efforts made by the international community to re-integrate Mozambique within its sphere of influence. The rationale behind this thinking is that the economic adjustments and changes in the internal balance of power brought about through destabilisation will in themselves consolidate the new position for Mozambique in the world order, independently of who is in charge of the government.

This approach is similar to that developed by Chester Crocker during his period as assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs under the Reagan administration, although paradoxically, the MNR was the only 'anti-communist rebel movement', which could not get public support from that administration, in spite of the Reagan doctrine. In practise, US official policy towards Mozambique has relied mostly on the force of economic dynamics to achieve the desired changes, i.e. weaning Frelimo away from communism.

**Internal and External 'Wings'**

Even if these two tendencies, or options, were not clearly formulated in 1982, the exiled Mozambicans whom Orlando Cristina managed to gather in and around the National Council of the MNR, soon realised that their road back to Maputo was not an easy one. As a diverse group of exiles in different countries their option came to be to associate themselves with the economic tendency, especially its backers in the United States. So instead of creating a coher-
ent group of individuals who could form a credible leadership of the MNR, Cristina's efforts consolidated a pattern of 'leadership' which has been quite stable since 1983-84.

On the one hand, there was the military activity with its close communications and logistical connections to South African military and security institutions. This activity was closed to and completely out of control for anyone engaged in 'the external wing' or in diplomatic efforts to gain credibility for the MNR. In fact, the lack of communication outside South African military control, between the MNR operationals inside Mozambique and those outside has, for a number of years, been a source of frustration for those in the external wing and around the Lisbon office of the MNR. On the other hand, we have had the so-called external wing living its own life, nourishing its own dynamics of contradictions. Efforts to create a National Council have failed again and again. The reason for this is the character of the pseudo-guerilla movement: it does not need a leadership for military or political purposes, but at the same time its international credibility as cover for destabilisation requires people who can represent it, for example, in negotiations.

But the different options and positions discussed above also spill over into the external wing. One division is between those with a credible political history as Frelimo dissidents or roots in the anti-colonial movement in the sixties and the seventies and those who have their credentials vouched for by the South African military. The former have in general opted for the economic tendency. A second dividing line is constituted by the efforts from government and security segments of the economic option, both from South Africa, the United States and Germany, to wrestle control over the external wing to its side. Eventually this could be a first step to gain control also over the operationals in Mozambique and the military activity. However, this has not been very successful.

The internal South African contradictions in this context reached a peak following the signing of the Nkomati Accord in March 1984. In September that year there were discussions in Pretoria involving representatives of the Mozambican government, the MNR and the South African Foreign Minister Roelof 'Pik' Botha with Botha officially acting as intermediary. The aim was supposedly to establish a base for a peace settlement in Mozambique. The South African military have reacted strongly demanding virtual capitulation by Frelimo. They also sabotaged the talks by bugging the room where Botha was to meet the Mozambican delegation and feeding the MNR with that information to use in their talks with Botha. As a result, Botha ended up as intermediary not between the MNR and the Mozambican government but between the Mozambican government and South African military intelligence. The dissident group of the external wing had no representatives in these negotiations.

Developments after the breakdown of the Pretoria talks in October 1984 were described by the US journal, Foreign Report (March 1986):
In South Africa, the Foreign Minister Pik Botha suggested that the rebels might negotiate without insisting on Machel's virtual capitulation. For Machel to agree however, Renamo must be first weakened; this process has started. An effort is being made to discredit Renamo's Lisbon-based representatives, Evo Fernandes and Jorge Correia, who hold Portuguese passports, as 'foreign elements'.

During a visit to Bonn by South African and American officials last month, the West Germans were apparently persuaded to help. They are said to be discreetly supporting a meeting in Cologne later this month of dissident ex-Renamo officials living in Europe and the United States. Machel's envoys have sounded out this group about forming a coalition that could include guerilla commanders. This might help to divide Renamo. The Cologne group has been assiduously cultivated by Pik Botha.

For the combined Botha-American operation to be able to offer meaningful conditions for negotiations to the Mozambican government after the debacle in Pretoria, it was essential, first, to have control over the external wing and at the same time be able to establish contacts with Dhlakama in order to set up a coherent MNR, in which military activity was in pace with and controlled by a political leadership; this was to be a headache. Pik Botha himself had tried unsuccessfully in January 1985 to set up a meeting between Dhlakama and the Portuguese businessman Manuel Bulhosa. All attempts to get Dhlakama out of Africa without South African military intervention also failed. (According to Paulo Oliveira there have been several vain attempts by the 'economic option' group of the external wing in Lisbon to arrange for Dhlakama to leave Mozambique via the Comoros Islands). Two of this faction finally succeed in meeting Dhlakama inside Mozambique, having entered via Malawi in November 1987, but on their way back to Europe, they died in a car crash in Malawi.

This long struggle for control of the external wing, seen as an instrument to eventually influence the operational in Mozambique and the future negotiations, has no clear victor. That is one of, or maybe even the main, reason for the slow pace in the Rome process. It is noteworthy that the MNR negotiators are all people, who over the years have preferred the military option. Most of those favouring the economic option have been either individually coopted by President Chissano through skilful Mozambican 'diplomacy' or blocked by South African military interests from participation in the disappearing external wing. In fact, there have been few Mozambicans in exile prepared to follow the South African military strategy to the ultimate limit of destabilisation, i.e. the complete destruction and dissolution of the Mozambican society.

Part Two will appear in the next issue of ROAPE.

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External Collusion with Kleptocracy: 
can Zaïre recapture its Stolen Wealth?

Steve Askin & Carole Collins

For 28 years, Mobutu Sese Seko has carefully and thoughtfully refined his system for transforming the public resources of Zaïre into private wealth, while using bribery, coercion and violence to thwart all movements for change. The consequences of his system, commonly known as 'kleptocracy' or government by theft, are well known: immiseration of the people; destruction of the nation’s infrastructure; enrichment of Mobutu and his collaborators; the transformation of Zaïre into the prime staging ground for foreign intervention against other African nations. This article will focus neither on the consequences of kleptocracy nor the growing opposition which, for the past three years, has aggressively but so far unsuccessfully challenged Mobutu’s rule.

It will instead examine questions of causation and culpability. It will identify some of the architects, beneficiaries and allies of kleptocracy; analyse the methods used for misdirecting Zaïre’s wealth, and catalogue the benefits Mobutu, his domestic associates and his external sponsors drew from this system. It will also discuss the legal mechanisms a post-Mobutu government might use to recapture stolen assets or set aside debts arising from loans whose proceeds were stolen.

This emphasis on identifying guilty parties stems, not from abstract moralism, but rather from the fact that assignment of blame may help set the stage for a successful transition to a more prosperous post-Mobutu era. Public exposure of irregular international transactions and improperly acquired assets is important for at least three reasons:

1. This information is immediately useful for effectively targeting economic sanctions, now being contemplated by several Western governments, to maximise their impact on Mobutu and his collaborators.

2. When a post-Mobutu government achieves effective control over the Zairian state, it will need this information to identify stolen public assets and take legal action for their return.

3. For the long run, accurate identification of the actual beneficiaries of past foreign lending to Zaïre will be the crucial first step toward
challenging the validity of loans which creditors knew were likely
be embezzled by Mobutu and his entourage.

Some of the more egregious abuses were identified in a report on misacquired
wealth produced in 1992 by a committee of Zaire's opposition-dominated Sov-
ereign National Conference, the predecessor body to the High Council of the
Republic headed by Catholic Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo. However,
many key elements of Mobutu's kleptocratic system have hitherto remained
well concealed.

Kleptocracy Before Mobutu

The roots of modern kleptocratic practice in Zaire can be traced directly to the
19th century Congo Free State, created by King Leopold II of the Belgians as his
personal property. Leopold, not Mobutu, was the first ruler to use profits from
export of this land's vast natural resources to build a personal fortune and
finance investments elsewhere.

The secrets of Leopold's system were first unravelled by shipping clerk turned
muck-raking journalist Edmund Morel. The Congo, as he discovered and oth-
ers later confirmed, was the only European colony to run at a profit almost
from its inception. Millions of Congolese were murdered or died from disease
and overwork under the murderous forced labour regime which Leopold used
to extract rubber, ivory and other precious commodities. Leopold, anticipating
Mobutu by a century, used an intricate system of double bookkeeping and false
trade statistics to conceal the profits from his vast private domain. Leopold's
public accounting of trade transactions was designed to facilitate tax evasion
and therefore consistently under-counted the profits. In a 15 year period exam-
ined by Morel, the King — who publicly claimed a cumulative loss of $5 mil-
lion on his Congo enterprises — actually earned $25 million in profits. Leopold's
friends and allies shared the profits through 'concession' companies
which received virtually unlimited rights over vast tracts of Congo land. One
such company earned $3.6 million in six years on an initial investment of less
than $50,000; others enjoyed a return on investment as high as 50-100% annu-
ally.

As Mobutu was to do decades later, Leopold poured his African earnings into
foreign investments and real estate, including a French Riviera estate at Cap
Ferrat, just ten miles from one of the modern dictator's favourite estates. The
King spent $6 million upgrading his palace at Laeken; at least $3.5 million on
other Belgian real estate; millions more for Belgian and French properties pur-
chased secretly through his doctor or his architects; and uncounted additional
sums for a dazzling array of investments in Asia, Latin America and the Near
East. He made the Congo one of the world's first 'off shore' money laundering
centres. He used Congo-incorporated shell companies to quietly pursue busi-
ness opportunities around the world: railway construction deals in China; fish-
ing rights off Morocco; mines in Greece and the Philippines; and rubber conces-
Economic historians appropriately called Leopold's Congo economic system a *raubwirtschaft*, or 'robbery economy' (Minter, 1986:30). The violence Leopold used to extract his wealth provoked one of the first international human rights crusades, finally persuading the Belgian parliament to take the colony out of Leopold's control in 1908. Violence eased under Belgian state rule and the intensity of the extractive process diminished. But the Belgians systematised the use of forced labour, forced cash cropping and coercive taxation to transform the Congolese peasantry into a wage labour force for Belgian-owned mining and agriculture firms. The Congo remained a field for highly profitable extractive investment (Peemans, 1975a). In 1950-59, the decade preceding independence, Belgian investments in the Congo enjoyed profits two to three times the domestic Belgian average (O'Brien, 1962:173). From the first month of independence, July 1960, foreign governments dispensed bribes to key political figures with a lack of concealment which would be unthinkable today. The vast outlays for 'buying up' Congolese politicians led to a peculiar kind of inflation: a rapid escalation in the size of the bribes demanded (Christian Science Monitor, 9 Dec. 1960). In 1961, the US Central Intelligence Agency outbid Soviet and other agents in a blatant competition to control the selection of a new Prime Minister (New York Times, 26 April 1966). In 1962, 'profuse bribery' rescued the CIA-bought Prime Minister, Cyrille Adoula, from National Assembly censure. Throughout the early years of independence, US embassy officials carefully monitored politicians' diversion of US aid commodities to the black market but did nothing to stop it and continued to pour in more money and supplies (Weissman, 1974:207-9).

The Making of a Modern Kleptocracy

On seizing power in 1965, General Joseph Desire Mobutu eloquently explained the tragic circumstances which necessitated radical change. He accurately pointed out that the Congo, 'which should be among the richest countries in the world', suffered rising malnutrition, deepening poverty and ever-worsening bouts of untreated disease (Mobutu, 26 November 1965). He decried mismanagement by government functionaries who served only the 'people and companies that pay them bribes.' He angrily denounced politicians' willingness 'to sell the Congolese nation and people' for support from foreign powers. As President, Mobutu promised, he would live simply on his soldier's salary, lead the army in restoring 'stability and legality' and, within five years return power to a democratically elected civilian government (Mobutu, 12 December 1965). In fact, Mobutu, a one-time Belgian security agent who had shifted his primary allegiance to the CIA around the time of independence, was already the epitome of the abuses he denounced. His first coup, against independence leader Patrice Lumumba in 1960, had been financed by the US government through the UN (Collins, 1992:18). By 1962, according to a UN audit, Mobutu had diverted enough money from foreign military aid programmes to make himself a millionaire (Mahoney, 1983:227-8; Dayal, 1976:65-66). Far from re-
building the economy, Mobutu’s willingness to ‘sell the Congolese nation’ would plunge his land into a cycle of ever-worsening hunger, disease and malnutrition. Instead of preparing his nation for a golden age of stability, legality and democracy for the benefits of all, Mobutu’s takeover paved the way for construction of one of a structured system of plunder: a ‘kleptocracy’ or government of theft.

The system Mobutu has constructed is partly a throwback to the Leopold era of rapacious extraction, partly a product of his shrewd utilisation of new self-enrichment opportunities created by modern political and economic conditions. In particular, cold war competition for African allies has offered Mobutu new levers — which he has used most effectively for almost 30 years — to extract bribes from foreign powers and to obtain their acquiescence or active support in the diversion for personal benefit of foreign aid and investment funds. Mobutu’s self-enrichment system rests on five pillars:

- direct bribes from foreign governments and security agencies;
- payments and takings from foreign investors;
- diversions from the Zairian government budget;
- embezzlement of export earnings;
- diversions of foreign aid and foreign loans.

The construction of each set of structures of corruption required the deliberate participation of foreign partners who benefited politically or economically from Mobutu’s system.

**Direct Foreign Government Bribes**

Foreign bribes were, as we have already seen, Mobutu’s first route to riches. While relatively little is known about payments from European governments, much information is available on his financial relationship with the US government. Former US National Security Council official Roger Morris has estimated that Mobutu received close to $150 million from the US in the first decade or so of his rule. In an interview, Morris emphasised that he was referring to ‘straight old-fashioned boodle . . . unaccountable money spent by the CIA’, not including any additional funds which may have been diverted by Mobutu or his associates from overt foreign aid programmes (Morris, 1977 and authors’ interview). Former CIA official John Stockwell, who served in Zaire in the 1960s and coordinated the Agency’s Zaire-based covert war against neighbouring Angola in the 1970s, reports that the agency repeatedly made multi-million dollar payments to fund specific Zaire-based military ventures, only to discover that ‘Mobutu pocketed it [the money] immediately’. Mobutu’s theft of $1.4 million was supposed to pass to Angolan rebels Jonas Savimbi and Holden Roberto (his brother-in-law) during George Bush’s reign as CIA director and was the
best-documented instance of a frequent pattern, according to Stockwell (Stockwell, 1978 and authors’ interview). Direct bribes from foreign governments appear to have had a declining personal significance for Mobutu after the mid-1970s. Indeed, Mobutu ultimately turned the tables and, by the late 1960s, was busy buying the allegiance of Western politicians. Belgian officials who received money or lucrative contracts from Mobutu included a former Prime Minister, the one-time leader of the Christian Democratic party and top civil servants in the foreign ministry, according to Erwin Blumenthal, who monitored Zairian Central Bank transactions for the IMF in the late 1970s. Other reports have documented flows of hundreds of millions of dollars in government contracts to businesses controlled by the family of then-French President Giscard d’Estaing and to politically influential Americans (Blumenthal, 1982; Kwitny, 1984). In the United States in recent years, Mobutu has granted multi-million dollar contracts to American businesses whose owners have lobbied on his behalf in Washington (Askin & Kramer, 1990).

**Dealings with Foreign Investors**

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Mobutu used the seizure of foreign-owned businesses and fixed assets to speedily build his own personal wealth, and to create a loyal Zairian economic elite. Mobutu presented his various cycles of nationalisation, ‘Zairianization’ and ‘radicalization’ measures of the late 1960s through mid-1970s as means to regain for the Zairian people resources controlled by foreign exploiters. In reality, they merely served to reallocate wealth to Mobutu and his clients.

In a militant 1966 speech, Mobutu promised to end ‘the abuses by monopolies and business groups which exploit our country’. A few months later he announced the nationalisation of Union Miniere du Haut Katanga (UMHK), the Belgian-owned firm which dominated the nation’s export economy. But a negotiated settlement ultimately granted the Société Générale de Belgique (SGB), UMHK’s parent firm, a lucrative contract to manage the state-owned successor, Gécamines. Profits flowed undiminished to SGB (Young & Turner, 1985:293). According to a close Mobutu associate (Africa Now, March 1982), an unwritten settlement condition provided that UMHK would secretly kick back a portion of the royalties directly to the Zairian ruler. The next major expropriation cycle was launched in November 1973 as the ‘Zairianization’ campaign. In its various phases, Zairianization redistributed shops, plantations, transport companies and other enterprises from European owners to Zaïrians. Most Zaïrian acquéreurs proved incompetent as managers, and many drove their new properties swiftly into bankruptcy. Yet conventional accounts, which portray Zairianization as a mindless attack on Zaïre’s agricultural and commercial productivity, do not tell the full story. Some acquéreurs (including Mobutu himself, created a personal conglomerate which controlled one-fourth of Zaïrian cocoa and rubber production, and 6-14% of other key crops), used Zairianization to build enduring business empires. Much of Zaïre’s indigenous business elite —
including the man reputed to be the nation's wealthiest entrepreneur, Bemba Saolona — got their start with Zairianized properties obtained through Mobutu's patronage. Bemba, like most of his peers, returned the favour by serving as one of Mobutu's loyalist supporters.

It is also worth noting that Zaïrianization's main targets were small or mid-size enterprises owned by expatriates of comparatively modest means and limited political clout. While taking from these relatively powerless expatriates, Mobutu continued to build mutually beneficial relations with more influential foreigners.

Corporations, like foreign governments, have found that providing Mobutu a chance to earn money facilitates desired transactions. In the 1970s and 1980s, Mobutu used his political power to obtain shares in the Zaïrian branches of such giant multinational corporations as ITT-Bell, Fiat, Gulf, Pan Am, Renault, Peugeot, Volkswagen, and Unilever, according to one authoritative study (Young & Turner, 1985:179). In one especially byzantine set of transactions, the Mobutu government signed several agreements with a mysterious German firm known as Orbital Transport Und Raketen Gesellschaft (OTRAG) in the 1970s. The Commission on Misacquired Wealth believes that Mobutu pocketed $50 million in commissions paid by OTRAG during two years in which it leased effective sovereignty over 29,000 square miles of Zaïre's Shaba province, for a missile testing scheme (Biens Mai Acquis, 1992:74-76). Even after the project's formal 'cancellation' under pressure from Angola and other neighbours concerned about its potential military implications, OTRAG managers stayed on to run several other ventures, including an air transport franchise on which it agreed to pay Mobutu 47% of the profits (Los Angeles Times, 22 August 1978). The most famous case of Mobutu-corporate collaboration involved Zaïre's biggest infrastructure project, the 1,100 mile Inga-Shaba power line. This 'uselessly expensive' project, as it was aptly termed by the Commission on Misacquired Wealth, benefited foreign bankers and suppliers, but did nothing for Zaïre except to add at least $1 billion to the nation's foreign debt. The Commission said that evidence suggests that Mobutu may have pocketed 7% of the project's value in secret kickbacks and commissions, but was unable to complete its investigation due to official resistance (Biens Mal Acquis, 1992:77-78).

Diversion of State Funds

The Zaïrian state treasury itself has provided Mobutu his most reliable and consistent source of funds. Confidential studies by the World Bank and the IMF contain a wealth of information on this subject. The authors obtained several of the key studies from officials who were distressed by their institutions' complicity in the concealment of Mobutu's abuses. Some additional information was obtained from previously published reports (Askin, 1990). Mobutu's appropriation of state funds for personal use can be divided into three categories.

'Legal' use of state funds via 'presidential' spending: Any examination of fi-
nancial flows to Mobutu must start with his presidential allowance, the annual *dotation présidentielle*, a fund officially allocated — in successive Zaïrian state budgets — for Mobutu’s unrestricted use. Much and possibly most of this money has been used for presidential accumulation and consumption or for payments to political associates and other regime maintenance costs. Starting in the late 1960s, Presidential appropriations officially consumed 15-20% of the government’s operating budget and 30-50% of its capital budget. In 1988, this fund totalled $65 million.

But the *dotation présidentielle* has been only one among many direct state payments to funds personally controlled by the president, according to confidential World Bank documents examined by the authors. One such report contains detailed figures on official funding of the Mama Mobutu Foundation, the ruling party and its youth movement, and other ‘political institutions’ controlled directly by the President. Taken as a group, these ‘political institutions’ receive annual appropriations totalling two to three times the *dotation présidentielle*, according to unpublished data for the years 1980 through 1987.

Illegal spending: Confidential World Bank reports indicate that Mobutu has routinely ignored official budgetary appropriations, and consistently overspent his already-generous presidential budget. In the late 1970s, Blumenthal found that ‘control of financial transactions of the Presidency is virtually impossible’, largely because ‘the President’s bureau makes no distinction between state expenditure and personal expenditure’. In 1986, for example, the Presidency and related institutions drew $172 million from the treasury, three times their official appropriation.

Mystery spending: Hundreds of millions of dollars have disappeared annually from the state treasury without even an indication of how, when or why the funds were taken or spent. A 1989 World Bank study showed that fully 18% of the year’s state expenditures were spent for unexplained ‘other goods and services’; in 1986, these unexplained outlays absorbed $269 million in Zaïrian state expenditures. According to World Bank experts who have examined Zaïrian state financial records, much of this money appears to have been spent on luxury purchases or superfluous military hardware.

Stolen Mineral Export Earnings

Embezzlement of export proceeds may be the most lucrative ‘pillar’ of Mobutu’s system. The state mineral marketing apparatus has been a ‘paragon of corruption’ since its founding in 1974, according to a well-research study of the state mining company, Gécamines (Henk, 1988:150). Over the past dozen years, repeated studies by the World Bank and other institutions have documented diversions of $150 million to $400 million a year from the nation’s copper and cobalt revenues, representing up to 30% of annual exports (Askin, 1990). The upheavals of the past three years cut copper and cobalt production to a mere one-third of historic levels. As a result, Mobutu-linked diamond
smuggling replaced diversion of copper and cobalt proceeds as Mobutu's main source of foreign earnings. In the past year alone, diamond smuggling operations with ties to Mobutu or his associates may have netted as much as $300 million (Askin, 1992, 1993).

Foreign Aid & Foreign Loans
Western governments and multilateral institutions have known at least since the mid-1970s that money lent to the Mobutu regime was likely to disappear without explanation. In some cases, loan proceeds were directly stolen, in others, they were squandered on projects which enriched no one except Mobutu or a few politically favoured foreign investors. If one analyses Zaire's foreign debt, former Wall Street Journal reporter Jonathan Kwitny rightly concluded, 'you find that almost none of it arises from anything that much benefited the Zairian people who are being slowly starved to pay it off' (Kwitny, 1984:19). As Kwitny points out, private commercial banks provided funds without carefully scrutinizing Mobutu's credit-worthiness because most of their exposure was covered by guarantees from agencies such as the US Import-Export Bank. Some private banks may have profited doubly from these loans: collecting debt service payments from Zaire or its guarantors, while accepting 'flight capital' deposits when loan proceeds were diverted to the foreign accounts of Mobutu or his associates.

Official flows of loan funds were dictated largely by political considerations, not by Zaire's credit-worthiness or the probability that funded projects would produce enough revenue to repay the debt. Zaire's accumulated foreign debt totalled $10.7 billion in 1991, the last year for which data is available. Foreign lenders have known for 20 years that there was no rational reason to expect repayment of loans to the Mobutu government. As early as 1974, a US Embassy official discovered that the Zairian Central Bank had no meaningful system for tracking foreign loan agreements and repayment obligations (Walker, 1974). After spending a year inside the Zairian Central Bank in the late 1970s, Blumenthal of the IMF definitively warned international lenders that they could never expect repayment of funds lent to Mobutu's Zaire. He concluded that 'the corruptive system in Zaire, with all its wicked and ugly manifestations, will destroy all endeavors ... towards recovery and rehabilitation of Zaire's economy' (Blumenthal, 1982:20). Western governments, fully aware of the continuing abuses, continued to deliver foreign aid grants and concessional loans as direct payoffs for Mobutu's political services. In 1983, after Zaire sent troops to defend US-backed Chadian President Hissen Habre, President Reagan praised Mobutu's 'courageous action' and rewarded him with a request to Congress for the doubling of US foreign aid. That request was made with full knowledge that the aid funds were likely to be stolen or squandered; a few months earlier the US Embassy in Kinshasa had warned Washington that any monitoring of expenditures was impossible because 'major diversions of funds and goods are made by the barons of the regime' (declassified State Department cable, 21 April 1983).
In 1987, after Mobutu made his territory available for US covert action against neighbouring Angola, Washington pushed through a new IMF structural adjustment loan for Zaire over strong objections from senior IMF technical experts (press accounts and interview with former IMF Trade and Finance Department director, David Finch). In 1988, African Development Bank officials with close links to Mobutu pushed through a $100 million ADB petroleum import support loan over similarly strong technical objections, despite warnings from technical experts that this loan was particularly susceptible to embezzlement or diversion. Zaire soon defaulted and, according to a finding of Zaire's Misacquired Wealth Commission, a Mobutu son-in-law embezzled $10 million from the loan proceeds (Askin, 1993).

Removing Mobutu: Recovering Zaire's Wealth

During the cold war, anti-Mobutu appeals led only to frustration, probably because the Zairian leader served, in the well-chosen words of former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, as a 'consistent if sometimes embarrassing source of support' for Western strategic objectives (Vance, 1983:70). Zairian democracy fighters were ruthlessly undercut by the West's continued backing of Mobutu.

Though defending Mobutu against domestic opponents no longer ranked high on any foreign power's agenda by the time that the West African wave of democratic protest swept across Zaire in early 1990, Mobutu's most important backer, the US, was far from ready to abandon him. A May 1990 massacre at the University of Lubumbashi brought swift protests from two of Mobutu's three most important foreign backers, France and Belgium. They swiftly cut aid and demanded an independent investigation. But Mobutu's 20-year friendship with former President George Bush insulated him from effective outside pressure. Washington insiders report that the Bush White House repeatedly blocked State Department recommendations of anti-Mobutu action.

A pro-democracy movement flowered despite murderous repression and international isolation. That movement gave rise to the institutions for construction of democracy: a National Conference which transformed itself into a transitional parliament — the High Council of the Republic — which selected the opposition's best-known leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, as transitional Prime Minister. Mobutu's resistance to change unleashed ever-worsening conflict and chaos. Foreign debt defaults precipitated an automatic cut-off of US aid and moratoria on IMF and African Development Bank loans. Yet Mobutu shrewdly rode the wave of protest, as he does to this day. He offers minor reforms followed by major disreforms, buys the support of some oppositionists; sends troops to kill or threaten others. A half-hearted and inconsistent response from Washington and other foreign capitals — coupled with Mobutu's control over the purse strings and some continuing military assistance to Mobutu from Israel, Egypt and South Africa — let him cling to the levers of power.
Economic Pressures: the Last Hope for a Peaceful Transition

In 1993, the new administration in Washington brought new hope for concerted international action. Soon after President Clinton took office, State Department officials started talking with their French and Belgian counterparts about a possible freeze on Mobutu's foreign assets. At this writing, in early June 1993, they are still talking, but not yet acting. Sanctions discussions centre on five sets of possible actions: Freezing the foreign bank accounts of Mobutu, his family and his associates; formally suspending Zaire from the IMF and World Bank; embargoing Zaire's cobalt, copper and other exports; banning weapons sales to the Mobutu regime; expelling Mobutu's ambassadors from Western capitals.

If well-designed, these measures may offer the last chance for removing Mobutu before the nation collapses into full-fledged civil war. Yet each must be creatively broadened to have any real effect. Moreover, the isolation of Mobutu should be coupled with efforts to strengthen the High Commission for the Revolution (HCR) and the Tshisekedi cabinet as — however imperfect — the only institutions in Zaire with a legitimate claim to represent the political will of the nation.

1. A freeze limited to Mobutu's personal bank accounts would be useless, because much of his foreign wealth is hidden behind the names of family members, friends and political cronies who must also be targeted. To be effective, a freeze must also encompass real estate holdings; equity interests in resorts and other business ventures; safe deposit boxes full of diamonds; and a host of other assets. And it should be viewed as merely the first step toward legal action designed to seize, and return to the people of Zaire, state-owned property diverted for private use and any other assets obtained by illegal or extra-legal means.

2. Suspension of the Mobutu regime's representation in the World Bank and IMF should proceed immediately, but serious consideration should also be given to accepting officials from the transitional government as Zaire's legitimate representatives to these institutions. The Bank and Fund should also be pressed to support the work of Zaire's Commission on Misacquired Wealth by providing it full access to the wealth of information in their files on Mobutu era financial irregularities.

Swift action is also needed to isolate Zaire's Central Bank, which is illegally occupied by a Mobutu appointee in defiance of the HCR and currently serves largely to launder diamond smuggling proceeds. This rogue institution should be excluded from all international funds transfer systems until Mobutu relinquishes control. In addition, a global embargo on the currency notes, printed abroad,
which Mobutu uses to pay his army could undermine his control.

3. An arms embargo is symbolically important but has relatively little practical meaning because Mobutu’s power rests on weapons already in-country. Mobutu controls the soldiers, defying Parliament’s assertion of military primacy, only to the extent that he pays their salaries. If foreign donors provided meaningful funding for the operations of the HCR and the Tshisekedi government, including funds to meet the military payroll, that might facilitate a speedy transition of control over the army to legitimate authorities.

4. Because Mobutu’s destructive regime has already driven the copper and cobalt mines to a virtual standstill, diamonds are the most important target for any embargo. Embargoing diamonds is extremely difficult, since any smuggler can carry several hundred thousand dollars worth in his or her pocket. Nonetheless, authorities in Antwerp, Tel Aviv, New York and other major diamond cutting centres would — if determined to do so — have relatively little difficulty pin-pointing the major buyers and sellers of Zairian precious stones. If an embargo were coupled with close observation of Mobutu’s customers and harsh prosecution when violators are caught, they will quickly turn to other diamond sources.

5. Expulsion of Mobutu’s ambassadors is merely the first step toward full international recognition of the HCR and its Prime Minister. Mobutu’s last presidential term expired in 1991. While the US and the European Community have repeatedly declared that they view the HCR as Zaire’s legitimate highest authority, this stance has not yet been consistently translated into policy. Recognition of the transitional government implies that HCR-backed officials would be granted control over Zaire’s foreign embassies and its seats in all international bodies. It would mean that, official foreign aid flows and foreign corporate tax payments, if they are to be made at all, must be channelled through the HCR-backed government, not Mobutu’s functionaries.

These proposals lack precedent in the history of international economic sanctions. Yet nothing less will work if Zaire is to be afforded any chance of achieving peaceful political transition.

Post-Mobutu Economics: Extinguishing Odious Debts

Zaire’s first post-Mobutu government will inherit an economy burdened with more than $10 billion in foreign debt, incurred by a dictator who stole or squandered the borrowed funds. International law — which has traditionally stressed the responsibility of successor governments for debts incurred by predecessors — cannot be rationally applied to such a case. As Ghanaian legal
scholar Chris Mensah has pointed out, this traditional view offers no justice for nations whose debt burden stems from imprudent lending by institutions which 'looked the other way even when they knew that the loan proceeds did not go towards the project or that the cost of financing was too high for the size of the project.' Mensah proposes a novel legal strategy for challenging the 'odious' debts which arose from corrupt collaboration between third world dictators and developed world lenders. Governments, he argues, are merely trustees who temporarily hold custody over assets and are actually owned by a nation's people; lenders are guilty of fraud if they disburse funds to a sovereign 'trustee' when they have reason to believe that he will steal the proceeds. If a bank knew that the previous 'trustee' (in Zaire's case, Mobutu) signed a loan agreement with intent to defraud, that agreement must be deemed invalid or deemed a personal debt of the faithless trustee (Mensah, 1992:33-39). No nation would provide a better test of this new theory than Zaire.

Since the US and other Western governments midwifed the birth of Mobutist kleptocracy, it would be difficult for Western officials to honestly deny their advance knowledge of the misappropriation risk. Claims of ignorance lack all credibility for the period since 1979, the year in which Blumenthal warned that financial abuses could not be halted while Mobutu remained in office (Blumenthal delivered his warning, it should be emphasised, to bilateral as well as multilateral Mobutu partners: in June 1979, distressed by inaccurate Congressional testimony in which the US State Department's senior Zaire expert suggested that effective reform was taking place in Zaire, Blumenthal explained to that expert, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Lannon Walker, the methods used by Mobutu to eliminate all prospects for reform (Blumenthal, 1982:9)). As we have already seen, direct acts of theft known to multilateral lenders have had an enormous impact in Zaire absorbing up to 20% of the state operating budget, 30% of mineral export earnings and as much as 50% of the state capital budget. Very little remains in the state treasury for legitimate government activity, and very little of that goes for human services. Zaire ranks last among developing nations in the percentage of its government budget allocated to education, health, housing and other social services (World Bank, 1992:238).

Despite their knowledge of the consequences, foreign lenders have continued to pour money into the Mobutu regime to the present day. Net private lending
to Zaire stopped in 1979, but credits from the World Bank, IMF and other official institutions made the Zairian government a net foreign borrower at least through 1991 (Authors' interviews with ADB and World Bank officials, May and June 1993). Net lending to Zaire over the past decade totalled roughly $1.9 billion (World Debt Tables, 1990-91, 1992-93). Though the IMF and ADB have halted all disbursements to Zaire, as of June 1993, the World Bank was still disbursing funds for some Zaire projects.

Zaire's claim against the lenders is made stronger still by the fact that the World Bank and IMF encouraged the adoption of false 'economic reforms' which bankrupted human services in Zaire while protecting kleptocracy profits. During Mobutu's latest and longest periods of 'compliance' with structural adjustment demands, 1983-86, officials of Western governments and multilateral lending institutions were publicly effusive about Zaire's role 'as a prime example of a country willing to bite the bullet of economic reform.' Yet confidential reports show that the World Bank knew that, far from reforming, Mobutu continued and expanded his misappropriation of state funds during this period.

Lenders' narrow interests were well-served in this period, because debt service received the largest share of Zaire's state spending. In 1986, for example, Zaire's state budget totalled slightly over $1 billion, with 43% of spending devoted to debt service. A mere 13% of the budgetary expenditures went to traditional government departments, and more than half of this money was spent by the military. The presidency and other political institutions absorbed 16% of the budget. In addition, a large portion of the budget, 28%, was absorbed by a nebulous category called 'centralized expenditures' and other unexplained items. This confidential study concluded that 'technical solutions to instill budgetary discipline are unlikely to be effective' because of Mobutu's propensity to divert state funds for political use (World Bank, 1988). The case for repudiation of kleptocrat debt, anathema to most bankers, has found at least one ally among multilateral lending officials. N N Susungi, London Resident Director of the African Development Bank, argued during the March 1993 conference of the Royal Africa Society, that 'it is morally unfair for the strong and powerful institutions to continue to demand unbearable economic sacrifices from the poor as a condition for debt rescheduling from the London or Paris Clubs when we all know that there is money out there somewhere that can be used to lift the burden off the people's shoulders.' The banks, he said, have a duty to help successor governments locate such stolen wealth and that these assets 'be used to pay off the loans of these powerful banks so that the poor people can be left alone to make a fresh start.'

Steve Askin and Carole Collins are based in the US and are completing a book on the Zairian economy under Mobutu; this article draws heavily on research for that book.
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Debates

The Future of Southern Africa

Roy Love

In ROAPE 50 (Africa in a New World Order) William G. Martin examined a number of possible directions of change in southern Africa following majority rule in South Africa, ranging from 'regional restabilisation' through 'regional break-up and peripheralisation' to 'neo-regionalism alternatives' (sic). While he usefully brings out the complexities of economic and political relationships in the region a lack of clarity in his conceptualisation has, in my opinion, led to a conclusion that is over-optimistic in its prospects for what he calls 'anti-systemic' regional alliances. What many observers tend to overlook, with the decline of apartheid and because of its poor performance in recent years, is the success of capitalism in South Africa: that is, the successful transformation of labour into a proletariat; the successful monopolisation of production capital; and the successful subordination, notwithstanding the existence of competing fractions, of the state to the needs, in a generic sense, of capital. The latter, in particular, means that any discussion of the role of South Africa in the region must also be premised on an understanding of the relationship between capital and the state, both as it has evolved and as it is likely to alter under majority rule. Likewise the discussion of regional alternatives must take account of the nature of class formation and its expression within the various nation states of southern Africa, and of the different forms which class struggle is taking throughout the region and of capital's response.

Though the relationship between capital and the state is crucial Martin tends to conflate the interests of each, thus bypassing the significance, both globally and regionally, of the differences in modality of operation and in objectives between transnational capital and the nation state. The economic influence over the region that has been exerted by South Africa in the past has been predominantly the influence of capital, rather than the state, not least because of variable state formations prior to 1910; and Martin's view that 'the regional economy was formed and maintained through interstate political initiatives' (p.118) is to gloss over the complex relationship between the growth of capitalism and the role of the state as intermediary between numerous vested interests throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The failure, for instance, of the Union of South Africa to incorporate Rhodesia and the neighbouring Protectorates in the earlier years of this century may be seen as a set-back to South African political initiatives contingent to the period but did not restrict the spread of South African based merchant, finance and production capital, which had benefited from state protection, throughout these territories. The pattern varied, of course, especially in the case of Southern Rhodesia where South African influence was moderated by policies to protect local settler capital, but
this did not prevent significant levels of penetration and dependency which remain today. Even the state sponsored destabilisation policies of the 1980s must be seen in the context of maintaining economic dependence on South Africa. The state has not therefore been unimportant, not least in the protection which it has provided over many years to white owned South African agriculture and industry, but it has not been the driving force behind the regional expansion of capital.

It is also clear that an analytical distinction between the current South African government and 'the state' in South Africa has to be maintained as has the fact that South African business interests have an agenda for the future which does not necessarily overlap with that of the present government in all areas. In this sense, paradoxically, South African capital is less boxed in by racial factors than is the National Party. The interests of capital are primarily, as Szetel and Ajulu have shown (ROAPE 51 and 55), in allowing structures to alter only in so far as they will continue to permit market forces to operate in favour of the present owners of capital. This was evident as early as 1989 when South African business leaders took the initiative to visit ANC leaders in Lusaka and in their subsequent success in influencing ANC economic policy to the extent that certain sections of the policy guidelines adopted at the May 1992 conference could well have reappeared later that year in the Annual Report of the Governor of the South African Reserve Bank. The ANC, for instance, declares that 'emphasis will be placed on macro-economic balance, including price stability and balance of payments equilibrium' while C S Stals, the Reserve Bank Governor, stresses the importance of a 'stable macro-economic environment with low inflation'; the ANC refers to 'redistribution programmes to meet the basic needs of our people' while the Reserve Bank recognises the need for a 'social upliftment programme' that takes account of 'the existing large disparities in the distribution of wealth and income' (ANC, 1992; Stals, 1992). The Governor of the Bank, however, also calls for economic restructuring which would 'adopt outward growth strategies ... cut back on excessive regulation ... and encourage (government) from interfering or competing in the areas of production and distribution where private sector entrepreneurs can perform best'. The precise formula for political representation that emerges from the constitutional talks is therefore less relevant to business than that it should not damage the prospects for existing holders of capital. Privatisation is clearly a further aspect of this.

Consequently, while the De Klerk government, representing white interests and the National Party, is preoccupied with political negotiations the business world is pro-actively involved with influencing public opinion on the merits of the market and in seeking ways out of the current economic crisis. An important aspect of the latter is concern over the country's continued heavy dependence on the export of one commodity, gold, and of the desirability of expanding both the range of export goods and diversity of markets. While this implies an improved performance, particularly for manufactured goods in the markets of the industrialised economies, it also underlines the importance of retaining the traditional hold over the regional market and many firms are actively increasing their penetration of the southern African region where there are historical networks to build upon. For example,
since the early 1990s Eskom has moved forward in its plans for a regional electricity grid, tying in to regional hydroelectric production in Mozambique, Lesotho and Zimbabwe; the Standard Chartered Bank of South Africa has extended its branch network through acquisition in neighbouring countries; Barlow Rand has increased its sales and consultancy on mining activities in the region and has regained possession of nationalised companies in Angola; and South African Airlines has extended its African network. Tjonneland has estimated that by 1992 some 30% of South African manufacturing exports went to the region together with Zaire and Mauritius. This share seems likely to increase. The South African state is also involved: regional aid deals have been agreed between the South African government and those of Germany and Italy; the Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, has spoken of a ‘Marshall Plan... to reconstruct depressed economies of the region’; and South African membership, of some sort, is anticipated in the newly formed SADC and in the PTA.

The net effect of all this activity is a reconfirmation and reinforcement of the conception by South African capital of the region as a single market. Robert Davies has pointed to the ‘South Africa-centred’ nature of current discourse on the region within South Africa and to similarities with the ‘Confederation of Southern African States’ initiative of the C W Botha years (Davies, 1992). Even the economic periphery of the region, though it may not provide the most important sources of profit generation, is not disqualified from inclusion in the perceived regional market. The example of Botswana demonstrates how mineral discoveries and their development can transform the potential of an area previously thought to be unimportant. The dominance of the South African economy in the region, with about 80% of regional GNP, allows us to see it as a microcosm of the global scene, ignoring for the moment the region’s own relationship to global capital. Thus South African based capital is constantly seeking to strengthen its hegemony in the region while the various nation states of SADC, the products of previous uneven development, are trapped in the contradiction of promoting local capital accumulation in harness with the short-run attractions of extra-national capital. The possibilities of ‘anti-systemic’ alliances being able to counteract this increasing hegemony seem to me to be extremely limited, especially in the current climate of structural adjustment and open markets. Quite apart from the extension by individual South African companies of their activities in the region the dominance of the ideology of the ‘free market’ will encourage polarisation of economic activities in accordance with Myrdal’s process of ‘cumulative causation’. Indeed it is in recognising that ‘attempts to promote wider economic exchanges based on notions of comparative advantage immediately exacerbate uneven patterns of accumulation’ that Martin calls for ‘a stronger anti-systemic thrust’ (p.125). However, both history and the advantages which continue to accrue from investing in the more established industrial centres of South Africa make this extremely unlikely. The cost of Bantustan regional subsidies is also likely to make any future South African government extremely wary of supporting a wider regional redistribution of resources.

The role of regional organisations such as SADC (Southern African Development...
ment Community), which replaced SADCC (Southern African Development and Cooperation Conference) in August 1992, is also likely to be unhelpful. The latter achieved only limited success in its objective of reducing dependency on South Africa during the 1980s, mainly through improved cooperation in transport and trading facilities and in providing a focalising influence on regional aid, but little significant change in trade patterns with South Africa was gained, to some extent because of South African destabilising activities but also because of the difficulties in breaking free from historically determined trade structures. The indications in recent years from SADC, SADCC and South Africa that the latter’s eventual membership of what is now SADC is being anticipated by both sides implies that dependency, and hence the influence of South African capital in the region, will increase. Further indications that the principal aid donors, notably the EC, are turning their attention increasingly towards South Africa (and eastern Europe) as apartheid formally disappears confirm, as might be expected, policies aimed at promoting closer economic integration in the region as a whole. In the meantime, discussions aimed at bringing SACU, SADC and the PTA closer in a wider Southern and Eastern African free trade zone will inevitably provide South African capital with greater opportunities for trade aggrandisement in African than it has ever had before, a process additionally reinforced by the pervasive liberalising policies of structural adjustment (Tjonneland, 1992; Davies, 1992; Harris, 1993).

In the area of popular resistance too, progress is likely to be limited. Robert Fine (ROAPE 55, 1992) has discussed the problems of democratising civil society and of creating a mediation between it and the state in the context of South Africa. It is difficult to see how an effective regional coordination amongst groups in civil society could be achieved when so many states are also dominated de facto if not de jure by one party rule. This extends to restraints on trade union cooperation: even amongst neighbouring advanced industrial societies, such as those in the European Community, progressive alliances amongst trade unions across national boundaries are notoriously difficult to sustain and the ability of the multinationals to play one group of workers off against another is unassailed, as witnessed by corporate relocations within the EC. Where the countries involved are at widely different stages of development then international cooperation between labour movements becomes weaker still (Williamson, 1991). Only in certain circumstances and for limited periods, as in South Africa in the 1980s, do trade union concerns transcend the local workplace and are even then concerned primarily with national politics. The spatial consequences of this are, however, a nationalism which tends to identify with the nation state, whose main function is to preserve national capital and, to an extent, national employment. High levels of unemployment throughout the southern African region are thus likely to intensify inward looking employment protectionism, rather than, as Martin indicated, leading to policies which cater for ‘the rights and wages of foreign, contract migrant workers’ (Martin, 1990:131). Despite an expressed concern for regional solidarity the ANC is likely to respond to the aspirations of its own grassroots supporters if it attains power, with local pressures necessarily dominating over any regional alliances that are entered
into. Throughout the region, moreover, repressive labour laws are likely to continue to severely constrain trade union activities: within South Africa itself 'homeland' labour legislation is more restrictive than elsewhere in the Republic; in Botswana strikers are regularly dismissed and the government has changed the law in the midst of industrial action to reclassify certain workers as 'essential' and thus render their action illegal; in Malawi trade union and opposition leaders are imprisoned, and in Zimbabwe state-trade union relationships are in continual tension. Here again structural adjustment programmes weaken the potential for effective alliances: to quote Raftopoulos, 'increasing threats of retrenchment, plummeting real wage levels, deregulations of labour laws, decontrol of prices, removal of subsidies and the implementation of cost recovery measures in health and education ... present labour with increasing problems' (Raftopoulos, 1992).

Martin is sanguine but also over-optimistic in seeming to 'witness a surging wave of resistance to the dictates of the world economy', and in seeing 'widespread protests ... across the region against entrenched parties' implementation of stabilisation programmes' (p.133) as creating opportunities for anti-systemic alliances. Quite apart from the power of state and capital to repress and incorporate opposition on a national as well as transnational basis, the rise of nationalism and 'Balkanisation' in eastern Europe shows the fallacy of depending on casual observation of populist tendencies. In failing then to attach sufficient recognition to the interface between the horizontal hegemony of South Africa and transnational capital in the region, and the vertical domestic hegemony of each southern African nation state (notwithstanding other debates on the 'soft' state), Martin underestimates the ability of capital to manipulate the dilemmas of nation states in the interests of furthering its own hegemony. It is not at all evident that any transition to majority rule in South Africa which leaves the essential structure of South African capital untouched will alter this drive to regional hegemony in any significant respect.

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South Africa’s Economic and Social Transformation: from ‘No Middle Road’ to ‘No Alternative’

Laurence Harris

In 1976 Joe Slovo, as a leader of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the intellectual force behind many of those movements’ modern positions, published a remarkable essay, *South Africa – No Middle Road*. Laying out a reasoned argument for the revolutionary struggle in South Africa, it is one of the classics of international communism. The argument it advanced that there was no middle road for the oppressed of South Africa except a left wing revolutionary road, was a double argument: instead of a middle road of peaceful pressure to achieve only national liberation, the only road was armed liberation struggle; and instead of a middle road between capitalism and socialism, national liberation was inseparable from socialist revolution.

The national liberation struggle reached a turning point in 1990 when the ANC and its allies were legalised, Nelson Mandela was released, and the government of South Africa committed itself to negotiating the end of the apartheid polity. Since this turning point signalling the end of apartheid is widely viewed as a victory for national liberation, the question posed is whether it places socialism on the agenda, for Slovo’s classic position was that national liberation would unleash a socialist revolution as well as being incomplete without it. At first sight that prognosis appears to be accurate for proletarian political forces, which classical marxism identifies as leading socialist struggles, have grown. The trade union confederation COSATU, which has socialism as a goal, has articulated the claims of organised workers and more general claims of the poor. Similarly, the SACP has grown since its legalisation and at times the requests to join have outstripped the organisation’s ability to process applications. The SACP has links with COSATU unions and trade unionists are a large proportion of its membership. In this article, I argue that view is false; socialist forces in South Africa are weak for, in the absence of an effective socialist strategy or a ‘socialist idea’ that represents an alternative to capitalist logic, socialism is not on the agenda. Instead of the socialist imperative associated with the idea that ‘there is no middle way’, the watchword in South Africa today is effectively that ‘there is no alternative’ to capitalism.

‘Radical Reform’

It would be a mistake to imagine that a socialist strategy or socialist idea is completely absent, for the success of the national liberation movement has been accompanied by active socialist attempts to define an appropriate strategy. The following paragraphs outline their main direction in the field of political economy, but in the later sections I argue that the new perspective does not amount to an effective socialist strategy. Here I am only concerned with some issues of political economy; I neglect other areas such as socialists’ active discussion of the concept of ‘civil society’, of the concept and role of nation, of law, gender and community action.

In the decades before the 1990 turning point, ‘socialism’ was an important ingredient in the ideology of the na-
tional liberation movement. Although the main organisations, the ANC, the constituent parts of the United Democratic Front (UDF), and the black consciousness organisations generally rejected the ‘socialist’ label given them by the regime’s anti-communist crusade, their ideology of national liberation was one in which socialist ideas mixed with ideals of Christian justice, nationhood, historic irredentism, and liberal human rights. The notion that apartheid was inseparable from capitalism and benefited big business promoted socialist ideas to an almost hegemonic position within that national liberation ideology, especially within the ANC and UDF, and that identification of apartheid with capitalism became a focus of debate between the organised movement and its critics such as Merle Lipton (1985). The fact that the South African Communist Party was a cornerstone of the ANC and UDF was one sign of the socialist ideological hegemony.

However, the socialist ideology that played such an important role in the construction of national consciousness was relatively undeveloped. South African Marxist scholarship had great strengths in specific areas such as history and sociology (Wolpe, 1989; 1976), but for several reasons that academic work did not provide a basis for the socialist ideology that could inform a movement for transformation. For most of the period, the implicit framework for the movement’s understanding of how to achieve social transformation was the ‘reform versus revolution’ perspective inherited from the classics of a century ago. As Slovo’s No Middle Road exemplifies, the reform of capitalism was considered impossible; to the Leninist rejection of reform was added the specific view that since South African capitalism was inseparable from apartheid, liberation was inconceivable without the overthrow of capitalism. That blunt dichotomy was not conducive to discussions of how a liberated South Africa would set about transforming society, for the idea of a revolutionary capture of state power was associated, by default, with a conception that centralised control of the state would confer the ability to control economic and social change.

The climate of socialist thinking underwent significant change in the popular upheavals of 1985, for the new grassroots organisations grouped within the UDF created political structures at a level beneath the formal, centrally controlled political institutions, while the COSATU trade unions similarly won new power and space at the base. The need to understand this new political balance and to appraise the policy issues posed by local situations of power, was partly filled by the appropriation of the Gramscian concepts of ‘civil society’ and ‘dual power’ and, at the practical level, by the development of fine negotiating and organising skills by socialists. Nevertheless, the 1990 turning point found the South African left without a coherent socialist strategy. The defeat of the centrally planned systems of the communist bloc and the fact that 1990 was the beginning of a process of negotiation rather than a revolutionary seizure of power, meant that the reform versus revolution paradigm offered no model on which to build, while socialist ideas forged in local popular struggles against severe repression had not led to a consciousness of how to build socialism in the context of negotiated national power.

The South African debate that has developed in the 1990s starts from the premise that the left’s old dichotomy
of ‘reform versus revolution’ is not useful; instead of reform being a dirty word, it is argued that ‘structural reform’ or ‘radical reform’ is a step on the road toward socialism that should be firmly adopted. Structural reform is envisaged as quite different from the reformism which was advanced by Bernstein and, since the beginning of this century, has been attacked by leninists. John Saul, Eddie Webster, Karl von Holdt and its other proponents define it in terms of two key characteristics: first, structural reforms have an inbuilt dynamic which carries them forward toward a socialist society; and, second, instead of being handed down they must be rooted in popular initiatives which increase the empowerment of the masses. Saul uses the term ‘structural reform’ while Webster and von Holdt refer to ‘radical reform’; since the latter identify their perspective with John Saul’s, I use the terms interchangeably. However, as becomes evident in this text, there is a difference between the two approaches in that Saul’s is linked in principle to a conception of a long run transformation which is revolutionary in character, while Webster and von Holdt explicitly opt for a goal of traditional social democracy (Saul, 1992, 1991; Webster, 1992). The potential for such structural reform lies in the fact that the breaking of the old forms of apartheid was achieved by precisely the popular initiatives, of trade unionists and communities, that are a defining feature of the strategy. The growth of powerful black unions from shop floor struggles in the 1970s to the creation in 1985 of the trade union federation COSATU, which is today the principal national body with a defined socialist strategy, is well documented (Fine & Webster, 1989; Webster, 1992) and, despite the inevitable problems that weaken trade union democracy, the socialist commitment of COSATU continues to be founded on the shop floor and in its community roots. At the same time, the rise of community power groups, the ‘civics’, in urban struggles over education, housing and infrastructure achieved real gains and formed the basis of the ANC-linked UDF whose campaigns destroyed the legitimation of the old regime.

Since popular initiatives brought down the old system, can they not be harnessed for reconstruction, to create a new society which is moving toward socialist ends? Webster and von Holdt (1992), focusing on the role of trade unions, argue that they can achieve such radical reform, for COSATU has already transformed itself into a major player in determining economic policy on a wider front than traditional trade union issues. For example, in 1991 it initiated an impressive, broad-based campaign and strong general strike against the imposition of a new tax, the value added tax and, although it did not achieve more than marginal changes in the tax, it ‘brought together a wide range of trade unions, consumer and welfare organisations, political organisations, medical associations and small business. Probably a broader coalition than any seen in South Africa before ... It brought mass action and mass participation back into the arena of negotiations’ (Webster, 1992:15-16). Going beyond that, those authors point to COSATU’s commitment to formulate an economic strategy for the country and its rapid strides to being accepted in tripartite bodies negotiating over broad macro-economic policies.

**Critique of ‘Radical Reform’**

Does structural or radical reform
amount to a socialist path forward that would justify the optimism some European and North American leftists have about the prospects for socialism in South Africa? The answer has to be no for two reasons: the concept is weak in principle and, in any case, the South African reality does not match up to the concept.

The principle embedded in the notion of structural reform can be seen as a constructed determinism; reform strategies can be constructed in such a way that they necessarily carry the movement forward to further reforms and they build on popular initiatives in such a way that they ‘leave a residue of further empowerment’ which automatically strengthens future struggles (Saul, 1992:6). The principle suffers from the weakness of all forms of determinism, for we know there is no such thing as a set of changes that necessarily flow from changes already achieved and we also know that while mass struggles can increase empowerment in the sense of heightened consciousness and the space in which to act, it is a ‘residue’ which is easily erased by the high powered cleaning fluid (or dark paint) of reaction.

Underlying the weakness of the principle of structural reform is the circularity introduced in an attempt to bolster its forward direction. To give meaning to the idea that successful reform struggles impose a logic from which further reforms must follow, Saul places them in the context where ‘the popular movement-cum party attempting a programme of structural reform must constantly articulate to itself and to its broadest potential constituency the goal of structural transformation/socialism’ (Saul, 1992) but that begs the question that should be the starting point for the concept, ‘what is the socialism that is the goal of structural reform?’.

In practice, the reality of South Africa does not live up to the claim that the country is moving along a path of radical reform towards socialism. On the important question of popular participation, grass roots initiatives and organisation did achieve the great political victories of the past decade or more, including the legalisation of the new trade unions, the 1990 agreement to improve labour relations law, and the legalisation of the ANC and SACP.

But the ability of popular bodies to achieve further gains is thrown in doubt by their weakness. The civics, which effectively took power in the townships and administered them as popular bodies in 1985, are fragmented, weak, and no longer have the same popular support; they have been weakened by the whole process of national negotiations and, above all, by the terror unleashed in the townships through Inkatha (that comparative weakness should not, however, be interpreted as a complete destruction of the civics for they have continuing significance in certain areas although, everywhere, their character has changed since 1985). The trade unions retain their shop floor structures and extensive shop steward system but, as in any country, acute economic crisis has forced them into defensive struggles instead of forward looking campaigns and, as unemployment worsens, weakens their power base and strengthens the employers’ hand (Webster and von Holdt detail the efforts made at national level to force employers in mining and textiles to agree to a union role in restructuring industry to meet the economic crisis. Far from being steps in a socialist direction the 1991 mining talks gave unions a voice in redundancies, and reductions in real
wages in return for productivity gains; moreover, under pressure from grass roots regional delegates the union rejected such deals in future. As the Webster and von Holdt note, the experience 'shows that most South African managers, for all their talk of a new era of social contracts and co-determination is (sic) responding to the crisis in its (sic) traditional way, i.e. with unilateral authority and attempts to force workers to work harder without conceding any real participation'). And, of course, there are large numbers of poor and oppressed South Africans whom the civics and trade unions do not represent and who are outside any significant radical popular initiative: the largest and arguably most hegemonic organisation with roots deep in every community is the reactionary Church of Zion.

On the other important principle of structural reform, that reforms lead on from one to another in a long term direction of socialist transformation, the reality of economic and social reform in South Africa consists of a progress measured by increased tripartism – forums for discussion or negotiation between the state, business, and trade unions (or civic associations) – but it is a collaboration that involves no challenge to the agenda of business. Several intellectuals of the South African left, like Webster and von Holdt, have presented that as the core of a new socialist strategy so that success in achieving a place at the negotiating table is itself seen as a positive step, but socialists with experience of corporatism in other countries have to take a view that is at least equivocal; one problem is determining the agenda the popular forces are to follow, while another is whether tripartite arrangements enable them to pursue it instead of being co-opted.

Within COSATU, the SACP and the ANC, an economic agenda or 'growth path' has been formulated under the slogan 'growth through redistribution' which Alec Erwin contrasts with 'growth and redistribution' (the notorious right wing concept of trickle down from increased profits) and 'growth with distribution' (the Chenery concept of development policy formerly pursued by the World Bank) (Erwin, 1992). For Erwin, the leading economist of the SACP and COSATU, a strategy of 'growth through redistribution' achieves growth through altering the distribution of resources. In its original formulation this strategy took a form that would have been familiar to left wing Latin American followers of Prebisch in the 1950s and 1960s, emphasising that the state should take a strong role in redistributing income and wealth toward the masses, simultaneously developing domestic industry's production to meet the demand for increased living standards and, essentially growing on the basis of that domestic market while seeking simultaneously to increase the competitiveness of export industries (Kaplinsky, 1990). However, Erwin's proposal is broader for he rejects the concept of redistribution as 'simple income transfers' and defines it to include all elements of economic restructuring; as a result his strategy is both empty and internally contradictory, and he disarmingly but correctly notes that it appears 'to be a very sweeping approach with no content to it'.

The narrower version of 'growth through redistribution' is itself far from having a socialist orientation, for we know from other countries' experience that it frequently degenerates into a mechanism for protecting sections of domestic capital while delivering few working class gains; in South Africa
large sections of business advocated such a policy (calling it ‘inward industrialisation’) for a long time before democracy came onto the horizon. We also know that even from the point of view of capital it has a poor record for it has frequently protected stagnation and managerial backwardness. Bearing that in mind, the economic strategy of COSATU emphasises the importance of export competitiveness as well as domestic markets and is based on the view that the backwardness of South African management can only be overcome by the trade unions themselves forcing modernisation and the adoption of high productivity techniques (Joffe, 1991).

Since the agendas to be pursued in tripartite bodies are, therefore, no different from a rational capitalist agenda, the structural reform idea that the greater voice of trade unions at the negotiating table represents a dynamic of progress, leading from popular democratic victories to gains which are more socialist, has no basis in reality. Equally as important, however, is the political question of whether the business-union arrangements themselves do leave room for the left to avoid co-option. Webster and von Holdt pin their hopes on constructing a new kind of unionism, ‘strategic unionism’ but their definition of it is the same as the corporatist forms of unionism under which the labour movements in Britain, France, and Germany were secured as allies of capital (Hall, 1986; Middlemas, 1979): ‘strategic unionism calls for conscious intervention at the macro-economic level, and the setting of goals such as low unemployment, low inflation, and social development’.

Erwin, following the same lines but seeking to address the problem that the unions represent only one section of the people, proposes that such a corporatist strategy should be backed by a broad coalition, traversing the whole of ‘civil society’ and united behind a Reconstruction Accord. In the past year these concepts have led COSATU into an Economic Forum including political groups engaged in national negotiations on preparations for constitutional change (CODESA).

Arguably corporatist solutions do have much to recommend them and can bring strong gains to the working class and wider sections of the population as well as to capital, but they do not warrant the claim that structural reform is a strategy toward socialism unless it is believed that corporatist Britain, France and Germany were socialist societies. If it is a mistake to believe that the current growth of negotiating fora and strategies agreed between the state, business, and popular organisations represents moves in a socialist direction, can they, nevertheless, succeed on their own terms and deliver the benefits associated with corporatism? That question is considered in the next section.

Prospects

If corporatism is to bring strong gains several conditions are required, but none seem to hold in South Africa.

First, the coalitions involved must be capable of holding together. In simple models of corporatism the coalitions can hold because all classes and groups gain, and that idea is embodied in South African discussions of the strategy, for they predicate a narrowing of South Africa’s extreme income inequality on achieving growth that can benefit all. But the idea that the whole country will gain from the construction of a new South Africa is a serious
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weakness in the politics of the ANC and the left. If coalitions are built on that Panglossian assumption they will fall to pieces in the face of the reality that reconstruction involves severe social dislocation, producing losers as well as winners, and as the coalition for change degenerates into conflicting interests corporatism will be unable even to deliver the wide gains and working class gains achieved in other countries and other circumstances.

Second, when, as in post war Europe, corporatism has been accompanied by sustained high growth, capital accumulation and improvements in working class conditions, that growth is not attributable to the 'settlement' or 'compact' itself. In that European experience, international conditions were as important or more important, for that growth was accompanied by an initially huge transfer of resources in the form of Marshall Aid (now recognised as having itself been designed to buy off workers' militancy); international regulation and stabilization of financial markets; a regulated steady expansion of world markets for trade; and the driving force of strong growth in the United States' hegemonic economy. A corporatist treaty in South Africa would exist in a much changed world; the world's financial system is volatile and fragile; the growth of world trade has slowed; conflict between trading blocs is unlikely to benefit South Africa; and there will be no inflows into South Africa comparable to Marshall Aid in Europe.

Since those conditions are likely to prevent high flown compacts between South Africa's capital and labour from delivering the fruits associated with social democracy, the third condition for the success of corporatism – success itself, or the materialisation of results – will not be present. As a result, either conflict over control of production and the distribution of resources will intensify and undermine any arrangements or corporatist arrangements will persist as a shell under which old and new business elites operate without opposition.

Fourth, in the present era reconstruction in all except the most powerful countries is monitored and steered by the powerful international forces of the IMF, the World Bank and other institutions. Their weight on the side of capital ensures that when corporatist arrangements weaken in the face of economic crisis, the perceived interests of capital prevail. Webster and von Holdt envisage that 'radical reform' will enable unions to intervene at the macroeconomic level and set goals 'such as low unemployment, low inflation, and social development'. But who can doubt that when choices have to be made the multilateral institutions will put their power behind low inflation at the cost of social development or employment?

In sum, therefore, the organised left in South Africa has given up any hope of socialist economic reconstruction in the foreseeable future and is settling for a corporatism that is, itself, likely to fail in its own terms. Why this should have occurred is an interesting problem, and in the next section one South African explanation is considered.

From 'No Middle Road' to 'No Alternative'

A paper by Joe Slovo, 'Negotiations: What Room for Compromise?' published by the African Communist (1992) suggests one explanation for a conscious shift of the left towards reforms with no perspective of socialism: since
national liberation has not been achieved, the goal for the foreseeable future must be some share of power while full political democracy is postponed and socialist reconstruction must be delayed to an unspecified future.

The views Slovo sets out his article and elaborates on in comments reported by *The Independent* (Carlin, 1992) are designed as conjunctural interventions concerned with details in the negotiating process that had sparked political dissent (especially concerning the size of required majorities and the definition of regional entities and powers). As such, most of his views were subsequently adopted by the ANC as the new basis for negotiations (ANC, 1992). But despite its immediacy the paper also presents an explicit underlying analysis.

Looking to the immediate future Joe Slovo argues that the ANC should not aim for state power but for a constitution under which it has to share power; the cabinet will have representatives of the white minority while the racist personnel of the state – in the civil service, the army, the judiciary, and the police – should have their jobs and pensions guaranteed and should be given a general amnesty for crimes committed under apartheid (Carlin, 1992).

Of course, no leader of South Africa's liberation struggle would propose permanent power-sharing with an entrenched white minority, or anything other than eventually untrammelled majority rule. Joe Slovo states that those remain the bottom line but, whereas the majority have expected that democratic dispensation to result from a constitutional assembly elected in the near future, he argues that they should not be the immediate results of the process. Whatever new constitution emerges from a future, elected constitutional assembly, it must ensure that power sharing is entrenched for several years during which negotiations and changes leading to eventual 'non-racial democratic rule in its full connotation' would be pursued. That power sharing, he argues, would itself be a political framework much more favourable than the present situation for the liberation forces to push for the objectives of national democratic revolution. But the attainment of those democratic objectives themselves would be postponed.

Clearly that is a long way from 'the complete destruction of the state that serves 'the capitalist class' that he wrote about in 1976 and it contains no prospect of socialist struggle. Slovo's rationale for it is that South Africa is not even at the stage of a national democratic revolution; the ANC has not won the liberation struggle. In this bleak situation, his vision for the next decade is a historic compromise under which the machinery of state will remain in the hands of the conservative Afrikaners that have held it since 1948. It is a historic compromise with the same logic as the strategy adopted by the Italian Communist Party when it was at its height; Slovo argues that taking the power that would be winable in the election booths should be eschewed in order to ensure that frightened right wing forces do not put a total block on democracy. In a private communication with the author, Joe Slovo makes clear that a formally agree compromise on minority political privileges for the precise time period of a decade is not envisaged.

The remaining paragraphs offer a critical evaluation of Slovo's argument, taking as its point of departure a
comparison between it and Slovo's previous views. His 1976 argument for socialist revolution in South Africa was within a long, broadly leninist tradition:

There is objective ground for the belief that 'under South African conditions the national democratic revolution has great prospects of proceeding at once to socialist solutions'. This follows from the undoubted reality that no significant national demand can be successfully won without the destruction of the existing capitalist structure. It is precisely because in South Africa capitalist production relations are the foundation of national repression that the national struggle itself has an objective coincidence with the elimination of all forms of exploitation... National liberation in its true sense, must therefore imply the expropriation of the owners of the means of production... and the complete destruction of the state which serves them. There can be no half-way house unless the national struggle is stopped in its tracks and is satisfied with the co-option of a small black elite into the presently forbidden areas of economic and political power (Slovo, 1976:140-141) (My emphasis).

That passage at the heart of 'South Africa - No Middle Road' was part of a coherent analysis developed over several years. As in his 1974 article A Critical Appraisal of the Non Capitalist Path and the National Democratic State in Africa Slovo emphasises that national democratic revolutions do not automatically become socialist and are not truly liberating unless the oppressed masses led by an independent party can struggle for socialist transformation. And later, after the world had entered a new period, Slovo's speech in Maputo on the 60th anniversary of the SACP repeated the words of his 1976 article. In the speech he criticised the official communist academicians' view of the national democratic revo-

lution as a sharply distinct stage or resting place, arguing, by contrast, that socialist revolution and the struggle for national liberation must flow from and into each other; 'the dominant ingredients of a later stage must have already begun to mature within the womb of the earlier stage' (Slovo, 1981:9; Slovo, 1974).

In one respect there is a clear continuity between Joe Slovo's current position and his 1976 article, for the link he made then between national democratic revolution and socialist transformation is consistent with the view that, because there has been no victory in the democratic revolution, both 'full democracy' and socialism must be postponed. The 1992 Manifesto of the South African Communist Party is similarly based on the view that 'national democratic revolution' has not yet been won. It presents the prospect of national democratic transformation as itself 'an important victory for the people of our country - not least the working class' and as 'a major weapon in the struggle to loosen the stranglehold that the capitalist class exerts over our country's entire destiny' (SACP, 1992:17). The immediacy of the transformations it discusses contrast with the postponement Slovo rationalised later in 1992.

However, one criticism of Slovo's views derives from that linkage, for it can be argued that his assessment that the liberation movement has not won but must, instead, bargain for the right to (a step toward) democracy at the negotiating table is erroneous. A clear victory was absent in the pre-Gramscian sense that the Winter Palace was not stormed, but if we evaluate recent years from a more meaningfully political perspective they can be seen, as a significant victory for the national
liberation struggle. To oversimplify, it was the regime that was forced to the negotiating table not the ANC.

At home the apartheid regime suffered an absolute legitimation crisis as a result of years of popular struggle through trade unions and the United Democratic Front and because of the sharp reversal of apartheid's economic growth. It suffered a severe fiscal crisis that made it unable to finance the machinery of apartheid and continue to support the living standards of the middle class and farming Afrikaners in the old way. The ANC made the regime culturally and financially isolated abroad. And the South African military was twice humiliated by its defeat at the hands of Angolans and Cubans (most recently at Cuito Cuanavale in Angola which also exposed the backwardness of South Africa's industry in not being able to produce modern aircraft). Since those travails of the regime were no less severe than the problems faced by the Soviet Bloc regimes which did lead to their dismantling, it can be argued that the democratic forces in South Africa did win a major victory but entered into negotiations without pushing it through.

A second line of criticism takes that recent history as given and, starting from the same position as Slovo, evaluates the strategy he advances. Its major problem is that its economics are unworkable; for the macroeconomic balance that is required for any growth and reconstruction of its economy South Africa has to reduce its overstaffed, inefficient bureaucracy where payrolls are based on administering the intricacies of apartheid. Existing jobs have to be slashed rather than guaranteed and that is especially so since new generations of black officials have to be quickly brought into public management. There is not even the economic capacity for guaranteeing the pensions of the bureaucracy as Slovo wishes to do to buy white acquiescence (in power sharing), for the state pension funds are already actuarially weak, they have been badly managed, and any resources injected into them will be at the cost of improving the lot of the black majority. Joe Slovo's intention of guaranteeing the security of the white bureaucracy and forces while restructuring the state simply cannot be realised except at an enormous cost in terms of wasted resources and opportunities, a cost which will ultimately be borne by the working class and the poor.

On political grounds, too, the argument for a historic compromise is open to question on the grounds that, if the threat from the right is so great, guaranteeing jobs and an amnesty is not likely to neutralise it; it is at least as likely to be seen as a victory for reaction which emboldens the right. Moreover, the concept of compromise itself is as problematic as negotiations; what does compromise mean? Any politics of transformation requires transactions and deals between constituencies and interests; at its most general that means reaching agreements in which groups, or their accepted representatives, give up some objectives while realising others. But for that to be a transparent, valid process of compromise, in which people can have a perspective of the possible outcomes and their implications, several minimal conditions are necessary: the different constituencies should be identifiable and relatively stable; their representatives should have legitimacy; and their basic objectives, against which give and take can be weighed, should be clear.
The negotiators in South Africa have clear sources of legitimacy as representatives, and the literature reviewed above shows the importance the democratic movement's representatives give to renewing legitimation continually by publicly addressing the issues and controversies caused by negotiations.

But the constituencies from which they draw their legitimacy are not well defined, particularly since they are unstable. Certainly the vague notion that the negotiations are between 'black South Africa' and 'white South Africa' is invalid as is the popular idea that the compromise Slovo proposes is by the blacks with the whites. Similarly, the notion that the basic constituencies are on the one hand the ANC and on the other the National Party is too simple. One reason is that those organisations are themselves unstable for they comprise different groups and, as in any period of fundamental social change, those groups are changing their social positions. For example, groups that were formerly more or less united in the ANC on the basis of their common national repression are rapidly diversifying as some join a wealth owning and ruling elite, others control local power bases for personal ends, while others remain exploited masses but potentially divided by clan and ethnic loyalties; and similar transformations are taking place within the National Party. An alternative view is that the negotiations involve compromise between class forces rather than national or ethnic groups; in other words, a dominant capitalist class seeking compromises from the representatives of oppressed classes in return for admission to a diluted political power. That is one of the most powerful of the forces in play, but it itself is made complex by the ethic and national divisions and by the transformations in class structure and class positions that are occurring.

The third element (in addition to the legitimacy of the representatives and the coherence of the constituencies) is the clarity of each group's basic objectives. Historically, two ultimate objectives have been central to the liberation movement: the winning of a democratic polity ('national democratic revolution') and the achievement of socialism. In today's South African discourse, the meaning and status of those objectives is muddy and, since the contributions discussed in this article do not clarify them, the compromises they advocate have no anchor or benchmark.

Paradoxes of Social Transformation

Three years after the legalisation of the ANC and the South African Communist Party, South Africa is unique in the modern world for it is in a process of being transformed from a rigid cold war tyranny to some type of post cold war democracy, with socialists, underpinned by a large, militant and organised working class base, having leading roles in that transformation. Moreover, that socialist movement is close to the apparatus of power in a country with an industrial base and infrastructure historically far stronger than most of today's new industrial giants (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, or China, for example) had twenty or thirty years ago. Paradoxically, however, those strong preconditions for a socialist future are accompanied by the dissolution of any effective commitment to a serious socialist strategy.

The 'big issues' that were for so long the touchstones of socialists in South Africa - nationalisation of banks, mines
and factories; nationalisation and redistribution of the land; universal health care and universal, equal education – have effectively been abandoned. Although the country is dominated by a handful of conglomerates with a stranglehold on every sphere of economic and political activity, and although the economy is in an alarming state of decline, the democratic movement’s leadership rejects nationalisation of any enterprises, while it only retains a vestigial presence as a possibility in ANC conference documents and the SACP programme (SACP, 1992). Despite the historic injustice at the root of apartheid, under which the black majority had rights on only one eighth of the land mass, the ANC and SACP leaders do not have plans to expropriate white farms in order to effect a large scale land redistribution. It is right that received ideas, formulated (but rarely analysed and discussed) in an earlier period, should have been critically evaluated and appraised and it is healthy that the simple slogans of the past have been superseded. But the ‘big ideas’ have been dropped under pressure from capital, without an informed socialist debate, and without the elaboration of effective new socialist perspectives. While the movement’s intellectuals find left wing meaning in corporatist tripartite councils under a ‘radical reform’ perspective, the ineffectiveness of that direction is signalled by the fact that the movement has not devoted resources to planning how to finance a universal health care system or universal secondary education system in the way that Britain’s social democrats did during and after World War Two.

It is clear that, regarding social and economic reconstruction, South Africa’s democratic and left politicians do not have a socialist strategy and are not developing one. At present they are hoping for some share of power in order to administer an existing structure into which they can introduce some marginal reforms – reforms agreed by, if not promoted by, capital. They will be in a similar position to that of Robert Mugabe who, after winning a real victory over the Rhodesian regime, has presided over largely unchanged structures of social and economic apartheid. A South Africa following the Zimbabwe option would be one where, in Slovo’s 1976 words, the national struggle is stopped in its tracks and is satisfied with the co-option of a small black elite into the presently forbidden areas of economic and political power.

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Bibliographic Note

When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist (Brazilian Archbishop Dom Helder Camara)

On hearing the US military was being used to bring food to starving people in Somalia, I was reminded that when Ronald Reagan was told of the 1986 hurricane that devastated Nicaragua, he said 'good'. His administration refused to supply a cent to help those left homeless and hungry by the storm. But with Congressional approval he later granted tens of millions of dollars in 'humanitarian aid' to the Contras to make certain that they would remain as a fighting force through the 1990 elections, adding a few more to the 30,000 already killed, and guaranteeing that Nicaraguans could only end the war by voting the Sandinistas out of power. Now children are once again free to beg on the streets of Nicaragua, a practice virtually eliminated by the Sandinista revolution, though it is all but universal in the third world. Food, like arms, remains a political weapon despite all the talk of a new post-cold war world order.

The official Washington line denies this. Instead, it proclaims that the action in Somalia is the first international armed intervention carried out solely for humanitarian purposes. Moreover, this is the first time the United Nations is intervening without the acceptance of the government involved, on the grounds that Somalia has become so anarchic that there is no one left with the authority to approve the action. Claims are similarly being made that the Tigray venture is unique in that US forces are being deployed even though its national interests are not at stake. It is widely held to constitute a radical break in global relations, in which the US, now freed of the burden of competing with the Soviets, can finally act in a totally selfless manner. It is of course possible that George Bush underwent some kind of political deathbed conversion to humanitarianism. But the evidence does not support this. The same Bush who got so weepy-eyed over a starving child in Somalia was, after all, the one who has caused the deaths from malnutrition and poor sanitation of tens of thousands of Iraqi children through an embargo which the US refuses to lift until Saddam Hussein goes. Nor did Bush condemn the practice of stopping all Haitians picked up at sea, regardless of their reasons for leaving, and sending them back to what for many is arrest, torture, and even death. The embargo against Haiti, of course, has been unevenly enforced, so that it has
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starved the poor but barely affected the government and the rich; US corporations on the island are specifically exempted. The Clinton administration has now adopted and extended these policies toward Iraq and Haiti. Yet, we are asked to believe that in Somalia the US is somehow acting out of purely humanitarian instincts.

But if this is not the case, what are the strategic interests that lie behind the invasion of that country? Despite the changes in East-West relations, purely geopolitical factors should not be totally discounted. The Horn of Africa remains critical to the stability of the oil-bearing region which the US defines as most vital to its interests, and over which it so recently fought the Gulf War. Chaos in this area of the world, no matter what its cause, is a matter of concern to those who believe that Middle East petroleum belongs to the US and its imperialist allies. With Islamic fundamentalism now dominant in nearby Sudan, and having a small but significant following among some Somalis, and with neighbouring Kenya to the south in increasing turmoil, the country can hardly be left to its own purposes, whatever they might be.

But there are other continuities with past US practices as well. This was, after all, the third time within the four short years of the Bush administration, following Panama and Iraq, that the US invaded a third world country to disarm the very same 'thugs' that it had been massively arming and employing as 'assets' only a year or two earlier. Such a raw display of power by the 'only remaining superpower' has its own rationale: it enforces the notion that the US alone is the arbiter of the globe, deciding on its own who will be favoured and whom punished. Those who are obedient and serve US interests will be made powerful, but if they then begin to believe they have rights and interests of their own, they will be crushed. But military intervention by the US and other imperialist powers against the peoples of the southern half of the globe long preceded the cold war, or even the existence of the Soviet Union. From this historical perspective, it is remarkable how much the ideology of the white man's burden finds a distinct echo in the paternalistic 'tough love' of the marines in Somalia. It is the public rationale for such interventions that changes, not the basic purpose. Viewed in this light, the rivalry with the Soviets merely provided one more convenient link in the endless chain of reasons given for the forceful domination of those parts of the globe populated by people of colour.

In the past, all that was needed was to identify a country as 'communist', a term conveniently extended to cover any nation that tried to resist US domination and gain control over its own resources - as in Guatemala, Iran, the Dominican Republic, Chile - and its government could be targeted for destruction. But as the cold war began to wind down and new forms of resistance, like religious fundamentalism arose, a scramble occurred to find alternative justifications for intervention, and for the military budgets of the Pentagon. The Defense Monitor (XXI,4,1992:3) quotes General Colin Powell as saying, 'I'm running out of demons. I'm running out of villains.' The drug trade was one easy villain to target, especially in Latin America, while 'terrorism' became the favoured watchword in the Middle East and North Africa. In the name of these new 'threats', Iran, Libya, and the Shining Path in Peru, even if they were isolated
from or bitterly opposed to the Soviets, could still be subjected to economic embargo and military attack.

Sometimes these new rationalisations were combined, as in the term ‘narco-terrorism’ applied to Colombia and the Andes region, providing the basis for the current and growing US military involvement there. A similar effort was initially made to turn the khat-chewing teenagers of Mogadishu into drug-crazed terrorists, but this seems to have fallen flat. What is left as truly ‘new’ in Somalia, therefore, is that ‘humanitarian aid’ has now been added to the long and ever-changing list of excuses that can be called upon for intervention in the third world as the need arises. What better cover for military action can there be, after all, than feeding the hungry? What demons can be more villainous, than those who steal food from starving children? This helps to explain the apparent conflict between the US and UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali over who will disarm Somalia. For the US, the important thing was to set the precedent for ‘humanitarian’ intervention and to add Africa to the continents which can be openly invaded at will, perhaps with an eye to the deteriorating situations in mineral-rich South Africa or Zaire. Having done this, the US has little desire to actually resolve the situation in Somalia, which might mean getting bogged down in real fighting, with heavy casualties and the loss of support at home. Better to let the ‘international community’ in the guise of the UN take the fall, while the US gets out as quickly and cheaply as it can.

For all its supposed newness, the Somali intervention therefore follows the same essential pattern as previous ones. The US military commanders have made it abundantly clear that any resistance in Somalia will lead to the same results as it has elsewhere. If the residents of Mogadishu get in the way, their homes will be flattened, and their uncounted bodies dumped in unmarked graves, just as happened in Panama City. If the teenage technicals give the troops any trouble, they will be slaughtered and left to rot in their vehicles, just as the fleeing Iraqis were on the road out of Kuwait. In the largest such incident, in Kismayu, 40 Somalis were killed or wounded by US and Belgian troops, with no ‘allied’ casualties.

It is true that, after a hesitant start, some of the media have at least made clear that a large proportion of the guns which are now being confronted in Somalia were supplied by the Pentagon itself, and that by propping up the dictatorial regime of Siad Barre for years, it laid the basis for the present chaos. But this limited mea culpa only serves to further obscure the larger questions. To listen to most commentators, echoing Washington and the UN, the short-term problem is to provide emergency food relief, while the long-term issue is how to disarm Somalia and restore some kind of civic order. What is not being addressed is who is responsible for a global system that keeps entire regions of the third world in such desperate poverty that millions face chronic hunger, and where any serious disruption due to climate or civil strife can lead quickly to mass starvation. Nor is it being asked what role US multinational capitalism and its governmental protectors have played in creating and maintaining these conditions. Yet it is here that the deeper national interests of the US lie, in upholding a world economic system in which millions die of hunger and disease so that others may live in
relative comfort, while a few attain heights of almost inconceivable luxury.

Why, in other words, do the poor have no food? What is truly striking about Somalia is not its uniqueness, but the features it shares with many other African countries. According to World Bank figures, in 1970 Somalia tied for sixth place among the poorest countries in the world, all of them in sub-Saharan Africa, with a per capita GNP of $80. By 1976, this figure had almost doubled, to $150, but then things went into reverse. After a decade and a half of stagnation and decline, the figure for 1990 was only $120. This could be blamed on the Siad Barre regime and the civil war that finally overthrew him, except that virtually all of sub-Saharan Africa has followed more or less the same pattern, with a combined GNP per capita of $160 in 1970, peaking at $570 in 1981, and dropping back to $340 by 1990. Between 1980 and 1990, what the World Bank defines as low-income nations in Africa dropped from $490 to $260, a loss of 47 per cent in one decade.

This must be contrasted with the experience of the US and other countries of the imperialist ‘core’. United States GNP per capita (in current dollars) grew from $4,970 in 1970 to $11,990 in 1980 and, $21,790 in 1990, increases of 141 per cent and 83 per cent respectively. From 1989 to 1990 alone, the figure rose by $940, or almost three times the entire GNP per capita for sub-Saharan Africa. By 1989, life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa was 51 years, exactly two-thirds of that in the high-income countries, where an average lifespan was 76.

But Africa is only the worse case. Globally, the ratio of average GNP per capita in all the countries which the World Bank defines as low-income to those of the countries in the high-income category fell from 1:25 in 1970, to 1:33 in 1980, and 1:56 in 1990. Thus just as the rich got richer and the poor got poorer in the domestic US economy during the late 1970s and 1980s, so too the obscene difference between the wealth of the imperialist core and that of the poor countries of the world grew enormously over the past two decades. This growing polarisation and impoverishment is both systemic and systematically enforced, through a combination of debt and commodity bondage. In 1980, eleven out of the eighteen low-income nations with the highest long-term public indebtedness as a percentage of GNP were in sub-Saharan Africa, led by Zambia at 240 per cent. Twenty-one out of the thirty countries with the greatest concentration of export value in only three commodities were also in the same region, ranging from Burundi at virtually 100 per cent to Rwanda at 77 per cent. All but two of the other leaders were oil producers.

Commodity specialisation and debt go hand in hand. The IMF, under US domination, uses the leverage of indebtedness to require that production be concentrated on commodity exports. The first consequence of this is to flood the market, resulting, as the New York Times recently noted, ‘in economic “cures” from Washington that urge them to produce ever more of their commodities, seemingly forcing prices inexorably downward’ (Howard W French, 25 December 1992:8). Through the 1980s, the terms of trade, which measures the relation of export prices to import prices, fell more rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa than in any other region of the globe, meaning that the region sold its raw materials for less and less while the costs of finished
goods purchased from the first world climbed. This is a principal form of the 'unequal exchange' which strips the third world of resources and profits to benefit the imperialist core. Sub-Saharan Africa actually suffered a relative, if not absolute, deindustrialisation during this decade, as the share of gross domestic product went from 28 per cent agriculture and 32 per cent industry in 1980, to 31 per cent and 26 per cent respectively by 1987, reversing 15 years of the opposite trend. More agricultural production, however, actually meant even less food for local consumption in many cases, as export commodities like coffee and cocoa replaced subsistence crops on which the population depends.

It is the effect of these global relations which must also be understood when, today, so much is made of how Somalia is awash in guns, but without sufficient foodstuffs. Clearly the amount of weaponry there is extremely high. Yet the budget of the Pentagon alone, now just under $300bn per year, is almost exactly double the gross domestic product of all of sub-Saharan Africa in 1988. On this amount, almost half a billion people, one-tenth of the population of the globe, have to live. The entire gross national product of Somalia in 1985, $1.56 billion, would not buy a single B-2 Bomber or Seawolf Submarine. Thus by the mid-1980s, the average Somalian had to live on the equivalent of less than six or seven millionths of what a single weapon cost for the US military. When the relationship of arms to food is made in Somalia, it is necessary to get beyond the myopic viewpoint that the main problem is the number of AK-47s in the hands of individuals. No doubt that country has its share of those who prey on others. Yet it is remarkable how many members of the US media, including those who should know better, have glibly adopted the official language of 'thugs' and 'bandits', when even the so-called warlords of that country are but a pale imitation of the top purveyors of global death and destruction, those who are now so widely hailed as humanitarian saviours.

For the past two decades, as previously in Vietnam and elsewhere, the US used its vast military and economic power to lead the way not only in making sure that this exploitative world system was maintained, but that any alternatives to the growing polarisation of wealth would be viciously crushed. Those who resisted were not only to be driven back into the poverty from which they were trying to emerge, but were to be reduced to the lowest of the low, as an object lesson to all others who might get out of line. Thus in Africa, socialist Angola – where the US armed UNITA under Jonas Savimbi and worked hand-in-hand with South Africa – suffered an estimated 300,000-350,000 deaths, about the numbers believed to have died in Somalia. Today, the Angolan conflict is being revived, with thousands more dead, as Savimbi refuses to accept his loss in the recent national election. In Mozambique, South Africa and private right-wing forces in the US together took over the arming of Renamo from the former white Rhodesian government, promoting a civil war which has led to a million deaths, reducing this once vibrant revolutionary socialist country to the poorest not only in all of Africa, but in the entire world, with a 1990 GNP per capita of only $80.

If the cold war competition with the Soviets had really been the primary reason for the devastation of the global South, the US behaviour should now
be radically changing. But that is not the case. Nowhere is this more evident than in US policy toward Cuba, now cut off from its Soviet relationship. Yet under pressure from Bill Clinton, who accepted large campaign contributions from the most right-wing of the Cuban exile organisations, the Bush administration signed the Torricelli Bill, tightening the 30 year trade embargo.

Despite these three decades of enforced regional isolation and a GNP per capita in 1976 of only $800, Cuba had a life expectancy by 1987 of 75 years, the same as that of the US, the highest in all of Latin America and the Caribbean, and higher than that of the USSR or the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. In 1990, infant mortality in Cuba was only 14 per 1,000 live births, compared to 18 in the industrialised nations, and a soaring 70 on average in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. This was achieved by a universal health care system which ranks with that of the first world, even though it absorbed only 3 per cent of the small Cuban GNP in 1990 (New York Times, 11 January 1993:A6). Compare this to the US, where 14 per cent of GNP in a vastly richer nation still leaves tens of millions without medical protection. Cuba also guarantees food, clothing and education for all. Desperate ragged children no longer beg on the streets of Havana, nor do they rummage in the garbage dumps as they do on the fringes of virtually all Latin America and Caribbean capitals.

Fidel Castro, the ‘last communist’, refuses to stop talking openly of ‘why the poor have no food’, constantly calls for the redistribution of global wealth and cancellation of third world debt, and opposes the US action in Somalia as a ‘cure’ that only spreads the disease. Moreover, Cuba has backed up its words with deeds: alone among the third world nations, it gave military support to Angola against South Africa and the US, sacrificed its own people to protect Grenada, and went down the line with the FSLN in Nicaragua to the end.

Nothing would make the US government happier, therefore, than to turn Cuba into another Somalia, to reduce it to the same state of starvation and anarchy, to send the Cuban economy reeling to the bottom of the global heap to join Nicaragua and Mozambique. But this alone will not be enough. For the Somalia venture provides the perfect new rationale for intervention. If only conditions can be made bad enough in Cuba, if the embargo can be screwed so tight as to cause famine, if the cutbacks that are already being forced even in the free milk programme and medical care can be made sufficiently universal, that will be all Washington needs to cry ‘humanitarian aid’ and come to the rescue. Of course, this will just be added to older rationales, like the need to prevent ‘chaos’ 90 miles from home, to protect US national interests and to ‘restore democracy’ like that which the Cubans enjoyed in the good old days under Fulgencio Batista.

As Bush stated in his valedictory speech at West Point, sometimes a ‘great power’ has to act by itself. It is not for nothing that in Somalia, as in Iraq, the Pentagon insisted that its troops must be under the command of the US alone, no matter what the UN cover under which they operate. Thus the US turns the UN and other global agencies into its puppets, to be used when international authorisation seems useful, to be ignored when its self-defined ‘national interests’ make solo action
preferable. At the same time, it refuses any restraint on its own actions, rejecting widespread international protests against the Torricelli Bill, as it ignored the World Court order to pay reparations to Nicaragua. If and when the US decides to act against Cuba, there will be no hesitancy just because the fig leaf of UN or OAS sanction may not be forthcoming. Here too the precedent is being laid in Somalia, and it has a global purpose. The only difference is that if the marines land in Havana, they will likely find more to greet them than CNN.

It is this combination, the unrestrained freedom to intervene after conditions have been made desperate enough, that makes the intervention in Somalia so sinister. Another weapon has been forged and added to the imperial arsenal, giving new meaning to the old Vietnam saying, ‘we had to destroy it to save it.’ First wreck an economy, then use the excuse that it is wrecked to intervene. The growing desperation of global polarisation, combined with the active destruction of those it opposes, will give the US many opportunities for just such intervention. For all the claims of selfless humanitarianism, Somalia is only another move in a strategy of global domination.

It is nevertheless probable that in the short run this action will help keep an unknown number of Somalis alive, and no one can fail to be moved by those in that country who appealed for outside aid, nor those in the US, especially African-Americans, who protested the attention being given to white Yugoslavia while Africans starved. The issue, however, is not whether the world community should try to provide relief in such situations, but the form which such assistance should take. There were alternatives to the massive unilateral US invasion, including a more balanced international force under real UN control, heavier reliance on African or Islamic bodies that might have been mobilised, and attempts to work together with whatever progressive elements were left in Somalia. But these would have strengthened the very forms of egalitarian internationalism and intraregional activism that the US wants to weaken, and they would have demonstrated that there are actually ways to resolve conflicts in the world other than by turning to the country that, as US officials never tire of saying, ‘has to lead.’ Thus whatever its eventual outcome, calling in the marines in Somalia only serves once again to reinforce the global inequality of power and wealth, and dependency on the imperialist core, which created the war and famine in the first place.

What will create a genuinely new international order is when the US is restrained like any other country, when it is subject to the command of a UN which truly represents the entire world, when there is a radical redistribution of global wealth, when the right to sovereignty of the smallest nations is as inviolable as that of the largest, and when the world community has the same power, neither more nor less, to intervene to house the homeless in Chicago as to feed the hungry in Kismayu. Meanwhile, there is not the slightest hint that such a time has arrived. Rather, the US has arrogated to itself new freedom to intervene where and when it will. The world will pay a heavy price for letting ‘humanitarian aid’ become just one more excuse for the marines to storm ashore.

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Briefings

Eritrea: Birth of a Nation

In mid-1991 the long conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia came to a close when the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) entered and liberated the capital of Asmara. On 27 May 1991, the Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) was formed, its structure to include legislative, executive and judicial bodies. It proposed a two-year interim period during which preparations would be made for an internationally supervised referendum on independence. With the change of government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia endorsed the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination and voiced its support of the referendum.

During this interim period, the EPLF Central Committee served as the legislative branch of the government. It issued proclamations, formulated and implemented domestic and foreign policies and approved the national budget. A 28-member Advisory Council headed by the Secretary General, Issaia Afeworki, formed the executive branch of government. The Advisory Council included the governors of Eritrea's ten provinces and the secretaries of key departments. The judiciary branch functioned independently of the executive and legislative branches.

From its inception, the PGE followed a policy of decentralisation geared toward fostering balanced development, encouraging local initiative, and redressing past imbalances. Decentralisation is seen as a crucial pillar of the democratisation process. To this end, the PGE issued a proclamation defining the powers and responsibilities of local government. The system of administration extends from the provincial to the village level and ensures the full participation of the people in national as well as local affairs. Village and regional elections were conducted throughout the interim period.

Ten local governments - Asmara, Akele Guzai, Barka, Denkalia, Gash-Setit, Hamasien, Sahel, Semhar, Senhit, and Seraye - were set up. Each comprises executive and legislative branches as well as an independent judiciary. These three components of local government are reproduced at the provincial, district and village levels, with the sub-provincial level comprising only the executive and judiciary branches. At each level, members of the legislative branch are democratically elected. Population size and other factors particular to the region in question determine the number of seats apportioned at the provincial council level. Efforts are made to ensure adequate representation of ethnic language groups and the full participation of women. While elections are based on universal suffrage without gender distinction, several seats are reserved for women to ensure that they are adequately represented.

The central government appointed provincial and sub-provincial governors. The provincial governors served as members of the Advisory Council of
the PGE. District and village level executive members were elected from the local assembly or appointed by the provincial governor. Regional governments enjoy broad autonomy and are responsible for many development programmes and the delivery of social services. These regionally-based structures also levy taxes and allocate budgetary appropriations.

Besides defining and putting in place decentralised structures to foster participatory governance, the PGE continued initiatives to put in motion the process of economic and political transformation. In sharp contrast to other developing countries that must maintain and reform an existing government, Eritreans, as citizens of a newly independent state, are challenged to create new and appropriate mechanisms entirely from scratch.

**Democracy in the New Eritrea**

The pledge of democratisation is not born of a desire to respond to current international trends. It is part of a history of democratic struggle that began in the 1940s and continued through the period of armed struggle. Elections are not new to those who lived in EPLF-administered areas during the war. There, the principles of religious freedom, women's equality and human rights were actively practiced. The elected committees and councils operating at the village level throughout Eritrea today form the basis for the growth of democracy. Emphasis must be given to building and expanding democracy from the bottom up. It cannot be imposed from the top by creating formal national structures without a base in society. A constitution and the framework for pluralism must emerge from a broad consensus and must be based not only on legal expertise but also on the needs and views of Eritreans to whom the political system must be accountable.

The PGE also developed and enacted Civil and Criminal Codes. They include the right of habeas corpus and a 48-hour limit on detention with charge. In 1991, the PGE abolished the censorship boards of the former Ethiopian regime. A broad range of rights for women, including guarantees for equal educational opportunity, equal pay for

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<th>No</th>
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<td>128,443</td>
<td>144</td>
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<td>92,634</td>
<td>92,465</td>
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<td>141</td>
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<tr>
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<td>33,596</td>
<td>113</td>
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<td>Seraye</td>
<td>124,809</td>
<td>124,725</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td>78,540</td>
<td>78,513</td>
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<td>Other Countries</td>
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<td>82,597</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1,102,410</td>
<td>1,100,260</td>
<td>1,822</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>99.81</td>
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equal work, and legal sanctions against domestic violence, were codified.

The PGE takes the position that Eritrean political parties should not be based on religion or ethnicity. The people of Eritrea are both Christian and Muslim and includes nine language groups, each with their own cultural characteristics and traditions. Government policies reflect this diversity within a framework of unity and commonality of purpose.

A New Member of the International Community

The United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER) was established on 16 December 1992. It deployed observers in all districts of Eritrea and covered most of the 1,014 polling stations. The core observer team, composed of 21 members from 21 countries, arrived in early February. They were joined the week before the vote by 100 UN observers and 18 members of the OAU observer group. A total of 38 countries were represented. In addition, more than 40 observers were deployed in Ethiopia and in the Sudan to verify the vote of Eritreans in those countries. UN designated representatives also observed the referendum in several other countries including Canada, Italy, Saudi Arabia, the Scandinavian countries and the United States.

The UN and OAU, joined by representatives of regional and international governments, actively participated in observing the Eritrean referendum. On 24 May 1993 Eritrea became Africa’s newest state and the 52nd member of the OAU, the result of a referendum that was carried out from 23 - 25 April. Eritrea will also become the 70th member of the ACP (Africa/Caribbean/Pacific) group of countries linked to the European Community by the Lome Convention.

The UN’s operational agencies opened offices in Asmara shortly after liberation as well as new NGOs, the European Community and the aid agencies of some donor governments. Formal diplomatic relations have now been established with the United States, Italy, the Sudan, Djibouti, Egypt, Yemen and Israel.

The Economy

The PGE committed itself to developing a market-based economy which should give the widest possible scope to private foreign and domestic investment while raising the population’s standard of living. To this end, the PGE issued Investment and Labor Codes. It also established an investment corporation and commissions to resolve land disputes and explore land policy. The aims of the Investment Code issued in December 1991 was to expand exports, encourage import substitution, increase employment and introduce new and appropriate technologies. Incentives include exemption from customs duties and taxes, exemption from income tax, preferen-
Eritrean Government Appointments
Following the first meeting of the National Assembly of the Government of Eritrea on 7 June 1993, the following have been appointed:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Issaias Afeworki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>Mr Ramadan Mohammed Nur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Administration</td>
<td>Mr Petros Solomon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>Mr Ali Said Abdullah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior</td>
<td>Ms Fawzia Hashim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Mr Mohammed Ahmed Sherifo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Mr Amin Mohammed Said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information &amp; Culture</td>
<td>Mr Haile Woldeitescu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Planning</td>
<td>Mr Ogbe Abraha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade, Industry &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>Dr Tesfay Girmatsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Dr Saleh Mekki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Resources</td>
<td>Mr Abraha Asfaha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Mr Tesfay Gebresellassie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy, Mines &amp; Water Resources</td>
<td>Mr Osman Saleh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Dr Haile Mihtsun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provincial Governors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sahel</td>
<td>Mr Mohammed Said Nawd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senhit</td>
<td>Mr Hamed Himed</td>
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<td>Barka</td>
<td>Mr Abdella Jaber</td>
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<td>Hamasien</td>
<td>Mr Berhane Gerezgigher</td>
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<td>Mr Adhanom Gebremariam</td>
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<td>Sendar</td>
<td>Mr Ibrahim Idris Toti</td>
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<td>Mr Saleh Ahmed Eyay</td>
</tr>
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<td>Assmara</td>
<td>Mr Sebhat Ephrilm</td>
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<td>Denkel</td>
<td>Mr Mohammed Said Bare</td>
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<td>Transport</td>
<td>Dr Giorgis Teklemichael</td>
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<td>Ports &amp; Marine</td>
<td>Mr Woldemichael Abraha</td>
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<td>Social Affairs</td>
<td>Ms Amna Nur Hussein</td>
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<td>Head of Labour Office</td>
<td>Mr Mohammed Nur Degol</td>
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<td>Auditor General</td>
<td>Berhane Habtemariam</td>
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At present, the Government is managing several public enterprises nationalised by the former government of Ethiopia and plans to privatise or close them in the near future. So far seven factories have been designated for sale, another six are to be transformed into share corporations, giving some shares to the families of those killed in the liberation struggle. Most of the 44 state-controlled industries are producing or are on the point of producing again, whereas in 1991 most had either ceased production altogether or were operating at less than 30% of capacity; most are now around 60% of capacity. The Director of the Investment Centre, Tekie Beyene, held talks with 1,112 potential investors (individuals, consortia and multinationals) and has reviewed 73 projects so far. The Nacfa Corporation, set up in 1991, raised $10m from 2,575 shareholders in 19
countries. Working closely with the Department of Commercial Land, the Centre is keen to see the development of agro-industries. Some land has been distributed, but commercial plants processing milk, cheese, meat, wine and canned foods are still in government hands. Bananas, soya beans, green beans, sweet peppers and sesame seeds are already being exported to the Middle East, Ethiopia and Sudan. According to Dr Mekki, Head of the Department of Marine Resources, their main priority is self-sufficiency, to revitalise the fishing industry to its former capacity in the 1950s. The Labor Code stipulates, among other provisions, that workers have the right to form and join unions as well as the right to strike. Collective bargaining is also recognised.

Political democracy cannot be achieved without sustainable and equitable economic development. The PGE continues its emphasis on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of its war-ravaged economy. To this end, it developed and begun negotiating funding for a national Recovery and Rehabilitation Programme (RRP) designed to jump-start the Eritrean economy. Top priority is given to the productive sectors – agriculture and industry, essential infrastructure – energy, roads and ports – that sustain the productive sectors. Refugee repatriation and reintegration, and the demobilization of former combatants are components of the programme with a budget of US$2 million. Other donors participating in the economic recovery programme are Italy ($24.3m), IDA ($25m), EC ($23m), Sweden ($9.1m), the Netherlands ($2.2m), Germany ($5.5m), Denmark ($6.5m) and UNDP ($2.5m)

Excerpts from Government of Eritrea 1993 and other sources.
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The Popular Front for the Liberation of 20 Million ECU

Adewale Maja-Pearce

A recent meeting in Brussels, convened under the auspices of the European Commission, concluded that a newly-created fund to help the press in Africa was best administered from Europe.

In the first week in March I attended a four-day conference in Brussels which had as its theme 'Press and Democracy in Africa'. It seemed that the European Commission, recognising the existence of a New World Order based on accountable government, the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights, had recently voted the sum of 20 million ecus as its contribution towards assisting the African press in its ongoing problems with economic and political survival, and had appointed a French-based human rights group, Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) with responsibility for convening the meeting.

In the African context — in any context, 20 million ecus is a lot of money, but every African child knows perfectly well that the politics of aid is never so straightforward, and that behind such apparently generous gestures lies the undeniable fact of power. And so it happened. One look at the list of participants was enough to raise the suspicion that there was more going on than was immediately apparent. It wasn't so much that there was only one delegate from the whole of East Africa, but that those fortunate few who had been plucked out of the obscurity that is the average journalist's lot in the continent were greatly outnumbered by representatives from
European-based organisations whose presence at such a conference was sometimes difficult to fathom. Amnesty International, Radio France Internationale, and Unesco might or might not have had an interesting point of view concerning the African newspaper scene, but they could hardly be said to be in the front line even as they occupied hotel rooms that could—and should—have been put to better use. More disturbing, however, was the presence of the 'western' human rights groups who were very much concerned with the continent's press—RSF, Institut Panos (Paris), Index on Censorship, (London), Article 19 (London) —and who for that reason constituted a menace to those they otherwise loudly proclaim to be assisting.

The passing of the old order has generated a crisis within the European human rights world. On the one hand, the aid agencies are becoming increasingly reluctant to divert precious resources to London and Paris; on the other hand, greater political liberalisation in Africa and elsewhere has encouraged the emergence of locally-based groups better able to utilise the available resources. On a visit to Nigeria in November last year, for instance, I counted no less than five such groups in Lagos alone, with another two preparing to enter the fray. Against this background, the sudden appearance of 20 million ecus was not to be taken lightly by European groups faced with the possibility of their own demise. Careers are not so lightly ditched, even when your job description has not merely ceased to be relevant to anyone but yourself, but has arguably become counter-productive.

So it was that RSF announced, even before the end of the first day, that it had been voted co-ordinator of two projects which it had already decided were important in terms of the African press: identifying areas of press freedom to be surveyed, and acting as the centre for the subsequent reports. Additionally, it was to be responsible for managing a legal fund for journalists in the region who fall foul of the authorities in the course of their duties. This was a deft piece of foot-work on the part of RSF, which had effectively placed itself between those who were giving the money away and those who were hoping to receive it, but any objections were supposed to be allayed when it subsequently transpired that some amongst us were to be responsible for the third important project: setting up a database on existing press laws in each of the countries on the continent. Why such a database couldn't have been set up in Dakar, Nairobi or Johannesburg was not among the questions that troubled any of the people present, although one delegate from yet another western organisation pointed out that communications were difficult in Africa, and that for this reason it was necessary to be 'pragmatic' in these matters. Such cynicism seemed to obviate the whole point of the conference, at least to those who imagined—foolishly, no doubt—that press freedom was a matter of principle and not expediency, but that is another story.

It would be naive, of course, to have expected the Africans present to wonder aloud whether there wasn't something fishy in all of this, but the point about journalism in Africa is precisely, the insecurity attendant upon a badly-paid profession which is continually at the mercy of governments for whom accountable government, the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights is merely a western ruse to
deprive them of the fruits of office. In other words, the mere fact of your presence at a conference in which 20 million ecus is being discussed automatically puts you in line for some of the crumbs from Europe's table, and therefore the possibility of feeding your family if and when you suddenly find yourself behind bars, or simply out of a job. Besides, who are you to tell Europe how to spend its own money? The relationship of dependency (or power) which brought the Africans to Brussels in the first place already dictated their silence. The alternative was to articulate what everyone knew even before they set out, but the price of dissension must be carefully measured by those for whom it continues to remain prohibitively expensive. Welcome to the New World Order.

Reprinted with thanks to the Index on Censorship.

British Economy & Third World Debt
Helen O'Connell

It is over ten years since the debt crisis began, yet debts and poverty continue to mount in many Southern countries and seriously hamper all attempts to work for long-term and equitable development. To date the steps taken to resolve the debt crisis have been inadequate. Economic problems in Britain and other European countries are severe too.

One World Action's aim in organising the British Economy and Third Debt conference on 10 June 1993 was to keep, or put, third world debt, and particularly Africa's debt, on the political agenda in the run-up to the Group of Seven Summit in Tokyo in July 1993. Interestingly, a UK government spokesperson, Anthony Nelson MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, asked if he could take the opportunity to announce some new measures on UK debt policy and restated the Government's commitment to the Trinidad Terms. Our second aim was to highlight the economic connections between Southern countries and Britain and provide an opportunity for representatives from different sectors - business, the City, trade unions, academic institutions, non-governmental organisations, the media - and interested individuals to discuss what action is required on debt, in order to assist development in the South and recovery in Britain. Two hundred people from a wide range of interests attended the conference.

Glenys Kinnock, chair of One World Action, opened the conference and stressed the harmful impact of debt and structural adjustment programmes on the poorest women, men and children in Southern countries. The opening speakers were Susan George (author of The Debt Boomerang: How Third World Debt Harms Us All), Mr Tekalign Gedamu, Vice President for Finance at the African Development Bank, Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Director of the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies and John Eatwell, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Susan George argued that while for the Northern banks and Southern elites the debt crisis, or cancer as she prefers to call it, is no longer a serious problem, the burden of debt continues to fall on ordinary people in the South and increasingly on ordinary people in the North in terms, for example, of lost
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jobs and markets, the environmental effects of rain forest devastation and the drug business. In her opinion, solutions to the debt question depend on the political will to take action.

Tekalign Gedamu made the case that an early resolution of the debt crisis was essential if economic recovery and the resumptions of sustained growth are to be achieved in Africa. However, as existing debt relief measures were ineffective there was a need, in his view, to go beyond current options. For him, the objective of debt relief should include not only debt alleviation but also should ‘embrace the critical determinants of growth, including the enhancement of investment and growth opportunities’.

Professor Adebayo Adedeji talked about a paralysis which is ‘inhibiting the design and implementation of a fundamentally different paradigm rooted in common human values and not in the hunger for profits of the few’. This paralysis was manifested, for example, in three failures: to link Northern and Southern economic problems; to view the continuing debt crisis as ‘a collective concern calling for joint action’; to address ‘the fundamental causes of persisting underdevelopment in most of the South’. He detailed the political and social effects of these failures and argued for substantial debt write-offs coupled with new resources for ‘a massive social rehabilitation programme’, investment in African agriculture and industry, and access to the North’s markets.

The final opening speaker, John Eatwell argued that the problems of debt deflation experienced by Northern countries were very similar to the problems facing Southern countries. He presented a proposal which sought to address both: a large and growing allocation of Special Drawing Rights to poorer countries in order ‘to stimulate activity, restore output and confidence, and hence recreate an environment in which private capital markets will operate’.

The opening session was followed by responses from a panel chaired by Harsh Kumar of AFEXP Commodities (UK) and composed of John Monks, Deputy General Secretary of the UK Trades Union Congress and Will Hutton, Economic Editor of The Guardian newspaper.

Further speakers each addressed a specific aspect of the conference theme. Oliver Morrissey (University of Nottingham), ‘Who benefits from British Aid?’, Stephany Griffith-Jones (Institute of Development Studies, Sussex), ‘Opportunities for reduction and conversion of Paris Club debt’; Professor Meghnad Desai (London School of Economics), ‘Why do countries get into debt?’ and Pauline Tiffen (TWIN), ‘Can countries trade their way out of debt?’.

‘The British Economy and Third World Debt Conference Report’, including background papers, will be available in August 1993 at £7.50 plus postage and packing, from One World Action, Education Office, First Floor, 59 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8LS, UK.

Editor’s Note: One World Action started in 1989 and supports organisations in a number of Southern countries who are working for social and economic change; it also carries out educational and advocacy work in Europe.

The role of the 'imperialism of free trade' in deepening and reproducing poverty in the South - especially in Africa - is at last beginning to get the press that it merits. The last issue reviewed Belinda Coote's The Trade Trap and Kevin Watkins's Fixing the Rules. Now come two further excellent books, advancing our understanding of how the trap was sprung, and laying the basis for strategies to escape.

Trade, of course, has never been free. Rich countries got rich by controlling trade, commonly with gun-boats. As competitors arose, their attempts to get a bit of the action provoked war, both actual and ideological, with the ideological fire-power of free-trade theory being wielded by the leaders. First Britain, and later the USA, forswore their earlier interventions once they were sufficiently dominant for free markets to work in their favour and against the newer competitors. But they preferred to make doubly sure by defining what distortions of the free market were unacceptable (in general those by states, particularly rival states), while others were somehow inevitable (transnational corporations and private trading monopolies, particularly those with shareholders resident in the home countries). The 30 years after the World War Two saw a series of challenges to free-market and free-trade theory, some of them ultimately successful (Japan and the Asian newly industrialised countries), others unsuccessful (the Soviet Union and most post-colonial countries). The challenges had a multilateral dimension through the Non-Aligned Movement, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, and the pressure for a New International Economic Order.

But as we know it all came to nothing, for the free-trade orthodoxy, so tattered in the 1960s and early 1970s, is now once again dominant, forced on almost all the South by the World Bank and the IMF through structural adjustment policies. History has, as usual, been rewritten, with what is merely (to be charitable) an experiment without a track record, or (to be more realistic) the assertion of the interests of the rich, being presented misleadingly as the successful strategy of the NICs. This story is fleshed out by Barratt Brown in two sections, the first called 'Unfair Trade' which covers the role of colonialism and the slave trade in shaping the present division of world resources, the world division of labour and trading relationships. The section concludes with the role of markets, and how far they are from being free, being dominated by a handful of commodity traders and TNCs: 'any challenge to the giants who dominate the whole field of commodity trade will have to be made at many points, because the
power of the giants is many-sided' (not least in the influence they have over the UK and US governments and the progress of GATT negotiations).

The second section is called 'Making Trade Fairer' and considers in turn regulating the market, aiding the market, planning trade, and finally alternative trade, involving alternative trade organisations (ATOs) such as Traidcraft, and Twin Trading (of which Barratt Brown is the Chair). But such examples of non-exploitative trade are still only a fraction of one per cent of world trade; nevertheless, there are signs, based on the experiences of mobilisation for famine relief and of green consumerism, that a strategy that might prove successful can be devised; this might be based on networks of consumer-producer unions contesting the centralising tendencies of states and markets. In the end the message is optimistic, for it ties in with ecological and democratic imperatives: it is in all our interests to find another solution, because the present dominance of exploitative trade is proving unsustainable, not just in the devastated rain forests and savannahs of the South, but at the global level.

Some of these ideas inform the joint book with Pauline Tiffin, which is focused explicitly on Africa. The African crisis and the flawed World Bank remedy (with South Korea as the misleading model) lead into a detailed demonstration of how concentration on more efficient export of commodities as the Bank advocates has benefited only the North, and offers no better prospects in the future. But Northern protection (in the teeth of its own ideology) still closes the door to effective development of manufacturing industry, and the debt burden locks the door. Autarchy is no solution in an increasingly interdependent world. The book finishes too pessimistically in my view: 'Africa can only avoid permanent political and economical marginalisation if there is an international commitment to a common programme to bring Africa back into the world polity.' Such an international commitment is clearly desirable, but what are its chances of success? The present system has developed because it is in the interests of powerful cartels and their parent countries who fight to safeguard these interests. They may regret the starvation that is the consequence, but for them it is not the bottom line. ATOs and networks of consumer-producer unions are unlikely to develop quickly enough to prevent further marginalisation of the continent, and destitution for the majority of its inhabitants.

Africans cannot therefore wait on the moral reform of Northern capitalists, but must look to their own resources, primarily human. Despite the general failure in the face of irresistible economic pressures since 1975, remarkable successes can still be found, not just those based on oil or diamonds, but, more generalisable, some based on industry (as described in Roger Riddell's Manufacturing Africa, for example). This would not be autarchic, but neither would it be free-trade; its essence, as in the cases of South Korea and Japan would be in downgrading market signals from commodities where world trade demand is increasing only slowly. This means most of Africa's current exports. As the failure of structural adjustment becomes apparent, peoples and their governments will then have to develop the determination to develop skills in products where trade is expanding - whatever the World Bank may say about their lack of comparative advantage.
Africa Resource Guide

This guide has been provided by Third World Resources for ROAPE. We intend to publish this annually, and hope that you will find the listing useful. If you would like to be included in future editions, please send details either to us or directly to Third World Resources, c/o Data Center, 46419 St., Oakland, CA 94612-2297 USA. Tel: (510) 835-4692. Fax: (510) 835-3017. E-mail: tfenton@igac.org.

This Third World Resources guide includes information on organizations whose primary concerns are the nations and peoples of the African continent. It is divided into four regional sections: Africa (general), North & West Africa, East & Central Africa, and Southern Africa. Organizations in each section are grouped according to their location or their regional focus. Additional information is organized as educational services, curriculum materials, reference books, audiovisuals, directories and guides, and periodicals.

**AFRICA (GENERAL)**

**Africa Centre**, 38 King St., London W2 8JU, England. Tel: 071-240-6649.

Africa Faith and Justice Network, 401 Michigan Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017, USA. Tel: (202) 332-1761. Fax: (202) 832-9051. E-mail: africas@igac.org.

Africa Fund, c/o American Committee on Africa, 198 Broadway, Rm. 401, New York, NY 10038, USA. Tel: (212) 962-1210. Fax: (212) 964-8570.

Africa News, African People's Socialist Party, P.O. Box 72205, Oakland, CA 94605, USA. Tel: (510) 771-1666. Fax: (510) 771-1816.

African Association for Development, B.P. 1107 CD Annex, Dakar, Senegal.

African Association for Human and People's Rights in Development, c/o Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Botswana, P.O. Box 2262, Gaborone, Botswana.

African Bar Association, P.O. Box 3451, 23 La Tebu St., East Cantonments, Accra, Ghana.

African Books Collective Ltd., The Jam Factory, 27 Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1HU, England. Tel: (0865) 726066. Fax: (0865) 793958. ABC Newsline.


African Front Library Services, 410 W. Falmouth Highway, Box 350, West Falmouth, MA 02574, USA. Tel: (508) 540-5378. Fax: (508) 540-5381.

African Institute for Economic and Social Development, Document Center, 15, avenue Jean Mermoz, Coody, B.P. 8, Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Tel: (255) 44-15-94.


African Institute of Human Rights, 43 Boulevard Pinet La Madeleine, P.O. Box 1921, Dakar, Senegal. Tel: 211-56-46.


African-American Labor Center, 1400 K St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, USA. Tel: (202) 789-1020. Fax: (202) 789-1040.

Africa Fund, c/o American Committee on Africa, 198 Broadway, Rm. 401, New York, NY 10038, USA. Tel: (212) 962-1210. Fax: (212) 964-8570. E-mail: africafund@aol.com.

Eritrean Relief Association, BCM Box 665 London WC1V 6XX, England.


Eritrean Relief Committee, 1325 15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA. Eritrea Newsletter.

Federation of African Media Women, P.O. Box 6076, Nairobi, Kenya.

Hom of African Resource Center, c/o The Fund for Peace, 1755 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036, USA. Tel: (202) 332-4666. Fax: (202) 267-6315.

Inter-Africa Group, P.O. Box 1531, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

International Movement of Catholic Students, Africa Regional Office, P.O. Box 62106, Old East Bldg., 4th floor, Tom Mboya St., Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: 0204 51, Fax: 254-2725805.

Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization, P.O. Box 44412, Nairobi, Kenya.

Mazingira Institute, P.O. Box 14550, Nairobi, Kenya.

National Council of Women of Kenya, c/o Wangari Maathai, P.O. Box 43741, Nairobi, Kenya.

Organization of African Unity, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, P.O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Tel: 15-77-00.

Pan African Women's Trade Unionists, P.O. Box 61068, Nairobi, Kenya.

Research and Information Centre on Eritrea, Via della Dogana Vecchia 5, 00186 Rome, Italy. Tel: 794 8137. Entera Information.

Sahara Fund, 4438 Tindall St., NW, Washington, DC 20016, USA. Tel: (202) 364-9473. Fax: (202) 364-9472.

Shiga Women's Group, P.O. Box 7333, Dares Salaam, Tanzania.

Somali Studies International Association, Secretariat of Research and Documentation, c/o Folklore Institute, Indiana University, 506 N. Feiss St., Bloomington, IN 47401-3122, USA. Tel: (812) 855-1527. Fax: (812) 855-4008.

Sudanese Women's Association, P.O. Box 381, Kampala, Uganda.

Women in Nigeria, P.O. Box 253, Smara, Zaria, Nigeria.

Women's Rehabilitation Centre, P.O. Box 185, Ekte, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Women's Research and Documentation Centre, c/o Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Women's Research and Documentation Project, P.O. Box 25165, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Sudanese Women's Gazette, P.O. Box 2995, London W14 0ND, England.


Sudan Update, P.O. Box CPRS, London W1J 7AR, England.

Sudan Women's Association, c/o VoL, Co-Executive Directors, 4 Croghan Lane, Durham, NH 03824, USA. Tel: (603) 868-2671.

South African Women's Association, P.O. Box 381, Kampala, Uganda.

Women's Association, P.O. Box 381, Kampala, Uganda.

Women in Nigeria, P.O. Box 253, Smara, Zaria, Nigeria.

Women's Rehabilitation Centre, P.O. Box 185, Ekte, Cross River State, Nigeria. Etc.

Women's Research and Documentation Centre, c/o Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Women's Research and Documentation Project, P.O. Box 25165, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

NORTH & WEST AFRICA

Algerian League for Human Rights, c/o All Yafia, Algiers, Algeria.

Abdennour, 10 Rue Abane Ramdane, Alger, Algeria.

Arab Organization for Human Rights, 17 Midan Aswan, Mohandesin, Giza, Egypt. Tel: 346662. AOR Newsletter.

Association of African Women for Research and Development, B.P. 3304, Dakar, Senegal. Tel: 23.02.11. ECHO The AAWORLD Journal.

Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), P.O. Box 3034, Rue Leon G. Dumas Angle Fann Residence, Dakar, Senegal. Tel: 23.02.11. Fax: (221) 24 1288. Africa Development.

Forum of African Voluntary Organizations for Development, c/o CONGAD, B.P. 4109, Dakar, Senegal.

Group for African Study and Thought, c/o CRIDSSH, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Saharan People's Support Committee, 217 E. Lehr, Ada, OH 45810, USA. Tel: (419) 634-3685. SPSC Letter.

Togolese League for Human Rights, 178 Boulevard du 13
Janvier B.P. 2302, Lome, Togo.
Tunisian National Women's Union, 56, Boulevard Bab Benat, Tunis, Tunisia. Tel: 200.178. Fax: 557.131.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Ad-hoc Monitoring Group on Southern Africa, 2222 Rayburn House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515, USA. Tel: (202) 225-1275.
Africa Resource Project, P.O. Box 296, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

African National Congress, P.O. Box 38, 28 Pantion St., London N19 9PR, England. Tel: (01) 837-2012.
African National Congress, Women's Section, P.O. Box 30791, Lusaka, Zambia. Voice of Women.
CODOFIC.

Artists and Athletes against Apartheid, 545 Eighth St., Rm. 200, Washington, DC 20001, USA. Tel: (202) 226-1275.

Australian Anti-Apartheid Movement, GPO Box 1724P, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
Azanian Trade Union Coordinating Centre, P.O. Box 2412, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. Tel: 27937. On the Labour Front.

Betaald Aanstel, c/o Pre-paid Reply, P.O. Box 180, 3970 ADDriebergen, Netherlands. Tel: (03438) 20744.

Campaign against Racial Exploitation (Australia), P.O. Box 159, Mt Lawley, WA 6050, Australia. Tel: (09) 3283966. Fax: (9) 2212394.
Center for Women's Studies, University of South Africa, 320, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa.
Cooperation Canada.

Mozambique (COCAMO), 1 Nicholls St., Rm. 300, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 197C, Canada. Tel: (613) 526-6037. Fax: (613) 526-2188.
CUSO, ECSA Desk, 135 Rideau St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 9K7, Canada. Tel: (613) 563-1242.

Cooperation for Research, Development and Education, P.O. Box 1895, Galborne, Botswana. Tel: 37-9695.

DC Student Coalition against Apartheid and Racism, P.O. Box 18291, Washington, DC 20036, USA. Tel: (202) 483-4090. Fax: (202) 265-7843.

Ecumenical Documentation and Information Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa, P.O. Box H94, Hatfield, Harare, Zimbabwe. Tel: 50311.

End Loans to Southern Africa, P.O. Box 686, London NW5 2NW, England. Tel: (1) 3594640.
End LoanstoSouth Africa Newsletter.

International Committee of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa and Namibia, P.O. Box 28, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Tel: (22) 3535175.
International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, P.O. Box 1024, Sta. B, Ottawa, Ontario, K1F 5R1, Canada. Tel: (613) 526-5939.
Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement, 20 Beechpark Rd., Foxrock, Dublin 18, Ireland. Tel: (01) 585-035. Amal Randl.
Irish Mozambique Solidarity, 13 Carlisle St., Dublin 9, Ireland. Tel: (01) 5413032.

Japanese Anti-Apartheid Committee, Ebisu 4-5-23 Shibuya, Rm. 306, Tokyo, Japan.
Japanese Anti-Apartheid Women's Committee, c/o Isu, B-504, 3-36 Higashi-Itsumigaku, Toyonaka City, Japan.

Mozambique Solidarity Office, 3435, Dearborn, No. 318, Chicago, IL 60604, USA. Tel: (312) 922-3915. Fax: (312) 922-6989.
Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Information Centre, 34 Percy St., London WIP 1FG, England. Tel: (01) 936-7108.
Namibia Information Service, P.O. Box 686, Lusaka, Zambia. Tel: (01) 543-4255.

Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, 211 E. 43 St., Rm. 703, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: (212) 526-2460.
Programme for Development Research (PRODDER), P.O. Box 302 Adelaide Postal Station, Toronto, ON M5C 2J4, Canada.

Protest Against South Africa, P.O. Box 1034, Sta. B, Ottawa, Ontario, K1F 5R1, Canada. Tel: (613) 526-5939.


Africa: A Directory of Resources (see Directories & Guides below) and the Directory of African & Afro-American Studies in the United States, compiled by Hanai M. Rana and John A. Distefano.


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Partnership for African Curricula and Teaching, Phelps-Stokes Center for Human Development, 10 E 87 St., New York, NY 10128, USA.


Organizations listed above that have noteworthy periodicals with regional coverage are: Africa News Service (Durham), African-American Institute (New York), Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa (Toronto), and TransAfrica (Washington).

Voices from Africa. UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (INGLS), Palais des Nations, CH 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.
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