Setting an Agenda for Change in Africa

Carolyn Baylies

This issue of ROAPE takes up a number of themes which have been a recurring concern of our contributors in the past. The pressures imposed by external forces and imperialist agencies, especially through the structural adjustment policies of the international financial institutions, are pervasive and inexorable, forming the context in which policy or political change must occur. But the internal impetus towards political change of state structures on the continent is also strong, particularly with regard to demands for popular participation. If external forces continue to take their toll, ongoing processes of change, particularly in the political realm, offer some room for cautious optimism.

Several of the contributions to this issue address the situation in South Africa, analysing ongoing developments, noting the potential for progressive change, but also offering cautionary advice. Mamdani's analysis of the problems of higher education in post-colonial Africa draws on past experience to evaluate parallels and differences salient to South Africa and to extract lessons which might be taken on board during the South African transition to democracy. Stoneman, in turn, considers structural adjustment programmes and suggests that the case of Zimbabwe may be particularly instructive for South Africa.

Mamdani's paper is the text of an address given this year at Rhodes University, the University of Natal at Pietermaritzburg, and the University of Durban-Westville. It notes tensions between the large, established, 'historically white' universities and the 'historically black' universities, with the former insisting on the need to uphold academic standards and the desirability of the state leaving the university sector alone and the latter calling for a democratically elected government to redress the balance between resource-rich and resource-poor institutions. Mamdani draws parallels between the current tension within South Africa's higher education sector and the immediate post-colonial experience of other African states, where expatriate lecturers appealed for maintenance of standards and autonomy from the state, while indigenous lecturers called for state intervention and support, and for policies of indigenisation of the faculty, only later coming to the view that too close an attachment to the state bore its own hazards. Mamdani affirms the need for reform in order to redress imbalances and ensure affirmative action within institutions but considers that this should be accompanied by universities
forging closer links with their surrounding, disadvantaged communities than with the state.

Randall also addresses challenges to the education sector in South Africa in the context of political transition, including the need to ensure and protect its relevance to local communities. His concern, however, is less with higher education than with policies which threaten to defuse the popular initiative associated with the campaign for people’s education — a campaign whose principles were described and evaluated by Mashamba, in ROAPE 48. Surveying the situation from a vantage point several years down the road, Randall expresses the fear that the vibrancy of the movement is being lost in a manner parallel to the way in which mass democratic movements have lost their active function, as the negotiators take centre stage and as the notion of ‘the people’ is progressively transformed into that of ‘citizens’. He queries an overemphasis on education as ‘training,’ noting that this removes from the agenda a process by which communities define and tackle their problems, at least in part through their control over and direction of the educational process, and casts doubt on the wisdom of training where economic development does not generate jobs for those newly armed with credentials. Randall’s stress on the need for communities to maintain a grasp on the education system in their midst and to ensure their participation in what he suggests should be a problem-solving enterprise is a theme which recurs in various guises in contributions to this issue.

This issue of ROAPE contains a special section on Cabral, in acknowledgement and celebration of the importance of his contribution to both theorising the struggle against oppression and to the practice of political change. As Ishemo notes, the relevance of Cabral’s message has not diminished with time and in many respects is as pertinent to present struggles as to those in decades past. Davidson highlights the emphasis Cabral placed on people doing things for themselves, rather than — what is so often the obverse in Africa — of the state, or external forces, contriving to do things to people. It was the notion of self-development through collective effort that was of central importance to Cabral as activist and theorist and which continues to be relevant today. In this regard, Davidson alludes to the independence of Eritrea as representing the achievement of a ‘route of escape’ via the sort of popular participation advocated by Cabral.

A degree of optimism coupled with a sober assessment of prospects facing Eritrea characterises Markakis’s account of developments subsequent to the referendum there in April 1993. With a devastated agricultural sector, reliance on food aid, a poverty stricken population and, indeed, a poverty stricken government, Eritrea may have little choice but to accommodate external pressures and embrace economic liberalism. The tension between ensuring popular participation and accepting, at least in part, the dictates of external donors is indeed a challenge of almost insuperable dimensions. Woldegabriel’s piece focuses on demobilisation of almost 100,000 combatants in Eritrea. As he says,
Eritrea is faced with a huge dilemma: how to provide a decent life for those who gave so much. His analysis in some ways mirrors that of Markakis and again asks the question, can Eritrea guarantee a reasonable rate of economic growth and development without a massive injection of capital. And if so, will the conditions be acceptable to Eritreans?

The nature of such pressures in the political realm is addressed by Beckman’s analysis of the ‘neo-liberal ideology’ which informs much of the current discourse on civil society. While neo-liberal theorists applaud the burgeoning of civil society, portray its advance as entailing an equivalent loss to the state, and affirm the desirability of a transfer of nationalist aspirations from the state to civil society, they obscure (or fail to identify) the way in which the state necessarily intervenes — in the name of civil society — to prop up some forces of civil society and undermine others. Civil society is not neutral territory nor autonomous from the state; it is an arena in which social forces compete, where class conflict continues to be acted out and state intervention is invariably on the side of capital. In critically evaluating the neo-liberal project, Beckman also comments on the response to it on the part of third world radicals. He notes a shift from a former ambivalence toward the state and remarks on the attraction which civil society has come to hold for some radical democrats, for whom it represents a space within which the nurturing and protection of popular democracy is perceived as possible.

Such room for manoeuvre may emerge. On the other hand, it may well prove elusive given the pervasiveness of imperialist pressures and their potentially destabilising impact. Perseverance, commitment and strength of collective purpose is needed to preserve principles and to protect popular participation and aspirations to the limits of what is possible within constraints constituted by such pressures. It is precisely this, Stoneman argues, that is one of the lessons South Africa must draw from the experiences of other African states. Suggesting that the balance sheet in respect of structural adjustment shows negative impact on most African states, he focuses on the case of Zimbabwe, arguing that its relative success in resisting the ‘totalitarian’ influence exerted by international financial institutions via structural adjustment should be highly instructive for other states and particularly South Africa. Resistance to the dogma of orthodoxy and determination to follow a largely self-directed path without engendering confrontation may yet be possible.

The analyses of Stoneman and Mamdani are directed specifically at the lessons which the post-colonial experience may offer the South African transition. Yet the other contributions to this issue are no less relevant to that process. The entire process of negotiation and transition in South Africa has been characterised by enormous pressures placed on the liberation movement to make concessions to privilege and injustice. The negotiating agenda of the state, the overt interventions of the institutions of global imperialism, the violence heaped on innocent heads by local ‘enforcers’ and criminals, the propaganda of the media, the earnest and worthy exhortations of a host of ‘liberal’
politicians and academics, all have been aimed at ensuring that transition will be devoid of much transformation. Efforts have been openly concentrated on limiting the capacity of the democratic state to redistribute resources or promote social justice and to defining the parameters of civil society so that the ownership of property (itself the outcome of the criminal racism of the past) is indefinitely insulated from the will of the people. We hope to give much more attention to the South African transition in coming issues. For now, it is as well to remind ourselves, in the contributions that follow, of the problems inherent in any agenda for change in Africa.
University Crisis and Reform: A Reflection on the African Experience

Mahmood Mamdani

I am grateful to the University and the Student Representative Council (SRC) for giving me this opportunity to reflect on a topic which is both timely and important. When I received your invitation to give the annual lecture on 'academic freedom', I was mulling over the situation at the University of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. The script seemed familiar. A student demonstration was confronted by armed soldiers; 17 students were killed. Forty-two professors and lecturers protested and were dismissed for signing a petition asking for a public inquiry into the killing of students. And then the rest of staff was asked to re-apply for their posts — so those successful may be re-employed on two year contracts! An extreme situation in a small far away African country, some may say. I didn’t think so. The events in Addis set me thinking about the contents of this paper. In another week, I found myself witness to a number of meetings and actions at the University of Durban-Westville (UDW, the university I am currently visiting) and called to protest the military and police occupation of the University of Bophuthatswana. You may still say, ah, it doesn’t concern us, this is just a ‘homeland’ university, closer to ‘Africa’ than to us.

The surest way to stop learning is to exceptionalise phenomena. I know that there is a strong undercurrent of South African exceptionalism that tends to mark the thinking of South African intelligentsia, white and black, left and right. But I also know that at times like these, times of transition, established truths are often open to question. Thus my decision to bring to you some of our experience, and to explore its relevance to your situation.

I have been asked to reflect on these issues on two previous occasions: once at the Union of Democratic University Staff Association (UDUSA) National Conference in 1992, and the other time at the University of Fort Hare in January 1993. Both times I did so in light of the experience of African universities, particularly those where I spent most of my teaching life, Makerere University and the University of Dar es Salaam. I believed then, and still do, that there are no absolute and universal answers to these dilemmas, that they must be re-
solved contextually. Is it possible to speak of university autonomy and academic freedom without considering the demand that intellectuals be accountable? Or underline the quest for quality and excellence without which university life loses much of its significance, without heeding the call that university activity be relevant to the needs of the society whose resources nourish it? Being a newcomer to South Africa, I then hesitated to explore the resonance that our experience may have for you. I suppose I believed in the old maxim of Mao tse Tung: 'No investigation, no right to speak.' Today, however, I intend to combine my reflections on our experience with my observations on your situation. Having been in the country three times, almost five months this time, I believe you would expect no less of me.

The point of contextualising discussion needs to be made over and again. After all, the most interesting and controversial issues in rights theory arise less so when a right is being formulated in the abstract, more so when it is asserted in practice. Does the fact that we support the right to divorce mean that we should support every application for divorce? Does our support for the right of free speech mean that we must support every exercise of that right, even if that free speech is racist, or sexist? Is not freedom from racist and sexist harassment also a right? When two rights conflict, which should prevail? It would be foolish to try and answer these questions outside of context.

**Autonomy and Accountability**

Let me illustrate the point by an example from the actual history of African universities. And let me preface that example with a brief historical sketch. In equatorial Africa, that land mass between the Sahara and the Limpopo, universities were a rare phenomenon in the colonial period. Take the example of Nigeria, a country in which live a quarter of the population of this continent. At the end of the colonial period, there was one university in Nigeria with a thousand students, the University of Ibadan. By 1990, Nigeria had 31 universities with 141,000 students. And Nigeria is not an exception. The whole of East Africa had a single university at independence: Makerere University in Kampala. When I last counted there were 15 universities in East Africa.

My example is from Makerere University, the university I come from. At independence, the academic staff of Makerere was sharply divided between a senior expatriate staff and a junior local staff. The expatriates called for the university to be autonomous, free from direct state interference. The local staff was just as firm that, as a national asset, the state had a responsibility to give the university a national character. The expatriates stood in defence of academic freedom, the locals wanted the state to override senior expatriate staff and appoint locals to leading positions in the university, and generally to facilitate and oversee the implementation of a vigorous affirmative action programme at the university.

We, the locals prevailed, at least in the short run. The state, we said, is the
custodian of the development process and the university an institution that must train human resources for development. It then seemed natural to us that the state play a key role in managing the university. That was easily achieved. The university staff was Africanised in a matter of a few years. In another few, the civil service was also Africanised. Henceforth, a student could no longer be guaranteed a government job, a car loan and a bungalow upon graduation. Lecturers were confronted with government-appointed heads of departments. We were now ready to discover the importance of rights, of university autonomy, and to question the logic of development, the logic that universities must be managed as if they are apparatuses of the state.

What is the lesson of the story? The expatriates lost the battle because their notion of rights was so exclusive that it ran counter to any notion of justice for those who had been historically excluded on racial and national grounds. We were right to see that banner of rights as no more than a fig-leaf defending racial privilege, at best an expression of crass professionalism. But we were short-sighted in not seeing beyond that immediate context, in confusing university interests with the interests of its immediate occupants, in not recognising that the language of rights does not have to be a minority language, it can also be a vehicle for defending majority interests.

Before I came to South Africa, I had long forgotten these events and the passions that propelled them. But once here, I recalled them as I moved from one university to another, giving seminars or meeting colleagues, from University of Western Cape to Fort Hare to Wits to Natal. I gradually came to see a deep institutional divide between what are called historically white and historically black universities, between historically privileged and historically deprived institutions. Both sides seem keenly aware of an impending transition to a new political order, and both seem to be preparing to defend their separate and even opposed institutional interests in a post-apartheid state, one in the language of university autonomy, the other in the language of redress. One urging the state to leave universities alone, for while they may have been white historically they are the current 'centres of excellence'; the other hoping for a democratic state to redress the balance between resource-rich and resource-poor universities, an imbalance historically justified on one single ground, that the former were white and the latter black. I wondered to what extent the essence of the post-independence conflict at Makerere was being replayed, this time not within individual universities but between universities, not between expatriates and locals, but between two groups of locals: those historically privileged and those historically deprived. And I wondered to what extent the combined call to defend 'centres of excellence' and university autonomy displayed an insensitivity to historical injustice at best and a narrow preoccupation with defending institutional privilege at worst. But I also wondered to what extent the expectation of strong state intervention was shaped by considerations of short-run institutional advantage which would leave the same institutions open to state control in the medium run. Above all, I have often wondered, are you condemned to suffer a replay of the old Afri-
can script or are you in a position to learn from our experience? I shall return to this question after a fuller reflection on our experience.

For the story of the African university, even this particular story, does not end where I left off. By the late 1970s, the world economy was beginning a downturn. As we used to say then, if they sneezed in London, New York or Paris, we would catch a cold across Africa. And we did. Through the 1980s export revenues declined; the budgetary crisis of the state deepened. Faced with growing deficits, one African state after another capitulated to the harsh regime of structural adjustment as defined by the International Monetary Fund. Soon, the World Bank stepped in to restructure higher education. At a meeting with African vice-chancellors in Harare in 1986, the World Bank argued that higher education in Africa was a luxury: that most African countries were better off closing universities at home and training graduates overseas. The thrust of the Bank’s logic ran as follows: that education is an investment like any other, foolish to make unless the returns are profitable. Recognising that its call for a closure of universities was politically unsustainable, the Bank subsequently modified its agenda, calling for universities to be trimmed and restructured to produce only those skills which the market demands. Such was its agenda for university restructuring in Nigeria in the late 1980s. The market logic of the World Bank turned out to be even narrower and shorter-run than the development logic of the state. But then, in the late 1980s, the state was also in the process of transformation. With the spread of structural adjustment programmes, it was rapidly changing from being a buffer to globalisation to being the agent of globalisation.

For us, the period of university expansion was long over, and the period of university crisis had set in. Faced with new pressures, this time of both the state and the market, of both government and donors, the response of academics was to call for academic freedom and university autonomy. For the first time, academics from across the continent rallied together in defence of academic freedom. That was in November 1990 at the symposium on ‘academic freedom’ in Kampala. Organised by CODESRIA, the Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa, we came from every ideological stripe, from the left to the right, from staff unions to student organisations. Faced with a common dilemma, we had discovered a common interest. In return for popular support for academic freedom and university autonomy, we pledged accountability to popular movements. But who would support us in that quest at such a late hour? Had we not ourselves, only yesterday, argued against university autonomy as a thin veil cloaking privilege and called on the state to remove that veil and redress injustice? But I suspect the reasons for popular indifference to our plea for help, and our pledge for solidarity, ran deeper.

To understand that reason, we need to explore the very nature of African universities, not only the few established by colonial powers, but also the many set up after independence.
Quality and Relevance

There is a popular African-American saying: the hardest act to understand is your own. Understanding our own act took some time. The participants of the Kampala Symposium were battle-hardened. In the face of growing authoritarianism and an all-embracing market logic, we had fought many a battle but we could not remember any we had won. Perhaps our only victory was that we had survived! But that same confrontation was a source of self-knowledge because through it we discovered our weaknesses and our isolation. We could neither find alternative sources of funding to make up for shrinking state subsidies, nor effective allies in the struggle for autonomy.

Driven into a corner, we discovered local communities, communities which we had hitherto viewed simply as so many natural settings. Forced to address these communities, we were compelled to look at ourselves from the standpoint of these communities. We came to realise that universities have little relevance to the communities around us. To them, we must appear like potted plants in greenhouses — of questionable aesthetic value — or more anthropological oddities with curious habits and strange dresses, practitioners of some modern witchcraft.

To academics accustomed to seeing ourselves as leaders-in-waiting or students accustomed to be cajoled as the leaders of tomorrow, these were indeed harsh realities. We were forced to understand the question of relevance, not simply narrowly from the point of view of the development logic of the state, or even narrower market logic of the IMF and the World Bank, but broadly from the point of view of the needs of surrounding communities. But we had always resisted any demand for a broad relevance in the name of maintaining quality. Faced with popular pressures for democracy in education, universities and independent states were determined, not only to preserve intact those universities inherited from colonial mentors but also to reproduce replicas several times over to maintain standards.

The new post-independence African university was triumphantly universalistic and uncompromisingly foreign. We made no concession to local culture. None! We stood as custodians of standards in outposts of civilisation. Unlike our counterparts in Asia and Latin America, we did not even speak the cultural languages of the people. The language of the university was either English, French or Portuguese. As in the affairs of the state, the discourse of universities also took place in a language that the vast majority of working people could not even understand. There was a linguistic curtain that shut the people out.

None of this was an accident. All of it flowed from a historical process set into motion with colonial occupation. Let us remember that formal education on this continent was a state initiative. Schools and universities were never created by communities; rather, they were extensions of the state. While they
enrolled children of the colonised, their self-declared mission was to uproot these children from their communities.

They sought not to transmit to students a sense of the history of their communities, but to erase any trace of that history. Against the 'backwardness' that local communities were said to signify, schools and universities claimed to hold the torch of 'progress'. Listen to the words of a peasant woman from northern Uganda whose husband was recruited into one of these schools, words immortalised in Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*:

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Bile burns my inside!
I feel like vomiting!
For all our young men
Were finished in the forest
Their manhood was finished
In the classrooms
Their testicles
Were smashed
With large books!
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Through this educational system were trained the cadres of 'civilisation' who came to organise political life in most independent African states after independence. Is it surprising that they cast as a state agenda what they had been taught to accept as the mission of the educational system: to bring 'development' to 'backward' communities, not to capitulate to them in the name of 'democracy'? Is it accidental that the leaders of post-independence Africa argued that development and democracy were not compatible? That some of the most militant of them came to believe in the notion of 'revolution from above', a notion of radical change that must be forced down reluctant community throats? Is it then surprising that when it came time to take over colonial universities, we de-racialised them but failed to de-colonise them? That we changed the personnel of these institutions, but not the nature of the institutions themselves?

I do not wish to romanticise communities and demonise universities. But I am arguing against the reverse tendency, a one-sided proposition that glorifies the mission of universities as fountains of an enlightened universalism and debases communities as repositories of an unenlightened parochialism. It is a tendency that is entrenched across this continent, and if my short experience here is any guide, more so in this country than in any other part of the continent I am familiar with.

It is a proposition which is sanctified by a sophisticated notion that science and technology are essentially apolitical pursuits whose objectives must be set internally, by scientists and technicians. That any external input in shaping the agenda of scientific research is an interference which must necessarily compromise the integrity of scientific work. Ironically, the thesis that the objectives of scientific inquiry are internally generated, that the demands of rigor-
ous scientific work rule out any meaningful choice, allows scientists to absolve themselves of responsibility for both the direction of scientific inquiry and the use of its results. Thus scientists can have their cake and eat it too, claim autonomy and disavow accountability.

The notion of a 'Republic of Science', autonomous and unaccountable, had its origins in discussions on natural science policy in the early 1960s in Europe. But it is a notion largely discredited, for the simple reason that nowhere in the world does fundamental research guide the activity of more than a tiny minority of researchers. Not only do the resources needed to finance scientific work have to be justified in competition with other resource needs of the society at large, it is a fact that most researchers are engaged in activities whose objectives are economic or social, rather than scientific per se. If this is true, then the question arises: science for what? Who is to set the agenda of research? The scientists themselves or the communities whose sacrifice represents the resources for scientific work? Or some combination? The real question we should be debating is not whether universities should be absolved of accountability, but to whom they should be accountable.

It seems to me that, in the South African case, the elitism and irresponsibility of universities in particular, and the scientific community in general, is reinforced by a second factor. This is the actual objectives that have historically guided the development of science, narrowly conceived simultaneously to serve the perceived security needs of the white minority and the needs of state security to suppress the black majority. In the midst of all the talk of a transition to a 'new' South Africa, I have found the legacy of that history to be very much alive and well. I have found researchers across the board, with always a few notable exceptions, sharing the myopic vision that South Africa is a member of the white industrialised world, except with a large poor population. In discussions that explore a possible future, whether for education or the economy, I have found constant references to Western Europe or North America, at most Australia, as models for a 'new' South Africa. But, viewed from the point of view of the totality of the South African population, South Africa is not an industrialised European country, but a developing African country with a minority whose European living standards are at the expense of a majority whose living circumstances are more African than anything else. Yes South Africa is not Uganda, but it is certainly more like Algeria than Holland or England. For those who can not do without a European parallel, it resembles more Hungary or Czechoslovakia, than it does any Western European country.

This myopic vision is not just an attitude that can be changed at will in a short span of time, because it is crystallised in the very nature of institutions that guide education and research in this country. Recently, I had the opportunity to read a survey of institutions of science and technology prepared by an international mission financed by the International Development Resource Council (IDRC) of Canada. It is instructive to reflect on some of their findings.
I shall take as an example the leading scientific research institution in this country: The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). In spite of its 'modern facilities and a tradition of technical competence', the IDRC team found it 'least well equipped to deal with the problems of disadvantaged communities.' For CSIR, in the words of the Report,

*has no history of experience in conducting research whose specific goals have emerged from long processes of consultation and discussion with disadvantaged communities whose needs are to be met, nor does it have a long tradition of using social science research as a route to the interpretation of the complex dynamics of societies which are dramatically different from those of its researchers.*

What does it mean to lack a history of research whose goals are not oriented to the needs of disadvantaged communities? The record of the Medical Research Council is illuminating. 'What', asks the IDRC Report, 'is the public health justification for continued expenditure on research on biomembranes, on the cell biology of arteriosclerosis, on inherited skeletal disorders, on transplantation or on eco-genetics?' Does not the research agenda of the National Accelerator Centre — designed for nuclear physics research and medical research related to proton beam therapy for certain classes of cancers, but whose 1992-93 budget of 39.1 million Rand is 25% more than the 30.2 million budgeted for the Foundation for Research Development's core programme of support to university research in the natural sciences and engineering — does not this combined agenda reflect 'an intensely political choice?' I could go on quoting from the IDRC findings, but I think the point is made.

We also made similar decisions, but on a lesser scale, not only because the resources at our disposal were modest, but I suspect also because we were not victims of a racism as intense as here, one that so completely dehumanised and debased the needs of the majority in the eyes of a research and university establishment drawn mainly from the privileged minority. But when we did make similar choices, we also defended them on grounds of 'pursuing excellence' and 'defending standards'. The discourse on 'excellence' and 'standards' in our case, as I fear in yours, had a strong ideological dimension. Before I explain it, let me emphasise that I believed then, and still do today, that mediocrity is not our quest. Universities must be centres of excellence. And yet, what we have come to realise after a long and tortuous journey, is that in chanting a one-dimensional song about excellence and standards we fell prey to a right-wing tradition. It is tradition that argues that quantity is always at the expense of quality, that democracy is always at the expense of excellence. But, could the opposite be true? Could the opposition between quality and quantity, between democracy and excellence, be relative and conditional, rather than absolute and unconditional? Could the demand to 'maintain quality' be a fig-leaf for maintaining privilege? Could the call for 'defending standards' be a demand for conformity? And could the combined call by universities to 'maintain quality' and 'defend standards' be an agenda for continuing to be unaccountable to the disadvantaged majority in society?
The irony in defining quality and standards in international and universalistic terms, outside the context we live in, was that precisely when universities were under the greatest threat, we were unable to defend our carefully nurtured 'centres of excellence'. Not only because the communities we lived amongst had so little reason to defend us, but also because we were deserted by our own colleagues when the going got rough. That desertion rate is measured as the 'brain drain'. In our single-minded pursuit to create centres of learning and research of international standing, we had nurtured researchers and educators who had little capacity to work in surrounding communities but who could move to any institution in any industrialised country, and serve any privileged community around the globe with comparative ease. In our failure to contextualise standards and excellence to the needs of our own people, to ground the very process and agenda of learning and research in our conditions, we ended up creating an intelligentsia with little stamina for the very process of development whose vanguard we claimed to be. Like birds who cross oceans when the weather turns adverse, we had little depth and grounding, but maximum reach and mobility. So that, when the going rough, we got going — across borders. Faced with a growing brain drain, some African governments turned to the stick, to outright coercion; others, with much prodding by international donors, turned to the carrot, simultaneously trimming universities while upping the privileges of those who had survived the process. But none questioned the very nature of the institutions we had created and sustained.

**Individual Access and Institutional Reform**

It is not that African universities sleep-walked through the morrow of independence. Not that there were no reforms; there were. The limits of that reform were the limits of affirmative action. For affirmative action meant Africanising or localising the staff and decision-making processes. But a change in occupants does not necessarily change the institution concerned. In fact, the reverse happened: through affirmative action, colonial-type institutions were able to get a new lease of life, a reinforced legitimacy, and fortify themselves against pressures for a change in orientation and purpose. Once again, I hear echoes of our experience in the South African universities. Is it not true that most universities, faced with a demand for change, are coming up with an agenda for improved access, and no more? De-racialisation is an important demand, but we must be clear about its limits; de-racialisation is not the same as de-colonisation. Without institutional reform, affirmative action will be turned into a survival strategy of privileged institutions, a last line of defence of the old order. To be turned into a first line of attack on that order, it has to be joined to an agenda of institutional reform, not only of individual institutions, but of the entire institutional landscape in higher education.

Let me return to the tension between the historically white and the historically black universities in this country to address this question a little more con-
cretely. In the very first month that I spent at UDW, although I did not know most of the people at the university, I felt a great sense of familiarity. Soon, I realised its source to be the problems and obstacles I would ordinarily run into. I felt I was back at the Makerere that I knew, a colonial-type institution with a legacy of heavy-handed administration, summed up in an ethos that administrative efficiency must be its overriding objective, even if the institution in question happens to be academic. Soon, I came to meet those in charge, whether in the Rector's office, or in the leadership of the staff union or the SRC. I now felt even more familiar, because I recognised that the colonial legacy was alive and well, just as it had been at the Makerere I taught at in the 1980s. All concerned were militantly opposed to apartheid and committed to eradicating its legacy, but many continued to harbour the kernel of that legacy as part of their militant consciousness, but without recognising it. That kernel was the conviction that change must come through a 'revolution from above'. I came to recognise this at the other historically black universities I visited. While at one, a well-intentioned Rector had actually attempted a 'revolution from above', at another the Rector in question was actually being blamed by militants in the staff association and the SRC for not affecting a 'revolution from above!'

But as I got the opportunity to give seminars at historically white universities, meet lecturers and researchers, and even make some friendships, I came to realise a paradox: that the relations of domination were actually much more transparent at historically black universities lacking in a tradition of university autonomy and internal democracy, but were far more concealed at liberal white universities with a tradition of university autonomy and internal democracy. For if the historically black universities were more obviously state-driven, their white institutional counterparts were less obviously but just as completely capital-driven. And yet, as institutions, both were equally distant from the needs of the disadvantaged majority around them, only that researchers at historically black universities saw this as the result of a state imposition, whereas many at historically white universities defended it as a rational choice, part of the historical mission of universities. Not surprisingly, the resistance to institutional reform embedded in the ideology of 'pursuing excellence' and 'maintaining standards' was much more pervasive at the liberal white universities. So that while the historically black universities seemed much more open to reform, even if less clear about what that reform may entail, those at historically white universities seemed neither open nor clear about the nature of a much needed reform.

At UDW, I was asked to teach an honours course in philosophy and political science. Many well-intentioned colleagues, both within the university and outside it, warned me about the lack of preparedness of the students, and prepared me to encounter lower standards than what I may be used to 'internationally'. The three months I spent with the students began as a tug-of-war. I refused to accept anything less than what I would anywhere else, but was prepared to negotiate the pace and the path by which we may come to that
goal. For I believed I had not been brought to UDW as a referee whose job was
to tag every student with the skills they possessed as they came into my class,
but was really expected to be a teacher who would embark on a common
journey of exploration, discovery and learning, who was supposed to leave
them better than I found them. I was pleasantly surprised. The students were
as excellent and as uneven as anywhere else I have taught, whether in Uganda
or Tanzania or the US. But you wouldn't know that if you just gave them a
performance test at the outset. For a test which ignores all differences in cir-
cumstances and treats everyone as equal is itself highly loaded. How, after all,
do you compare someone who runs a mile in six minutes on hilly terrain with
another who does so in four minutes in manicured stadium?

My point is this. In the apartheid era, the historically black universities were
subject to a double restriction: they were both resource starved and racially
cordon off. The result was that while they were always starved of financial
resources, they were not equally starved of human resources. For the racial
cordon applied to both those with talent and tenacity, and those with less of it.
That, however, will no longer be the case if the oncoming reform in higher
education is limited to de-racialisation and improved access. For if the racial
cordon is lifted and access to historically white universities improved, and
that reform considered reason enough to continue their privileged access to
resources — in other words, if the racial cordon is lifted and the differential
access to financial resources continues — the result will be that the resource
deprivation of historically black universities will actually worsen.

Not only will they be starved of financial resources as they were in the past,
they will also be in danger of losing the best of their human resources which
were yesterday closeted because they were black even if talented, but are to-
day being looked for like needles in a haystack by white university scouts
precisely because they are black and talented, and even better if female. Un-
less the entire institutional landscape is reformed, the other side of improved
access to historically white universities will be a brain drain from historically
black universities. And I dare say that the situation will be no different in
other fields, such as housing. American social historians tell us that Harlem
did not become a ghetto until the black middle class started moving out be-
cause of improved access to hitherto white suburbs. For, until then, Harlem
was much more of an organically differentiated and integrated community,
home to middle class as to poor, to professional as to menial. If post-apartheid
South Africa can deliver no more than improved access in housing, Soweto
will surely go the way of Harlem!

How does one ensure that post-apartheid reform does not enrich the suburbs
of Johannesburg and simultaneously ghettoise Soweto further or, to stick to
the subject of my talk, privilege liberal white universities and ghettoise histori-
cally black universities further? In answering this question, I must necessarily
be modest, and cut the cloth to suit my experience. I cannot put before you a
comprehensive agenda but I can put before you some proposals the essence of
which should be a part of that agenda.
I have argued that there must be a radical shift in vision, from the notion that South Africa is a white industrialised country with racial problems, somewhat more acute than the United States, to a vision that South Africa is actually a developing African country. A change in vision is not possible without a change in those who define that vision. In the case of universities, these are the Governing Councils. I would argue that, at the minimum, there needs to be a restructuring of these Councils so as to give meaningful representation to four different groups: one, the academic community of teachers, researchers and students; two, disadvantaged communities; three, the productive sector; and four, the state.

If you want me to put it in the language of affirmative action and redress, then I am arguing that the reform has to be carried out at three levels, not just one as seems to be the dominant perspective. It should, first of all, be affirmative action within institutions, designed to bring in more black and female persons, not just in the student body, but also in the teaching and research staff, the administration and the Governing Councils. One needs to recognise that, of these, the complexion of the student body is the easiest to change and the most difficult to sustain, especially if different shades come from different socio-economic backgrounds. I remember being a student at Harvard in the late 1960s when two great democratic movements came to a head: the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement. Bowing to popular pressure, Harvard admitted more and more black students through a combination of financial aid and affirmative action. But I also remember returning a decade later, in a changed environment where the democratic movement had demobilised and the economy was on a downturn. Harvard then pleaded scarcity of resources and scaled down its financial assistance for the disadvantaged. The complexion of the student body changed once again, shifting like a pendulum, to lighter shades.

Second, affirmative action needs to involve a redress between institutions so that the resource disparity between historically white and historically black universities will not end up being reproduced, even worsened, under other labels, say a distinction between national and regional universities, or one between research-oriented and teaching-oriented universities. In other words, one should stop thinking in apartheid terms, of a few national universities lavishly endowed, and others not, but start thinking of national facilities deliberately and evenly spread between universities, historically white and historically black. And it should, third, involve a redress for the majority but historically disadvantaged communities whose sweat and blood has indirectly built the facilities at all universities, and who must now be guaranteed a meaningful representation in defining the needs that should shape the agenda of research and teaching at all institutions. If we take this seriously, we must then speak not only of re-defining the role of all existing universities, but also of building new facilities that specifically aim to link the work of higher education and research institutions to the needs of the previously excluded majority. After all, of any country on this continent, it is South Africa which has the
greatest experience in carrying out this type of triple redress, only that in the past it was carried out not in the interest of the black majority, but of what was then a relatively deprived Afrikaner minority. To have a sense of history, after all, is to realise that there is no experience, no matter how oppressive, which can be dismissed, simply and one-sidedly.

One last word. The real point of democratic reform, what I have been calling institutional reform, is not just to change the complexion of researchers, teachers and students, nor just to change the location of research and teaching; to be truly meaningful, reform has to lead to a change in the orientation of these activities. Let me take a hypothetical example, one where you succeed in adding more black and female faces to the research and teaching establishment, and even to shifting the location of that establishment mainly to historically black universities — say your most advanced medical research facilities come to be located at the University of Fort Hare, with researchers mainly black and female, but the facility is still oriented to proton beam research for special types of cancer, away from the public health needs of the people — what will you have achieved? I dare say you would then have joined the ranks of independent Africa. The key issue will still remain not addressed: who should centres of research and learning serve, and how? This is why I think the real challenge for all of us, whether south or north of the Limpopo, whether black or brown, yellow or white, is to begin thinking of how to root African universities in African soil.

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The Liberation of Civil Society: Neo-Liberal Ideology and Political Theory

Björn Beckman

The state versus civil society debate is an arena where competing class projects confront each other, each seeking to ensure a social basis for its own control over the state. The state plays a central role in the construction of civil society. The neo-liberal project seeks to de-legitimise the state as a locus of nationalist aspirations and resistance, drawing on theories of 'rent-seeking', 'patrimonialism' and 'state autonomy'. The neo-liberal project conceals its own massive use of state power, transnational and local, for the construction of a civil society in its own image while suppressing actually existing civil society which it defines as 'vested interests'.

'State vs Civil Society' as an Arena for Ideological Contestation

The 'liberation of civil society' from the suffocating grip of the state has become the hegemonic ideological project of our time. The emergence of the new hegemony is dramatised by the collapse of the socialist-oriented states in Eastern Europe, the weak performance of statist and nationalist strategies in much (but not all) of the third world, and the crisis of state welfarism in the West, all linked to the restructuring of class relations in these societies and the related disintegration of state-centred development coalitions.

A range of political forces across the political spectrum think that civil society has been constrained by the state and needs to be liberated. Neo-liberals claim they want to free its entrepreneurial potentials. But also socialists, of many shades, seem to accept that the failure of socialist experiences so far has been due to the suppression of civil society. Also in the social democratic middleground is the retreat from 'excessive statism' argued in terms of more freedom for civil society. In the third world, neo-liberals spearheaded by the World Bank, seek to roll back the state. But forces on the left are also disenchanted with their own statist experiences. They cling to the freedoms of civil society in defence against a hostile state. Organised interests seek to assert their autonomy.

Current arguments, however, are concerned not just with the liberation of
civil society but with its very creation, especially in the third world and East European context. Socialism as well as post-colonial statism have not only repressed civil society but prevented it from emerging. It is fatal for the state itself because it has not been subjected to the necessary discipline provided by the forces of civil society and has opened the way for authoritarianism, parasitism, and inefficiency. The road to the creation of a 'proper' state therefore goes via the promotion of a 'proper' civil society.

Is this the 'end of ideology' proclaimed by the victorious cold-war warriors or the coming of a new global consensus as heralded by the World Bank (1989; Beckman, 1992)? Not at all. All sides have their own designs on both state and civil society. Interestingly, all depend heavily on a presumably redundant state in their efforts to develop the right type of civil society. The consensus is a conjuring trick — an attempt to assert hegemony. In the name of consensus, the World Bank, for instance, draws on radical populist positions, incorporating metaphors of the indigenous, the grassroots, and the development from below as against the alien, elitist and anti-civil society practices of the past.

This article is primarily concerned with the role of the state-civil society dichotomy in the ideological strategies of the current neo-liberal offensive. In the effort to de-legitimise the principal ideological rival, economic nationalism, neo-liberals seek to de-legitimise the state, the main locus of nationalist aspirations and resistance to the neo-liberal project. In order to undercut the claims by the state to represent the nation its alien nature is emphasised. Its retrogressiveness is explained in terms of its separation from civil society. I will also examine some principle elements in this analysis of state separation, the notions of 'rent-seeking', 'patrimonialism' and 'state autonomy'.

The article does not attempt a definition of either 'state' or 'civil society', nor does it attempt to solve the difficult riddles of their interconnectedness which are also actively debated in the African context (cf. Mamdani, 1990b; for the Hegel/ Marx/Gramsci attempts in this direction, see Sassoon, 1983). 'State vs civil society' is treated here primarily as a metaphor that suggests, in a rough manner, a terrain of ideological struggle. I argue, however, that the state plays a central role in the constitution of civil society which is an issue which goes beyond ideology.

The Neo-liberal Project

Why 'neo'? Why not just 'liberal'? While the project is clearly liberalisation, the prefix is justified in order to distinguish current liberal strategies from those which have dominated the agenda of international development institutions since the decolonisation phase. They were also predominantly liberal in as far as they sought to promote capitalist development and world market integration. The World Bank was involved since the 1950s in support of market forces, foreign investment and local entrepreneurial classes. Because of the weakness of the domestic bourgeoisies, state sponsored development
schemes were treated as nurseries. The state was expected to act as a trustee of a budding capitalism. State enterprises and parastatals proliferated not so much from a commitment to public ownership, as in the absence of alternatives. Partnership with the state gave national legitimacy and the necessary political protection to foreign capital and international development agencies (Beckman, 1977, 1981, 1985). The 1970s witnessed a deepening of state-promoted commercialisation within foreign-sponsored large-scale rural development projects, covering vast parts of national territory and developing foreign-managed administrative apparatuses that often overshadowed existing ‘national’ state institutions (Beckman, 1987). Agency-encouraged foreign borrowing for such projects contributed to the debt crisis, which in turn opened the way for the current neo-liberal offensive.

The new strategy is therefore neo-liberal, not because it promotes capitalism, commercialisation and markets, which all liberal strategies do, but because of the redefinition of the role of the state in this process. It is neo-liberal not in an abstract orthodox sense but in a specific historical and regional context. This redefinition has taken place, not just or even primarily because of the failure of the previous strategy but because of a shift in the balance of forces, undermining the bargaining power of post-colonial nationalism. The global dimensions of this shift require no further elaboration. It is important to stress that it is also supported at the level of bourgeois class formation within post-colonial society.

This is not to downplay the crisis of the post-colonial statist development model. The neo-liberal option, however, does not emerge as the ‘only’ or ‘natural’ response to the crisis. Nor is it necessarily the most capitalist one, in the sense of leading to the most rapid transformation of African societies on capitalist lines. This continues to be contested, for instance, on the basis of the successful statist East Asian experience. The neo-liberal project is promoted in competition with other nationalist and statist options.

The ‘liberation of civil society’ plays a vital role in the struggle to legitimate the shift in the balance forces, both internally and globally, and to de-legitimise resistance and contending options. While the shift itself is quite dramatic, it is important not to lose sight of the basic continuities in the commitments of the leading international agencies in their efforts to lay the institutional pre-conditions for world-market integration, both at the level of state and civil society. Nor should we underestimate the centrality of state intervention to the liberal project in its new ‘anti-statist’ phase.

State vs Civil Society and the De-legitimation of Post-colonial Nationalism

The post-colonial state emerged in the context of global contradictions between dominant and dominated positions in the world system. It became the focus of national aspirations and of resistance even if neo-colonial and
accommodationist forces often gained an upper hand. Yet, post-colonial nationalism provided in most cases a real constraint on the world market integration of the post-colonial world. Nationalist aspirations were reinforced in the 1970s by the military victories of the national liberation movements in Vietnam, Central America and southern Africa. UNCTAD and the Non-Aligned Movement asserted the right of third world economies to protect themselves politically against a world market.

The de-legitimation of the state is central to the ideological de-construction of post-colonial nationalism as the state continues to be the locus of resistance to world market subordination. 'The state vs civil society' discourse offers an arena for de-legitimation. 'Civil society' is therefore substituted for the 'nation' as the principal locus of legitimation. The contradiction between state and civil society is propagated as the dominant one. The more 'alien' the state can be made to appear the less legitimate is its pretence to represent the nation.

I have discussed elsewhere how the World Bank plays skilfully on nationalist sentiments in this de-legitimisation exercise. Post-colonial 'statism' is presented as the result of foreign ideologies, not just marxism and socialism but also the statist ideas that had dominated development thinking in the West (Beckman, 1991; 1992). The foreign-ness of the state becomes a means of explaining its irrelevance to the needs of civil society and its failure to establish appropriate roots. The international agencies present themselves as the spokesmen of the forces of civil society that have been suppressed. The 'empowerment' of civil society is supposed to lay the foundations of a future more genuine state, more responsive to the requirements and aspirations from below.

**Political Science and the Academic Foundations of Neoliberal Ideology**

International intervention on the side of civil society draws on academic theorising about the nature of the African state. Political science has become useful to the 'international development community', having previously been marginalised by economists. The World Bank's (1989) long-term plans for Africa are prepared in consultation with political science scholars (World Bank, 1990). While economists focus on the dysfunctional impact of the state in African development, political scientists offer to explain the weakness of the state itself. Professional organisations such as the US African Studies Association and new institutions, like the Carter Center in Atlanta have provided fora for a new discourse on African 'governance' (Carter Center, 1989, 1990).

Reviewing the proceedings of one of the Carter Center conferences, Mamdani (1990a) outlines a critique of this new paradigm where polarity between state and civil society is a core feature. He argues that it misrepresents the manner in which 'forces within society penetrate the state differentially, just as the
state power reinforces certain social interests and undermines others.' The paradigm fails, according to Mamdani, to address the relationship between social processes and state power. It downplays fundamental differences in the manner in which production is organised and wealth generated in African societies, whether, for instance, the base is large-scale commercial agriculture, small-scale peasant production, or mineral rent. Such differences 'shape the contours of social groups, their demands and their capacities to wage struggle around these' (Mamdani, 1990a:8-9).

In theorising the state its 'class character' is defined in terms of the appropriations ('rent-seeking') of the 'political class' or the 'nomenclature', not in terms of the role of such appropriations and functionaries in the management of the contradictions of the wider social formation. State and politics is reduced to rent. The logic of rent-seeking is extended to the 'vested interest' which share, directly or indirectly, in the appropriation of political rent. These include wage earners, public sector contractors, and private businessmen whose profits are an outcome of state patronage and preferential treatment. The relationship of these classes to production is seen as essentially unproductive and predatory. Public enterprises are subsidised and thus part of the rent-seeking order. Theories of rent-seeking are firmly linked to 'neo-patrimonialist' theories which stress personal rule and clientelistic relations. Both sets of theories obscure how power relations and appropriations articulate with social forces, reinforcing or modifying the manner in which social contradictions are resolved. Government spending is reduced to the distribution of patronage, favouring some sectional interests and discriminating against others in a pattern of ethnic or clan politics (Beckman, 1988a).

In a recent text, Gibbon (1992) develops the critique of this new political science-dominated paradigm. Like Mamdani, Gibbon demonstrates how patrimonialism and rent-seeking are abstracted from the social and economic relations that define their actual content and the failure to focus on their articulation with other social processes. Patrimonialism, for instance, becomes an 'empty box tied to personal rule', making it difficult to distinguish what it means and the limits within which it operates in different contexts, whether Nigeria, Kenya or Zaire (Gibbon, 1992:4). He also notes that clientelistic relations may be combined 'successfully' with 'free markets' as in Pinochet's Chile or in a state-civil society 'symbiosis' as in Japan. Gibbon shows convincingly how Robert Bates, one of the theoreticians of the new paradigm, separates politics from production relations. The entire focus is on politics as source of accumulation, neglecting all other forms (Gibbon, 1992:8).

Rent-seeking and the Contradictions of Post-colonial Society

The failure to situate rent-seeking and patrimonialism in relation to the wider dynamics of production serves to conceal the manner in which the neo-liberal project intervenes in these contradictions. For instance, in a mining or oil
economy, 'rent' concerns the terms under which mining and oil companies extract these resources, including their access to deposits, the terms on which labour is 'made available' and profits transferred. The function of the state in this context cannot be reduced to the parasitism of rent-seeking classes, however extensive it may be. The relation involves both national and class contradiction. The state represents national territorial interests. The 'political rent' that is appropriated by the 'political class' must be discussed in relation to what happens to this 'national rent'. It is in the interest of the neo-liberal project to blur the distinction between the two and to reduce the issue of rent to that of 'political rent' in a narrow class or 'nomenclatura' sense. It diverts attention from the underlying national contradictions and, in particular, from the way in which the neo-liberal project intervenes in those contradictions on the side of transnational capital. But also, class contradictions are obscured by the focus on rent-seeking. The state acts as gatekeeper for the terms under which local labour is made available to foreign capital. The issue of 'political rent' needs therefore to be related to the manner in which the state performs this role. Does the state collaborate with management in obstructing workers' rights and suppressing wages? Or is it supporting workers' interest? The neo-liberal intervention has implications for this relationship.

Agricultural marketing boards are favourite villains in the neo-liberal world view. Producers are prevented from reaping the full value of their labour. By reducing the boards to rent-seeking, however, it becomes possible to pursue liberalisation without addressing the problems of improving market access, price stability, extension services, access to inputs etc. which were supposed to engage the boards, apart from their fiscal functions. If the boards are reduced to rent-seeking it also blocks an attempt to relate their functions to dynamics of social forces and contradictions within agrarian society itself. At the one end we merely find an amorphous suffering 'peasantry' and at the other a parasitic bureaucracy. While there may be much truth to such a picture, it blots out the highly differential manner in which board activities involve different strata among the producers, intermediary structures, co-operatives, traders, and village/community power-relations, including the struggle of such local forces to reform the marketing system in their own interest (for a discussion of the politics of Ghanaian cocoa marketing, see Beckman, 1976; on recent Nigerian experiences of liberalisation, see Mustapha, 1992). All this can be brushed aside in the bold neo-liberal sweep. Neo-liberal theory has no need for any knowledge about the demands and aspirations of the particular social groups affected in order to offer its solution. The medicine is supposed to work anywhere anytime. If not now, later.

Radical Reinforcement of the Separation Theories of State and Civil Society

Rent-seeking and patrimonial features are readily identified in most African societies and are dramatically conspicuous in some. Theorising about these features in terms of state-civil society polarity is not necessarily linked to sup-
port for the neo-liberal project. Some of it is rooted in concerns with popular emancipation, social movements, and democracy. My argument so far has been to demonstrate how a narrow, seemingly ‘materialist’ conceptualisation of the state in terms of rent-seeking and patronage abstracts those features from the relations of production with which they are articulated and which will influence their content and meaning. Moreover, as everything becomes subordinated to the logic of patrimonialism and rent-seeking, the model also obstructs an understanding of the functions performed by the state where rent is not a significant feature, for instance its actual role in regulating land, property and labour relations.

Radical scholars are of course as disturbed as the neo-liberal crusaders by the venality and parasitism of African ruling classes. In trying to explain the failure of the state to respond reasonably and efficiently to the imperatives of social and national emancipation they also draw on theories about state-society disjunctures. A ‘comprador’ model of the post-colonial state explains the separation of the state from society in terms of its international dependence. Local ruling classes have been reduced to agents — compradors — in the subordination of their societies to the requirements of neo-colonial or transnational capital. The commissions that they collect in this relationship is their rent. I have elsewhere developed a critique of these positions which fail in my view to take the dynamics of local bourgeois class formation seriously enough and underestimate the significance of access to state and territory as a basis for bargaining power (Beckman, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1985). At this point, however, my concern is with the manner in which such radical positions draw on theoretical assumptions which are appropriated by the neo-liberal project (Beckman, 1988a).

One such ‘common’ assumption is the absence of a ‘proper’ bourgeoisie. While neo-liberals would certainly not think in terms of a ‘national’ versus a ‘comprador’ bourgeoisie, there is common ground both in the rejection of the existing one and the search for a substitute. While some radicals, at an earlier point at least, were preoccupied with finding a more progressive replacement for the missing national bourgeoisie, e.g. in patriotic military quarters, neo-liberals have gained the upper hand in their pursuit of an ‘enabling environment’ in which new entrepreneurial classes will emerge, less dependent on the state, with their own autonomous institutions (e.g. Chambers of Commerce), and ultimately destined to transform the state from below (with some little help of their foreign friends) into a proper capitalist state (see my critique of the World Bank’s long-term perspective for Africa; Beckman, 1992). While radicals find such transnational intervention objectionable, their way of posing the problems in terms of a missing bourgeoisie opens itself for co-optation.

In theorising the separation of the state from society, neo-liberal theory can also draw on the vulgarisations of theories of the ‘autonomy of the post-colonial state’ borrowed from the radical tradition. An elaborate analysis by
Hamza Alavi (1972) of ruling class factions, primarily in Pakistani post-colonial society, was at an early point adopted within radical discourses on Africa, revised out of recognition, and finally incorporated into the 'populist' luggage of neo-liberal ideology. The original argument concerned the relative strength of the state bureaucracy, civilian and military, within the arrangement of ruling class forces, local and foreign, dominating the Pakistani state. This was seen as enhancing the relative autonomy of the state. It was explained in terms of the history of class and state formation in the colonial context, including the crucial role of external forces in imposing a particular state on the society. In its application in the African context, the 'autonomy' aspect of the argument has tended to be drastically inflated. No domestic social forces seems to count in explaining the class character of the state except those who inhabit the state itself, the bureaucrats and politicians, who 'inherited' the colonial state, itself an imposition. To some radicals such special autonomy held out the prospects for struggles within the state apparatuses on primarily ideological grounds and therefore also the possibility that socialist-oriented forces may gain an upper hand, capable of confronting the continued domination by transnational capital (for a review of the debate, see Goulbourne, 1979).

As such radical aspirations waned with the deepening financial difficulties, indebtedness and dependence of the state itself, the autonomy argument was modified and incorporated into the new liberal discourse. Hyden (1983) speaks of 'the existence of a state with no structural roots in society', suspended 'as a balloon' in mid-air. African societies, according to him, lack a social class which is in command of society which is 'an inevitable prerequisite to development and there is no way that Africa, if it is serious about development, can escape taking the challenges therefrom' (Hyden, 1983:19,195). Hyden's argument about the separateness of the state, its lack of roots, is coupled to the 'neo-patrimonial' model. The absence of a genuine class base makes the state wide open to penetration by 'the economy of affection', his euphemism for nepotism and clientelism, which prevents the state from performing its legitimate functions and ruling it out as an agent of development (Hyden, 1988 and my critique, Beckman, 1988b).

The 'autonomy' that is attributed to a state can only be meaningfully defined in terms of the social parameters that delimit and specifies its content. Questions must be asked about 'autonomy to do what? 'autonomy in relation to what?' The original Alavi argument contained some efforts in this direction. Notions of states 'without roots in society' serve no analytical purpose and only help to obscure an understanding of the balance of forces within which they operate. It is essentially an ideological position suggesting that the state lacks the roots which you think it ought to have.

Civil Society and the Construction of the Post-colonial State

The neo-liberal project is able to draw on a radical critique of the state, claim-
ing that the post-colonial state is primarily driven by its own internal 'class' logic (rent and patronage), in separation from the people. Both have good ideological reason for projecting this reductionist image of the state. It serves to prepare the way for their own alternative orders. Radicals may be in good faith. It is so obvious that the state fails to represent popular and national interests as these are perceived by them. However, the radicals are the ones to loose most from the promotion of the myth of the root-less state. If the neo-liberals indulge in self-deception it does not matter much. They currently have good access to state power and can promote their own project with the help of the very state they have declared redundant. In the case of the radicals, self-deception on these lines is bound to obstruct their own projects. In particular, it obstructs an understanding of the popular roots of ruling class politics, past and present.

The analysis of state-civil society relations must start from what has constituted the state historically at the level of civil society. What are the demands that 'society' has made on the state and how has the state developed 'as a state' in response to such demands. The fact that the post-colonial state was 'inherited' from colonialism does not make it any more 'cut off from society' than any other state. While originally having developed in response to the requirements of colonialist interests, transformations at the level of local society internalised these demands. The contradictions generated by the transformations created new sets of demands on the state which it sought to manage, combining promotion, repression and other means of regulation. Colonial capital and other foreign capital had a primary stake in the state and continues to do so. The state offers protection and services. While neo-liberal more than radical theorising can be blamed for obscuring this relation, the latter tends to neglect the manner in which such seemingly external determinants of the state were internalised into local civil society. While Cadbury, the chocolate manufacturers, wanted the colonial state to protect its interests, the cocoa farmers organised in their own defence, pressuring the state. The colonial state, which was very rudimentary at inception, was itself formed — constituted — as part of this process. Some of the interests in the state were of a pre-colonial origin, seeking protection, for instance, for pre-existing relations of power and privilege. Others represented emerging social forces, challenging such 'traditional' relations and their mutations under colonialism, as well as new ones, specific to the colonial economy and society. In its management of these contradictions, the colonial state developed its own 'popular roots'.

The state at an early point became the focus of demand for public services. Local civil society developed largely in the way in which claims on the state were increasingly taken on organised, collective forms. Roads, schools and health services were, and are, basic popular demands. It was natural that the competition for these services came to take on a territorial character, reinforced by the uneven penetration of commercial relations in peasant agriculture and other economic activity. Commercially more advanced areas were usually better placed in the struggle for services because their civil societies
were better organised and more articulate (access, information, education etc).

One of the most unacceptable aspects of the neo-liberal paradigm is the tendency to reduce the relations which developed on the basis of these demands to questions of state rents and patronage. If instead the point of departure is taken in the legitimate popular aspirations contained in these demands and the genuine conflicts of interest that they involve, the irrelevancy of the neo-liberal recipes of rolling back the state and breeding more entrepreneurs should be apparent.

The State and the Construction of Post-colonial Civil Society

The demands along the public service nexus have been central in shaping the state as well as in the construction of post-colonial civil society itself. For the notion of civil society to make sense it must involve some structuring of relations that distinguishes it from just being society. It seems to me that it is the relationship to the state that is this structuring principle. Civil society does not exist independently of the state, it is situated in rules and transactions which connect state and society. Chambers of Commerce, for instance, a popular representative of civil society in the neo-liberal world view, organise and represent the interest of business in a public arena as defined primarily by relations to the state (legislation, taxes, licenses, duties etc). If we are to look for the institutions of post-colonial civil society we therefore need to pay special attention to the public service nexus. This is where we find a plethora of organised community interests, seeking to ensure that the new road, school, market, borehole etc. will come their way. This is also where we find the organisations of public service workers, teachers, doctors, nurses, railway workers, etc. who in the neo-liberal world view are the ‘vested interests’ which obstruct their designs. It is not surprising that such groups play a leading role in the articulation of popular demands on the state (Bangura and Beckman, 1991).

The construction of civil society is centred on the rules that regulate the relations between competing interests in society. Interests demand from the state that it should lay down and enforce rules in their favour. People seek the protection of the state in the pursuit of their productive and reproductive life. They want protection for life, property and contract, access to means of production, rights of employment and tenancy. They want due process. Little of this is natural which should be apparent when considering, for instance, the ongoing transformation of property and family rights as part of the commercialisation of the social relations of production. Most rights are situated within relations of domination and unequal power. Most relations are contested.

Both state and civil society are formed in the process of this contestation. Law is at the centre of the contest, not just the law of the book and the court room,
but in its interpretation and application as determined by social struggles. It is in this context that the neo-liberal project intervenes, prodding the state to be more responsive to interests of capital and private property. The intervention is made in the name of civil society as opposed to the state, while its consequences are to intensify state intervention in suppressing existing forces of civil society, including those converging within the public service nexus. It is also an intervention on the side of capital within the capital-labour relation. In either case, actually existing civil society is portrayed as ‘vested interests’ which need to be combated in the interest of a civil society yet to come.

The organised social groups that most actively articulate the defence of the autonomy of civil society vis-à-vis the state can be found within and around the public service nexus, e.g. teachers, students, doctors, nurses, lawyers and journalists.

Conclusions and Implications
The state versus civil society debate has been discussed in this article as an arena for ideological contestation. Competing class projects confront each other, each concerned with the promotion and defence of different civil societies, populated by different NGOs, social movements and encapsulating different civil rights. Each project seeks to ensure the long-term social basis for alternative configurations of state power. The state plays a central role in both the construction and the liberation of civil society. The functioning of civil society, also in its autonomy from the state, depends on state intervention, including the enforcement of the rules which constitute and regulate property, markets and other rights. The freedoms of civil society are gained in struggles against inherited constraints, including feudal, patriarchal, religious and other restrictions. The freedom and emancipation of subordinated social groups depends on the ability of the state to restrain the exercise of power in society, based on arms, property, gender, ethnicity and other factors which discriminate between people in access to resources.

This article has been concerned with the manner in which the state-civil society dichotomy has been appropriated by and geared to the neo-liberal agenda. By pretending to be civil society’s best friend and by assigning the state the role of the enemy of civil society, the neo-liberal project conceals its own massive use of state power, transnational and local, for the purpose for constructing a civil society according to its own image. In so doing, it is busy suppressing and disorganising much of the civil society as it actually exists, with its aspirations and modes of organisation centred on influencing the use of state power. While pretending to act on behalf of all civil society — NGOs, social movements, grassroots — by a definitional trick, groups which are not supportive of its own project are defined out of civil society. They are ‘vested interests’, benefitting in one way or the other from state and therefore not truly civil society in the way the polarity has been falsely constructed. The hypocrisy of this ideological construct, however, is that the beneficiaries of neo-
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liberal state intervention are as profoundly dependent on state promotion and protection, including the state enforcement of their own type of property rights. The neo-liberal project exploits successfully the radical and populist critique of the bad state but ignores that such critique is based on radically different expectations about what the state could and should do for the people.

How do third world radicals respond to this ideological challenge? The state was identified as the principal agent of development in most radical development theories, be they primarily socialist or nationalist by orientation. As socialists, radicals sought to turn the state into an instrument of popular class power. As nationalists they aspired to use it to liberate the nation from its subordination to transnational power that obstructs national development. Faced with the neo-liberal hegemonic thrust, responses from radical democratic and nationalist forces have been ambivalent. While vocal in denouncing the retrogressive and oppressive nature of the existing state, including the parasitism and rent-seeking behaviour of its functionaries, the state is still defended as an instrument of national aspirations. In the past, solutions may have been more commonly thought of in terms of the capturing of state power. The defunct post-colonial state was to be reconstructed under radical leadership. With the likelihood of this happening being even more remote, radical expectations on the state are rescinding.

The focus of radical democrats has shifted towards the construction and protection of popular democratic power in society. To that venture the state appears as a threat. There is a primary preoccupation with enhancing the autonomy of popular organisations vis-à-vis the state. The liberation of civil society makes sense in that context. A radical retreat into civil society may reflect a sobering of expectations and a more realistic understanding of local and global determinants of state power. It does not necessarily mean an abandonment of the quest for it. Disenchantment with state politics has created new strategies of influencing the exercise of state power from organised and autonomous bases of popular power in civil society. The experience of the Nigerian labour movement, for instance, points to the manner in which the laws, institutions, and practices that define the freedom of the civil society develop in the context of class struggle (Andrae and Beckman, 1992).

A critique of neo-liberal ideology, its hypocrisy, its false consensus, and its hegemonic pretensions, does not exclude, of course, that radical democrats and neo-liberals have areas of common interest in the liberation of civil society. There may be a scope for alliances based on a platform of pluralism and constitutionalism in defence against arbitrary state power. Radical democrats have their own agenda for the reconstitution of state civil society relations, and not one but many, depending on concrete experiences and openings. In Algeria, for instance, the 1988 events are seen by some as of the final breakdown of state civil society relations built on an element of social consensus inherited from the liberation struggle and a certain societal acceptance of state
violence in the national interest (Bourenane, 1990). In this perspective, the real rupture only occurred as a result of the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s, as linked to the disintegration of the income support and welfare services which both agriculturalist and wage earners had received. It went hand in hand with the intensified enrichment by state and related elites. Other Algerian scholars situate the origin of the rupture much earlier, in the nature of the liberation struggle itself, where the capturing of state power from the colonialists at an early point opened up for the private enrichment of entrenched cadres (Talahite, 1992). Mamdani (1990c), drawing primarily on the Ugandan experience but referring to a wider African one, suggests an even earlier rupture, coupled to the rise of state nationalism linked to the suppression of the popular and democratic elements in the origins of the nationalist movement. Such differences will of course affect radical strategies vis-à-vis the current crisis of the post-colonial state.

At present the primary preoccupation of radical democrats may be to fend off state repression and widen the democratic space. In this there is room for alliances with both liberal and neo-liberal forces, foreign and domestic. Similarly, the rights of labour may be advanced and protected within the context of 'social contracts' with state and capital. The real meaning of such rights to the popular classes, however depend — as always — on struggle and organised strength.

What about the project of national liberation? Economic nationalism has been retreating in the face of advancing neo-liberalism, causing a dissolution of previous nationalist dominated radical alliances. Does the retreat into the defence of its own civil society mean that nationalism has been abandoned as the other leg of the radical project? Current experiences suggest that this is not necessarily the case. The resistance to the neo-liberal thrust of 'structural adjustment' as promoted by the international finance institutions has opened up a renewal of alliances which are both national and democratic (Beckman, 1990).

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Bibliographic Note


From Pseudo-Terrorists to Pseudo-Guerillas: the MNR in Mozambique

Anders Nilsson

The first part of this article (ROAPE 57) outlined the history and the guiding military concepts of Renamo (Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana, MNR) and related the war of destabilisation against Mozambique. This part analyses destabilisation as a specific kind of war with its roots in the counter-insurgency concept of 'pseudo units' which the British developed in Kenya. This article will discuss the kind of mechanisms at work in the recruitment process at the local level and the risk of a second wave of destabilisation.

From Pseudo-guerilla to Brigandage: Three Categories

When a MNR base is established in a certain area and its influence felt among the population, the reaction is not homogeneous. Some people escape and abandon their homesteads; others leave when the MNR are rumoured to be about or immediately after the bandits appear. Other people stay for longer periods, refusing to leave their houses, lands, cajueiros and coqueiros. What is common is the tendency to move step by step, just a few kilometres each time. This means that one of the groups at times, will be included in the direct sphere of influence of the MNR base, while the other almost always manages to keep out of reach of daily harassment and abductions.

This pattern of movement results, within a couple of years, in a new pattern of habitation in the district. Some of the people gather around the district town, or even semi-urban areas in neighbouring districts. They live without land and are mostly dependent on international emergency aid for survival. In official Mozambican language they are called deslocados. Although they live under precarious conditions, their situation is clearly better than a second category — recuperados. These are people who have been living in and around MNR bases or camps and managed to escape or have been picked up by patrols of the FPLM searching areas close to bases. Often they are gathered in centres, somewhat isolated from the surrounding population, and generally belong to the poorer strata of the rural areas. A third category are those who have come to collaborate intimately with the bandits, the madjibas.

There is clear socio-economic differentiation between these categories in that they belonged to a quite different strata of the peasantry before the emergence
of banditry in the area. Thus, the ones escaping first and trying to keep out of reach of the bandits are families of the better off peasantry, miners and small artisans, etc; the recuperados are from the lower strata in the rural areas, while the bandits themselves and the madjibas seem to have their roots in the rural lumpen-proletariat and other marginalised segments of the population. Of course, the situation is floating, with individuals moving from one category to another, but the general pattern is there.

To this we must add one more category, which is the population in and around the district towns, who have never suffered any direct attacks and who have had the opportunity to continue cultivating their lands without interruption. They are benefiting from the abundance of extremely cheap labour. Control of land in these areas is a great source of accumulation. The deslocados, who constitute this cheap labour, are themselves proletarianized from the better off peasantry, whose means of production have been destroyed or abandoned. Thus, any rapid increase in food production is difficult to obtain without a massive restoration of the means of production of this group in their zones of origin.

**Recruitment**

One question during the 1980s had been whether or not the MNR had any popular support, based on the same assumptions that guided the analysis of the guerrilla movements in the 1960s and 1970s, i.e. that no movement could exist and operate without popular support. Linked to this assumption is that recruitment is based on political consciousness. But recruitment to any organisation, movement or association can take place in different ways, especially if we try to find the proper moment in a longer process of adherence.

As far as recruitment to the MNR is concerned, the proper moment of recruitment is not when the 'recruits' enter the base, but when they leave it. Thousands of young peasant boys are abducted from their homes and villages, but recruitment takes place only when they take the decision about trying to escape or not. So the question is not only whether people join the MNR because of political admiration or not, but also if there are other factors influencing whether they escape or not — and when. This pattern of recruitment seems quite clear. The overwhelming majority of active bandits are abducted from the villages. The degree of force might differ between different attacks, but it is always there; it ranges from the threat of arms and orders to move, to beatings, killings and the creation of columns of people tied together with ropes. Which are the determining factors if and when an abducted boy from the rural area tries to escape and return to his family?

A moving account given to me by a Mozambican nurse, a distinguished gentleman in his sixties, reveals some of the factors involved. He had been kidnapped during the massacre in Homoine in July 1987 and spent six months in the provincial base before he managed to escape and return to the district town. In our conversation I asked why some people chose to stay with the
bandits while other escaped as soon as the could. For a short moment he lost
his temper and corrected me:

Young man, you have to understand that an escape from there requires a lot of courage.
You have to reach a stage where you wake up one morning with the full conviction and
acceptance of the fact that today is the day when I am doing to die. That day you can
mobilise sufficient courage to overcome the fear of the violent death you will suffer if you
are detected by the sentinels or the madjibas. If you are caught and killed, that is what
you knew already and had mentally prepared yourself for. If not, thank God for the
extra time in life you earned! And, you see, all people do not reach this stage within the
same scope of time. Some get there immediately, for others it takes some time, some
people never get there.

It is clear that the poorer elements of the peasantry are over-represented
among the bandits and the population living within the sphere of influence of
the bases. The bandits and the madjibas are principally of poorer origin. Eco-
nomic and social differentiation is clearly linked to behaviour in confrontation
with the increasing bandit presence in the home area: the better off you are,
the sooner you leave and try to re-settle in safer areas.

If we then look at the bandits as a group, do the same indicators determine
behaviour; for example, how soon do they decide to escape? The average pe-
riod as an active bandit in a group of 48 was twelve months. There was also a
marked difference between the three categories — deslocados, recuperados and
madjibas. The economic standard of their families was higher for those who
had been a shorter than average period among the bandits, while the bandits
staying for longer periods had their roots in the poorest segments of the rural
population. However, this economic differentiation was not as marked as be-
tween the deslocados and the bandits — as groups. More striking was the level
of education: a higher level of education means a shorter time among the
bandits.

Does this mean that the more educated a peasant boy is, the more he is in
favour in Frelimo? Does this mean that the better off peasants, artisans and
small shopkeepers are also more in favour of Frelimo than the poorer strata of
the population? My preliminary answer to both these questions is 'no'. The
pattern of movement away from the violence is linked more to different mate-
rial conditions and the ability to organise a rapid move while at the same time
transferring most of their property to another place. The higher degree of
wealth and education tends also to facilitate resettlement and integration in
areas more distant from home.

When we try to systematise the experiences undergone by those young peas-
ant boys who were abducted from the villages, we find a pattern in how they
are treated and in their eventual integration into banditry. This pattern is al-
most congruent with the methodology in the education of torturers in Latin
America or in Greece during the time of the junta. Roughly speaking, the
process is dominated by efforts to break down the personality and self-confi-
dence, thus breaking down the coherence of the individual’s identification
with prior systems of social norms and replacing it with new norms of social
behaviour; in this case, where it is not considered deviant to cut off lips, ears
and sexual organs or to cut open the womb of a pregnant woman. Extreme
subordination and obedience to the local commanders — based on threats of
violent punishment — is the key for this behaviour.

This process uses known psychological and socio-psychological mechanisms.
Initially the boys are ill treated, humiliated and beaten. This treatment is inter-
spersed with short moments of kindness and human understanding in which
the prospects of another reality is outlined if they will join the training and
take part in attacks and looting of villages. By accepting these new norms, the
boys enter a process where the desire to be integrated into their new ‘commu-
nity’ will gradually transform them into brutalised and traumatised individu-
als. This description is borne out by all the evidence from attacks and am-
bushes in the rural areas. The smaller boys are always the cruellest — they are
the easiest to mentally destroy.

It is through this process that the real ‘recruitment’ takes place; and those who
cannot stand this transformation try to escape. Some try early in the process,
some never reach that point. Again, the level of education seems to be instru-
mental. It is important to remember that primary schools in the countryside
have always been prime targets for destruction. Destruction of the educational
system in rural areas seemed to support not only the consolidation of the
MNR but also a new kind of banditry, an endemic banditry — brigandage —
based on completely marginalised sectors of the rural population, the rem-
nants of the MNR and, in certain cases, demobilised or deserted soldiers of the
FPLM or militia units.

The social and economic transformation of the countryside through the war,
the proletarianization or the lumpen-proletarianization of the mass of middle
and small peasantry has created the socio-economic conditions for the emer-
gence of this new kind of banditry or brigandage, constituted of people who
have to steal and loot for survival. This is the second qualitative transforma-
tion of the destabilisation of Mozambique, the first one being the change from
pseudo-terrorists to pseudo-guerillas. Thus, the dynamics of the banditry cre-
ates the condition for a perpetuation of violence, criminality and social break-
down, an internal ‘self-destabilisation’ where the Mozambican people are in-
cited to get rid of themselves.

Traditional Power

During the past few years a considerable amount of attention has been di-
rected towards the role of so-called ‘traditional power’ and its relation to the
MNR. At the end of the 19th century the Portuguese met a lot of resistance
during its pacification wars and the ‘traditional power system’ did not look
the same after this turbulent period as it did before. My understanding of
‘traditional power’ is based solely on the situation during the later years of the
colonial period and the 1975 transition.
'Traditional power', as it was organised in the south of Mozambique during the colonial period had three different levels. There were the regulos who were the highest in this hierarchy; next was the cabos de terra of which there are around ten in each regedoria, i.e. the geographical area of the regulos. Since a district might have around ten regulos, there were in each district around a 100 families which had their roots in the two highest levels of the traditional power structure. Subordinated to the cabos there was one more level, called nganakanas, a kind of family patriarch who served as a link between the individuals and the social system as a whole. Above this system was the Portuguese administrator in the lowest administrative colonial unit, the circumscricao (in general corresponding to the present districts).

Post-independence interpretations of the role of this system are often based on the assumption that the traditional system was only and solely the prolonged black arm of the colonial system into the Mozambican society, where it acted as a tax collector and recruiter for chibalo, forced recruitment to public works and plantations; as such it was a hated system which had to be abolished. My interpretation of the situation around 1975 is that the legitimacy of 'traditional power' was in fact drawn from two different sources. The first, obviously, was the Portuguese administration. The regulos had to comply with the demands of the colonial administration regarding tax collection, keeping law and order in the villages, the chibalo, etc. The regulos, who did not comply, always ran the risk of being substituted. The other source of legitimacy came from the population. The hierarchy of 'traditional power' were also the historical bearers of knowledge about traditional religion, its rites and ceremonials, as well as the procedure in periods of misfortune in the local society. Also the ceremonials of family life were among the responsibilities of local leaders in the hierarchy of 'traditional power'. The regulos' capacity to guarantee the long term survival of his people was seen as the final test of his legitimacy. These two sources reinforced each other mutually during the colonial period. When the administrative source of power disappeared at independence, the regulos and the cabos were cut off from participation in the political system and the entire traditional hierarchy was prohibited from performing its former functions.

Today it is frequently argued that this was one of the main errors committed by Frelimo and that the abolition of the 'traditional power' system is one main reason behind the war and the alliance between the external forces of destabilisation and 'traditional power'. A very rough estimation is that there are between 10,000 and 20,000 families in Mozambique who belonged to the higher levels of 'traditional power' system. If they, as a social force, had joined the MNR, an organisation with substantial strength would have been created.

In Inhambane province the proper regulos are in very few cases directly involved in the local network of base commanders. The former cabos de terra are more involved and quite a number are presently living on the bases. There might be two reasons for this difference. On the one hand, the regulos were in general older than the cabos, and they may simply have been too old when the
MNR started its campaign to recruit people from the traditional power groups at the beginning of the 1980s. On the other hand, the regulos had generally a better economic situation and many of them managed to keep this relative wealth within their families and continue to live at a comparatively high standard. Thus, they reacted generally to the arrival of MNR commanders in the same way as the better off peasants — they left the area for a safer place to settle. The cabos, who lost more of their privileges, were possibly more vulnerable to feelings of vengeance when the opportunity was given through the emergence of banditry in their area.

These groups were available as informers on a local level and, according to individual ability, they have also been used to facilitate the recruitment process. So at this level destabilisation has created a conventional counter-revolutionary alliance between the former feudal-colonial rulers and the marginalised lumpen-proletariat. During the MNR's initial penetration period in Inhambane Province, the most important local people to be recruited were the curandeiros and feticeiros (witch doctors). It was not until later, when the power of the local curandeiros had proved insufficient to protect the provincial base from destruction by the FPLM, that the cabos were more actively searched for because they were considered the only ones who could communicate on speaking terms with the local ancestors (in order to get their protection).

Basically, if the pseudo-guerilla movement, MNR, had not been introduced into the area, there would have been none of what we have seen evolving; there might have been some local gangs of brigands, outlawed people and maybe some outbursts of social banditry, but nothing like the devastation we have seen. Local MNR commanders have obviously shown a great ability to use local contradictions in their efforts to penetrate new areas.

**Prospects for Reconciliation**

Since this is a war of destabilisation, a special kind of war, to end the war will also need some special attention. A peace settlement is not a simple winner and loser's zero-sum game: there is no need for victors. The objective of the war will be fulfilled as soon as the sought for policy changes are implemented and considered irreversible. Different actors in and around this war have different views on when these desired changes have or will become irreversible. Too extreme a destabilisation might be considered counter-productive by actors desiring changes not involving the total destruction of Mozambican society. The negotiations of the last two years are marked by two features: the contradictions inherent in any organisation pretending to be what it is not and the contradictions in the political environment surrounding the pseudo-guerilla movement in which no consensus exists regarding when destabilisation ought to end.

Thus, there are two parallel processes going on. One is taking place within the framework of the covert operation of destabilisation and its catalyst — the
pseudo-guerilla MNR. The other process is that of the political, economic and social changes that destabilisation has generated in Mozambique. This reconstruction of Mozambican society as a corollary of these changes must not be confused with the negotiations in Rome which belong to the other sphere. 'Reconciliation' is not taking place in Rome, it is the process in which the Mozambican society is re-moulded post-destabilisation to suit post-apartheid southern Africa. It is in this part of the peace process that the risks for another war must be halted.

Most people involved in the destabilisation of Mozambique seem to be of the opinion that the desired changes are now irreversible. Political changes at the global level are also securing destabilisation's effects. However, even the main protagonists within the system may not be in the position to, or have the capacity, to benefit from the political changes; they may have to be approached in another way. The construction of the successful pseudo-guerilla movement and its end, requires an option in which no one loses face. Offers from the Mozambican government have not yet been satisfactory in spite of the fact that other destabilisation forces, i.e. the economic tendency, seem to have accepted that it is now time for peace. Yet no one from the economic tendency is represented in the negotiations; no Vilanculos, no Mahluza, no Massinga and no Rajabo da Costa.

It is in the other process of reconciliation where we will find the objective beneficiaries of destabilisation. The Frelimo policies for Mozambique's transformation in a socialist direction were obviously directed against capitalist activities inherited from the colonial period. Some Mozambicans who at independence saw a possibility to substitute the Portuguese as exploiters, were held back by the pursued policies of Frelimo. The contradictions between the socialist path of Frelimo and the potential 'new' exploiters then became acute.

The relationship between the state and 'traditional power' at a local level seems as if those from the 'traditional power' structure, who have been directly involved in the daily activities of the MNR in the countryside, are returning, within the framework of the law of amnesty. There are two reasons for this: one is that there is a greater openness among district administrators to consult these people with certain questions, mostly regarding land and residence; performance of their ceremonial function would not create the same response from local authorities it would have done ten years ago. The other reason is that the cabos and the curandeiros, who have been living on the bases for a number of years, are beginning to realise that this will not bring them anything. An aged former cabo de terra in the remote interior of Inhambane Province will not be a celebrated victor in a peace settlement. But in the process of reconciliation with Frelimo, new local state organs might contain representation from the traditional power segment which will allow them to regain a certain role in society.

'Reconciliation' is taking place in the day to day reality of Mozambican society and not in formal negotiations between two, seemingly belligerents. 'Recon-
The economic and social disruption following this war is in itself a source of social tension which might trigger off endemic violence, both in the countryside and in urban areas. A conventional peace settlement with a 'winner-take-all' mentality, will not manage to handle the new economic and social reality to avoid a future real peasant based class war. Such a war will be directed against the new societal order, which the beneficiaries of the destabilisation is presently creating — a ferocious capitalism. Those insisting on a continuation of the destabilisation process are sowing the dragon's teeth which, in due time, will turn against the sower.

The Second Transformation

During the course of the war we identified two key turning points in which the political and social content have changed. The first was when the pseudo-terrorist concept were developed and transformed into a pseudo-guerilla organisation. This qualitative step had already been taken in part by ex-Portuguese settlers in Rhodesia, but was skilfully developed and improved when it was moved to South Africa after independence in Rhodesia in 1980. This process of transformation fundamentally changed the social base of the banditry; it internalized it, but not as politically motivated military force, but a socio-economic and psycho-social process which fostered the development of violent structures in the behaviour of certain strata of the rural population.

The continuing impoverishment of the countryside has then provided an autodynamic for the war and has created a huge rural 'lumpen-proletariat' which constitutes the backbone around which other marginalised groups vulnerable to the option of survival through armed robbery coalesce. This process fostered conditions for the second turning point, the institutionalisation of banditry as a new and 'necessary' form of criminality. As the commanders withdraw, the economic, social and psychological effects of the war remain in place and is becoming a long term socio-economic problem which has to be countered by socio-economic means, not military or other repressive strategies. It is the poorest segments of the rural population who stay longer with the bandits and who have greater difficulty in defending themselves; that even without the MNR and its external backers, hundreds of thousands of people will have robbery and looting as their only means of survival.
Strategy for the Peasants

The original population around district towns and other urban or semi-urban centres have suffered less from the war than the rural population. They can be seen as one of the victors in the war in the sense that they have managed to maintain the conditions and material capacity to respond to increasing demands for transport, commerce and local food production which is emerging out of the war situation. Furthermore, they are surrounded by the deslocados which constitutes an extremely cheap labour force. The fact that this proletarianized force have their roots in the better off peasantry and artisans constitutes a particular threat against a rapid restitution of Mozambican self-sufficiency in food production. My investigations show that this group was better equipped with farming implements, had better access to highly productive land and had, in general, higher education than people who were categorized as recuperados. The destruction of their potential for production will retard the necessary broad increase in food production.

Furthermore, there are people still living in remote areas or in areas influenced by the MNR who are at the absolute brink of destruction; large groups of people living an errant life, sleeping in the trees and cultivating scattered plots of less than 25 square metres in order to escape looting from armed forces. Cloth has not been available for many years and wooden sticks serve as farming implements. But now there is a new rift between the fast growth in urban and semi-urban areas and the absolute poverty 15 km away. Across this rift the tensions will grow to acute contradictions, a real class war where the losers will confront the victors — the growing class of entrepreneurs and small capitalists. The ‘wretched of the earth’, in Fanon words, are back on stage, but this time fighting an internal enemy, not a colonial one. This will be a peasants war for survival.

It seems to me as if most of the international organisations, as well as the Mozambican government, do not consider this perspective, in project planning. On the contrary, it seems most aid money is concentrated in Maputo and the central institutions. The state’s investment in the agricultural sector is extremely biased towards the southern part of the country and to irrigation schemes of varying sizes. If and when resources are allocated outside of Maputo, they rarely reach the poorest of the poor in the district capitals, thus reinforcing the rift and increasing the risks for a continuation of the destabilisation. Without a clear peasant-based development strategy, or without the means to implement one, the government may not be able to handle the situation without repressive methods, which may replace efforts of economic development. Many international organisations will have to share responsibility for this if they do not take steps to develop a realistic peasant-based strategy for rural development.

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People's Education and 'Nation Building' for a New South Africa

Stephen Randall

My purpose in this article is to restate the continuing relevance of 'people's education' as a necessary mobilising dynamic in the project of social emancipation in South Africa today. The notion of 'salvaging' the concept of people's education implies that it is in process of being discarded, made over into something new having served its provisional utility. I want to suggest that this is indeed how people's education is now being viewed and that this perception is premature, even inappropriate.

My concerns are threefold: that the transformatory potential of education is being replaced with a 'skills' paradigm; that as a consequence of this and other factors, the mobilising element of people's education is in danger of being usurped by its converse — a demobilising or immobilising of the movement; and — related to this latter vis-a-vis the requirements of 'nation-building' in a land despoiled by the ravages of apartheid — that this skills-based notion of national development is misconstrued.

People's Education — The Forward March Halted?

A number of commentators have observed how the new political climate ushered in by the release from prison of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of formerly 'illegal' political groupings has necessitated a reorientation on the part of the liberation movement from resistance politics to preparing to govern (Cloete and Muller, 1990; Cloete, Muller, Taylor, 1990; Taylor, 1990; Levin, 1991; Cherrett, 1990; Wolpe, 1991; Kallaway, 1991). These same observers have likewise meditated on what this new role means for the education struggle. Levin (1991) has encapsulated their collective concerns thus:

A particular danger is that the processes stimulating the development of People's Education have been dissipated. People's Education now runs the risk of being divorced from its mass base and becoming a problem for experts to solve... A major consequence of De Klerk's February 2nd reforms has been the reconstruction of the relationship between the state and civil society. In the context of the pre-De Klerk era of repression the state/people dichotomy led to the merging of civic and political issues... Increasingly, civic issues are viewed as those pertaining to local 'bread and butter' issues, while 'political' issues are seen as those relating to the national political level, such as the negotiation of a new constitution, the demand for a constituent assembly and so on.
In this transition phase the role of the mass democratic movement has been reduced to that of stage army whilst the negotiators — the technocrats and experts — take centre stage. This process has run in tandem with the winding down of struggle on the educational front and has in turn quickened this process. The de-mobilisation of the education movement may be gauged if we measure the founding principles of people’s education against the educational policy prescriptions — albeit tentative and in draft version — now emanating from the main players in the education lobby.

The first national consultative conference on education on 28-29 December 1985 at the Witwatersrand University and organised by the Soweto Parents’ Crisis Committee (SPCC), defined People’s Education as that which enables the oppressed to understand the evils of apartheid and prepares them for participation in a non-racial, democratic system; and which eliminates capitalist norms of competition and individualism... and encourages collective input and participation by all, as well as stimulating critical thinking.

Five years later Gerrit Viljoen, the then minister responsible for education and training, sought to appropriate the democratic component in People’s Education by emphasising the necessity of community participation in educational matters. A new-found convergence of concerns as regards educational interests now extends to the parameters — the precepts and prescriptions — with which educational issues are discussed. Thus a Joint Working Group of senior government ministers and leading figures in the opposition camp — including ANC and National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) representatives — has been established to explore the educational requirements of the future South Africa. One newspaper describes this development as a ‘Patriotic Front on Education’ (The Argus, 9 September 1991). The same paper rounds off its report of this gathering thus:

the JWG agreed that the social and educational plight of the marginalised youth (‘lost generation’) was a very serious problem. South Africa is, at least, shifting emphasis on academic education to technical training and this fresh approach could provide an answer to the ‘lost youth’.

Business said it clearly: ‘Empower them with technical skills to enable them to compete in the job market’. This instrumental approach to education, with its stress on vocational training to meet the skills needs of the market, echoes many of the themes in the government’s Educational Renewal Strategy document (1991). It likewise resonates with similar preoccupations in other quarters. Hence, according to Tony Morphet (1991), Bernie Fanaroff of the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa has put the need directly — ‘education and training must become a national obsession if we are to make any progress towards an economy which can grow and deliver benefits to the mass of the population’. In keeping with this skills-based conception of development various of the concerned actors in the field have established human resource development agencies or research units with a brief to elaborate policy mechanisms and procedures to facilitate this model of development.
The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), in a discussion paper on Human Resource Development for the Commonwealth Expert Group Meeting (COSATU, 1991), provides a useful survey of developments and organisations in this field incorporating the private as well as the state sector and including non-governmental organisations and political groupings. This ranges from the previously cited government Educational Renewal Strategy, together with its National Training Strategy, to the Private Sector Education Council which includes the major national employer organisations and its related Private Sector Initiative which is essentially a fund of 500 million rand over five years which will be used to meet educational needs. There are also private sector, ‘trusts’ like the Urban Foundation and the Education Foundation with a state awarded purse of 2 billion rand to be used for educational and other needs and to be administered through the Independent Development Trust. There is, of course also COSATU’s Human Resources Committee which has liaised with NUMSA’s ambitious Training Project. The ANC also sponsors a Centre for Development of Human Resources as well as its own Department of Manpower (sic) Development and has issued a discussion paper on educational goals by its education department. Finally, there is the National Educational Policy Initiative, a ‘think-tank’ commissioned by the NECC to investigate and devise models and options relevant to the needs of the community. This has been called by Morphet (1991) a ‘De Lange of the Left’.

This list is far from exhaustive — it does not, for instance, include the various international initiatives nor does it make mention of the multifarious community development and welfare networks on the ground. What it does indicate is that the main brokers are united in seeing ‘development’, and the role of education and training within that, as ‘the only game in town’. It also indicates a certain ‘tunnel-vision’ as to how this game is to be played out.

Development and Education

I am not saying here that the development needs of South Africa’s people will not be the over-riding imperative of any government inheriting the callous legacy of apartheid. The facts and figures of such an inheritance will be known to the readers of this journal but let me rehearse some of them in order to give a context to the next stage of the discussion. Using figures culled from various researchers (Cherrett, 1990; Unterhalter, 1990, 1991; Chisholm, 1991; Pillay, 1991) we can build a profile of the ‘educational damage’ done to South Africa’s population. In South Africa today 60 per cent of those under 30 are not engaged in formal employment and most of those have never been so on a regular basis; 64.4 per cent of the black population are functionally illiterate and, as Chisholm notes, ‘what is startling about this figure, is that the highest number of illiterates occur within the generation schooled by apartheid, those between the ages of 16 and 34’. Of those at work, 66 per cent have not gone beyond primary education. There is a pool of unskilled labour (7.5 million) chasing 1.5 million jobs. At the other end of the labour market one-third of 1.8
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million managerial and professional posts are unfilled owing to a skills shortage. Related to this shortage of higher level personnel is a staggeringly high failure rate of black students, a legacy of decades of ‘Bantu’ mis-education, at both school and university.

Black students are grossly under-represented at the tertiary level compared with whites. For example, whites account for the vast majority of those receiving technical education, with only 2.6 African university students per thousand head of population compared with 31.1 white university students per thousand head of population. This segmentation of educational and skills provision along racial lines is illustrated when we realise that estimates put the shortage of qualified chartered accountants at more than 7,000 by the turn of the century and that in 1989, out of the 12,000 qualified chartered accountants, only 25 were African. Figures for the same year list blacks as constituting 3.8% of all engineers, 10.9% of all scientists, 12.5% of all technicians and technologists, 11.8% of accountants and auditors and 6.7% of all administrative occupations. Against this imbalance and mismatch of skills needs is an economy in serious decline with a decelerating growth rate and a formal sector which is seeking to become more capital intensive, concentrating on technological innovations and so unlikely to provide an employment base for South Africa’s population. Little wonder, then, that development is a ‘national obsession’.

It is traditionally supposed that a nation’s development is determined by the rate of growth of its GDP and that the role of its human resources in this process is to lubricate the levers and mechanisms of the market to facilitate this output. In this world view, education is seen as a component, even a precondition of development (in particular non-formal education (NFE) which is thought to be cheap, effective — at the level of basic skills — and, because non-institutionalised, endlessly adaptable, is seen as being appropriate to under-developed countries with remote and rural populations). In the words of Carmen (1992):

NFE came to be appreciated by the economists of education as soon as it became clear that planning and development of formal education was unable, as originally expected, to ‘provide’ for the world’s educational needs.

Elsewhere in the same article he comments:

The problem, as I see it, is that education has sold its soul to economics and while like Faust, it may have gained the world (the World Bank in this case) in the process it has lost any claim on being a builder of identity, autonomy and self-reliance which are the soul of both development and education.

This turn to a ‘technicist’ (or instrumental) sooner than ‘political’ definition of education and its role in society quickens the perception that People’s Education is no longer relevant. It is said that the agitation in the classrooms has eroded the ‘culture of learning’ (hence the drastically low performance rates of black pupils) and that ‘the struggle is no substitute for study’. The notion is
gathering ground that People's Education has failed the community by turning its students into 'failures', thereby the reorientation to more orthodox educational strategies as a means of upliftment. This is the significance of the gathering of concerned parents in Soweto in January 1990.

Who (sic) is People's Education?
The argument in defence of People's Education is that if it has not 'delivered the goods' it is due to state repression. Others (Levin, 1991; Nasson, 1991) suggest that this is due in equal measure to a 'conceptual imprecision' at the heart of People's Education: it has proven unable to sustain the commitment of the people because they were unable to embrace its full implications and were unable to do this because of a lack of clarity on the part of its proponents. The prescriptions for People's Education were neither sufficiently developed nor sufficiently precise. Hence it was not sufficiently emphasised that education cannot compensate for society. In the face of the depressing examination results of 1989, the slogan 'People's Education' descended ignominiously, from a panacea to a platitude. Having invested unwarranted faith in the term's magical powers as a catalyst, the parents of Soweto, first disorientated then demoralised, became educational apostates. This conceptual confusion became political confusion.

George Mashamba (1991) has praised this conceptual fluidity inhering in People's Education as a tactical mechanism for retaining its continuing mobilising power as a slogan. Yet we see that it has foundered on the reefs of ambiguity. In moments of crises of legitimacy the ruling powers exercise a unifying language, deploying terms which can mean all things to all people. Thus it should come as no surprise that certain aspects of popular education are now being championed by the likes of former Minister of Education & Development Aid, Gerrit Viljoen (1991):

In terms of the basic terminology of 'People's Education', there are also positive aspects which has (sic) been part of our approach and which should be further emphasised and given effect. People should participate in the government of education. Parents and the community should be allowed to take part at local and regional level and have a meaningful share.

When the demand, 'People's Education for People's Power' was raised in 1986 this was viewed as an appropriate tactical emblem. Mashamba appears to suggest that when the expressions people, education, power are elided in this way they transcend their formal limitations and come to reflect the necessary stages of the social struggle (Mashamba, 1991). He seems to imply that terminological exactitude results in a kind of reification of the struggle and its co-option by a professional caste of theoreticians. In his view, reflecting the struggle in this matter is not to be equated with a short-sighted 'populism' but is a kind of keeping close to the needs of the people. Levin (1991) counters that the contradictions in any given set of terms must be meticulously unpacked or they will simply be stalled, waiting to erupt at a later date. This seems to be
what happened to the education movement in Soweto between 1985 — 1990.

The different interests of the different social groupings — teachers, parents, student cadres, white and black middle-classes — previously cloaked by the catch-all phrase 'the people', burst forth with the advent, overnight, of a civil as opposed to solely political terrain, consequent upon the realignment of forces engendered by the 'new dispensation' of the De Klerk regime. Far from such elasticity signalling a faithfulness to the working out of social interests and processes this 'theoretical indeterminacy' has served only to postpone them, ushering in the 'return of the repressed'.

Harold Wolpe has refined and focused the issues by honing them down to 'Three Theses on People's Education'. These are that a) education plays the fundamental role in the structuring of social stratification; b) education is a chief instrument of social reproduction or perpetuation of class and race hierarchies; c) the relationship between education and society is not functional in an unproblematic way but, like society, is contradictory and dependent upon the concrete conjuncture at a given time; it is not universally given but is always being contested or, at least, open to contestation. The implications for People's Education are obvious.

The first thesis, Wolpe contends, results in a fatalistic adaptation to the inevitability of education as the primary change-agent in society. The second thesis leads to the dismissal of education and learning strategies as a tool of social domination. The third thesis argues that education is a site of struggle and any alternative education system must be contestatory — rather than adaptive — and transformatory, linking educational change with social change. It is suggested that with the demise of the schools' boycott movement, and with the grassroots campaigns grounded by the negotiating stage, that the communities have reverted to thesis one. That is, the people have resigned themselves to the overwhelming reality of an 'inevitable' education system as the only available mechanism of social advance.

Education is once again self-referential and divorced from the struggle for social emancipation. The inclusion of new syllabi, texts and teaching strategies gives this process an alternative gloss. Witness the statement by Gerrit Viljoen. But, laments Wolpe, curriculum development is a technical and professional matter when not negotiated through the imperatives of the social collective. It is not just that this curriculum development remains the preserve of the professional classes and thus, managerially supervised; it is that 'they have not been linked to political structures and objectives in a way which would ensure their transformatory role'. Wolpe (1991) concludes:

*it is essential to recognise that People's Education is not a theoretical concept capable of being refined and made ever more rigorous by means of a process of theoretical abstraction. On the contrary, People's Education expresses an ideological and political conception of what the function and functioning of education should be in a democratic society.*

This notion of People's Education as a political programme, whose curricu-
lum is framed by the political and community organisations of the ‘mass movement’, is challenged by Cloete et al. Whilst not disputing the principle, nor denying its ‘general usefulness’, they maintain that it is inadequate to address the actual, concrete social processes animating the education discourse. They counterpoise to Wolpe’s ‘ideological’ conception of education their own concrete analysis of the social formation, thus revealing how the trajectory of People’s Education evolved as it did.

We have seen how the homogeneous ‘people’ as a united front against the exclusively racial state was a political imperative whilst remaining conceptually insufficient. However, with the ‘prising open’ of ‘civil society’ as a result of the post February 2nd dispensation, the rubric, the ‘people vs the state’, became too confining as an analytical tool and needed to be made both broader and more specific. We saw earlier how this ‘populist’ notion of the people had the effect of obscuring the class locations of the various agents and constituencies grouped under that heading. Cloete and friends (1990a) wish to take the narrative along a particular path, to wit:

the strategic implications that follow from the emergence of a distinction between offensive and reconstructive movement, needs and means, and to understand what strategic opportunities and risks follow when the tension between the two begins to prise open civil society.

Thus we discover that amongst ‘the people’ there are greater and lesser needs — beyond the ‘need’ to vote — with greater and lesser means for addressing these needs. Their ministrations have served to explode — implode? — the myth of the ‘people’ and the impossibility of staving off indefinitely the working out of the social processes contained within such ascriptions. I now propose to do the same for the term ‘education’.

Education — the ‘Official’ Model

Behind and before any pedagogy is politics — the hidden curriculum. Andy Green (1982), here paraphrasing Farukk Dhondy (1974), reminds us that

educational institutions [perform] ... certain functions for the state and for capital. The school is responsible for skilling, grading, childminding and socialising pupils into acceptance of their role in the labour hierarchy.

Schools both ‘train up’ tomorrow’s managers, supervisors and functionaries, and ‘cool out’ or prepare the losers in life’s lottery to accept the fall-out from a stratified pecking order as both inevitable and fair. Hopper (1958) and Turner (1971) have both demonstrated how the ‘meritocratisation’ of the learning process inoculates the social body against an otherwise ‘pathogenic’ condition by presenting the credentialing element of education as a neutral allocator of life-chances. If People’s Education is, ultimately, ‘an ideological and political conception’ as Wolpe tells us, then, it is argued, so is education in any and all of its guises. Countless authors have demonstrated the ways in which meritocratically-led education serves to legitimise the hierarchisation of life-
chances and rewards in an already socially-stratified world

This 'meritocratisation' of education results in a privatisation of learning whereby the individual is rewarded with upward mobility for his or her individual endeavours and is unlikely to prove commensurate to the structural tasks involved in wholesale social regeneration. But to paraphrase Paulo Freire, the proper uses of education in a development context are to develop the whole people, not to reward or advance the individual. Where formal education serves as a sorting system, selecting certain individuals for advancement whilst leaving the rest where they are is designed to produce and justify an elite. In opposition to this ideology of meritocracy is counterpoised that of democracy with its concomitant associations of the social collective and social need: pedagogy is politics. It may be, as Wolpe points out in his third thesis, that education is both functional and potentially dysfunctional. It is certainly, as we have demonstrated, supremely ideological.

Adrian Blunt's paper, 'Education, Learning and Development, Evolving Concepts' (1988) talks of western models of education which, when transplanted to a developing country, create social and cultural inconsistencies. One consequence of such inconsistencies is the formation of a very small educated elite who command key positions in government, business and industry and who enjoy an urbanised, metropolitan lifestyle which is resourced by the labours of the rural poor. But it is not just the 'ideology' of formal education which militates against the interests and needs of the mass of the people; the delivery mechanisms, the structures and ethos of conventional knowledge — pursuit is likewise inappropriate. Thus in the schooling system there is no discrete, specific terminal goal which corresponds to each activity. Rather, learning is a long-term deferral, each activity being a trailer for the next, more abstract, stage. Each phase is little more than a protracted admissions test for the following stage. With usually inflexible age-specific entry and exit points, if a student misses these they miss out on all that has gone before or after. Similarly if a student 'drops out' then all efforts hitherto go unrecorded and so unacknowledged. There is a set pattern in a set sequence to which the student must mould. This endlessly preparatory and abstract or academic education neither equips with skills nor can it demonstrate its immediate applicability. Its main function — other than the 'reproductive' one described above — is as an initiation rite into a status — conferring brotherhood.

The Education 'Brotherhood'

This self-perpetuating 'brotherhood' is responsible for the phenomenon of urban drift whereby the successful ones mimic the metropolitan lifestyles of the West; they become, in effect, a class of 'mandarin drones' thus depopulating the regions of skilled human resources. The necessary corollary of this status-conferring ceremony is systemic and large-scale 'failure' which, in the context of a developing nation, also means large-scale waste. This western model of schooling is not just wasteful of human talent, but also of financial resources.
Hulme and Turner (1990) inform us that the cost of educating a pupil rises almost exponentially as they progress from primary to tertiary levels. But because most underdeveloped nations suffer a chronic shortage of higher and medium-level personnel, as in South Africa, governments are tempted to concentrate resources in the first instance on the tertiary sector. Yet, because of factors which should not need rehearsing, i.e. poverty, inadequate communications and other infrastructures, the rural poor, with disproportionately high school absence and drop-out rates, are not represented at this level. In the words of Barnard (1980),

the group entering higher education is bound to be largely made up of middle — and upper-class children. To subsidise education at this level out of federal government funds is therefore to transfer resources from the poor to those who need subsidies least.

But that is not all. The previously noted phenomenon of 'urban drift' serving as a 'transmission belt of talent from the towns to the cities' works at both a national and global level to take skilled graduates out of their countries in search of bigger rewards elsewhere. Thus, between 1984-1987, 30,000 graduates emigrated from the sub-Saharan countries (Times Higher Education Supplement, 19 July 1991). This, as other commentators have observed, represents a transfer of skills from the poorer to the wealthier nations. The educational policy-makers of South Africa might respond to the above alarms by stating that they are not working to a scholarly-academic but a skills and 'nation-building' paradigm. They might thus maintain that their educational vision is not a reproductive but a truly functional one. But is this development planning model in fact capable of delivering?

**The Skills Paradigm or 'The New Vocationalism'**

Hulme and Turner (1990) question such an approach, claiming that 'evidence indicates that high educational levels have not been a prerequisite for the onset of rapid economic growth'. They point out that universal primary education came to Great Britain a hundred years after the onset of the industrial revolution. They mention the phenomenon of 'educated unemployment' — a by-product of the 'diploma disease' whereby education becomes the pursuit of qualifications rather than the acquisition of skills. Similarly, Webster (1984) reminds us that educational criteria sometimes serve a 'guild' function in restricting rather than widening access to many professions. Webster points out that qualifications make people eligible for jobs but tell us nothing about their potential productivity or on-the-job proficiency. 'Education becomes obtaining qualifications in order to get a job rather than learning to do a job' (Hulme and Turner, 1990:134).

The argument is akin to the debate on whether skills-training of itself provides jobs. This intrusion of skills training into the educational sphere has an established if relatively recent pedigree in England where it is known as the 'new vocationalism'. It is interesting that De Lange's proposals for restructuring
education in South Africa carries echoes of the British Manpower Service Commission's (MSC) prescriptions for redressing the imbalance in skills deficits and labour market needs. The new vocationalism in Britain had its origins in the so-called 'Great Debate' on education initiated by the then Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan in an address given in 1976 at Ruskin College, Oxford. Here Callaghan called for a tighter fit between the production needs of the economy and the grade and composition of higher education graduates. It was the dramatic increase in unemployment, particularly youth unemployment with its attendant risks of social disaffection, which provided the motivation to act on Callaghan's nostrums, rather than any enlightened rationalisation on the part of Britain's employers. Hence in 1981, coinciding with large-scale rioting by inner-city youth in virtually all of England's major cities, the MSC announced its 'New Training Initiative'. In 1984 its themes were incorporated into a government white paper titled, 'Training for Jobs' an initiative which was not about skilling people for jobs so much as de-skilling the labour force so as to make it both more pliable and less valuable — that is, cheaper. It is instructive that soon after the introduction of the first in a long line of Youth Training Schemes, the industrial apprenticeship system was effectively discontinued. Similarly, the Industrial Training Boards which exacted a training levy from the big employers and on which the trade unions had a significant voice, were reduced from 16 to 7. Examining the youth training 'syllabus', the students are instructed into cultivating transferable 'generic' skills rather than being offered precise and specific actual competence; hence it is a process of de-skilling rather than re-skilling. As well as socialising a generation of young people who would otherwise not experience the labour-discipline of work — there being no jobs for them — these 'training schemes' serve to keep wage levels down (which employer would offer a wage to a young worker when they were paid by the government to offer them work experience placements?). In addition, they enable the politician accountable to an electorate to claim that they are 'doing something about unemployment'.

The fact is that it is not training which provides jobs but, rather, the structural requirements of the market which determine what jobs, and at what pace, are needed. The deficit model of training whereby the individual is perceived as lacking the desired skills, puts the cart before the horse — it is the market which is defective. Employer-led, and, therefore, market-regulated skills training has not worked in Britain. Employers view training as a cost rather than an investment. Remarking on how vocational training schemes in the western world tend to take the form of state-led pre-service work preparation rather than in-service training linked to employer sponsorship, Bennell and Swainson (1990) comment on how the ideologues of market-led training schemes cannot furnish empirical evidence of either employer efficacy nor sincerity of intention in this endeavour. These various training schemes constitute a dirigisme executed in the name of free enterprise so as to camouflage the fact that, left to itself, the free market would not deliver.
According to the *Times Educational Supplement* of 24 January 1992: ‘The South African Chamber of Business predicted that only about 7 per cent of black school-leavers would find jobs immediately in the formal sector’. This ‘new vocationalism’ has been called a ‘new corporatism’ or ‘new monetarism’:

*ET represents this new corporatism in its early stage. It intends both the de-regulation and the incorporation of labour, both horizontal (market) and vertical (polito-legal) segregation of the class. In the new monetarism we have a workforce, in the form of trainees, which is at once free and subsidised; a market-led economy where prices float but where income is legally divorced from the powers of bargaining; a labour force without labour power; an economics brutally extracted from politics* (Usher, 1990).

**Redefining Skills**

This situation is not just ‘domesticating’ in terms of class confrontation; it is also supposed that it nullifies a critical, reflective consciousness. Morphet (1983) contrasts skills/training and knowledge/learning. He argues that the former is functional and systemic, the latter ‘processual’ and analytic or reflective — the one a ‘managed event’ ending in a ‘closure’; the other open ended and resulting in an opening out. One is measured behaviourally, the other attitudinally. Morphet says:

*As formal education yields ground to systems theory in learning so the processes of enquiry based on the problematising of given understanding and knowledge lose their force . . . The stress falls instead on demonstration, performance and the fulfilment of demands as they are set by the system. The suppression of the enquiry process carries with it the implication that any individual questioning by a ‘deviant’ within the learning system must emerge as something anarchic and personal. The destiny of the learner is in adjustment to what is established — the possibility of alternatives both personal and social is excluded.*

Morphet is of the opinion that this skills/training paradigm is a new orthodoxy in South Africa, making a ‘tool’ of the subject rather than a self-agent, and is promoted with equal vigour by both the English business establishment and the ‘enlightened’ Afrikaners. He concludes by saying that, as progressive educators

*we have to accept the responsibility of catering to the need for the rapid acquisition of marketable skills, but we have at the same time, as educators and not trainers, to problematise that particular need . . . The survival of our students in the condition of the market is important but more important still is their ability to conceive of themselves and their society in terms other than those provided by the market.*

But Morphet is operating with a somewhat ‘luxurious’ notion of the emancipating powers of conceptual thought. In a world where capital rules and the amount of capital in one’s possession will determine one’s life choices and life chances then the only tangible power is purchasing power. Such power is attendant upon the acquisition of a marketable skill. In any event, rather than counterpoise skills — vocational or otherwise — against analytic reasoning,
thus reinforcing the divide between mental and manual work, Morphet
should seek to re-appropriate the term; he has made a categorical error.

In the early 19th century the British labour movement raised the slogan ‘really
useful knowledge’ as a rallying cry against the introduction, by the local em-
ployers, of mechanics institutes which equipped the workers with rudimen-
tary technical and functional skills that they may become more efficient opera-
tors of the new productive processes. What was of more relevance to a newly
emerging labour movement, it was thought, was a curriculum that spoke to
their experience and included critical reflection, skills of civic participation
and alternative economic analysis. Another slogan of the time was ‘knowl-
edge is power’. In the late 20th century knowledge is still rightly viewed as an
indispensable element in the process of empowerment, but the concept of rel-
evance has been adjusted somewhat. Stuart Hall (1983) comments thus:

The fact is that the very counterpoising of ‘education’ against ‘vocationalism’ and of
‘skills’ against ‘education for its own sake’ are the only other ways of reinforcing the
existing social divisions, because these concepts are already inscribed and imprinted
within it. It is the productive system under capitalism which gave education the task of
reproducing the divisions in the first place.

As the Development Task Force Report, drawn up by Cherrett and Hardy
(1990) at the request of the South Africa Namibia Project (SANAM, 1990:6)
suggests, a ‘nation’ cannot simply be declared — it is constituted of and by its
people — however carefully defined — and must command their allegiance:

The majority population in South Africa has had a deeply negative experience of gov-
ernment delivery — whether from the National Party or the ‘homeland’ puppet struc-
tures. They may easily and quickly turn against a new government that fails to fulfill
expectations. In Zimbabwe or Mozambique we can see that even a liberation movement
enjoying apparently unlimited power has only a limited period of grace. A post-apart-
heid government in South Africa will have a restricted window of opportunity in which
to secure the support of the population around development. The first five years will be
critical.

In the context of Cloete’s (et al) ‘opposition-to-construction, needs-and-
means’ scenario, and given the timetable above, then this observation from
the same document becomes more pressing:

The experience of many communities has been restricted to one of mobilisation around
purely political questions rather than organisation around tighter productive or devel-
opmental ends. And those economic/developmental initiatives that did take root have
often been ineffective and, in the end, demoralising. The lack of skills and experience in
the community around organisational development and management, coupled with the
difficult context of repression, has meant that there have been few enduring develop-
ment successes from this period. Many community organisations are now making an
urgent appeal for resources to train and develop people in the community in organisa-
tional and development skills.
In short, progressive educators must argue for an emphasis on skills — albeit of a wider application — for the most pragmatic of reasons.

The State Agenda

This, perhaps, is a starting point and may go some way to addressing Morphet’s apprehensions about the exaggerated functionalism — to refer to Wolpe’s first thesis — of such educational provision. The greater danger, however, is that the skills training offered will remain an entirely ‘managed event’ and that there will be a two-tier rather than dual-track education system. Indeed Nasson, (1991) in a searching critique of supposed education reform in South Africa, detects just such an agenda. Dissecting the De Lange Report’s prescriptions for equal opportunity he detects the introduction of a structured differentiation in a ‘post-apartheid’ schooling. Thus there will be nine years of compulsory education for all, the first six of which shall be schools-based and fully subsidised; the succeeding three years shall be academic or vocationally orientated, the first part-subsidised by the state and the latter resourced primarily by the corporate sector. Nasson points out how this is a South African version of the ‘minimal state’ of Thatcherism whereby the state becomes the regulator rather than provider of services. For instance, it is supposed that the formal academic provision will be topped-up by parental contributions to ensure ‘quality’ performance in relation to the standardised and, therefore an ‘equitable’ base-line:

The implications are ominous. What the De Lange reforms deliver is an educational system structured by social privilege and grossly unequal income distribution. Middle-class communities will enjoy selective access to partially subsidised formal secondary schooling, while poor working-class children will be shunted into heavily subsidised, narrow vocational and technical training, financed directly by market interests. For the children of urban elites there is expensive schooling in facilities endowed by levies and funding from wealthier communities and individual parents. For the children of the poor, the pickings are very much leaner, as they find themselves liable for streaming into technical or ‘career-oriented’ education from the tender age of twelve (Nasson, 1990).

Nasson comments on this ‘structured inequality’:

Instead of apartheid being regarded as the determinant of educational inequality, unequal inputs and outcomes may be justified on the grounds that they are a consequence of individual market exchange and voluntaristic stimulus.

Whilst being right in details Nasson is wrong on this last point. Apartheid is still to be the chief determinant of inequalities as the caretaker state seeks to construct foundation stones of continuing racial privilege as its last act, prior to the enforced throwing in of the towel. This is the significance of white education minister Piet Marais’ announcement in the week leading up to the Pochefstroom by-election of 27 February 1992. Four thousand white teachers were issued with redundancy notices as R620 million was cut from the white education budget to help resource the ‘standardising’ or universalising of
educational provision across the 'races'. At the same time, Marais held out a series of 'carrots' and 'sticks' designed to induce schools to become self-governing. Quite why a government professedly committed to the dismantling of apartheid, should seek to sack 4,000 teachers rather than transferring them to those schools where a quarter of a million black children are without qualified instruction is puzzling. Of course schools which are consumer rather than producer-led will have an instrumental, rather than scholastic conception of education. 'Standards' will be assessed in terms of pass rates sooner than the quality of learning, as is the case in Britain where the Tory government is seeking to oblige schools to publish yearly test results in their local press, thus instituting a 'league table' of schools' performance. This is the 'diploma disease' run amok and its purpose is to reinforce a competitive and conformist rather than solidaristic and critical 'learning' culture.

Looking remarkably like the 'opt out' system introduced in England with the Education Reform Bill of 1988, these parent-run schools would be free to decide on things like schools admissions policies, hiring and firing of staff, budgeting matters and curriculum options. The higher the student intake the lower the per capita school fee: thus there would be an incentive to permit children from other 'groups' where there was a likelihood of low student enrolment. The corollary, of course, is that a parentally-governed school in a white area might opt to charge higher fees as the price for remaining 'white'. In the words of the Weekly Mail of 21 February 1992: 'Read Piet's lips: if you pay up, your school stays white'.

Conclusion

What does all of this mean for salvaging People's Education? I have demonstrated how formal, academically constructed knowledge results in an elite-producing process and serves as gatekeeper to this elite brotherhood. Likewise, I have sought to show that the vocational skills model of development — particularly when implemented via the open market — is misplaced and cannot put people in productive work if the imperatives of the domestic and global economy disallow it. Moreover, such skills-based 'nation-building' has served primarily to reconstitute and so domesticate an otherwise disaffected working class — in particular its youth fraction. However, in its more benevolent manifestation of 'vocational progressivism' it has gone some way to counter the complacency of the scholarship model of education and reintroduced notions of relevance and empowerment into the educational policy debate.

As well as investigating these varying definitions of education, I also queried (with the aid of Cloete et al) the reliability of the notion of 'the people' and concluded that with the creeping metamorphosis of 'people' into 'citizens', this term had all but forfeited its meaning. It disguised as much as it disclosed and so was in need of revaluation, if only for tactical reasons. On this note we begin to reconceptualise or reframe the terms of the debate.
If the demands and directives of formal education are perceived as being inappropriate to the developing nations, then learning as a non-formal and continuous pastime is to replace it. Blunt refers to the Faure report (1972) which declared learning to be 'a more fundamental intellectual discipline than education, and that it ought to be established as an independent field of study' (Blunt, 1988:46). Researchers, according to Blunt, now talk of 'global learning' in opposition to the meritocratically-led educational instruction which is premised on the individual development of the privatised agent. This they characterise as the 'consideration of the learner within the total socio-cultural context of family and community' (1988:46). We are informed that the United Nations University of Tokyo has adopted the concept of global learning in its mission statement defining this as 'the need for developing not only the individual's capacity and opportunity for learning but also the learning capacity of social groups, institutions and even societies' (Ploman, 1985 as quoted by Blunt, 1988).

Yet even this 'sea-change' is not enough for some contributors to the debate. Pramod Parajuli, a Nepalese adult educator who has worked with grassroots community groups in his country claims that non-formal education, along with the human resources model of development, is a domesticating strategy which seeks to draw the 'revolutionary sting' from the plebeian impulse behind genuine, popular educational mobilisation (Prajuli, 1986:36). The former, he maintains, adopts a 'deficiency' model of third world peoples which emphasises changes in values and attitudes (on the part of individuals) sooner than challenging the structural balance of power implicit in the global distribution of resources:

Non-formal education deliberately eliminated from its agenda the elements of social change and social transformation. Instead of addressing the socio-structural problems the oppressed were facing, it blamed them for being psychologically deficient.

Parajuli says that critical literacy programmes conceived as problem-solving methodologies but devoid of political content can be used equally effectively for domestication sooner than emancipation and will not be able to generate 'transformative' social actions (1986:37). He poses the question: are these initiatives simply alternative classroom pedagogies or are they part of the broader critique of society? Transcending 'input-output calculations' this counter-discourse questions the economics of a development which sees subjects as capital stock and an abstract nation-building that does not build from the actual community base upwards. Parajuli, likewise, maintains that the popular subject 'is not an individual entity, but a collective one. It is formed of collective social actors, that is, groups which share a collective will and social force, and are motivated to intervene in history' (1986:35). This is reminiscent of E P Thompson's 'recuperation' of the eighteenth and nineteenth century English working class as 'self-agents' making their world. It also brings us back to the notion of popular education as 'global learning', whose curriculum is rooted in and grows out of the needs of family and community. Non-
formal education, in order to make agents of subjects, must have both an 'autonomising' and a transformative dimension. Popular education, insists Parajuli, is a critique of non-formal education and is simultaneously a counter-discourse in development theory.

If education is viewed as being the catalyst of national development, providing for the economic performance needs of a country, then I view popular education as an activity that lays stress upon the problems and needs of people as starting points for learning — in particular, though not exclusively, of disadvantaged, deprived and powerless groups. It should increase people's capacity to discover, define, pursue and achieve common objectives, and in the process, to develop more confident relationships with one another and the outside world. It is thus about the development needs of communities and people rather than the structural requirements of the national economy. It is not curriculum-led; rather, the 'syllabus' is the lived realities of people's needs. In this context 'appropriacy' becomes a truer yardstick of educational usefulness than scholarly 'excellence'. Harrison (1980) illustrates how such a syllabus might look:

It would include: functional literacy and numeracy — the ability to read newspapers, read and write letters to authorities, keep simple accounts and do craft and farm measurements; skills and knowledge needed for work, on and off the farm — including new techniques to improve productivity; knowledge about improving family life — nutrition and child-care, family planning methods, health and sanitation; the development of a scientific, pragmatic, problem-solving outlook based on an elementary knowledge of the natural processes of one's home area; knowledge enabling people to take part in civic and political life, such as legal rights, what authorities to apply to for what and so on; and the development of a co-operative attitude and willingness to join with one's neighbours in the effort of community development.

Its structuring dynamic is not 'the discipline of the subject' but the act of problem-solving which enables people to effect change in their environment and so make them autonomous agents rather than passive ciphers. It enables its students to — in the words of Paolo Freire — 'read the world'. It is therefore necessarily 'autonomising' and transformatory.

It has been stated that the crisis facing a post-apartheid government will be that of demand versus capacity. The ability to re-allocate resources across the board on the part of a regime which has negotiated power rather than taken it will be greatly circumscribed. There will be structural and resource constraints coupled with suspicion from the private and corporate sector. Additionally there will be difficulty in selling the notion of 'deferred gratification' to a mass population that feels itself to have waited too long already for their moment in the sun.

The urban classes, with their network of professional associations and contacts, likewise the employed workforce in trades unions, will be able to lobby and petition for a share of whatever resources are to be made available. But
the dispossessed and excluded 65% — those who comprise the shanty-town and township dwellers, the unemployed and unskilled youth, the 'homeland' denizens — may be shut out — voiceless and with no way of staking their claim. If these communities are not to remain disaffected then we must broaden the notion of skills to include community development skills which will enable them to identify and address their needs whether these be negotiating and lobbying tactics or the pooled husbanding and marketing of local resources.

The Development Task Force report of 1990 which maintains that such skills of community advocacy and self-help are different in kind from the mobilising skills acquired in the years of struggle, puts it thus:

*One key to effective development mechanisms is the encouragement of the population to act for themselves. Above all the creation of social movements amongst the unorganised, the dispossessed is key. The 65 per cent of the population that is either rural, illiterate or unemployed must organise if their needs and priorities are to become part of a National Agenda.*

In this way the non-metropolitan populations will be self-reliant and pro-active whilst remaining involved in the debate about their country's future and direction. Such community advocacy skills are at least as crucial, and perhaps more relevant in the transition years, than vocational training.

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**Editor's Note**

Due to lack of space, we are not able to carry Randal's entire Bibliography, but it is available from the ROAPE office.

**Bibliographic Note**


A Tribute to Amílcar Cabral,
12 September 1924 — 20 January 1973

ROAPE's decision to mark the twentieth anniversary of the murder of Amílcar Cabral reflects the view that this is an opportune time to consider his achievements and the relevance of both his thought and practice — especially regarding events that are unfolding in Africa today. The contributions from Basil Davidson, Shubi Ishemo and Lars Rudebeck each provide a stimulating analysis that covers enormous ground but hardly overlaps at all.

One enduring relevance of the life of Cabral and of the struggle of the PAIGC (Partido Africano Pela Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde) is its very success. When the Portuguese responded to a peaceful wage protest on 3 August 1959 by killing fifty dock workers, it must have been inconceivable to the survivors of Pijiguiti Quay that within sixteen years Bissau would be theirs —
after defeating a 70,000 strong NATO supplied colonial army. These historical moments need, especially now, to be remembered.

Cabral’s own writing continues to be an invaluable source of inspiration. This is not to suggest, and Cabral himself would have hated the suggestion, that his writing formed some great dogma — the conclusions of which should be obediently followed. What they do provide is an astonishing range of insight and analysis. For instance, environmentalists may discover in his work and in particular his essay on ‘The Utilisation of the Land in Africa’ (first published in the Boletime Cultural da Guiné and then in English in Ufuhamu, 1973), an early and possibly original analysis of the links between export oriented production and soil erosion. As Rudebeck points out, Cabral saw theory not as any end in itself but as a highly practical tool for understanding and changing the reality he faced which was one of armed colonial domination. Soil erosion was important because it affected agricultural production.

The role of women was important because their support was vital to the struggle. From as early as the PAIGC’s First Congress in 1964, it was agreed that at least two of the five person committee which would be elected to run each village should be women. Cabral’s commitment to women’s participation did not stop at playing a numbers game. In informal interviews which are published in Return to the Source and with discussions with PAIGC militants such as those interviewed by Stephanie Urdang, it was clear that there was a need to understand the more subtle differences of perception and work towards accommodating them. By the end of the war, women were beginning to put forward their own proposals and did not, in the main, seem to feel they were pushing against closed doors.

According to Mario de Andrade (founder member of the PAIGC), the greatest danger for socialist governments was the failure of communication between the governors and the governed. Cabral clearly gained increasing satisfaction from the results of popular participation in the politics of the revolution, particularly the two-way process of education which was happening as the revolutionary petty bourgeois lived amongst the peasantry and together they shared the joy and the relief of winning a war. It was this shared experience, in the forest, in war, this forging of a common purpose which created the image of the local bourgeoisie changing sides, committing suicide as a class, a concept which has always given more sedentary marxists conceptual headaches.

However, it is very important to note that Cabral was not simply assuming that all would work out smoothly. He was actively trying to build mass participation into the structures of the state that was being created and, more in interviews than in any major speeches, he appeared to be thinking increasingly of a very decentralised state. I remember one interview in which he suggested that ministries would be spread around the country and that there would be no traditional capital city.

Cabral’s written and recorded work is important both historically and as a
stimulus for creating new ideas. So also is his methodology, described in all the pieces which follow. It was a methodology which, for example, sought to understand ethnic differences through careful studies of how people live, and rather than hiding differences, sought ways for people to unite. It also made exhortations to ‘tell no lies, claim no easy victories’ which might appear banal but, if applied, gain real credibility for any political movement. Equally important in looking at Cabral’s achievements are the skills, in modern parlance, management skills developed during the struggle. As Basil Davidson records, the PAIGC’s ability to train cadres to overcome the warlordism of early years and successfully delegate authority, was vital to its success. In very different circumstances, such training and such delegation are central to any effort to launch a popular-based struggle today.

No direct parallels are being suggested. As Davidson points out, one of the advantages that the PAIGC had was an implacable enemy which left families no room for sitting on the fence. Many of the political struggles developing in Africa now offer far less simple options to the people around them. Cabral’s legacy is not a blueprint for these struggles. What is offered is a wonderful example of victory against the odds, a fountain of ideas, a way of approaching the problems that face us and the benefit of some very practical experience of how to organise.

Mike Powell

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Reading Cabral in 1993

Lars Rudebeck

Killing a Man but not his Work

In the evening of 20 January 1973, Amílcar Cabral was shot to death outside his house in Conakry, capital of the Republic of Guinea. Although acting in collusion with the Portuguese colonial forces, the murderer was in fact a member of the PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde), the liberation movement for Guinea-Bissau that Cabral himself had launched in September 1956, sixteen and a half years earlier, and which he had led since then with striking success up until the eve of independence and state sovereignty for Guinea-Bissau.

Twenty years after Cabral’s murder, his name is only rarely mentioned in the international media. His historical significance remains intact, however, not only as an outstanding leader of African decolonisation but also as a political thinker and strategist of unusual merits. Although originating and reaching
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the pieces which follow. It was a methodology which, for example, sought to
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Twenty years after Cabral’s murder, his name is only rarely mentioned in the
international media. His historical significance remains intact, however, not
only as an outstanding leader of African decolonisation but also as a political
thinker and strategist of unusual merits. Although originating and reaching
its most concrete goals in Guiné and Cape Verde, in terms of intellectual scope and political impact his work transcended by far the narrow geographical limits of those two countries. Among the leading figures in modern African history, Cabral was in fact unique in his capacity to integrate political practice and theory into a coherent whole; combining as he did elements of classical marxism and neo-marxist dependency theory in his analysis of social reality, and skilfully applying this to the concrete task of decolonising his native land.

Cabral’s Written Work

In contributing to ROAPE’s commemoration issue, I was asked to select excerpts from Cabral’s writings. The editors’ idea was for the selected texts to illustrate, within a few pages, not only Cabral’s historical achievements and intellectual methodology but also the way he wanted to combine the two goals of democratic participation and organisational efficiency. A recent authoritative bibliography of Cabral’s collected writings covers over 50 pages of titles on a wide range of topics (Chilcote, 1991:179-231). Furthermore, these have to be viewed in the context of his practice. The challenge was thus considerable and can only be partially met.

Views on Democracy and Organisation

We will begin at the end by quoting Cabral’s 1973 New Year’s message to his Guinean and Cape Verdean compatriots broadcast in early January 1973 by PAIGC’s Radio Libertação, only a few weeks before he was killed (Cabral, 1980:288-289, 294). This was to become his political testament.

As Cabral was speaking on the radio in his clear intensive staccato voice (Endnote 1), the armed struggle for independence was still raging in its tenth year, victory was within sight. Cabral speaks of it as certain, without demagoguery. Still, at that moment, nobody could predict that in only a little more than a year later, on 25 April 1974, the fascist regime in Lisbon would be toppled by a coup, swiftly triggering in turn the independence of Guinea in 1974, and in 1975, that of the other Portuguese colonies. The fall of fascism in Portugal was brought about by young officers of the colonial army who had learnt the hard way, not least in the swamps and jungles of Guiné, that classical colonialism was coming to its end in Africa. These dramatic events in the history of decolonisation can be causally linked, historically, to the very successes of Cabral’s political and military strategy.

Our extract from Cabral’s 1973 New Year’s message thus illustrates his greatest and most concrete historical achievement, that of leading Portuguese Guinea/Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde to the threshold of independence, despite the determination of the Portuguese colonial regime to endure. By the attention paid to the 1972 elections in the PAIGC-held areas of Guiné and to the formation of a People’s Assembly — which actually did meet eight months after Cabral’s death, on 24 September 1973, to proclaim unilaterally
the de jure existence of the state of Guinea-Bissau — the extract also demonstrates the importance Cabral attached to popular participation and to democratic procedure. The serious question of under what conditions radical democracy could actually have been expected to function in the post-colonial situation is not touched upon, however.

New Year's Message, January 1973

Comrades, compatriots. At this moment when we are beginning a new year of life and struggle and our fight for the independence of our African people is ten years old, I must remind everyone — militants, combatants, members responsible for specific tasks (Endnote 2) and leaders in our great Party — that it is time for action and not words. Time for action in Guinea, action that is each day more vigorous and more effective (Endnote 3), in order to inflict greater defeats on the Portuguese colonialists and remove them from all their criminal and vain pretensions of reconquering our land. Action that is constantly more developed and better organised in Cape Verde to carry the struggle into a new phase, in accordance with the aspirations of our people and the imperatives of the total liberation of our African country.

I must, however, respect tradition by addressing a few words to you at a time when all sane human beings — those who want peace, freedom and happiness for all (Endnote 4) — renew their hopes and the belief in a better life for mankind, in dignity, independence and genuine progress for all peoples.

As you all know, in the past year we held general elections in the liberated areas, with universal suffrage and a secret vote, for the creation of Regional Councils and the first National Assembly in our people's history. In all sectors of all regions, the elections were conducted in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm on the part of the population. The electorate voted massively for the lists that had been drawn up after eight months of public and democratic discussions in which the representatives of each sector were selected. When the elected Regional Councils met, they elected in their turn representatives to the People's National Assembly from among their members. This will have 120 members, of whom 80 were elected from among the mass of the people and 40 from among the political cadres, soldiers, technicians and others of the Party. As you know, the representatives for the sectors temporarily occupied by the colonialists have been chosen provisionally.

In the course of this coming year and as soon as it is conveniently possible we shall call a meeting of our People's National Assembly in Guinea, so that it can fulfil the historic mission incumbent on it: the proclamation of the existence of our state, the creation of an executive for this state and the promulgation of a fundamental law — that of the first constitution in our history — which will be the basis of the active existence of our African nation. That is to say: legitimate representatives of our people, chosen by the populations and freely elected by conscientious and patriotic citizens of our land, will proceed to the most important act of their life and of the life of our people, that of declaring before the world that our African nation, forged in the struggle, is irrevocably determined to march forward to independence without waiting for the consent of the Portuguese colonialists and that from then on the executive of our state under the leadership of our Party, the PAIGC, will be the sole, true and legitimate representative of our people in all the national and international questions that concern them.
We are moving from the situation of a colony which has a liberation movement, and whose people have already liberated in ten years of armed struggle the greater part of their national territory, to the situation of a country which runs its own state and which has part of its national territory occupied by foreign armed forces.

Concern with the war and with political work should not, however, make us forget or even underestimate the importance of our activities at the economic, social and cultural levels, as the foundation of the new life we are creating in the liberated areas. We must all, but mainly the cadres who specialise in these matters, give the closest attention to questions of the economy, health, social welfare, education and culture, so as to improve our work significantly and to be ready to face the great problems we have to face with the new situation ... so many new problems, but the more complex the more exciting, which we must be capable of solving at the same time as we intensify and develop vigorous action at the politico-military level to expel the colonial troops from the positions they still occupy in our land of Guiné and Cape Verde.

Intellectual Methodology

The 1973 New Year's message is straight and clear. In that sense it does indeed illustrate Amílcar Cabral's intellectual methodology. But for a more theoretical grasp, we have to consult other parts of his work. The most frequently quoted version of Cabral's general view of the conditions of social transformation in a colonised, dependent and underdeveloped country, such as his own, is found in the address he delivered to the first Tricontinental Conference of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America in Havana, 3-12 January 1966. (Endnote 5) Cabral adopts the orthodox view that history goes through 'at least three stages', each definable by the 'level of productive forces' (p.78) which is assumed to rise as history moves on, thus making possible more advanced forms of social and political organisation. Cabral's scheme differs from the conventional marxist one by offering a stage of their own to communal societies, thus avoiding seeing these as mere pre-stages to history, while grouping instead feudal and bourgeois societies in the same broad category, thus dethroning capitalism by putting it at par with feudalism.

Here we shall only quote one important introductory point. Cabral had, he said, found that a fundamental part of the struggle for national liberation was actually lacking on the agenda of the conference. This was 'the struggle against our own weaknesses' (Cabral, 1969:74):

Obviously, other cases differ from that of Guinea; but our experience has shown us that ... this battle against ourselves, no matter what difficulties the enemy may create, is the most difficult of all, whether for the present or the future of our peoples. This battle is the expression of the internal contradictions in the economic, social and cultural (and therefore historical) reality of each of our countries. We are convinced that any national or social revolution which is not based on knowledge of this fundamental reality runs a grave risk of being condemned to failure.

This is a sternly realistic observation, characteristic of Cabral. But let us turn to an even earlier document, Brief analysis of the social structure in Guinea (Cabral, 1969:46-61), first presented in on 1-3 May 1964, to a seminar held at the Frantz
Fanon Centre in Treviglio, Milan to illustrate his way of moving from theoretically penetrating analysis to political conclusions: (Endnote 6)

I should like to tell you something about the situation in our country, 'Portuguese' Guinea, beginning with an analysis of the social situation, which has served as the basis for our struggle for national liberation. I shall make a distinction between the rural areas and the towns, or rather the urban centres, not that these are to be considered mutually opposed.

In the rural areas we have found it necessary to distinguish between two distinct groups; on the one hand, the group which we consider semi-feudal, represented by the Fulas and, on the other hand, the group which we consider, so to speak, without any defined form of state organisation, represented by the Balantes.

This distinction between the two groups is theoretically founded in sociology and anthropology. Two years later, in his speech in Havana, Cabral would also use for the first time the terms vertical versus horizontal social structure to denote the conceptual dichotomy implied (p.78). In Milan he still used more common words, although with great precision. The most general point made (pp.49-50) was that it had proved less difficult to mobilise the Balanta and similar groups than the Fula for the struggle against the Portuguese colonial regime, as ...

the Fula peasants have a strong tendency to follow their chiefs. Thorough and intensive work was therefore needed to mobilise them ...(on the other hand) ... these groups without any defined organisation put up much more resistance against the Portuguese than the others and they have maintained intact their tradition of resistance to colonial penetration. This is the group that we found most ready to accept the idea of national liberation.

Limits of Cabral's Analysis

It is not possible here to develop the complex theoretical and political issues related to the way Cabral applied the vertical/horizontal distinction. A recent attempt to sum up my own and others' contributions to this debate is found in Rudebeck, 1992:48-54. In 1964 Cabral consciously focused attention on that dimension of the social structure of Guinean society that was most relevant to the task of mobilising the peasants for anti-colonial resistance. He was successful in this, as we know.

It is easy, today, to point out that Cabral's analysis was far from complete, and in fact much more limited to the specific tasks of the anti-colonial struggle than was generally thought at the time. This seems to have become clear to Cabral himself, as the struggle went on. In Conakry on 10 May 1972, for instance, he described at length to me the system of government he wanted to see at work in his country after the achievement of independence. This was to be a system with political and economic power firmly anchored in decentralised assemblies of the people. The functions of the state were to be strictly limited. In our discussion Cabral called this 'cooperative democracy'.
In a revolutionary perspective, the cooperative system obviously rests on the assumption that the people are a 'revolutionary force' and not a mere 'physical force', as Cabral had labelled the Guinean peasants in his 1964 seminar lecture in Milan (p.50). We see thus, how two different modes of thinking were ambivalently posed against each other within Cabral's own analysis of the social basis of the liberation movement: one marked by leninist party theory combined with conventional modernisation thinking, the other revolutionary-democratic. The problem for the future was that the question of the social basis of the democratic alternative was not confronted, thus opening up in practice a one-party system cut off from the majority of the people, once independence had been achieved.

Cabral's theoretical work mirrors his political task. Taken as a whole, it never reached beyond the point of independence, whether in politics or economics, except for fragmentary pieces. Nowhere in his writings do we find, seriously conceptualised, any realistic way of making the revolutionary-democratic alternative come true in the post-colonial situation. The only way considered is the unrealistic one of asking the 'petty bourgeoisie' to 'abandon power to the workers and the peasants', as he put it in Milan (1964:57). In Havana (1966:89), in an expression that would become famous, he asked for the 'class suicide' of the petty bourgeois leaders of the liberation struggle. The passage is subtly ambiguous. Are we listening to a realist, a voluntarist, or a prophet?

To retain the power which national liberation puts in its hands, the petty bourgeoisie has only one path: to give free rein to its natural tendencies to become more bourgeois, to permit the development of a bureaucratic and intermediary bourgeoisie in the commercial cycle, in order to transform itself into a national pseudo-bourgeoisie, that is to say to negate the revolution and necessarily ally itself with imperialist capital. Now all this corresponds to the neo-colonial situation, that is, to the betrayal of the objectives of national liberation. In order not to betray these objectives, the petty bourgeoisie has only one choice: ...the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie must be capable of committing suicide as a class in order to be reborn as revolutionary workers, completely identified with the deepest aspirations of the people to which they belong.

The Weapon of Theory

The Weapon of Theory is the title of one of Cabral's most famous texts. It could have been the title of his entire written work. Let us look briefly at three passages, all of which carry significance beyond the context of the anti-colonial struggle, precisely because they are theoretically founded.

The first may seem initially to be limited to the concrete context of the anti-colonial struggle in Guiné. In reality it points toward the future, by shedding light in hindsight on aspects of the development failures of independent Guinea-Bissau. The quote is from my transcription into Portuguese of a crioulo tape recording from a seminar for Party people held in August 1971 (Cabral, 1971:14):
Regardless of their specific responsibilities, the comrades in charge of all branches of our organisation should help our people organise collective fields. This is a great experiment for our future, comrades. Those who do not understand this have not yet understood anything of our struggle, however much they have fought and however heroic they may be.

What disturbed Cabral was that mobilisation in the PAIGC-controlled areas of the country was mainly political and ideological, while very little economic transformation was taking place. Paradoxically, instead, the conditions of the liberation war tended even to reinforce traditional self-reliance in production, in the sense that commercial and administrative links to the colonial system were cut. Since independence, on the other hand, any attempts to develop agriculture through collectivisation have been undermined by the fact that the leadership gave a 'free rein to its natural tendencies to become more bourgeois', to use Cabral's prophetic phrase.

At least in the short run, that fact has in turn contributed to heightening the significance of ethnicity in politics, in Guiné as elsewhere. In 1993, in times of 'ethnic cleansing' world-wide, the following definition of 'ethnicity' offered by Cabral thus retains all its validity, theoretically as well as politically (my translation from Guinea-Bissau: Alfabeto, 1984:26):

It is not the existence of a race, an ethnic group, or anything of the kind, that defines the behaviour of a human aggregate. No, it is the social environment and the problems arising from the reactions of this environment and the reactions of the human beings in question. All this defines the behaviour of a human aggregate.

But how is it possible to change environments that give rise to racist or ethnicist behaviour? In another one of Cabral's lectures to party workers in 1969, we find a philosophical answer to that question (Cabral, 1980:44-45) (Endnote 7):

Our view is the following: man is part of reality, reality exists independently of man's will. To the extent to which he acquires consciousness of reality, to the extent in which reality influences his consciousness, or creates his consciousness, man can acquire the potential to transform reality, little by little. This is our view, let us say the principle of our Party on relations between man and reality.

What if Cabral Had Not Been Killed?
We noted that Cabral, in his theoretical work, did not go very deeply into the problems of post-colonial development. We shall never know if he would have had the time and force to develop his analyses, had he survived. But if so, this would most likely have been within the realm of political economy. There is an obvious void in his work, as it stands, with regard to linking the transformation of the economy and the democratisation of political structure to each other. This is also the area where the failures of independent Guinea-Bissau are most visible. At the same time, passages like those quoted on collectivisation and ethnicity do indicate a possible direction of thought. Con-
sider the following much quoted words from Cabral’s *General Guidelines*, written as early as 1965 for the activists of the liberation movement (my translation, Cabral, 1965:23):

National liberation, the struggle against colonialism, working for peace and progress, independence — all these will be empty words without significance for the people, unless they are translated into real improvements in the conditions of life. It is useless to liberate a region, if the people of that region are then left without the elementary necessities of life.

The sharp formulation does express a basic truth, but not the whole truth. It does not raise the question of how to translate the beautiful words into ‘real improvements of the conditions of life’. Taking that question seriously would have led on to issues of how to democratise power over the economy. Yet however relevant Cabral’s philosophical view on ‘relations between man and reality’, the immediate task of decolonisation spurred cultural and political mobilisation rather than transformation of the relations of production.

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**Bibliographic Note**


**Endnotes**

1. Tape recording of the original broadcast against which I have checked Wolfer’s translation which follows the original very closely.
2. Wolfers’ translation, ‘responsible workers’ uses the noun *responsável*, plural *responsáveis*, which is very common in political language but difficult to translate.
3. Wolfers’ translation, ‘time for action in Guiné that is each day…’
4. Wolfers’ translation of *todos homens*, ‘all men’, is literal; however, from the context I infer that Cabral was not referring exclusively to males.
5. The text is entitled *The Weapon of Theory* and has been published in a number of versions, in several different languages. The most complete, in English, is in Cabral 1980:119-137. An earlier English version, Cabral, 1969:73-90 does exist which I have found somewhat closer to the PAIGC document in my possession (Cabral, 1966), used here.
6. Brief analysis is not included in the Cabral, 1980 selection, for which the texts were selected by the PAIGC. It is however, found in Cabral, 1969:46-61, the only English version available.
7. The quote is from the second of nine lectures delivered by Cabral during a seminar for Party people, 12-24 November 1969. The lectures were held in crioulo, transcribed into Portuguese, and later translated by Wolfers for publication in English (Cabral, 1980:28-113).
Amílcar Cabral’s Thought & Practice:
Some Lessons for the 1990s

Shubi Ishemo

Recent issues of ROAPE have carried timely articles on the post-cold war developments and their effect on the economic and political processes in Africa, on the debt crisis, on the so-called structural adjustment programmes, the consequent crisis manifest in the fall in the living standards of the popular masses and the erosion of achievements in health, education etc. The gap between the rich and poor, the gap between the South and the North are ever widening. Dependence on external handouts has increased and external agencies — the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and some NGOs — and western governments are increasingly setting the agenda for Africa. Pessimism in the West on the future of Africa is all pervasive. The sovereignty of African states has been gravely eroded (Hanlon, 1991, Tandon, 1991). Already in the advanced capitalist countries, particularly the US, imperial arrogance has reached an all time high. D G Dubois (1993) cites examples in The New York Times Magazine. It asks whether Africa is fit to govern itself — whether it is not yet opportune to recolonise:

Colonialism’s Back — And Not a Moment Too Soon ... [and] Let’s Face It: Some Countries Are Just Not Fit To Govern Themselves.

In the light of the current crisis, this brief article seeks to reflect on some aspects of Amílcar Cabral’s thought. It proposes that Africa, and indeed the third world, are not devoid of ideas or the dynamism to rethink and work out solutions to their current problems. Models developed elsewhere, with little or no relevance to the social and economic realities of Africa are being imposed on Africa. Far from stifling debate on these issues, the changing global balance of forces and western pressures have stimulated a very healthy intellectual and political debate. Shivji (1991:83-84) has correctly noted that this debate is not new. It ‘was always on the agenda so far as the popular forces are concerned ... our debate’, he continues,

should not be diverted. It should focus on the larger question of democracy and should be rooted in our own historical experience — frankly owning up to our past ‘mistakes’; drawing lessons for the future and being courageous enough to propose what may have been unthinkable only a few years ago. This is not to say that other experiences can or should be ignored. But their relevance has to be established. We must approach other experiences honestly with a view to understanding and examining our own situation rather than rationalise and justify some preconceived prejudices. Ultimately though, our point of departure and reference should be our own political practices over the last three decades of independence, not only in eventually arriving at any specific decision, but in forging the methods of making that decision.

This approach has also been carried in new journals such as Africa World Review and publications of new political parties of the left in Africa (see, for
example, Foroyaa and other publications of the People’s Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS) of The Gambia). Elsewhere in the South, particularly in Latin America, a similar debate is taking place. Tomas Borge (1992:98-99), a Sandinista leader, poses the same question.

Instead of looking at ourselves, instead of analysing our own reality, our thinking, our myths, we are intent on testing to see if what we do is in accordance with European values. Just like nineteenth century liberals who totally denied colonial culture, we have in general tended to be textbook Marxists, seeking to fit concepts derived from manuals into our disproportionate view of reality. . . . [we adopt] new schemes and ideologies when we have not yet finished absorbing previous ones.

These issues were being debated by the left in Latin America in the 1980s (Bollinger, 1985) and of late by the recent Conference of Parties of the Latin American Left held in Havana, Cuba. The Latin American left has also turned to history, to recoup the most positive ideas and practice. This is more so in Cuba where, since the beginning of the rectification process of the 1980s, lessons drawn from the ideas and practice of Che Guevara have energised the revolutionary process. President Fidel Castro (1987, in Tablada 1990:45) has defined rectification as a way of

looking for new solutions to old problems, rectifying many negative tendencies that have been developing . . . we’re rectifying all the shoddiness and mediocrity that is precisely the negation of Che’s ideas, his revolutionary thought, his style, his spirit, and his example.

Africa is not short of such positive ideas and practice. Amilcar Cabral’s ideas and political practice, formulated during the concrete experience of national liberation struggle, hold relevance to understanding the current situation in Africa. Cabral’s stature as an agronomist, as a revolutionary theoretician, and as a political strategist and historian is well known in Africa, the rest of the third world and among progressive humanity elsewhere. In 1983, an International Symposium on Amilcar Cabral, attended by intellectuals and activists from Africa, Western Europe, the Soviet Union, Cuba and North America was held in Praia, Cape Verde. At that symposium, Basil Davidson (1984:29) posed a set of fundamental questions:

What will be the further impact, generally in Africa or elsewhere, of the practice and theory of Lusophone liberation movements? Can they be seen to have introduced a new trend toward effective self-development? Do they indicate a qualitative advance on the road to progressive change? Will they appear, in twenty years’ time or so, to lie at the start of new African modalities of struggle, organisation, understanding of sociocultural and economic needs and possibilities?

He noted that even then ‘there seemed to be reasons for thinking so’. Indeed all the contributors to that symposium were in no doubt (PAICV,’1984).

On Class

In his revolutionary practice, Cabral started from the position of understand-
ing the social, economic, cultural and political realities of Guinea and Cape Verde, and how these were situated in the wider realities of the world. His Agricultural Census of Guinea detailing the material conditions of the various ethnic groups has been compared with Lenin's Development of Capitalism in Russia. He worked from the premise that knowledge was crucial to understanding the complexity of the ethnic composition of the Guinean people, the precapitalist formations, and the role of chiefs. This was essential for preparing the ground for popular mobilisation and raising the consciousness of the popular masses.

Cabral's main point of reference was history. It was important to understand the history of the people in order to develop an effective strategy against imperialism. To him,

*the ideological deficiency, not to say the total lack of ideology, on the part of the national liberation movements — which is explained by the ignorance of the historical reality which these movements aspire to transform — constitutes one of the greatest weaknesses if not the greatest weakness, of our struggle against imperialism* (1980:122; see also Aquino de Branganca, 1976).

It was his formulation on classes that aroused controversy. He used historical method: ‘Does history begin only with the appearance of classes and consequently class struggle?’

While agreeing with this in broad terms, he cautioned against it because it placed certain societies in Africa, Asia and Latin America outside history. For him, the basis for understanding the specificity of class in Africa must be the concrete reality of Africa. ‘Our refusal’, he argued

*based as it is on detailed knowledge of the socio-economic reality of our countries and on analysis of the process of development of the phenomenon of class . . . leads us to conclude that if class struggle is the motive force of history, it is so in a specific historical period.*

He stressed that the motive force of history in each human society is the mode of production. To him, ‘the level of productive forces, the essential determinant of the content and form of class struggle, is the true and permanent motive force in history’.

The historical and social context of Cabral’s formulation has been misinterpreted. In his ‘Social Structure’ he sets out to examine the social formation of different ethnic groups in Guinea. For example, he made a distinction between the social structure of the Balanta and the Fula. Whereas the former had a horizontal (stateless) structure, the latter had a vertical structure dominated by chiefs. From this he extrapolated the political potential of each group in the course of national liberation. Equally important, Cabral was addressing not only the purveyors of colonial racist historiography, but also those on the left who held the view ‘that imperialism made us enter into history at the moment when it began its adventure in our countries. This preconception must be de-
nounced: for somebody on the left, and for marxists in particular, history obviously means class struggle (1980:56). But Cabral was not contending against marxism. Rather, he was seeking to apply it to the concrete realities of the colonial situation. He urged a deeper knowledge of the 'essential characteristics of the colonized peoples' (1980:123) based on 'a rigorous historical approach' (1974:56).

Imperialism, to Cabral, had not fulfilled its historical mission. It had not developed the productive forces towards the 'sharpening of class differentiation with the development of the bourgeoisie and the intensification of class struggle' (1980:127). Thus in the case of Guinea and other African countries, it was only the petty bourgeoisie who were 'the only stratum capable both of having consciousness' of imperialist domination and of handling the state apparatus inherited from imperialist domination (1980:134). The petty bourgeoisie were an unpredictable class. It contained two sectors of what he referred to as a revolutionary petty bourgeoisie and those who vacillate or are hesitant in the national liberation struggle. Cabral demonstrated a profound knowledge of the petty bourgeoisie in neo-colonial situations. They had the tendency of becoming 'bourgeois' of '[allowing] the development of a bourgeoisie of bureaucrats and intermediaries in the trading system, to transform itself into a national pseudo-bourgeoisie, that is to deny the revolution and necessarily subject itself to imperialist capital'. In this situation, they constituted a 'betrayal of the objectives of national liberation' (1980:136).

In order to strengthen its revolutionary consciousness and the liberation struggle, Cabral argued that the petty bourgeoisie had to 'commit suicide as a class'. Jean Copans (1985:36) has taken issue with this. He doubts that African political leaders are Gramscian organic intellectuals. 'The a-patriate, "floating" intellectual who may commit suicide,... whom Cabral dreamed of, is an historical nonsense. It is not possible to transcend by any means whatsoever one's origins and class barriers.' Copans continues,

Without — in the case of the political leader — a definition of the relationship between the intellectual and masses and . . . a definition of the relationship between the exteriority of theoretical consciousness and social processes, class analysis will remain a victim of dogmatism, voluntarism and idealism.

Copans grossly misrepresents Cabral. Cabral was neither idealist, nor dogmatic. Far from being 'historical nonsense', Cabral's formulation of the petty bourgeoisie was Gramscian. What he refers to as the petty bourgeoisie who 'commit suicide as a class' are in reality the 'organic intellectuals' or in Cabral's terms, the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie who, in the colonial and neo-colonial situation, show 'the capacity for faithfully expressing the aspirations of the masses in each phase of the struggle and for identifying with them more and more' (1980:125). Cabral would have agreed with Copans suggestion that marxism 'must be appropriated theoretically and practically, and this can only result from a process of reflection linked to the social practice of
the exploited classes' and 'the reading of Marx in the context of specific historical situations' (Copans, 1985:37). This is what Cabral set out to do. In all his work, there is a richness of originality. His 'Social Structure', 'Party Principles and Political Practice', 'Weapon of Theory', etc., reflect his engaging questioning of every situation and his rejection of ready made models.

The subsequent neo-colonial situation clearly bears out Cabral's analysis. We have in the past decade, seen the defection of some of the 'organic intellectuals' of the 1960s and 1970s. These are what Petras (1993:107-109; see also Petras and Morely, 1992) has characterised as 'institutional' or 'memo writing' intellectuals. Here, Petras is referring to intellectuals like Che Guevara who were involved in theoretical, analytical work and political practice. They formulated their politics, as did Gramsci, 'by breaking from their class background, immersing themselves in mass struggles'. Cabral was such an organic intellectual. He foresaw, in the neo-colonial situation, the contention between two groups of intellectuals under conditions dictated by agencies of imperialism (the IMF, World Bank, etc). It is those third world and western intellectuals who since the 1980s have retreated to serve imperialism that Cabral referred to as 'a service class'.

Today, the 'organic intellectuals' in Africa, as in Latin America, are challenging the neo-liberal agenda. Political parties based among the popular classes have emerged. Such parties are, in a Cabralian way, basing their political practice on an ongoing study of the internal and external realities. Cabral's method is as relevant in the 1990s as it was in the 1960s and early 1970s. Today, the neo-liberal triumphalists make hollow promises to the popular classes. Cabral always emphasised honesty. He never made extravagant promises. In his discussion with combatants, he demonstrated profound knowledge of the concerns of the people, their beliefs and aspirations. 'Always bear in mind', he urged PAIGC cadres,

> that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children . . . (1980:131).

He suggested that 'tribalism' was not an invention of the people. Rather, it served the interests of frustrated petty-bourgeois opportunists who strove for political office as a means to accumulate wealth and exploit the popular classes (1980:61-62). These, he suggested, constitute an internal enemy that is 'all the social strata of our land, of classes of our land who do not want progress for our people, but merely want progress for themselves'. For Party cadres, he strongly advised against the tendency of feeling indispensable to the struggle, against bigmanship and the fear of losing power. He foresaw and educated PAIGC cadres to draw lessons from the experience of others: 'Many countries have come to ruin because the rulers were afraid of losing the lead' (1980:97).
On Culture

Cabral's analysis on the role of culture in national liberation enlarges on his earlier work: 'Social Structure' and 'Weapon of Theory'. 'Our struggle', he wrote, 'is based on our culture, because culture is the fruit of history' (1980:58). It is also 'a determinant of history, by the positive or negative influences which it exerts on the evolution of relationships between [humanity] and [the] environment' (1973:41). Culture has its material base at the level of the productive forces and the mode of production. Culture was a valuable instrument in the resistance against foreign domination. In discussions with combatants, he enthused about culture. 'We must enjoy our African culture, we must cherish it, our dances, our songs, our style of making statues, canoes, our cloths' (1980:57).

The colonial forces, he noted, create a pliant indigenous petty bourgeoisie which take on the cultural values of the colonisers. This group becomes alienated from the popular masses. In the liberation struggle, this group had to undergo what he called a 'reconversion of the minds', a 're-Africanisation' (1973:45,47,64). But this 're-Africanisation should not be confused with 'Negritude', the 'uniqueness of the African soul'. If he opposed the racist underestimation of African cultural values, he equally opposed the 'absurd linking of artistic creations, whether good or not, with supposed racial characteristics (1973:51). 'It is important', he argued,

*to be conscious of the value of African culture in the framework of universal civilization, but to compare this value with that of other cultures, not with a view of deciding its superiority or inferiority, but in order to determine, in the general framework of the struggle for progress, what contribution African culture has made and can make, and what are the contributions it can or must receive from elsewhere (1973:52).*

There is, therefore, no absolute or closed culture. All cultures evolve historically. Doors must be opened for other positive influences. These would, in turn, enrich the positive elements in African culture. In this respect, Cabral spoke of a scientific culture, of a universal culture, free from domination (1973:55). Cabral's interpretation of people's beliefs reflect his deep insight into the relationship between society and nature. 'Certain of our dances', he wrote,

*represent relationship of [humanity] to the forest; folk appear clothed in straw, in the shape of birds, and others like great birds, with a huge beak, and folk run in fear. We can do many such dances, but we have to go beyond this, we cannot stop there (1980:59).*

Humanity had to take charge of nature. It was counter productive to talk down on the peasantry. Beliefs that instil fear had to be interpreted and transformed to heighten the people's political consciousness. Culture was, therefore, a dynamic force. But when manifested in passive resistance, it constituted wasted energy. Passive resistance could not challenge the enemy. This could only be effectively done through the creation of a Party.
Since the 1970s, the debate between the advanced capitalist countries and the third world countries on the 'new international economic order' and the 'new world information and communication order' has shown the inseparable link between economy and culture. The widening economic imbalances between North and South, the commoditisation of culture in the advanced capitalist countries and the use of advanced communication technology to disseminate these across the globe are a manifestation of the supranationalisation of capital. The imperialist countries' relentless pressure to have unlimited access to the markets of the South have had consequences on the culture of peoples. Cabral's formulation on the relationship between culture and social structure has been clearly borne out by the consumption pattern of such cultural commodities disseminated from the North. They are class specific and they serve the petty bourgeoisie and other privileged strata. In this connection, some 'institutional' intellectuals no longer refer to imperialism. They have replaced it with 'globalisation', 'interconnection and interdependency' — that is 'the end of capitalism'. The implication of these hollow formulations is to dehistoricise the people's experience, to make them ashamed of their history, individualise their consciousness and to blunt their potential for political mobilisation. Cabral's view of history and of culture is as relevant today as it was in the earlier phase of national liberation struggle.

On Internationalism

Cabral always emphasised the interconnectedness of the struggles of African Asian and Latin American peoples against imperialism. He was an uncompromising fighter for African unity. He strongly advocated solidarity with 'the people of Cuba who were able to overcome reaction and imperialism in their land, to establish a just system which is encircled and threatened by imperialists'. This call for solidarity with the Cuban Revolution is as relevant in the 1990s as it has been since 1959. Cabral was a fighter against racism. He urged the African people to show 'solidarity, real solidarity' with the African diaspora. 'We have to give courageous support to their struggle, without pretending that we are going to wage the struggle for them' (1960:81).

Conclusion

In commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the death of Amilcar Cabral, it is important to recognise his contribution to revolutionary theory and political practice. The world balance of forces has changed since his time. But the principal contradictions which he so eloquently analysed have never been resolved. If anything, they are as sharp as they were. That is where, despite the changing terrain for political practice, his ideas and practice hold great relevance. His understanding of the historical, social, economic, political and cultural realities in a given struggle, his rejection of ready made models, but his readiness to learn from other experience provide a sound methodology for political struggles in the 1990s. We should not be ashamed of our history. It has strengths which inform and enrich current and future practice.
Remembering Cabral

Basil Davidson

It becomes tempting to wonder, in this period of moral reduction and political decline, just what it is which causes positive change to begin, and then enables this change to become a route of escape so manifestly valid and worthwhile that persons — ordinary persons, everyday persons, persons such as myself — will follow that route as though it might be as dear as life itself.

I was pondering this elusive question while present at Eritrea’s celebration on 24 May 1993 of the winning of its independence after 30 years of anti-colonial struggle. For the winning of this freedom, so vividly felt in Eritrea now, was the work of a remarkable self-mobilisation in sacrifice and effort for the common good. But how did this come about? Leave aside the instrumental explanations — the traditions of Eritrean social solidarity, the pressures of a malignant and ferocious enemy (as the Ethiopian dictatorship had long become), the brilliance of individual leaders, the courage of those countless volunteers who made the army of the EPLF, much else besides — and the elusive question still remains: just what it is that set this people on its route of escape?
Bibliographic Note


Remembering Cabral

*Basil Davidson*

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The question is by no means new to readers of this journal, and various answers have come to hand. Addressing it on Eritrea’s smiling day of independence — formal independence, for the reality had been reached in 1990 — President Issaias Afewerki told us that they had been able to win only by having evoked ‘a solidarity of effort’ across every rivalry (in Eritrea) of religion, ethnicity, or other claim on installed privilege. And the facts bear him out. The Eritreans have won against odds piled mountains high against them because they have been able to reach a nationwide unity of effort and objective. In their recent and internationally-supervised referendum (see ROAPE 57), 98.52 per cent of registered voters used their vote, and of those who used their vote 99.805 per cent voted for independence. No one from any quarter of opinion has doubted the honesty of that vote.

How this unity was achieved through many years of difficult and often violent conflict — conflict also among Eritreans themselves — is part of a history that now awaits to be told. Excellent books could be written about that history, and we can hope that they will be. When they are they will have much to say about the means and methods of mass mobilisation: about just what it is that leads a people to become able to save itself from grim disaster. While thinking about this in Asmara, I was led again to thinking about another liberating figure whose name and achievement are known and respected by Eritreans, and not least because of his wisdom and leadership precisely in the means and methods of mass mobilisation.

It is just over twenty years since the death of Amilcar Cabral; and ROAPE’s initiative in celebrating this anniversary makes a fine occasion to celebrate Cabral’s achievements. And to note, moreover, that Cabral and what he achieved has not become lost in the turmoil of the passing years. I see, for example, that Edward Said gives due recognition to Cabral in his deeply impressive Culture and Imperialism (1993). Or else, for the English-reading academy worldwide, there is Horace Campbell’s still more recent memorial of Cabral in The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World (1993), where Cabral is defined as ‘the pre-eminent theorist and guerilla fighter in the period of the decolonisation of Africa’. Cabral’s achievement, writes Campbell, ‘sped the decolonisation of Africa in a very fundamental way’. Beyond that, ‘Cabral’s writings and speeches have provided the basis for a new direction in the study of Africa’.

These are sound judgements; and yet the question remains as to how it became possible for Cabral to be given the loyalty of a ravaged people, whose level of literacy stood at about one-half of one per cent, in a colony where the authority of power had long become synonymous with contempt or indifference, and where law had appeared and usually had been a force of blind oppression. Where any sense of patriotism was a bad joke, and social solidarity outside the family or clan an empty form of words.

Cabral and his handful of companions, four decades ago, had to find answers to despair. Where should they start, what should they do? Cabral started with
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five others in the Portuguese colony of Guiné. That was in 1956, long before they had a party or a movement in anything but name, or any detailed programme, or any clear perspective. What they had, very consciously, was a burning sense of the justice of their anti-colonial cause, and a conviction that others would recognise this justice once the embers of revolt could be brought alight. They also had, above all in Cabral’s unwavering clarity of mind, was the advantage — the very dangerous advantage — of an implacable enemy. Compromise with colonialism might be attempted; it would fail. Reconciliation might be wished for; the fascism of Portugal, whether at home or in the colonies, knew no such thing. So that there must arise for everyone — everyone regardless of preference or opinion — an unavoidable choice: are you for us or are you against us?

Any revolt would have to be the product of profound conviction. Any war of liberation, if it could come to that, would have to be a long one fought through ‘to the end’. It came to that in 1963, seven testing years since the six beginners had found each other, and had opted for a resistance that might have to become an armed resistance; and the core of their later success is to be found in those seven years. It turned, as would be seen later, upon a single principle of action and organisation: colloquially, in Guiné Creole, que povo na manda na si cabeça (meaning that people have to do it for themselves, you have to do it for yourself). Otherwise there is no self-development, there is only a calculation of personal gain, a squabbling bid to jump the queue.

That may sound so very obvious, now in the aftermath. But in those years it could and did sound revolutionary. Rebellious thought in those times — creative thought, contestatory thought — still carried old burdens: from one source, a severely condescending Eurocentrism that had shuffled down the decades from the slaving years, and then, from another source not much less unhelpful although more recent, an authoritarian marxism — or ‘marxism?’ — according to which an effective blueprint for action must be handed down to actors as holy writ, without which those actors would be helpless. In their various ways these legacies would be tremendous handicaps to innovating thought and action, and Cabral had to measure himself against them: whether as a schoolboy in Cape Verde, where a primitive racism governed by way of pigmentational absurdities; or later as a university student in Portugal itself, where creative thinking had been crushed out of existence save for a clandestine communist party within which, however, the rigours of secrecy had duly opened the gate to the rigidities of a kind of stalinism. Cabral and his handful of like-minded friends rejected both the racism and the stalinism. Standing in a void, as it were, they looked for a posture of their own, and this they found in a deliberate process of re-Africanisation from the alienations of Portuguese colonial culture. Their Angolan comrade, Viriato da Cruz produced his masthead slogan, vamos descobrir Angola, and it became for all of them a whole programme of self-development. Let’s discover ourselves!

This was certainly the message that Cabral took back with him to Africa early in the 1960s, and what he afterwards taught, using whatever different ways
and words, to all who would listen to him. Even in this tensely distraught
territory of Portuguese Guiné, lost somewhere between Senegal and Liberia
and deprived in every conceivable dimension, the blacks could and would
save themselves if only they themselves were led to take the saving work in
hand. ‘Were led to take’, I think, was the kernel of Cabral’s ideas on political
mobilisation. For this was the accent of his teachings in all the obscure and
lonely years — the 1950s — when he was finding out ‘how to begin’ and with
whom to begin. Later, when the beginning was well and truly made, he for-
malised these ideas and his teaching of them in his handbook for militants, the
Palavras de Ordem Gerais composed in 1965, and then, orally and variously, in
a series of forest seminars. These evolved as intimate ‘conversations’ when no
limits were set to what could be raised and argued (partial texts of some of
these seminars will be found in Cabral’s collected writings published as Unity
and Struggle, London and New York, 1980, in an excellent translation by
Michael Wolfers).

To the moral thrust of Cabral’s ideas on revolutionary change, in short, there
was added this severely practical stress on the analysis of immediate reality
and circumstance. It was to be one of his strengths that he knew his country
and its peoples thoroughly, and usually better than anyone else: those early
years which he had spent as a government agronomist, tramping from one
region to another and living in their villages, at home within languages that
others seldom spoke save in fragmentary phrases, became for him a living
source of encouragement and inspiration. When he said que povo na manda na
si cabeca he was speaking, one can say, from inside the heads of the peasants
from whom the slogan had initially come.

This was no doubt what gave his programme its simplicity of conviction. Fac-
ing a barbaric colonial oppression, always coercing or corrupting as it was,
Cabral presented the ‘simplistic’ belief that humankind is good by nature, a
view of things so outrageously stupid in the eyes of a distant Europe, as to set
him beyond the boundaries of orthodox notice. Yet that is what he believed: so
much so, I think myself, that he would never have been murdered if he had
believed otherwise. For it stands sorely on the record that at least three among
his murderers were men punished for one or other crime inside the fighting
movement (PAIGC) but forgiven and released from prison by Cabral and
kept close to his person, ‘so that they could make good their errors’. His chief
bodyguard, whom I knew myself, was one of those three; afterwards, this
man shot himself in horror at what he had helped to do.

The principles of Cabral’s organising action can be studied in the published
writings (Wolfers, 1980). Their practicality had to depend on the sufficient
recruitment of fighting personnel, and stiff training in the military disciplines
of what had to be done. Here there was nothing new or original, successful
guerilla warfare having few and simple rules. The real — and enormous —
difficulty came at the point where sufficient fighters had to be accumulated:
precisely, that is, in the actual process of mobilisation. His practice in this
respect, I think, can be boiled down to a broad conclusion: political mobilisa-
tion is always specific to time and circumstance. But it is a process; it has stages of development: essentially, two stages. One stage is to evoke sympathy with what you mean to do, overcoming (in this case) the deep ingrained scepticism of this rural audience — 'you want to throw out the Portuguese, but you can't even make matches' — with its contempt for its own abilities: 'Take up arms against the Portuguese? But what fool was ever going to do that?'

This was where the young 'fighters of the first hour' came into their own, attacking a police post, destroying a bridge: small actions, but successful ones. Sympathy with anti-colonial sentiments could then be got to take a step further: into feeding these young fighters — maybe a dozen in number, or fewer still — and then hiding them, bringing them useful information about the nearest garrison, or something of that kind. All this was possible and was done. But all of it would end in flight or extermination at the hands of the colonial state if this first stage were not followed by a second. Sympathy must be developed into participation. 'People must do it for themselves'.

This second stage was entered at the end of 1963 and increasingly established in the year or so after that. In 1967, as we were coasting by night along the southern fringe of that country's mangrove creeks, Cabral recalled for me the meaning of this crucial achievement:

First of all, as you know, we liberated the southern and a little part of the north-central regions of our country. Then, in 1964, we began to say to our guerilla fighters in the south that the time had come for them to go into the eastern region. Otherwise, we said, if the struggle remains only in the south and north, the Portuguese will be able to concentrate on those regions, and eliminate us there. But we found that our guerillas were not at all of this opinion. We've liberated our own country, [they said to us], now let those others [in the east] liberate theirs. Why should the Balante go and help to liberate the Fula? Let the Fula do their own work...

We didn't force the issue. We waited until the Portuguese did in fact begin to redouble their attacks in the south, just as we'd said they would, and then we argued our case all over again. This time it worked, and we could form a regular army that would move, and not stay, like guerillas, in their home zones. We said, free uniforms, better arms, good equipment and so on for everyone who joins; but everyone who joins will go where he's sent. Two thousand young men volunteered. For a start, we chose 900 (Davidson, 1969).

Once sympathy had developed itself into participation — social and political as much as military participation — then it began to be seen, and Cabral made sure that it was seen, that the struggle against oppression had become a movement with its own inner dynamism.

Then it became a matter of persistent leadership in the sense of ensuring that the currents of self-development should stay unclogged (as little clogged as possible; Cabral was no utopian) by collapsing into this or that personal vanity or distraction, while, at the same time keeping up the pressure for onward
action. The general and in the end overwhelming success in these tasks was what the history of this liberation war would demonstrate, but it should go without saying that the success could never be invariable or complete. Here was a leadership — as I think must always happen in enterprises of this kind — that could never be free of personalist distraction and corruption, if only because these failings feed upon success. But the general success in this context of mobilisation was high, even as I think extraordinarily high. I used to walk about that country of forests and creeks and hillside pastures with a handful of fighters bent on this or that objective, or on simply looking after me; and the success was patent. Here you would find a peasant guarding or watching all canoe traffic on the waterways, quite by himself and usually keeping out of sight, unsupervised, unwatched, unguarded; but his work was to know about and report on everything that moved on the water, and this work he simply carried out. Here was a school in dense bush with two or three young teachers responsible literally 'for everything'. Here was a make-shift 'hospital' for a clutch of wounded, with an itinerant surgeon who was virtually a saviour for these wounded but himself depended for food and safety on the nearest village activists. And so on up and down the line of useful action.

Once the movement could impose its own self-discipline — roughly, sometime after early disasters in 1963 — there thus evolved a community across age, or across age-groups in these often age-defined societies, that was in evolution from colonially oppressed objects to socialised — self-regulating? — subjects: at various levels of consciousness, with various back-slidings into self-inflation, of course. But very much had been done to promote an essential unity of attitude and action by the time, late in 1973, that the Portuguese dictatorship was faltering to its fall. A fall, one can add, that was crucially accelerated by the achievements of Cabral and his movement, the PAIGC. It was certainly the case that the young Portuguese officers who would bring about that fall, in 1974, had learned their own lessons from those same achievements. "The colonised peoples and the people of Portugal are allies", ran one of those young officers' pronouncements of 1974. "The struggle for national liberation has contributed powerfully to the overthrow of fascism and, in large degree, has lain at the base of the armed forces movement" (which overthrew the dictatorship) (Davidson, 1981). The smooth men and women who would come to govern the Portugal of the 1980s would offer a very different view; the fact remains that overthrow of the colonial dictatorship in Africa was an essential prelude to overthrow of the dictatorship in Portugal itself.

Yet if much had been done to promote a post-colonial society in Guiné, much else remained to be done; and there were those at the time (myself among them, if I may add) for whom the liberation war was at a level of virtual standstill (so far, that is, as major hostilities were concerned) but might have usefully continued for a few more years. As others have explained, what remained to be done, even to be launched, were transformations in the sphere of
economic reorganisation. These could not be tackled while the Portuguese were still able to fight on offensive positions; but they might have been tackled after 1973 when the Portuguese were fighting in retreat. As it was, things fell out differently and by 1978, in peacetime, ‘doing things to people’ had taken the place of ‘people doing it for themselves’ (Dowbor, 1977).

In remembering Cabral, however, one thinks above all of the process of social change set in motion during the years of political innovation and expansion. One thinks, in Cabral’s own phrasing, of the armed liberation struggle not as a mere instrumentality, much less as an adventure, but as a ‘determinant of culture’, a penetratingly social determinant of cultural progress that ‘is without doubt, for the people, the prime recompense for their efforts and sacrifices.’ For

the leaders of the liberation movement, drawn from the ‘petty bourgeoisie’ (intellectuals, employees) or from the background of workers in the towns (labourers, drivers, salaried workers in general), having to live day by day with the various peasant strata among the rural populations, come to know the people better. They discover, at its source, the wealth of their cultural values (whether philosophical or political, artistic, social or moral). They acquire a clearer awareness of their country’s economic realities. They see the difficulties, sufferings and aspirations of the mass of the people . . . the leaders thus enrich their culture: they cultivate their minds and free themselves from inhibitions (imposed by colonial history). So they strengthen their ability to serve the movement in service of the people.

Meanwhile, the same cultural determinant had another field of action ‘out there in the bush’ about which the leaders who had mostly derived from the towns had known little or nothing, and had feared much:

On their side, the mass of labourers and, in particular, the peasants who are generally illiterate and have never moved beyond the confines of their village or region, come into contact with other categories; and in doing this they shed the inhibitions which had constrained them in their dealings with other ethnic or social groups. They understand their position as determining elements in the struggle. They break the fetters of the village universe. They gradually integrate with their country and with the world. They acquire an infinity of new knowledge useful to their immediate and future activities within the framework of the struggle. They strengthen their political awareness by absorbing the principles of national and social revolution postulated by the struggle.

Summarising, Cabral went on to say in one of his well-remembered phrases that ‘the armed struggle therefore implies a veritable forced march along the road to cultural progress’ because:

We should add these inherent features of an armed liberation struggle: the practice of democracy, of criticism and self-criticism; the growing responsibility of populations for the management of their own life; literacy teaching; the creation of schools and health care; the training of peasant and other cadres. And this is how we find that the armed liberation struggle is not only a product of culture, but also a determinant of culture (Endnote 1).
Looking back from these our 1990s, when banditries and corruptions and vile external interventions have gone far to wreck or utterly destroy the harvests of progress that Cabral and his companions were able to promote and produce, I am sometimes met with reproaches by those, today, who tell me that Cabral and his companions failed. To those who tell me this from an honest standpoint, and not from any mealy-mouthed or merely calculating collapse into reaction, I can reply that the charge of failure is morally and historically baseless. I respect their prudent scepticism but ask them to think further. For the record shows that the principles upon which Cabral and his companions acted remain as valid today as they were valid thirty years ago and more. They are the same principles and ideas that may now be heard expounded, in a score or more African languages and as many different African situations, with the terminologies of democratic decentralisation, mass participation, cultural renewal, post-colonial restitution. New men and women will apply these principles and ideas, no doubt with the genius of creative innovation that history will unfold. But the same mandatory directive will apply. Que povo na manda na si cabeca.

Endnote
1 These extracts are from one of Cabral’s principal political lectures, National Liberation and Culture, 1970, and available in the Unity and Struggle volume.

Bibliographic Note
Debate

The World Bank: Some Lessons for South Africa
Colin Stoneman

Economic Orthodoxy

Orthodox structural adjustment policies, now imposed on nearly all of Africa and likely to be forced on a future South African government, will perform a double function so far as outside interests are concerned: they will help to safeguard the economic interests of both foreign capital and white 'kith and kin' in the region; and they will attempt to prevent experimentation with alternative policies and so reduce the 'threat of a good example' (Melrose, 1985) for the rest of the world.

Structural Adjustment is not Structural Enough

Structural adjustment sounds to be a good idea in the face of the horrors of an apartheid-structured society or the corrupt, inefficient, one-party, state-dominated dictatorships so common in Africa until recently, and still not extinct. But I would argue that such cases merely provide a pretext for imposing a single economic strategy worldwide, irrespective of whether countries were actually this unacceptable socially, or unsuccessful economically. Having been freed of the fear of stalinist totalitarianism, we are now faced with the actuality of a worldwide market totalitarianism to which no exceptions are tolerated.

This may seem to be a loose, or perverse, use of the word 'totalitarianism' in this context, given the associations of the market with an 'anything goes' philosophy. But it is easy to demonstrate that all markets are in fact interfered with by governments (and other actors), and what is new about the 'new world order' is that for the first time there is a single unchallenged authority with the financial power to lay down which interventions are acceptable. Policies previously regarded as purely the business of individual countries and not the outside world, such as infant-industry protection, subsidies on basic foods, the balance between the state and the private sector, funding policies for education, health and other social services, to say nothing of trade and exchange-rate policies, are now routinely regarded as subject to influence if not outright determination by the World Bank and the IMF. This is not just a matter of denying countries the right to make their own mistakes, to prefer different choices to outsiders, it is also denying them the right to use the very policies of import-substituting industrialisation, protection, subsidisation and state intervention that are widely accepted to have been instrumental in bringing about the success of late developing countries, such as Germany in the last century, and the newly industrialised countries (NICs) in this. This was for some time denied by World Bank ideologists, but in the face of the evidence they appear to have dropped the issue (Amsden, 1989). The metaphor of 'pulling up the
ladder after us' may seem apt, until it is pointed out that the powerful are still using these policies: the Japanese and South Korean markets are still very closed to imports and investment, the Multi-Fibres Agreement (which places quotas on textile and clothing imports from third-world countries) is still in force, and Europe still subsidises its farmers — but then tells Zimbabwe that it must reduce its subsidies (which are in any case necessary mainly because of the dumping of excess European grain on the world market).

But what were those failed policies that structural adjustment is seeking to reverse, and why were they instituted? In fact they derive from post-colonial attempts to restructure economies away from the inherited colonial structures which featured extreme inequalities of wealth and income internally and external relations that were characterised by free trade with a metropolitan power. These imperial powers dictated specialisation in primary-commodity production for their colonies, in order to gain for themselves a cheaper supply of inputs than was available to their rival colonial powers. The free markets inside the empires prevented the colonies from developing significant industry, and they were obliged to buy most of their needs from their colonial masters. In Africa, only South Africa and Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia), were allowed enough local power through concessions to their settlers so as to be able to pursue policies of economic nationalism involving the protection of infant industries.

This was the course most ex-colonies embarked on when they eventually obtained independence. To be sure, many of them failed to break the colonial pattern, and some even created worse structures involving corruption, repression and destitution for the majority of their populations. But some succeeded.

The wholesale imposition of structural adjustment should thus best be seen as a return to the former colonial relationship, this time taking a multilateral form, but no less disadvantageous to the peripheral countries. It is in this sense that some analysts have begun using the term 'recolonisation' to describe the impact of structural adjustment in the 1980s and early 1990s.

It has also been Largely Unsuccessful

The new policy shift began with the publication in 1981 of the 'Berg Report' which argued that the problems of sub-Saharan African countries were largely self-inflicted, through an overemphasis on the state, neglect of agriculture, suppression of markets, over-valued currencies, corruption etc. Only in the sequels (1984, 1989) was the influence of deteriorating terms of trade, rising oil prices, and the debt crisis, given more than passing reference.

Few would now claim that defence of currencies at ten or more times their value on the world market is sensible policy, nor that states — least of all states with scarce resources of skills — should try to substitute for the market across a wide range of economic activities rather than making strategic interventions. However, it did not take the World Bank to tell this to even the most state-oriented countries such as Angola and Mozambique. The latter's president, Samora Machel, made his famous 'The state does not sell matches' speech in 1981 before the Berg report was published. It is also common-
sense that a growing cumulative deficit — whether on external or internal account — will sooner or later have to be funded (although the present UK government seems to be reluctant to acknowledge this). Where governments refused to recognise these truths adjustment policies have performed a useful function, and in some case brought about the preconditions for sustainable growth. But the package contains other elements, including the liberalisation of the trade and foreign exchange regimes, privatisation, an end to subsidies (even if affordable), and a general minimisation of the state's role. These are not only much more controversial, theoretically as well as politically, they are also commonly not applied even now (let alone at comparable earlier stages of development) by the rich countries. And of course they have been forced on countries like Zimbabwe which already had a good record on the earlier less contentious parts of the package as well as on countries which didn't.

The result has been that the record of structural adjustment for the countries concerned has been dubious at best and in some countries disastrous, despite the sensible ingredients. In the late 1980s the World Bank, having proclaimed that success for the policies had been demonstrated by Ghana (endnote 1) and later Tanzania, decided that wider demonstrations were needed and published a continent-wide survey (World Bank, 1989), which after omission of special cases showed a small average increase in GDP growth for adjusting countries. Zimbabwe was omitted from the non-adjusters because of the severity of the droughts that it had suffered (logically this should have meant its inclusion with extra weighting!). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa reworked the World Bank figures with different (and in my view more plausible) criteria as to which were non-adjusters or adjusters, and as to which were special cases, and got the opposite result. The issue is therefore unresolved, and in no way can the World Bank claim that the statistics clearly support its case (Parfitt, 1990).

Clearly a number of World Bank personnel have lost faith in structural adjustment, and much press comment has been along the lines of how much the World Bank needs an unequivocal success story.

Zimbabwe was chosen for this role for two reasons: first it was an embarrassing advertisement for alternative policies, with even the US ambassador to Zimbabwe, James Rawlings, speaking in September 1988 of the US's 'recognition that Zimbabwe's economy is healthy and dynamic with the potential for greater growth based on the successes of the past' (EIU, 1988); second this very success, especially the balance of payments surplus and the manageable debt, meant that structural adjustment would be applied in a context with fewer problems than was usual in adjusting countries. Zimbabwe therefore came under severe pressure to liberalise in the late 1980s as we see below. In March 1991, after it began what it claimed was a 'home-grown' economic structural adjustment programme (known locally as 'Esap'), the World Bank resident representative in Zimbabwe, Christian Poortman, incautiously argued that because of its earlier dynamic economic performance 'Zimbabwe could be the first to succeed with such reforms' (EIU, 1991).

'Success', however, can be viewed from two directions. If structural adjustment is seen as successful hardly
anywhere in Africa, different criteria are used to judge it in Washington. From there, faster economic growth, reduced levels of poverty, even industrialisation, would be nice. But their absence is embarrassing rather than destructive, for the bottom line is that Africa is now firmly reintegrated into the world market, the actual main aim of the international financial institutions, and far more important than mere economic development.

Successful Alternatives have been Largely Ignored or Drummed into Line

That the main impetus for forcing countries to reform is ideological rather than economic or democratic is supported by two examples relating to Zimbabwe. As we see below in more detail, Zimbabwe was surprisingly successful economically in the 1980s despite severe constraints, while maintaining a policy strongly resistant to the second half of the structural adjustment package. The British government was widely criticised in 1988 for advancing large sums to the military dictatorship in Nigeria, whilst denying any programme aid to Zimbabwe, despite its better political, economic, and human rights record. The response of Margaret Thatcher's government was two-fold: Nigeria had promised to reform in five years' time (endnote 2); and Zimbabwe did 'not have an IMF programme'. The latter point discloses the real motivations. It may be understandable that Britain should not have wished to support Zambia at the time because of its arrears with the IMF and numerous other creditors, and because of its refusal or inability to meet the IMF's conditions for rescheduling and continued support. But on the other hand Botswana, although it received substantial development aid, had no IMF programme for the simple reason that it didn't need one: with its diamond revenues it had no need for borrowing to cover balance of payments deficits. Zimbabwe was between these two cases, and as it lacked any equivalent of the massive diamond revenues might be seen as the most virtuous, for it was neither in arrears with any creditors (least of all the IMF) nor had it ever sought a rescheduling of its debts. It had no IMF programme because like Botswana it did not need one, although it did need programmes of development-oriented finance then denied it by both Britain and the US and restricted by the World Bank.

The second example in fact concerns the World Bank, which was continuing to lend for a range of development purposes, such as infrastructure upgrading, irrigation and skill development. But in 1982 it had also lent Zimbabwe US$70m to set up an 'export-revolving fund' (endnote 3) (ERF) to promote exports of manufactured goods, no doubt seeing this as part of a process of reintegrating Zimbabwe into the world market. Unfortunately for its strategic aims, Zimbabwe made a great success of manufactured exports in a context which after March 1984 reverted to being one of controlled trade. Negotiations for an expanded fund which would also help other sectors of the economy to export, went through all the technical stages easily, possibly because it involved people in the less ideological lower levels of the World Bank, many of whom were genuinely committed to promoting Zimbabwe's success. But after a long delay in Washington, without any technical problems being raised, nor any doubts being cast on the potential of Zimbabwe to benefit from the loan, it was finally vetoed for ideological reasons at the highest lev-
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els of the Bank. The last thing that the Bank wanted to happen was for Zimbabwe to succeed with 'the wrong policies' (Stoneman, 1991). Only when Zimbabwe agreed to liberalise trade would it get the funds (although in such a context such a fund becomes irrelevant). The 'threat of a good example' was diminished.

Consequences: the 50 Per Cent Solution

What Open Market Policies Imply for Economic Development

As well as enforcing more prudent economic policies (some aspects of which are unexceptionable), structural adjustment brings an end to most areas of discretion in economic policy, whether revolutionary experimentation, reactionary projects like apartheid, or even cautious attempts to change structures through the state in time-honoured fashion. Policies which will be constrained include programmes of regional integration, because component states will have little scope for reducing tariff barriers to each other, or giving other preferences, if they have been obliged to open up to world markets already. Similarly it will be harder to protect infant industries, to escape from primary-product dependence, to create new comparative advantages, for these things involve looking ahead to future markets and the prices they would throw up, whereas obeying today's market signals means accepting today's comparative advantages in what are usually relatively unprofitable areas (that is what it means to be underdeveloped) — and today's comparative disadvantages in profitable areas.

Another World Bank 'success' story is Chile, which, thanks to military dictatorship was able to impose neo-liberal policies earlier and longer than the rest of Latin America. It is currently growing very fast (although two catastrophic drops in GDP of 15 per cent or more, one in the 1970s, the other in the 1980s, means that average growth over the last two decades has barely reached 2 per cent per annum), and this success follows a radical restructuring of the economy (involving deindustrialisation of much of the more advanced parts) and dramatic growth in the export of primary agricultural commodities, including fruit, vegetables, cut-flowers and wine. Undoubtedly it is a world leader in these areas, but with dozens of other countries (including Zimbabwe) beginning to compete seriously, it may well prove that its base is too narrow to sustain success for much longer (although 'success' still includes roughly 50 per cent unemployment). If this proves wrong, Chile will not so much be confirming the orthodox approach to development as blazing a new trail: free markets have not delivered success in the past.

What Open Market Policies Imply for Investment and Employment

It is popularly claimed on the basis of neoclassical theory (in particular the Heckscher-Ohlin theorem) that acceptance of world prices will promote foreign investment that is keen to exploit the resources — in particular cheap labour — of developing countries. To some extent this is true, as shown by the experience of some export processing zones (EPZs) like Mauritius. Yet out of over 200 EPZs worldwide, the number of clear successes can be counted on the fingers of one hand. This shows that there is probably a market only for a tiny fraction of the type of goods that very
cheap labour could produce, and with the entry of India and China into this area it is decreasingly likely that any African country could gain significant benefits from this market.

In fact most foreign investment promotes what it is most familiar with, namely modern capital-intensive technology. It is already the experience of liberalising countries in Africa that insofar as they have got any new investment it is capital-intensive, providing fewer jobs than the former protected labour-intensive industries that were bankrupted by liberalisation. This technology is designed in rich countries where US$50,000 is the average cost of an internationally competitive job. The process, of bringing it into poor countries may be necessary if the latter are to compete in export markets where high quality and consistency are essential. South Africa, like most developing countries needs to look for niche markets in these areas, exploiting whatever advantages of geography, climate, skills, cultural connections or resources it can muster. The possibilities range from wines and cut-flowers to the EC market, through high-quality clothing and footwear, to stainless steel from Columbus and platinum-based catalytic converters. Almost certainly it does not mean labour-intensive sweat shops.

But if open policies do therefore require investment with first world technology and capital-labour ratios in export industries, they also impose them in the domestic market. To achieve employment for the annual increment to the labour force by these means would imply spending R100,000 on each of some 800,000 new workers or R80 bn, some 36 per cent of GDP—or 48 per cent if we add the 12 per cent or so needed to make good deprecia-

tion. This high an investment ratio is plainly an impossibility. Even if we assume that each ‘international’ job creates two others for a quarter the cost in related downstream and service industries, i.e. the average cost per job falls to R50,000, an investment ratio of 30 per cent is still needed. It is in fact extremely optimistic to expect that a 30 per cent investment ratio would indeed produce enough jobs (it would also imply a steady growth rate of at least 6 per cent annually), but it is also over-optimistic to believe that 30 per cent would be achievable at a time of expectations of much higher educational and health expenditure. Note furthermore that even this huge effort would merely stop unemployment rising above the present unacceptable levels. The actual outcome is much more likely to be closer to what actually occurred in both South Africa and Zimbabwe in the 1980s when barely 10 per cent of school leavers found jobs (although in South Africa the ratio was falling to 7 per cent, whilst in Zimbabwe it was rising to about 20 per cent).

**Why a ‘50 per cent’ Solution is Likely**

Thus even employing 50 per cent of school leavers would be a startlingly good result for orthodox economic policies, and reading their strategy documents (Juta, 1990, 1992) it is clear that they would see it as such. The other 50 per cent (or they might well be two-thirds as in Latin America) would be thrown back onto subsistence in the rural areas, the bantustans, the urban informal sector, or simple unemployment and crime. When, ever more rarely, orthodox economists do such calculations, or are confronted with them, they take refuge in the ‘multiplier’ as I did above to reduce the impossible 48 per cent investment
ratio to an implausible 30 per cent, or resort to references to ‘trickle down’ or ‘the informal sector’.

But these are at best wishful thinking and at worst a disguise for the fact that the orthodox have no solution for a half or more of the population. References to market forces eventually finding them jobs have no historical precedent to support them and little theoretical justification. Lewis’s elegant model (Lewis, 1954) has not come about in practice, and indeed how could the market deal with a problem which lies outside it? (The only linkage is through the supposed effect of the unemployed driving down wages so that profits and investment rise and new jobs are created. Clearly the leakages from this benign cycle have proved nearly complete in practice). If unemployed people receive no income and exert no effective demand, the market has no information as to whether they constitute 50 per cent of the population, or 60 per cent, or 90 per cent. So the equilibrium it reaches may be optimal for the lucky 50 per cent (or 40 per cent or 10 per cent) who happen to be inside already, but clearly not for the population as a whole. Investment to provide the right type of affordable jobs for the whole population is therefore primarily a political, not an economic, decision.

Alternatives: Some Lessons from the Experience of Zimbabwe

In face of a situation in which a bankrupt orthodoxy nevertheless holds nearly all the levers of power, alternative policies need to be carefully tailored. It is not enough to show that alternative strategies are both theoretically possible and historically successful (which I attempt to illustrate in the next section); in addition the basic agenda of the international financial institutions — to create a single world market — needs to be confronted.

Zimbabwe was Remarkably Successful in the 1980s

First, why is Zimbabwe’s post-colonial record relevant to South Africa? It is surprising that this question needs to be answered at all, but it does because so few South Africans are prepared to admit that other countries may have anything to teach them. Of course South Africa is different, with its own specificities. But so is every country; however, there are numerous similarities and shared historical experiences that make Zimbabwe’s record of much value, providing both positive and negative lessons. Apart from the common experience of white minority rule, both countries have mineral-dependent economies in which substantial manufacturing capacity has been developed through import-substituting industrialisation, largely as a result of the economic nationalism of those white minorities.

But the particular reason for discussing the Zimbabwean experience here is that Zimbabwe’s very economic success in the 1980s provides good evidence for the existence of an alternative to the orthodoxy. During the 1980s real GDP growth in Zimbabwe averaged over 4 per cent per annum, about three times that in South Africa or in Africa as a whole. Furthermore it was if anything faster in the second half of the decade, so contrary to some suggestions, there is little evidence that the experiment was ‘running out of steam’. Over the decade, and particularly since March 1984 after the decision to terminate an IMF programme, Zimbabwe diversified exports in the direction of manufactures,
repaid its debts without resort to rescheduling, expanded education and health services, created food security sufficient to enable it to ride out the devastating drought of 1987 without imports — and all this in face of a daunting battery of constraints, including destabilisation, rigged export markets, donor hostility and four drought years. To emerge with an average growth rate of 4 per cent may not seem remarkable until one considers what might have been the growth rate in the newly industrialised countries, the world’s great success stories of the 1970s and 1980s, had they suffered similar constraints. Suppose, for example, that South Korea had not had massive donor flows from the US in its initial import-substituting phase in the early 1960s. Would it have had the base to grow at 8 per cent thereafter? Suppose then that it had not had access to cheap loans, that it had not had access to an open US market (at a time when it was closed to most other countries), that it had been landlocked, that it had been subject to continuous destabilisation by North Korea and China. What would its growth record have been, despite its widely praised export-oriented policies? Only 6 per cent? Or maybe only 4 per cent?

Nevertheless it is not the intention to claim that the Zimbabwean record (or the South Korean record) is wholly positive. The first three years of Zimbabwe’s independence saw serious overborrowing, much of it unproductive in the short run, resulting in the debt crisis of the late 1980s when the debt-service ratio approached 40 per cent. The successes were coupled with a failure to create enough jobs, to implement redistribution, especially of land, to plan meaningfully, to fully work out government’s role in industrial and trade policy (in the manner of South Korea), and to respond quickly and appropriately to shocks. The constraints were serious enough, but mistakes were made in responding to them that often made their consequences worse than they need have been.

**Depackaging Structural Adjustment**

How then do we explain this significant (albeit somewhat mixed) success in such difficult circumstances? It is not simply a matter of Zimbabwe being a non-adjuster; in some respects it followed very conservative financial policies after the initial profligacy of the first three years. The overborrowing did not at the time seem inappropriate in view of the initial growth rate of 10 per cent, but when this declined with the world slump and the beginning of the drought of 1982-84, a balance of payments crisis forced the signing of an IMF programme in 1982. But as the economic situation worsened (1983 showed a 3.6 per cent decline in GDP), so did the balance of payments, and in March 1984 Zimbabwe returned to direct foreign exchange controls knowing that this would bring an end to the IMF facility after only a third of it had been drawn down. It then pursued a home-grown structural adjustment programme which soon restored external balance. From then on the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe maintained a realistic value for the Zimbabwe dollar by relating it to a ‘trade-weighted basket’ of imports and exports. (The currency was deliberately kept slightly overvalued; the World Bank from time to time estimated it as being between 10 per cent and 20 per cent high. Black market rates suggesting 50 per cent to 100 per cent overvaluation did not accurately reflect underlying economic realities, but rather the premium that some
individuals were prepared to pay at the margin to get trapped funds out). A substantial trade surplus was engineered by tight import controls so as to repay the earlier debts. New borrowing was tightly monitored so that the debt-service ratio was reduced from nearly 40 per cent to under 25 per cent. Indeed the finance minister Dr Chidzero probably over-reacted to the finger-burning suffered in the early 1980s, and set his face against further borrowing. As a result in 1987 when a new drought coincided with a hump in debt repayments, significant damage was done to the economy through reductions in the real value of foreign exchange allocations to industry to about a third of the 1981 level. Nevertheless, this was not part of a Ceausescu-like strategy to reduce debts to zero, for Dr Chidzero argued that a roughly 20 per cent debt-service ratio was the price that a developing country had to pay for access to necessary development funds. The key point was that it was by then accepted that borrowing had to be primarily for investment that would generate its own surplus out of which repayments would be made.

Although the state continued to play an active role, controlling prices and wage levels, most enterprise remained in private hands, and markets continued to operate in wide areas of the economy. For instance the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange flourished in the late 1980s, with its industrial index rising in real terms faster than any in the world for two years.

But if it can therefore be seen that although Zimbabwe accepted the first half of a structural adjustment package — basically the stabilisation part which amounts to little more than a prudent adaptation to external realities — it set its face firmly against later parts. In particular it continued to control imports and foreign exchange which can be seen as an essential part of a policy of ISI (import substitution industrialisation), and also (as in South Korea) part of a policy of developing export industries. The other part of the export policy included an export subsidy and other measures such as the export-revolving fund described above, and although modestly funded it was very successful. Government also retained a major role (probably excessive) in economic regulation and in agricultural marketing, and resisted demands for privatisation (indeed the state sector expanded somewhat through voluntary sales of assets by departing South African companies). Less satisfactorily, government put a lid on the budget deficit at around 10 per cent of GDP rather than trying to squeeze it to 5 per cent; (endnote 4) but at least it halted what had threatened to get out of hand. Subsidies on foodstuffs were reduced, but parastatals continued to require subsidies, largely though not entirely for external reasons. For instance the Grain Marketing Board's deficit derived in large part from a combination of paying decent prices to farmers and the costs of storing surplus maize that could not be sold profitably on the world market because of the dumping of similarly surplus maize by the EC and the US. Other major costs which had been squeezed under the pre-1984 IMF programme were those arising in education, health and defence. All were protected after March 1984, although this meant that few areas were left in which major savings could be made in government expenditure. But government had little choice in view of both needs and popular expectations in the former areas and in view of continuing destabilisation and the costs
of protecting the Beira Corridor in the case of defence.

Despite the impeccable payments record and an economy often rightly described as dynamic by outside observers, Zimbabwe received little credit. The external pressure for liberalisation continued to mount, with aid programmes being squeezed on flimsy pretexts as in the case of Britain and the US (which stopped its aid programme in 1986 because of criticism of the US policy in Angola made on 4 July).

The bottom line, however, was that Zimbabwe still continued to grow at 4 per cent despite a net outflow of over 5 per cent of GDP occasioned by debt-service, while Ghana, the World Bank's prime African example of adjustment success, was growing at 5 per cent on the basis of net inflows of 5 per cent of GDP. What would Ghana have managed with an outflow at Zimbabwe's level? Alternatively, at what rate might unadjusted Zimbabwe have grown with a 5 per cent net inflow?

Zimbabwe was thus not forced into structural adjustment by financial imbalances or the pressure of debt, as in so many other cases; it had already confronted and overcome these problems. Nor had it 'run out of steam' or 'hit the buffers'. Although many problems existed, and reforms in many areas were needed (and recommended by the present author), the bottom line was that nevertheless growth was still strong, and possibly increasing (at the end of the decade financial analysts in local merchant banks were speculating as to whether having negotiated the 'debt hump', a devastating drought and reduced the debt-service ratio, Zimbabwe had at last reached a path of steady growth).

Insofar as economic factors were behind the shift to liberalisation it was in the desire to relax the foreign-exchange constraints, worsened by the limits to aid imposed by the IFIs. Much more important than the economic factors, however, were political factors, as interests with external links were strengthened relative to domestic interests following the changes in Eastern Europe.

Conclusions — What South Africa Can Learn

The obvious lessons from the above are that considerable pressures will be applied to the future South Africa to follow the new orthodox open-market policies. The outcome will be a range of constraints against the undoing of the inequalities of income and property engineered by apartheid (Padayachee, 1992). As in Zimbabwe, a new black elite will be welcomed into the existing elite, thereby moderating its egalitarian fervour. But many people, probably a majority, will see no economic improvement, with only a minority of school-leavers finding jobs even if the economic growth rate averages 5 per cent (and that will depend on generous aid and investment flows). Nor does the experience of structural adjustment to date offer bright hopes of longer-run development bringing 'redistribution with growth': South Africa can discount the possibility of becoming a new NIC (ruled out by the structural adjustment package) or of attracting labour-intensive assembly industries away from Asia. All it can hope for is to develop further its comparative advantages in mineral and agricultural production, much like Chile, although probably less successfully.

We know that alternative policies do
exist, and that they must be closely related to the successful policies followed by the late industrialisers of the 19th and early 20th centuries and by the NICs and Zimbabwe more recently. Unfortunately we also know that such policies are now deemed by the new totalitarianism to be wrong.

How then can the future South Africa gain room for manoeuvre, avoid the blind alley that the orthodoxy will direct it down, and adopt proven policies without antagonising the financial powers that would undoubtedly defeat it in a head-on confrontation? If there is an answer, it must draw on two elements: the uncertainties and divisions within the World Bank; and the specificities of its own situation.

On the first point, it is no secret that the public certainties on the merits of structural adjustment hide profound uncertainties and controversy inside the Bank in the face of the lack of visible success of its policies in Africa. One analysis goes as far as to suggest that the World Bank as an institution lost faith in structural adjustment three or four years ago, but is obliged to continue promoting it until it has developed a new policy that can command a new consensus (McCarney, 1990). On the second point, the high expectations of the population and likely social disruption in the event of disappointment are well-appreciated. The ANC could use this, together with the risk of finding itself outflanked by more militant forces in Cosatu, the SACP, the PAC, AZAPO, the ‘comrades’ in the townships, etc, to strengthen its bargaining position and obtain a range of exceptions to the usual package. In effect this is similar to what South Korea and Taiwan gained: so as to make them into anti-communist show-cases, the constraints imposed on other capitalist developing countries were lifted. South Africa and Southern Africa as a whole need access to world markets without being denied the right to protect their own infant industries; this is what is in fact available to signatories to the Lomé Convention. They also need interventions to undo the past interventions of apartheid and colonialism, to promote exports, and to create labour-intensive jobs meeting the basic needs of the population. It is ridiculous to expect that any sort of solution to South Africa’s problems could involve allowing its market to be flooded with cheap consumer goods from Asia, while millions of people who could be producing such goods remain unemployed. If they produce inefficiently at first, this will have to be accepted, with market opening following success as in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

Finally it may be remarked that one of Zimbabwe’s major mistakes was to proclaim that it was building socialism while it was manifestly doing nothing of the sort (Davies, 1988). In this way it alienated much support from the major capitalist powers, while failing to gain significant support from socialist ones or being able to emulate their success in job creation. It was prepared to lose aid as a result of rhetoric, as when it attacked the US over its policy in Angola and the Soviet Union over Afghanistan. But it was not prepared to risk the loss of aid through implementing land redistribution policies that were desperately needed for both human and economic reasons.

Perhaps the chief lesson for South Africa in this area therefore is that its actions need to be much more radical than Zimbabwe’s, while its rhetoric should be less so.
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Endnotes

1. As Ghana was seen to be growing at 5 per cent per annum on the basis of net inflows of 5 per cent of GDP, it is pertinent to ask whether it was the new policies or the reward for adopting them that was producing the growth. As after five years Ghana was still not in a position to repay the accumulated debt, it had the loans rescheduled and continued receiving net flows worth 5 per cent of GDP. Two further questions are posed: how long must this process continue before the country can begin to service its own debts? And how does this experience differ from the profligate borrowing to sustain earlier policies so criticised by the World Bank?

2. In fact in 1992 after six years of structural adjustment its total external debt at US$29bn was 113 per cent of GDP, debt-service arrears were US$3.4bn and there was a debt-service ratio of about 70 per cent before rescheduling (Financial Times, 'Survey on Nigeria', 1 April 1993). Meanwhile elections between two parties approved by the military are scheduled for 1993.

3. ERFs ensure that potential exporters don’t fail to produce because they have inadequate foreign exchange to purchase needed inputs. Whatever the general foreign exchange constraint, a firm export order wins the right to import essential inputs whose foreign exchange costs are then reimbursed from the export earnings.

4. On the other hand Reg Green has pointed out in a personal correspondence that the budget deficit was probably about the same size as defence expenditure, which at over three times the African per caput average was largely justified by destabilisation. In other words, if this constraint is allowed for, Zimbabwe was otherwise following very tight financial policies.

Bibliographic Note


Briefings

Western Sahara: A Moroccan-style Election?
Teresa K Smith de Cherif

In the 18 months since the last briefing on Western Sahara (ROAPE 53), a new United Nations (UN) Representative for the territory has been appointed, shuttle diplomacy has been undertaken, and the two parties, Morocco and the Polisario Front, have held unprecedented direct negotiations in the West Saharan capital of El-Ayoun. Nevertheless, if cease-fire violations, deteriorating human rights, 'insider trading', and chicanery are indications, no means have been spared in transforming the UN peace plan for Western Sahara into the charade of a Moroccan election. Thus, chances for a free and fair referendum for the Sahrawi people, originally scheduled for January 1992, seem quite remote as the United Nations skews the process toward Morocco’s favour. The conflict in Western Sahara presented an opportunity to demonstrate the neutrality of the United Nations and its ability to be an arbiter of the new world order. Sadly, under the helm of UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, this chance has been lost.

As early as January 1992, Boutros-Ghali announced that if the dispute between Morocco and the Polisario over voter eligibility were not resolved by May of the same year, he would resort to another approach. Then, on 24 March, he appointed a former foreign minister of Pakistan, Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, as the Special Representative for Western Sahara, despite the explicit objections of the Polisario Front. While Yaqub-Khan conducted his first visit to the region, an official US Senate report and sworn testimony by the former deputy commander of MINURSO (UN monitoring body) forces, US Colonel Albert Zapanta, made clear that Moroccan obstruction and mismanagement at UN headquarters were jeopardising the peace plan. In late May, the Secretary General reported that Morocco had been responsible for 97 of 102 cease-fire violations.

Moroccan Rebuff

With no progress noted in Yaqub-Khan’s negotiations, the Security Council extended MINURSO’s mandate for another three months. Throughout that summer, the Special Representative shuttled from New York and Geneva to Rabat, where he met with King Hassan, and to Tindouf for meetings with Polisario Secretary General Mohamed Abdelaziz and with the movement’s chief UN negotiator, Bachir Mustapha Sayed.

Just as he asked the two parties to provide written assurances regarding the possible outcomes of the referendum, Morocco issued a defiant challenge to the United Nations: the long-postponed general and local elections would be held in Morocco and Western Sahara. Morocco was moving to cement its annexation of the former Spanish colony.
Instead of unequivocally rejecting Morocco's rebuff to the efforts underway to resolve the status of Western Sahara, Boutros-Ghali merely requested Morocco to give assurances that the voting would not prejudice the final status of Western Sahara. The first round of elections, therefore, went ahead on 4 September 1992, with a Sahrawi participation index of almost 100 per cent in a vote that produced a 99.98 per cent approval of constitutional reforms. Then, on 8 September 1992, despite his formal assurances to the contrary, King Hassan announced that Western Sahara would be converted into an autonomous region of Morocco with development priority over all other regions. Local and legislative elections were held on 16 October 1992 and 25 June 1993, respectively, under the hoisted flag of the United Nations. By hook or by crook, Morocco was going to keep Western Sahara.

Accommodating Morocco

The 22 August 1992 Secretary General's report on Western Sahara was a harbinger of the accommodations Boutros-Ghali and Yaqub-Khan were apparently prepared to make for Morocco. The report, in supporting the voter eligibility criteria introduced by former UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, threw negotiations back to square one. Despite Morocco's continued pattern of troop movements, overflights of Polisario positions, and shelling, all of which are cease-fire violations, the August report noted a substantial decline in breaches of the cease-fire by employing a technique of confirmed and unconfirmed violations. A number of field observers stated to this writer that perhaps UN headquarters was requiring Polisario to return fire or to shoot down Moroccan planes in order to provide incontestable evidence of Morocco's truce violations. Certainly, one questions why UN observers are in the mission area if headquarters cannot rely on their judgment.

On 28 October, Yaqub-Khan pessimistically outlined to the Security Council his attempts to unblock the impasse and proposed as a last-chance measure consultations with the Sahrawi tribal chiefs. On 30 November, 38 tribal chiefs arrived in Geneva (19 from each party); yet, 7 persons on the Moroccan side were not tribal chiefs elected by the Sahrawis in 1973 and officially recognised by the United Nations, but personnel of the Moroccan Interior Ministry. When Polisario suggested that 12 officially recognised chiefs from each side might negotiate, Morocco refused and the meeting was cancelled. Instead of duly attributing the responsibility for failure, Yaqub-Khan released a partisan communiqué blaming Polisario. Then on Christmas Day, announcement that his next report would be completed by the second half of January 1993, Boutros-Ghali declared that the referendum would be held within a few months.

Human Rights

Throughout this period, Morocco continued to violate the human rights of the Sahrawis in Morocco and in the Western Sahara. On 24 September 1992, in the oasis of Assa (southern Morocco), hundreds of unarmed Sahrawi civilians held a peaceful demonstration in favour of independence for Western Sahara. Moroccan security forces opened fire, killing 15 people and injuring scores of others. Morocco acknowledges that an incident took place. At least 28 of the demonstrators were put on trial in
Agadir, with no recourse to defence lawyers, and sentenced in January 1993 to one year of solitary confinement for having disturbed public order.

In October and November, in the Western Saharan cities of Smara and El-Ayoun, Moroccan forces responded violently when Sahrawi civilians attempted to hold peaceful demonstrations and to make contact with MINURSO, both of which are forbidden. On 20 October, 19 of the demonstrators sought asylum in the UN sub-headquarters at Smara, were refused on the order of the sector chief, and were turned over to the Moroccan authorities — an act which violated the international standards of political asylum and refoulement.

On 29 March 1993, Amnesty International confirmed that hundreds of Sahrawis had been arrested by the Moroccan authorities in Western Sahara and southern Morocco between September 1991 and January 1993 on suspicion of supporting Western Saharan independence or for participating in peaceful protests and expressed its concern that the human rights guarantees in the UN peace plan had not been respected. The Swiss government, which staffs a medical unit in Western Sahara, confirmed the refoulement incident, noting that MINURSO could have provided provisional protection to persons directly threatened by unjustifiable violations. Yet, when Yaqub-Khan investigated the matter, he could not corroborate any human rights violations. In light of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, this UN 'finding' suggests, at best, UN negligence in safeguarding the civilian population of Western Sahara and, at worst, outright complicity with the Moroccan government. In May and July of 1993, there were reports that Morocco had arrested more Sahrawis for the nonviolent expression of their opinions.

To preempt scrutiny over the deplorable human rights situation in the territory, Morocco released details concerning alleged torture and misuse of humanitarian assistance in the Sahrawi refugee camps located in the Tindouf region of Algeria. Morocco called upon a prominent Polisario defector, Brahim Hakim — who was Polisario's foreign minister in the mid-1980s — to provide the details at a press conference in New York on 11 November. Hakim, who fled to Morocco on 12 August after learning he was to be indicted on charges of embezzlement, is now officially Morocco's ambassador-at-large. Although Hakim's allegations were dismissed by the press as a propaganda exercise, the Algerian Mission to the United Nations released an unusually terse response:

'It is not a good idea — and it ought not to be permitted — to move the debate on to contentious ground ... MINURSO is present at Tindouf and in constant contact with [the refugees] ... Representatives of nongovernmental agencies and eminent personalities active on two fronts — delivering humanitarian aid and protecting human rights — have for many years been visiting, on a regular basis, Saharan refugee camps at Tindouf. Those various parties are certainly in a better position than anyone else to document the actual situation of the Saharan refugees.

Nevertheless, in March 1993 a Amnesty International report 'expressed concern about credible reports of abuses by the Polisario Front' and appealed to the Polisario to halt such practices. In a reply, Mohamed Abdelaziz denied the reports.
Influence Peddling

In the period of 1991-1992, when Morocco was supposedly improving human rights conditions, Rabat actually was using influence peddling and deception to garner favourable commentary and foreign aid. To wit, during this period, Morocco received $136.4 million in US foreign assistance and then paid three US firms in excess of $1.4 million to represent and promote the Kingdom of Morocco in the United States. The methods used by Morocco included attempts at discrediting several professional staff members on Capitol Hill as well as at the US Agency for International Development. Furthermore, the Moroccan lobby claimed that the infamous Tazmamart dungeon was razed and that 260 formerly ‘disappeared’ Sahrawis were set free. To the contrary, Tazmamart is open, those Sahrawis are living under strict surveillance — including the threat of death — and at least 8 of them have been rearrested. Still, King Hassan remains a Washington favourite; when Mohamed Abdelaziz prematurely visited the city in June 1993, no one in the administration of Bill Clinton would receive him.

Pressure on the UN

In January 1993, a year after the referendum was originally planned to take place, Boutros-Ghali released yet another report in which he outlined three proposals to break the deadlock and asked the Security Council to choose how to proceed. The first option was to pursue negotiations between Morocco and Polisario, which he believed had a very weak chance of success. The second was to implement immediately the peace plan along the lines defined in December 1991 by the former Secretary General, which he recognised would imply acting without the cooperation of one of the parties. The third consisted of adopting an alternative approach, namely autonomy within Morocco. France immediately backed option 2 and circulated a draft resolution in its favour, but the United States insisted on its withdrawal, considering that a solution had to be based on the consent of the two parties.

Simultaneously, Pérez de Cuéllar became the first UN secretary general accused of corruption and ‘inside trading’. He was the principal artificer, in December 1991, of conflictive voter identification criteria that proposed incorporating an electorate three-times greater than that defined by the 1974 census. His report greatly satisfied Rabat, which had been insisting that 170,000 Moroccans be included in the plebiscite in order not run the risk of losing. On 29 January, Pérez de Cuéllar was named vice president of a French holding company acquired by the largest business in Morocco, Omnium Nord Africain, which is 70 per cent owned by King Hassan and 12 per cent French. He denied having accepted the position, ‘because it could have being misinterpreted.’ Still, the offer leaves the impression that the Moroccans wanted to thank Pérez de Cuéllar for support that was far removed from the impartiality proper of a secretary general.

The affair certainly was noted during February’s intense negotiations at UN headquarters. Finally, the Security Council expressed its preference for the first option — that negotiations should continue — in resolution 809 of 2 March 1993. The main elements of the decision were that the peace plan be implemented without further delay, a deadline of three months for
both parties to resolve their differences, registration of the Sahrawis identified in the Spanish census, and the undertaking preparations necessary for the referendum to be held by the end of 1993, at the latest. The novelty of the resolution, however, was that it rebuffed Boutros-Ghali’s stated preference and required him to intervene in a much more direct manner in order to reduce the differences between Moroccans and Sahrawis over updating the 1974 Spanish census, which the Council reiterated should serve as the basis for establishing the list of voters.

Soon after, on 29 March 1993, Yaqub-Khan traveled to the region once again in order to prepare for Boutros-Ghali’s first visit. On 22 April, British diplomat Eric Jensen was appointed as head of the voter Identification Commission and UN headquarters dispatched 30 civilian police (CIVPOL) to the territory in order to facilitate his work. One month later, Jensen was touring the mission area, where his visit to Tindouf coincided with the 20th anniversary of the Polisario Front. An interim report of the Secretary General of 21 May, while noting a certain progress in the negotiations, suggested that Polisario was the party not cooperating.

Having been instructed by the Security Council to put an end to the criteria war, Boutros-Ghali toured the region from 31 May 31 through 4 June 1993, in what was billed as another last-chance initiative. In Rabat, he spent two days with King Hassan; in Algeria, he met with the President of the High Council of State, Ali Kafi; and, after initially refusing to meet with Mohamed Abdelaziz in the Tindouf camps, the meeting did take place in Hafed Bujema, territory under the control of Polisario forces.

‘Compromise’ Formula

In his visit, Boutros-Ghali discussed a ‘secret’ formula that outlined his attempt to establish an intermediary solution to the deadlock. Its four essential points are: full acceptance of the amplified criteria proposed by Pérez de Cuéllar (see Seddon, ROAPE 53); the use of official documents and oral testimony as supporting evidence; noting how and where the Identification Commission will determine the voter eligibility of individual applicants; and general observations on how a Saharan electorate will be chosen. While Boutros-Ghali had expressed great hope that both parties would accept the plan, Morocco’s official response was, ‘There is no intermediary solution nor compromise possible.’ Given that Boutros-Ghali has warned that he will apply his formula as it stands if the parties do not reach agreement, that his so-called compromise accommodates Moroccan demands in about 90 per cent of its content, and that he displayed a far greater interest in his talks with Morocco than with Polisario, there appears to be a certain discrimination against the Polisario Front. Polisario displayed a moderate enthusiasm, although it called for numerous clarifications. It also will accept an augmentation of the voter list limited to approximately 15 per cent of the 1974 Spanish census (revised in 1991, it lists 71,204 Sahrawis) — an increase that the US Department of State, based on similar experiences, deems reasonable — and confined to individuals who can provide written proof of having been residents of the former Spanish Sahara. The Polisario will accept the UN’s recourse to oral testimony provided by tribal chiefs only in extreme cases and if (and only if) the chiefs called to testify are those elected
by the Sahrawi people in 1973. Polisario also is requiring that appropriate definitions of the concept of tribe and tribal subfractions be delineated, based on links to the territory. Polisario will not accept the erroneous impression of the compromise proposal — that if a person is included in the 1974 census, then all of his tribal subfraction belongs to Western Sahara — which effectively would define as 'Sahrawi' Moroccan tribes that never had anything to do with the Spanish Sahara and whose numbers far surpass the total real Sahrawi population.

Direct Negotiations

On 1 July, Boutros-Ghali announced a major breakthrough: that Morocco and Polisario would undertake direct negotiations in the Western Saharan capital on 15 July. The occasion would enable Polisario to reenter the sector controlled by Morocco since February 1976, signaling the first direct talks in the Western Sahara. The meeting was designed to unblock, through direct negotiations, the stalled peace process by coming to agreement on Boutros-Ghali’s 4-point formula.

On 16 July, a high-level and plenipotentiary 11-member delegation of the Polisario Front, headed by Bachir Mustapha Sayed, arrived in El-Ayoun aboard a UN charter plane. Special Representative Yaqub-Khan had arrived the day earlier aboard King Hassan’s private plane, after a long stopover in Rabat and Casablanca. One hour after the Polisario’s arrival, the Moroccan delegation landed, led by its plenipotentiary ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Ahmed Senussi. Some 20 members of the Royal Consultative Council for Saharan Affairs constituted the majority of the Moroccan delegation, under the careful watch of Minister of the Interior, Driss Basri, and his two principal deputies, Omar Hadrami and Brahim Hakim.

Although three hours of direct exchanges did take place, there was no substantial dialogue in El-Ayoun. The Moroccan side unilaterally decided to convert the meeting into a gathering of tribal chiefs, removing Senussi and replacing him with Mohamed Cheikh Baidila, a Sahrawi who is currently the governor of Sale (near Rabat), who would negotiate on behalf of the Royal Consultative Council. The Council, however, lacks decision-making authority and is limited to proposing measures for the social and economic development of the Sahara. Eerily reminiscent of its tactics at the failed December meeting in Geneva, Morocco made clear that the meeting was not a negotiation, but merely an exchange of points of view between the Council and the ‘brothers from Tindouf, who were returning to the motherland.’ Thus, owing to the imbalance of authority and powers of the delegations, the meeting was not between governments, as had been agreed, and stalled. In the closing session — and only after consultations with King Hassan — Senussi replaced Baidila, delivering a paternalistic message. In contrast, Sayed indicated Polisario’s complete willingness and commitment to compromise, noting the reunion as a ‘first step, a victory over very selves, a victory of realism and responsibility.’ Because the parties met face-to-face — if only at the opening and closing ceremonies — a dialogue was commenced, and an agreement was reached to meet again, El-Ayoun cannot be considered a failure.

Nevertheless, the air of hostility and intimidation that prevailed in El-Ayoun
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raises serious doubts about the UN’s willingness to establish a plebiscitary atmosphere in Western Sahara, as duly required by the peace plan. El-Ayoun, once a breezy little town, was draped in Moroccan flags and sealed behind the ferrous measures of the Moroccan Interior Ministry; hundreds of secret police were stationed on the city’s street corners; and, ironically, the meeting place, UN headquarters, was located on the so-called Green March street. Most notable, however, was the information blockade caused when the United Nations left the matter of accreditation to the Moroccans exclusively. A corps of journalists who had traveled to Tindouf, hoping to accompany the Polisario team to El-Ayoun, had to be left behind. Rabat would only accredit 12 foreign reporters and restricted their movements. The environs of the Hotel Parador, which hosted the delegations, was cordoned off by Moroccan police dressed as civilians. In addition, Spanish sources suggest that of 150 so-called journalists from Morocco, only 15 were reporters, the rest being agents of the Ministry of the Interior who were spreading rumours and taping private conversations.

**Prospects**

When the Special Representative Boutros-Ghali warned that ‘those who cooperate with the UN in the peace plan will benefit from its help, while those who oppose it will have to face the consequences of their decision’, the message was not aimed at the Moroccan side. Morocco has undoubtedly been the principal obstacle to the completion of the UN mission in Western Sahara. In the eyes of the Sahrawi people, who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of the referendum process, the United Nations has all but forsaken its impartiality and, thus, its ability to arbitrate and moderate a difficult impasse. Gutting the original peace plan, but leaving its facade, which is what Boutros-Ghali is effectively doing as he accommodates the Moroccans, may result in a referendum, but it will be a Moroccan-style election. While this may extricate MINURSO from Western Sahara, it may well provide the Sahrawis with a return to war as the only option.

_Teresa K Smith de Cherif_ is the president of the Sahara Fund, Inc. (Washington, DC), a nonprofit, tax-exempt organisation, recognised by the US Internal Revenue Service as a public foundation, operating for charitable, educational, cultural, and research purposes regarding Saharan Africa. The Sahara Fund, an affiliate of the African Studies Association of the United States, has produced _Voices from the Sand_, a documentary film set in Western Sahara.
Sudan: Over Four Years of Fundamentalist Rule

Sidgi Kaballo

This Briefing gives an account of the four years of Islamic fundamentalist rule in the Sudan since their seizure of power in June 1993. It poses the important question of whether the Islamic fundamentalist programme offers a viable solution to the problems that are facing Sudan and the difficulties confronting the Islamicists now that they are in power in having to provide practical solutions to concrete problems.

An Authoritarian State

The day the military junta seized power in June 1989 it established a legal framework for an authoritarian state. The Constitutional Decree No 1 suspended the 1985 Transitional Constitution of the Sudan that guaranteed political and civil rights for Sudanese citizens. The new Decree dissolved the elected Parliament, dismissed the elected government and established a self-appointed Revolutionary Command Council. Decree No 2 has confiscated the basic freedoms:

All political parties and political formation should be disbanded, their activities and formation prohibited and their property confiscated by the state.

It has withdrawn the licences of non-governmental newspapers, journals, publication and publication corporations. The Decree has declared a state of emergency throughout the country, prohibiting all sorts of opposition to the National Salvation Revolution (as the regime calls itself, Article 6:d). Clearly the Decree endangers individual and collective freedoms by permitting the detention, without trial, of individuals suspected of endangering political and economic stability; it also empowers the Chairman of the RCC to dismiss any public employee. Constitutional Decree No 3 provides the RCC and its Chairman control of all state institutions including the army, police, civil servants and the judiciary — the latter formerly an autonomous authority in the Sudan.

The authoritarian state is guilty of many acts of repression and violation of human rights. Detention camps that were closed in April 1985, following the overthrow of Nimeiri, have been reopened and new ones, known as Ghost Houses, have been secretly run by the Sudanese security since October 1989. Hundreds of Sudanese politicians, trade unionists, students, professionals, women, clergymen, Islamic religious leaders and Sheikhs, military officers and other citizens have been detained and tortured. Twenty-eight officers were executed in April 1990 and at least two detained persons died in prison, one under torture. At least four students were shot dead during demonstrations, three of them on the Khartoum University campus. Three other people have been shot in different places in the capital by the Security forces. Despite the promise of the Sudanese Minister of Justice, none of the killers have been brought to justice. Many people have been reported missing; many professionals — university teachers, civil servants, army, police and prison officers, as well as workers, have been dismissed from their jobs because of their political views.

The authoritarian state wasted no time in escalating the war in Southern Sudan bringing to an end the hope during the first half of 1989 for peace
Sudan: Four Years of Fundamentalism

Though human rights in the war zone are abused by all fighting factions, the Islamic Fundamentalists' share is greater than others. Civilians in areas under government control are detained, killed without trial or often with an unjust trial. Areas like the Nuba Mountains are described by human rights organisations as scenes of genocide. A press release by the Sudan Human Rights Organisation (SHRO), on 1 February 1993 confirmed that it had 'received reports of a massacre of horrendous scale in the rural area of Jebel Heiban in the Nuba Mountains region. According to the report, 6,000 people were massacred on 25 December 1992 and buried in a mass grave.'

In May 1993 SHRO showed a documentary film shot by a crew smuggled into the Nuba Mountains that provided testimonies of people who witnessed part of the 'holy war' against the Nuba people of Central Sudan. A church worker, Kamal Tutu, testified, 'After they burnt the church with the people inside, the military threw me into the embers of the church and left.'

The escalation of war in the South is orchestrated under the slogans of a Jihad. The peace negotiations, held in Nairobi in 1989 and in Abuja in 1991 and 1993 had failed because of the insistence of the Fundamentalists to impose their programme of the Islamic state on the mostly non-Muslim Southern Sudanese. Recent news has focused attention on the government bombardment of southern villages. On 16 September 1993, the Al Sharar Awassat (an Arab newspaper based in London), reported that the government had received military equipment from the Islamic government in Afghanistan; it was also reported that Arab-Afghan fighters were air-lifted to Khartoum. In response to press queries, the Sudan government peace negotiator, Mr Ali El Haj, responded that the government has opted for a military solution.

Sudan's Isolation

Four main reasons led to Sudan's international and regional isolation: the record of the Islamic Fundamentalist's regime in human rights violation; the Sudanese government's support of Iraq during the Gulf war; the close relation between Sudan and Iran and Libya; and the allegation that Sudan is hosting, training and arming terrorist groups of Islamic Fundamentalists. This isolation is reflected in a number of policies and resolution adopted by the international community. The European Community, Canada and the United States have denied the regime any economic assistance except that justified by humanitarian reasons and the Gulf countries stopped their economic assistance and finance of the 'three year recovery program' following the Gulf crisis in 1990.

In December 1992, the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on Social and Humanitarian Issues approved a resolution condemning human rights violations in the Sudan. That resolution was followed in February 1993 by the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva which shifted the discussion of the violation of human rights from the special procedures to an open one that allowed the Commission to appoint a Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Sudan. A discussion the same month in the British House of Lords also expressed concern about the situation of human rights. In August 1993 the US added Sudan to its list of countries
that encourage and host terrorism. In the same month, the IMF suspended Sudanese voting rights.

Islamic Economics of Poverty

The first announcement of the 1989 coup accused previous governments of mismanaging the economy and promised the Sudanese people prosperity and development. Yet after more than four years, the economic situation is far worse than that of June 1989. From 1989-1993 the level of prices increased by almost 2280%.

Escalating inflation was a result of the economic and financial policies of the government and their effect on other economic variables including the gross domestic product, the level of wages, the budget deficit, the external imbalance, the quantity of money and the exchange rate of the Sudanese pound. From 1990, shortly after appointing an ex-manager of the Braka Islamic Bank as Minister of Finance, the government began applying an IMF-style programme of economic recovery without the backing of the IMF and other international and regional financial institutions. The programme included the privatisation of the public sector, liberalisation of prices and exchange rates and the liberalisation of foreign trade. Despite isolation from the international financial institutions, the government continued to implement part of the programme hoping that by doing so it might persuade the IMF to come to its support. (The Sudanese Minister of Finance was quoted as saying the IMF told him that the Sudan was implementing the right economic policy but they had to solve their political problems with the Americans). This implementation led to the decline of the exchange rate of the Sudanese pound followed by a series of devaluations (see Table 2).

The government budget deficit increased from £59bn in 1989 to an estimated deficit of £68bn in 1993. In 1992-93, the government borrowed from the Central Bank almost 20% of the total government indebtedness to that bank since independence — £18bn compared with the total debt of £92bn.

The isolation of the regime led to a decline in foreign trade. Sudanese exports in the first three months of 1993 amounted to US$25m compared with US$263m in the first quarter of 1992. The liberalisation of the foreign trade was haunted by rising costs of production, an increase in the demand for imports for which foreign finance was not available — not only because of the isolation, but also because of the decline of transfers from Sudanese living abroad — the flight of Sudanese capital and the tendency of Sudanese businessmen to hold their savings in foreign currencies because of the continuous devaluation of the Sudanese pound. As a result the country faced a continuous shortage of fuel, medicine and other important goods.

In facing inflation the government was compelled to increase wages, yet the

| Table 1: Prices of Ten Consumer Commodities 1989-1993 |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Dura (90kg bag)| 60    | 2200  | 3500  | 5600  |
| Meat (kg)      | 24    | 120   | 150   | 550   |
| Bread (loaf)   | 0.25  | 0.50  | 1.5   | 2     |
| Sugar (lb)     | 0.75  | 7     | 10    | 45    |
| Charcoal (90kg)| 80    | 150   | 250   | 1000  |
| Oil (litre)    | 2.5   | 30    | 50    | 330   |
| Soap (piece)   | 0.5   | 8     | 10    | 25    |
| Toothpaste     | 7     | 45    | 150   | 320   |
| Benzene (gallon)| 7    | 25    | 50    | 150   |
| Gasoline (gallon)| 2.5  | 20    | 40    | 150   |
Table 2: Exchange Rate of Sudanese pound per USA dollar

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<tr>
<td>Official</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>Black Market</td>
<td>15</td>
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real income of the salaried population is declining — a fact that led to the government appointed leadership of the workers trade union’s federation to demand further increases in wages in August 1992. The ban on non-fundamentalist trade-unions and their dismissal from work, detention and torture, left the regime’s economic policies unchecked.

There has also been a serious fluctuation in agricultural output since 1989. Its sharp decline in 1989-90 and 1990-91 led to the famine of 1991 which put the life of more than four million people at risk. While the output of the 1991-92 season was good, the 1992-93 was only moderate. The war in the South and Nuba Mountains continue to endanger the lives of people in these areas. Continual bombardment and the armed conflict between the warlords have led to the prevention of food emergency supplies to the region resulting in famine but also an increasing displacement of innocent civilians. Those who are not killed by bullet or a bomb most probably die of hunger and malnutrition.

Where is the Opposition?

By 1990, the government destroyed the internal opposition in Northern Sudan. The failure of the doctor’s strike in October 1989, the defeat of the student uprising in December and the failure of the April 1990 coup, brought to an end any major opposition to the regime. Yet, external opposition has continued notably with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which though formed inside Sudan in October 1989, has worked from abroad since the beginning of 1990. The NDA was able to approach the SPLA/SPLM and convince its leadership of joining the alliance. It was able to hold three important conferences (in Addis Ababa, London and Nairobi) where agreements on policies to be implemented after the overthrow of the regime in Khartoum were agreed upon and drafts of a transitional constitution, transitional laws and economic programmes were adopted. Nevertheless, despite all these achievements the NDA remains ineffective because of the lack of genuine leadership and efficient organisational structure. The SPLA/SPLM remains the only genuine opposition but its effectiveness has been halted by internal division.

Despite the strong stand of the international community against the regime, it has not shown any support to the opposition, whether the NDA or the SPLA/SPLM. It seems that not only is the Khartoum regime living in isolation, but so too is the opposition which might be a consequence of its inefficiencies rather than the immobilisation of the international community.

Under such circumstances, the regime in the Sudan will continue to exist until either an alternative internal opposition appears or the NDA will be able to solve its leadership and organisational problems. The possibility of the re-unification of the SPLA/SPLM groups, though remote, may also contribute positively to the overthrow of the Fundamentalists.

Sidgi Kaballo, a Sudanese academic in exile, is the President Alternate of the Sudan Human Rights Organisation.
Human Rights Abuses in Sudan

A Agaw Jok Nhial, Nur Tawir Kafi & Eltigani Seisi

Human rights abuses in the Sudan are all pervasive and in 1992-93 there was an international outcry from the UN Security Council, the US and the European Community condemning the Sudan government. This Briefing examines abuses in the South, Nuba Mountains and Darfur. What follows is just a sample of the human rights abuses in the Sudan. Because of the security clampdown and the danger to anyone collecting data, the authors have relied largely on secondary sources — human rights organisations, NGOs and international agencies.

No single aspect of human life has been spared; no person, classes of people or professions have escaped the ill-treatment and humiliation of the National Islamic Front (NIF) security agents. Southerners as well as Northerners, Christians and Muslims alike, men and women, teenagers as well as grey-haired grandfathers, millionaire businessmen as well as helpless vagabonds; Sudanese Army officers and able-bodied Sudanese youths viewed as unsympathetic to the regime, medical doctors and lawyers, judges and university professors, students and pastoralists; all have suffered humiliation and physical abuse at the hands of the regime in Khartoum. People have been killed, women (and men also) have been raped, 70-year olds have been flogged, limbs have been amputated, bones have been broken through severe torture, property has been confiscated, people’s homes have been bulldozed down and people killed for refusing to vacate their own shelters, Christians have been forced to fight under the slogan of a jihad and compelled to shout the war cry of Allahu Akbar, La Ilah ila Lah, and sick people have been denied the opportunity to seek medical treatment available abroad.

Abuses in Southern Sudan

Security: The ultimate human rights abuse is that which claims the life of a human being. In this respect, the Sudan government stands to account for the loss of thousands of Sudanese lives either at the hands of its own so-called security forces or as a result of criminal negligence. In the Southern Sudan thousands of citizens have perished from hunger and hunger-related disease. Hundreds more have died while in detention in state prisons or secret ghost houses. Still many more have been gunned down in broad daylight in Juba by government troops and NIF militia who chose to avenge their comrades who died in SPLA attacks on the town. Various reports estimate that the number killed since June is well over 300 persons.

Political Impact: The immediate objective of the coup makers of June 1989 was to forestall the peace talks that were scheduled to take place on 4 July between the various political forces in the Sudan and the SPLM/Army.

These talks were expected by many Sudanese to succeed, but the Islamic fundamentalists were alarmed at the prospect of a peaceful settlement that would recognize the political, religious, ethnic, cultural and social diversity of the Sudan. It would have meant the adoption of a secular constitution for the country, a development which would have isolated the NIF and led to their possible demise in the country’s political arena. Thus they opted for a military approach.
All political parties and organisations were banned as of 30 June 1989. Existing national laws were suspended and the junta ruled by decree. Any politician who as much as dropped a careless remark was promptly arrested and kept in detention without trial. Almost all the prominent Southern politicians have been interned at one time or another since 30 June 1989, some repeatedly and civil and political rights have been suspended. The State of Emergency that has been in force since that time has given unlimited powers to NIF security organs and personnel. There are no courts of appeal and the people are at the mercy of every kind of thug that declares allegiance to the NIF ideology. Since 1989 political participation is only symbolic for Southern Sudanese. Appointments to political positions are usually sinecures that carry a salary but no power or authority.

Islamic Sharia has been applied indiscriminately to Muslims, Christians and followers of other faiths. Its application is being imposed under the protective umbrella of the emergency laws which in practice constitute a licence for lawlessness by the various agents of the security apparatuses of the regime. These laws have encouraged unspeakable excesses committed by the NIF supporters. Among other things, it has ensured the freedom to rape Southern females without the fear of retribution and it has meant the liberty to choose and take at gunpoint any property that a soldier or mujahid might fancy.

Religion: The driving force behind Beshari's regime's policies is Islamic religious zealotry. The defining feature is that it is an Islamic fundamentalist movement dedicated to turning the Sudan into a homogeneous Islamic theocratic state. A corollary of this philosophy is that the Sudan shall also be defined as an Arab nation. The NIF theologians view Islamism and Arabism as two faces of one coin.

The significance of this attitude is that non-Muslim Southern Sudanese (and they are the overwhelming majority) have found themselves put at great disadvantage by a government that does not — except for demagogic political expediency, recognise their religious faiths. With the implementation of the Sharia law the non-Muslim Southerners have automatically been reduced to the status of second-class, perhaps third-class, citizenship. Their being non-Muslim automatically disqualifies them for certain civil and political rights. They are not eligible for the office of the head of state, for instance, or for the top army positions. They cannot be accepted as witnesses against Muslims in law courts. Nor would the Islamic punishment for homicide be applicable in their case should one of them be murdered by a Muslim. The 1962 Missionary Societies' Act, first introduced by General Ibrahim Abboud at the height of his military dictatorship, is now being applied to the letter and with a vengeance. Thus it is not allowed for Christians to build churches or worship shelters anywhere in what is geographically designated as Northern Sudan. Many centres of worship that were constructed with temporary building materials in areas settled by displaced Southern Christians have been demolished throughout Northern Sudan, e.g. Khartoum, Omdurman, Khartoum North, Medani, Kosti, El Obeid, Damazin, Port Sudan and Dongola. Church property has also been confiscated in some of these places. Priests have been exiled from towns like Dongola and Damazin;
others have been arrested and subsequently released, while others remain in detention. One of the most dramatic incidents was the arrest of three Catholic priests in Juba in 1992. They were accused of inciting student protest against the Islamisation of the educational system in Equatoria Region. Following their arrest students in Juba went on a rampage protesting for several days until the three were released. Christian students are compelled to study and sit the Islamic religion in the Sudan School Certificate Examinations, otherwise they would not get a certificate at all, however well they might have done in other subjects. Islamic religion is now a compulsory subject at all educational stages in the Sudan.

Culture: Human rights abuses in the cultural sphere derive mainly from the regime's attempts to create by hook or by crook a uni-cultural Islamic society. Yet because culture is a cumulative process that encompasses more than religion and its basic tenets, the NIF cultural crusaders have had to resort to the imposition of certain codes of behaviour. For example, a special dress code — particularly for women — requiring them to wear long dresses and cover their hair, ears, and neck, and to refrain from using perfumes. Southern women have successfully resisted this, although some have been flogged for their defiance.

Servicemen in the various armed and security services are encouraged to sport a beard which accrues an additional salary allowance. The educational syllabi for all educational levels have been saturated with Islamic cultural inputs. Christians and other non-Muslims have to put up with a cultural deluge: radio and TV programmes, all monopolized by the state, broadcast and show nothing but Islamic literature. Southern non-Muslims have no access to any kind of media to make their cultural material known to their own audiences. The most dismaying aspect of this unfair contest is the regime's exploitation of all the media to depict Southern cultures as decadent, primitive and atheistic. The Southern insurgents of the SPLA are routinely described as Kufaar, or infidels, and every piece of land they set foot on is said to be desecrated and in need of purification.

Economic and Social

The civil war has devastated the economy of Southern Sudan. Even rudimentary subsistence activities upon which most of the rural people depended have been abandoned. The main culprit behind this deterioration is the Sudan government and its Army. It is true that banditry has wreaked havoc in many parts of the war zone, but it is the indiscriminate carpet bombing by high-altitude government military jets that has caused the greatest disruption of normal rural life. The economic difficulties that many Southerners face today might have been minimized or altogether overcome if the government had not treated every Southerner as its enemy.

In the towns and urban centres both in the South and in Northern Sudan many government officials and employees have been dismissed for either perceived defiance or protesting against some aspect of government policy. The result is that their families have been exposed to great suffering, denied licences for commercial activities and access to credit on the grounds that their businesses are not being run in accordance with the principles of Islamic Sharia.
Displaced people who ran away from the war zone to escape the fighting have been subjected to the most traumatic social experience. The government has deliberately striven to keep them perpetually unstable by constantly harassing and relocating them to new sites, always being worse than the previous one.

Generally, Southern Sudanese and the Nuba are being constantly subjected to deliberate harassment, especially in the Khartoum area where security agents break into people's homes in the middle of the night. Elderly people and women have been publicly flogged, an ordeal that is tantamount to the highest form of humiliation in many Southern societies.

Education: There is no longer any education in most of the South. The few towns still under the control of the Khartoum government are really nothing but garrison camps where school buildings have become the army barracks. Where there are schools, like in Wau, or Juba and Malakal, until recently, Islamisation of the curricula has been given more attention by the NIF appointees than the availability of educational opportunities for the greatest number of Southern children. All the regional ministers in the three Southern states of Equatoria, Bahr El Ghazal and Upper Nile are Muslims and members of the NIF. They were assigned the specific mission of Islamising the South as soon as possible through the vehicle of education. But it appears that the lack of popular support for their programme has been a major setback. The Islamisation of education has therefore been stalled until the regime tries another dry season offensive against the SPLA. Should such a military campaign succeed, it is calculated that the Southerners in the government controlled areas will be psychologically passified so as not to resist the Islamisation crusade.

Most of the schools that were opened in Khartoum for the displaced student population have been shut down and the students compelled to either drop out or join Northern schools instructing in Arabic. Professors and lecturers of the University of Juba who had been teaching in English language have also been forced to lecture in Arabic. As many of them could not cope, they simply chose to quit and started looking for alternative employment.

SPLA and Human Rights Abuses in Southern Sudan: The preceding expose has focused mainly on human rights abuses committed by the Sudan government against its own citizens. Yet the SPLA is also guilty of human rights abuses within its sphere of influence: the massacre of thousands of unarmed civilians in Bor, Yirol, Tonj and Bentin, by forces of the Nasir faction that also calls itself SPLA; the killing of the United Nations Relief personnel in SPLA territory. But this leads us to the crucial point of difference. The government, even an illegitimate junta that usurped power by force like the one in Sudan, is supposed to behave according to certain internationally recognized standards. One of these is assuming the responsibility for the safety and welfare of its citizens. The moral responsibility of the government is much greater than that of any other force, within the borders of its own territory. A guerilla army fighting for a definite cause has certain responsibilities towards the people on whose behalf it is fighting. Its success in winning support among the people depends on how it treats those people. The SPLA is viewed by many Southern Sudanese as a well-
disciplined army, and most of them are prepared to accept the explanations offered by its leadership for any excesses committed by its members. Such explanations are sometimes dramatically demonstrated when culprits are punished in public. The major difference between the SPLA and the NIF government in Khartoum is that whereas the SPLA does not normally condone human rights abuses committed by its soldiers against civilian citizens, it has been established beyond reasonable doubt that the Sudan government actually abets human rights abuses as part of its strategy of repression and coercion in order to impose its unacceptable policies on the Sudanese people.

**Human Rights Abuses in the Nuba Mountains**

In the mid-1980s, human rights abuses in the Nuba Mountains became a matter of concern when their neighbouring Arab nomadic tribes, heavily armed with modern automatic weapons, encroached on their lands. The Nuba people did not have any arms and when the central government failed to handle the situation, the Nuba youths decided to join the SPLA to acquire both weapons and military training to enable them to defend their territory and properties.

When the NIF usurped power in 1989 it decided to officially arm, train and support the Arab militias under the name of the Popular Defence Forces. The Nuba people became a direct target of these forces as any civilian was categorized as a 'fifth columnist' or SPLA supporter. At the beginning of 1992, the NIF government declared a *jihad* in the Nuba Mountains. It signalled the onset of a campaign of ethnic cleansing which a number of independent human rights organisations have witnessed and documented.

**Security and Political Dimensions:** The remoteness of the area of the Nuba Mountains has been a major factor in encouraging government troops and militias to commit human rights abuses with utter impunity. Thousands of people have been killed during the last *jihad* campaign which was accompanied by indiscriminate area bombardment by military bombers and heavy artillery. Villages have been burnt down to the last hut and some estimates put the death toll at more than 30,000 civilians. In the towns and urban centres of the Nuba Mountains the small educated class of Nuba people has been a particular target. Many people have disappeared. Hundreds more are in detention centres where they are routinely tortured and denied visits by relatives and friends.

Thousands more have been forcibly uprooted and removed from their homes and dumped in the midst of sand dunes in the northern sector of Kordofan region. There they are kept under sub-human conditions where they are subjected to both physical and psychological torment. Certain humanitarian NGOs, mainly western or Christian relief organisations, are barred from entering these camps. Only Islamic organisations under the administration of NIF cadres are allowed to operate among these Nuba people, and it is known that they use relief food for pressuring people to convert to Islam. The exact number that has been affected by this programme is still unknown as removals continue. One estimate in early 1992 suggested 50,000 had been displaced.

This campaign had started in the early 1990s when about 5,000 Nuba minors...
were abducted from their villages and confined to a camp at a place called Sheikan, not far from El Obeid, the regional capital. It was further reported that the aim of that action was to isolate the children and indoctrinate them against their own culture and to convert them to Islamic militants. According to some reports, the children have been removed again and relocated, this time, to Libya.

The Nuba people have been stripped of their political rights, their political and civic organisations have been banned and most of their leaders detained. The regime treats the Nuba people with exceptional harshness because they view the Nuba Mountains as a special backyard of their own, an area that must be Islamised by all means since it is geographically part of Northern Sudan. As such the Nuba are a particular target wherever they are in the country. Educated Nuba people in Khartoum have been subjected to constant ill-treatment and harassment. The recent wave of arrests involves many Nuba, both intellectuals and workers.

Religious Aspects: The local authorities in the Nuba Mountains show nothing but disdain for Christians and other non-Muslims of African stock despite the claim that Christians are exempted from Islamic laws. Churches and worship shelters have been burned down or destroyed in many Nuba towns and villages. Priests and Christian lay workers have been harassed and forced to flee their parishes. Others have been arrested and kept in detention for indefinite periods. Christian relief organisations have been pressured to leave the area and some of their expatriate aid workers have been denied entry visas into the country. Those already in Khartoum have been prevented from paying inspection tours to the area. Christian children are forced to study Islamic religion and compelled to sit for it in the Sudan School Certificate Examinations.

Cultural and Social Aspects: The main aim of the NIF in the Nuba Mountains is to eradicate the ethnic cultures and traditions of the Nuba people. The abduction of children is a long-term element of the government strategy for achieving that goal. The other component of this policy is education. The cultural content of the educational syllabi is preponderantly Islamic. Educational material in history books, Arabic readers and civics textbooks all revolves around Islam, extolling it and denigrating local indigenous traditions and customs. Muslims, like Yousif Kuo (SPLA Commander in the Nuba Mountains), are described as Kufaar, or infidels.

The forced relocation of Nuba people and the callous separation of families are some of the most traumatic aspects of the social disruption that is being experienced throughout the Nuba Mountains today. The deliberate humiliation of the Nuba people in various ways is intended to create a sense of inferiority. Women and young girls are raped often in front of their husbands and parents, men are flogged and humiliated before their wives and children which the NIF calculate will bring about the full submission of the Nuba people.

Education and Economy: The civil war has disrupted education and many villages have been razed to the ground by government troops and militias. Because teachers constitute a considerable proportion of the educated class of the Nuba people, they became a major target of the government cam-
paigned of persecution. Many of them had to run for their lives by abandoning their stations and joining the SPLA or taking refuge in other relatively safe areas.

The Nuba Mountains is an agricultural area but the civil war, and forced eviction of people, coupled with the genocidal campaign have left the fertile land unattended. Crops have been routinely destroyed by government security forces. The same forces have driven away thousands of livestock, leaving the survivors in utter poverty. Small-scale economic projects that were established and supported by foreign governments and organisations like the European Economic Community have come to a standstill. The result is widespread misery, malnutrition and starvation.

Health Aspects

Many health centres and dispensaries in the rural areas have been destroyed and abandoned, hospitals in the towns are as good as useless. Those still in operation generally lack medical doctors and trained paramedical personnel. Medicines and drugs are in critical shortage and there are no attempts whatsoever on the part of government authorities to do anything about the crisis. There have been epidemics of malaria not only in the Nuba Mountains but throughout Western Sudan and parts of central Sudan. Anti-malaria medicines which used to be relatively inexpensive can now only be obtained from the black market, a full course costing at least £52,000 (a worker’s salary being only £51,500). The deadly combination of endemic violence, malnutrition and lack of health care has, as can be expected, claimed and continues to claim many lives in the area.

Human Rights Abuses in Darfur

Darfur is the western-most region of the Sudan and has witnessed armed violence since the mid-1980s. But this violence was linked to armed banditry and led to many human rights abuses yet there is a difference in the nature, frequency and severity of those human rights violations during the democratic era and those being perpetrated by the present regime. For one thing, the prevalence of an atmosphere of political plurality and free press helped to expose those earlier abuses which kept the perpetrators in check. In contrast, the NIF is not constrained by any system of checks and balances.

Since the military takeover in June 1989, the junta has committed a wide range of human rights abuses against the people of Darfur who had rejected them in the 1986 elections. Immediately after the coup in June 1989, the governor, the deputy governor, regional ministers and prominent political and civic leaders of the area were arrested and incarcerated in Chala prison. The total number of detainees reached 109 during the first week of the coup. Many of them remained in detention for long periods; some were released but later rearrested. The most disturbing thing about these detentions is that many people are physically tortured, some so severely, that they never really recover from their injuries even after they are released.

Darfur is inhabited by communities of African stock as well as those of Arab origin; but all of them are Muslims. Darfur, in fact, is the only region in the Sudan that is completely religiously homogeneous. Yet this potentially unifying factor has been rendered irrelevant by a regime that considers itself the champion of Islamic expansion.
The NIF had no base in Darfur and this situation did not improve after they usurped power by force. In order to gain a foothold in the region, the regime’s strategists promoted ethnic strife by encouraging sedition among the various tribes. The regime backed the Arab ethnic groups and under the pretext of combating ‘armed robbery’, the government launched a military campaign against the Fur and Zaghawa tribal groups, both of African origin. The Arab tribes were armed and supplied with modern weapons and munitions and encouraged to invade Fur and Zaghawa territories. In one incident against the Zaghawa in April 1991, government troops shot and killed at least 17 people in the courtyard of a mosque in the village of Khazan Jadid. The Arab tribal militias executed a parallel campaign with the intention of displacing the Fur tribes from their more fertile and agricultural ancestral homeland. In the process, hundreds of their villages have been burnt down and large numbers of people killed.

Following the infiltration of Darfur region by a large SPLA force led by a Fur tribesman called Daoud Yahya Boulad in early 1992, the regime mounted another campaign against the Fur. Many perished during the government’s onslaught including tribal chiefs, teachers, merchants and farmers who were detained in Chala prison.

In January 1992, the regime’s authorities in the region declared that all the 3,000 SPLA rebels who had infiltrated the area had been wiped out in Wadi Salih province and that many indigenous Fur tribesmen lost their lives during the government campaign. Many civilian tribesmen were killed or tortured and the SPLA commander, Boulad, was captured by the government forces, his face shown on TV with the announcement that he would be tried. He was executed at a place called Saraf Magin, ‘while trying to escape’.

In El Daein area, the regime turned against some members of the Rizeigat tribe. In June 1992 a number of people were arrested and accused of collaborating with the SPLA and encouraging their tribesmen to join the insurgent movement. Among those arrested was the commander of the popular Defence Forces in Darfur, Captain Zanoon El Tigani. They were summarily tried and Captain Zanoon was sentenced to death while others received various prison sentences.

**Recommendations**

This Briefing of human rights abuses in the Southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains and Darfur Region represents only the tip of the iceberg. It is simply what filters through the intricate web of insulatory measures that the regime has devised. Because of the authoritarian nature of the regime, for it to stop arresting people or to stop torturing detainees is like pouring water on a duck’s back. The government in Khartoum has become immune to international criticism and, indeed, scornful of human rights organisations.

While it is necessary to continue publicising human rights violations, we recommend that we reverse the appeals campaign. Instead of asking the Sudan government to become humane we should urge the international community, through its governments and other public institutions, to treat the Sudan government like the pariah it has become. We should ask
the world to tighten its isolation of the Sudan while finding ways to help the victims of its brutalities. The recent spate of condemnations and sanctions by a number of world nations is already showing signs of hurting.

Finally, Sudanese organisations avowed to fight the incumbent regime should be offered the necessary assistance to enable them expedite the removal of this regime and the restoration of democracy and basic human rights and freedoms.

Editor’s Note: This Briefing is an edited version of a paper presented to the ‘Workshop on Human Rights Abuses in the Sudan, Abuses Connected with Internal Conflict and War’, Cairo, November 1992.

Empowerment of Women & Democracy in Madagascar
Suzy Ramamonjisoa

The following Briefing has been translated by Bill Freund; his explanatory comments appear in square brackets in the text.

The literature on Madagascar for long has expostulated on the theme of matriarchy on Africa’s giant island. Without denying the apparently relatively advanced situation that some privileged groups of Malagasy women occupy compared to women in the adjoining continent or in much of Asia, and even compared to women in Western countries, I wish here to establish the necessity nonetheless of analysing the empowerment (or non-empowerment) of women in Madagascar, and investigating how to increase that empowerment within the concrete situations that I am familiar with.

Women’s Power in Madagascar

Myths: The central argument of feminists is centred on the struggle against patriarchy. In the Malagasy case, a mythical matriarchy is joined to patriarchal practises. The history of Malagasy societies has rarely been written by women. A feminist history of Madagascar would permit us to situate and look in a new way at social relationships in Madagascar and to thereby disclose the actual place occupied by women. Such a history would teach us that the privileged place of women exists not in daily life but first and foremost in institutional myths.

In the Tantaran’y Andriana (Endnote 1), the chronicle of the chiefs of central Madagascar, rice [the staple crop], is said to have been brought to people in the gizzard of a cock by the true daughter of Andriamanitra, ‘The Lord who must be flattered’ (Andriamanitra is translated as God by Christians).

Myth services a particular function: to attribute a crucial innovation as com-
the world to tighten its isolation of the Sudan while finding ways to help the victims of its brutalities. The recent spate of condemnations and sanctions by a number of world nations is already showing signs of hurting.

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Suzy Ramamonjisoa

The following Briefing has been translated by Bill Freund; his explanatory comments appear in square brackets in the text.

The literature on Madagascar for long has expostulated on the theme of matriarchy on Africa's giant island. Without denying the apparently relatively advanced situation that some privileged groups of Malagasy women occupy compared to women in the adjoining continent or in much of Asia, and even compared to women in Western countries, I wish here to establish the necessity nonetheless of analysing the empowerment (or non-empowerment) of women in Madagascar, and investigating how to increase that empowerment within the concrete situations that I am familiar with.

Women's Power in Madagascar

Myths: The central argument of feminists is centred on the struggle against patriarchy. In the Malagasy case, a mythical matriarchy is joined to patriarchal practises. The history of Malagasy societies has rarely been written by women. A feminist history of Madagascar would permit us to situate and look in a new way at social relationships in Madagascar and to thereby disclose the actual place occupied by women. Such a history would teach us that the privileged place of women exists not in daily life but first and foremost in institutional myths.

In the Tantaran'ya Andriana (Endnote 1), the chronicle of the chiefs of central Madagascar, rice [the staple crop], is said to have been brought to people in the gizzard of a cock by the true daughter of Andriamanitra, 'The Lord who must be flattered' (Andriamanitra is translated as God by Christians).

The origin of the tension between flooded rice field agriculture and pastoralism can be found in the confrontation between the Rasoalao woman who come from the West and the giant Rapeto in the marshes of Itasy.

A female water spirit gave birth to the Menabe dynasty of Maroseranana [one of the earliest known dynasties in western Madagascar, often assumed to be of central origin].

In all these cases, the religious imagination assumes that innovations are brought by women. However, the founding family heads who emerge from the waves of successive migrants to the island use female ancestors for legitimation but they are in fact men. Myth services a particular function: to attribute a crucial innovation as com-
ing from a woman who belongs to a prestigious, and by definition, ancient family. Reversal (whether sexual or not) as a means of transference is a classic way in which myths are constructed. The political legitimation of dynasties was often established by origin through women such as Rafohy, the short one and Rangita, the 'frizzy-haired' (probably to be associated with an African origin), mother or grandmother of Andriamanelo, the first of the Andriana, whose father is unknown (Endnote 2). The two women are linked to the origin of the institutionalisation of the first kingdom of Imerina [fanjakaran arindra in Malagasy], previously inhabited by 'tribes without rulers'. Even more famous are the queens Ranavalona I, II and III in the nineteenth century, a rule associated with the era when free commoners (i.e. not the Andriana), ruled — Manjaka Hova (the reign of free men), an era that traditionalists saw as an impure form of the kingdom.

Before that Andrianampoinimerina (Endnote 3), who forged central Madagascar into a state, confirmed the position of women related to the king as a means of assuring dynastic succession. In considering the succession of his heir, Radama I, he was uncertain not only whether he was in fact the father of Radama but whether the putative mother, Rambolamasoandro, had actually borne him. Thus he designated his own sister Ralesoka and thus from his own mother. This bit of justificatory research into biology did not prevent Andrianampoinimerina from establishing the laws of hierarchical social organisation as a model which failed to evolve after the eighteenth century. He is associated with the custom of Kitay telo an-dalana (the three woodpiles) which are placed separately at the time of marriage; the man takes two and the woman one as they are separated. This unequal share was considered justified because it was man who fought the kingdom's wars and organised the cultivation of the rice fields.

This kind of marriage was polygamous, albeit a somewhat limited polygamy, the man was the formal head of several households (tokantrano) each headed by women who organised the economic structures within the family and educated the children. The man was supposed to be the arbiter between households and their representative in larger lineage deliberations in which he spoke in the interest of his women. But each woman was responsible for controlling her tokantrano. She informed the man and asked his permission with regard to points involving her responsibilities which might concern the lineage group.

To the present day, Malagasy societies continue in appearance to function according to this model. In the home, the woman is all-powerful but she has no right to speak in public: that is an exclusively masculine role. Polygamy, which has officially disappeared, did imply the non-interference of men within the sphere of the woman-headed household. To the present, it is the woman who organises household moneys and is totally in charge of the children's education. The father has formal authority. But in the rituals of kinship groups, in the lineage assemblies — the fokonolona, the fehitra, the tarika, etc., women must satisfy themselves with applauding or booing men who have the exclusive right to speak, in accordance with their age and rank. Up to the present, few women know how to speak in public and decision-making is a man's role. Women are rarely found in positions of leadership...
Thus even in traditional representation, matriarchy serves as a myth rather than a reality (Bloch, 1989). Malagasy matriarchy is a theme dear to those anthropologists who are more interested in the origins of the Malagasy than in the living dynamism of their culture, privileging the racial question before the historic one (Endnote 4). Matriarchy is unable to explain how Malagasy societies actually functioned and is itself turned into a myth, a construction forged by Western-trained researchers obsessed by genealogy. In Malagasy, genealogical recitation through women is always the most reliable, the most undeniable; it is always from a woman that a prestigious chief, whoever may be his father, claims descent. In the north-west of Madagascar, they say 'the seeds of a man walk around' (Ambon-dahy mitsangatsangana). It is always the uterus of the child-bearing woman that is most reassuring from the point of view of descent. Maternity is surety, while paternity is above all a source of belief; from this comes his strength. All Malagasy societies have elaborated patriarchal ideologies in order to reinforce this role of the father, perhaps through anxiety with regard to the force of [the potential claims of] women.

In reality, however, patriarchy, like matriarchy, is never observable in a pure state. What one can see are the concrete forms of patrilineality and/or matrilineality, for example with regard to residence, naming, inheritance, relations of production. In the Comoro Islands, there are aspects of matrilineality which do reveal specific female strategies with regard to residence, ownership of houses even, if as a whole, society can be regarded as patrilineal. In the Malagasy case, it is generally said that there is no overall lineage inheritance bias; one can find patrilinear features varying from one part of the island to another. One can speculate that the introduction of pastoralism, of Islam, and of Western values derived through the vehicle of Christianisation and colonisation, were all respective historical influences that brought out the features of patrilinearity in Madagascar (Endnote 5).

Socio-economic Indicators: It would take too long to dwell here on the socio-economic indicators in detail. Research produced by the resource persons of the commission belonging to the Femmes et Development National Workshop show that despite appearances and in particular, the frequently proclaimed affirmations of equality between men and women, women perform badly when one compares the rate of literacy, years of school attendance, the level of job, access to posts that involve decision-making, etc., in Madagascar (Endnote 6).

An enquiry done within a regional UNICEF programme on girls tried to analyse the 'comparative opportunities and educational disparities between boys and girls (Endnote 7) and even posed the question of girls' eating patterns. When children were asked 'do you eat enough' and 'do you eat well', to a statistically significant extent, girls found their access to food less sufficient and not enough compared to boys. The more frugal diet of girls, the cultural forms related to food consumption, help to explain the situation. Boys tend not to eat with their parents; mothers set aside their portion. Girls eat with the parents and in
general, the adults, particularly the father, get the best portions. Girls learn very soon mandefitra, resigning yourself to eat less and less well. Such resigned girls are unlikely in future to claim an equal share in public affairs! Yet at the same time, everyone states that normal practise is to treat boys and girls equally. This, in fact, is a slogan which conceals subtle but efficacious discriminatory practises that make sure girls are trained for a subordinate rank.

Our starting hypothesis concerning the girl's position is simple; the Malagasy girl is less educated, less likely to continue her education because she works more in the house and is more exploited within the household. Moreover, there is no infrastructure to prepare her for womanhood bringing her into the local community (Firaisana) after the first menstrual cycle and little or no available sexual education or information. This hypothesis was largely confirmed through our research elaborated elsewhere.

Socio-economic indicators concerning the typical woman in pre-industrial countries reveal a triple burden: a) the care and education of children; b) the care of the household and c) the production of food for consumption.

In general, women work more hours for lower wages. It is nice to recall that in Madagascar, women could be reigning queens. It is comforting too to think about the theoretical possibility that a woman may be polyandrous (have the right to marry more than one husband simultaneously) as our queens were but for every princess of heaven (andriambavianitry) how many women are there in Madagascar who are badly fed, overburdened by labour and childcare, aged before their time?

How to Empower Women

In my view, we must take stock first of all of our actual capacity. It is not only by favourably evaluating ourselves compared to other countries that we will advance but through a lucid and objective analysis of our capacities and our limitations. Without being dogmatic with regard to the methods of empowering women, I would stress that it is still appropriate to measure progress in our context through the use of analytical tools that have been used elsewhere to characterise key differentials between men and women. Seeing the gender gap problematic through figures showing educational levels and women's representation in positions requiring responsibility must be the first step in picking out the problems that need to be attacked. This sort of gender analysis should make it possible to identify or choose priorities in policy making, in plan-

| **Languages:** | Malagasy and French, Hovba and other local dialects. |
| **Population:** | 11,600,000 (1989) |
| **Capital:** | Antananarivo, population (1990) 802,000 |
| **Religion:** | more than half, traditional beliefs; ca 40% Christian, the remaining 5% Muslim. |
| **Politics:** | A restricted multi-party system currently in effect; Captain Didier Ratsiraka, president since 1975, re-elected in March 1989 with 62% of the vote. |
| **Education:** | literacy, 73% female/88% male. |
| **Economy:** | Per capita GNP: $230 (1989); major exports: coffee, spices, crustaceans and molluscs, cotton fabric; external debt: $3.6 billion, $311 per capita [debt service: 52% of exports]. |
ning the advancement of women while integrating them in a national and international effort aimed at their development. It is now possible to devise an operational vocabulary in order to organise plans of action. Resistance to change will not disappear from one day to the next while emotions and interests may be strongly aroused by raising the issue of women's empowerment. Equality is never a gift. It must rest on a labour of conscientisation, on organisation, on reflection and on a choice of appropriate strategies.

What is at Stake in Democratisation?

We do have to face the risk of destabilising our societies on the ground. [In consequence] the partisans of the old order as well as some development agencies are reluctant to engage in opposition to traditions and local cultural practises that discriminate against women. The international conjuncture, however, seems rather to stress the necessity for women to be equal ‘participants and beneficiaries’ in the process of development. (I will move quickly through some familiar texts which are accepted as policy by the government). The UNO exploratory strategies for the promotion of women’s interests ‘consider that the equal sharing of political power by women is the basis of strategies for the development of women’. In order for equality to become a reality for women, power-sharing on an equal basis with men must be a central strategy.

The UNO Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women engages all member-nations to eliminate all forms of legal or administrative discrimination against women in all sectors of the economy and aspects of public life. The Convention requests member-states to ‘take all appropriate measures in order to modify racial and cultural images concerning men and women with the perspective of eliminating prejudices, customs and all other practises which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of one or the other sex and the stereotyped roles of men and women.’ All bilateral or multilateral agencies of development have elaborated positive and explicit policies concerning the development of women. The principal problem seems to be on the ground where such decisions have not yet had an impact on national programmes.

When patriarchal resistance is organised by national bureaucracies and development agencies in order to resist the integration of policies aimed at the equality of women within the development projects more generally, very often one hears the excuse, ‘We cannot intervene.’ Contemporary leaders of the third world are appealing for international solidarity on the grounds of a duty of intervention in order to change, or at least establish popular control over, political regimes. Can’t this duty to intervene also be exerted in favour of the rights of women? (Endnote 8).

Suzy Ramamonjisa, Academic Malgache, Antananarivo.

Endnotes


2. Andriana: Chief, in a general sense Lord, prince, king. Literally means, he on whom you
can rely. The Andriana formed the top tier of a three-tiered central Malagasy society. Below them are the Hova, 'those who love, who are able to change', the group of free men. Third are the Andevo, the group of captives who lost their status through political or economic shortcomings or misfortune. [From the African mainland, in particular, came more slaves]. According to Raymond Kent, the American historian, the emergence of Malagasy 'kingdoms' can be directly correlated to the size of the slave trade, the number of pirogues, dhows, brigs arriving in Madagascar [the author, in effect, refers here to Malagasy, Arab/Swahili and European boats respectively, all participating in the trade].

3 This was the Merina ruler who first created a large kingdom in Madagascar and whose successor, Radama I, went on to conquer most of the island, c. 1740-1810 — Freund.

4 Madagascar is only 400 km at the nearest point from the coast of Mozambique. The obviously South East Asian origin of the Malagasy language, many Malagasy people and many aspects of the culture is a much-debated and somewhat mysterious subject given that there is no memory of migration from Asia in oral traditions. The question of African origins of people and culture in Madagascar, clearly of some importance, is also very debatable — Freund.

5 Cattle in Madagascar come from African stock and were introduced early but probably separately from the direct migration of people from the Indonesian region. Pastoralism is very important as a form of social and economic organisation although in varying degrees in the island. Islam came from several sources and has an important pre-European contact historical influence although only a very small percentage of the Malagasy are Muslim. The ruling class became Christian in the nineteenth century, adopting Protestantism as the state church in 1869 but with many Catholics as well — Freund.

6 Despite the fact that in two provinces associated with pastoral activity and export agriculture, Tulear and Toamasina, girls are more likely than boys to go to primary school. The National Workshop of Women’s Organisations Concerning Strategies of Action entitled ‘Femmes et developpement’ was organised by the Ministry of Population, Fombrandazana sy Ficanana (Society for Tradition and Progress) and the Centre for Information and Technical and Scientific Documentation, 1992.

7 ‘Possibilites et disparites educatives entre fillettes et garcons a Madagascar, cas national, etude du cas de Betafo’.

8 International pressure has been instrumental in the re-institution of democratic political procedures in many third world countries recently, and notably in Madagascar — Freund.

The Nigerian Presidential Elections
Joseph C Okorogi

The return of Nigeria to the democratic process has been long in coming. Soon after the military dictator, Ibrahim Babangida, took over the reigns of power on 27 August 1985, he told the nation that he and his administration was determined to build an enduring system which would correct the fault lines associated with previous democratic experiments. His first move (which was applauded by most Nigerians) was to set up the Political Bureau. This body created in January 1987 was chaired by Professor Sam Cookey and deliberated for a year, consulting all shades of opinion in the country before recommending a presidential system.

Babangida’s brief to the Bureau was to search for a system which was not ‘a regulation of the political models of the so-called advanced countries of the world’. Thus he wanted a unique political system best suited to the peculiar political soil of Nigeria. The year-old consultation was to lead to the recommendations which help to draw up the transition programme bringing to an end his military regime. In the end the Bureau recommended the military administration come to an end in October 1990; Babangida chose October 1992.

His next move was to ban the politicians and public officers of the Second Republic. Under Decree 25 of 1987 which was a modification of the 1986 Decree which placed a blanket ban on all former public office holders, Babangida banned some of them for life and others from participating in
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politics during the transition programme, stipulating a fine of N250,000 or five years imprisonment for contradiction. Although this action drew fire from those affected, the government succeeded in ignoring all the pressures, seeing itself in the role of a 'corrective regime'.

Next, Babangida appointed the Constitution Review Committee under Judge Buba Ardo to examine and make recommendations to remedy the inconsistent or faulty sections of the constitution in readiness for the Third Republic. Based on the recommendations of this body, a Constituent Assembly (partly elected, partly appointed in 1988) was given the task of ratifying the new constitution but was however, deprived of the powers to change certain arrears of the constitution (mainly finance and security) which the military saw in their wisdom as crucial (either in self interest or possibly the national interest).

In effect, the Assembly felt hamstrung in its deliberation and this 'back-seat driving' generated rows on the grounds that the Assembly was a mere rubber stamp talking shop, bereft of any real power — a factor which did not deter the military 'hard man' from unveiling the 'new constitution' on 3 May 1989. On this same day, Babangida lifted the ban on political activities and enjoined all Nigerians to 'move out as from today to join others and enlist the support of like-minded people in the formation of political associations.' These associations were required to meet stringent conditions before applying to the National Electoral Commission for registration as political parties. The emergent political parties were required to state clearly and concisely their positions on the following issues: a viable, popular and genuinely democratic political system; human rights; socio-economic and political rights/freedoms; the relationships between the economy and politics; rural community development; the rural population in Nigerian politics; women, labour, youth, traditional rulers, the armed forces in Nigerian politics; political parties — their funding, formation and administration; elections and electoral processes; statism, nationality and citizenship; creation of states; revenue allocation; ethnicity and corruption in society/politics; the media, bureaucracy, external relations and the evolution of a national language.

In spite of these herculean conditions, the nation greeted the news with enthusiasm and within one week, 23 associations had taken advertisements in the national newspapers and by the end of the first month, the number had risen to 88 creating an impression that the Nigerian political elite were enjoying the exciting times provided by this singular act of the government. However, this was not to last. The government warned that they would police the new political parties because they did not want those politicians of the Second Republic who were banned, the so-called 'old breed', from participating in the new dispensation. They were supposed to be 'political virgins', not tainted with the wrongs of the previous political experiments and who would be willing to serve their people in an altruistic manner without expecting to enrich themselves. In other words, Babangida was searching for angelic qualities in this so-called 'new breed' who, in his own words, 'would not let down the country' and would help 'lay the foundation for the Third Republic'. In the end, only 13 of the 88 political associations managed to meet the stipulated hurdles and pay...
the N50,000 which was required by the NEC. However, on verification of the genuineness of these associations' meeting the stipulations, the NEC claimed in its report to Government that all the associations had exaggerated their membership sizes and organisational strengths.

After considering their report, the Government announced that 'because all the 13 associations (approved by the NEC) were surrogates of the banned or disqualified politicians', none was approved. In the words of Babangida, 'we will not serve our people yesterday's food in glittering new dishes'. He went on: 'when I say that my administration opted for a new political culture, we mean new leadership, not old political wolves in new breed sheepskins'. The stage was thus set for the most innovative?daring?conspiratorial?political experiment in black Africa by a military administration. Out came two ready-made political parties viz — the National Republican Party, presumed right of centre, and the Social Democratic Party, equally, presumed left of centre (the author considers the political leaning of both parties irrelevant because both parties had their constitutions drawn up by the government with virtually no difference in their modus operandi. The only relevant comparison is that between tweedledum and tweedledee!).

The 29-page constitution of each of the parties were virtually similar in every respect. The government's view was that the formation of the two parties would eliminate the stranglehold of the rich who founded or funded earlier political parties. On 4 December 1989, these two parties (funded and politically/administratively teleguided by the military regime) were launched.

Local elections were the first to be fought under the two-party system under a new electoral experiment known as the 'open ballot system' (as opposed to the usually familiar secret ballot system prevalent in the West). In this open ballot system the voters queue behind the photo of the candidate they want to vote for, with the result that every individual voter can testify with ease who voted for whom — avoiding the perennial voter accusation of 'rigging' prevalent in every Nigerian election since independence. This system was criticised by the political elite as an inexcusable return to primordial politics which the nation ought to have outgrown in the dying years of the 20th century. Contrary to this line of argument, the Babangida regime insisted that the open ballot system solved the dual problems of rigging and political corruption. Thus, not only was it used for the local elections, it was also used for the gubernatorial and national assembly elections.

The presidential elections which took place on 12 June 1993 was supposed to be the final electoral stage in the transition programme. The candidates for the elections were: for the SDP Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, a millionaire businessman from the West, internationally known for his contacts and for launching a crusade for the payment by the West of reparation for the black race whose campaign rhetoric was,
Tofa, whose cosy relationship with Babangida and his military regime led some cynics to refer to him as Babangida's candidate — having previously argued that Babangida should remain in power until the year 2000 (Daily Times, 11 May 1990). A Northern millionaire, Tofa was quoted as saying that he would outspend Abiola without feeling any pinch at all.

Abiola, an optimist, kicked off his campaign by openly declaring his belief in the honesty of the military in handing over power and his own prospect of becoming the next president of Nigeria. In contrast, his opponent, Bashir Tofa, saw a divided nation characterised by general depression, mutual suspicion, distrust, cynicism and frustration — a nation racked by religious and ethnic tensions, a nation that has lost pride in itself. This cynicism was not without reason because under the revised transition timetable, the handover date was changed from 1 October 1992 to 2 January 1993. The inauguration of the National Assembly scheduled for July 1993 was also put on hold. These developments raised suspicion about the ultimate intentions of the military — leading Nigerians to believe in the so-called 'hidden agenda'.

D-day was 12 June 1993. However, a variety of events took place before this date. For example, on 12 May one of the presidential candidates was summoned and reprimanded by the NEC for allegedly contravening a section of Decree 27 (1989) which stipulates in part that 'no political campaign shall be made on the basis of sectional, ethnic or religious grounds or considerations'. Chief Abiola was generally known to be the candidate. Again, on 10 June, a high court action was brought by the Association for Better Nigeria, led by Arthur Nzeribe seeking to cancel the election and thus pave the way for the military regime to continue until 1997. Although the court, presided over by Justice (Mrs) Bassey Ikpeme allowed the election to be postponed until a full hearing of the case, the NEC ignored the ruling and its Chairman, Humphrey Nwosu said, 'for the avoidance of any doubt, I wish to restate that the presidential election scheduled for tomorrow, will go as planned' (Financial Times, 12 June 1993).

The NEC Chairman went on, 'the court injunction contradicts Section 19, sub-section 1, of the Basic Constitutional and Transitional Decree No 13 of 1993. Thus the NEC was not ignoring the court order but rather carrying out the provisions of Decree 13 which gives it the exclusive right to conduct elections'. Thus the elections took place as planned on 12 June and the reports of both the internal and international observers gave the NEC high marks for organising such a trouble-free, corruption-free and rigging-free and fair elections. As the results started to come out, it became clear that Chief Abiola had swept the board, winning 20 or the 30 states of the federation and set to become Nigeria's third civilian president. When news of this political development spread throughout the nation, opponents of the (presumed) winning candidate started court action asking the courts to stop the NEC from announcing the results. As court action followed counter-court action, political analysts started to speculate whether or not the military would intervene to stop the release of the results.

The nation did not have long to wait as the junta quickly stepped in — in its usual 'corrective' manner to, accord-
ing to the announcement, ‘save our courts from being dragged in the mud after all the years it has taken to build it up’. The scene was thus set for the official cancellation of the election results. The head of the junta promised a broadcast to the nation to explain why the delay in the release. After a number of postponements, the broadcast — when it finally did come on 26 July — cancelled the election results on the grounds that both candidates made excessive use of money in the campaign to influence the electoral process. He claimed to have documentary evidence to prove the allegation against the two candidates. However, when the documents became available for public scrutiny, it became obvious that it related only to the DSP and Chief Abiola. It alleged that the DSP voted N1,519,182,000 for the elections, out of which they spent N1,099bn to bribe voters with material items such as rice, fertiliser, toilet soap, milk, cloth and other essential commodities. The document also claimed that the DSP’s Working Committee prepared a budget for the wholesale bribery of the NEC — with the Chairman Nwosu receiving N100m; the Secretary N10m, the Commissioners (to share) N24m; while the directors and resident electoral commissioners were to share N3.5m and N310m respectively. According to the same document, Chief Abiola personally approved N5m each for the 30 state police commissioners; N350 for the accredited members of the Nigerian news media; and N296.5m for the NEC election task force.

This document was used by the anti-Abiola group within the military as a basis for disqualifying both candidates in general but Abiola in particular without success. However, it is important to know that this ‘important document’ was prepared and sent to the military junta by an anonymous individual only known as ‘JK’ who claimed to be on the staff of the DSP secretariat and a party loyalist who felt ‘violated enough by their (party leaders) plans and thus wanted the nation to know all these terrible plans. Chief Abiola said that the offending document reached him more than three months earlier, dismissing them as ‘scandalous, wicked lies and denied ever bribing NEC officials adding, ‘I have never given any NEC official any dime’, urging the federal government to prosecute him if it had the evidence, since bribery is a criminal offence.

Why then was the 12 June election results cancelled? A variety of factors/ reasons have been preferred, ranging from the cynical ethnic speculations to others much more sinister. In his warning to the federal government, Chief Emeka Ojukwu used the ethnicity argument. He claimed that the military, in calling fresh elections for 14 August, has implicitly told Chief Abiola’s home ground, the Yoruba dominated southwest, that the powerful northern elite will never relinquish power. He went on, about one-third of northerners who went to the polls voted for Chief Abiola, probably because he was the candidate best able to stand up to the military (Abiola was rumoured to have a list of senior army officers whom he would retire as soon as he took power), but the army’s refusal to recognise his victory has hardened the divisions in the southwest. The battle lines are forming through national institutions, notably the courts. Conflicting court decisions on the legality of blocking the presidential elections has led to the judiciary dividing along regional political lines. The government transferred prominent human rights activists to the capital, Abuja, for trial in courts widely recognised as influenced by the military. Legally, they should be tried in
Lagos but the courts in Lagos were on strike in sympathy with Abiola, but reopened only to hear his suit to force the government to recognise his election victory — thus leading to separate judicial systems (The Guardian, London, 19 July 1993).

The military junta claimed that in the 8-year reign of Babangida his long-standing friendship with Abiola earned Abiola’s firms government contracts to the tune of $844,979,751, out of which $648,046,368 has been paid, leaving a debt of $196,933,113, thus fearing that his financial interests would clash with the public interest. Babangida capitalised on this assumed fear; however, readers should be reminded that both Abiola and Babangida have been soul-mates for a long time, being connected both commercially and socially. Also, Abiola is known to have been reluctant about fighting the presidential elections, only being strongly encouraged to do so by Babangida himself footing the original primary elections bill to the tune of millions of naira in cash. Thus, this fear is dismissed by political insiders as a charade, a smoke-screen and in Abiola’s words, ‘calling a dog a bad name in order to hang it’. The junta feared that with Abiola’s tribe, the Yoruba who, the Northern Hausa/Fulani political elite accuse of controlling both the economy and the bureaucracy, would now have to control the political direction of the country.

There are other explanations for depriving Abiola the presidency. In his dealings with the military over the last decade, Abiola is known to have treaded on some officers’ toes, among whom is Major-General Chris Garuba, a former governor of Bauchi state whose appointment to the post Abiola is known to have vocally fought against because Garuba is a Christian while the state is mainly Muslim. Another senior military ex-governor suspected of baying for Abiola’s blood is Major-General Adetunji Olurin (who, at the time of the election was a member of the ruling National Defence and Security Council). Abiola is on record for referring to him (Olurin) and his brother-governors as ‘Eaglet governors’ (a derogatory reference which compares them to Nigeria’s under-18 national football team) for boycotting his installation ceremony as the Aare Ona Kakamfo of Yorubaland. Thus, Abiola’s strained relationship with the military was so fraught with danger that many feared a military coup d’etat even before the inauguration ceremony. In his address to a meeting of governors in Abuja on 6 July, Augustus Aikhomu, Babangida’s number two man, supporting this hard line said, ‘should this administration which brought your administrations and legislative bodies about be allowed to be dissolved by any imminent convulsion’, adding threateningly ‘that any state which allowed itself a breakdown of law and order, the governor would be sacked and replaced by the State’s Brigade Commander.’

When it became clear that Abiola had won the election, Babangida phoned him to offer him the post of Prime Minister for a two year period during which time he could warm up to his enemies in the armed forces. This offer was refused by Abiola who denied having made so many enemies within the armed forces claiming that Babangida’s offer was a ruse — exaggerating the size of his enemies within the armed forces in order to perpetuate his tenure at the helm of events. In his words,

*the struggle in Nigeria is between the people*
and a small clique in the military determined to cling to power at all costs. We have a record of all the votes cast in all the military cantonments in Nigeria. They all came out overwhelmingly to vote and with their families voted for me.

Abiola's thesis may be supported by the resignation of Colonel Umar, Commander of the Armoured Corps in protest against the annulment of the elections. The significance of Umar's resignation is that he is regarded as one of the 'Babangida boys' whose participation in the 1985 coup ensured Babangida's incumbency in Dodan Barracks. In his letter of resignation, he wrote,

having watched recent political events in the country, I have come to the conclusion that the Nigerian military as represented by our present leadership has become a stumbling block to the development of the nation's democracy. I took an oath on being commissioned to protect the territorial integrity of Nigeria and her civil power to maintain law and order. I declare that it is impossible for me to do so while our leaders are actually the ones who are bent on destroying the integrity of the nation. The latest announcement cancelling the presidential election results and other measures taken by the FMG regarding the Transition Programme are not acceptable to me; I can neither rationalise the decisions to my subordinates nor command them to put down any civil disturbance that may arise.

Colonel Umar's protest was not isolated. The Association for Democracy and Good Governance in Nigeria, made up largely of retired Generals, put out a statement saying that 'Nigeria is being manoeuvred to the brink of another catastrophe in its history.' Nationwide, there were protests against the annulment of the election results. These protests were particularly intense in the southwest (Yoruba states) where people rioted and the army shot and killed many, shooting some in the back. Senior members of the Campaign for Democracy who advocated for a week of national protest starting from 4 July, were arrested.

Conclusions

These reactions were rather harsher than Babangida had anticipated and the unanimous call for his departure from office was such that he could not do a 'maradonna' on the Nigerian people any more (Babangida is usually referred to as the maradonna of Nigerian politics because of his capacity to manipulate, cheat, scheme and generally dominate events). Thus he had no option but to go, but before he departed, he set up an 'all appointed' Interim National Government designed to organise/conduct the new presidential election.

This Government led by Chief Ernest Shonekan, an industrialist, announced that it would hold the presidential election on the 19 February 1994. Chief Shonekan is from the same area as Chief Abiola, thus Babangida may have appointed him as a gesture to the Yorubas assuring them that the elections were not cancelled because Abiola was a Yoruba but rather because of the electoral malpractices that were prevalent.

Babangida eventually retired from power and the military on 26 August 1993 and went back to his home state of Minna. The announcement by the ING of the new presidential elections is problematic because many politicians have bluntly refused to participate/cooperate in such elections. They argue that since both national and international observers hailed the annulled elections as free
Nigerian Election Results

The following official results were released by the electoral commission on 15 June and cover only 14 States and Abuja, the capital and seat of the federal government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>SDP</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>NRC</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abia</td>
<td>105,273</td>
<td>41.04</td>
<td>151,227</td>
<td>58.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akwa Ibom</td>
<td>214,782</td>
<td>51.86</td>
<td>199,342</td>
<td>48.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>212,782</td>
<td>57.11</td>
<td>159,258</td>
<td>42.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borno</td>
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<td>54.40</td>
<td>128,684</td>
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<td>Edo</td>
<td>205,407</td>
<td>66.48</td>
<td>103,572</td>
<td>33.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
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<td>53.64</td>
<td>336,660</td>
<td>46.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>169,619</td>
<td>52.28</td>
<td>154,809</td>
<td>47.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi</td>
<td>222,760</td>
<td>45.60</td>
<td>265,732</td>
<td>54.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwara</td>
<td>272,270</td>
<td>77.23</td>
<td>80,209</td>
<td>22.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>883,965</td>
<td>85.54</td>
<td>149,432</td>
<td>14.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>136,350</td>
<td>38.10</td>
<td>221,437</td>
<td>61.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogun</td>
<td>425,725</td>
<td>87.78</td>
<td>59,246</td>
<td>12.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyo</td>
<td>536,011</td>
<td>83.52</td>
<td>105,788</td>
<td>16.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>417,565</td>
<td>61.68</td>
<td>259,394</td>
<td>38.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuja/FCT</td>
<td>19,968</td>
<td>52.16</td>
<td>18,313</td>
<td>47.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FCT = Federal Capital Territory; Source: Nigeria Electoral Commission

Number of Registered Voters by State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abia</td>
<td>991,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>954,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akwa-Ibom</td>
<td>1,032,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>1,248,226</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>2,048,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>1,297,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borno</td>
<td>1,222,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross River</td>
<td>876,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>1,156,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>912,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enugu</td>
<td>1,291,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imo</td>
<td>1,141,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigawa</td>
<td>1,230,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>1,614,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>2,583,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>1,661,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuja/FCT</td>
<td>152,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39,125,492</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and fair, whose interest was Babangida really protecting? Surely, not the Nigerian public interest! Abiola is entitled like anyone else to be leader of Nigeria once elected by Nigerians. It should not be forgotten that Babangida after all was an un-elected, self-styled President whose authority came from the barrel of the gun.

Eritrea: The Transitional Period

John Markakis

I had not seen Asmara since the late 1960s, and my first impression on a recent visit in May 1993 was of a city that had changed hardly at all in the interval. The Eritrean nationalists wisely avoided turning Asmara into a battleground, sparing it the wholesale destruction suffered by Massawa in the fighting and subsequent Ethiopian bombing raids. Asmara retains the neatness, orderliness, and quaint charm of the colonial town lovingly built by the Italians in the early years of this century. Fin de siècle buildings, now brightly repainted, give the city an air of tropical cheerfulness. Cheerfulness is also the prevailing mood of its people who are enjoying peace after many years of violent conflict, and are content in the knowledge that the vexed issue of Eritrea’s future has been settled to their satisfaction.

First raised in the 1940s, this issue was finally settled by the referendum held in 23-25 April 1993. Though the outcome was never in doubt, the victorious Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) was anxious to demonstrate beyond doubt the peoples preference for independence, and to guarantee international recognition for the new state. Therefore, it accorded the referendum the highest priority, and devoted one year for its preparation. During this time other pressing matters had to wait. Critics, mainly from the Ethiopian side, complained because political party organisation was ‘not allowed in the prelude to the referendum, and because the choice offered to voters was stark ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to independence.

The concern of the EPLF apparently was shared by the people of Eritrea, for whom participation in the referendum became a test of loyalty to their nation. Although it stamped them as aliens in that country, almost 60,000 Eritreans living in Ethiopia voted in the referendum, and three times as many voted in the Sudan. The refusal on religious grounds to vote by a few hundred Jehovah’s witnesses in Eritrea raised a storm of public indignation and threats of reprisals. The result of the referendum was a unanimous 99.81 per cent ‘yes’. Obtained under close international scrutiny, it could not be disputed. Eritrea celebrated its independence on 24 May 1993 in a simple ceremony, whose most moving moment perhaps was the passing in parade of amputee fighters in wheelchairs.

Participation in the referendum provided a basis for estimation of Eritrea’s population, which has never been counted. A total of 1.2 million voted, including 154,000 in the Sudan, 60,000 in Ethiopia, about 50,000 in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, and 32,000 elsewhere. The estimated statistical percentage of voters in a population ranges from 40 to 30 per cent. This gives a total population estimate of Eritreans, resident and expatriate, ranging from 2.42 to 3.3 million. On the
and fair, whose interest was Babangida really protecting? Surely, not the Nigerian public interest! Abiola is entitled like anyone else to be leader of Nigeria once elected by Nigerians. It should not be forgotten that Babangida after all was an un-elected, self-styled President whose authority came from the barrel of the gun.

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assumption that not all Eritreans abroad voted, the latter figure is taken as the more accurate.

Shortly before the proclamation of independence, the EPLF Central Committee decided to extend the transitional period under its rule for a maximum of four years, during which time the Front will play 'a decisive role' in state affairs. This appeared to contradict earlier EPLF statements, but it did not cause much comment in or outside Eritrea. At the same time, the Central Committee set up a government structure for the transitional period. A quasi-legislative national assembly (Baito) with more than 130 members was formed. It consists of the 70 member strong Central Committee, three members from each of the ten regional assemblies (assembly chairman, secretary, and one woman), 20 others (veteran nationalists, intellectuals, professionals), and ten women added to reinforce gender representation.

The national assembly’s first act was to elect the EPLF Secretary General, Issaias Afeworki, President of Eritrea. Next, it approved the formation of an executive body, the State Council, proposed by the President. This includes 14 ministers and 10 provincial administrators. All but four of these posts are held by Central Committee members. The key posts of Defence, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Information, are held by Politbureau members. EPLF former Secretary General, Ramadan Mohammed Nur, is minister of local government, and will represent the President when he is absent or incapacitated. Two other Politbureau members, Sebat Ephraim and Mohammed Said Barre, became administrators of Asmara and Dankalia respectively. There is only one woman in the State Council, the minister of justice. A few women members of the Central committee head major agencies, such as Posts & Telecommunications, Social Affairs, Tourism, etc. The lower levels of the state structure are composed by village, district, and provincial assemblies which have been in place for sometime (see full list in ROAPE 57).

Other than the certainty that it will be dominated by the legacy of the EPLF, the political outline of the future is not now discernible. Several commissions are to be formed to prepare a draft constitution, draft laws regulating political parties, and laws regulating the press. Popular interest has yet to focus on such issues, although in an open meeting recently in Asmara where he answered questions from the public, Issaias was asked about the relative merits of the presidential versus the cabinet forms of government, the nature of a multi-party system, the relationship of church and state, etc. The EPLF has not revealed its own preferences, except for a categorical rejection of political party organisation on the basis of ethnicity, religion, or region - in sharp contrast to current practice in Ethiopia.

Unlike Ethiopia, where the civil war has produced deep political cleavages, the EPLF is the beneficiary of a solid political consensus forged by the successful 30-year struggle it waged for national liberation. For a long time, the Eritrean nationalist movement was riven with sectarian and sectional factionalism, and was hampered by an internecine conflict fought in parallel with the war against Ethiopia. In the last ten years, however, the EPLF not only prevailed against all rivals, but also appears to have made a good start towards healing the wounds of the
past. Eritreans of all political generations and persuasions have returned to their homeland, and many enemies of old have joined the EPLF government. They include Mohammed Said Nawid and Saleh Ahmed Iyay, founders of the first nationalist movement, the Eritrean Liberation Movement, in the 1950s; Idris Osman Galadewos and Taha Mohammed Nur, two of the founders of the Eritrean Liberation Front in 1960; Mohammed Dinai, one of the ELF’s first military commanders; Berhane Blatta, a companion of Issaia Asfoworki in the first ELF group trained in China in the 1960s; Hirouy Tedla, vice-chairman of the ELF until 1975. Ibrahim Totil, vice-chairman of the ELF until 1982, joined the EPLF earlier and is in the Central Committee.

Only two of the many ELF splinters remain irreconcilable. One of them is headed by Ahmed Nassir, one-time ELF chairman (1975-1982), and the other by the man who deposed him in the 1982 coup, Abdalla Idris. Neither represents a significant force, but a potentially troublesome faction is a group calling itself the Ansar el Sunna (Fighters for Sunni Islam). Formed in 1989 in eastern Sudan, to fight the ‘Christian marxist’ EPLF, this group has a potentially fertile recruiting field among the half a million Eritrean refugees still stranded in that country. Its leader, known as Arafa, studied theology in Saudi Arabia and later taught in the Sudan. The ansar el Sunna claims that Eritrea’s population is 80 per cent Muslim, and its goal is to turn it into an Islamic state. In fact, Muslims and Christians are evenly balanced in Eritrea. EPLF relations with the Sudanese military regime remain cordial, and after approaches by the former recently, the Sudanese curbed Ansar el Sunna operations and closed its offices, but it is unlikely that they have stopped its activities.

The main problem confronting the EPLF government presently is the moribund state of the Eritrean economy. The long war of independence shattered what had always been a fragile economic base. The country’s infrastructure was laid waste; even the 306 kilometre railway was dismantled. The modern production sector inherited by the EPLF in 1991 comprised some forty obsolete industrial enterprises. Lack of raw materials, replacement parts and electrical power reduced production in this sector by half afterwards. Agriculture, which earlier provided a living for 80 per cent of the population and 70 per cent of exports, was devastated by war and persistent drought, and Eritrea now is heavily dependent on food aid. Separation from Ethiopia has inhibited trade, although transit trade through the Eritrean ports of Massawa and Asab is active.

The distraction of the referendum, the inability to negotiate as a sovereign state for foreign aid and investment, and the imperative need to provide basic relief for a poverty stricken population, meant that little could be done in the first two years to rehabilitate the productive sector and revive the economy. Nor, it seems, has the EPLF been able in this short time to reformulate clearly its thoughts on the economy, and shift the focus from the faded marxist certainties it espoused in the past to the exuberant uncertainties of economic liberalism it is now obliged to embrace. The free market is the reigning principle, however, putting it into practice is far from easy. Extricating resources - land, real estate, plant - from the legal and bureaucratic maze created by the last Ethiopian
regime is a daunting task; as the authorities in Asmara discovered when they began the process of restoring nationalised housing to its former owners. As for rural land, a commission has been set up to study the issue of land tenure.

John Markakis is at the University of Crete, Rethymnon.

Demobilising Eritrea's Army

Berhane Woldegabriel

Since independence in April 1992, Eritrea has not only been faced with the demobilisation of almost 100,000 of its liberation army but a basic political dilemma: how to provide a decent life for those who gave so much?

Having neither the resources nor the justification to support such a huge army, the EPLF were asked at the end of the war to continue their spartan lifestyle and serve for a further two years without pay. They would continue to be housed (some in the former US Base Kagnew) and fed and would receive 50 Birr (US$ = 7 Birr) spending money a month. Such was the nature of their dedication that they agreed. Since many of the fighters had continued their education in the field during the war they were given jobs all over Eritrea - in administration, construction, education (university and secondary school), television, radio etc.

According to Gebretensae Tewolde, Head of the Demobilisation Office, demobilisation is being carried out in phases beginning with those who had joined the army last. They have full energy and can work to support themselves; some can go back to school. Most are single and so not have major family responsibilities. Many also come from rural areas and are expected to return to farming. In this first phase 25,000 combatants, 16 per cent of them women, are being demobilised. Depending on their length of service each fighter will receive a lump sum of between 1,000 and 5,000 Birr plus food assistance for six months. Special assistance is being given to women and their children. All have been promised vocational training, priority in employment and credit facilities. A special loan fund of £600,000 has been set up to assist in their reassimilation into civilian life and loans will also be provided to those who wish to set up in business.

Good Policy — But a Poor Economy

The Eritrean economy has been shattered by the war and is slowly rebuild-

Books from ROAPE — The Long Struggle of Eritrea for Independence and Constructive Peace

Edited by Lionel Cliffe & Basil Davidson. This is a very important book, looking at the history of the Eritrea struggle, placing it in the wider history of the region. It scrutinises the legal standing of Eritrea's claim for independence and analyses the character of the liberation movement; it also looks at the tasks it has set itself and evaluates its achievements. Published by Spokesman, 1988: £5.95/$10.95.
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Good Policy — But a Poor Economy

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Demobilising Eritrea’s Army

ing its infrastructure. All main roads and bridges need repairing; the factories, like the leather goods one in Asmara, is working at a fraction of its capacity due to a lack of raw materials; the 180-mile railway from Tessanai to Massawa was dismantled and the country is not yet self-sufficient in food, unlike its neighbours of Sudan and Ethiopia. However, it was as if the weather was also waiting for the country’s independence in that the last two years have seen heavy rains and it is expected that in 1993, Eritrea could produce about 50 per cent of its food needs for the first time in 25 years. This is despite a considerable proportion of the 6.5m acres of arable land that has had to be cleared of mines. An official report released in August 1993 has shown that there is an immediate need for 5,000 farm workers in the newly rehabilitated area of Ali-Gheder.

Aware of its financial limitations, the Central Committee again decided that every combatant, including themselves, should continue to serve without pay, this time for four more years. Understandably, this provoked a demonstration in Asmara on 20 May in which the combatants briefly gained control of the airport and other establishments and demanded an audience with Issasias Afeworki. While obviously misjudging the mood of some fighters, the Central Committee were then obliged to listen to the fighters’ demands which included compensation for the families of more than 65,000 fighters who died during the war (a special commission is being set up to deal with these issues). The combatants also asked the ‘transitional government’ to call an organisational congress which will take place in early 1994. (The last one took place, in Sahel, in 1987). In the end, the fighters agreed to another two years without pay.

This incident highlights the most pressing problem facing the Government. There needs to be a programme of training with some prospect of employment especially for those least able to fit back into a civilian structure. The only hope is a massive injection of foreign aid. To date pledges to Eritrea have been encouraging. The Recovery and Rehabilitation Project for Eritrea (RRPE), the World Bank group through IDA, has given a 40 year credit of $25m, with a 10 year grace period. That is nearly equal to the amount proposed by the Italian Government ($24.3m). The European Community contributed $23m to a total budget of $106.7m to which Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and UNDP also contributed.

‘For a long time we’ve been trying to convince the world that Eritrea is rich in resources and economically viable as an independent state. Now we must try to convince the world that we are poor!’

Editor’s Note: Eritrea in ROAPE

Material on Eritrea in earlier ROAPEs includes the following (issue numbers in brackets): Eritrea: Intervention & Self-Reliance (EPLF, 10); The USSR, China and the Horn of Africa (Lyons, 12); Revolutionary Crisis and Revolutionary Vanguard: The EPLF (Pool, 19); Eritrea and the Right to Self-Determination (25); Women in Eritrea: An Eye-Witness Account (Cowan, 27); Women’s Movement in Eritrea: An Interview (Gegreab, 27); Nationalism, Peasant Politics and the Emergence of a Vanguard Front in Eritrea (Gebre-Medhin, 30); Dramatic Shifts in the Military Balance in the Horn: The 1984 Eritrean Offensive (Cliffe, 30); A New Dawn for Women in Eritrea (NUEWm, 30); The EPLF Second Congress (Burgess/Cliffe, 38); Congress in Eritrea (Cliffe, 39); Concluding Declaration Second and Unity Congress, Eritrea (39); Research and Information Centre on Eritrea (Keleman, 44); EPLF Statement on the Dergue Proposals for Talks (EPLF, 44); Women and War: Eritrea (Burgess, 45); Eritrea: A Country in Transition (Yohannes, 57); Eritrea: Birth of a Nation (57).