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Democracy, Development and Defence

Chris Allen

This issue returns to several themes which have been the concern of this Review since its foundation: democratisation, popular organisation, agrarian policy and (post)apartheid South Africa.

Democracy and Civil Society

From its inception, the contemporary debate on democratisation has focused on three themes: the viability of democratic transformation, the role of external forces, and the role of civil society. As Eghosa Osaghae argues in his contribution, the debate has been narrowed and effectively undermined by failing to see the present struggles for democratisation as part of a long history of such struggles, and by viewing the present instead as a discrete episode in African politics. Part of the reason for this lies in the imputed role of civil society in democratisation.

For most writers, and especially for those unaware of the history of this concept, 'civil society' consists of those private (non-state) organisations that (within each one's limited sphere of competence) mediate their members' relations with each other, with other organisations and with the state. There has been such an extraordinary growth in these organisations in the last ten years, and they have been so visible within democratic struggles (see ROAPE 54) that it has often been assumed that they constitute the driving force behind what is taken to be a process of democratisation. It has also been assumed, as Bjorn Beckman points out in ROAPE 58, that civil society seeks to 'liberate itself from the suffocating grip of the state', and thus has the same project as that claimed by neo-liberal international institutions and neo-liberal academics.

Rather than take it for granted that civil society underpins democratisation, we must examine whether, why and how it may come to do this (and in what if any sense this capacity and function has changed since the period around Independence). Beckman and Jega tackle this question by examining the recent history of two Nigerian organisations, representing students and university teachers. They demonstrate how the nature and demands of conflict with university authorities, supported by the state, have promoted democratic practices and values within the organisations, and led them to broaden their campaigns for accountability, representativity and the rule of law within tertiary education to cover the Nigerian state as a whole. They warn, however, of the continual dangers posed for internal democracy by co-optation of leadership by the state – as occurred for example throughout the labour movement in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s – and by certain exigencies of struggle, notably the need for secrecy.

While intelligentsia, students and organised labour have been at the centre of most struggles for democratisation in Africa for the better part of this century, they constitute a minority within civil society, sometimes a small minority. More
representative of civil society as a whole, and of its ambiguity within democratisation, is Mboscuda, a new popular organisation among the Mbororo of Northwest Cameroon, studied by Lucy Davis. While there has been a substantial literature on the democratic struggle in Cameroon, and much of it has focused on the 'anglophone' West notably John Fru Ndi’s Social Democratic Federation, relatively little has dealt with the far Northwest and with its Fulani inhabitants.

Itself as much the product of the struggle as a contributor to it, Mboscuda can be viewed and understood from two perspectives. Like the other organisations involved in the struggle, Mboscuda has an antagonistic relationship to the Cameroonian state and its supportive institutions, such as the patronage networks that have formed the main connection between the Mbororo leadership and the national political leadership. To a considerable degree its early and active membership was drawn from groups excluded from this relationship – young men, especially urban young men, the educated, and women. At the same time, it seeks to represent the Mbororo as a whole, as a self-conscious community, and it shares certain cultural assumptions about Mbororo (political) behaviour, assumptions which supported the older relationship between the Mbororo and the state. Thus for Davis it remains uncertain whether Mboscuda can become an effective component of a national, democratic, movement, or will instead develop into another vehicle for ethnic chauvinism.

Civil society has also suffered considerable external intervention in the name of development. As the capacity and will of African states to perform a full range of functions has dwindled or been circumscribed, so elements of civil society, notably NGOs, have moved to take over those functions. International financial institutions and Western governments have increasingly diverted funds and training schemes into NGOs, directly or through Northern NGOs. This has created the prospect of the co-optation of civil society not by the African state as in the past, but by the inaptly named ‘donor community’, and its diversion away from a role in democratisation. To this theme we must return in future issues.

South Africa: Disarming Armscor or Disarming the ANC?

South Africa's Government of National Unity (GNU) began life in an atmosphere of painful optimism, but always dogged both by the inheritance of apartheid and the need – as at all times since Mandela’s release – to accommodate minority parties. These parties, or the state forms they once represented were responsible for much of the violence that marked the eighties and early nineties. Committed to policies contradictory to those of the ANC, and to class and other interests hostile to those of the ANC's social base, they have fought for retention of elements of the apartheid system, and to undermine the ANC.

As in 1991-92, this has fostered divisions within the ANC, between leadership and base, centre and locality, and within the leadership itself. So also have the very largely unreconstructed nature of the state (still with the same institutions and – to an extraordinary degree – the same personnel), pressures from external investors, IFIs and the 'donor' community and the short-term expedients arising from inherited foreign debt, low gold prices, high production costs and other features of the economy.

A significant illustration of the ANC’s dilemma is the conflict over the purchase of four naval corvettes, designed to strengthen the country’s tiny navy, neglected in the eighties but without an obvious sea-borne enemy to confront (with the possible
exception of vessels illegally fishing off its coasts). Though the original decisions were made by the National Party government of 1989-94, the proposed purchase gained enthusiastic support from Ronnie Kasrils, deputy Minister of Defence, and no less vehement opposition from Jay Naidoo (in charge of reconstruction and development) and Trevor Manuel (trade and industry). Despite considerable pressure from several foreign governments in support of national firms bidding for the contract (including Britain, Spain and Germany), and senior officers in the SANDF behaving as if the purchase were already agreed, President Mandela had to suspend negotiations and order the cabinet to reconsider the proposal.

Susan Willett's article underlines the significance of this episode (and of recent revelations about private South African companies offering military training to African states). She outlines much of the background to it in discussing the broader debate over arms policy, and especially arms exports. One by-product of the pre-1992 embargo on arms sales to South Africa was that the National Party government developed a domestic arms industry to supply its massive security forces, headed by the arms parastatal, Armscor. In turn this industry entered the international arms trade, at first selling covertly or to other pariah states, and then more widely and openly – though still to customers like the Habiyarima government of Rwanda, responsible for the 1994 massacres there. Now the apparent potential of arms exports is being used to defend both the arms industry and more broadly the entire defence budget, a large chunk of which is devoted to arms procurement.

The debate over arms exports divides the ANC, pitting Joe Modise (Minister of Defence) against colleagues from the development and social ministries. Hitherto it has been presented largely as an argument between economic expedience – 'we need the jobs and the foreign exchange' – and political principle – 'the arms trade is immoral, a particularly vile legacy of apartheid'. Willett argues that this misconceives the economics of arms production and sales. Opponents of an arms trade need not, she asserts, abandon the economic side of the argument. Deliberately focusing on the limited terms in which the arms trade is customarily defended, she shows that it is hard to find enough significant benefits – in revenue, employment, technological spin-off etc – to match the undoubted costs of arms production and the impact of the diversion of funds from supporting the RDP into sustaining the armed forces. There remain, of course, the moral arguments, to which ANC ministers seem less and less disposed, and the political debate, which includes the possible role of the SANDF in regional peacekeeping and conflict resolution. We shall return to this theme, notably in reporting on the workings of the official enquiry into questionable recent arms sales by South Africa.

At the heart of the debate over arms sales is a still more important issue, that of the relationship between the military (and associated industries) and the political process. Across Africa, the record of military rule and of the trend toward militarisation of African society in the seventies and eighties, show how sharp have been the contradictions between these phenomena and repeated attempts to develop economies and societies and to democratise African polities.

Okolie's discussion of agrarian policy in Nigeria underscores both the concentration of control over land, capital and other resources in the hands of what he calls 'subsidised elites', and the massive dissipation of resources entailed by their policies and the nature of military rule. Several of the Briefings confirm Beckman and Jega's picture of the embittered hostility of Nigerian military rulers to democratisation, and their abuse of human rights. Policies of support for existing military structures and
budgets – and in South Africa for the arms industry – or even policies of partial reform must thus be confronted by their implications for the health of democracy and the viability of social and economic development. Africa needs demilitarisation, not new model armies and 'efficient' arms traders.

INTERNATIONAL APPEAL TO END NUCLEAR TESTING

President Chirac has announced the French government's decision to resume nuclear testing in September in the South Pacific.

This decision leaves an open door for other nuclear powers to begin testing again. It undermines global attempts to limit and ban nuclear weapons and poses a grave threat to the environment of the South Pacific.

We urge you, President Chirac not to start nuclear testing and to sign a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The Legacy of a Pariah State: South Africa's Arms Trade in the 1990s

Susan Willett

South Africa's defence industry was built up in the context of the UN arms embargo and during the period from 1975 to 1989. It was developed and coordinated by the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (Armscor), renowned for an unaccountable, insidious covert culture which involved arms smuggling, corruption and most recently selling $30 million worth of arms to the government of Rwanda. A commission of inquiry – the Cameron Commission has been set up by the government to look at an apparent lack of control within the defence sector. Yet, since the end of apartheid, Armscor has attempted to recast itself as a socially responsible institution in its commitment to greater openness and transparency. The debate which supports the expansion of South Africa's arms trade contend that the industry is an important economic asset and that the contract which Armscor has secured from the government will treble arms sales over five years, creating 20,000 new jobs. But at what price? As the industry is faced with a declining domestic market it is likely to revert to markets it is familiar with, where high profits are guaranteed.

As Susan Willett states, the controversy between the moral and economic arguments – utilising different norms and assumptions resulting in political impasse – must become more rigorous and detailed in order to overcome a stalemate. This article seeks to avoid further polarisation by considering the arms trade in terms of orthodox economic analysis and the political debate ensuing in the context of a fragile and embryonic democracy.

1995 will be the year in which the future of South Africa's defence industrial and arms trade policies will be debated in the South African parliament. Parliamentary deliberations are likely to emphasise transparency and accountability in arms production and sales given the industry's record of clandestine and illegal practices during the apartheid period. The issue's salience results from the proceedings of the Cameron Commission into Armscor's (Armaments Corporation of South Africa) recent role in illegal arms transfers to Yemen in November 1994 and other matters. The outcome of the debate has implications for South Africa's standing with the international community, for international efforts at conventional arms control, as well as the debate on national priorities in government spending and industrial and technology policies.

At the same time, it is a focal point for a profound yet subtle struggle between many influential forces within South African society. On the one hand there are the old military institutions and structures, such as Armscor, the South African Defence
Force (SADF) and defence industrialists intent on maintaining as much of their original power, influence and structure as possible. On the other hand, there are newly empowered constituencies intent on reducing the role of the military. Such organisations include the radical churches and influential groupings within the ANC, who are intent on realising a 'peace dividend' in order to help redress the legacies of inequality inherited from the apartheid system. Such objectives are embodied in the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) which has the stated goal of shifting national resources away from defence towards more pressing socio-economic needs. Fears have been expressed, however, that under pressure to fund its reconstruction programme the new government will support a major arms sales drive and contribute to the global proliferation of conventional weapon systems.

The struggles over defence issues, however, cannot be compartmentalised as a battle between the old order and the new, for there are distinct elements within and sympathetic to the ANC who have a vested interest in securing a high profile in the international arms trade, namely defence industrial workers organised in COSATU, and Umkhonto we Sizwe who have voiced to ambitious military objectives, such as regional power projection and engagement in international peace keeping operations.

In addition to the internal political struggle, there is considerable external pressure on the Government of National Unity from multilateral institutions such as the UN, the IMF and the World Bank. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) have expressed concern over South Africa's plans to pursue further arms sales, especially in the context of an increasing proportion of the regional GDP being devoted to arms purchases. The UNDP has warned that the new government will have to be 'more careful' about weapons sales, and that South Africa had a moral responsibility not to fuel regional conflicts through arms exports (Southscan, 10 June 1994). The prospect of increased South African arms sales, especially to developing countries, needs to be seen against the backdrop of the economic crisis facing many developing countries especially in Africa, where scarce resources are diverted towards arms purchases which may undermine security as well as having significant opportunity costs for social and economic development.

Both the national and international debates about South Africa's role in the global arms market are based on moral, political, strategic and economic grounds and are highly influenced by the country's past policies and practices, and its changing strategic, political and economic environment. The presence of this debate in the national press is a welcome sign of the democratisation of a society once characterised by militarism, secrecy and oppression. However, emotive arguments characterise both sides of this public discourse. On the one hand, there are those who defend and promote the arms trade on the grounds of positive macro-economic arguments, job creation/retention, wealth creation and balance of trade effects. They argue that South Africa's post-cold war security environment requires a modern, well equipped, technologically advanced defence force. Utilising threat analysis, they argue that external instability could encroach into South Africa. Joe Modise (the Minister of Defence) said in an interview, 'The immediate danger lies in the instability around us. We have to face up to it and cannot safely assume that it will not spill over into South Africa or otherwise affect our interests' (Jane's Defence Weekly, 6 August 1994). It follows that a strong defence capacity and industry should be maintained to meet these potential threats. As significant investments in developing arms production capacities were made in the past it makes little economic sense to withdraw from such activities in the future (Navias, 1993). The lifting of the UN arms embargo makes possible significant increases in arms sales, boosting foreign exchange earnings and
job opportunities. Politically, moreover, arms sales can have important diplomatic benefits, in terms of supporting or realising foreign policy objectives.

The alternative viewpoint argues that the major threat to South Africa's security lies not outside South Africa, but in the internal problems arising from the legacy of apartheid. Here a broader common security approach is adopted, which identifies poverty, ethnic tensions, economic refugees, small arms proliferation and environmental problems as the major security threats. Closely associated with these positions are arguments which, on moral and humanitarian grounds, question the need for a defence industry, particularly one which exports weapons to conflict situations elsewhere in the region and internationally (Cock, 1993). They point out that arms are seldom used against foreign armies but more often to suppress domestic political opposition. Any increases in arms sales from South Africa would not only help to fuel and/or sustain armed conflicts elsewhere, particularly in Africa, but could also undermine the newly-acquired credibility of the Government of National Unity.

This controversy pits moral arguments against economic arguments which utilise different norms and assumptions, resulting in a political impasse. It is essential that the discussion becomes more rigorous and detailed in order to overcome this stalemate. This contribution seeks to avoid further polarisation of the respective positions by considering the subject in terms of orthodox economic analysis, drawing some political conclusions.

The Economic Effects of the Military Burden

The arms trade debate is but one facet of a much broader discourse on the economic effects of military expenditure and defence industrialisation on South Africa's developing economy. Such concerns have been the object of economic discussion since the early classical economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo argued that excessive military expenditure acts as a drain on capital accumulation, as it slows down investment and thus economic growth. The contemporary debate is broadly divided between those who argue that military expenditure has a negative economic impact and that the reallocation of resources to civilian sectors would improve economic performance (UN, 1982), and those who assert that military expenditure encourages growth, through a number of different mechanisms such as spin-off from military to civil innovation and counter cyclical effects (Baran & Sweezy, 1966).

The catalyst for the empirical work on developing countries came from Benoit's seminal paper (1978). Contrary to his own expectations he found that defence spending had a positive effect on the rate of growth of national product (income) in LDC's. Most work on the effects of the military burden on developing societies are a response to the challenges posed by Benoit's results. For instance Kolodziej (1987:303-35) has found that in the short and middle run there are marginal gains from investment in arms production and if not real economic and technological gains, at least a perception of their existence. Deger and Sen (1987) on the other hand contend that the production of military products obviously increases military capability, but hardly contributes in an definitive way to economic development. This is because there are weak linkages between civil and military industries, job creation is limited, and foreign exchange reserves are depleted by the establishment of large scale systems of arms manufacturing (Ball, 1988). On the basis of a cross-national statistical survey, Mullins has found that the propensity to develop national defence industrial capabilities depends on GDP growth, but the accumulation of military power may undermine the prospects of economic growth over the long term (Mullins, 1987:106-
7). The causal relationship is very clear here: industrialisation, and in particular, heavy industrialisation, permits the development of arms production if there is the political will to follow this course. But once an arms industry is established it is not a neutral agent in the economy. It often spreads new production processes and standards, encourages Research & Development intensive activities, and favours particular management practices. Combined, these factors contribute to the creation of a new technological paradigm and culture embodied in the defence industry but which operates in the larger institutional and social context (Vayrynen, 1992).

In reviewing the literature it is clear that the economic effects of military spending are complex and historically variable. Analysis is contingent on other economic and social variables, and on historical conditions which makes it difficult to make general statements on the basis of empirical work. It is therefore necessary to undertake detailed analysis at both an abstract aggregate level and at specific disaggregate levels within the economy in question. At the level of industry the effects of military expenditure on industrial structure, firms and labour should be considered. An understanding of the nature and impacts of military expenditure is necessary but not sufficient, for modifications in military expenditure precipitate changes in the economy which evoke structural adjustments contingent both on the specific situation and current and future policies.

Arms Trade Legacy

Any analysis of South Africa’s arms industry and trade before 1994 is complicated by the shroud of secrecy which enveloped all aspects of South Africa’s defence activities under the apartheid regime. As Navias (1993:38) has commented:

There emerged then no means of analyzing the scale and scope of transfers, of openly debating arms production values, and of assessing arms sales and arms procurement policies. In essence there were no public fora in which the benefits and costs of arms trade options could be thrashed out.

South Africa’s domestic defence industry was built up in the context of the UN arms embargo, and during the ‘total onslaught’ period between 1975 and 1989, in which national resources were mobilised to defend apartheid against perceived internal and external threats. The development of the defence industry was coordinated by Armscor, which developed a deep rooted and insidious covert culture, and has been associated with shady dealings involving international arms smuggling, corruption and even murders (Sunday Times (SA), 30 August 1992).

The arms embargo, and the need to supply the armed forces with military equipment to defend and maintain apartheid against internal and external threats ‘forced’ South Africa’s defence industry to become largely self-sufficient in providing military equipment for the SADF. The decision to develop an indigenous arms industry was as much a political as a military strategy to consolidate South Africa’s position in the international hierarchy in order to enhance its politico-military autonomy vis-à-vis the pressures emanating from the global centres of economic power. This political motivation meant that its economic effects were regarded by the policy makers as secondary. As Nolan (1986:5) has observed of other attempts at defence industrialisation in LDC’s,

the achievement of self-sufficiency in defence ... is an imperative that will not yield to calculations of relative inefficiencies and diseconomies, nor can the defence-industrialisation
path pursued by third world governments be expected to follow strictly the curves of comparative advantage.

By the late 1980s the domestic defence industry had acquired across-the-board production capabilities and was able to supply the SADF with the bulk of its equipment needs. Weapons and technology that could not be procured locally were acquired through clandestine measures – i.e. front companies, third parties, smuggling – and through the grey and black areas of the international arms market. Despite the international embargo a number of multinational firms, such as Siemens, Plessey, etc. allowed their South African subsidiaries to be used as conduits for military technology. It is thus no coincidence that many of South Africa's weapons systems are based on a wide range of foreign defence technologies.

As a result of massive state investment and a highly privileged resource position (in terms of access to capital and skilled labour), South Africa’s defence industry emerged as one of the major industrial sectors of the economy by the late 1980s, employing approximately 160,000 people – 10 per cent of total manufacturing employment. Approximately 800 private sector companies were involved in defence production, either as contractors, sub-contractors or suppliers of products and services. In 1989 the arms industry contributed 4.5 per cent of GDP and 19.2 per cent of the value of total manufacturing production. It embodied the highest concentration of skilled workers and of technological and manufacturing capabilities in the economy. It had also emerged as a major exporter, driven by excess production capacity, rising overhead costs and few economies of scale to pursue external markets. In 1982 arms exports amounted to R22m (US$20m), and after peaking at R454m in 1987, they again rose in the 1990s to reach R798m (US$244m) in 1993 (DIWG, 1994).

South Africa exported arms to 34 countries in 1992-93 and was regarded as one of the major developing country arms producers. This should however, be put into perspective: in global terms South Africa’s arms exports accounted for less than 1 per cent of the international arms trade. Most of the recipients were fellow ‘pariah states’, similarly excluded from access to major sources of supply. For instance South Africa sold arms to both sides in the Iran/Iraq war, to the Pinochet regime, the Khmer Rouge, Unita and Renamo. South Africa has also supplied arms to Peru, Taiwan, Israel, and Rwanda, and has been implicated in supplying key technologies to Iraq for its nuclear industry (Southscan, 10 June 1994). In 1992-93 the major recipients of arms exports from South Africa were the Middle East (42 per cent), Asia (22 per cent) and the Far East (40 per cent).

With the ending of South Africa’s involvement in the war in Angola/Namibia and changing government spending priorities, huge cuts in defence spending have occurred since 1989. The bulk of these cuts have been in procurement spending: 65 per cent in real terms between 1989-93. This led to the cancellation or postponement of a large number of equipment projects and increasing its industrial orientation towards export markets, developing products such as the Rooivalk (attack helicopters), Olifant (tank), Rooikat (armoured personnel carrier), and upgraded G6 howitzer specifically for foreign sales. Armscor has also attempted to minimise the affect of the defence cuts on the defence technology base by adopting a Technology Development Programme and funding the Industry and Technology Survival Programme (ITSP). Critical capabilities and key areas in industry have been identified and projects structured to assist industry in adjusting to, or repositioning themselves in a new market place, while simultaneously preserving critical skills for the future.
Armscor has been at the centre of efforts to increase South African arms sales. It issues arms import and export permits, assists with export credits and with the shipping and movement of arms products. To assist its overseas sales activities Armscor has established five overseas offices and is planning to open up two more in the Far East in the near future. It is also responsible for the sale of SADF surplus/obsolete equipment, and administers counter-trade contracts (during 1992-93 seven of its contracts involved counter trade worthR1,026m). The improvement in South Africa's foreign relations, as a result of the negotiations between the ANC and the government, together with the establishment in 1992 of its former production facilities as an independent company (Denel) allowed Armscor to begin operating more openly in the international market. South Africa's first defence exhibition, DEXSA, was held in Johannesburg in November 1992, and despite the UN Arms embargo over 200 official visitors from 46 different countries attended. The South African arms industry also began vigorously to promote its products at international arms fairs in Chile, London, Malaysia, Dubai and Abu Dhabi since 1992.

Despite attempts by Armscor to clean up the image of the South African defence industry there is evidence that some South African defence companies were still engaged in covert arms supplies as late as September 1993. In March 1993 President dos Santos of Angola was reported to have written to the UN Secretary General to complain about covert arms supplies to the Unita rebels in Angola from South Africa. One recent scandal involved the supply of South African arms to war-torn Rwanda (The Guardian, 5 September 1993). In 1992 the government of Rwanda bought 3,000 R4 automatic rifles, 10,000 hand grenades, 20,000 rifle grenades, 10,000 launching grenades and 1 million rounds of ammunition at a total cost of $5.9m, and Armscor has admitted that it supplied $30m of arms since 1989, but had suspended arms sales in September 1993 (Washington Post, 22 & 27 May 1994).

With the ending of apartheid, Armscor has attempted to recast itself as a socially responsible institution, a generator of jobs and technology, a proponent of international law and a central actor in the RDP. It has declared its commitment to greater openness and transparency in all arms negotiations and asserted a willingness to open up its operations to greater public scrutiny. In addition, it has agreed with ANC policy that arms exports should not fuel civil wars and human rights abuses.

The decline in the defence budget, particularly procurement, in the 1990s has created even greater reliance on exports as a strategy for the survival by the domestic defence industry. South Africa produces a wide range of internationally competitive products which it markets as particularly well-suited to third world buyers in terms of price and quality – and as robust, relatively simple and tried and tested under battle conditions. Since the lifting of the arms embargo in May 1994 Armscor has secured government approval for a massive drive to increase South Africa's share of the global arms market. Armscor believes it can treble arms sales over five years, creating 20,000 new jobs.

Despite Armscor's newly acquired legitimacy, its reputation as a pariah institution lingers on, reinforced by the recent scandal of the aborted shipment of arms to Yemen. The deal involved the supply – ostensibly to Lebanon – of R2.4 million worth of arms, including 10,000 AK47 assault rifles, 15,000 G3 rifles and a million rounds of ammunition. Armscor has said it struck the deal with an arms agent who fraudulently claimed to represent the Lebanese government. The ship carrying the arms was diverted to Yemen which is in a state of civil war. The ship's captain, a Dane, refused...
to unload the consignment and returned to Port Elizabeth amid a furor about the violation of South Africa's new arms trade policy.

This latest scandal involving South Africa in dirty arms deals has posed some uncomfortable dilemmas for the new government, not least because the Minister of Defence, a strong proponent of the defence industry, was totally unaware of the transaction, raising embarrassing issues about the lack of control over the defence sector. It not only damaged the credibility of Armscor but forced government to set up a commission of inquiry, the Cameron Commission, into this and other recent arms trade scandals involving Armscor. The findings of the Commission are likely to have a profound effect on the national debate on the country's arms trade policy.

Unless the Government of National Unity makes a conscious effort to impose more rigid controls upon the operations of Armscor and the defence industry it is likely that faced with a declining domestic defence market the South African defence industry will continue to operate in markets it is familiar with, where high profits are guaranteed. We must ask, however, what if any benefits arise from adopting such a strategy in the long term.

Is the Arms Trade Beneficial? Arguments For

The advocates of South Africa's arms trade focus on the potential positive impact of military capabilities on economic development. Such arguments stress the macro- and micro-economic advantages of foreign exchange earnings, balance of payments considerations, employment retention and technology spin-offs (Navias, 1993:40). Political arguments are used to reinforce economic ones: a state secured through strong military force can safely develop in economic terms. Moreover, weapon sales help to win friends and influence people. Nowhere is this more true than in Africa where South African arms sales are increasingly seen as a major foreign policy lever. Navias argues that 'arms transfers and sales may underpin regional security arrangements that could be established' (Navias, 1993:41). Indeed Williams and Omar go so far as to argue that South Africa's foreign policy should be 'predicated on a defence component' (Business Day, 9 May 1994). Many African states seem more than willing for South Africa to take on the mantle of regional security provider and have been courting Pretoria in recent months in an attempt to reduce reliance on major Western suppliers. African countries such as Nigeria, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe have already declared their intent to buy arms from newly-democratic South Africa. In addition to arms exports, Armscor is convinced that South Africa's defence industry can play a major role in servicing, maintaining and upgrading the weapons systems of states in Southern Africa.

The domestic arms industry, led by Armscor, have used powerful and persuasive economic arguments in order to obtain government approval for a massive drive to increase South Africa's share of the global arms market. Even President Mandela, once a dignified voice of opposition to the arms trade appears to have been convinced:

I don't think it would be fair to say that a particular country should not engage in trade in arms. Arms are for the purpose of defending sovereignty and the integrity of a country. From that angle there is nothing wrong in having a trade in arms (Southscan, 27 May 1994).

Dr Jakkie Cilliers, executive director of the Institute for Defence Policy, has observed that
since coming to power the ANC has changed dramatically from its pre-election stance. They've dropped their idealism and suddenly woken up to the fact that there's money to be made from the arms industry ... For the ANC now facing the realities of government it is going to be very difficult to ignore the persuasive arguments by both local and international arms dealers that even though it's a dirty business it's potentially highly lucrative and the ripple effect on the economy is tremendous (Sunday Times, 12 July 1994).

Joe Modise, the Defence Minister, goes so far as to suggest that the SA military and defence industrial base could make a major contribution to the RDP by creating jobs and boosting industrial output:

*I am confident that the defence industry can be used effectively to contribute to the socio-economic and political reconstruction of South Africa* (Modise, 1994).

In concrete terms the benefits of arms exports are seen in terms of foreign exchange earnings and jobs. For instance, in 1993 arms exports earned R800m ($244m) in foreign exchange and supported 15,000 jobs out of a total of 70,000 in the defence sector. Armscor believes that the end of the arms embargo will allow South Africa to increase its arms sales to approximately R 2.4bn ($800m) per annum, thereby creating a further 20,000 new jobs. Such potential is held up as evidence of the importance of the defence sector to South Africa’s economic regeneration.

The newly created South African Defence Industry Association (SADIA) argues that military R&D has many technological spin-offs that benefit the total population. Military developments in radar for example can be used in commercial air traffic control systems, and in such ways the defence industry will actively contribute to the RDP. It also warns of opportunity costs if government support for the defence industry diminishes:

*Without a continuing commitment to research and development, South Africa will not be able to maintain its competitive advantage in the field of world class technology. It will therefore lose the ability to earn foreign income and will not be able to retain technological preparedness for future military requirements* (SADIA, 1994).

Counter trade is argued to be another benefit from arms transfers. Counter trade requires the supplier of military products to import goods from the recipient nation or to transfer technology or investment to the importer. Armscor claims to have negotiated R4bn worth of investment in South Africa through counter trade agreements. These agreements involve the Swiss company Pilatus who are supplying a trainer aircraft under licence, Israeli companies engaged in the refurbishment of aircraft, a Spanish company, and British Aerospace (Southscan, 19 August 1994).

**Is the Arms Trade Beneficial? Arguments Against**

The alleged economic benefits of arms transfers dominate the policy debate in South Africa, though such claims are difficult to validate when only partial data on the real value of transfers is supplied and when the costs of transactions and state subsidies are hidden from public scrutiny. Counter-arguments which highlight the consequential costs of adopting a policy of arms export maximisation – including short-term budgetary costs and long term opportunity costs – are rarely examined in detail (Smith et al. 1985; Smith, 1992). Certain parts of the defence sector undoubtedly do face an ‘export or die’ situation, but several questions arise. Can the arms export sector survive without government subsidies? Does it make the contribution to
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macro-economic activity that is claimed by its proponents? And if the defence sector does require the continued support of government, what social and economic opportunity costs are involved?

By examining defence sector contributions to output, exports and employment we can gain a more objective measure of its economic significance. In 1993 total defence production accounted for only 1.1 per cent of GDP and around 4 per cent of total manufacturing output. Defence industrial employment contributed 5 per cent of total manufacturing employment, while the jobs generated by arms exports accounted for just 1 per cent of manufacturing employment. Arms exports have ranged between 0.1 per cent and 1.3 per cent of total exports during the last decade, and only exceeded 2 per cent of manufactured exports for a brief period in the late 1980s. From these figures it is clear that the defence sector’s contribution to overall economic performance is far less significant than is often maintained by its supporters.

Moreover, aggregate figures on arms exports and production only reveal a partial picture of their true economic significance. Despite the UN arms embargo and the attempt to be self-sufficient in arms production, South Africa has consistently had to import a significant amount of military related technology. Approximately 30-40 per cent of total procurement spending is still accounted for by direct and indirect imports. Thus when we examine the balance of trade in military technology, which has been in deficit for a number of years, it is clear that the balance of payments contribution of arms exports is even less convincing. In addition, according to Tielman de Waal, executive general manager of Armscor, the UN arms embargo meant that South Africa had to pay a premium of approximately 10 per cent of the value of contracts for its arms imports (interview: April, 1994).

South Africa’s continued dependence upon arms related imports is reflected in the most recent arms trade figures. Although these provide only a partial picture (covering 1991-94), they do reveal a trade deficit in military technology in the first two years of the decade which was only reversed in 1993-94 (Armscor, 1994). In addition, they do not include the purchase of capital goods (e.g. machine tools) and other intermediate inputs which have to be imported for the production of weapons. The use of foreign exchange for such inputs has meant that other industrial sectors have been deprived of foreign exchange to import capital goods necessary to expand production and improve efficiency. Evidence from the Brazilian arms industry suggests that the value of imports of various components required for arms production exceeded the value of arms exports (Vayrynen, 1992:98). Like Brazil, the South African arms industry has not been propped up because of its capacity to earn foreign exchange. Instead the underlying rationale has been political: the requirements of the repressive apartheid state.

If South Africa continues to expand its arms exports, it is likely that further imports of capital equipment and technology will be required which will absorb scarce foreign exchange and in turn crowd out investment and inputs into other sectors of the civilian industrial base. The fact that Denel inherited all its fixed assets (e.g. machinery) from the state for free, means that the prices of Denel’s export products do not reflect the real costs of producing such products. In this sense South African taxpayers will be continuing to subsidise Denel’s production for arms exports even though the company is now semi-privatised.

Combined these factors suggest that arms exports provide only a minimal contribution to SA’s macro-economic performance. It is rather at the micro-economic
level that the economic significance of arms exports are revealed. The top SA defence companies represent the country's high technology capabilities, and defence exports account for a significant part of these companies turnover. These high technology sectors are also the most critical for maintaining highly skilled employment.

**Subsidies and Indirect Costs**

The research and development costs of major weapon systems account for roughly 30 per cent of their unit costs. Despite the fact that many weapons are produced by private companies government is the major source of R&D funding, through the acquisition budget. Thus in 1993, R206m, nearly 50 per cent of total R&D spending, was spent on subsidising R&D in private sector firms through acquisition spending. Spending on defence R&D has in the past accounted for over 30 per cent of total government R&D spending, with little visible benefits to the civilian economy. Export sales rarely generate sufficient economies of scale to spread R&D costs significantly. In these circumstances recipient countries are benefiting from state subsidised R&D rather than arms sales subsidising R&D costs, as is so often claimed.

The government also subsidises arms exports through its defence marketing activities. Significant amounts of Armscor’s operating subsidy (R200m) are used for international marketing purposes, including international defence exhibitions and the establishment of overseas marketing offices. Furthermore, most arms exports fall under category 4 of the General Export Incentive Scheme (GEIS) and thus benefit from subsidies of between 14.5 per cent and 19.5 per cent. Subsidies are also provided by Armscor to facilitate countertrade transactions, totalling R348m in 1991-92 to 1993-94.

While the defence industry appears to enjoy a comparative advantage in specific battle-tested arms niches, this can only be sustained by massive future investment in R&D and capital investment. The Rooivalk is a case in point. The South African Air Force’s decision to acquire the Rooivalk attack helicopter was informed by strategic considerations with little regard to budgetary constraints. The project was nearly cancelled a number of times in the late 1980s and early 1990s because the development costs were becoming too high. Despite a lack of funds, the SAAF was finally ‘persuaded’ to buy the Rooivalk in order to help ‘recover’ some of the development costs of the helicopter through possible export orders. It was felt that if the SAAF was seen to be purchasing a foreign attack helicopter, South Africa would have found it very difficult to market and sell the Rooivalk overseas when its own armed forces were not willing to purchase it. Thus potential export earnings would have to be offset against the costs of domestic procurement. The decision to procure the Rooivalk has meant that the funds available for the procurement of other more pressing defence equipment have been severely diminished or crowded out. This example raises a more general issue about the compatibility of the government’s policy of arms export promotion with the equipment needs of the SANDF (South African National Defence Force) in the new strategic environment.

**Industry, Technology and Labour**

We may also examine the opportunity costs of military expenditure, the effects on industrial competitiveness and efficiency, private sector crowding out, and trade-offs with social welfare. Defence spending at R10.6bn in 1994 was approximately 8 per cent of total government spending. Procurement, as represented by the Special Defence Account at R3.1bn, directly supports the local defence industry, while other parts of the defence budget provide indirect support through the purchase of
consumables. However, there are many pressing social and economic needs which the Government of National Unity is under pressure to address, given the high expectations of a newly empowered population. For its own legitimacy and credibility spending on education, welfare, health and sanitation should take priority over defence expenditure, or at least procurement in the short term. In addition the government may face external pressures from international financial institutions to keep military expenditure low. The IMF wants to see developing countries keep defence spending below 2 per cent of GDP. Bilateral donors may impose similar conditions on South Africa before loans are dispersed. However, the continued subsidisation of the defence industry makes it difficult to keep defence expenditure below this benchmark unless arms are sold abroad.

Those arguments which support the expansion of South Africa's arms trade contend that the arms industry is an important economic asset, contributing to industrialisation, indigenous technological innovation and human capital formation. In the following sections the impact of the defence sector on industry, technology and the labour market will be examined in the light of their opportunity costs.

**Industrial Effects**

Joe Modise has argued that 'the technical and scientific capability developed by the existing arms industry can be used constructively in ... the transformation of the national economy towards meeting the needs of the majority of the population' (1994:14). While restructuring to meet the pressing socio-economic needs of the population must be a national priority, the defence sector is part of the economy's structural problem, not part of the solution.

During the 1980s per capita incomes fell alarmingly. This has been associated with a slowing of output growth and a stabilisation of manufacturing's share of GDP. According to Kaplinsky (1992), poor industrial performance has arisen from a combination of factors such as under-investment, investment in unsuitable sectors, and from the inappropriate choices of technology within industrial sectors. During the 1980s South Africa's ratio of GDP to investment fell dramatically and was low by comparative standards. The share of manufacturing output accounted for by labour-intensive industries has fallen disproportionately, whilst that arising from capital-intensive and high growth industries such as the defence, chemical and mineral-energy industries have risen. This pattern departs from the development paths of most of the successful newly industrialised countries (NICs) to which South Africa's development is often compared. In contrast with other NICs South Africa's industrial sector is abnormally small, with the heavy industries being 'overdeveloped' and the light industries 'underdeveloped' which has resulted in low employment growth and inefficient factor use.

The choice of investment in the heavy industries has meant that the capital labour ratios are high by international standards, and have grown. Some observers claim that low employment growth and inefficient factor use arises from a tendency to choose capital intensive techniques. However, there is little evidence to support this conclusion. While the capital-labour ratio rose by 20 per cent during the 1980s the productivity of labour was static and the productivity of capital fell by 18 per cent (Joffe et al. 1993). Instead the apparent high levels of capital intensity in the manufacturing sector reflect a general lack of investment in virtually all sectors except for the inherently capital intensive 'strategic' sectors such as chemicals, mineral/energy and defence.
The low levels of productivity growth in the manufacturing base are a major obstacle to meeting the population's basic needs. Urgent measures are required to revive overall investment, but due consideration must be given to the efficiency of future investment. Kaplinsky argues that in the past 'inappropriate choices ... driven by strategic considerations rather than by relative factor prices' were made which have been so significant as to affect the overall pattern of manufacturing growth (Ibid: 31). Joffe et al. (1993) argue that the reinvigoration of the manufacturing sector is the key to an improved economic future. But only when investment is shifted away from the established centres of accumulation in the 'strategic' sectors of the economy and channelled into the more labour-intensive higher value-added export orientated sectors will the South African economy begin to meet the challenges that confront it. This will not only help to revitalise per capita income growth, but may also be the necessary precursor to fighting inflation, increasing employment and expanding the fiscal base required for meeting the developmental challenges facing the Government of National Unity (Kaplinsky, 1992).

Traditional patterns of public investment, of which the defence sector forms a part, reflect a general process of 'misinvestment', in which the state has allocated vast amounts of national resources to 'strategic industries', which are inherently inefficient and unviable in commercial terms. Vayrynen has noted that in countries whose economies are in decline, and in South Africa's case there are many indicators that suggest this is the case, the defence industry becomes a burden.

It not only consumes scarce financial and skilled human resources, but also creates political and bureaucratic obstacles to the restructuring of the industrial system in general. In that way it may even accelerate the downward trend in a nation's economic career (Vayrynen, 1992:104).

Given South Africa's factor endowments, the structural weakness of its manufacturing sector and the urgent social and political task of meeting people's basic needs, prioritising the highly capital-intensive defence sector is a highly inappropriate strategy. It represents a social cost in a country where surplus labour and growing population suggest the need for an industrial and technology policy which should emphasise labour intensive production in both domestic and export orientated consumer sectors.

**Technology**

In order to justify a prominent and strengthened role for the arms industry the defence industry advocates argue that the civilian economy ultimately benefits through the diffusion of technological innovations ('spin-off'). This may take the form of products, processes, organisational techniques or knowledge. Evidence in developed market economies suggests that spin-off is increasingly difficult to realise because of the lack of synergies between military and civil technologies. It is only in the area of dual-use technologies that military and civil technologies interact and in this context 'spin-on' – the transfer of civil technology to the military sphere – has become the dominant pattern of transfer. This suggests that innovation policies which prioritise military over civilian innovation will lose or fail to gain competitive advantage in high value-added growth markets to the detriment of long term economic growth.

Measuring technological performance is difficult, and data limitations mean that for South Africa we are forced to rely on measures of patenting activity. Patents of new products and process are seen as evidence of innovative activity. Data is provided by
the US Patent Office which records the country of origin of patents. From this source Kaplinsky found that until the early 1980s South Africa was a relatively significant patentor in the US market, suggesting considerable technological capabilities. But after this period there was little change in SA’s patenting activity reflecting a plateau of innovative activity. In contrast, other NICs such as Taiwan and Korea had a very rapidly increasing number of patents reflecting a substantial investment in technology.

According to Joffe et al. (1993:44-5), this poor innovatory performance has a number of systemic roots. National investment in enhancing civilian technology is currently declining, the national system of innovation is poorly integrated and there has been substantive market failure in the development of technological capabilities. During the 1980s when civil R&D was declining military R&D increased significantly (by some 280 per cent) – but there were no subsequent increases in patenting activity. This suggests that the innovative return to military R&D as measured by patenting activity is less than the return to civilian R&D. Against this background, allocating scarce resources to military R&D which is likely to have a marginal impact on civil innovation through spin-offs can only exacerbate the country’s declining innovatory performance.

A crucial factor which influences a nation’s innovative performance which is often neglected by the more orthodox economists is the reciprocal interaction between technology and social forces. Technology and its agents are not independent of each other; on the contrary, mutually compatible patterns of technologies, policies and productive organisation form what Dosi (1982) has termed ‘technological paradigms’. Such paradigms are internally congruous, so long as the constituent parts develop in synchrony with each other. The paradigm faces a crisis if technology and organisation become incompatible or if policy is at a crossroads with both or either of them. In South Africa the technological requirements generated by the social, political and economic transformation which is taking place in South Africa has caused just such a paradigm crisis.

This is because the dominant military technological paradigm has become a burden on rather than a boon for economic growth. Vayrynen (1992:17) comments that

> the (military) technological paradigm calls for a policy in which the military is able to control the results of military related science and to integrate technology into military related organisations. Such arrangements ‘tame’ the technology and make its affects predictable within the organisation. The organisational entrenchment of technology, not the autonomy of sciences, lends it autodynamic features and undermines the possibility of political control. This suggests that techno-structures and other forces associated with technology are gaining in importance, condition political choices, and make disarmament more difficult.

Armscor, the SANDF and the defence industry, are engaged in promoting their own narrow interests which have become isolated from the rest of the economy. Their technological culture is sheltered from the market and responds primarily to the military challenges stemming from the international strategic environment rather than those emerging from South African society itself. Military technologies are often so specialised that civilian applications are difficult to develop. This limits the economies of scale in military R&D and may even lead to diseconomies.
Labour Market

There are direct opportunity costs in employment terms from allocating scarce national resources to defence. Direct employment sustained through the defence budget of R10.6bn includes 130,000 military and civilian personnel and 70,000 defence industry workers. In contrast, funding for the public job creation programme designed to benefit an average of 250,000 people a year has been put at just over R1.1bn. In addition, the defence labour market distorts human capital formation by absorbing a disproportionate number of science and technology graduates and skilled technicians, creating bottlenecks in the local labour market. The training of skilled defence workers is very expensive and the utilisation of this labour is highly capital intensive. It is estimated that of the 70,000 workers in the defence sector, almost 15,000 are technically highly trained and part of the upper income group (SADIA, 1994:10). Most of the skilled defence workers are white and there is no guarantee that new jobs created through export promotion will redress this legacy. Armscor, although adopting an affirmative action programme in 1993, has admitted that it is finding it difficult to recruit blacks into its organisation.

Many issues which relate to opportunity cost arguments remain unresolved for lack of data, making it impossible, for example, to quantify the level of subsidisation of South African defence exports. However, on the evidence that exists it can be asserted with relative confidence that at best, arms transfers provide marginal short-term gains for the economy. Once all factors are taken into account, including short term subsidies and long term opportunity costs, the net return on arms sales is negligible.

Conclusion

It seems that the new administration is likely to continue trading in arms, albeit in a more responsible and less clandestine manner. However controlling the activities of an industry in which clandestine activities and control by whites (predominantly Afrikaners) have been the norm will be a test for the new government. While Armscor and Denel have shown a willingness to open up their operations to greater public scrutiny in the last two years and to enter into dialogue with the ANC about the industry’s future, the question of ownership and control of such strategic assets are of immense importance to the country’s security and economy.

Undoubtedly there will be considerable pressure on the state to continue to subsidise defence production and trade in order to maintain employment. This in turn will encourage the government to export arms in order to reduce its domestic burden. Ultimately maintaining a highly subsidised defence industrial base has considerable opportunity costs for the transition economy. At the same time, export maximisation is likely to come into conflict with compliance with international regimes and the adoption of a code of conduct. The latter might well restrict the number of potential defence markets, making it difficult to maintain the required level of exports from legitimate markets.

Without expanding export markets the South African defence industry is likely to be much smaller than its present size. Of course there will be adjustment problems associated with the further downsizing of the industry which cannot be regarded lightly or dismissed out of hand. Employment generation and economic development are the prerequisites for a successful transition process, and the ability of the defence industrial sector to adjust to a new market environment, given its centrality to the manufacturing sector and technology base, will be one of the tests of the new system.
In the post-cold war environment many nations with large defence sectors have turned their attention to converting and diversifying defence industrial activities. While positive results are limited, South Africa should not shy away from exploring conversion opportunities, particularly now that the economy is on the upturn. Government support is especially important in this regard since defence conversion requires a national effort. One way in which the state could encourage defence conversion is by establishing formal links between government, universities, industry and the financial sector in an attempt to redefine national technological and industrial priorities. The science councils and state corporations like the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research could play a key role in this respect.

For the international community critical of South Africa's aggressive arms trade policies, the test is whether to accept South Africa back into the fold unconditionally and support it in its difficult and contradictory transition process, or whether strict conditions are imposed with respect to its defence expenditure and arms trade practices. In return for compliance with arms trade limitations South Africa should fight hard for recompense through international aid and loans which could help redress the problems of defence industrial adjustment. Such a trade-off would have benefits not only for South Africa, but for the global community in its attempt to curtail weapons proliferation and improve the international security environment. Conditions without recompense could mean that South Africa might find the internal price for external compliance too high and thus be forced to stay out in the cold.

The arms trade debate is likely to continue for some time to come. But for all the arguments about cost-benefit analysis, the impact on trade and international relations, and the effect on the international standing of the country, they will have only a marginal effect on the outcome of the debate if the vested interests in South Africa's military industrial complex go unchallenged. As South Africa makes the transition to democracy, the military industrial complex led by Armscor is seeking to define a new role for itself, while preserving wherever possible its former influence, with arms exports representing a particularly powerful economic and political lever.

Only when the government has a reduced stake in military production and adopts a national security policy which down-plays the importance of self-sufficiency in weapons production will a real change come. In the final analysis the crucial question for the government is whether to continue to subsidise a privileged industrial sector, a product of the apartheid system, because it claims to contribute to the civilian economy, or whether to spend its limited resources on urgently needed social programmes which will contribute to greater stability and security in the future. In common with many other countries South Africa's, future national security policy will be increasingly determined by the growing influence of economic performance on strategic competitiveness and by recognition of the critical role of this relationship (Cohen & Wilson, 1988). Failure to recognise this choice and restructure accordingly could have disastrous long-term economic, social and political consequences in the context of a fragile and embryonic democracy.

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Vayrynen, R (1992), Military Industrialisation and Economic Development: Theory and Historical Case Studies, New York: UNIDIR.
This article deals with the role of organised interests in Nigerian democratisation. The wider study seeks to develop a general argument about the connections between the pursuit of group self-interest, the defence of organisational rights, and involvement in wider democratic struggles. The argument draws on the experiences of a range of Nigerian organisations during the 1980s and early 1990s, including the central labour body, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), one major industrial union (the textile workers'), the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), one women's organisation – Women in Nigeria (WIN), and some civic and human rights groups. In this article, two organisations are used to illustrate the argument: the Academic Staff Union of the Universities (ASW) and the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) – the organisations of the 'scholars'.

The Framework: Interest Groups and Democratisation

The abortive 'transition to democracy' in Nigeria underscores that dominant power groups, be it in a one-, two-, multi-, or no-party context, keep regrouping themselves, splitting up, multiplying, striking deals, outwitting each other, and regrouping again. Those with special access (not just to guns) keep twisting the rules in favour of themselves and their friends, while faking constitutional legitimacy. Electorates are taken for a ride, again and again. It is all very depressing, understandably inviting widespread cynicism and apathy, while committed democrats keep calling their bluff, trying to untwist the rules, striking their own alliances, without perhaps many illusions about immediate success but hoping that popular democratic aspirations may impress themselves on government in the long run.

What support can such hopes draw from observing the actual social forces at work in society? Much more, we believe, than the miserable spectacle of 'transition' politics may suggest. Without belittling the importance of democratic party politics we need to shift the focus to the wider arenas of conflict resolution and interest representation in society. This is where a significant expansion of democratic space has been achieved in recent years, despite the continued oppressiveness of national politics. But we also suggest that even substantial advances in the arena of electoral politics, in Nigeria and elsewhere, will have only limited impact in terms of democratising the state unless supported by advances in the constitutional regulation of conflict within a multitude of separate and overlapping arenas, including workplaces, schools, hospitals, market places, homes, and communities. Just as in national politics, these are arenas of ongoing struggles to restrain the arbitrary exercise of power and expand the sphere of constitutional rule, based on the recognition of conflicting interests. When writing the history of democratisation, these arenas should be explored for
achievements and experiences, as can be documented, for instance, in the struggles by trade unions, professional associations, women's and student organisations, but also in more fragmented arenas, less visible from the horizon of national politics, as in the contestation of patriarchal despotism in the peasant household and in the everyday resistance to arbitrary state violence and intimidation in roads and market places.

Our concern is with the role of organised interests in the construction and expansion of democratic space from within the arenas where they are counterpoised, preoccupied with the rules that regulate the relations of domination, each seeking either to pull the state on its side in that contest or fending off hostile state intervention, each looking for allies outside its own immediate arena. The establishment of the rule of law, in the sense of 'constitutionalising' conflict resolution, reducing the sphere of arbitrary rule, opening up for the legal representation of interests and the recognition of rights of organisation, are all vital elements in the construction of such democratic space. It presupposes an underlying 'social contract' – that is, a mutual understanding that 'if you abide by the rules, we will abide by the rules', implying the partial renunciation of the use of force. Yet, the contract rests on the balance of forces. The dominant force, be it the employer, the landowner, the school authority, the state, will respect the new contractual legality only as long as its non-application can be forcibly contested from below.

Our first preoccupation in this study is with what happens in the arenas which are the direct operative spheres of particular organised interests. However, the state is profoundly involved in structuring the 'regimes' that govern such arenas, apart from being a contesting party in its own right, both as an employer of labour and a producer of public services. Organised interests that contest relations of domination in their respective arenas will inevitably come up against the state, and will have a stake in political solutions which facilitate the pursuit of their interests; such solutions are not necessarily democratic. Interest groups may accept corporatist deals which award them privileges of access to state resources in exchange for political support for an authoritarian government. We need to discuss when and how contestations at the level of interest group regimes link to general democratic struggles at the level of the state. The link-up is affected by changing policy conjunctures which may cause corporatist solutions to be undermined and encourage disengagement and greater autonomy.

The struggle over autonomy has particular relevance for the expansion of democratic space. It is a field where organised interests that operate in widely different arenas, for instance students and workers, may find a common platform in the defence of autonomy against state encroachment. The defence of organisational rights is likely to overlap with struggles for political rights as citizens, including for freedom of association, speech etc. These linkages, we believe, can be amply illustrated from recent Nigerian experiences; it is also in that context that the question of democratic alliances can be addressed.

Interest groups, especially in the context of the politics of structural adjustment, are commonly branded as 'vested' or 'special interests' and as obstructing both the 'national interest' and the interests of less organised classes such as the peasantry. We conclude by discussing briefly if and in what ways the expansion of democratic space in the arenas of organised interests, as illustrated here with the cases of university teachers and students, is of relevance for such wider popular interests. We also touch on the internal democratic constitution of the organised interests themselves as being decisive for their ability to reproduce themselves as forces of democratisation.
Contesting Relations of Domination in Civil Society

The actions of associations become relevant to democratisation first of all if and when they contest relations of domination within their own fields of operation. Some associations are more prone than others to get involved in this respect. This study is primarily concerned with organised interests in a 'modern' sense, formally constituted in terms of a defined membership and with an internal constitutional process for electing leaders, being accountable etc. These include, in particular, trade unions and professional associations. They differ from organised interests without a formal structure, such as social movements which are represented by activists without constitutional status and where membership is fluid; the distinction is not rigid. Formally organised interests may also claim to be part of and to represent wider informal social movements, as in the case of trade unions and the 'labour movement', though they can certainly not claim to represent the entire associational life of a society. In discussions of 'the growth of civil society', however, they are usually given an important place.

The study deals first of all with the construction of democratic space within the professional arenas where such organised groups operate. These may be 'private' arenas, constituted by relations to other 'counterparts' than the state, for instance relations between workers and private employers. The state, however, is in most cases involved, not just as an employer in its own right, but in the political regulation of the relations between the private parties. The arena is defined by the nature of the interest and the relationships implied by representing that interest, such as the relationship of labour to employers, tenants to landlords, producers to produce buyers, students to school authorities. In each case we may identify basic underlying conflicts of interest that define the relationship: workers want better pay and job security, employers want to cut costs and raise productivity; tenants want low rent, landlords high; producers high prices, produce buyers low etc.

Organised interest groups intervene in the regulation of these conflicts and develop a stake in the procedures by which the conflicts are resolved. Such procedures reflect the uneven power relations characterising the relationship. Employers assert their right to hire, fire, and discipline workers on the basis of ownership and control over the means of production. Workers, in their turn, seek to enhance their bargaining power by withholding their labour and other forms of collective industrial action. Farmers' associations may organise sales boycotts and students may refuse to attend classes. There is no scope within such asymmetric power relation to resolve conflicts through democratic processes which would presume equal rights. However, a factory or a university can be more or less democratically constituted in terms of rights of organisation and expression and the extent to which workers, students and lecturers are given a say in the decisions which affect them. Even if disciplinary rights rest with managers and authorities, the process by which such rights are exercised may or may not be organised in a way as to protect against arbitrary treatment. The scope and limitations of the disciplinary rights may themselves be subjected to negotiation.

Each such arena of conflicting interests can be seen as governed by a 'regime', a set of formal or informal rules and practices that define rights and obligations. We may speak of the work place regime of a particular factory and a labour regime for a particular sphere of production, society or place. We may similarly speak of school, university or hospital regimes when referring to the way in which power and authority is structured in such institutions. These regimes may be more or less arbitrary (despotic) or constitutional, authoritarian or participatory, imposed or
agreed. The extent to which the interests can assert themselves in the constitution and operation of the regime will reflect the balance of power both in specific arenas and in society at large. That balance is not constant, but is continuously shifting both as a result of circumstances (e.g. changing market conditions, state intervention etc) and as a result of the efforts by the contesting parties (organisation, leadership). As the regimes involve relations of domination (management, discipline, authority), they are potential arenas of democratic struggle because those who are being subordinated have an interest in changing the regime itself so as to enhance their say in the way in which they are ruled. The struggles of workers against managerial despotism (for example) are therefore part of the struggles to expand democratic space in society. The same is true for students contesting the authoritarianism of educational institutions and women's organisations contesting patriarchy at different levels of society.

Advancing the Rule of Law from Below

Central to the contestation of relations of domination in civil society is the struggle against the arbitrary exercise of power by those placed in a position of authority, as managers, landlords, teachers, heads of department, vice chancellors, market supervisors etc. Much contestation takes place at an unorganised level by individuals and groups who defy authority that they consider to be illegitimate. This may itself be important in the disciplining of authority and the expansion of democratic space. Organised interests take a more direct part in the efforts to constitutionalise the relations of domination within their respective spheres of operation in order to regulate the exercise of authority and minimise arbitrary and personal rule. Having a say in the way one is ruled is closely linked to the establishment of recognised procedures for the regulation of conflict. In this respect democracy and constitutionalism are closely connected.

'The rule of law' is often associated with the ideology of those who want to discipline and control subordinated groups. Historically, however, constitutionalism has also been the project of imposing law and order from below on those who exercise power. If left to themselves, the latter are likely to continue to rule as they deem fit, seeing themselves as responsible only to God or their own good will. Most managers, headmasters, patriarchs, and others 'placed' in positions of authority are convinced that they have the best interest of their 'wards' at heart. It is only when challenged that they will find virtue in constitutionalising their authority. The contest over the terms is central to the process of democratisation.

Organised interests, in their struggle to do away with arbitrary (despotic or paternalistic) forms of domination, enter into an implicit 'contract' whereby they agree to abide by certain rules if the other side makes the same undertaking. The contract imposes constraints on the exercise of power on both sides, including restrictions on the use of obstruction and non-cooperation by the subordinate party, as in the case of the regulation of the right to strike. The expansion of constitutional forms of conflict regulation is therefore no less a struggle for the definition and recognition of the legitimate interests that are to inform such contracts. As with all contracts, they are bound to reflect the differences in strength (resources, organisation, leadership, alliances etc.) of the contracting parties. There is nothing necessarily 'fair' about them and the democratic content, in terms of influence, may be limited. Still, the contract may allow the subordinate party some element of legal protection on which to build the strength from which future, more advantageous contracts can be negotiated.
In many instances, a formal set of rules may exist in the statute books, as required, for instance, by international conventions or as influenced by legal practices elsewhere. This is true of much labour legislation. But such rules are often of little consequence for the way in which authority is actually exercised. The Nigerian textile workers union, for instance, has fought hard for the implementation of such official labour rights in companies where they have been ignored or resisted by management, often with the collusion of government labour officers, police commissioners and other official guardians of ‘law and order’ (Andrae & Beckman, 1991; 1992).

This underscores that the struggle for constitutional rule has to be waged from below and that formal rules often have no more meaning than can be asserted and defended by the contending forces. It also reminds us that the struggle for the constitutional regulation of conflict within relations of domination does not mean a renunciation of the use of force. Except by retaining the ultimate sanction of non-constitutional force, subordinate groups cannot expect their interests to be respected, when seeking to either establish or uphold the new legality.

**Frontiers in the Defence and Expansion of Democratic Space**

The organisational experiences discussed in this article relate to different frontiers of democratic struggles, from those concerning the elementary right to exist as an organisation at the one end, to involvement in the demands for the democratic transformation of national politics at the other. In distinguishing between the different frontiers we thus move from the immediate arenas in which organised interests are constituted, e.g. a work place or an institution, to the wider societal arenas in which they may engage as the representatives of the interest of their members, though we are not suggesting that ‘democratic relevance’ necessarily depends on the size of such arenas. An organisation which dabbles ineffectually in ‘national democratic politics’ may contribute less to democratisation than one engaged in transforming relations of domination in its own immediate arena of operation. Our concern, however, is not with assigning priority to particular arenas but with tracing they way in which they connect, how struggles at different levels prompt and reinforce each other. When, for instance, may seemingly ‘narrow’ conflicts, as over the appalling quality of food in the students’ canteen, take on a wider democratic significance? The accounts of the organisations of Nigerian university teachers and students that illustrate our argument span a wide range of such different ‘democratic levels’, including:

- Rights to organise, hold meetings, elect representatives, without risking interference and victimisation.
- Rights of recognition, representation and collective bargaining.
- Participation in the development of public policies which directly affect the members.
- Promoting democratic practices within the institutions that constitute the immediate arena of operation.
- Promoting the rule of law including transparency of transactions and accountability within these institutions.
- Promoting institutional autonomy and integrity vis-à-vis the state (e.g. academic freedom, free collective bargaining).
• Solidarity and alliances with other organised interests.
• Promoting political rights and freedoms in society at large.
• Giving voice to popular political demands, especially in the absence of democratic means of political representation.

Whose Interests? Representation, Recognition, Mediation

Interest groups provide means of representation in the context of the regulation of conflict of interests in society. But whose interests do they actually represent? Their democratic potential is frequently questioned because the organisations are seen as lacking either in internal democracy or in autonomy in relation to the other party of the conflict. Representation is complicated by the need for interest groups to be recognised both in law and by the other parties to the conflict and by the fact that they tend to perform a mediatory role. The tension between representation and mediation underscores that interest groups themselves are contested territory, and not just by internal forces. The way in which they are constituted both within the arena where they seek representation and in relation to the state are all subject to struggles with a potential democratic content.

The constitutional practices and processes inside the organisation themselves are of obvious importance, including the way in which problems of succession, accountability, divisions, minority rights etc. are handled. All of this involves struggles for the construction, extension and protection of democratic space. Interest groups may be seen as breeding grounds where practices and values of importance to the democratic transformation of society are developed. Conversely, the anti-democratic practices and values characteristic of many interest groups undercut the ability of the latter to serve as democratic forces in society. Interest groups that are weakly organised in terms of internal democracy may still perform a democratic function by expanding constitutionalism and the principle of representation within their sphere of operation. This presupposes however that they have some reasonable claim to represent the interests of their members, as defined by the nature of the conflict, the issues at stake, and the lines pursued by the leaders.

The question of representation and the democratic role of interest groups is complicated by the problem of recognition. An organisation needs to be recognised by the other party in the conflict. Some may be able to force recognition by virtue of the militancy and perseverance of their members. Often, however, recognition is granted without any showdown because the other party has an interest in seeking accommodation, hoping to ensure greater co-operation by granting benefits to the organisation and its leaders. Co-optation may be crude and corrupt, or be more subtle. Interest groups may even be turned into instruments used by the dominant party for administering its domination. In some cases, interest groups are even created and maintained by the dominant party, as in the case of so-called 'yellow', management-sponsored unions.

Recognition is thus double edged. It is necessary to obtain it but it may also be a means of control, undermining democratic potential. The rules regulating the establishment and recognition of interest groups are therefore an important area of contest. The right to represent somebody else is regulated in law; there is no natural right to fall back on. The right to strike, for instance, as a means of collective industrial action organised and enforced by a union, conflicts, as neo-liberals remind us, with
the right of the individual to freely negotiate with the employer. The right to strike assumes the authorisation of the union to act on behalf of its members. The balance struck between these conflicting principles is an outcome of historical struggle and the balance of forces, varying from one context to another.

The element of recognition and external authorisation may prevent interest groups from being ‘pure’ expressions of the aspirations of their members. This is where the issue of mediation comes in. As ‘society’ (the state, the other party) agrees to ‘recognise’ an organisation, authorising it to be the ‘legitimate’ representative of a particular interest, it may also reinforce its role as middleman or mediator in the regulation of conflict.

Illustrations

The Academic Staff Union of the Universities (ASUU)

ASUU represents some 8,000 members of staff in 33 Nigerian universities. Rights of organisation have been repeatedly suppressed, including outright proscription of the national body and the refusal to allow branches to be established in some universities. Local and national leaders have been victimised and intimidated, and operations restricted. ASUU has challenged such repressive policies, often successfully, including maintaining an effective underground organisation while banned, forcing the lifting of the ban, and taking university authorities and governments to court (Jega, 1994). The suppression of the organisation has been used by the state to block demands for collective bargaining over conditions of service as well as the reform of the university system, including the rules regulating the selection and powers of Vice Chancellors, University Councils, Deans and Heads of Departments etc. The prolonged strike actions in 1992 and 1993 forced the authorities to the bargaining table which yielded substantial results on all counts (ASUU-FGN 1992). The state continues to ignore demands for participation in the making of public policy in the field of higher education but the union has responded by non-cooperation, undercutting the effective implementation of imposed policies. Local branches have running battles with their respective university administrations over transparency and accountability. The defence and expansion of university autonomy and academic freedom against subversion by the state and by local university leaders have been a major area of struggle, scoring both victories and defeats. ASUU has played a leading role in the demand for democracy at the level of national politics and acted as a ‘people’s tribune’ on issues of popular concern, for instance, in resisting structural adjustment polices considered detrimental to popular welfare.

ASUU has come a long way from its modest origins in the late colonial period when the first universities were established. Its concerns in the 1960s and 1970s conformed largely to a conventional picture of academics as an elitist, conservative, and vacillating segment of the middle class, preoccupied with conditions of service in a narrow sense. It tended to seek accommodation with the authorities and was easily repressed. A strike in 1973 was smashed by the threat of eviction from university housing which sent lecturers scampering back to the class rooms.

The rapid decline of the material conditions of the universities in the 1980s accelerated ASUU’s process of transformation from a timid and accommodationist professional association into a major actor on the national political scene. The collapse of university funding, the disintegration of basic educational infrastructure, gross understaffing, brain drain, shortages of basic textbooks, laboratory equipment etc.,
were issues of wide concern, not just to staff and students (Bangura, 1993). Hence, what would otherwise have been simply particularistic demands assumed national significance, broadening the union's popular appeal and ability to attract sympathy when faced with state repression. In 1988, ASUU asked for negotiations over conditions of service and went on strike when its request was ignored. The state proscribed the organisation and intimidated the leaders (Jega, 1993a). After the ban was lifted in 1990, when the state felt that members had been sufficiently cowed, ASUU put forth fresh demands for improving the university system. Again it was ignored.

In 1992, ASUU declared another strike which again led to the proscription of the union. Members, however, remained loyal. The state was obliged to enter into discussions with the banned leaders and to sign an agreement, making major concessions, when it became clear that proscription and harassment had failed to break the organisation. The improvement in the conditions of service and the reforms of the university system achieved in 1992 and defended in a new strike in 1993 were widely acclaimed throughout the academic community. The state had failed in its efforts to insulate the ASUU leadership from the general membership and the public by portraying the leaders as dangerous radicals and extremists. The organisation retained effective unity throughout the prolonged crisis (Citizen, 6 September 1993).

The 1992 Agreement, as enforced in 1993, brought major increases in salaries which had been greatly undermined by inflation. But the negotiations also resulted in reforms of the power relations within the universities. The university system had grown into a mammoth patrimonial edifice characterised by rigid hierarchical structures, arbitrariness in decision-making, and patron-client relations. Vacancies were often filled with ethnic and religious clients. The reforms made Heads of Departments and Deans more accountable by subjecting them to elections by colleagues. Union branches have signed separate agreements with their individual university managements to further democratise the system, reviving the committee system and regularising the holding of congregations.

The union was also concerned with expanding university autonomy and participation by making vice chancellors more directly accountable to the university community, and less agents of state control. While the universities were established under separate statutes guaranteeing their autonomous status, these had been undermined and ignored. They were often treated as organs of the civil service, expected to be taking directives and implementing circulars from the Minister of Education. Rules governing appointments, promotions, disciplinary actions and dismissals were breached. In trying to protect the interests of its members, ASUU sought to ensure compliance with the rule of law in these matters, taking the authorities to court over wrongful terminations, not always successfully. The 1992 Agreement contained an undertaking from the government to respect university autonomy. The extent to which the union can protect the rule of law from fresh violations remains to be seen. The union's protracted engagement of the authorities over these matters, however, has sensitised the members to the issues involved.

ASUU has been less successful in ensuring participation and consultation in government policy-making that directly relates to its area of operation. The government has refused to involve the union, as, for instance, when a decree on 'rationalisation of minimum academic standards' was imposed in 1986. Similarly, a World Bank loan to the university sector, involving a series of conditionalities, was contracted by the state in 1990 without consulting the university community.
Vigorous protests were ignored and the union therefore settled for a strategy of non-cooperation with those aspects of the conditionalities which were particularly resented by its members (Jega, 1990). The resistance has at least succeeded in restraining implementation.

The ability of the Academic Staff Union to resist and survive state repression and to force the state to make major concessions met with wide acclaim by democratic forces generally in society. Its victory was judged in the light of the common concern with resisting state authoritarianism, not the least as Babangida's military dictatorship was becoming increasingly ruthless, erratic, and personalised. The union's national credibility in these respects greatly boosted its authority when intervening on issues of general national concern and, in particular, in the process of transition to civilian rule. Since the overturn of the civilian government in 1983, in the midst of acute economic crisis related to the fall in oil earnings, the Nigerian public has been engaged in a series of debates concerning the future of the economic and political system, some orchestrated by the state in an attempt by the military to retain initiative and control. Relations with the IMF, for example, and the introduction of structural adjustment policies (SAP) under World Bank auspices in 1986, were hotly contested. ASUU has played a prominent role in these debates, organising its own national conferences and seminars, issuing programmes and statements on the 'State of the Nation' (ASUU, 1984; 1987). Meetings of the ASUU executive and delegates' conferences have passed resolutions on the burning issues of the day and the communiques have been widely circulated and quoted in the media (ASUU, 1993; 1994).

In its wider political role, ASUU has been drawn into cooperation with other organisations. It joined the Nigeria Labour Congress in 1983 as a deliberate attempt to broaden its social base and relevance. It was forced to disaffiliate by military decree in 1986, after the NLC's active involvement in protesting the killing of demonstrating students by riot police in Ahmadu Bello University in May that year. ASUU became an active member of the democracy movement that developed in response to the failure of the military government to ensure a speedy and credible return to civilian rule. It joined the effort to convene a 'National Conference' in September 1990, inspired by similar moves in neighbouring Francophone countries. At that point in time, the credibility of the official transition programme had been fundamentally shaken as General Babangida had proscribed all prospective political parties and replaced them with two of his own making, one 'a little to the left', the other 'a little to the right'. The state succeeded in aborting the 'National Conference' at the last minute but the democratic forces regrouped in a new umbrella organisation, the 'Campaign for Democracy' (CD), gathering human rights groups, students, journalists, lawyers, women's groups and others who refused to collaborate with the official transition agenda (CD, 1991). While the transition kept being brazenly manipulated by the state, these groups felt that it should be allowed to run its course as the only way of getting rid of the increasingly detested military dictatorship. The regime's refusal to accept the results of the June 1993 presidential elections, however, sparked off a wave of popular protest for which the CD was able to offer leadership, albeit temporary, forcing Babangida to 'step aside'.

**National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS)**

NANS represented in the early 1990s a student population of some 220,000 in the universities alone, with another 320,000 in polytechnics and teachers' colleges. It has faced constant harassment and repression, including long periods of proscription. To
a larger extent than in the case of ASUU, its right to exist as an organisation has been suppressed also at the level of the individual campus, with frequent intervention by the authorities in union elections, divide and rule tactics, including the setting up of 'yellow' unions. Meetings have been held clandestinely, some blocked or disrupted by the police. The leaders have operated informal, underground networks of communication and decision-making. Rights to represent the students on issues affecting their welfare at the local institutional level, as well as participation and consultation over public policy have been denied. But NANS has retained a remarkable influence over student opinion. It has been in a position to force repeated showdowns on the authorities, leading to police and military intervention in campuses, long periods of closures, but also to concessions. It has played a critical role in challenging the military dictatorship, spearheading national democratic campaigns and initiating broad popular protests against government policies.

Students' activism has been precipitated by a wide range of issues, from poor canteen food to imperialism and international solidarity. Students were radicalised politically during the 1970s, a period of oil boom and rapid expansion of the university system, with high expectations and much frustration over bureaucratic bottlenecks and corruption. Murtala Mohammed, the general who overthrew the Gowon regime in 1975, was greeted by students as a patriot who would re-establish integrity and discipline while radicalising Nigeria's foreign policy, especially over Angola and southern Africa. His stature was further enhanced when killed in an attempted counter-coup the following year. A turning point in state-student relations was the 'Ali Must Go' campaign in 1978, demanding the resignation of the Minister of Education who had proposed the introduction of school fees (Yusuf, 1991; Babatope, 1991). Students were killed at the Lagos and Zaria campuses, universities closed, NUNS (NANS' predecessor) proscribed, student leaders rusticated, and lecturers, who were thought to have instigated the actions, dismissed. A public enquiry portrayed student unions as manipulated by radical political groups. NUNS remained banned and the NANS which was created in its place failed to be recognised for much of the subsequent decade, being only briefly unbanned in 1985-86 as part of the effort by the incoming Babangida regime to show a 'human face'.

After the 1986 ABU killings (see below) NANS was again obliged to operate as a clandestine organisation, with leaders shadowed and ranks infiltrated by state security agents. The holding of national executive meetings and delegates' conferences kept being a hide and seek affair where university authorities and the police had to be dodged. The July 1993 meeting of the NANS 'Senate', for instance, was to be held at the Enugu campus, but the arriving delegates were rounded up in police vans, taken to the police station, and 'escorted' out of town, while the leaders were 'retained' by the police for questioning. Those left behind, however, were part of a 'kangaroo' leadership set up deliberately to deceive the police, while the real leaders reconvened for the Senate meeting in a different location (Nasir Kura, interview 1993). In some campuses the authorities played on communal divisions to prevent students from meeting. The convention assembled at Bayero University, Kano, in early 1993 was violently disrupted by members of the Muslim Students Society, whose leader had been brought in from Lagos specially for the occasion by the Students' Affairs Division of the university. The delegates had to run for protection, reconvening in Zaria (Ibid.). Vice Chancellors and other local university leaders have engaged in brutal tactics to prevent NANS-affiliated branches from gaining a firm foothold, as at the Nsukka campus in the 1987-88 session when vigilante groups were sponsored to beat up and threaten the lives of student activists and local NANS leaders, some of whom were detained and tortured by the police.
Unlike the case of ASUU, the rights of the students to organise, defend their interests, and pronounce on national affairs have never been conceded by the authorities on any sustained basis. The rights have had to be continuously reconquered and defended, often at a heavy cost to individual students not only in terms of academic careers but also in life and limb. The commemorations of those killed have become occasions for recurring mobilisation and defiance, going well beyond organisational self-interest, protesting the violent and repressive nature of the state, demanding that civil rights and the rule of law should be respected.

Seemingly narrow local conflicts accelerate into major national crises because of these wider dimensions. Even a protest over the poor quality of the food in the student canteen takes on national significance due to the linkages between local and national power relations. If, for instance, the wife of the Vice Chancellor is a food contractor who supplies the canteen, issues of corruption and nepotism become mingled with the politics of warring local and national power factions that seek to control the universities for their own purposes. Such linkages help to explain why the authorities often react violently, seeing students as proxies for forces with sinister motives which are out to destroy them. The victimisation of students and of lecturers seen as encouraging them generates additional national political linkages, leading to contestation in courts, engaging civil rights lawyers and arousing solidarity actions both from other students and other organised interests sympathetic to the cause of the students or anxious to teach the state a lesson. As events ‘get out of hand’, the authorities respond by sending police and army onto the campus, closing down the universities and sending home the students. While intended to diffuse the tensions, such collective punishment not only generates new resentment but also ensures that the controversies are disseminated in society as the students return home to their villages and towns. Wide media coverage also highlights the issues of civil rights, social justice, and democracy, not the least in reaction to the efforts by the authorities to portray the students as destructive, irresponsible, selfish and unpatriotic.

Grievances specific to individual campuses have an important place in local agitation and mobilisation. The role of NANS, however, has been to aggregate the local issues into national ones, while simultaneously ensuring that issues of higher education are part of wider ideological and political concerns. The ‘Ali Must Go’ campaign of 1978, for instance, mobilised students in defence of free education, social justice and redistribution. The tendency to situate student grievances in a wider context intensified during the 1980s, beginning with a ‘Charter of Demands’ in 1982, addressing problems at all levels of the educational system as well as foreign policy. ‘Structural adjustment’ became the major issue, accompanied by the further, rapid disintegration of public sector services, including the universities. The ‘right to education’ at all levels of society was emphasised, culminating in the Campaign for Academic Reform in 1991, causing fresh detentions and closures. From 1988 onwards, when the Nigeria Labour Congress was partly disarmed by the state, the student movement took it upon itself to provide leadership for the militant anti-SAP campaign, carefully planning its interventions to obtain maximum popular impact and support. In 1988, 1989 and 1990, campus-initiated anti-SAP demonstrations transformed into popular protests and rioting in a number of major cities (Shettima, 1993). The challenge to the state was real and its immediate violent response was followed by attempts to pacify the students, both by presidential donations (special grants to the universities, buses for students’ transport services) and by rewarding individual leaders who distanced themselves from NANS radicalism. The accelerated political decay of the Babangida dictatorship in the early 1990s, however, undermined these attempts to establish state control over the student movement.
The confrontations with state, police, and school authorities precipitated both momentary manifestations of solidarity and the formation of longer-term alliances between the student movement and other organised interests. The closest links were with ASUU which made the unbanning of NANS and the inclusion of student representatives in university decision-making part of its own agitation. NANS resisted attempts by the state to use students' discontent with the disruption of classes to undercut the strikes called by ASUU. In 1993, at the time of acute confrontation between ASUU and the state, the government unbanned NANS in the mistaken belief that this would weaken its support for ASUU. The unity of ASUU-NANS struggles were particularly apparent at the new campus at Abuja, where the Vice Chancellor tried to block the formation of any union, whether of teachers or students. Under growing pressure from the media, he was in the end forced to recall and pay compensation to the six student leaders who had been expelled, as well as to allow the formation of both staff and students' unions.

Student links to the Nigeria Labour Congress were strong, at least in the pre-1988 period, before the NLC itself was weakened by disruptive state intervention. Some of the young radicals in the NLC Secretariat had a background in the student movement and facilitated the link-up. Solidarity peaked during the dramatic events of 1986 when the ABU campus in Zaria was invaded by riot police, killing several students (ASUU, 1986). The NLC called for a day of mourning, urging its members to participate in solidarity rallies. The state, perceiving this 'general strike' as a threat to its authority, clamped down preemptively, taking control over national and state secretariats and detaining key labour leaders (African Concord, 12 June 1986; Yusuf, 1991).

NANS has played a prominent role in the wider democracy movement, for instance in organising the abortive 'National Conference' of 1990. Student activists have provided grassroots organising cadres for the movement, including the human and civil right groups that cooperated in the formation of the Campaign for Democracy (CD). Leading human rights lawyers have provided institutional and legal backing for the students.

Conclusions

The Problem Of Internal Democracy

As the defeated and embittered opposition walked out from the Ibadan Congress of the Campaign for Democracy in February 1994 its principal allegations against the leadership concerned violations of internal democracy (Bagu et al. 1994). The CD chairman was accused, for instance, of entering into talks with the government without a mandate. All the organisations discussed in this study have had their own problems in this respect. Differences in internal democracy may also help in explaining differences in performance. In the case of the NANS, a high level of repression bred a culture of clandestine, underground politics, including the maintenance of a shadow leadership, capable of keeping the organisation together even when official leaders were detained. It was not necessarily conducive to the development of democratic practices. In the case of ASUU, external interference and repression were also obstructive of normal democratic processes during certain periods. Most of the time, however, the organisation was free to develop its own internal political practices. In both cases, the number of branches offering effective support to the national organisation varied considerably from time to time, as did the ability of branch leaders to command support on the individual campus. In the case of
NANS, local leaders were often undermined and made ineffectual as a result of fractious branch politics and disputed elections, sometimes with direct involvement of school authorities, pushing their own candidates or seeking to undercut those which they feared most. While the divisions among the students were exploited from above, they also had their own momentum. Regionalist, communal and religious sentiments served as platforms for challenging the uneasy hegemony of the radical nationalist tendency within NANS. The contestations of Christian and Muslim 'born again' activists, for instance, invariably spilled over into student union politics. Both students and lecturers were affected by the politics of regional balancing and representation related to the extremely uneven development of higher education in the federation, with some states having a massive surplus of qualified candidates both for university admissions and for faculty positions, while others had not enough qualified 'indigenes' to fill their modest reserved quota.

In view of this wide scope for divisiveness, it is therefore remarkable how both NANS and ASUU were able to sustain, for most of the time, broad support for their non-sectional, patriotic agenda. Their ability in this respect has been subjected to repeated testing as school authorities and the state have attempted to suppress and break-up the organisations. Their ability to reproduce some considerable legitimacy within their constituencies may have depended less on the strength of the internal democratic processes and more on the ability of the leadership to pursue an agenda which attracted wide support. In the case of ASUU one may, in addition, also see significant advances in recent years in the direction of more democratic practices. State repression, and the real scope for divide and rule type interventions, have taught the leadership to be particularly observant in their compliance with constitutional procedure as well as in ensuring that individual branches feel committed to the common cause when confronting the authorities. In that sense, state repression may itself have been a source of more democratic practices internally.

In the history of all the organisations, we find evidence of recurring crises, often linked to the real or perceived lack of transparency and accountability in the management of common resources, causing disruptions, factionalisation, and serious setbacks. In the case of both ASUU and NANS, however, what is noticeable is the ability of the two organisations to survive such crises and reconstitute leadership with a credible mandate and claim to be speaking on behalf of their respective constituencies.

The Problem of Autonomy

In much of post-colonial Africa, interest groups have had only limited autonomy in relation to dominant, state, bureaucratic and one-party structures (Hashim, 1994; Akwetey, 1994). Trade unions and professional associations have been tied to procedures of official recognition, registration and regulation which have seriously constrained their ability to act independently from state and employers. The Nigerian experience, generally, suggests a fairly high level of autonomy, despite the distinctively 'state corporatist' arrangements that regulate much interest group activity, including the award of organisational prerogatives to certain bodies recognised by the state (Andrae & Beckman, 1992; Otobo, 1987). The organisations studied by us, however, differ strongly in these respects. The Nigeria Labour Congress, for instance, especially in the post-1988 situation, has been vulnerable to state attempts to reinforce control while individual industrial unions have been more successful in sustaining their autonomy (Beckman, 1992b; Andrae & Beckman, 1992).
The professional associations have also had a mixed record. The state has had some partial success when intervening in both the Bar Association and the Nigerian Union of Journalists. In the case of both ASUU and NANS, however, attempts by the state to assert control, making recognition dependent on good behaviour, have been largely unsuccessful. Repeated proscriptions have failed to achieve their purpose, although some limited results have been obtained in restricting the link-up of the two organisations with the NLC.

Whose Interests? Special Interests vs. the People
Most of the interest groups covered in the study, including the two discussed in this article, have been attacked from both neo-liberal and from radical democratic perspectives as representing ‘special’ or ‘vested’ interests that make up only a tiny segment of the population and whose narrow, self-interested pursuits are either irrelevant or even positively harmful to the concerns of the majority, the peasantry and other small producers and traders who have no effective organisations of their own. In the neo-liberal perspective, such ‘vested interests’ are linked to a notion of an inflated and parasitic public wage economy which is biased against the rural sector and obstructs the development of such private entrepreneurship which could give work and income to the unemployed and marginalised (World Bank, 1989: 1991; Beckman, 1992a; 1993a). The radical democrats, on the other hand, feel that the prevailing democratic agenda, sponsored by local alternative elites and foreign ‘donors’, focus on segments of a ‘civil society’ which are largely ‘middle class’ and fails to address the relations of oppression facing the lower classes, rural and urban, and the democratic issues to which these give rise (Mamdani, 1990; 1992).

In the case of the special interest groups discussed in this article we find that their agenda are linked to broader popular concerns, relating both to democratisation and welfare, for instance, in resisting the imposition of school fees and educational levies and defending the ‘right to education’. Both ASUU and NANS have played an important role in spearheading wider popular protests in the absence of other democratic channels under the military dictatorship. While some of the conflicts of interests are real and important (e.g. wage earners vs peasants), the special interests groups may still function as the vanguard of a wider process of democratisation, from which those ‘outside’ have much to gain, not the least from the advancement of the rule of law in the regulation of the relations between state and society.

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The Study of Political Transitions in Africa

Eghosa E. Osaghae

This article examines some of the inadequacies of dominant Western perspectives, especially those originating from the US for studying political transitions in Africa, by focusing on the current democratic transitions. It attributes the major flaws to the hegemonic and ideological interests which these transitions are designed to serve and which underlie approaches made popular by Western scholars, to a 'periodic' conceptualisation of the process of transition itself, to the consequent treatment of transition in an ahistorical manner and the abandonment of previous perspectives of social and political change, and to the failure to relate transitions to the developmental needs of countries involved as determined by the peoples themselves. It discusses how these weaknesses can be overcome and outlines the requirements for a more adequate framework for studying transitions.

At present, no clear framework of understanding, far less of explaining reality exists, nor even of coming to grips with it. The old ideological frameworks, the old grand theories, have become obsolete, no clear guide exists for formulating a praxis (Kothari in Wignaraja, 1993:59).

...requires questioning of ... a priori theorizing and methodology of Western so-called scientific enquiry, which have for the most part informed attempts to analyse social change (Wignaraja, 1993:5).

One of the consequences of the methodological soul searching which has featured prominently in the study of African politics recently is the resurrection of the age-long debate between scholars who insist on so-called universalist referents of analysis, and whose studies have largely been informed by Western precepts and experiences, and those who argue for a more (African) contextual and problem-solving perspective. The approach of the first school, whose roots lie in classical modernisation theory, has been described by adherents as empiricist and scientific, but it has nevertheless been accused of ideological biases and serving the hegemonic interests of Western capitalism. The second school which is basically a response to the received modernisation paradigm, approaches African politics from its historical, material and structural contexts and emphasises the need to combine theory and praxis, although much of the analysis within it (especially within classical dependency theory) is, like modernisation, charged with universalism and ideological biases in favour of the third world.
Against the background of this renewed debate on how best to study African politics, this article examines how political transitions can most meaningfully be studied by focusing on current democratic transitions. The debate on how to study these transitions has generally followed the divide outlined above, with ‘Southern’ (third world) scholars like Wignaraja questioning approaches popularised by ‘Northern’ (Western) and especially North American scholars, which take African realities and the need to solve problems therein as secondary in the study of transitions. But, in spite of the robustness of the debate that has ensued, studies of transitions have continued to be flawed in key areas which seem so far to have eluded serious attention. One such area is the ‘periodic’ conception of transitions which accounts for the discontinuous manner in which they are studied. This conception erroneously assumes that democratic transitions are a new experience, and underplays the benefit of insights from previous experiences. Another is the failure to adequately reflect African conditions in the comparative frameworks of analysis derived from Western, Latin American and Eastern European experiences and informed by the foreign policies of the US and other Western powers. It is such inadequacies and how they can be overcome that this article addresses. Unless democratic transitions are analysed within appropriate and adequate frameworks, their outcomes cannot meaningfully be predicted and their relevance in the lives of African peoples (which, in the final analysis, is the only guarantee for the survival of democracy) will not be given the emphasis it deserves.

The Search for Relevant Perspectives in African Studies

As the search for appropriate perspectives for studying transitions is closely tied to the larger question of how to study African politics in general, we shall briefly discuss the latter as a backdrop for our concerns in this article.

One striking thing about the study of African politics (and, by extension, comparative politics) in general is the large number of contending perspectives, approaches and theories, and the seemingly endless search for new perspectives (for a good discussion of the diversity of approaches, see Chazan et al. 1992:ch. 1; and for critical African perspectives see Himmelstrand et al. 1994). In addition to macro perspectives like modernisation (cf. Huntington, 1971; Higgott, 1983) and dependency-underdevelopment (cf. Wilbert, 1973; Cohen & Daniel, 1981) as well as statist and state-society perspectives (cf. Rothchild & Chazan, 1988; Midgal, 1988) which are themselves mixed bags of different conceptual and theoretical frameworks, there are several eclectic micro perspectives and theories. Recent formulations like the governance perspective (Hyden & Bratton, 1992), prebendalism (Joseph, 1987), rational choice (Chazan et al. 1988), and the civil society framework (cf. Harbeson et al. 1994; Osaghae, 1994) belong to the latter category. Attempts have also been made to refurbish old frameworks of analysis, especially by adherents of the old modernisation/political development perspective (cf. Weiner & Huntington, 1987; Apter & Rosberg, 1994).

This plethora of approaches largely explains why basic methodological issues remain contested and unresolved. What should be the unit of analysis: the state, society, individuals, or groups? How should politics be interpreted: in ethnic, cultural or materialist (class) terms, or in ways which balance these? What level of analysis should be adopted: the global or the peculiarly African or country specific? How scientific or value-free can analysis be? This latter issue which many scientific purists take very seriously, is complicated by the fact that, on the one hand, the perspectives of Western and non-third world scholars are treated with ideological suspicion while,
on the other, the African scholar is reminded of his responsibility to balance theory with praxis (it is said that the desperate situation of the African crisis does not afford the luxury of detached or crassly empirical analysis; see Oyovbaire, 1993 and Mamdani et al. in Wignaraja, 1993). Such contentious issues underlie the search for appropriate frameworks of analysis.

However, one issue on which there is wide agreement is the centrality of development, whose importance has increased with the deepening crisis of underdevelopment in most African countries. Despite their narrow political, social, economic, regional, country or global ‘specialisations’, virtually all perspectives relate their studies one way or the other to development which it is agreed is the ultimate goal in Africa. Indeed, for scholars of the radical bent, concern with development, defined as the process of attaining sustainable capacity to deal with problems of poverty, ignorance, disease, inequality, economic growth and effective governance, provides the criterion of relevance for perspectives in African studies; some even go further to argue that the concern must be positive and Afrocentric (cf. Sklar & Whitaker, 1991). Thus, perspectives which suggest the ‘inevitability of instability’ (such as ethnic pluralism) or undermine African initiatives (such as modernisation) were for a long time regarded as inappropriate, even inimical, to African studies. The convergence on development does not however resolve the contentious issues of methodology partly because there is no agreement on how development itself should be approached and specific issues related to it. We shall briefly highlight two such issues. First, since development is a total and all-inclusive process whose political, economic and social aspects are concomitant and mutually reinforcing, can any aspect of it be meaningfully studied in isolation? Should democracy for example be studied as a purely political and structural process? How should its manifestly political aspects be related to the economy and society? Recent works on methodology have been very critical of narrow disciplinary specialisations and propose all-inclusive multi-disciplinary approaches to the study of different aspects of development (cf. Wignaraja, 1993).

But even where multi-disciplinary efforts have been made, the range has tended to be limited mainly to political science and economics and, to some extent, sociology. Anthropology, psychology, history and philosophy have not featured as they should in extant multi-disciplinary discussions, although this is truer of African social science scholarship in the US than it is of French or British perspectives (see e.g. Bayart, 1993). Given the path-finding status of anthropology and history and the important insights they provided especially in the early stages of African studies, their virtual abandonment in dominant perspectives in the US is partly responsible for some of the discontinuities in analysis of development issues today. Ekeh (1990) has pointed, for example, to the huge gaps in the study of ethnicity following the abandonment of social anthropological perspectives of tribalism. Insights from psychology and philosophy, on the other hand, have not been popular materials for African social science study in spite of the useful lights they provide for contextual analysis which have remained largely unexplored. African world views for example are crucial for understanding development-from-below, a point which has only recently been given emphasis by the growing school of ‘indigenous knowledge systems’. More work, especially in collaborative research, certainly needs to be done properly to factor indigenous knowledge and world views into development scholarship.

The second issue relates to the constantly changing character or phases of the development crisis and the corresponding turn-over of perspectives which address
the different phases. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was African nationalism, social change, decolonisation, political instability and economic development; in the 1970s, it was military and one-party rule and economic prosperity; in the 1980s, re-civilianisation and transitions to democracy, economic recession, structural adjustment, internal war and the virtual atrophy of some states in the empirical sense, governance, and foreign debt; and in the 1990s, increased marginalisation of Africa in the global system, collapse of national economies, escalation of internal war and civil strife, and democratic transition.

As these phases have come and gone, so the memories of scholarship which attended them have tended to fade away. The result is a tendency to concentrate on current issues and problems, to the detriment of supposedly old issues and perspectives, and accentuating the discontinuous character of the analysis of African politics. For example, not much use is made of the anthropological perspectives of social change of the 1950s and 1960s and those of political change which produced classics like Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968) in studies of transitions to democracy of the 1980s and 1990s, notwithstanding that the circumstances which necessitate transition today – the desire to overcome poverty, ensure the efficiency and accountability of government, empower ordinary peoples through the enjoyment of participatory and other rights, etc. – do not differ too much from those which guided social change in the past, and that the conclusions reached in the so-called old perspectives remain as relevant today as they were when they were formulated. One recent study which gives due weight to so-called old perspectives of political transitions only does so, however, to support an evolutionary theory of democratisation (Vanhanen, 1990).

It is therefore understandable why the search for relevant perspectives has continued in the study of African politics. This search is very relevant to the study of political transitions whose methodology has only recently begun to come under serious scrutiny. In the rest of the article, I propose to discuss the inadequacies of existing perspectives on democratic transitions in Africa and the ways in which they can be overcome.

**A Critique of the State of Political Transition Studies in Africa**

Although there is now such a thing as the democratic transition school (Jowitt in Slater et al. 1993), a clearly African perspective on democratic transitions is still far from crystallising. The result is that analyses of transitions in Africa have been undertaken within frameworks derived mainly from Latin American and Eastern European experiences and others which though supposedly universal and comparative, hinge on old unilinear development assumptions and amount to celebrations of the triumph of American (Western) liberal democracy (cf. Vanhanen, 1990). Consequently, recent transitions in Africa have been largely approached from the prescriptive standpoint of conforming to standards developed elsewhere – so-called universal standards. Although many discerning Western scholars have emphasised the need to take local conditions into consideration in building democracy in Africa, the ideological character of the whole enterprise has severely limited attempts to move beyond the conformist/prescriptive orientation.

Larry Diamond (1993:61), one of the leading students of the globalisation of democracy school, admits that current democratisation is a Western project, but nevertheless emphasises the need properly to situate its construction: the West must be careful to assist the organic development in the particular ‘soil’ of each country,
without imposing its own particular vision of how democracy should work (see also Huntington, 1984; 1991).

But this is precisely what has happened because the underlying objective of democratic transition seems to be the diffusion of liberal democratic principles and institutions to the non-Western world on terms set by Western powers – in fact, Vanhanen (1990) analyses the democratisation of the 1980s in terms of a Darwinian theory of diffusion.

The problems of current frameworks for analysing democratic transitions in Africa begin with the definition of the concept of transition itself. It is defined as the interval between one regime and another. More specifically, it is the process of change from an authoritarian regime to a democratic regime, a process which Stepan (1990) says involves erosion of the past and construction of the future (O'Donnell et al. 1986; O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986; Diamond et al. 1988). ‘Eroding the past’ suggests that democracy has no prior basis in polities in transition or that that past was anti-democratic, and because the ‘interval’ conception of transition tends to restrict analysis to the actual period of transition in terms of its causes, courses and possibly consequences, it does not encourage elaborate longitudinal analysis of past transitions and progress recorded by them as the beginning point for present transition. By contrast with earlier notions of transition which at least saw it as a lengthy process consisting of different phases, thereby making it possible to link supposedly different transitions as essentially aspects of the same process (cf. Rustow, 1970), the conception of transition as an interval is not well suited to the study of political transitions. As it were, the restriction of transition to the interval of change undermines the meaning of transition as a historical and continuous process rather than a state of being. What is required is a conception of transition which relates past transitions and their studies in frameworks of political and social change to current ones in terms of continuity and change, rather than a conception which underplays or ignores the past. To make this possible, the prevalent assumption that transition to democracy is a new experience which is the sense conveyed by notions of democratisation as a ‘learning’ process, has to be replaced by one that sees it in incrementalist terms, as a continuation of previous efforts. The ‘learning’ of democracy is indeed an old process which began in most countries with the transition from colonial rule. Although this process was eclipsed in many countries by the rise of authoritarian one-party and military regimes, the learning process continued through attempts made in some of them to ‘craft’ or ‘construct’ democracy as is being done today.

In Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia under Doe, for example, there were democratic transitions undertaken by military regimes though these were then analysed using the prevalent concepts of the time, demilitarisation and recivilianisation. These concepts which pointed to the strategic importance in transitions of the military (both as managers and threat) have virtually disappeared today, and with them have gone serious concern with military intervention. Welch has reminded us of the dangers of paying little attention to the military, especially in countries like Nigeria where the military has remained the major obstacle to democracy. As he says, not only is ‘governmental control over … military forces a sine qua non for successful liberalization and democratization’, the unanswered question facing many transitions is ‘if a cycle of coups and countercoups exists, is there any likelihood of transitions to effective “civil” institutions?’ (Welch in Slater et al. 1993:82; see also Welch, 1988; Goldsworthy, 1986).
It can be argued that earlier transitions were not appropriate because they failed to entrench truly democratic systems, but they have important lessons which need to be factored into the analysis of current transitions. This point was highlighted at the initial stages by scholars like Nzongola-Ntalaja (1987) who characterised the new wave of democratic transitions in Africa as 'second independence (or liberation) movements'. In this conception, the essence of current transitions does not lie in their newness but the opportunities they present to ordinary peoples who were betrayed in earlier transitions, especially the transition from colonial rule, by leaders who converted state power to instruments of personal and one-party/military rule, once again to attempt to reap the benefits of independence through deciding who would rule them and how (in many cases for the first time). Does this require learning afresh or learning from the mistakes of the past? The answer will be both since in addition to past experiences, elements of democracy like accountability, tolerance of opposition, the rule of law, respect for civil liberties and constitutionalism have either been practically absent or tenuous where present. However, the 'interval' or periodic conception places emphasis on learning afresh and tends to underplay the lessons of past transitions, although a more fundamental reason why lessons from past experiences are undermined is the fact that current transitions are undertaken within the framework of conditionalities imposed by Western powers.

One good way to relate the study of current transitions to those of past transitions is to ask the question why previous exercises failed to sustain democracy. This provides the only meaningful way of anticipating the success or failure of current transitions, and yet such matters as past proclivities towards military intervention, the entrenchment of father-of-the-nation personal rulerships, domination of state power by one or a few ethnic groups, corrupt and inept leadership, and the abandonment of the ordinary peoples as the subjects of development, which killed democracy in the past and remain firmly entrenched, have not been adequately addressed. It is as if the world order of democracy which makes authoritarian regimes unpopular or the formal institution of democratic principles is all democracy requires to thrive. The lesson from the past is that successful transition or democratic consolidation does not simply mean the defeat of supposedly undemocratic rulers like Banda or Kaunda or the putting in place of democratic institutions, notably multi-party systems, bills of rights and free and fair elections. Its survival would, as in the past, depend on its consequences for the people: how much it is able to better their material conditions in terms of literacy, security of life and property, better health care, employment, food security, potable water and rural development, as well as to ensure political stability and thereby save the people from the scourge of war and violent conflicts.

Defined in terms of the prolonged search for appropriate democracy in Africa, it becomes obvious why analysis of ongoing democratic transitions should not and cannot be restricted to the interval of erosion and construction; it has to include, of necessity, the antecedent factors (the gains, failures and lessons of previous efforts at democratisation) which provide the backdrop of analysis of both the processes and their outcomes. This raises the question of when transition comes to an end. A recent view holds that it ends 'when a government is installed as the result of a free and fair election' (Bratton & van de Walle, 1993:3). From all that has been said, this short-run conception of the end of transition which is consistent with the interval formulation, does not suit the incrementalist and developmental context of democratisation in Africa. As a process, it only comes to an end when it proves to be appropriate to the needs and circumstances of the country concerned and therefore when it has reached a point when elements in civil society are prepared to fight to ensure its survival.
However, the development by the vast majority of the people of such a stake in the sustenance of democracy is an experiential matter, not a matter of mere ‘construction’.

Which brings us to the meaning of democracy itself. What is most remarkable about current transitions is the emergence of liberal democracy, especially the American variant of it, as the ‘universal’ standard of democracy after a long period of struggle with other notions of democracy, including marxist-socialist democracy and ‘African’ (one-party) democracy. The triumph of liberal democracy is largely attributable to the emergence of the US as the power centre of the post-cold war world order and the efforts to hegemonise that order – a new project of making the world safe for democracy and capitalism – which underlies many of the perspectives so far adopted by American social scientists and especially established democracy-exporting institutions (Gendzier, 1985). This project has been highly successful so far because the US, together with its European allies, has also triumphed as the core of a hegemonising global economic system. This economic control has been used practically to impose the favoured brand of democracy on highly vulnerable and beggarly African countries. As Hermet (1990:25) puts it,

... today the cycle has come full circle, and ethnocentricism [has] transform[ed] itself into philanthropy. People’s power has triumphed well ... on the basis of a very Western-inspired model (my emphasis).

The ethnocentric character of the new wave of democracy has important implications for its definition. One of these is that the form of democracy (institutions and practices) is given emphasis over and above the suitability of these institutions and practices in the countries to which they are ‘exported’. Most definitions of democracy revolve around Robert Dahl’s characterisation of polyarchy and accordingly point to inclusive political participation, ‘meaningful and extensive’ competition for political offices, accountability, protection of civil and political liberties, rule of law, and relative autonomy of civil society, amongst others, as the essence of democracy (cf. Dahl, 1971, 1989; Diamond et al. 1988).

These elements of democracy are neither new to Africa as authors, like Busia (1967) and Legum (1986) have pointed out, nor does their Westerness make them any less relevant; but they have repeatedly failed to be entrenched. Should this not make suitability a more relevant question than that of how to put institutions in place? Richard Sklar (in Sklar & Whitaker,1991) has attempted to get round this problem by relating democracy to development, emphasising that democracy is not simply about form or means; it is also about ends which have to do with its inherent capacity to enhance development. He introduces the concept of ‘developmental democracy’ which is more oriented to solving ‘problems of economic underdevelopment, social stagnation and political drift’ than to specifying democratic principles. Similarly, Wignaraja (1993) and his fellow ‘Southern’ scholars have also emphasised that democracy and development ‘are two sides of the same holistic vision’.

It would be wrong however to claim that within the context of current transitions the conceptualisation of liberal democracy even by the least ideologically zealous scholars is exclusively about form. Going back to the period of classical modernisation theory, the point has often been made that democracy is a concomitant of economic development, and that economically underdeveloped countries are not ‘ripe’ for democracy. All that seems to have changed with the new wisdom of the political economy of democracy – the relation of state to market – which is consonant with the triumph of Western capitalism. As Gendzier (1985:12) puts it, the new
political economy is proof that Western scholars are ‘committed to the interpretation of third world change in a manner compatible with the expansion of capitalism”. In this wisdom, the free market economy which involves reducing state control of the economy as well as its role and power in other spheres, is propounded as the only context within which democracy can thrive. Accordingly, Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) which aim to foster economic liberalisation have been implemented alongside democratisation in most African countries, although it is the virtual collapse of the economies of these countries which puts them at the mercy of the IMF, World Bank, the US and other aid and donor countries and has made possible the foisting of non-statist capitalism. The entrenchment of market forces and liberalisation these bodies insist, is the best solution to economic (and political) problems, the underlying assumption of SAPs being that the state is a key obstacle to both economic and political development (cf. Widner, 1994).

What again is most striking about the economic liberalisation argument is that it is based on Western capitalist precepts which takes us right back to the untenable assumptions of unilinear development of classical modernisation. While it is true that the character of the post-colonial state in Africa – described variously as ‘weak’, ‘soft’, ‘underdeveloped’, ‘rentier’ and so on – and its misuse by an essentially opportunistic elite makes it ill-equipped to undertake some of the tasks of development, the minimal state is not suited to the level of development. The low levels of infrastructural development, of the provision of basic needs and of marked socio-economic and political inequalities amongst different segments of the citizenry, amongst others, makes a high level of state capitalism and intervention necessary; in fact, one of the paradoxes of the new orthodoxy is that the implementation of economic liberalisation policies requires more, not less state power (cf. Onimode, 1991; Agbaje, 1992; Olukoshi, 1993).

Moreover, the comparative experiences of countries in other non-Western regions do not support the minimalist state thesis. The state was and remains the fulcrum of development in Asian countries which are now regarded as economic miracles. Even in the advanced capitalist countries, state intervention or what has been termed ‘embedded liberalism’ continues to be maintained ‘in the interests of domestic stability on the one hand and international economic adjustment on the other’ (Callaghy in Slater et al. 1993:162; also Harbeson et al. 1994). All considered, Callaghy concludes, ‘The main task then is not “getting the state out” but finding the state’s appropriate roles for fostering economic growth and development via both ... state and market’ (p. 165). In any case, the experience of many African countries with structural adjustment which has, through removal of subsidies, devaluation, rationalisation and retrenchment of workers, privatisation and other policies, greatly impoverished the people and led to massive withdrawals of support for the state shows that the the retrenchment of the state, and the corresponding attempt to entrench market forces, do not provide an enabling environment for democracy in underdeveloped countries (cf. Gibbon et al. 1992; Mkandawire, 1994; Ould-Mey, 1994; Healey & Robinson, 1992).

So much for conceptualisations and contextualisations. Let us now critically examine two of the popular frameworks within which democratic transitions have been analysed, namely the strategic elite perspective and the civil society perspective.
The Strategic Elite Perspective

One of the most established dimensions of modernisation theory is the vanguardist role given to the supposed innovators of change in the development process. Typically, they are the elites most exposed to the niceties and benefits of Western industrial societies and their socio-economic and political processes. Thus, in the 1960s, the theory of the modernising soldier emphasised the vanguardist role of the military elites, whose industrial complex made them innovators in third world countries (Adekanye, 1978). With regard to current transition processes, Diamond (1993:53) alludes to the ‘relative absence of alternative visions [to the democratic state]’ and the role of technological progress especially in communication in the diffusion, through demonstration effects, of liberal democratic values. But the concern is with how this translates into democratic transition, and this is where the role of the strategic elite comes in.

O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) are the foremost champions of the strategic elite perspective. They point to intra-elite divisions, loss of legitimacy by incumbent authoritarian regimes, and a readiness on the part of the dissatisfied elite to ‘overthrow’ the regime as necessary and sufficient conditions for democratic transition to occur: ‘there is no transition whose beginning was not the consequence – direct or indirect – of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hardliners and softliners’ (p. 19).

Making a similar point, Diamond (1993:43) argues that challenges to the authoritarian regime and its subsequent loss of legitimacy (typically because of poor performance) are both a precondition for democratic transition and determinant of the form it takes:

Certainly, in all cases of democratic transition ... the choices, behaviours and strategies of a relatively small number of leaders in regime and opposition – including the conflicts they wage, the understandings they reach, and the agreements they negotiate – are critical in determining whether, how, and at what pace a democratic transition will be effected.

The conclusion he reaches is however highly exaggerated: ‘The only absolute requirement for transition (short of foreign conquest and imposition) is a commitment to democratization on the part of the strategic elite’ (p. 58).

There is no doubt that the strategic elite perspective provides a useful framework for analysing the internal sources of democratic transitions. In particular, it provides a way of monitoring transition and predicting its outcome. It is therefore appropriate for analysing orderly transitions like those managed by military regimes (as in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Congo and Ghana), negotiated between hardliners and softliners (as in South Africa) or organised through the national conference (as in Benin and Mali). It is not well suited to analysing forced transitions in which the role of the elite cannot be easily predicted. A more serious problem with the perspective is its overemphasis on the role of the elite. The idea of a strategic elite seems to support the ‘liberator’ image which, like the ‘modernising soldier’ of old, has led supposedly anti-authoritarian elites like Museveni in Uganda to wage wars to oust unpopular regimes or formerly authoritarian leaders like Rawlings in Ghana to put on the garb of democratic elites but, as these examples show, this is no guarantee that the liberators are themselves committed to democratic principles. This is a point that Diamond makes very well, but by hinging the success of the entire transition process on the whims and caprices of the elite, he unwittingly undermines the whole purpose of democratic transition.
Understandably, the notion of strategic elite is consistent with the strategy the US and its Western allies have often employed in pursuit of their hegemonic interests: the creation of a bridgehead in the recipient country. In all probability, this is the role the so-called strategic elites who are prodded by Western powers are expected to play. For the purposes of ‘diffusing’ democracy, this perspective serves the interests of the Western powers, but this is not the purpose for which the ordinary peoples have struggled to entrench democracy. Indeed, from a problem-solving standpoint, one serious problem with the elite perspective of democratic transition is its restriction of the sources and purposes of democracy. It suggests for example that the opposition political parties and other associations formed by the elites which are usually described as ‘pro-democracy’ movements are the only sources of democratic transition, which is not true. It also hinges the process of transition on the elite, which clearly downplays the relevance of the ordinary peoples in the democratic process.

The popular uprisings which forced democratic transition in several countries – student protests, strikes, and other acts of civil disobedience and strife – were in most cases autonomous actions embarked upon by disillusioned and frustrated ordinary peoples seeking better and more responsive governance (for an extended treatment of recent popular uprisings in Africa, see ROAPE 54). In some cases, the strategic elites simply hijacked the ‘peoples revolution’. Indeed it would seem that the emphasis on the elite is meant to discourage or prevent such revolutionary outcomes, long seen as inimical to economic development (Huntington & Nelson, 1976). To make the strategic elite perspective more relevant, it has to include analysis of the extent to which the elites share the expectations of the ordinary peoples or represent them or actually embark on democratisation for the purpose of meeting the developmental needs of the people. Many would argue that this is the essence of accountability, one of the major pillars of the new wave of democracy, but this cannot be entrenched merely by recognising it; we have to examine the chances of its being entrenched. One way to do this is to include analysis of elite/non-elite linkages and the extent of non-elite participation in our study of democratic transitions. Unless this is done, the perspective amounts to a justification of the class character of liberal democracy.

The Civil Society Perspective

This perspective is probably the most popular of all the perspectives on democratic transition in general. It derives from three main sources. The first is the experience of the Western societies in which civil society, conceived of as the non-statist organisations that occupy the political and social space between the individual and the state, has historically functioned to limit the power of the state and uphold pluralism. The second is liberalisation which has been implemented side-by-side with democratisation in many countries. The third is the role civil society is expected and encouraged to play in the process of democratic consolidation. It is believed that civil society has the capacity to check the transition process from backsliding and that if ingredients of democracy like accountability and respect for constitutional rules are well ingrained it can play crucial roles in the building and sustenance of democratic cultures. It is for these reasons that the strengthening of civil society organisations has been emphasised in the democratic capacity-building initiatives of major Western powers:

In recent years, international assistance has increasingly interacted with and strengthened democratizing changes in civil society. Although they are primarily indigenous phenomena, the proliferation of autonomous and largely democratic associations around the world has been aided and abetted by foreign influence and assistance (Diamond, 1993:54).
This assistance has been in the form of financial grants from agencies like the US National Endowment for Democracy, USAID, US Information Agencies all over the world, and the British Westminster Foundation for Democracy, as well as other forms of aid (including the new aid package of election monitors and observers) offered by the US, British, German, French and Japanese governments. Financial and other forms of aid have also been offered by Western NGOs like the (Swedish) Foundation for Human Rights which funds human rights activist organisations in several African countries. Although these NGOs operate independently, it is interesting to note that, at least in the area of assisting pro-democracy organisations, their interests and those of their home governments do not differ much. Scholars have also been commissioned to study and make appropriate recommendations on how these ‘aid’ packages can be more effectively used to promote democracy (see for example the contributions in Rotberg, 1988).

Such direct encouragement of civil society organisations, some of which are regarded as dissident by incumbent governments or whose objectives actually conflict with those of democratisation, further reinforces the argument about the hegemonic intentions underlying current transitions. A case in point is the role of new religious movements, mostly fundamentalist Islamic and Christian organisations, which are often externally funded and whose activities and modus operandi (opposition, even armed opposition, to the secular state, welfare functions for members, non-democratic organisation, etc.) have impacted negatively on the democratisation process in several countries, notably Nigeria and Algeria (on new religious movements, see ROAPE 52). But this does not detract from the critical role of civil society in democratic transition.

The civil society perspective provides a very important framework for factoring the ordinary peoples, their demands, actions and orientations into the transition process. Scholars of all persuasions agree that civil society organisations latently and manifestly provide a countervailing force to the overbearing power of the state which explains the restoration of civil society to analysis of democratic transitions. Nevertheless, a difference can be discerned in the approaches to the role of civil society between African and ‘Southern’ scholars on the one hand, and Western scholars on the other. For the former, focus on civil society gives democratisation the proper bearing in terms of the role the people can play to ensure that democracy serves their interests. Transition provides the people with an opportunity, as Wignaraja (1993:12) says, to form their own organisations and strengthen existing ones (he characterises these organisations as social movements), and attain ‘further consciousness raising and self-transformation’.

For Western, especially American scholars whose views have dominated the literature, on the other hand, a focus on civil society is aimed not at the benefits of democracy to ordinary people, but at its consolidation. This approach derives from the largely ahistorical analysis of civil society organisations in Africa as well as the virtual abandonment of ‘old’ literature dealing with tribal unions and other voluntary associations; there are in fact suggestions that civil society is just emerging and is in need of construction by those whose overriding concern is with making civil society play consolidatory roles. What is more, perspectives like those of ‘incorporation’ and ‘disengagement’ propounded by Azarya and others (see Azarya, and others, in Rothchild & Chazan, 1988; Harbeson et al. 1994) which provided useful frameworks for analysing some of the peculiar features of civil society and relations between it and the state in Africa have been reduced to serving the interests of the new ‘political renaissance’ in the continent. For these reasons, the emphasis placed on the role of
civil society organisations in ensuring the consolidation of democracy is not reflective of the true character of civil society in Africa. As Ekeh (1992) points out, there is a clear misrepresentation which arises from the unqualified application of the Western connotation of civil society to the African situation. Unlike the West where civil society organisations arose to check the totalitarian state, those in Africa historically evolved as ‘shadow states’ performing for the individual and the group functions mainly of a social welfare nature which the state could not or would not perform (Azarya analysed these functions in terms of ‘disengagement’ from the state). For Ekeh therefore, the hallmark of civil society in Africa is its highly apolitical nature:

*civil society in Africa is largely indifferent to the affairs of the civic public realm over which the state presides [being] content to look after the affairs of other segments of the public realm over which the state shows little concern* (1992:197).

Although this characterisation does not adequately reflect the diversity and strength of civil society organisations as it applies more to ethnic, cultural, hometown, women's and other kinship based organisations rather than politically active and watch-dog students, professional, civil liberties and other civic organisations, it serves to remind us of the need for a non-Western approach to the study of civil society.

From Ekeh's insights for example, we know that it is an analytical error, given the orientations of civil society organisations in Africa, to identify the relevance of individual organizations with their ability and readiness to challenge the state as has been done by many Western scholars, who thus have tended to exclude rural and kinship/ethnic based associations from the relevant civil society. This risks underplaying the relevance and roles of the social movements of ordinary peoples, especially those in the rural areas, whose primary objective is not to antagonise the state but which are, as Samir Amin (in Wignaraja, 1993) says, organisational expressions of unsatisfied needs.

Even when these organisations have had to confront the state, as they did in the Agbekoya and Bakalori peasant revolts in Nigeria for example, it is because their interests are directly threatened by state policies which means that they cannot be taken for granted. To this extent, there is need to focus more on the interests of civil society organisations whose activities are not obviously related to the democratic process and on how they can be further empowered by the process. There is an even more compelling reason why this has to be done. To the extent of their material impoverishment and deprivations, some of these organisations, notably hometown and ethnic organisations, demand more, not less state action, something that is opposed to the new orthodoxy of the minimalist state. This fundamental contradiction could threaten the very foundations of the new democracies if the demands and expectations of ordinary peoples are not properly investigated and accommodated within the transition processes.

An Appropriate Framework for Analysing Political Transitions
This article has tried to show that the continued unqualified application of Western and non-African precepts and experiences to the analysis and construction of political reality in Africa is largely responsible for certain methodological inadequacies that have dogged the study of African politics. In the specific case of democratic transitions, fixation on modernisation-inspired approaches as well as ideological and hegemonic commitments have so far prevented these transitions from being studied
in the way they should. That analyses of these transitions have been undertaken mostly in furtherance of the foreign policies of the US and its Western allies, as has been argued in this article, have made considerations of their relevance to the developmental needs of African countries only of secondary importance. Indeed, with the political and economic conditionalities imposed by these Western powers and the international monetary institutions which they control – principally the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – the democratic transition project has practically become a new form of colonisation. But this is not all that is wrong with the study of political transitions in Africa. We have shown how the interval conception of the process of transition itself, the discontinuous nature of the study which is partly the result of the attempts by scholars to keep pace with the changing scenes of African politics, and the failure to properly Africanise comparative frameworks of analysis have all made for inadequacies in the study of political transitions.

To conclude, I shall briefly outline what, from the critical examination of current perspectives on political transitions in Africa needs to be done to improve analysis and make transitions more meaningful and likely to succeed than is the case at present. These include the following:

(1) Transitions should be analysed as historical processes in Africa whose broad outline includes the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial formations. The ways in which these formations affect attempts at democratisation should be analysed in terms that emphasise continuity and change. In more contemporary terms, the struggles for independence, the search for appropriate forms of democracy in the first years of independence, as well as the failed transitions of the late 1970s should be analysed as parts of essentially the same process of democratic learning and transition which involves the search for appropriate democracy.

(2) Narrow disciplinary specialisations which are incapable of providing the holistic framework required for analysing transitions should give way to robust multi-disciplinary approaches. The multi-disciplinary scope should however go beyond the present restriction to political science, economics and sociology which characterises much of the Africanist scholarship in the US, to include anthropology, history, philosophy and psychology whose important insights have increasingly been abandoned.

(3) There is a need to focus more on the ‘traditional’ self-preservationist functions of civil society in Africa and not simply on its role as a challenger of state power which is a largely Western conception. In particular, the range of what are seen as relevant civil society organisations should be far more inclusive, to include rural social movements and organisations to which the vast majority of the citizens belong, in analysis of the roles of civil society in democratisation. As Sklar (in Sklar & Whitaker, 1991:301) rightly observes, a huge gap presently exists in the literature on the roles and relevance of non-elites: ‘no one has yet assembled aggregate data on proletarian struggles for liberty and constitutional government in the third world’.

(4) Development-as-end provides the appropriate context for analysing political transition given the deepening crisis of underdevelopment in most African countries. The needs of development have however to be informed by African realities rather than the prescriptions of benevolent captains of global capitalism as is the case with the policies of economic liberalisation which have been pursued at the behest of foreign interests simultaneously with democratic transition in most parts of Africa.
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Andrew C. Okolie

In 1970 the Nigerian government shifted the focus of its agrarian policies from peasant-produced and state-marketed cash (export) crop production to mechanisation and the concentration of land and food production in the hands of highly subsidised elites – mainly serving retired top military officers, bureaucrats and wealthy business people. It also tried to regulate production through public ownership, indigenisation of foreign enterprises, price, interest and exchange rate controls and the restriction of certain capitals from certain sub-sectors. Contradictorily the government at the same time promoted the importation of large quantities of food. The elite farmers remained few, produced little food, and the welfare of the vast majority of the people was not improved; meanwhile bureaucracies were created and continued to reproduce themselves. By 1986 the government had begun to reverse those policies in compliance with a structural adjustment programme imposed by the IMF/World Bank. Subsidies, price, interest and exchange rate controls and the government’s direct involvement in production were reduced or ended. The productivity impact of this shift was also minimal and welfare has suffered. These policy shifts result not from the impact of internal or external forces alone, but rather from a complex interaction between them.

Thus the post-1970 agrarian policies have to be understood not only as a product of the oil boom and slump but also as a product of the changes in the international system of credits. Military rule, centralisation, and huge oil revenues combined with an international credit regime dominated by private banks to produce the statist policies of the oil boom period. Similarly the decline in oil revenues, and shifts in the rules governing access to international credit from 1982-83 led to the shift away from the statist policies and attempts to regulate private production. Furthermore, the Nigerian state is revealed as having little control over the price of its main export and its imports, a relative inability to implement its policies and enforce its rules, and is being obliged by international forces to reverse its policies. The strength and autonomy it exhibited during the oil boom thus appear merely conjunctural.

The literature on Nigeria’s agrarian policy tends to over-emphasise national forces and factors. Some authors focus almost exclusively on domestic political choices which they believe stifle the market, thereby hurting the rural producers in favour of urban dwellers or simply preventing genuine smallholder strategies (Bates, 1981; World Bank, 1974, 1989; Palmer-Jones in Watts, 1987). Others focus on the alliance of domestic merchants, international grain dealers and consultants which ‘traps’ Nigeria into externally determined solutions – food imports and mechanised farming
for its food problems (Andrae & Beckman, 1985; Beckman in Watts, 1987). In both cases the nation is taken to be the point of departure. By ignoring supranational forces these explanations fail fully to capture the changing character of the state's agrarian policies, which has been marked by two phases since 1970.

In the first, or 'activist', phase (roughly 1970-85), there was a shift from an emphasis on peasant produced, state marketed cash crops to a focus on the concentration of land and food production in the hands of the elite, particularly a new group of highly subsidised large-scale farmers made up mainly of serving and retired military officers, top bureaucrats and wealthy business people, as well as the direct involvement of the state in production.

In the second, 'non-activist' phase (1986 to the present) the shift has been towards the withdrawal of the state from direct production, withdrawal of subsidies and a reorientation of private production to serve export markets. The features of the second phase are part of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to 'roll back' the state in favour of a self-regulating market. The outcomes of these policies and shifts have been complex and sometimes unanticipated. This interaction as well as the changing nature of the outcomes have implications for our conception of capital, state, and social classes. In particular they caution against reifying them.

I intend to focus on one aspect of those international shifts - the changing international system of credits. My argument is that the agrarian policies of the Nigerian state since the 1970s have to be understood not only as a product of the oil boom and slump but also as a product of the changes in the international system of credits, namely the rise of Eurodollar loans and the subsequent international debt crisis. Among other things, these policy shifts have resulted in: the rise of huge state bureaucracies that manage agricultural development; greater penetration of agribusiness into agriculture; increasing dependence of farmers on external inputs especially chemical fertilisers; increasing dependence on external sources of finance for its agricultural development; increasing loss of autonomy and coherence by the state in policy making and execution; increasing factionalisation within the structure of the state and dominant elites, particularly the large-scale farmers; and increasing hunger and malnutrition for the vast majority of the people. These results, and especially the increasing loss of autonomy and coherence of the state and the factionalisation of the elite farmers, show clearly that the state may not be as powerful as analysts thought in the 1970s. The 'power' and 'centrality' of the state which were popular then may have been merely conjunctural. They also bring into question the conception of class boundaries and interests. Finally, the failure of the international agencies to 'roll back' the state since 1986 is evidence that it is misleading to continue to claim that there can be a 'free' or 'self-regulating' market. Such a market seems unlikely so long as aggrieved social groups resist its establishment.

The Oil Boom, Enhanced Government Revenues and Increased State Autonomy

I shall present only the outlines of the oil boom and stress a neglected side to it – its role in making Nigeria credit-worthy in the private international financial market, and thus more vulnerable to developments within it. Oil had become an important foreign exchange earner for Nigeria by 1965, and became dominant in the early 1970s as a result of the OPEC-engineered price increase. As agricultural exports fell and oil
production rose in the 1970s, oil exports grew to account for over 90 per cent of export earnings, and 80 per cent of government revenues. Further price increases in 1979 led to a peak in revenue from oil of N15,234 million in 1980, twenty-four times its level in 1970 (Forrest, 1993). As oil revenues increased, the military government enacted decrees concentrating more resources and power in the Federal government at the expense of the constituent states. It also maintained a high value for the Naira to cheapen imports which it considered necessary for development, and embarked on various kinds of projects – roads, bridges, ports, schools, hospitals, sports stadia, among others. There was a construction boom in Nigeria’s urban centres which heightened rural out-migration, depleting the agricultural labour force. Initially (1970-75) oil revenues reduced Nigeria's dependence on external project aid, but the government soon came to require external borrowing to sustain the level of expenditure, mostly from private international banks. This reliance on private bank credits rather than on bilateral aid however provided the state with greater freedom to decide on national priorities.

Oil Revenues and a Liberal International Credit Regime

The oil boom period coincided with a specific international credit regime that encouraged what has been described as ‘statist’ policies of the period. This has been ignored by most analysts of Nigeria’s development policies of the period. Before the collapse of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates, and the subsequent accumulation of dollars in private banks, poor countries got concessory credits from the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA) and bilateral donors, mainly the advanced capitalist countries. After the collapse, two factors encouraged a flow of dollars into private banks: the continued rise in US deficits, and the later removal of US restrictions on capital flows abroad in reaction to the rising value of the dollar (Block, 1977; Kolko, 1988). These Eurodollar funds were then swollen by deposits from OPEC countries ('petrodollars') when oil prices rose steeply from 1973-74. The private banks soon became the primary lenders to governments around the world, including oil exporters such as Nigeria and Mexico.

There was considerable agreement in international financial circles and donor governments on the need to recycle these funds by lending them to needy (and-not-so-needy) third world countries. One reason for that understanding was that corporate borrowing in the OECD countries was low due to recession. The surge of transnational corporations into the oil exporting countries as suppliers and contractors in their burgeoning infrastructure development and import-substitution industrialisation also encouraged the banks to lend. In 1989 Robert McNamara, the then President of the World Bank admitted that the policy of the international financial institutions in the 1970s was to encourage developing countries to take commercial loans to assist in the recycling of petrodollars (cited in Obasanjo, 1990:231). To facilitate the recycling, the concessionary window was closed against countries classified as ‘middle income’ earners, such as Nigeria, Brazil and Mexico.

To the borrowers, Eurodollar loans seemed less restrictive than turning to the IMF whose conditions are often politically risky. In fact, lacking any serious political control, the banks seemed willing to lend as much as the borrowers sought. Such independent funds made it possible for these governments to attempt to regulate their economies nationally by measures such as the introduction of exchange controls, trade restrictions, subsidies, and the expansion of the public sector. It was therefore an international credit regime that favoured the greater involvement of some states in
their economies. Nigeria was one of them. Its leaders were encouraged to borrow from the Eurodollar market, especially as oil prices began to fall. The country was said to be 'underborrowed'. The government's fiscal irresponsibility worsened matters. Apart from numerous construction projects and sharp wage rises in 1975, Nigeria's import bill was rising at 40 per cent per annum (Olukoshi in Onimode, 1989:223). One of the major imports was food, mostly basic foodstuffs needed by the urban working class – rice, wheat, poultry, beef and milk. The government was worried about shortages and rising food prices especially in the cities. The high exchange rate, supported by oil revenues, made imported foods cheap. This helped accelerate taste transfers towards imported foods and discouraged local producers. In reality, Nigeria's food imports took place when the price of food had risen in the world market. For instance, between 1972 and 1974, the world price for wheat tripled from $60 to $200 a ton; the price of rice rose from $130 to $300 a ton (World Bank, 1982:89). These massive food imports led to a drain of foreign exchange.

Oil Doom and the Decline of State Autonomy and Coherence

The discovery of North Sea and Alaskan oils helped depress oil prices. In 1977, in the face of a virtual glut in the world oil market and falling oil prices, the Obasanjo government tried to maintain revenue levels by increasing the price of Nigeria's crude by 2 per cent. The result was a sharp drop in demand for Nigeria's oil as customers had access to cheaper crude including the spot market, and Nigeria's oil output declined from 2.1 mbd (million barrels per day) in 1977 to 1.57 mbd in February 1978 (Olukoshi in Onimode, 1989:223). A recession ensued. There was a balance of payments deficit of about N1.3 billion, external reserves declined, and the country appeared unable to sustain its import bills which stood at N1 billion a month by May 1978. By mid-1978, business at the Lagos port alone was 97 per cent in imports and only 3 per cent in exports (Freund, 1978:94).

One of the government's responses was to increase its indebtedness. The public debt of the Federal Government increased to N5 billion at the end of December 1977, a 66.4 per cent increase over the year. A significant part of the debt came from private international banks from which the government took a 'jumbo loan' of $1 billion in 1978, the first of such size in Nigeria's history. The loan, according to the then Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo, was recommended by the IMF and the World Bank, which declared that Nigeria was

underborrowed in their conspiratory efforts with commercial banks of the West to recycle the oil money in Western banks ... Loans at concessionary rates from non-commercial financial institutions were deliberately made difficult to come by for us ... (1990:230).

Nigeria's debt to private international banks rose from a mere $0.5 billion in 1974 to $5.1 billion in 1979 when the military yielded power to civilians. It then rose to $14.7 billion at the time of the overthrow of the civilian government in 1983 because of the reckless borrowing and fraud by the civilians under Shehu Shagari (Asobie, 1986:24). The New York Times of 20 January 1984 estimated that government officials alone exported wealth of about $5-7 billion between 1979 and 1980. Despite the country earning N56 billion (N44 billion from oil alone), the highest amount ever recorded for such a period in Nigeria's history (Mohammed, 1986:131,136), the Shagari government left a total external debt of N17.7 billion at the end of 1983 (CBN, 1984:79).

Despite a short-lived increase in oil revenues during the 'second oil shock' (1979-1980) Nigeria embarked on a spate of reckless borrowings from the international and
domestic capital markets (The Analyst, 4 (1) 1989:16-19; 2 (3) 1987; 2 (7) 1987; Obasanjo, 1990:232). Nigeria borrowed $768 million from the Eurodollar market in 1981. In 1982 the figure exceeded $3 billion, making Nigeria leap from the rank of 31st highest borrower from the market in 1981 to 13th in 1982 (Euromoney, March, 1982:29). By this time, however, interest rates on commercial bank loans had risen sharply as part of the Western neo-conservative governments' counter-inflation strategy. The London Inter-Bank Offering Rate (LIBOR) rose from 5.5 per cent in 1972 to 9.25 per cent in 1978. It later rose to 17 per cent in 1981 and 16 per cent in 1982. Moreover, loans to the third world countries carried higher spreads over LIBOR as they were considered higher risks. By 1982 the real rate of interest on commercial bank loans to the third world was 19.4 per cent, partly due to increases in the LIBOR (Wood, 1986:263-4). Even as Nigeria's debts were piling up the Vice President of an international bank which was already a major creditor to Nigeria said:

*We're trying to increase our Nigerian exposure. Nigeria is underborrowed. Its debt service is only 5.3 per cent, one of the lowest in Africa ... You have to take a different attitude when dealing with black Africa. You know the payments will be late, you know sometimes they forget to pay the fees. You have to work hard and go and get the money and hold their hands. Your reward is high fees* (quoted in Grant, 1982:155).

Borrowing went out of control until Mexico defaulted in 1982 thereby sparking the international debt crisis. In order to avoid a collapse of the international financial system, a close alliance was forged between the private banks and the IMF and World Bank. Private banks now blocked further credits to most debtor countries unless they secured an IMF seal of approval. By 1983 it had become difficult for Nigeria to borrow from the banks, though international creditors agreed that its debt was still modest (The Banker, December, 1982:20; see also Andrae & Beckman, 1985:8). Nigeria then turned to the IMF. Negotiations dragged on until 1986 (after the overthrow of two governments) when an agreement was reached with the Fund and the Bank for the imposition of the SAP on Nigeria as a condition for the rescheduling of Nigeria's debts. Key features of the programme include the devaluation of the exchange rate, cuts in public spending, privatisation of public corporations, removal of subsidies, trade liberalisation and promotion of non-oil exports. Their implications for agricultural policies are discussed below.

**The Development of the Activist Agrarian Policies**

The agrarian policies that accompanied the increases in revenues and the greater freedom to initiate policies focused on the concentration of land, mechanisation and large-scale food production by the elite, and the elimination of peasants. This marked a shift from the policy focus in the First Republic which itself was inherited from colonialism, namely peasant-produced and state-marketed cash (export) crops. The new strategy was pursued through the construction of gigantic irrigation schemes, the provision of various subsidies under a variety of programmes such as the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), Operation Feed the Nation, the Green Revolution, the Agricultural Development Programme, and land use reform. Also important were macro-economic policies such as control of interest and exchange rates, price controls and trade restrictions.

By the early 1970s the political leadership, the technocrats in the federal bureaucracy, and international agencies such as the World Bank and USAID had concluded that what was needed to meet Nigeria's agricultural needs was mechanisation (World Bank, 1974; Johnson et al. 1969; Awoyemi, 1981). The Bank argued that the major
problems with Nigeria's agriculture included lack of capital and qualified manpower, and shortages of improved seeds, fertiliser and other agricultural machinery (World Bank, 1974, 1975). The dominant view in policy-making circles was that rural out-migration had depleted the rural labour force and that the peasants' primitive tools and methods could no longer be relied upon for increased output, hence the need for mechanisation (e.g. Oluwasanmi, 1971; Awoyemi, 1981).

This approach was also supported by the managerial cadre, and the crop of emerging agricultural economists who had trained in either Western universities or Nigerian universities and institutes in which Western experts shaped the curriculum, e.g. the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Lele et al. 1989). It is not surprising then that Nigerian planners would see agricultural practices in America as the model to follow irrespective of the differences in local conditions. Their analysis of the problem hardly included social relations in agriculture, issues of access of the poor to resources such as land, credits and other incentives, and local participation in decision making and control. The shift toward mechanisation amounted to a shift towards farming by the rich and powerful since, in Nigeria, only they could afford the new technology. They had privileged access not only to information but also to subsidies for the acquisition of the technology. Yet they did not necessarily hold much promise of resolving the food crisis.

While the technocrats and military leaders agreed on the need for mechanisation, they disagreed on how best to proceed. One of the earliest manifestations of the new approach was the construction of three gigantic irrigation projects in the north: the Kano River, the Bakolori, and the South Chad projects. The control of the military government by officers from the north as well as the sparse rainfalls in the north were instrumental in ensuring that the first three schemes were located in the north. They also largely supported the emphasis on wheat. Many bureaucrats from the south (such as Philip Asiodu, then federal permanent secretary) did not believe that the promised self-sufficiency in wheat could be realised, and were opposed to the commitment to it, which they saw as merely political.

By the Third Plan period (1975-1980) irrigation, which used to be mainly a Northern Region affair, had become a national affair mainly because of the control of the federal government by the northern elite, and the agitation of other state (regional) governments to get federal money as well. In that period N827 million was spent on irrigation by all governments. Of a total of N8.9 billion earmarked for agriculture in the next (Fourth) Plan, N2.2 billion was allocated to irrigation. In the Plan's first year, the Federal Ministry of Water Resources which oversaw the irrigation projects, appropriated 36 per cent of the Plan's five-year total, while agriculture received 7 per cent. The same was essentially true in 1982 (Palmer-Jones, 1987:145), while in 1983 nearly half of the N11.9 billion allocated to agriculture by the federal government went to water resources, including the irrigation schemes (Watts, 1987:83). No other crop has received the kind of attention given to wheat.

With the irrigation schemes a new crop of farmers emerged in northern Nigeria, namely wealthy businessmen, serving and retired military officers and bureaucrats. The irrigation schemes are managed by River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs). Later more RBDAs were set up, bringing the total to eleven. The rest were to construct small-scale irrigation schemes in other states. The biggest attraction for the 'emergency farmers' all over the country was state subsidies for agricultural production. What was truly national was the provision of subsidies for rain-fed agriculture generally through such programmes as the NAFPP (1972), the Agricultural
Development Programme (1975), Operation Feed the Nation (1976) and the Green Revolution (1980).

Although introduced by different governments, they did not differ markedly from each other, being campaigns to increase food production, and included free or subsidised seeds, fertiliser, equipment, credits, and land clearing and extension services. Their significance lies mainly in the subsidies they made available for agricultural production. The inauguration of the NAFPP in 1972 marked the shift of emphasis to food production and was the earliest introduction in Nigeria of what is better known as the 'Green Revolution' strategy of agricultural production. Officially NAFPP focused on the distribution and demonstration of small farmer packages for wheat, sorghum, millet, rice and cassava. These included seeds, fertiliser and other chemicals, and tractor hire services. A Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank, recommended by the World Bank and USAID, was established to lend money at below market rates for agriculture. The UNDP provided a grant which was used for the recruitment of management experts for the new agricultural bank while the World Bank acted as the executing agency for the grant.

Because the NAFPP programme was hardly known and of little impact, the Obasanjo government launched Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976 in order to popularise and dramatise the NAFPP. An Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme was set up in 1977. Under it, agricultural loans at interest rates 2-3 per cent below prime from commercial and merchant banks were guaranteed up to 70 per cent by the Federal Government through the Central Bank. This was intended to encourage the hitherto reluctant banks to lend to agriculture. The second plank of the OFN was direct state involvement in agricultural production through state farms. This was continued on an expanded scale under Shagari's Green Revolution programme. Schools were encouraged to establish farms to provide part of the food consumed by students. More subsidies were provided not only in terms of seeds and fertiliser but also for tractor hire, land clearing, extension service etc. The Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) strategy was part of the World Bank's Assault on World Poverty (1975). The Bank's interest had shifted to lending for agriculture in the third world in response to the movement of agribusiness into third world agricultures. At the level of rhetoric the ADP strategy differed from the OFN and Green Revolution in terms of its declared focus on smallholder farmers and its broader conception of integrated rural development which includes rural infrastructure, rural water supply, and rural health.

The main beneficiaries of the three programmes have been the elite farmers. In the case of the ADPs another key beneficiary has been a middle layer of wealthy peasantry including chiefs and village heads (Wallace, 1981; D'Silva & Raza, 1980; Beckman in Watts, 1987; Adelakun, 1984; Tukura, 1985; Okolie, 1987). The large-scale farmers have been the main beneficiaries of the subsidised inputs especially fertilisers, credits from the agricultural bank and the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund, extension services, land allocation, and irrigation water. Those of them who serve in or are retired from the government or bureaucracy participated in designing the projects themselves. But the ADP has a more elaborate institutional structure – the ADP bureaucracy – and had an external agency of capital – the World Bank – as partner. To facilitate farming by the new rich as well as the big corporations the government enacted a land use decree in 1978 which vested all land in the state, thereby taking it away from local authorities such as traditional chiefs and family heads and communities. Other incentives included liberal import policy for agricultural equipment, and other inputs.
The government also coerced banks to lend to agriculture by prescribing a minimum percentage of bank loans that must go to agriculture. Generally, interest rates were regulated by the government which deliberately kept them low. For instance the prime lending rate remained constant at 7 per cent between 1970 and 1974, fell to 6 per cent from 1975 to 1977 and averaged roughly 7 per cent between 1978 and 1981. In fact, in the period the Federal Savings Bank lent money at 3 to 4 per cent below the prime (Federal Office of Statistics, nd, p. vi). Thus even as the government borrowed at exorbitant rates from the international banks, it lent at cheap rates domestically. Agricultural loans have benefited mainly the elite farmers. For instance, between 1973 and 1986 the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank allocated N55 million to the RBDAs, N184 million to 130 intermediaries, and N341 million to 400 retired generals and civil servants, businessmen and their companies for arable farming, fishery and cattle breeding. However a paltry N18 million was allocated to 8,456 small farmers (Bonat & Abdullahi in Onimode, 1989:158). In fact the average loan to borrowers was N132,000 (Watts, 1987:22). This indicates clearly that the bank mainly promoted large-scale farming. Similarly the larger chunk of the loans provided under the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme went to the large-scale farmers (NACB, nd). Even the procedures and requirements for procuring the loans were often beyond the grasp and reach of poor and illiterate farmers.

The Impact of the Activist Agrarian Programmes

In the case of the irrigation schemes, the sponsored crop is often not the staple food of the peasants and therefore suited only those farming for the market, the elite. An example is the Kano scheme where wheat is the sponsored crop while the local farmers’ staple is guinea corn. Thousands of peasants were expelled from their lands to make way for the projects. Tina Wallace reports, for instance, that at the Kano River Project over 13,000 people were moved from their homes and fertile lands and resettled on barren lands (1981:298; see also D’Silva & Raza, 1980; Beckman, 1985). Others were encouraged to sell their lands to officials and wealthy farmers (Wallace in Heyer, 1981). In Kaduna State the Report of the Land Investigation Commission, set up in December 1979, revealed that a large number of rich and powerful people used village heads to frighten peasants, under-value their farmlands and acquire them for large-scale capitalist farming (vol. 1:31).

These emergency farmers did not derive their initial wealth and/or power from agricultural production but from their positions in government and other commercial activities. It is quite revealing that the projects' consultants regard the entry of such people into the projects as evidence of the success of the irrigation programme. NEDECO, the consultants for the Kano river project reported in 1973 'that some merchants and grain dealers from outside Kadawa were attracted by the results of 1971-72. So they rented land within the irrigation area and cropped it' (Wallace in Heyer, 1981:289). Those displaced are rarely paid adequate compensation, and their protests have been violently repressed, sometimes with many deaths, as happened at the Bakolori project in Sokoto State.

The proletarianisation process extends to the ADPs. In the Funtua ADP, 133 farmers out of a total of 85,000 controlled 15 per cent of the land. They were made up of 19 top civil servants, 10 retired bureaucrats, and 104 businessmen (Mahmud, cited in Watts, 1987:80). More recently, wheat farmers are becoming increasingly dominant in the northern ADPs because of the continuing heavy subsidisation of wheat production by various governments in the north with federal government’s assistance (Kimmage,
1991). Yet the World Bank says the ADPs are for smallholder farmers and is opposed to domestic wheat production.

Despite the huge public expenditures on it the contributions of the large-scale farmers to food productivity was marginal. Although no one knows the number of farmers involved, they are very few relative to the entire Nigerian agricultural population which is nearly 70 per cent of all Nigerians. The government and project officials do not know the level of their actual contribution but admit it is not significant. Yet they cornered most of the government’s subsidies. With the possible exception of Abiola Farms, none of them appears to have a farm of a size which compares with those in North America after which they try to model theirs. They do not have a technological base. Officials at the Federal and State ministries of Agriculture and the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund told me that some diverted their loans and other incentives to uses other than agriculture (in interviews: 4 May 1992; 22 January 1992; 30 June 1992). I found that some used the liberal import policy for agriculture to bring in earth moving equipment for their construction contracting businesses (interview with former staff, Ben Hall Farms, 29 June 1992). Many others moved into agriculture for speculative purposes; they acquired lands in project areas and sold them later when the value had been increased by state expenditure such as land clearing and preparation, and irrigation. Thus Samuel Ogbemudia, former governor of Bendel State, sold the huge lands he acquired to John Holt, a subsidiary of Lonrho.

The strategy, especially the new technology of farming, has led to increasing dependence of Nigerian farmers on the state and unreliable input markets, especially for fertiliser. Intensive farming, unlike fallow, depletes the soil’s nutrients. Chemical fertilisers have potentially disastrous ecological consequences because they destroy important soil microbes. The ADPs had a more positive impact on productivity in the beginning especially in the enclave ones, partly because of better planning. Their wider spread is also potentially positive as it could make more people aware of improved farming practices. In most cases also they accommodate local staples. However, as my study of the Imo ADP showed, most people knew the ADPs only for fertiliser which they even had a hard time procuring. In general they have had a marginal impact but have drained public resources, including the World Bank’s contribution which the Bank ensures is mostly spent outside the country although the country repays it anyway (Okolie, 1987).

These programmes, having consumed enormous public resources, contributed significantly to the rising budget deficits and borrowing. Fertiliser imports which are a major conduit for foreign exchange outflow and a reason for huge foreign loans, have been promoted by these projects and programmes. It is not even important whether Eurodollar loans were raised specifically for any agricultural project, since funds are fungible. They certainly utilised resources that could have gone into other areas for which loans were raised. But they did not meet food needs.

The Change Toward Non-activist Agrarian Policy and its Impact

By 1981 some rethinking was beginning to take place in government circles. After a visit by US Vice President Walter Mondale restrictions on participation in Nigerian agriculture by foreign agribusiness were relaxed. They were allowed to own up to 60 per cent equity shares in agricultural enterprises, later increased to 80 per cent by the post-1983 Buhari government. The visit also led to the award of a multi-million dollar contract to American and Japanese firms led by Kellog for the construction of a
fertiliser factory at Onne, near Port Harcourt. No other significant policy change took place in agriculture until the imposition of the SAP.

Consistent with the SAP agreement with the World Bank and the IMF the government abolished the commodity marketing boards, thereby enabling farmers to market their products directly. It amended the indigenisation policy to allow TNCs to invest in any activity in Nigeria, including food production, and itself withdrew from direct involvement in agricultural production, began to sell off some of its agricultural interests such as the non-water assets of the RBDA, and to commercialise the remaining ones. Its new role, it said, would be to assist the private sector with the provision of infrastructure such as rural feeder roads, storage, technical advice and marketing information, mainly through a new Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). Some form of subsidy, though highly reduced, would still be provided (FMAWRD, 1989; and interview with Press Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, 4 May 1992).

Subsidies, the bedrock of the agrarian policies of the preceding period were reduced or abolished, including those for fertiliser, loans, equipment etc. For example, fertiliser subsidy was reduced from 83 per cent in 1983 to 28 per cent in 1986. The Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank was allowed to lend money at market rates and to source funds from capital markets around the world. Interest and exchange rate controls were also abolished and many import restrictions removed.

This change in policy direction is evidence of the state’s loss of autonomy because they were conditions imposed for debt rescheduling. But they were expected to increase farm-gate prices for farmers, enhance productivity and earn non-oil foreign exchange. Although there are variations among crops, the overall impact of the SAP on productivity has, however, been very marginal. Even the World Bank agrees, although it simply blames the government (Faruqee, 1994:238-285).

The prices of agricultural commodities have risen, thereby enhancing farmers’ gross income, but input costs have also risen thereby eroding the farmers’ real income. For instance the devaluation of the Naira led to a rise in the price of a tractor from about N50,000 in 1986 to over N400,000 in mid-1992. High input costs have combined with high interest rates to produce low capacity utilisation. The farming enterprises most affected appear to be those owned by the elite because of their greater dependence on government handouts and on high-tech equipment which has high foreign exchange content. This is even worsened by the ban on the export of food, which could have enabled the farmers to offset some of their foreign exchange expenditure. Wheat farmers have fared better because of the government’s continued massive subsidisation of wheat production and high prices for domestic wheat.

But the decline of their farms did not necessarily translate into greater poverty for the elite farmers, for the SAP has opened other niches for them, particularly foreign exchange speculation and import/export business. Many of them – for example, Moshood Abiola, Shehu Yar’Adua, and Immanuel Iwuanyanwu – are behind the numerous banks and finance houses that have emerged in Nigeria since the SAP, which are little more than money changers. Their greatest source of profit has been ‘round-tripping’, i.e. buying foreign exchange at the official rate and selling it to the growing underground market. Poorer farmers and other vulnerable groups, including women, have not been so lucky. The cost of fertiliser has risen for those already dependent on it and the prices of other essential goods and services have also risen. Malnutrition and other diseases of want are now prevalent.
The state has not only lost autonomy, but also changed in structure. Important changes include the enhancement of the powers of the Central Bank of Nigeria through new decrees and its monopoly over foreign exchange, and the use of task forces to perform tasks traditionally performed by regular ministries, for example, the use of the DFRRI in place of the Ministry of Agriculture. Policy has become inconsistent and incoherent. This is due to pressures from creditors, the ethnic dimensions of political power, and heightened opposition by such groups as labour, students, market women, the unemployed, academics, activist dissenters, and sections of the elite farmers. Examples of policy inconsistency and incoherence are legion. The withdrawal of subsidy on fertiliser was halted because of the massive devaluation of the Naira and considerable political opposition, particularly from powerful agricultural interests in the north, the main beneficiaries of the fertiliser subsidy. In fact by mid-1992 fertiliser subsidy had climbed up to as much as 375 per cent (interview with Omoni, 4 May 1992). Wheat production in the north is still highly subsidised (Kimmage, 1991), which has bred resentment against wheat farmers by other farmers, and by southern farmers against northern farmers (although wheat farmers are a minority in the north). This has made it more difficult for the elite farmers as a group to influence policy for the group.

Protests against escalating interest rates as well as the continued decline in the exchange rate led the government to move between regulation and deregulation a number of times to the extent that investors hardly knew what the policy would be the next day. The large-scale farmers that I interviewed complained about this unpredictability. Other contradictions include the ban on wheat imports to promote domestic production and the ban on food exports to prevent increasing scarcity and rising prices at home. These contradict trade liberalisation.

The loss of autonomy in policy making, changes in structure and increasing incoherence of the state cast doubt on its characterisation as ‘strong’, which was popular in the 1970s (e.g. Alavi, 1979). In Nigeria’s case, at least, it seems that the ‘strength’ may have been conjunctural. As I have shown there are larger than national forces at work which have to be considered as well. A state which has an external resource base and is so pervasively affected by the vagaries of the world economy can hardly be called strong. Currently finance capital seems to be regulating the state (McMichael & Myhre, 1991).

There is no evidence though of the Nigerian state shrinking in size or being ‘rolled back’ due to the SAP. Rather the state seems to be increasing in size. Although some public enterprises have been privatised, virtually all the agricultural bureaucracies established earlier are still in place; more have been added such as the DFRRI. There has been more centralisation of power, particularly in the Presidency. Budget deficits have been rising, even threatening to outstrip the budgeted expenditure, and the World Bank itself admits that fiscal discipline has broken down in Nigeria since about 1988, the third year of the SAP (Faruque, 1994). The causes of such fiscal indiscipline (apart from corruption) seem to be the government’s attempts to placate (or as Nigerians say ‘settle’) various groups, organisations and individuals to secure their support or silence towards the government and its programmes. Resistance by aggrieved social groups to the SAP has thus induced the government to subvert the programme through irresponsible fiscal and monetary behaviour. Although the state has become increasingly unable to regulate the economy (evidenced by the forced policy changes and the growth of the informal and underground economy) it still controls the foreign exchange earnings from oil. This seems to provide the state with
some room for manoeuvre. The burgeoning debts are being serviced, enabling the state to secure some reschedulings from international creditors.

Conclusion
I have shown that the two phases of agricultural policy-making in Nigeria since the 1970s are linked to shifts in the world economy and politics, particularly the changes in the credit regime. This supports my contention that it is more useful to focus on the interaction of national and supranational factors. It strengthens the theories of the internationalisation of capital rather than those that focus on either the national state or foreign capital. It is also more useful than such explanations as ‘drought psychology’ (Forrest in Heyer et al. 1981) or ‘cognitive dissonance’ on the part of government officials (Kimmage, 1991).

I have also shown that the state should not to be reified. There are different interests represented within the structure of the state which are sometimes contradictory. These may be local, ethnic, national or transnational, and the state does not automatically promote one against the other. It depends on the balance of the forces representing those interests. Classes are not necessarily homogeneous; divisions exist within them and these divisions and their contradictions are represented within the state. As I showed above, during the oil boom and easy credit period, the Nigerian state restricted the movement of certain types of capital, keeping agribusiness from producing food and restricting finance capital through the control of interest and exchange rates. In the post-oil boom period the state began to attempt to attract such capital with numerous incentives.

I also showed that Nigeria’s political elite, including the elite farmers, is not homogeneous. It has different and sometimes contradictory interests. With huge oil revenues and easy credit the Nigerian state simultaneously promoted domestic wheat production as well as large-scale wheat importation. As oil revenues and loans declined wheat importation was banned for seven years and the emphasis was on the promotion of domestic production. The ban has again been lifted although domestic production is still being promoted. And while the wheat-producing, and largely northern, wing of the elite farmers is still being heavily subsidised, the non-wheat producing wing gets little subsidy beyond fertilisers. Nigeria’s agrarian policies are thus also shaped by ethnicity, partly because state managers try to ally with powerful groups for political support.

Epilogue
It is important to pay attention to the state’s increasing incoherence and loss of autonomy as these lead to more confusion, uncertainty, unpredictability, corruption and worsening conditions of life of most of the people. The crisis has made Nigeria more ungovernable, a situation which often lends itself to calls for more discipline and tyranny. The role of international finance makes matters more complicated and internationalises the crisis. The pervasiveness of the international environment, especially the capital markets and oil prices, means that inward agrarian policies should be explored. This does not imply isolation from the world economy, which seems almost impossible, but a new kind of ‘controlled interaction’ with the world economy while emphasising the domestic market and local needs. This includes negotiating better agreements with international agencies for responsibility sharing. The current situation whereby the World Bank bears no loss for the failure of programmes that it promotes and finances must be rejected.
Food policy should be about feeding people and people feeding themselves. The people need to participate in shaping those policies. State (regional) and local governments and communities are better suited for popular participation. More consideration should be given to the specificities of local conditions including ecological differences among regions and socio-political structures. This implies greater decentralisation of resources and power.

Nigeria's federal government should have little to do with agriculture beyond setting national standards and preventing ecological disasters. Experience has shown that policy at that level has been more the result of high stakes politics and business. The emphasis has been on rent sharing by the elite, on foreign conceptions of agriculture, large-scale, ecologically non-sustainable, capitalist farming, which in Nigeria's case produces little. The result has been policies that have little relation to the needs of the vast majority of farmers, low productivity and a waste of resources, huge centralised and inefficient agricultural bureaucracies, the enrichment of state managers and the elite farmers, and the dependence of a large number of farmers on the international market for such inputs as fertiliser at a time when they can hardly afford their prices.

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Opening Political Space in Cameroon: 
the Ambiguous Response of the Mbororo

Lucy Davis

This article discusses the impact of national democratic movements and economic crisis on internal political and social change in Mbororo pastoralist society, North West Province, Cameroon. *Pulaaku*, a Mbororo code of behaviour based on Mbororo distance, self-control, individuality, and racial ‘purity’, is discussed in relation to the difficulties Mbororo society has in responding to internal divisions as population explosion and land pressure spell the demise of the basis of their former existence. *Pulaaku* is also seen as a form of traditional, cultural, resistance, both to the other, settled ethnic groups in the North West Province and to active integration into the Cameroon state and political system. Mbororo society has difficulty adjusting to the new, uncertain politics of active participation and debate. The article discusses the aims, fortunes and internal ambiguities of a new Mbororo organisation – Mboscuda – which, responding to the meeting of ethnic and state identities, attempts to provide both a democratic forum for the problems in Mbororo society and a voice for the Mbororo in a new, volatile, political arena.

Banso, Bui Division, North West Province Cameroon: in a whitewashed government building on a hillside overlooking the market town of Banso, sit a group of fifty Mbororo men and one woman from various regions of the country, heads bowed in an earnest, concentrated silence as they listen to the words of the District Officer (DO) of Banso who is excitedly giving his opinions as to the reasons for ‘Mbororo backwardness’:

*You Mbororo people are tearing yourselves apart instead of coming together like the rest of Cameroon. You call yourselves an abandoned people? Who abandoned you? You abandoned yourselves! – Keeping away from others – keeping away from Me! How do you expect me to understand you when you keep away from me, keep away from others – when we are all here in the towns and you remain away from us, away from everything, away from me – up in the hills out there in the Bush!!*

It is difficult to discern the reaction of the ten to fifteen elderly Mbororo leaders, who have agreed to be present at the meeting to this onslaught. Lined up on benches against the wall of the building, they smile patiently, gracefully, silently and clap, when the now out of breath DO finishes his speech and collapses in his chair of honour, proceeding to sleep throughout the rest of the meeting. ‘We have been psychologically defeated ...’ laments Musa Ndamba, provincial coordinator of
Mboscuda, the newly formed social movement for the ‘social and cultural development’ of Mbororo pastoralist peoples in Cameroon. It is Mboscuda who have called this meeting in Banso.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to discuss the relation between processes of change and conflict in a modernising, democratising Cameroon upon the lives of Mbororo pastoralists in North West Province. I shall discuss the significance of the changing nature of Mbororo identity, as the identity of a pastoralist people with a profound sense of ethnic identity is brought increasingly into contact with new identities, and as Mbororo people become participants in a modernising state. I shall also discuss the impact of openings in political space, where new freedoms of expression appear to have accentuated long standing conflicts of land and power and intensified internal conflicts between new and old identities in Mbororo society.

Much of the work for this article was carried out from March to June 1993 in what was one of the first largely sedentary Mbororo communities in North West Province. Sabga, a Mbororo settlement since the early 1920s and now a community of 2,000, mostly Mbororo inhabitants, is situated on the edge of the one of the slopes of the Bamenda highlands, on a cliff top overlooking the densely populated Ndop plain. The ‘Ring Road’ that in the dry season joins all the major rural centres of the North West together, cuts through Sabga. Sabga people see their community as a centre of focus for the Mbororo in the region. Their settlement is the home of a traditional authority now called a ‘Lamido’.

Conflicts with the outside world are not new to the Mbororo, but the new forms of internal and external pressure that this community faces, caught between an increasingly difficult pastoral lifestyle and the explosive influence of a modernising Cameroon (evidence of which rumbles through Sabga on the North West Ring Road every day), mirror in microcosm the conflicts facing Mbororo society in the Province, as a whole. The opening of political space does however provide opportunities for Mbororo expression in new political arenas, in part through the creation of a new social movement for the Mbororo people – the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association – Mboscuda.

Democratic Struggle in Cameroon

The history of what is now called Cameroon is one of heterogeneous and changing networks of peoples and political structures, marked by people’s mobility and sophisticated, interrelated politics and trade patterns. The complexity of these networks of peoples and their political structures was in many cases reduced by the structured modalities of Western thought: ‘regional divisions’, and ‘ethnic groups’, were ‘unified’ in a national Cameroonian state after first German and then French and British occupation (Nkwi & Warnier, 1982; Nkwi, 1987; Bayart, 1993).

‘The Cameroons’ as they were called before independence were previously British and French mandated territories, taken from the Germans during World War One. The Anglo-French division, and the different forms of colonial administration with which the two powers sought to prepare the Cameroons for independence, has served to constitute the national political identities of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians, as they call themselves today. The North and South West Provinces that border Nigeria were before independence under the control of the British
Nigerian colonial administration. They are now eager to stress their version of Cameroon history where, as they remember it, British Cameroon was loosely governed as an eastern province of Nigeria, with a 'House of Chiefs' and with local politicians given a fair degree of self-determination and thus 'experience of democracy'. The French, however, established a sophisticated bureaucratic system of their own over the heads of traditional leaders and clamped down on local political parties (Foncha interview, May 1993). Amongst the Anglophones, Anglophone-ness and what is commonly spoken of as their threatened 'Anglo Saxon heritage', has become a major focal point for political identity (All Anglophone Standing Committee, 1993:5).

In the 1960s and 1970s Cameroon was heralded as one of the most promising West African states. Rich in natural and mineral resources, the economy was growing rapidly and export markets (palm oil, cocoa, coffee, tea and cotton) were good. Oil discovered off the south west coast promised to make Cameroon less dependent upon its big brother neighbour, Nigeria. Politically, it seemed to fulfil all criteria for Huntingdon-style 'strong state' development (Huntingdon, 1971). The federal system of government proposed at independence had looked to ways of alleviating post-colonial ethnic tensions and loyalties, providing space for the independent development of the different regions. It was abolished in 1972. The national political forum in Cameroon was soon restricted to the privileged elites who belonged to first president Ahmadou Ahidjo's circles of patronage. Political stability under force then accompanied Cameroon's early economic prosperity (Foncha interview, 1993).

Towards the end of the decade, the transparency of national financial dealings became more cloudy. Figures as to the direction of oil profits in the late seventies remain a well kept state secret. In spite of this, in this period of relative prosperity there does seem to have been a 'trickling down' of spoils to Cameroonians in the countryside through channels of patronage and personal relationships. Cameroon's subsequent economic decline is only partially a result of the fall in aggregate demand and recession of the early 1980s (from which it has not been able to recover). Extensive mismanagement and misappropriation of national resources, capital flight and political patronage, whilst also a feature of Ahidjo's regime, took new turns under Paul Biya after he succeeded Ahidjo in the early 1980s. The over-inflated, French-backed Cameroon CFA franc made its exports and locally produced goods expensive in comparison, for example, to imported French dairy products, undermining new Mbororo attempts to organise the selling of milk at local markets. By the early 1990s the economic crisis had reached a level at which the government was unable to pay its own employees. Many civil servants in the North West Province had not been paid for a year at the time of research.

The present much used expressions of 'accountability' and 'transparency' ought perhaps to be seen in this light. What seems to have happened under Biya is that as state resources dwindled, the numbers enjoying state patronage became a very restricted group who, now under attack from 'moral' democrats, found it necessary to employ more ingenious technologies to hide their accumulation of the dwindling state resources from the rest of society. New demands for 'transparency' may then mean more a reform (in line with the rule of law) of the complex systems of patronage in Cameroon than a complete change of system; 'accountability' may mean little more than the fulfilling by rich patrons of their responsibilities to their clients. Are some Cameroonians then more interested in a reopening of these same systems of patronage, so that a larger number of the population can get a share of the 'national cake' (Bayart, 1993)?
Political Space

By ‘opening of political space’, I mean the new opportunities for political expression in Cameroon society that have arisen from the Biya regime’s bending to pressure for liberal democratic reform. Freedoms of association and expression have opened the floor for new forms of political power and influence in the nation. There were of course underground voices of dissent in the national political arena and in exile, during the Ahidjo years and during Biya’s rule in the 1980s. However, the efforts of these voices were tightly organised and directed against the ruling powers of the Cameroon state. There does not seem to have been the ‘space’ for other popular political discourses in arenas of a Cameroon ‘civil society’ (such as those centred around the rights of specific ethnic groups, the rights of women, etc). The opening of political space and new freedoms of association in Cameroon in the 1990s has had the effect that although political discourses are still largely dominated by state powers/opposition party dichotomies, there is also room for other forms of political expression, such as the Anglophone movement and the Mbororo organisation, Mboscuda.

By concentrating on these ‘new’ openings in political space I do not mean to imply that political expression is something new to the people of Cameroon or that with the advent of democratisation processes that previously passive Cameroon peoples have suddenly come alive. Nor do I mean that these new spaces for political expression in the arenas (imaginary or otherwise) of multi-party state politics and debatably ‘civil society’ in Cameroon are necessarily a more effective or more legitimate means of fulfilling the demands of the heterogeneous peoples of Cameroon than the already existing political systems that, although under attack, continue alongside and indeed within these ‘new’ arenas of political expression.

The democratisation process and openings of new political space in Cameroon by Biya came at a time when few Cameroonians were untouched by the economic crisis. The opening of institutionalised politics to include genuine opposition parties and the reluctant acceptance of a free press in the early 1990s have started processes in Cameroon society that the present regime is having difficulty keeping under control. The sheer number of tabloids on the streets that are critical of the government, although fewer now than in the euphoric days before the last elections, reflect an enthusiasm with which Cameroonians participate in these new arenas with the discussion of state affairs, the latest scandals and miscarriages of justice. The messages of the local media are categorical, sensational, and are eagerly discussed in taxis, buses, bars and eating houses.

Although (perhaps, even because) the movements by the Biya regime towards an institutionalised liberal democracy are far from complete, discourses of democracy and rights have also opened the door for a variety of new forms of popular political organisation and association. This would seem in line with Bjorn Beckman’s earlier comment that

For a growing number of the African left, the struggle for liberal democratic rights has become an important platform for fighting repression and for widening the democratic space within which popular and democratic organisations can survive and develop (Beckman, 1989).

The ability of these new arenas of political expression to generate change on a national level is however contained by the immobility of the present government. The Biya
regime and state apparatus seem unable to respond to the new demands from below that are the direct consequence of political changes it has itself initiated.

The minority western provinces of Cameroon that were under British mandate have long been a breeding ground for dissent against what is perceived to be Francophone dominance. North West Province with its capital Bamenda is the centre of this dissent and a major target for government displays of might and human rights abuses (Herbert interview, 1993). Political figures in the North West and South West Provinces have now joined forces in an ‘All Anglophone Movement’ for a return to the federal decentralised government that Ahidjo abolished in 1972 (‘All Anglophone Standing Committee’, 1993). The largely Francophone regime has been unwilling to discuss this issue as it would mean, apart from anything else, discussion of the right to administer Cameroon’s oil reserves, located off the South West coast. According to Anglophone political commentators, a threat of secession looms beneath the surface (Ibid.).

The presidential elections held in November 1992 are widely believed, especially in the North West Province, to have been won by the opposing Social Democratic Front candidate, John Fru Ndi. The refusal of Biya to relinquish power, his subsequent declaration of a state of emergency and the human rights abuses by the military and gendarmes against opposition supporters and North West Province residents in the closing months of 1992 (Bobga, 1993; Foncha, 1993) provoked further opposition from people on the street.

The Mbororo Fulani: Culture and Identity

The Fulani are a dispersed, heterogeneous, group of largely pastoralist peoples, numbering about six million and spread with their cattle and their horses over much of West Africa, from Senegal and Mali in the far west, over to Central Africa, to Chad and the Central African Republic. Cameroon Fulani see themselves as divided into two broad groups: the first being ‘Fulbe’ or ‘town Fulanis’ who have been resident in Cameroon for longer than their nomadic or semi-nomadic Mbororo cousins and have their power base in the North. Former president Ahidjo claimed Fulbe descent, and although his supporting factions have been purged after a coup attempt against Biya in the early 1980s, the Fulbe remain a strong, regional political force. They have intermingled with the local peoples, many of whom have been forced to assimilate their lifestyle and Islamic religion, a process termed ‘Fulbeisation’ (Burnham, 1991). The Fulbe, and those who have sought to associate themselves with them, speak a slightly different version of the Fulani language, Fulfulde, to the Mbororo, or second main category of Fulani, who are the subject of this article (Burnham, 1991:79).

The ‘Mbororo’ arrived in Cameroon from the West only at the end of the last century. They are said to comprise 12 per cent of the present Cameroon population of over 12 million people (Mboscuda, 1993). The Mbororo of the Bamenda Plateau, North West Province are estimated to number 120,000 (Django & Mzeka, 1993:1), and arrived in the region in the early 1900s, from Adamawa further to the north (Burnham, 1991:85; Zinchem, nd; Michener, 1966). The Mbororo speak of themselves as further divided into two groups, their names corresponding with the types of cattle traditionally raised. The Jafun, like those in Sabga, have traditionally large dark brown cattle and came to North West Province at the beginning of the 1920s. The Aku with small white black-nosed cattle have been in the region for the last fifty years or so. Within these groups are several distinct family clans; the North West Jafun are further divided into ten clans or koen, those resident in Sabga being called Goshi.
The Mbororo in West Africa are traditionally nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists, cattle herders where practically all aspects of traditional identities lead back to the cow. They are the group of Fulani that have been most resistant to change and were the last to embrace the Islamic faith. The North West Mbororo are becoming more sedentary, coming together in larger communities with better access to schools and health facilities. Other Mbororo, those young men who do appear able to assimilate into town life, acquire unskilled labour jobs and take on new identities as part of a town market system. They return to the compounds with new knowledge, and values and are ‘buying out’ traditionally female spheres of influence: buying the family provisions; buying modern medicine from the hospital; buying new zinc roofs for the compound; making decisions about the (mainly male) children’s (western/arabic) education. Often young men’s greater knowledge of the Koran is used to justify these changes. In one of the few visible indicators of Islamic influence in sedentary Mbororo society, married women are no longer permitted to travel to the market to sell milk and buy provisions.

Mbororo Society and the World Outside

The problems facing Mbororo society today are a combination of the inescapable influence of outside political and economic pressures and the apparent inability of Mbororo society to counter these pressures or resolve the problems that they create from within. Most Mbororo would point to external factors as constituting the main threats to their society and causes of their problems. However, conflicts between Mbororo other ethnic groups in the Province have been building up over many years. This is reflected in the terms they use of each other: ‘Natives’ and ‘Fulanis’, which date back to the language of colonial surveys and are used as commonly as the more neutral ‘farmers’ and ‘graziers’ by both groups. The dichotomy allows the ‘Fulani’ to maintain their claim to racial and cultural distinction (as does the more derogatory Fulfulde term haabe for farmers), and allows the ‘Natives’ to regard the ‘Fulani’ as foreign immigrants with less rights to land than themselves.

The Mbororo have traditionally maintained a distance from their settled ‘black’ ‘Native’ neighbours, viewing their farming activities with silent disdain. The distinctive physical appearance of the Mbororo (pale skinned, tall, slender and long nosed) is an important feature of their traditional identity and they are at pains to distinguish themselves from other neighbouring ethnic groups. They have been largely endogenous, marrying often within their own clan to prevent division of their wealth and protect bloodlines (Adebayo, 1991:2; Django & Mzeka, 1993:4). A corresponding aura of mystique has grown around them and the way that the Mbororo have been constituted from outside. They have become the subject of myths and folk tales among the other inhabitants of the North West Province where Mbororo wealth has been much envied by their neighbours and often exaggerated. The settled farmers resented the good relations the Mbororo had with the British colonial administration and feared that they would use their wealth to take land they saw as their own. Reports of the pre-independence, Fulani-Native relationships speak of ‘Fulaniphobia’ on the part of the settled population (Njeuma & Awaso, 1988:466).

Pulaaku: ‘Making like a Fulani’

The Mbororo have a code of behaviour called pulaaku, or ‘to make like a Fulani’ (Burnham, 1991; Reisman, 1977). It represents a ‘fuzzy’ (Kaviraj 1991:51), ambiguous ‘cluster of identity’ (Jensen & Turner 1992:4) of ‘Mbororoness’, encompassing for the
Mbororo a profound, racial otherness, reserve, pride, a sense of shame, honour, discretion, self-control, not raising ones voice or rising to a conflict, not showing others what one has in mind or revealing one’s real desires. Ideas of pulaaku affect, to a greater or lesser extent, most Mbororo social relationships. Pulaaku rests partially on the Fulani’s idea of themselves as a cultivated people with control over their own needs and independent from all others. It is often defined negatively, by contrasting ‘making like a Fulani’ to the behaviour of the ‘Natives’ or haabe.

The part of Mbororo identity that relates to ‘making like a Fulani’ contains on the one hand superior otherness and cultural resistance to the world of the ‘Native’ peoples outside. Whilst I consider debates of ethnicity and colonial-inspired tribal ‘false consciousness’ to be largely irrelevant (a starting point for our work has been the Mbororo’s own present day historical reality), concepts of specific Mbororo otherness do seem to date back further than many other colonial-imposed ‘tribal’ divisions. They seem to be more of a process of older historical antagonisms, such as conflicts with the settled haabe. Pulaaku contains, on the other hand, codes of reserve and distance in relation to other Mbororo. Perhaps concepts of pulaaku suited the rather isolated, individualistic nature of semi-nomadic life. Mbororo people have traditionally remained geographically apart from rural centres and detached from other Mbororo as necessary for their form of pastoralism, living with their close family in small clusters of huts, in the hills. Cattle have in the past been kept together in family herds. Collective grazing has a mixed success rate.

Pulaaku is also something that Mbororo feel it necessary to ‘make’ in the company of other Mbororo, a show of ‘Fulaniness’. Whilst many see pulaaku as an overridingly positive characteristic, some of the new generation, the mobile and the business minded see it as hindering direct communication and the speedy resolution of affairs. In the words of a titled Mbororo and president of a small dairy cooperative:

_We ask at the meeting if there is a problem with what we want to do and they all say ‘Halawala - no problem’. We ask again if there are problems and they say ‘Halawala - no problem’. We then make resolutions. Later we find that nothing happens because of some big problem that nobody wants to talk about._

The common retort ‘Don’t make pulaaku!’ is often a joke, sometimes an irritable threat. Although Mbororos take possessive pride in their Fulaniness or Mbororoness, they do not have the organisational fervour of the other ethnic groups in the region, renowned for its strong, complex traditional bureaucracy and leadership (Nkwi, 1987). Many Mbororo seem to distrust each other as much as they distrust the ‘Natives’ (a problem that Mboscuda members are quick to point out). They seem to have a great fear of gossip and spying, of other Mbororo talking about them or about their problems, and frequently accuse each other of doing so. According to workers at a local hospital, the number of Fulanis admitted due to internal scuffles and knifings far exceeded the number injured in conflicts with members of other ethnic groups.

_Pulaaku and Islam_

According to local Islamic leaders, Mbororo society in North West Province has only really been influenced by Islam during the second half of this century. When North West Province Mbororos are asked today about the main characteristics of a Mbororo, being a ‘good Muslim’ is almost invariably the first attribute they name, a change in the conscious articulation of Mbororo identity that, according to long term observers has only come about during the last twenty years.
Mbororo speak of the spiritual and moral support that Islam gives them on an individual level in these times of hardship. It would seem that whilst Islam has greater meaning for the Mbororo than before, it is now also a reflection of Mbororo individuality and distance, a reflection of pulaaku. Although arguably increasing, the influence of Islamic social doctrine upon Mbororo daily life and internal social mechanisms is still rather erratic. Most North West Province Mbororo seem to feel free to interpret the Koran in different ways, as they see fit, and there does not appear to be a set of accepted Islamic norms governing Mbororo society. There are, for example, only about ten to fifteen local Mbororo men who visit the Mosque daily in Sabga during the five times of prayer. Other men sometimes pray in their homes, as do, more rarely, the women. Islam does not seem to have the solidarity-in-obedience effect of bringing people together in prayer that it does in other Islamic societies. There are learned, religious individuals and Islamic elders who follow more rigorously the teachings and practices advocated by the Koran, but they do not seem to have much effect upon the conflicting currents running through Mbororo society. Islam does not appear to be a social force that Mbororo society is latching onto as a means of unifying their people against threats from outside, and frictions in the region do not seem to be expressed in religious terms.

North West Province Mbororo, like the Hausa traders in the towns, are a minority, isolated from other Muslims. Nearly all other people of the region are either Christian or one of a heterogeneous mixture of local beliefs. While this may make the Mbororo more outwardly-conscious of being Muslims, Islam does not have the political clout that it has in the strong, once independent Muslim states of Northern Cameroon. This may be a reason for their more relaxed approach to Islamic doctrine. It is far more politically necessary to be dogmatic in areas where power is held by those with the capacity to interpret Koranic law as they see fit, than in the North West Province where political power is held by members of the other religious groups.

Pulaaku and Outside Politics

The Mbororo have in the past been distanced from affairs of the Cameroon state, their little contact being the paying of cattle taxes with which they complied as necessary (Anon, 1948) in the same way as they would pay off any number of local patrons. Cattle tax aside, the Cameroon state did not need the Mbororo and they did not seem to need the state; the two coexisted side by side, the one's identity not impinging upon the other. Current developments are, however, bringing about a meeting between state and ethnic identity, dragging the Mbororo by the horns into the political and economic turmoil in North West Province.

The North West Province Mbororo's traditional reluctance to engage in either aggressive economic activity or in regional or national power struggles can be seen as a process of their pastoralist lifestyle and a version of pulaaku. Having had no Mbororo representatives of their own to speak for them on a regional or national level, they have cultivated a pragmatic approach to both state and local politics basing their support on complex if distant reciprocal relationships. It has been relatively easy for the Mbororo in the past to solve conflicts that have arisen by using their wealth and appealing to one of their local patrons. Patron-client relationships and vertical forms of problem solving were not restricted to the Mbororo although they went well with Mbororo pulaaku and distance. Many a land dispute has been solved by the Mbororo appealing to a local 'Pa' or 'big man' with an appropriate gift and similar gestures thereafter. The patron-client relationships that the wealthy
Mbororo cultivated were ones of distance and a degree, albeit asymmetric, of mutual respect. They have not needed to associate themselves directly with an outside political or social force, nor have they felt the need to have a regional or national political representative from their own people. The North West Province Mbororo's power as such has been in the comparative wealth that they enjoyed as cattle graziers in relation to their subsistence farmer neighbours. Although they have in the past been one of the wealthier groups in the region, this wealth has been concentrated in their cattle herds and in their horses. Mbororo have no tradition for growing crops. They have been reluctant to enter into direct trading relations with others, traditionally using Hausa or Native middlemen to market their produce for them, often resulting in these middlemen retaining significant cuts for themselves.

During the recent changes in the direction of multi-party politics in Cameroon, many of the North West Province Mbororo switched allegiance from their traditional support of Biya’s ruling CPDM (Cameroon Peoples’ Democratic Movement) party to support of the Northern, Muslim politician Mohamadou Bello Bouba, then head of the UNDP (Union nationale pour le démocratic et le progrès), the third largest party, but since co-opted by the CPDM. When asked why, they answer that ‘he seems a calm man and a quiet man and he is a good Muslim.’ It could appear from this that the Mbororo in the North West Province are indeed participating actively in the new logistics of institutionalised national political struggles of the Cameroon State, allying themselves with the Muslim stronghold of the North. However, it could also be argued that in the North West Province Mbororo’s case, voting for a distant, Northern politician, with the convenient excuse that he is a Muslim, reflects in this example, more their desire not to become involved in new national politics at all. Voting for Bello Bouba represents an attempt by the Mbororo to keep a distance from the violent party political struggles in the North West Province that are concentrated around the Bamenda-based SDF’s (Social Democratic Front) opposition to the CPDM.

During the state of emergency in October 1992, a number of Mbororo compounds were attacked and burnt, large numbers of cattle are claimed to have been attacked with machetes. The Mbororo retaliated on horseback, attacking local villagers with their herding staffs. Mbororos were not permitted to enter certain market towns and had to buy their provisions through Hausa middlemen. These events may indeed have helped lead the Mbororo into a more genuine, growing, movement towards Muslim unity in North West Province, albeit as yet independent from the North.

Internal Solutions?

Mbororo society today seems to be having difficulty with the closely-packed conditions of largely-sedentary settlements such as Sabga, that are growing in size as population pressure makes transhumant lifestyles more difficult. Whilst there are many respected, titled Mbororo in the Mbororo leadership systems, their political structures seem more oriented to administration of cattle and horses, and the care of the Lamido and his palace, than to the solving of economic and social problems amongst Mbororo people. In contrast to other ‘traditional’ leaders in the North West Province, Mbororo leaders such as the Sabga Lamidos do not seem to have power in their present role to bridge alone the new divisions and disruptions in an ever-expanding, diversifying sedentary society that makes transhumant lifestyles more difficult. The pulaaku ethic gives the Mbororo a common identity as ‘making like a Fulani’. However, this does not seem in the present North West Province context to be a community identity but one of distant individuals maintaining and displaying their
distance and independence from each other. The Mbororo have no tradition for horizontal problem solving in contrast to other ethnic groups in the region. Difficult questions are avoided through politeness, modesty and reserve and the need to be seen to be 'making like a Fulani'. Conflicts are suppressed and when they do emerge, can do so in a violent manner.

Violence as a means of conflict resolution is no new feature of Mbororo life. However, some sort of balance of violence was perhaps easier to maintain at a distance, with the nearest other Mbororo compound situated away on another hilltop, than in larger more tightly packed communities such as Sabga. The Mbororo Islamic elders represent a vocal force which at community level attempts to provide guidelines with which to maintain continuity and cohesion in the society. The first or second generation of those exposed to Arabic and the Koran, they advocate stricter adherence to Islamic law in Mbororo social life as a means of combating alcohol misuse, violence and immoral behaviour. However, differing attitudes to Islam only appear to underline the divisions within Mbororo society. Some Islamic leaders retain a dogmatic loyalty to orthodox social codes. They disagree with some members of a new western-schooled generation who through contact with the cities and young from other ethnic groups at school, have different ideas about the social consequences of Koranic interpretations. The young are keen on maintaining and rejuvenating old Mbororo traditions such as the baralala, a Mbororo dance, danced in former days at Muslim festivals, involving Mbororo of both sexes, young and old. This is frowned upon by North West Province Mallams and Imams.

**Changing Patron-Client Power Relations**

The fragmentation of Mbororo society and the difficulties it has in solving social conflicts from within has been catalysed by changing economic fortunes and political upheaval. This has left the Mbororo vulnerable to abuse from outside forces who are eager to create an order of their own, through force, with its base in Mbororo society. Mbororo patron-client relationships are taking new forms with the political and economic changes in Cameroon. The decline in Mbororo wealth and thus their power, coupled with openings in political space, new local political 'patrons', new discourses of rights, and media campaigns against 'corrupt' individuals, have complicated things, destroying the delicate balances of power the Mbororo previously cultivated with their distant patrons.

The Mbororo in the North West Province live under the shadow of an extremely wealthy and ambitious member of the Central Committee of the ruling party. Whilst not actually a Fulani himself, Al Hadji Baba Danpullo has a history of dealings with them, taking advantage of the divisions in Mbororo society and the remains of their declining wealth to build up his own power base (Bobga interview, 1993). The case of Baba Danpullo is interesting in three ways. First, because the mechanisms he has used to control the Mbororo are the same mechanisms that have otherwise contributed to an effective, although undeniably asymmetric, system of patron-Mbororo power and influence. Second, because Al Hadji Baba Danpullo also represents the 'old politics' of the present regime which are having difficulty relating to the 'new politics' of democracy and debate. Third, it illustrates the weakness of Islamic administrative structures in the North West Province.

Baba Danpullo bound Mbororos to him when they were in need of financial assistance or needed extracting from some local political dispute, establishing a relationship that
Opening Political Space in Cameroon: the Ambiguous Response of the Mbororo

in other times was much a matter of course. The Mbororo in the past were self-sufficient, relatively rich and a useful economic source to tap. However, with the Mbororo losing their wealth and livelihood, moving to the towns and away from their family clans it is becoming less easy for them to repay their debts and keep check upon the going price for a favour.

With the opening of the political forum and the amazing new array of possible future ‘Pa’s’ (or ‘big men’) that it is necessary to keep on the good side of, relationships of loyalty become much more complicated – especially when the major, North West Province based opposition party vows to eradicate corruption in the country. Baba Danpullo feels threatened by the changes taking place, as does the present regime. He has turned to more extreme measures, keeping his own battalion of gendarmes in his palace fortress in the region of Kom. He attempts to take advantage of the present lack of Mbororo organisation, placing large amounts of money into cattle cooperative ventures which leading Mbororo figures are pressed to contribute towards and participate in, arranging for the imprisonment of those who stand in his way (Bobga interview, 1993).

Danpullo also attempts to maintain his order over Mbororo society by taking advantage of their religious isolation in the North West Province, and the weakness of their own Islamic structures. He has been given permission by the government to set up an Alkali Islamic court in the province, giving him overriding power over all Muslims in the region. He now has the power to bring charges against whoever he pleases, with summons signed by the chief of gendarmes, allowing him to imprison and torture the few Mbororo who stand up to him.

In the course of our enquiries, any line of questioning that we conducted as to why the Mbororo in the countryside have not made any effort to get together and respond to the many threats to their way of life have ended in silence and vague references to the ‘force from outside’, as they refer to it. In private, Mbororo express fears that their neighbours might be spies for this ‘force’ and the matter is rarely discussed openly. It is no coincidence that Baba Danpullo has chosen Mbororo people as his clients. It would seem that whilst openings in political space are providing opportunities for other Cameroonians to organise themselves, form parties and speak out, Mbororo society is set in contrast as they see forces ‘from outside’ take advantage of pulaaku ethics, the weakness of links between Mbororo, the weakness of traditional mechanisms of problem solving and Islamic structures, and Mbororo economic decline, thereby manipulating relations of patronage to create their own, closed political and economic arena.

In a revealing interpretation of the discourse of ‘rights’ presently enjoying popularity in North West Province public debate, one established Mbororo when pressed as to why he did not openly resist Al Hadji Baba Danpullo replied simply: ‘I have a right to be scared’. However, according to human rights activist and lawyer to those imprisoned by Al Hadji Baba Danpullo, Mr Harmony Bobga:

*The most recent attacks on the Mbororo and the corresponding publicity that they have received as opposition media has picked up on their case might have been a blessing in disguise for the Mbororo people.*

The opposition media has been able to speak for the Mbororo in a way that they have, up to now, found it difficult to do themselves (*The Custodian*, 31 May 1993), constituting the Mbororo from the outside as ‘victims of tyranny’. They are freed from
having to plead themselves as exploited and backward (in what would be a humiliating business for a Mbororo). Pride in being Mbororo overrides any possible distaste at hearing of their people’s weaknesses, as they see their case as worthy of being put into print. Everyone suddenly has heard of what is going on, even if they are not able to read the newspaper stories.

The Mbororo and ‘New’ Politics
Patron-client relationships have hitherto presented the most effective means for the individual Mbororo to get their demands through the system vertically, with pulakutu. In the North West Province at present, however, there appear to be interlinked, yet nevertheless competing arenas for political expression, old and new, where there are ‘new’ state-civil society arenas of democratic struggle; political parties, the media and new social movements, seem to dominate the high ground. Patron-client relationships do not in my opinion necessarily submit to the privileged force of politics of state and civil society or of a determinate future, but continue within these new forms of political expression. However the opposition political parties and the new social movements operating within an (‘imagined?’) civil society can more convincingly co-opt discourses of democracy, equal expression for all, than the present guardians of the Cameroon state, arenas based on networks of elites, patronage and personal relationships, the ranks of which are closing in the face of attack from outside and dwindling State resources.

Whilst the continuity of personal relationships and that of patron-client relationships is undeniable and can indeed be found in the heart of these ‘new’ political arenas, the subtleties of these former systems of power and politics, now an issue of ‘free speech’, seem reduced in popular debates to a marginal caricature, constituted by the ‘honest’ protagonists of ‘new’ politics as blatant and open ‘corruption’ and lack of ‘accountability’. Many of these former power relations were indeed cruel and oppressive for the ‘client’ party. However, political relations of former, wealthier days appear to have given the Mbororo more manoeuvrability than the ‘new’ political arenas. The Mbororo retain a cautious, distance from these new arenas. In the words of opposition SDF leader John Fru Ndi, himself a North Westerner:

*we fight for them [the Mbororo] but they don’t support us at election time. They vote for Bello Bouba instead. We help them in their problems with corrupt members of the government! We intervene on their behalf in land disputes – our lawyers speak for Mbororo wrongfully imprisoned! – but they do not trust us! They are so adapted to corruption! They don’t understand that we can help them without them giving us bribes* (interview, June 1993).

Mboscuda: a Mbororo New Social Movement
Media interest has however helped to make Mbororo in the countryside a little more open towards ways of solving their problems from the outside and to make things a little easier for a number of new generation Mbororo who are trying to build a new basis for Mbororo organisation through Mboscuda. Thus when three Mboscuda members were imprisoned and tortured by Baba Danpullo after failing to respond to jumped up charges in his private court (Ardo Duni et al. interview: May, 1993), the media outcry that followed and the interest of foreign human rights organisations provided good publicity for Mboscuda and the Mbororos in the North West Province.
Influenced by the fast moving political changes in the towns, foreign radio programmes about social movements in Nigeria and equivalent movements for minority rights in the North West Province, such as the Anglophone movement, Mboscuda is struggling to encourage communication between Mbororo peoples and discussion of the threats facing Mbororo society on a local, regional and national level (Mboscuda, 1992). Responding to the consequences of the meeting between the modernising state and the lifestyle of the Mbororo, Mboscuda hopes to act as a go-between. Its aim is to work alongside traditional Mbororo leaders, strengthen Islamic structures and provide a new forum for the discussion of specifically Mbororo problems and the future of their society and culture, organising around strengthening ideas of ‘Fulaniness’ in a multi-ethnic, democratic national political arena.

This ambitious young organisation has, however, been encountering difficulties. Many of these are due to the fact that whilst the founding members are genuinely attempting to respond to the social changes that face their society, they are themselves part and product of these same changes.

Some Mboscuda members express irritation at the ignorance and cowardice of their fathers and families in the countryside. The young, without families, without income - and therefore difficult targets for the likes of Baba Danpullo - are unsympathetic to the older generation and older Mboscuda members who have more to lose. Other Mbororo, whilst not outwardly opposing the organisation, remain to be convinced that Mboscuda is not just creating more problems with conflicting forces from outside. They are wary of the Mbororo ‘getting too political’ and coming out as losers in a new, uncertain, political arena where they are already under attack.

Members of the elder generation and the more traditional Mbororo take offence at what they perceive as the new generation’s arrogance and distinct lack of pulaku. They respond to the brashness of some Mboscuda members by humouring them, yet keeping away from the heat of debate and discussion. When our young, educated, female and Mboscuda-member translator asked the wives of the present Lamido of Sabga what the greatest difference was between Mbororo in the old days and those today, she was told that:

In those days when we were your age we followed the cows all day and then when we didn’t have any duties we spent time relaxing with our sisters. We didn’t go to school and we had more time to relax than you seem to today. We knew what a good Mbororo was and what our traditions were and what Islam meant to us ... These days you young people spend all your time running up and down asking people what it means to be an Mbororo because you’ve forgotten yourselves what it means!

The gender conflicts that are beginning to emerge with changes in Mbororo society are also reflected in Mboscuda. Amina Hamman, Moboscuda’s treasurer, is 33 years old and from the first North West Province Mbororo family that sent its daughters to school:

I was the first woman in the organisation and at our first meetings I was the only woman among many men. According to our tradition I was not supposed to be there at all. If our elders were there it could cause problems. We are trying to break down these traditions and there are more women in Mboscuda now. It is difficult to understand though how Mboscuda members can say that they want more women in Mboscuda and want women to talk at meetings when they leave their own women at home ... they wont even allow their own wives to come.
Islamic leaders are also attempting to exert their influence within Mboscuda by, for example, trying to get the organisation to ban dancing. The youth of the organisation have reacted in a way that reflects the street forms of democratic protest presently used by other Cameroonian peoples. At a recent provincial meeting, the young ‘danced in resistance’ whilst religious prayers were taking place. According to Mboscuda participants, every time the elders succeeded in quelling the Mbororo drums in one area, they would start up in another. On an official level, however, the organisation does not dare to conflict with religious authorities in controversial areas. This means many of their policies, such as family planning, have to be done in an underhand, secret way.

The case of Mboscuda resistance to Al Hadji Baba Danpullo illustrates clearly the pluralist/exclusivist ambiguities of Mbororo ethnic discourse. On the official level Mboscuda resistance to Baba Danpullo is part of a pluralistic, democratic, struggle against corrupt oppressors, involving horizontal links with other, similar social movements such as human rights organisations. However, more popular ‘everyday resistance’ (Scott, 1989) to Al Hadji Baba amongst the less ‘courageous’ Mboscuda members is expressed more in racial terms, as they scornfully write him off as ‘no real Mbororo’, and ‘descended from haabe’. One of the main charges brought against the Mboscuda members detained at his Alkali court was that they had been overheard accusing him of being descended from a ‘slave’.

Baba’s father, it is said, was a Fulbe while his mother was apparently a ‘Native’, from Kom in the North West Province. The name ‘Baba Danpullo’ reflects his family’s desire to associate themselves with the Fulani, pullo being the root form of the Fulfulde word for ‘Fulani’. The emphasis that both Baba Danpullo and some Mbororo thus seem to put upon racial legitimacy in the fight against Baba Danpullo suggests the continuity of chauvinist sentiments found in pulaaku concepts of ‘purity’, that are not easily dismissed.

In trying to become an organised expression of ‘Mbororoness’, Mboscuda has also to take on board the sometimes conflicting ambiguities that the idea of ‘making like a Fulani’ encompasses. There is no one core to Mbororo identity and individual Mbororo will see Mbororoness in very different ways. In trying to draw together fragmented groups of Mbororo with failing personal pride and belief in their own worth, some members of Mboscuda will appeal to common feelings of Mbororo racial superiority, glorifying the physical attributes of a people who would never marry a member of the other, ‘Native’, groups and whose traditional society was based upon a cultural resistance to a hostile world outside. Whilst trying to restore pride in ethnic identity, these sentiments could develop chauvinist overtones.

It is interesting to note that this Mbororo organisation, now a social movement on a national level with representatives in all provinces where there are Mbororo, decided after much heated discussion to change its name from what was previously called – a ‘Fulani’ social and cultural organisation, to a purely Mbororo one. Mboscuda members place great stress on the specific problems that Mbororo have as pastoralists, thereby cutting out the risk of Fulbe dominance and distancing themselves from processes of ‘Fulbeisation’. It is faintly paradoxical that many of the founding members of Mboscuda could indeed be seen as ‘town Fulani’ of sorts; they live in the towns and do not own cattle themselves. The significance of cattle is, however, a central element in all their discussions and one of the organisation’s main raison d’être, as they take great pains to underline.
Conclusion

The situation at present in Cameroon is a fragile one, made more volatile by the stand taken by the present regime. Biya’s government has allowed for an opening in political space, the creation of new political arenas – freedoms of association, speech and discussion of conflicts in society. The Cameroon state and the power systems of the present regime are now, however, under attack. Government seems unable to accommodate, and remains largely unresponsive to, the new, articulated demands and conflicts that are being expressed.

The members of Mboscuda are trying to maintain stability and continuity in their society by organising themselves around the defence and development of their people as Cameroon citizens in a new political arena where the prevailing ideology is one of democratic pluralism. The organisation is attempting to tackle the economic and social problems facing Mbororo people as land pressure and national economic crisis spell the demise of both their pastoralist lifestyle, power and influence, and indeed the whole basis for Mbororo society’s past identity. In doing this they have the difficult task of maintaining order and creating a new forum for dialogue and discussion of the many frustrations their people are facing, creating new definitions for ‘to make like Fulani’ – bridging generation gaps and gender divisions. In choosing to base their organisation around the ambiguities of ethnic identity, they are well aware of the balancing act that they are playing.

Mboscuda cannot, on the one hand, alienate its own people by allying itself with political forces outside and becoming too involved in a new, mistrusted, political arena. On the other hand, it must try to prevent their people becoming alienated from new and changing centres of power and influence in Cameroon society. They have to take care that tensions in Mbororo society are not translated into defensive exclusivity, bitterness towards other groups or towards the outside world. The remaining question for the Mboscuda is whether the Mbororo ‘imagined community’, the ambiguities of pulaaku, Fulani otherness, distance and individuality, can be transformed and channelled into a new social movement for Mbororo togetherness, that at the same time holds the door open to concepts of plurality and democracy in a national Cameroonian context. To echo the arguments of Martin Doornbos (1991:64), the border region between a ‘liberating’ organisation for the restoration of pride and the discussion of rights of a threatened, demoralised, pastoral people, and a new focus for defensive ethnic ‘chauvinism’ is similarly ambiguous.

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Interviews: Amina Hamman, June 1993 (Mboscuda treasurer); Boh Herbert, May 1993 (freelance Anglophone journalist and political commentator, former BBC stringer); Dr John Foncha, May 1993 (former President of Anglophone Cameroon and leading figure in the Anglophone movement); John Fru Ndi, June 1993 (leader of the opposition party SDF, and claimed winner of the November 1992 presidential elections); Harmony Bobga-Mbuton, June 1993 (barrister, solicitor to MBOSCUDA members detained and tortured by Al Hadji Baba); Ms Elisabeth Maloney, London, July 1993 (journalist, resident in Sabga in the 1970s).


Anon (c.1948), 'Papers on the History of the Fulanis and their Nomadic way of Life' (written by a colonial administrator; obtained in Sabga, Mezam Division, North West Province, Cameroon 1993).


The following is a response to ‘Democratisation in Kenya: Should the Left Participate or Not?’ which appeared in ROAPE 61.

The Left and the Question of Democratic Transition in Kenya: A Reply to Mwakenya

Rok Ajulu

... we shall not lose heart, no matter which turn history takes, but we shall not allow history to take a turn without our participation, without the intervention of the advanced class ... (Lenin).

In the aftermath of the 1992 Kenyan multi-party general elections, the first plural elections since political independence in 1963, and the victory of the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) on a minority vote, progressive forces, patriots, democrats, and the left in Kenya have demonstrated a concern to critically evaluate the political fecundity of participating in electoral politics. Inside the country, the frustrations, disenchantment and despondency over the failure of the opposition parties to remove the Moi regime at the last election, has fostered a situation in which ordinary people are beginning to ask whether genuine changes can be brought about through the ballot box. Given this state of affairs, it is not surprising that in their latest pamphlet, Mwakenya addresses itself to the content of ‘democratic transition’ in Kenya and attempts to chart a way forward.

In ‘Democratisation in Kenya: Should the Left Participate or Not?’, the question however is posed wrongly. What other alternative exists? Fold their arms like Pontius Pilate and observe democratic struggle from the sideline?

Mwakenya starts by reiterating its 11-point Kenya Democracy plank issued in 1990, which among others, called for a national conference to decide the country’s future, a caretaker government charged with the responsibility of drawing guidelines and arranging for elections to the Constituent Assembly, a new constitution before the elections could be held. It was particularly concerned about the dangers of holding elections under the supervision of the Moi/KANU autocracy.

This is followed by an assessment of the post-election scenario. The pamphlet alludes to the undemocratic practices which have continued since the elections: the determination by the government to close altogether the political space opened since the legalisation of political pluralism, ‘ethnic clashes’ which have continued with tacit support of senior ministers and KANU officials, and concludes, rightly so, that Moi and KANU are still opposed to true democracy and that

... no solution to the crisis facing Kenya is possible while Moi and KANU remain in power. Every pressure should be exerted to dislodge them. We should not wait till the elections, for they will behave just the same.

Mwakenya then proceeds to issue a six point call to action, which could be variously interpreted as the organisation’s programme of action and a way forward from the 1992 electoral fiasco. Three of these points are important not only in terms of understanding the strategies and tactics of Mwakenya, but equally for
debating the role of the left in democratic transition in Kenya:

• Defy the Moi regime by all means necessary.

• Defy all repressive laws which deny us as Kenyans our fundamental rights.

• Organise and fight for our rights without seeking permission from the regime.

• Students, teachers, workers, peasants, professional groups, women and religious organisations should form whatever unions or associations which they consider necessary to promote their respective interest.

• Unite so as to effectively wage a campaign to remove Moi and KANU from power.

The pamphlet ends with a call for a National Convention, and appeals to all democratic, progressive and patriotic Kenyans to form a principled and united front to hold the convention. In all this, not a single word of the 'left'. In other words, Mwakenya does not answer the very question that is posed at the beginning of the pamphlet. This, I suspect, is because the concept 'the left' is ambiguous in Kenyan context.

The Left in Kenyan Politics

Perhaps the appropriate question to ask at this juncture is who is the left in Kenyan politics – the exiled opposition, radical intellectuals, or the old left of the former opposition Kenya Peoples Union (KPU)? The fact is that the idea of a political left in Kenya is rather a problematic one. For historical reasons, the so-called left has not existed as an organised political force. If it exists at all, it has been characterised by organisational weakness and numerical insignificance. The so-called left had its origins in the militant labour movement of the anti-colonial period. The specificity of capitalist penetration in Kenya had by the late 1930s and early 1940s produced an alliance of class forces – the rural owners of small patches of land, semi-proletarianised low wage earners in urban areas, the petty-traders, the urban lumpen proletariat, and the rural squatters – which despite its differentiation, consisted of those who had the least stake in the colonial political economy.

These proletarianised and semi-proletarianised categories formed the political base of the militant trade unionism of the late 1940s and early 1950s. The intensification of landlessness in the Central Province of Kenya, the revolt of the squatters in the Rift Valley, and inability of the moderate constitutionalists to cope with the demands thrown up by these developments, enabled the political initiative to pass over to the militant World War Two veterans within the urban working class. The 1947 Mombasa general strike marked their political ascendancy, and the political 'coup' in 1951, through which Transport and Allied Workers Union (TAWU) and Clerks and Commercial Workers Union (CCWU), captured the Nairobi branch of the nationalist movement, Kenya African Union (KAU), their finest moment.

But the policy of 'containment' pursued by the Colonial Office, whose main objective was to '... give the maximum possible support to responsible leaders' (CO 1954), and which sought to encourage the emergence of moderate leaders, was ultimately to undermine the potential development of this embryonic 'left'. The assault on the militants started in the immediate aftermath of the 1947 strike when most of the leaders of the strike were either detained or banned. The banning of the militant East African Trade Union Congress (EATUC) three years later, and the formation of Aggrey Minya's (later Tom Mboya's) moderate Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions (KFRTU) and finally the declara-
tion of the state of emergency in 1952, followed by arrests and detention of hundreds of activists, a majority of whom were labour activists, finally closed the curtain on the militants.

It was almost a decade before the militants could regroup; the occasion, the glasnost of the 1960-61 period when the colonial authorities finally allowed free political activity and formation of political parties. But the militants were no longer the force they had been in the 1950s. Indeed KANU, the party of the ‘left’, was in fact an alliance of class forces in which no single class could justifiably claim political hegemony. It was this alliance of the urban working class, traders, lumpens, the peasantry, and of course, the embryonic indigenous bourgeoisie, which was instrumental in KANU’s capture of state-power at independence.

But no sooner had KANU comfortably settled in state-power than its embryonic bourgeoisie declared an open season on the militants. In a series of bruising political battles, the militants were first evicted from their Parliamentary Backbench stronghold, whereupon they retreated to their old base in the trade union movement, under the banner of Kenya African Workers Congress, and finally into the opposition Kenya Peoples Union, whose banning in 1969 marked the end of this radical and militant opposition, or as Leys once put it, ‘the petty-bourgeois/urban trade union/rural landless alliance ...’ (Leys, 1978:258).

The next regrouping of the ‘left’ was to take place in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Its nucleus was in the universities, particularly Nairobi University which since the banning of KPU in 1969 had emerged as the base for anti-government opposition. The consolidation of the indigenous bourgeoisie and co-optation of the trade union movement under the Kenyatta regime ensured that the only opposition to the regime now existed within the radical students, the intelligentsia, and university academics. The relative economic buoyancy of the late 1960s and early 1970s, however guaranteed it a narrow political space within which it could organise. The deterioration of the economic situation during the late 1970s and the early 1980s, and the uncertainty of the Moi regime meant that Moi could not tolerate opposition even to the limited extent that Kenyatta had. The 1982 attempted coup provided Moi with the excuse to clamp down on the ‘left’, after which it ceased to exist as an openly identifiable force.

It has been necessary to go through this brief survey of the traditions of Kenya politics in order to identify what is often referred to as the left in Kenya. What emerges from this brief analysis is that the concept left is probably inappropriate to define the traditions and political practices of this political group. To the extent that the concept is traditionally understood to define political groupings identified with marxist political ideas, and espousing political programmes associated with socialist economic programmes, then it is questionable if such a ‘left’ has ever existed in Kenyan politics.

Thus what has often been tagged as the left is in fact an alliance of the militant labour leaders, the landless, and petty bourgeois radicals. It is interesting to note that this alliance has never organised independently of the mainstream nationalist party. During the 1961-66 period, it was patched rather uncomfortably onto the outer wing of KANU, in the 1966-69, it was admittedly the dominant force within KPU, but by no means the sole one, and in the 1970s, the only time it could be said to have been independent of any party, it was a collection of individuals, incoherent organisationally, and incapable of speaking with a single voice. This is the sad story of our country; despite a sizeable working class, and a relatively high level of urbanisation, neither during the struggle for independence, nor in the last thirty years of our
independence have we been able to organise an independent left political organisation.

Thus in addressing ourselves to the content of democratic transition in Kenya, it is important that we start from concrete realities, and stop lulling ourselves with illusions about the centrality of the left in our politics. In our country, the political ring has for years been occupied by forces who are not necessarily pro-democracy. It would seem to me therefore that the relevant question at this stage of our struggle is the immediate content of that struggle.

How does Mwakenya approach this question? In 1992 Mwakenya issued a ten point demand and urged Kenyans to press for their implementation insisting that there would be no point in participating in the elections without such implementation. Among the demands were: Moi must go; the present Parliament must be dissolved; a caretaker government be set up whose duty was to draw guidelines and arrange elections for a constituent Assembly. Mwakenya was rightly suspicious of the Moi regime and expressed the dangers of going into elections with Moi and his ruling KANU still in control of the key apparatuses of the state.

Predictably, Moi deployed the apparatuses and institutions of the state to ensure that he was returned to power. Despite qualified acceptance of the results by the Commonwealth observers and various international monitoring groups, looking back the 1992 Kenya elections seem more like organised farce. Thus, history has indeed vindicated the Mwakenya stand. However, it must be recognised that in the ultimate analysis, such a farce was only possible because of the disunity of the opposition; Moi received only 36% of the vote; over 62% went to the opposition. But all this was pretty obvious in the run up to the 1992 elections. Starting with the outbreak of ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the Rift Valley Province in May 1992, just about the same time that voter registration started, the Moi regime thus signalled that it was not about to abandon its privileges without a spirited battle. Mwakenya was therefore absolutely correct; one of the most damaging mistakes that the opposition committed was agreeing to participate in the 1992 elections without requisite constitutional changes to ‘level the playing field’.

The crucial question however, is, what did Mwakenya do to implement its programme, particularly its insistence that elections would be meaningless so long as the Moi regime remained in control of the process? Did it organise the students, workers, or the Kenyans it had called upon to support its programme? Mwakenya called for a caretaker government, yet it did nothing to realise its call. It may very well be that Mwakenya expected Moi to abandon the presidency, dissolve the Parliament, appoint a caretaker government and then disappear from the political scene. Either Mwakenya greatly underestimated the resolve and the capacity of this ruling class to resist change, or it was plainly politically naive, inexperienced or both.

Just about the same time that Mwakenya issued the above statement, Odinga’s FORD also called for a National Convention. At its first national rally at Kamkunji in Nairobi, Odinga welcomed

... proposals from all concerned parties on how we can organise a National Convention in spite of the refusal of the Moi government ... Let us open our hearts to each other. Let us embrace the opportunities and the challenges of the future together. The clergy, the lawyers, professionals, patriotic politicians, students, peasants ... the battle is not yet over. The building of democracy has just began ...

(Odinga, 1992).

Unfortunately Mwakenya was underground and was thus unable to provide the kind of intervention that FORD re-
quired during these crucial embryonic stages, intervention which we believe could have been vital in shifting the balance of forces and strengthening the position of progressive forces, patriots, and democrats within FORD. Why it decided to remain underground is yet another question which casts doubt on its political judgement. Having fought for the opening of a democratic space for over a decade, it then decided to abandon any attempts to influence the direction of that political space, or alternatively to do so by issuing periodic programmes of action. In doing so it abandoned the political terrain to other political forces, only to turn around and declare, 'we told you so'.

Let us concede for the moment that in 1992 getting rid of Moi was a conjunctural and an objective impossibility. So what do we do, do we abandon trying? Mwakenya appears to be arguing that nothing, no solution is possible until Moi is removed. So, do we fold our arms and wait for this all-consuming moment when Moi suddenly disappears from the political scene. It would be nice if this were to take place. Unfortunately, this is not the stuff political reality is made of. Moi is not about to walk from the presidency without a spirited struggle. No ruling class, to the best of our knowledge, has ever done anything as stupid as that. Only mass organisation and mobilisation can force Moi to surrender power.

There was a moment in 1991-92 when as a result of qualitative shifts in the balance of forces – the regime had lost the support and confidence of the middle and professional classes, the classes of capital and property were abandoning it in droves, it was thus forced to rely on a very narrow social base – there was a possibility of forging a broad united front and the prospects of forcing the regime's surrender looked feasible. How and why did the opposition lose this initiative? In order to answer this question it is important to understand the balance of forces within the opposition parties and political praxis that emerged out of 30 years of one-party rule.

The opposition represented a fragile alliance of sections of the old classes of capital and property (the Kikuyu bourgeoisie), the petty-bourgeoisie representative of the mainstream opposition of the Odinga camp, and the professional and intellectual classes, an alliance, which as I have suggested elsewhere, was always going to be difficult to hold together. More significantly, the Kikuyu class of capital, for historical reasons, could not organise under a single party. While Kibaki's Democratic Party (DP) was the political home of the old Kenyatta coalition which had remained with Moi until the opening of the democratic space in 1991, a fact which was to cost Kibaki the bulk of the Kikuyu vote, Matiba's FORD Asili comprised the Kikuyu factions which had been marginalised earlier on as Moi constructed his capital base. The different factions of Kikuyu capital needed control of state power in their own right. Each was convinced they were capable of winning. As such their candidacy was not negotiable.

On the other hand, Odinga's FORD Kenya comprised the old petty-bourgeoisie of the traditional opposition, the professional and intellectual middle class, the so-called 'Young Turks', and other forces which had been instrumental in the struggle for democratisation throughout the 1980s. This was a coalition cobbled around the Luo as the dominant force in FORD. And according to the Luo, not only were they owed the Presidency this time round, more importantly, the Luo needed the Presidency in order to redress the developmental imbalances of the previous two regimes. For these reasons Odinga's candidacy was equally non-negotiable.

In such circumstances, politics was reduced to elite pacting and complicated sets of political horse trading to determine which of the regional (tribal) barons
was capable of delivering the constituencies. Political characters who only a few months earlier were vocal in denouncing multi-partyism from within KANU now found respectability in respective opposition camps. The urban sansculotte who participated in the mobilisation leading up to the demonstrations in July 1990 during the *Saba Saba* days threatened to render the Moi regime ungovernable were confined to the periphery of the political ring. In the circumstances, it is not surprising that Moi regained the political initiative and was able to dictate the rules of the game unfettered.

**Which Way Forward?**

In attempting to chart a way forward, I think it is important that we take cognizance of certain basic realities that the opposition has to confront since the 1992 elections. We must start from the premises that the most significant outcome of the 1992 elections was its legitimation of the status quo. The Moi regime is now a legitimate government, probably more so than at any time over the last 17 years of his rule enabling Western governments and the donor community to engage without fear of adverse publicity.

Thus at the November Paris Consultative Group in 1993, despite the rhetoric on political reforms, the emphasis was primarily on economic conditionalities. The government was commended on its achievement in the macro-economic area – monetary policy, stability in the financial system, the abolition of import licensing and exchange allocation, restructuring of the Kenya Posts & Telecommunications Corporation and other parastatals deemed to be the basis for patronage politics, deregulation of the petroleum market, etc. In return, over the last two years, Moi has implemented economic policies apparently with the sole purpose of maximising political milage out of IFI conditionalities and economic reforms. It is within this framework in which the world community appears to have shelved political conditionality that the opposition has to strategise the way forward.

In assessing the character of the transition, Mwakenya has once again called on Kenyans to ‘defy the Moi-KANU regime by all means necessary’, reiterated the call for a national convention as a forum for charting out a peaceful, prosperous and a democratic Kenya. Mwakenya urges Kenyans to start discussing these issues in order to come up with solutions on ‘how best to go about it’. I have nothing against a national convention, but in the ultimate analysis, I think it should be possible to approach the people with concrete workable slogans. It is not clear to me how serious Mwakenya is about its call to ‘defy the Moi regime by all means possible’. How is this to be done? armed struggle? mass mobilisation? or are these just empty words? It advocates for a national convention, but would prefer the people to take the initiative. Mwakenya is probably happier leading from the rear! And what about the existing opposition parties? The document dismisses them in one sentence: ‘Let us not be deceived that just because the opposition parties have their members in Parliament that they will be in a position to effect any fundamental changes’. So, how do we relate to them? do we just close our eyes and assume that they do not exist. These inconsistencies are probably due to the fact that Mwakenya is not quite sure whom it is calling to action. This preoccupation with ‘All or Nothing’ which is itself a product of incorrect and unsystematic analysis of the current situation in our country carries the risk of rendering Mwakenya irrelevant. For Mwakenya, it would seem that nothing has changed since 1992 election. Of course the political space prised open since 1991 is limited, it is far from perfect, and if Moi had his own way, he would close it sooner rather than later. But to formulate policies and strategies as if this did not
exist, as if other actors were not occupying the political ring, is at best wishful thinking. It would appear to me that the immediate content of the struggle for democracy in our country is the struggle to resist Moi's attempt to reverse the democratic gains of the last four years, keep the democratic space open, and broaden the content of that democracy, i.e., supporting democratic parliamentary opposition, encouraging the consolidation of a civil society. These are immediate objectives, pursued not as an end in themselves, but with the broad purpose of creating conditions where a democratic left can situate a long-term political programme.

For these minimal objectives to be achieved, we need political mobilisation at several levels: the trade union and labour movement, the student level – particularly universities, internationally to refocus world opinion on Moi's undemocratic practices and human rights violations, and finally, political work within the Kenyan opposition parties. I believe that meaningful intervention here could foster an appropriate balance of forces to begin to take the above issues seriously. But most certainly we cannot continue to act as if the opposition did not have a following in Kenya.

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Bibliographic Note


The Islamists, the Democratic Opposition and the Search for a Political Solution in Algeria

Hugh Roberts

Since October 1994, when army commanders decided to call a halt to President Liamine Zeroual's latest round of dialogue with the political parties, the resumption of the military offensive against the Islamist rebellion has led to a massive escalation of in the velocity of the killing in Algeria. The reported death toll since January 1992 now exceeds 35,000, and the majority of these have been killed in the last year. But, as was amply demonstrated by the spectacular hijack of an Air France Airbus at Algiers airport on 24 December, the bomb attack in central Algiers on 30 January which killed at least 42 people and wounded 286 others, and the slaughter of five foreigners (including a Briton) working for a pipeline company near Ghardaia on 5 May, this repression has not improved the security position at all.

It remains to be seen whether the army will persist in this course or whether it will eventually come round to allowing the substance of the Islamist movement an alternative to violence in the form of constitutional political activity. This policy has been urged on it by all the main legal opposition parties, which at a conference in Rome on 13 January published a 'Platform for a Peaceful Political Solution to Algeria's Crisis' that offers the regime the chance of an honourable way out of the present impasse through a negotiated end to the violence and a return to constitutional politics. To date, however, the regime has refused to accept these constructive proposals and has preferred instead to press ahead with its own project of presidential elections, while the action of the army has been tending to reduce the Islamist movement to the fragmented state which has characterised it throughout most of its existence.

The Background

Prior to the promulgation of the pluralist constitution in February 1989, the Islamist movement which had been developing in Algeria since the mid-1970s had been a highly diffuse affair, a nebula of different tendencies and local groupings operating informally if not clandestinely. In the course of 1989, the greater part of this movement crystallised into a single political party, the Islamic Salvation Front (El Djebhat El Islamiyya li'l Inqadh, Front Islamique du Salut, FIS), under the leadership of Dr Abassi Madani and Shaikh Ali Ben Hadj. But two important groupings, led by Shaikh Mahfoud Nahnah of Blida and Shaikh Abdallah Djaballah of Constantine respectively, preferred to remain outside the FIS as independent associations, Nahnah's Association for Guidance and Reform (Jam'iyyat El Irshad wa'l Islah) and Djaballah's Movement of the Islamic Renaissance (Harakat En-Nahdat El Islamiyya).

Until the autumn of 1990, the FIS monopolised the representation of Algerian Islamism in the party political sphere, and Nahnah and Djaballah called on their supporters to vote for it in the municipal and regional elections in June 1990, in which the FIS won control of 856 (54%) of Algeria's 1,541 communal assemblies and
31 of its 48 regional assemblies. Thereafter, however, both Nahnah and Djaballah set up their own political parties in competition with the FIS. In December 1990, Nahnah’s party, the Movement for an Islamic Society (Haraka li-Mujtama’ Islami, whence its familiar acronym, Hamas) was legalised, and Djaballah’s association, known by its French name and acronym (Mouvement de la Nahda Islamique, MNI, subsequently changed to Mouvement de la Renaissance Islamique, MRI), was officially recognised as a political party early in 1991.

Both Hamas and the MNI decided to contest the National Assembly elections, and in the first round of these held on 26 December 1991, Hamas polled 368,697 votes (2.78% of the electorate, 5.35% of valid votes cast) and five of its candidates got through to the second round. The MNI polled 150,093 votes (1.13% of the electorate, 2.18% of valid votes cast) and two of its candidates got through to the second round. Between them, therefore, Hamas and the MNI took some half a million votes from the FIS, but the FIS easily shrugged off this challenge, polling 3,260,222 votes (24.59% of the electorate, 47.27% of valid votes cast) and won 188 seats outright, and was well placed to take the vast majority of the 203 seats to be decided on the second ballot.

Following the fall of President Chadli and the cancellation of the second round of the elections in January 1992, all three Islamist parties sought to remain on the ground of constitutional legality, while withholding support from the newly constituted High State Committee which the army commanders had set up to replace the vacant presidency. But with its most experienced leaders (including Abassi and Ben Hadj) in custody since the disturbances of June 1991, the FIS found it impossible to control the frustration and discontent in its own ranks, and a series of fresh disturbances gave the authorities the pretext for introducing a State of Emergency in February 1992 and banning the party altogether the following month. Since then, Algerian politics has been dominated by the efforts of successive, clearly unconstitutional, regimes to acquire a modicum of legitimacy on the one hand, and the violence engendered by the banning of the FIS on the other hand, as the armed rebellion launched by former FIS militants has grown in scale and intensity.

The Islamist Spectrum

There has long been a broad measure of agreement among Algeria’s Islamist parties on the basic elements of their agenda. All of them call for the ‘moralisation’ of public life and thus demand measures against corruption and the establishment of a proper system of law based on the Shari’a. All of them, too, oppose the importation of Western cultural models and patterns of behaviour (including dress) which they consider alien to and at odds with Muslim values, especially the traditional value of modesty. And all of them, being concerned to defend the family as a source of moral stability in Algeria’s chaotic urban environment, oppose contemporary Western conceptions of women’s rights and seek to reassert traditional rules through the enforced segregation of the sexes in public places (offices, schools, transport, etc.). Finally, all of them are also vectors of the demand for the Arabisation of public life and especially the demand for fair access for Arabisants to public employment, traditionally seen as the preserve of those educated in French.

The main differences between the parties up until January 1992 concerned their attitude to political power. All of them were prepared to accept the 1989 constitution as the legal framework of their activity. As such, they were all, even the most radical of them (the FIS), to be sharply distinguished from those fringe groupings which refused to play the game of party politics and always advocated violence as the only way to achieve
the Islamist ideal. But there were two key differences of doctrine.

First, whereas Hamas and the MNI argued that the long term goal of an Islamic state – *dawlat islamiyya* – could only be achieved after a thoroughgoing reform of society through the patient activity of the da’wa (the proselytising mission), the FIS held that the reform of society itself hinged on and presupposed the prior capture of political power.

Second, and perhaps linked to the above, whereas Hamas made clear early on its acceptance of the pluralist principles embodied in the 1989 constitution, which guaranteed the right of non-Islamist (including secularist, even marxist) parties to exist, the FIS criticised the 1989 constitution as un-Islamic on these very grounds, while agreeing to work within it until an Islamic constitution might be secured.

A third, and major, difference was that, whereas both Hamas and the MNI remained fairly purist, if not elitist, in their political approach, the FIS represented a complex synthesis of Islamist notions and the long established traditions of populism and nationalism. As such, the FIS might well be described as an *Islamic populist* party rather than an Islamist party properly so-called, and both the radicalism of its rhetoric and the scale of its ambitions expressed the degree of popular alienation from the state as much as, if not more than, a genuinely doctrinaire critique of the state.

None of the Islamist parties made any serious attempt to address the economic issues facing Algeria at the time. In the case of Hamas and the MNI, this reflected their awareness of their modest prospects and status as Islamic ginger groups pushing an essentially cultural-moral and religious agenda. In the case of the FIS, this reflected in addition the extent to which it was operating an unacknowledged alliance with the liberal ‘Reformer’ faction inside the ruling FLN between 1989 and 1992, and was content to endorse the economic policies of its allies.

### The Islamist Parties and the Armed Rebellion

Since March 1992, the FIS has had no legal existence inside the country, whereas both Hamas and the MNI (now known as the MRI or simply as En Nahda) have remained legal parties, if restricted in their activities, like other parties, by the terms of the state of emergency. Being legal, and never having had large political ambitions in the short-term, neither Hamas nor En Nahda have had any reason to engage in violent activity against the state, and have had nothing to do with the armed groups which have proliferated over the last three years, nor any influence over them.

These groups have been linked either to the ex-FIS or to those fringe groups which had always refused to engage in party politics within the 1989 constitution and which therefore refused either to join the FIS when it was legal or to set up rival political parties in competition with it. The two main fringe groupings in question have been *Takfir wa’l Hijra* (‘Expiation and Flight’, an Algerian imitation of the Egyptian group of the same name), which is unlikely to have had a membership in excess of 500, and the so-called ‘Afghans’, a grouping of Algerian veterans of the Afghan war which may have numbered up to 2,000 at its peak. The tendency to violence of these two groupings has been the corollary of the extent to which they have taken their political bearings from the Egyptian and Afghan experiences, and have refused to engage seriously with the very different realities of the Algerian national context.

The violence of the mainstream of the armed rebellion has been a different matter, however, and has primarily been a reaction to the state’s decision to deprive it of a constitutional avenue rather
than the expression of a doctrinaire preference for violent over non-violent political activity. While the rhetoric of the rebellion has suggested that its aim is to overthrow the present state and establish an Islamic Republic in its place, there are grounds for thinking that the aim of the mainstream of the rebellion has been to force the regime to revoke its ban on the FIS and thus resurrect the possibility of a negotiated transfer of power within a measure of constitutional continuity.

Nonetheless, the relationship of the banned FIS to the armed rebellion has been a very difficult and complicated affair. This has partly been due to the dismantling of the FIS's organisation by the authorities, with most of its key leaders in prison since January 1992 if not June 1991, thousands of activists held in detention in the Sahara, and the rest either in exile or clandestinity or dead. These circumstances have prevented the FIS from controlling the armed groups, and its spokesmen at liberty have frequently admitted that it does not, in fact, do so. But there have been two other sources of difficulty and complexity. The first is that the rebellion itself was at first an extremely chaotic and unorganised affair, with a plethora of groups operating in different localities with no overall coordination or discipline. The second is that, as efforts to coordinate the rebellion made progress, the armed movement crystallised into not one unified organisation, but two, and the state has undoubtedly sought to exploit this division, and has done so with some success.

The main organisation to emerge by late 1992 was the Armed Islamic Movement (Harakat El Islamiyyat El Musallaha, Mouvement Islamique Arme, MIA), led by Abdelkader Chebouti, a veteran of an earlier Islamic guerilla movement of the same name led by a certain Mustapha Bouyali between 1982 and 1987, and Chebouti's principal lieutenant, Azzeddine Baa. The reconstituted MIA recycled most of the old Bouyalists and the majority of those FIS activists inclined to take up arms, and acted as an umbrella for many local groups. The latter initially included an organisation called the Armed Islamic Group (El Jama'at El Islamiyyat El Musallaha, Groupe Islamique Arme, GIA) led by another ex-Bouyalist, Mansouri Miliani, but following Miliani's death the GIA emerged, from September 1993 onwards, as a vigorous rival to the MIA as a whole, vehemently opposed to all and any dialogue or negotiation or compromise with the regime, and consistently oriented towards spectacular attacks on the most vulnerable targets, and especially foreigners living and working in Algeria.

The Problem of Negotiation
For the last 18 months, the rebellion has been structured by the division between the MIA and the GIA, and in these circumstances it has been impossible for effective negotiations between the regime and the imprisoned FIS leaders to get very far. It appeared that substantial progress was being made in the summer of 1994, when it was announced that a new organisation had been set up, the Islamic Salvation Army (El Jaish El Islamiyya li'l Inqadh, Armea Islamique du Salut, AIS), led by Azzeddine Baa, which subsumed the MIA and other smaller groupings. The AIS explicitly proclaimed its affiliation to the FIS and thus implicitly strengthened the bargaining position of the imprisoned FIS leaders, since through the AIS they could claim to be able to have effective authority over the bulk of the rebellion. But while it appeared that the AIS predominated in eastern and western Algeria, the GIA was predominant in the Algiers district, and efforts to fuse the two movements repeatedly fell through.

The result has been that the FIS leaders, both those in prison and those in exile, have been impaled on the horns of a dilemma. Because the GIA has predominated in the Algiers district and its
hinterland, and has been able to exert a considerable gravitational pull on the impressionable unemployed youths of the run-down housing estates of Algiers and its suburbs, and has undoubtedly contained some former FIS activists, it has been impossible for the FIS wholeheartedly to disavow it. Instead, it has tended to support efforts by the AIS to unify with it, but these very efforts have themselves inhibited the FIS spokesmen from distancing themselves unambiguously from the GIA’s often very brutal actions for fear of undermining the delicate negotiations and manoeuvres under way in the maquis. At the same time, the rivalries within the armed movement have undoubtedly led to a tendency for those leaders facing take-over bids from rivals to defend themselves by upping the ante, in order to outflank their rivals in perceived radicalism, on which their ability to recruit frustrated urban youths to their ranks in part depends.

Thus, whenever there has seemed to be a prospect of negotiations between the authorities and the FIS leaders, there have always been elements of the rebellion disposed to sabotage this prospect by some particularly atrocious act of violence at the crucial moment. There can be no doubt that this faultline within the armed rebellion has been exploited by hardline factions within the regime which have been opposed to a negotiated settlement for reasons of their own. In particular, the hypothesis of manipulation of the GIA in particular by occult elements of the regime cannot be excluded. One, very disturbing, implication of this is that the question of where the moral responsibility for many of the worst atrocities really lies has become extremely problematic.

While neither Hamas nor En Nahda have had a direct connection with the armed movements, they have been obliged to take account of them. In particular, they have been inhibited from engaging wholeheartedly in dialogue with the regime for as long as the FIS is excluded from the dialogue process, for fear of being perceived as having been co-opted and suborned by the authorities. Thus the problem posed by the FIS has been a problem, in varying degrees, for all Algeria’s Islamists. The degree of legitimacy which the FIS obtained through its electoral victories has made it impossible for the other Islamist parties to profit from the FIS’s exclusion from the constitutional process, and has obliged them to call for its rehabilitation.

This they did very vigorously in the talks which President Zeroual launched with eight political parties on 21 August 1994, and it appeared that momentum was building up for the re-admission of the FIS to legal political activity. The FIS leaders, for their part, appeared willing to make important concessions. Abassi Madani announced that he personally accepted the two most important constitutional principles announced by Zeroual as non-negotiable, namely pluralism and ‘I’alternance’ – the principle that a party elected to power will allow itself to be voted out of power again. But Abassi made it clear that he was speaking only for himself, and that for as long as he and his colleagues were imprisoned and the party’s leading instance, the Majlis Esh Shura (Consultative Council), was unable to meet, the FIS as a whole could not be expected to commit itself to anything. Whereas Zeroual proved willing to release several FIS leaders, and to move Abassi and Ben Hadj from jail to house arrest, where they were allowed to have contacts with their colleagues, the army General Staff was unwilling to allow the FIS Majlis Esh Shura to meet, and the dialogue process came to a halt.

The sticking point in the negotiations appears to have been Abassi’s insistence that the armed wing of the FIS should be represented in any meeting of the Majlis Esh Shura. This seems to have been unacceptable to the army, since it amounted to rehabilitating rebels in advance of an end to the rebellion. On this
point, moreover, Hamas’s leader Mahfoud Nahnah broke Islamist ranks and supported the army’s position. It is not clear, however, whether the army was opposed only to the representation of the armed movement within the FIS’s leading instance, or whether it was opposed to the rehabilitation of the FIS as such. It is likely that the hardline faction led by Chief of Staff Lt General Mohamed Lamari was opposed to both equally, and that its sole interest in talking to the FIS leaders in the first place was to try to enlist their influence in inducing the rebellion to lay down its arms on the one hand, and to deflect international criticism on the other hand.

The Rome Platform

Algeria’s main opposition parties were not long in refuting the army’s charge that they had been responsible for the failure of the talks. They did so by holding two rounds of talks of their own, at the invitation of the Catholic Sant’ Egidio Community in Rome, on 21-22 November and again on 8-13 January. The resulting Platform or ‘National Contract’ represents by far the most serious, imaginative and statesmanlike proposal yet made to find a solution to Algeria’s crisis. It was signed by Abdelhamid Mehri for the FLN, Hocine Ait Ahmed for the Socialist Forces Front (FFS – the main party based on the Berber-speaking population of the Kabylia region), former President Ahmed Ben Bella for the Movement for Democracy in Algeria (MDA), Shaikh Abdallah Djaballah for En Nahda, Louiza Hanoun for the leftwing Workers’ Party (Parti des Travailleurs, PT), veteran lawyer Ali Yahia Abdennour for the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH) and, for the FIS, by Rabah Kebir, the president of the External Executive Committee and Anwar Haddam, the president of the External Parliamentary Delegation. The parties which have thus committed themselves to the proposals contained in the National Contract represent between them over 80 per cent of the vote in the National Assembly election of December 1991.

The main significance of the National Contract resides in the commitment to basic democratic principles. In signing this, the FIS representatives, who were not in custody or under duress and had been able to consult their colleagues widely beforehand, publicly committed their party not only to the principles of political pluralism and alternation of power through universal suffrage, but also to the principles of respect for popular legitimacy and the popular will, the guaranteeing of fundamental liberties irrespective of sex, race, religion or language, and the principle of freedom of religion. By doing this, the FIS made clear its conversion from the theocratic and anti-democratic positions which it had originally espoused in 1989-1992 to an explicitly democratic position. It also announced its rejection of violence as a means either of gaining power or maintaining it (while tacitly maintaining its position that rebellion as such was legitimate for as long as constitutional avenues were denied it).

In this way, the other representative opposition parties succeeded in inducing the FIS to make all those concessions to democratic principles and opinion in Algeria that might reasonably be required of it. At the same time, the Rome platform offers a major olive branch to the army, proposing not only a realistic procedure whereby the violence might be ended and peaceful order restored, but also stating that, in any future negotiations, all parties – and, by implication, the army as well – would be entitled to guarantees.

The Rome platform offers all sides of Algeria’s terrible drama an honourable way out. So far, it has been rejected and denounced in Algiers, but Algiers has advanced no arguments of substance in support of this negative attitude.
Algiers and Paris on the Spot

Thus an important aspect of the significance of the Rome platform is that it has put the present regime in Algiers firmly on the spot. Ever since the interruption of the electoral process three years ago, the successive army-sponsored regimes in Algeria have all tried to secure legitimation by claiming that their essential purpose has been to organise a return to the electoral process. Their excuse for not actually doing this has been the claim that conditions do not permit it. The conditions which have not permitted it have been, above all, the prevailing insecurity as a consequence of the violence.

Now, however, the main opposition parties have made a realistic and principled proposal as to how the violence and insecurity can be brought to an end, yet the Algiers regime has not appeared to be interested. Indeed, not only has it dismissed the Rome platform's peace offer, but it is notionally intent on organising a return to the electoral process, in the form of presidential elections which Algeria's most popular party, the FIS, will not be allowed to contest, and which are to be held before the end of 1995, despite the fact that the violence and insecurity is worse than ever and no end is in sight. In this way, the essential hypocrisy in the army's position has been dragged out into the light of day.

It cannot be doubted that the army's persistence in this policy has represented the ascendancy of the hardline 'eradicator' faction led by Chief of Staff Lt. General Mohamed Lamari and composed essentially of a coterie of former officers of the French army with which France has maintained especially intimate relations and who have been the privileged recipients, within the Algerian military establishment, of French support and cooperation. The refusal to consider the Opposition's proposals follows the eradicators' earlier refusal to allow President Zeroual to follow through with his own dialogue process at the very moment when this appeared to promise a breakthrough.

The question which now arises, especially in the light of Rome, is what the real purpose of French policy towards Algeria has been. Following the publication of the National Contract on 13 January, French official spokesmen, notably foreign minister Alain Juppe, defence minister Francois Leotard and even President Mitterrand himself, paid lip service to it. The question is whether this was anything more than lip service. It should not be forgotten that, while repeatedly advocating 'dialogue', France offered no practical support whatever to either of President Zeroual's two attempts to secure a political settlement, and her official silence when the army hardliners aborted Zeroual's initiatives suggested tacit French compliance with the hardliners' actions. Moreover, while her spokesmen praised the Rome platform, Paris does not appear – at least up until now – to have used her influence with Lamari & Co. to induce them to adopt an open-minded attitude to it. Yet, in view of the immense financial, commercial, diplomatic and even military leverage which France possesses in relation to the Algiers, it cannot seriously be doubted that Paris could persuade Algiers to adopt a more constructive policy if she wanted to do so. It remains to be seen whether the election of Jacques Chirac to the French presidency will lead to a decisive change of French policy in this respect.

The Future

In the meantime, the slaughter has continued, with no prospect of the bloodshed resolving the conflict one way or the other. While the successive offensives which the Algerian army has undertaken since last October have probably had a serious impact on the military capacities of the Islamist rebellion in the short run, the small size of the army makes it unlikely that it can sustain repression on
the current scale for long. It is therefore possible that the guerilla movement could recover some if not most of its strength in the medium term if its principal organising nuclei survive the current onslaught, as they seem so far to have done.

For this reason, a negotiated compromise of some kind at some stage between the regime and the opposition, including the FIS, remains the most plausible strategy for resolving Algeria’s protracted political crisis. Precisely because neither Hamas nor En Nahda have any link with the rebellion, dialogue with them alone will resolve nothing. Either the regime strikes a bargain with the FIS as part of a wider negotiation with the representative opposition parties, or it must destroy the FIS. There is no reason to suppose that the regime can destroy the FIS. At most, it can hope to alter the military balance of power in such a way as to free the FIS leaders, to some extent, from the constraint they have so far felt to take account of the guerilla commanders. The danger is that the army’s repression will lead to such a fragmentation of the armed movement that it will be impossible for a relegalised FIS to reabsorb much of this movement into peaceful constitutional political activity should it eventually be allowed to attempt to do so. Thus the action of the army commanders, instead of eradicating the rebellion, may have the effect of making it into a running sore which Algeria will have to endure for years to come. It is already apparent that the costs of this to the Algerian state as a whole are prohibitive.

Hugh Roberts is a specialist writer on Algerian affairs and an Associate of the Centre for Geopolitics and International Boundaries Research at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. This is an updated version of an article which first appeared in der Überblick (Hamburg), March 1995.

Nigeria in Crisis

Nigeria, Oil and the Ogoni

Nigeria became independent from Britain in 1960. Its population in the 1993 census was 92.6 million made up of over 250 distinct ethnic groups. GDP is $31.3bn, per head is $388; agriculture which comprises 30% of GDP is the main source of employment but has been steadily declining since oil was first extracted in the Niger Delta in the 1960s. Petroleum and derivatives dominate the economy forming 98% of exports. Anglo-Dutch Shell produces 50% of Nigeria’s oil which accounts for almost 14% of the company’s global production.

One of 250 distinct ethnic groups, the Ogoni people of 515,000 (1991 census) live in an area of 404 square miles in Rivers State in the south east of Nigeria, the oil-rich Niger Delta. Shell discovered oil in Ogoniland in 1958 and it is estimated that over the past 35 years, have made $30bn in oil revenue. Ogoniland remains underdeveloped and her people poor in spite of having been the source of much of the country’s wealth. The average life expectancy is 51 compared to the national average of 54; only 20% are literate.

Between 1976 and 1991 official figures quote 2,976 oil spills on the Delta as a whole. Combined with atmospheric hydrocarbon pollution, the damage to their staple agriculture and fishing has meant that the Delta peoples face a stark choice: starvation or resistance (which would incur the wrath of an increasingly unstable and repressive regime).

In January 1993, 300,000 people led by Ken Saro-Wiwa (the Ogoni author and winner of the alternative Nobel prize and President of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People – MOSOP) participated in peaceful marches throughout Ogoniland protesting at 30 years of pollution caused by Shell and its joint venture
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partners. After their demands for environmental compensation and oil royalties were ignored, tension rose. Shell closed their operations in Ogoniland after a worker was attacked. Fearing that other oil-producing areas might follow suit, covert military operations began to break the Ogoni community's resistance. By autumn 1993, ten Ogoni villages had been anonymously attacked, leaving 750 dead and 30,000 homeless.

In December 1993, Ogoni people in Port Harcourt were attacked and 63 killed. In April 1994, the Internal Security Task Force was sent to Ogoniland ('Operation Restore Order in Ogoniland') to seal off and subdue the people in order to allow Shell to return and resume vital supplies of crude oil. Between May and mid-June 1994, army operations were in full swing. The Internal Security Task Force has been accused of widespread human rights violations including beatings, rape and extrajudicial killings.

Ken Saro-Wiwa and another Ogoni leader, Ledum Mittee were arrested on 'charges of a mob murder'. After nine months in detention, Ken Saro-Wiwa and four other Ogoni activists were belatedly brought to trial in February 1995 on a murder charge. If found guilty, they face execution at the hands of the Nigerian military. Despite a heart condition, deteriorating health, being denied access to doctors and lawyers, being chained to a wall for 65 days, Ken Saro-Wiwa succeeded in smuggling out a speech for this year's Ogoni Day. Against all odds, it was celebrated, a symbol of the resilience and determination of the Ogoni to survive the present and secure their future.

The MOSOP leader invited the celebrants to dance; and among the many who danced, could be seen a small child, fragile yet formidable, 'dancing to free Ken from detention'.

My brothers and sisters, my beloved children,
Dance, dance this 4 January 1995
Dance your anger and your joys
Dance the military guns to silence ...
Dance oppression and injustice to death.
Dance the end of Shell's
Ecological war of 30 years.
Dance my people, for we have seen tomorrow;
And there is an Ogoni star in the sky.

On 28 May 1995 the following letter appeared in the Guardian Weekly:

A year has gone by since I was rudely roused from my bed and clamped into detention. Sixty-five days in chains, weeks of starvation, months of mental torture and, recently, the rides in a steaming, airless Black Maria to appear before a kangaroo court, dubbed a special military tribunal, where the proceedings leave no doubt that the judgement has been written in advance. And a sentence of death against which there is no appeal is a certainty.

Fearful odds? Hardly. The men who ordain and supervise this show of shame, this tragic charade, are frightened by the word, the power of ideas, the power of the pen; by the demands of social justice and the rights of man. Nor do they have a sense of history. They are so scared of the power of the word, that they do not read. And that is their funeral. When, after years of writing, I decided to take the word to the streets to mobilise the Ogoni people, and empower them to protest against the devastation of their environment by Shell, and their denigration and dehumanisation by Nigeria's military dictators, I had no doubt where it could end. This knowledge has given me strength, courage and cheer – and psychological advantage over my tormentors.

... Ultimately the fault lies at the door of the British government. It is the British government which supplies arms and credit to the military dictators of Nigeria, knowing full
well that all such arms will only be used against innocent, unarmed citizens.

It is the British government which makes noises about democracy in Nigeria and Africa but supports military dictators to the hilt. It is the British government which supports the rape and devastation of the environment by a valued tax-paying labour-employing organisation like Shell. I lay my travails, the destruction of the Ogoni and other peoples in the Niger Delta, at the door of the British government.

Ultimately, the decision is for the British people, the electorate, to stop this grand deceit, this double standard, which has lengthened the African nightmare and denigrates humanity.

Whether I live or die is immaterial. It is enough to know that there are people who commit time, money and energy to fight this one evil among so many other predominating worldwide. If they do not succeed today, they will succeed tomorrow. We must keep on striving to make the world a better place for all of mankind – each one contributing his bit, in his or her own way.

Ken Saro-Wiwa,
Military Hospital,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Blatant Bias against
Nigerian Writer on Trial for
his Life

On 8 June 1995, ARTICLE 19 (the International Centre Against Censorship) issued the following:

The trials of Nigerian author and environmentalist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and those charged with him are fundamentally flawed and should be halted immediately, according to a joint Report released today by ARTICLE 19, the Law Society and the Bar Human Rights Committee (Fundamental Rights Denied: Report of the Trial of Ken Saro-Wiwa and Others). The author of the 80-page Report, British barrister Michael Birnbaum QC, went to Nigeria to observe the proceedings, which is being held before a Special Tribunal set up by the Federal Military Government specifically to try cases arising from the murder in May 1994 of four traditional chiefs in Ogoniland. All 15 defendants are charged with murder; if convicted, they face a mandatory death sentence. They are denied any right of judicial appeal, in gross breach of international fair trial standards. According to Mr Birnbaum:

The tribunal is neither independent nor impartial. Some of its decisions have been blatantly biased in favour of the prosecution. By appointing a Special Tribunal to hear this case, instead of the ordinary courts, the Nigerian Government is undermining the rights of defence enshrined in the country's Constitution and in international human rights instruments to which Nigeria is a party.

The three London-based groups say that the international community must urgently intervene in this case, which underlines how far the rule of law has been corrupted by Nigeria's military government. Frances D'Souza, ARTICLE 19's Executive Director, emphasised the importance of action by the UK government: Extensive trading and investment links, as well as colonial ties, mean that the British government has the potential to be particularly influential. The UK must openly condemn the abuse of fundamental rights in this trial and press for
well that all such arms will only be used against innocent, unarmed citizens.

It is the British government which makes noises about democracy in Nigeria and Africa but supports military dictators to the hilt. It is the British government which supports the rape and devastation of the environment by a valued tax-paying labour-employing organisation like Shell. I lay my travails, the destruction of the Ogoni and other peoples in the Niger Delta, at the door of the British government.

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ARTICLE 19, the Law Society and the Bar Human Rights Committee say that the government’s action in setting up the tribunal may be politically motivated and intended to silence one of its most outspoken critics. They argue that the trials are grossly unfair and should be terminated immediately.

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an end to human rights abuses in Ogoniland.

The Report identifies major areas of concern, including:

- the ominous influence over the proceedings of Lt-Col Paul Okuntimo, Commander of the Internal Security Task Force in Ogoniland, who insists on being present whenever the defendants are allowed to meet with their lawyers;

- harassment of defence lawyers by the security forces;

- the alleged bribery of witnesses: the two principal prosecution witnesses have sworn affidavits that they were bribed to give evidence against Ken Saro-Wiwa;

- others have been detained for many months and may yet be charged.

There have also been serious allegations of ill-treatment in custody and concerns about the health of Ken Saro-Wiwa, who suffers from a heart condition. On 15 May, the Tribunal ruled that Saro-Wiwa was fit to stand trial and overruled the objections of defence lawyers, who said that more tests were needed.

Note: ARTICLE 19 is an international human rights organisation campaigning for the right to freedom of expression. The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales aims to defend the rule of law and international fair trial standards. The Law Society of England and Wales, through its International Human Rights Working Party, works to defend the rule of law worldwide. For further information, contact ARTICLE 19, 33 Islington High Street, London N1 9LH, UK.

Ogoni Widow

Hilary Rouse-Amadi

For Ken Saro-Wiwa and all those massacred, mutilated, impoverished and made homeless by the corporate greed of the oil industry.

They sit, sadistic smug
In metropolitan boardrooms,
Dispensing death and destruction
Casual with slick stroke
Of pernicious pen.
Invisible, nameless, unknown predators,
They preach paternalistic power
From the glossy pages of brochures
Bristling bright with presumption.
And there they name themselves
Good stewards of the land,
Modern magicians of technology,
Global lords and caring custodians
Of all they oversee and survey.

Why then does the Ogoni mother
Wake to find their pipeline placed
Preposterous-close to her front door,
Looming monstrous-intrusive in its length,
Syphoning her birthright unseen
Into foreign bank accounts,
Regularly reviewed by those
Who coldly calculate their profits
While turning eyes boldly blind
To her losses, pricetag incalculable?

No one asked her whether
She was willing to accept
This alien encumbrance in her midst.
No one cared to explain to her
Why her crops, blighted beyond belief,
Could only struggle sickly
Into the ripeness of a bitter harvest,
That would yield nothing
To fill and satisfy the empty
Bellies of her hungry babes.

No one came to treat and cure
The sores and rashes rampant
On the skin of her children,
Who bathed innocent-ignorant
In streams snaking venomous
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Who bathed innocent-ignorant
In streams snaking venomous
Into ancient waters, now transformed
Into torture chambers and burial grounds
For fish that fiendish mocked
The patient questing for
Precious protein from the deep.

After three decades of petroleum imperi-
alism
Had visited devastation and destruction
On a people who were no strangers
To the systematic stratagems and wiles
Of business brigands and bandits from
afar
Come to pillage and plunder the Niger Delta,
Three hundred thousand marched
On Ogoni Day to declare loud and clear
For the rest of Nigeria and the whole
world to hear,
That the cursed company,
Plaguing their days
And disturbing their nights,
Ignoring claims for compensation
For wrecked, ruined lives,
Was required immediately to desist
From all acts of industrial
Vandalism in their midst.

When the soldier boys struck, sadistic-
eager
To test their newly-imported military
hardware,
No one doubted the orders derived
From the same conniving chain of com-
mand
That had systematic for centuries,
Extracted slave cargoes from the land,
To service and supply
The plantations of the New World,
Then piratical purposeful reappeared
To syphon palm oil from Nigerian soil,
For the eager factories
Of Britain back home.

When her husband was slaughtered
In the massacre that ensued,
Her home razed to the ground
Making her refugee outcast
In her own native land,
The elders intoned in agony of despair
That when brother fights brother
And begs, whimpering, like dogs

For bones from his own backyard,
The winners in New York, Amsterdam,
London
Lock up their loot
Count their gains,
And laugh in scorn
At the ten per cent boys
They own and control,
Who promptly pay their dues with speed
Whenever there is another urgent need
To dispatch a whirlwind, punitive raid
On restless natives threatening insurrec-
tion
And causing the company unnecessary
irritation.

Stubborn, she refused to shelter
In makeshift shack in squatter camp,
Where it is said unemployed youths
Were quickly rented to
Rampage, rape, riot and raze
The fragile dwellings hastily made.
They killed her brother with brutal blows,
For shoddy fee, another name
Crossed off the list of those
Who foolish dared to oppose

The operations of the almighty company.
Stubborn, she sits nursing her woes
Before guarded entrance to gardened
bungalows
Of the company that has bombarded
Her with such bitter blows,
Her placard plain for all to see
As they enter affluent serene
In their smooth, sleek limousines.
Return to me my
Husband and brother alive,
Restore our land
Polluted and poisoned
Scarred and desecrated,
Scorched with acid tears,
Wounded and weeping
For a thousand years.
You may murder our men
Bury our leaders deep in your gaols,
But you cannot forever plug your ears
Against the anger of mothers and wives
Whose newest songs of protest
Have scarcely been sung,
And whose struggle for survival
Is centuries strong.
Notes to Ogoni Widow: I am informed that Shell has located oil in other states of the Nigerian Federation, far from the agonies and outrages of the Ogoni. Therefore, we must dance and sing so that the people of Bauchi state may not become the next victim of petroleum imperialism. We must dance and sing so that the heroic struggle of the Ogoni will grow and gather necessary momentum and support.

Hilary Rouse-Amadi.

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Nigeria: the Continuing Disintegration of Rule of Law

As the second anniversary of the annulled 12 June 1993 presidential election approaches, the Abacha government has stepped up arrests of human rights and pro-democracy activists at an alarming rate. According to Human Rights Watch/Africa, the government has arrested an increasing number of its opponents in recent weeks in an effort to stifle criticism of its repressive regime. HRW/Africa believes that the most recent wave of arrests may be an attempt on the part of the government to divert attention from the closed trial of twenty-three alleged coup plotters by a military tribunal, in blatant violation of Nigeria's obligations under international human rights law.

Other government opponents currently in detention include Chief Moshood Abiola, who is widely viewed to have won the June 1993 elections, Sylvester Odion-Akhaine, General Secretary of the Campaign for Democracy, Ken Saro-Wiwa, president of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni people, and numerous other Ogoni activists; trade union leaders Frank Kokori, Wariebi Kojo Agamene, Francis Addo, and Fidelis Aidedomon; and journalists Kunle Ajibade, Chris Anyanwu, Ben Charles, and George Mba.

HRW/Africa calls upon the Nigerian government to facilitate the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees held solely for the non-violent expression of their political beliefs and to drop all politically motivated charges against them. Insofar as credible evidence exists for any detainees accused of complicity in legally recognisable crimes, HRW/Africa calls for them to be tried within a reasonable time by a competent, independent, and impartial court in compliance with Nigeria's obligations under international human rights law.

Those human rights activists arrested in the past week included Olisa Agbakoba, president of the Nigerian Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Tunde Akanni, CLO campaign officer, Femi Falana, chairman of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, and Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti, chairman of the Campaign for Democracy (CD), a pro-democracy group. Although Agbakoba and Falana were subsequently released, they were ordered to report to the State Security Services for questioning. Other prominent human rights activists are reportedly 'wanted' by the Nigerian government.

Following a 31 May 1995 bomb explosion during the launching of the family support program of Maryam Abacha, wife of the current Head of State, in Ilorin, capital of Kwara State in northwestern Nigeria, the Kwara State police arrested and interrogated Chief Cornelius Adebayo and at least two other members of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). All chairmen of local gov-
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ernment areas in Kwara State have been ordered to report to the nearest police stations.

NADECO, which includes politicians, retired military officials, and pro-democracy figures who support Abiola’s installation as president, has been accused by the government since mid-May of plans to foment a new political crisis; NADECO has repeatedly denied these allegations. However, NADECO members throughout the country have been summoned for questioning.

Wale Osun, acting secretary-general of the National Democratic Coalition, has been detained since his arrest on 19 May 1995. On Saturday, 3 June 1995, the State Security Services broke up a meeting of the Democratic Alternative (DA), another pro-democracy group, in Jos. They proceeded to arrest and detain without charge DA President Alao Aka-Bashorun and Dr. Onje Gye-Wado, a member of the National Coordinating Committee of the DA. Caroline Embu, a member of the DA executive in Jos and CLO coordinators Edward Daudu and Steve Aluko were also recently arrested and detained without charge.

On 1 June 1995, Chief Michael Adekunle Ajasin, an octogenarian leader of NADECO and the mainstream Yoruba political group Afenifere, and some fifty other Afenifere leaders from nine states, were arrested for holding an illegal political meeting, although they have reportedly been released.

These recent arrests have coincided with the start of the trial of alleged coup plotters by a seven-man military tribunal headed by Brigadier General Patrick Aziza. On 10 March, the armed forces chief-of-staff announced that the government had arrested twenty-nine military officers and civilians in conjunction with a failed coup attempt. These included Former Deputy Head of State Major-General Shehu Musa Yar’Adua. Former Head of State General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was arrested on March 13 for alleged involvement in the coup, is currently under house arrest. Abacha’s critics claim that the government fabricated the coup plot as an excuse to quell opposition.

The trial of twenty-three of those arrested, not including Obasanjo and Yar’Adua, began on 5 June 1995 at the Lagos Garrison Command and is closed to the public and the press, although journalists were permitted to take photographs of the suspects at the first session. The tribunal is composed of individuals closely identified with the military regime and is therefore neither independent nor impartial. The accused, who have been variously charged with treason, conspiracy, concealment of treason, and accessory to these offences, have also been deprived of other due process guarantees required under international law. They have been denied access to independent and freely-chosen legal counsel, although they have the option to be represented by armed forces personnel with legal training.

The findings of the military tribunal are scheduled to be submitted to the Chief of Defence Staff, Major-General Abdusalam Abubakar, by 30 June 1995. This short time period appears insufficient for complete presentations of the cases of both the prosecution and the defence and meaningful consideration of the issues by the tribunal. The tribunal’s decision is not subject to review by a higher court, but only to confirmation by the Provisional Ruling Council, the highest law-making body in Nigeria. If convicted, the accused could be subject to death by public execution.

HRW/Africa is concerned that, as happened following an alleged coup plot in 1986 and a coup attempt in 1990, the accused may be sentenced to death and hastily executed based on inadequate evidence following a secret and unfair trial. The tribunal claims jurisdiction to
try both military personnel and civilians. HRW/Africa opposes military tribunals for civilians and for military personnel when the offenses are not specifically military in nature, as in this case, because military tribunals are intrinsically not independent and usually not impartial.

The military personnel to be tried by the tribunal include Colonels Bello Fadile, Lawan Gwadabe, O. Oloruntoba, Rowland Emokpae; Lieutenant-Colonels S. E. Oyewole, Happy Bulus, M. A. Igwe, R. D. Obiki, V. O. Bamgbose, O. E. Nyong, C. P. Izuorgu; Ex-Major Akinloye Akinyemi; Captains M.A. Ibrahim, A.A. Ogunsuyi, U.S.A. Suleiman; retired Lieutenant-Colonel M.A. Ajayi; Second Lieutenant Richard Emonvhe; and Staff Sergeant Patrick Usikpeko. The civilians include Felix Ndamaigida, Sanusi Mato, Peter Ijaola, Julius Badejo, and Matthew Popoola.

The suspects have been detained incommunicado at the Directorate of Military Intelligence in Apapa, Lagos since their arrests. The government is reportedly continuing its investigation of others who were arrested and detained in conjunction with the alleged coup attempt, but who have not yet been charged.


**Nigerian Universities and Academic Staff under Military Rule**

**Attahiru Jega**

The condition of African universities has recently attracted much attention not only from scholars but also from policy makers, including international aid agencies (Saint, 1993). A devastating crisis has swept over the continent, profoundly affecting the universities and their academic communities. Even the World Bank, which in the mid-1980s claimed that Africa did not need universities, has acknowledged that ‘Africa’s universities face a crisis at a pivotal point in their development’ (World Bank News, 14 January 1993:1). There has also been a growing concern with the crisis in the Nigerian university system. The universities are grossly underfunded, understaffed, overcrowded and lacking in infrastructure and facilities. In addition, they have experienced many violations of due process, the suppression of academic freedom and the restriction of academic autonomy.

This Briefing outlines the main features of the crisis in Nigerian universities, what caused it, why it has persisted and how the academic world has responded to it. It focuses in particular on the impact of military rule on academic life. It argues that prolonged military rule, combined with economic crisis and structural adjustment, is the main problem faced by Nigerian universities. Through the violation of academic freedom, the restriction of academic autonomy, underfunding and other adverse policies, military rule in Nigeria has hindered the functioning of the universities, and has drastically curtailed their contribution to positive national development. Confronted with marginalisation and growing irrelevance many academics have left the universities. However, those who have remained have gotten better organised under the
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platform of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (USUU) and tried to wrest concessions from the military controlled state. They have also championed popular resistance to the World Bank and the IMF-inspired policies which have caused so much suffering for Nigerians.

The Nigerian University System

The Nigerian system began in 1948 with the establishment of the University College at Ibadan, as a College of the University of London. It became a full fledged university in 1962, at the same time when three other universities were established. Since then, the Nigerian university system has grown phenomenally. There are today 37 universities of which one is exclusively for the military; 23 are funded by the federal government and 13 funded by state governments. They have a total student enrolment of about 300,000, with a staff strength of about 8,000. In a comparative perspective, Nigeria’s enrolment figures represents more than half of the university students of Africa south of the Sahara (542,000), while the number of its universities represents one-third (World Bank News, 14 January 1993:2). The initial impetus for the growth of the system in the 1970s was provided by the country’s vast revenues from petroleum and associated products. But political considerations also came to play a significant role, leading to a great expansion of the university system in the absence of any long-term planning (Jega, 1992).

The military has to a large extent over the years relied on the universities to maintain its rule. It has drawn its executive and administrative staff, at both the federal and state levels, from the academic community. This was part of a process of co-optation necessary to legitimise the regime. The academics drawn into the corridors of power proved ineffective in checking the excesses of military rule. Many used access to the state for self-serving objectives. Academics in government either watched helplessly while their military mentors wrecked vital national values, or actively connived in the process. While using the university system as a fertile recruitment ground, the Nigerian military regimes also displayed intolerance and contempt for academic freedom and autonomy. They sought to control the system and in the process virtually destroyed it. The impact of military rule on the universities has been devastation. While the number of universities and students enrolled expanded rapidly, indeed spectacularly especially since the 1970s, their capacity to make a positive contribution was seriously undermined. The universities have been allowed to decay with antiquated, deteriorating and overstretched facilities, while the lecturers have been demoralised by the policies of successive regimes.

First, the military has tried to establish its control over the universities through the appointment of cronies to Vice Chancellor positions, in disregard for the university statues. Consequently academic freedom and due process have been eroded, and a reign of terror and repression has become institutionalised on many campuses. Matters concerning appointments, promotions and discipline of staff have been single-handedly dealt with by Vice Chancellors with no regard to due process. Many university administrators have become despots, acting in the spirit of their military benefactors, like garrison commanders. They have demonstrated extreme insensitivity to the welfare of the students and staff, acting primarily in the interest of the military rulers and their sponsors outside the universities.

There are many reported cases of university resources for capital expenditure being squandered through inflated contracts and dubious projects approved by administrators blessed with military patronage. Vice Chancellors have more or less surrendered the autonomy of the universities to the military authorities, and connived in flouting the university statutes by bending to ministerial direc-
tives or inviting the armed forces on campuses to prevent student demonstrations. In turn the regimes have removed Vice Chancellors as arbitrarily as they have imposed them on the academic communities. Thus, many Vice Chancellors, to protect their positions, have opted to become more responsive to the requirements of the state, regardless of whether or not they violate academic statues, than to those of the academic communities over which they preside. Academics and students go to court quite often to seek protection against violations of basic rights. Sometimes they win a reprieve, but in most cases even the courts seem helpless in the face of executive lawlessness and military decrees annulling their jurisdictions.

The impact of military rule on the universities manifests itself also through chronic under-funding. Education in general, and the university system in particular, have been systematically underfunded under successive regimes. The military regimes have presided over a situation in which there has been a systematic decline of public spending on education (as indeed, on all social services) while military spending has increased. From 1960 to 1990, military spending, as a percentage of GDP, rose by 1%, while that of education rose by only 0.2% (UNDP, 1993:39, 205). Worse still, the military has nurtured and entrenched a system in which most of what is purportedly spent on social services is actually stolen by state functionaries and their clients, as several (ASA, 1994 panel) reports have shown. With regard to education, Funding of the university system reached its peak during the 1976-77 academic year, with public spending allocations totalling about 4,000 naira per student (equivalent to about $5,000 according to 1975 exchange rates). From then on, it declined swiftly, down to barely 409 naira (about $50) during the 1989-90 academic year. As a result, by 1992, the situation in the universities was chaotic, as reflected in the high student-teacher ratio (up to 1:200 in some courses), the lack of adequate laboratories and equipment, poorly stocked libraries, overcrowded classrooms and staff offices. It was also reflected in the low quality of the graduates produced by the system and in the brain drain phenomenon.

Underfunding for the educational sector can be best understood in the context of the misplacement of national priorities by the military regimes. Critical to a proper definition of national priorities is the role assigned to the satisfaction of basic needs, especially education, by the state. In addition to being a basic need, education is a tool for national development. An illiterate nation is doomed in this modern age. Yet, comparative data illustrates how low Nigeria ranks among nations in this regard. Despite its vast national resources, Nigeria ranks 142 out of 160 countries on the Human Development Index, with an HDI value score of 0.0246 (UNDP, 1993:14).

Nigeria ranks poorly on all indices of educational priorities, ranging from educational expenditure per pupil, to educational expenditure as a percentage of the GNP, to adult literacy rate. Also, as Kurain has noted, 'Nigeria ranks 79th in educational expenditure per capita, and 114th in number of third level students per 1,000 inhabitants' (Kurain, 1988:951). The misplacement of priorities in Nigeria is even more striking when placed in the context of other, less endowed, developing countries. For example, in 1990, Niger's and Mali's educational expenditure represented 3.1% and 3.3% of their...
respective GNP, while Nigeria lagged behind with 1.7%. Indeed, virtually every country in the world has significantly increased the proportion of educational expenditure as a percentage of its GNP between 1960 and 1990, except Nigeria (Jega, 1994a). Significantly Nigeria is reputed to have ‘the poorest records in anglophone Africa for educational innovation and commitment to educational excellence’ (Kurain, 1988:951).

The cumulative effect of decades of misplacement of priorities by the Nigerian state and the impact of the military is such that the academia has faced a serious crisis of relevance. Underfunded, faced with inadequate facilities, overworked, academics have to struggle even just to survive, in a regime of structural adjustment. They have to battle with despotic Vice Chancellors and they are also overwhelmed by the knowledge of the reckless abandonment with which those in power have vandalised social resources. Thus, they have had to choose between struggling to advance popular aspirations or doing nothing and becoming irrelevant.

Academia’s Response to the Impact of Military Rule

Confronted with this crisis, Nigerian academics have seen the need for collective struggles against the state’s misguided policies which, under structural adjustment, have increased people’s suffering and deprivation. Determined to be relevant, academics have assumed the role of a people’s tribune under the umbrella of their organisation, the Academic Staff Union of the Universities (ASUU). They have been activated and recharged politically by the economic hardships produced by the economic crisis and the adjustment process. Those who did not want, or could not escape the impact of the crisis by emigrating, regrouped under ASUU, to salvage themselves, the university system and the nation. ASUU was registered as a trade union in 1978, when the desire for greater social relevance compelled academics to change their hitherto conservative and timid association, the Nigerian Association of University Teachers (NAUT). ASUU emerged at a critical conjuncture when Nigeria’s oil boom was on the brink of bursting, and the rentier state was resorting to the use of force and other corporatist strategies to contain the increasingly restive population (Jega, 1994a).

In response to a growing culture of repression amidst deteriorating socio-economic conditions, staff and students’ discontent grew and the atmosphere in the universities became charged and quite often rebellious. Beginning with 1978, when the military regime tried unsuccessfully to reintroduce school fees and other unpopular policies in the tertiary educational sector, the Nigeria university ‘campuses emerged as centres of vigorous protest and often violent confrontation against the authorities (Kirk-Green & Rimmer, 1981:53). These protests and struggles intensified as military rule became entrenched, as the economic crisis deepened and as Nigeria experienced a stirring demand for democracy, from the mid-1980s onwards. It is in this context that the organisations of university teachers and students (notably ASUU and NANS, the National Association of Nigerian Students), came to assume a leading position in the struggles against military rule. In the absence of legal opposition politics, they advanced the popular cause in addition to promoting their own demands relating to reforms in the university system (Beckman & Jega, 1994). ASUU in particular became the forum through which academics responded to military rule and the economic crisis it has engendered.

The more the academic community resisted violations of academic freedom and university autonomy, and championed the democratisation of academia and popular resistance to military authoritarianism, the greater the backlash
from the regimes. The harassment, however, merely intensified the resistance. Consequently, ASUU came to have running battles with successive military regimes and their appointed Vice Chancellors. For example, its operations were repeatedly suppressed and recruitment of membership was restricted by military decrees. Union leaders were either co-opted, bought over, harassed, intimidated, incarcerated without trial through so-called ‘preventive detention’. Quite often some of them were arbitrarily purged from the system. Many students and lecturers who were activists were either summarily dismissed or harassed in all sorts of ways for exercising their rights to academic freedom or that of freedom of association and organisation on the campuses. For example, at the University of Calabar, one Vice Chancellor arbitrarily dismissed 18 lecturers between 1977 and 1979 (ASUU, 1981:3). The Obasanjo regime set up the Anya Commission on Academic Freedom and university autonomy with the objective of establishing a ‘Code of Conduct’ for staff and students which was ‘to enable them to function in ways supportive of the system’ (ASUU, 1981:2). ASUU successfully resisted this move.

The worst period for the Nigerian universities and the academia was between 1985 and 1993 under the Babangida regime. The funding situation worsened. The regime perpetuated a culture of repression on the campuses using its appointed Vice Chancellors to deal with those opposed to its policies, the so-called extremists, especially when it sought to consolidate the IMF and World Bank inspired Structural Adjustment Program. The conditions on campuses deteriorated. Staff and student unions were repeatedly proscribed and their leaders sacked and/or detained. At ABU (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) in the mid-1980s, expatriate staff had their contracts voided or arbitrarily terminated because of their political views. One of them was even deported because of his criticism of government policies. In the universities of Calabar, Zaria, Benin, Ife, Nsukka and Maiduguri alone, the number of staff and students victimised on political grounds between 1985 and 1993 was close to 500 (Jega, 1994a).

The Babangida regime used co-optation, intimidation and harassment to contain mounting opposition from the academia. It tried to use some ‘professors in government’ to contain restive colleagues in the university system. When these attempts failed to make ASUU ineffectual, resort was made to divide-and-rule tactics, invoking regional and religious loyalties, to break union solidarity and weaken ASUU’s unity and cohesion. These methods have proven very effective on the Nigerian political scene; but ASUU, although not immune to these influences, was relatively unscathed by religious bigotry, ethnic chauvinism and regional loyalties. This added credibility to the union as a patriotic, organised interest group and it facilitated alliance with other progressive pro-democracy forces seeking to end military rule and bring about a credible civilian democratic order.

In trying to act as a ‘Peoples Tribune’, university lecturers through their union, offered critiques of policies that they have perceived to be detrimental to the welfare and well-being of the majority of Nigerians. For example, ASUU has issued several press releases and communiques containing critiques of the Structural Adjustment Programme which has compounded the economic crisis and created immense socio-economic problems for ordinary Nigerians (ASUU: 1987, 1993 1994).

The students have also pursued several strategies to oppose the military regime ‘anti-people’ policies, including organising and leading anti-SAP riots in 1988 and 1989. Even the Committee of Vice Chancellors responded to the economic crisis by organising a National Symposium on the matter (CVC, 1987). Through
ASUU, the academics have tried to be relevant in the struggles for democracy. During the ‘political debate’ launched by Babangida in 1987, which was supposed to pave the way for the transition to Civil Rule, ASUU issued a comprehensive statement analysing the situation and making recommendations which, though ignored by the regime, were widely circulated. ASUU has also actively participated in broad national coalitions and alliances, seeking to promote genuine democracy in Nigeria. It has contributed to the Campaign for Democracy’s (CD) popular mobilisation that compelled General Babangida to ‘step aside’ in August 1993. ASUU is also involved with the democratic struggles currently taking place in Nigeria. One of the major issues giving rise to ASUU’s 1994 strike (beginning in August) is the detention of M. K. O. Abiola, widely believed to be the winner of the annulled 12 June elections. ASUU has demanded Abiola’s release and the immediate return to democratic rule, in addition to putting forward specific demands relating to the university crisis.

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UK Arms Sales to Nigeria*

- 1980-82: £60 million deal to sell tanks and associated military vehicles.
- 1983: £300 million for 18 ground-attack Jaguar fighter aircraft.
- 1984: IMF lends £2.1billion and reschedules debt.
- 1990: 80 Vickers Main Battle Tanks supplied.
- 1992: UK supplies £150 million worth of arms to Nigeria.
- 1993: UK cut military co-operation.
- 1995: UK Government admits that 30 export licenses for ‘non-lethal military equipment’ had been issued for exports to Nigeria.

Recommendations:

1. The [UK] Government should agree to a full, independent review of ECGD’s [Export Credits Guarantee Department] cover for military sales.
2. Banks: Irrespective of government licencing, banks should themselves agree not to finance or in any way support arms sales ... 
3. Overseas Development Administration (ODA): The Government should set up a full and independent inquiry to investigate the evidence that aid commitments and sales of military equipment may have been linked in a number of countries.
4. European Union: EU member states should draw up a detailed proposal for interpretation and implementation of their existing common criteria, agreed in 1991 and 1992, governing arms sales ... in the run up to the 1996 European Inter-Governmental Conference.

The State vs. the Academic Unions in Post-colonial Kenya

Alamin Mazrui & Willy Mutunga

In November 1993, the faculty of Kenya's four public universities went on a strike that was not officially called off until September 1994, in protest against the government's decision not to register their proposed union, the University Academic Staff Union (UASU). Despite many precedents from a number of other African countries, the Moi government has treated the idea of an academic union as an anathema to Kenya's body politic. Even after a long paralysing strike he has refused to submit to internal and external calls coming from the strikers, the opposition and several academic and non-academic unions from other parts of the world, urging him to register UASU. If this unprecedented strike in the history of Kenya's academia showed the extent to which academics had underestimated the government's capacity to withstand the pressure of their collective action (academics had no contingency plans in case the government decided to stop their salaries or evict them from government houses), it also demonstrated the government's resolve to prevent academics from organising themselves into a trade union.

The question is why has the Moi government been so uncompromisingly opposed to the idea of an academic union in Kenya. What factors and forces can explain this hostile reaction to the unionisation of academics? If, under local and international pressure, the government changed the constitution of the country and allowed for the registration of political parties whose objective was explicitly to remove the Moi-KANU government from power, why does the same government object to the registration of an academic union which has a much narrower economic agenda? Before we turn to these questions it may be instructive to look at the history of UASU's registration.

Historical Background

When the Registrar-General rejected the application for the registration of UASU in 1993, he insisted that there is no provision in the legislation (establishing national universities) for the formation of an academic union. What the Registrar-General did not mention, however, is that in 1972 the same Registrar's office had registered the University Academic Staff Union (UASU), a body founded to cater for faculty members of Nairobi University, then the only public university in the country, and its constituent Kenyatta University College. Prior to 1972, the dons had a University Staff Association which was provided for under the University of Nairobi Act. The dons resisted this form of organisation, however, because it was subject to administrative and political control by the university administration and the government. For this reason they took the initiative of registering UASU, whose main objective, in addition to improving the terms of the service, was to improve the relationship between its members, the university council and the students.

Differences, however, began to emerge between UASU and the Moi government soon after it came to state power in August 1978. The issues ranged from UASU's demand for the reinstatement of Ngugi wa Thiong'o to his former professorial position at Nairobi University after his release from detention, to its condemnation of how the government and the university administration handled student unrest; from its call for the improvement of the terms of service for the academics to its demonstration against apartheid in South Africa and the murder of Walter Rodney in Guyana. In response, President Moi issued an unconstitutional order disbanding UASU; concomitantly in July 1980 he deregistered the Civil Servants Union (CSU) for reasons that are
not clear, given that (unlike UASU) the CSU never had a confrontation with the government.

July 1980 was the last period when Kenyan academics had a union. The revival of academic unionism in October 1992 was promoted by academics who, until then, had never had any political involvement, and who decided to strike only after the petition for the registration of UASU had been in limbo for one year, to then be finally denied. This decision sparked off a series of strikes on 29 November 1993, which ended without achieving any of the academics' objectives. As the academics continued the strikes, three other professional groups sought registration of their unions: the Civil Servants Union (CSU) which had suffered the same fate as UASU some 12 years earlier; the National Union of Teachers of Secondary Schools and Tertiary Institutions (NUTSSTI), and the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists (KMPDU). These too were denied registration. Like UASU, members of the unregistered KMPDU also went on strike from June to September 1994, to protest against the Registrar's decision, but the KMPDU strike too ended without any gain.

Against this historical background, how to explain the government's hostility towards academic unions? If UASU had a legal precedent, why did the government choose the path of non-registration? We suggest that this was partly a product of the prevailing conception of the state, the nature of trade unions, as perceived by the state, and the government's view of which class in Kenya most threatens the status quo.

The State as Employer

The state in Kenya, as in many other nations of the 'third world' has been the largest single employer in post-colonial Kenya. Only recently, under the liberalisation program of the IMF, has Kenya been forced to cut the size of its civil service through ministerial mergers, retrenchment, and the lowering of the retirement age.

The majority of university academics in Kenya are state employees. There are now a few private universities like the United States International University (USIU) and Daystar University, but even these are highly dependent on adjunct professors serving as full-time employees in Kenya's four public universities. These public universities are not only funded by the government and come directly under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, but are headed by the President who functions as their Chancellor, and thus appoints all the Vice Chancellors of the executive heads, and the Vice Chancellors of these institutions. Like most presidential appointments in Kenya, the instatement of Vice Chancellors is based more upon political patronage than professional expertise.

But the problem arises not so much from the fact that the state acts as an employer, but from its conception of the state as an absolute power, having the right to control all those working for it; the right to be their only voice; and the right to demand complete allegiance from them (for example on the occasion of the first multi-party elections in 1992, circulars were distributed in government offices to remind civil servants of their expected allegiance to the KANU government in the conduct of their jobs and in their voting behaviour. From the government's viewpoint, then, the idea that any group of the government employees may organise a trade union, to better bargain around the terms of service, is an anathema. The assumption is that the state must remain unchallenged, and must be thought incapable of mismanagement, oversight, or miscalculation. It is on this basis that Daniel arap Moi proclaimed that 'his government was taking care of its employees well and they, therefore, did not need a union' when he banned UASU and
An absolutist government is intolerant of challenge and dissent coming from any section of society but it is likely to react with utmost intolerance when the challenge comes from its own employees as it regards them as custodians of its interests rather than custodians of the public interest. This is why, perhaps, the Moi government proscribed and later refused to register not only a union of academics but also a union of civil servants.

The Union: Economics vs. Politics

In its attempts to deny the dons their constitutional right of association the government has invoked not only legal excuses, but extra-legal arguments. One of the more prominent concerns the very conception of what is a trade union. In its attempt to justify its decision not to register UASU, the government came to rely almost exclusively on a small group of pro-establishment academics who argued that unions, by their very nature, exclude white collar workers. Professor Mwanzi of Kenyatta University, now Executive Officer of the ruling party KANU, suggested, for example, that university academics are not fit for trade unions, which are for people like mechanics, tailors, sugar plantation workers (The Weekly Review, 21 January 1994:8).

Such arguments have continued to be proposed in government circles oblivious of the fact that academic unions are the norm everywhere in Africa, South America and Europe, and have a precedent in Kenya as well.

The government fears unions because it sees them essentially as political bodies. Accordingly, President Moi described, the demand of medical practitioners for a union, as 'a civil disobedience strategy orchestrated against the government by the political opposition' (Daily Nation, 30 August 1994). The alleged political characters of the unions is what led successive Kenya governments to impose severe restrictions on union activity. Under Kenyatta, the president had to ratify the appointment of the Secretary General of the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU). The Moi government has gone even further as it has virtually turned COTU into a wing of KANU. Ironically, in order to undermine the political potential of COTU, the government has brought it under its own political umbrella.

This conception of the trade union as a political body is a colonial legacy, for British colonial officers and British settlers for a time believed that Africans were not capable of seeing trade unions as non-political organisations. The recurrence of strikes that linked economic demands with the demand for self-rule was further evidence, in the eyes of the colonialists of the Africans' inability to distinguish between economics and politics. Settler employers in Kenya maintained, therefore, a strong stand against the registration of African trade unions. An ordinance legalising unions was passed by the Colonial legislative assembly in 1943, but very grudgingly and only because its passage was a condition for the eligibility for development and welfare grants from the British Colonial Officer on which the settler community had become quite dependent. When independence was imminent, however, the British Labour Department established a programme intended to promote 'responsible', i.e. non-political trade unions. Nonetheless, trade unions in Kenya continued to be a major political force campaigning for the good of the country. It is the memory of this colonial history that has continued to haunt Kenya's leadership to the present and to motivate legal and extra-legal strategies for controlling trade unions.

If the Kenyan leadership regards trade unions as political in nature, why then has it allowed certain unions to operate, while proscribing others? We suggest that the government has allowed those
unions to survive which it regards as politically controllable, while it has banned those others which it regards as most threatening to its rule. At present, it seems that the unions that have the maximum oppositional potential, in the eyes of the government, are the professional middle class unions.

Kenya is now engaged in its second liberation struggle, a struggle which is directed primarily against the autocratic rule that has characterised the three decades since independence. It is a struggle for ‘genuine’ democracy, pluralism, greater freedom. It is, in essence, a middle class struggle. This, in great part, is the reason why Moi sees the professional unions of the middle class as the potential source of greatest opposition. Under Jomo Kenyatta virtually all the victims of the dreaded Preservation of Public Security Act – the law empowering the government to imprison a person without charge or trial for an indefinite period of time – were opposition politicians and people suspected to be involved with the Somali nationalist movement. The only member of the professional middle class detained then was Ngugi wa Thiong’o.

Under Arap Moi’s rule, however, victims of the detention law have been largely members of the middle class (academics and university students, lawyers, journalists). For the Moi regime, it is the unions seeking to represent the members of the professional middle class that appear less likely to submit to political control. (The expansion of university education and the establishment of new universities in other Kenyan towns, have made the problem of control over unionised academics appear even more formidable than ever before). This factor possibly is a reason for the Moi’s government persistent violation of the freedom of association in the case of teachers, civil servants and medical practitioners.

Unions and the Washington Connection

By all indications, the Kenyan government has won this round of trade union dispute with the academics. However, there is no reason to believe that we have witnessed the end of this struggle. The fate of this saga may depend not only on the local forces but on external ones as well. More prominent among the latter may be the Washington connection, whose legacy (again) extends back to the colonial period. As we have seen, the colonial government always strove to keep the Kenyan unions depoliticised and sharply separated economic and political objectives. It finally achieved this goal during the Emergency when it effectively removed the militant leadership from the unions, including Makhan Singh, Chege Kibachia and Fred Kubai.

This left Tom Mboya, head of the Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL) and later Minister of Labour in the post-independence government, as the most prominent trade union leader. Though Mboya was quite a moderate – according to some, even reactionary – his union did maintain a degree of political activism that was not insignificant, especially in the climate of intense repression unleashed to crush the ‘Mau Mau’ and radical trade unionism.

Mboya and his KFL came, however, quickly under the patronage of the American AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations) and later the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICTFU). As Kenya was gradually heading for independence, the AFL-CIO and ICTFU were to aid Mboya to pre-empt the spread of ‘communism’ in the Kenyan trade union movement. The Washington connection in Kenya’s trade union history was established, therefore, at the peak of Kenya’s first democratic struggle – the struggle against colonialism. As Kenya is engaged in its second democratic struggle – the Washington connection is being reacti-
vated now through the African American Labor Center, a trade union organisation sponsored by the US State Department. In May 1994, for instance, the Center took the initiative of contacting the leadership of the unregistered UASU and organised a three day seminar at its expense, which included the cost of room and board in an expensive Nairobi hotel (the New Stanley) and a handsome honorarium for the participants. The general theme of the seminar was leadership and organisation in 'responsible unionism', that is, one that would be unencumbered by politics.

At this juncture, US involvement with Kenya's trade union movement is no longer motivated by the cold war agenda, nor is it necessarily interested in prop-ping up autocracy as it has done so often in the past in many regions of the world (see Noam Chomsky, *Third World Fascism and the Washington Connection*). On the contrary, the US government today postures as the champion of the pro-democ- racy movement. But as much as the US establishment may not be immediately concerned that the trade union move- ment may contribute to the downfall of the Moi regime, it still does not want the movement to challenge the present neo-colonial arrangement. It is noteworthy that whereas both the US government and the World Bank/IMF have postured as supporters, and even sometimes as engineers, of the pro-democracy move- ment, they have been conspicuously si- lent on the issue of the right of academics to have a professional union. Thus the need to keep trade unions as apolitical as possible continues to feature in the US trade union agenda for Africa.

Conclusions

As the government continues to under- mine any possible unionisation for aca- demics, the need for such an organisation is escalating. Kenyan academics need to be unionised, first because of the deterio- ration of their terms of service in the context of an economy that has been in decline for years. Academics in Kenya as elsewhere in Africa, have suffered be- cause of drastic economic changes precipitated in part by global factors, local economic shifts and above all by IMF conditionalities and structural adjustment programs. An instrument of professional solidarity and collective bargaining has become indispensable for the protection of the basic economic rights of the aca- demics.

Second, the conditions of work have also been deteriorating. Oduor Ong'wen has described the educational infrastructure in Kenyan public universities as lamenta- ble; this decline includes the depletion of library resources, which now receives just about one per cent of the total budget allocation; the shortage of basic educa- tional material like chalk and stationery; overcrowded classrooms; power black- outs – all in Ong'wen's view are a product of the massive cuts in educa- tional subsidies imposed on the government by the IMF and the World Bank (*Sunday Nation*, 26 June 1994:7). These conditions are af-fecting the productivity of academics and the quality of univer- sity education. This accelerating trend towards the academic and intellectual dispossession of Africa must be stopped and reversed. The empowerment of aca- demics through unionisation can be part of the strategy towards this end.

The deterioration of both the terms of service and the conditions of work have a bearing on the question of academic freedom. Unable to make ends meet and to carry on their work, Kenyan academics are increasingly seeking employment op- portunities elsewhere or are turning to Western funding agencies, which often have their own agenda and their conditionalities for research support. This combination of factors is rapidly giving rise to a shrinking intellectual arena, that is, a state of intellectual deprivation which is bound to limit academic choice and threaten academic freedom.
Academic freedom in Kenya, however, is also threatened by the general political environment. The move towards political pluralism provided some hope for the promotion of academic freedom. But as the popular as well as institutionalised opposition continues to weaken, and as the regime of Daniel arap Moi continues to reconsolidate its power base, there are clear signs of mounting repression of basic freedoms. The Moi regime's sense of security and power and therefore its sense of the political space it has to repress has been expanded thanks to the backing it has received from the international community, in particular the IMF, the World Bank and the EC. In this context, an academic union which can establish an international network with other academic unions elsewhere can be a potential source of challenge to and resistance against this erosion of academic freedom.

Alamin Mazrui is at Ohio State University; Willy Miitunga writes on behalf of the Law Society of Kenya. This Briefing is reproduced from the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa (CAFA) Newsletter, spring 1995.

Resources

- **The Humanitarian Monitor: Sudan, Somalia and the Legacy of Conflict in the Horn of Africa** is available from the Inter-Africa Group, P.O. Box 1631, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

- **Horn of Africa Bulletin**, Life & Peace Institute, Box 297, 751 05 Uppsala, Sweden

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**Kenya: the Trial of Koigi wa Wamwere et al.**

**David Bryan Sullivan**

Four dissidents, Koigi wa Wamwere, Geoffrey Gatungu (G.G.) Ngengi Njuguna, James Maigua and Charles Kuria Wamwere, stand on trial for their lives in Nakuru, Kenya. Koigi wa Wamwere is an opposition politician, former MP, and human rights advocate. Detained on four previous occasions, he has spent much of the last 20 years in prison – though he now faces trial for the first time. The other three defendants are associates of Koigi, and two are his relatives. The trial, which began in April 1994, continues as I write. I spent eleven days in Kenya as a trial observer in October and November 1994, and concluded that what I viewed was unfair.

The prosecution claims that the four attacked Bahati police station in the early morning hours of 2 November 1993. They allegedly used a 'homemade gun', on evidence at the trial, in an attempt to steal firearms from the police station. Attempted robbery with violence (which carries a mandatory death sentence), the principal crime with which the defendants are charged and imprisoned since their arrests in November 1993, does not permit bail.

The defendants deny the charges and state that the trial is an instance of harassment for their political views. Koigi's corroborated alibi is that he spent the night of the robbery 200 kilometres away at the Nairobi home of Gibson Kamau Kuria, a leading human rights lawyer. Koigi told me, in an illicit letter, 'The real problem in this trial is President Moi. He is afraid that I might contest [the Kenyan] presidency in 1997.'

I attended the trial to evaluate its procedural fairness. I attended because of Koigi's prominence, the danger to his life,
Academic freedom in Kenya, however, is also threatened by the general political environment. The move towards political pluralism provided some hope for the promotion of academic freedom. But as the popular as well as institutionalised opposition continues to weaken, and as the regime of Daniel arap Moi continues to reconsolidate its power base, there are clear signs of mounting repression of basic freedoms. The Moi regime's sense of security and power and therefore its sense of the political space it has to repress has been expanded thanks to the backing it has received from the international community, in particular the IMF, the World Bank and the EC. In this context, an academic union which can establish an international network with other academic unions elsewhere can be a potential source of challenge to and resistance against this erosion of academic freedom.

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I attended the trial to evaluate its procedural fairness. I attended because of Koigi's prominence, the danger to his life,
widespread reports that the trial was unfair and broader concerns about the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in Kenya. Kenyan and international NGOs, foreign diplomatic missions and bar associations have also sent observers, and the Kenyan press covers it in detail.

The Conduct of the Trial

The magistrate's rulings: The first and perhaps the most blatant indication that the trial was unfair came from second-hand reports. Nakuru Senior Principal Magistrate William Tuiyot presides over this trial and will determine its verdict. Two prominent Kenyans not associated with the trial each told me that Tuiyot told them, as the trial was under way, that the four defendants are guilty and he will convict them. Other indications of unfairness became evident as the defendants testified. Procedures appeared superficially fair, but the cumulative effect of rulings precluded the defence from disproving the prosecution's case.

The second accused, G.G. Njuguna, sought to discredit the effectiveness of the 'homemade gun'. Proof that it could not fire would weaken the prosecution's case, and quite possibly undermine the capital charges as well. Njuguna could discuss the gun only as a layman, after Tuiyot denied a defence application to qualify him as a firearms expert. One basis Tuiyot expressed for his rambling and unclear ruling was that, despite his military training and expertise, '(i)t was clear that accused number two never submitted supplemental documents to support his claim that he was trained as a ballistics expert'. The magistrate then refused to allow as evidence certification of Njuguna's expertise, a diploma from an English military academy. Tuiyot explained this ruling:

It is not relevant ... The Court has already ruled that accused number two should give evidence as a layman. If that type of evidence is allowed it would show that this court has changed its mind.

Giving evidence as a layman, Njuguna testified that the 'homemade gun' lacked essential components, such as a trigger and a hammer, and lacked components which make a gun effective, such as sights, a magazine, and an ejector. Tuiyot listened and took notes, but stated that Njuguna was giving impermissible expert testimony. Without articulating which parts were impermissible, he announced that he would disregard much of Njuguna's evidence: 'I'm letting him say what he wants to say and then I will ignore some or most of it.' Because the court rejected Njuguna's testimony about the gun, the defence asked to allow their own firearms expert to test the 'homemade gun'. Tuiyot rejected this submission. He ruled it unnecessary in part because the police admitted damaging the evidence while it was in their custody, and therefore acknowledged the gun's ineffectiveness.

This series of decisions seemed contradictory to the Kenyan law of evidence, and logically inconsistent. They were entirely consistent in their effect, however, of being severely detrimental to the defence. They denied any opportunity to rebut prosecution claims about the 'homemade gun', and protected a potentially exculpatory flaw in the government case from scrutiny.

The role of the magistrate: Independent Kenyan observers confirmed reports that Tuiyot treated the defence more fairly when international observers such as myself attended. Nevertheless, when I observed, he played an inappropriate role in several ways. During their unsworn statements, Tuiyot asked defendants leading questions, denying their right to frame their own testimony. James Maigua complained: 'The court is oppressing me, stopping me from saying what I want to say.' Also during the defendants' statements, the magistrate inappropriately asked clarifying questions and raised
objections. He particularly blocked testimony when he said it touched upon politics. In describing his personal history, James Maigua said that at one point he worked for Koigi wa Wamwere's campaign for Parliament against a relative of President Moi. Tuiyot angrily interrupted to state that the accused could not bring President Moi into this trial. 'I've told you not to mention the name of the President', Tuiyot said.

Kenyan magistrates keep the only official record of court proceedings. Most of the time, Tuiyot took copious notes, often requesting pauses and repetitions. Legally, this record is crucial because it serves as the sole basis for any appeal. Tuiyot will submit his record to the parties for review but, contrary to an apparently standard practice, he will wait to release most of it until the end of the trial. As I observed this on several occasions, when Tuiyot deemed a witness' testimony to be redundant, irrelevant or political, he demonstrably ceased to keep the record.

**Spinning out the trial:** Standard procedures, particularly the magistrate's note-taking, make this a slow trial, and all involved – defence, prosecution and magistrate – each seemed to cause some delays. Yet the court never came close to meeting its undemanding official schedule of four hours of court time per day (9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with breaks of an hour for morning tea and an hour and a half for lunch). When I attended, the average court time was under three hours per day.

Delays are prejudicial in several ways. A longer trial prolongs imprisonment of the accused. Attention, in Kenya and internationally, may wane as the trial wears on. Costs to the *pro bono* defence attorneys accumulate, draining their resources and deterring them from accepting similar cases. Observation of the trial is less feasible. Testimony becomes more disjointed, losing some effectiveness and

continuity. The cumulative effects of losing one hour of trial time per day are severe. If the trial takes 12 months and the schedule I observed is typical, it could have been completed in nine months had the court adhered to its official schedule.

**The conduct of the trial/conclusions:** Non-governmental observers from Ghana, Norway and the UK as well as from the US have attended this trial. To my knowledge, all agreed that the portions we observed were not fair. Our combined reports indicate consistent bias and support the defendants' claims that the trial is rigged and the charges fabricated.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights guarantee a fair trial and the presumption of innocence, prohibit arbitrary arrest, and protect the freedoms of conscience, expression, association and assembly. Kenya has acceded to both instruments. Based on my observation, the Koigi wa Wamwere trial demonstrates that Kenya is violating its obligations under international law.

International observation does appear to have improved the procedural fairness of parts of the trial; several Kenyans say that the magistrate changes his demeanour and strives to appear more fair in the presence of international observers. Yet the imprisonment and capital trial of the defendants continues. The likely result of the trial will be conviction of the defendants, one or two appeals, and a petition to the President for clemency if all appeals fail. I left Kenya on the first anniversary of the incarceration of Koigi wa Wamwere. The four defendants could easily spend a second year or more in prison under threat of death. In fact, some suggest that the government intends to imprison these dissidents through the next set of elections, at present scheduled for 1997.

Continued observation of the trial is important by the Kenyan organisations
who can maintain constant surveillance, by coordinated efforts of foreign diplomats and by African and other NGOs. According to a Kenyan observer, the magistrate denigrated international observers when none were present, 'especially the ones from “white lands”, i.e. outside Africa.' This comment suggests the importance of connections between NGOs and human rights advocates across Africa. Activists from other African countries, as opposed to those from Europe and North America, bring more credibility, similar experiences, common historical and cultural backgrounds, and African viewpoints to a situation such as the trial of Koigi wa Wamwere. While there is a role for Western organisations, it is important for African NGOs to follow events in countries other than their own and to cooperate across national borders. All should publicise this case and continue to pressure the Kenyan government to release the four defendants, drop the charges against them and end this unfair trial.

Politics and the Rule of Law

Ethnicity: Underlying ethnic tensions are one of the case's most important and delicate aspects. Koigi wa Wamwere and his three co-defendants are Kikuyu, as are their three principal lawyers. The magistrate, like President Moi, is Kalenjin. The defendants allege that their prosecution is part of Kalenjin repression of the Kikuyu; Koigi wrote to me,

Moi also wants to use this trial and the judiciary in general to effect his diabolical policy of ethnic cleansing against Kikuyu people who live in the Rift Valley.

Public opinion about the trial follows ethnic lines. Thus a Kenyan friend introduced me to our Nairobi taxi driver with a compliment to the effect that, 'This American is here to observe and report the great injustices being done at the Koigi trial.' When I later asked how my friend knew that he supported Koigi, my friend said, 'Because I spoke to him in the vernacular first.' In other words, that the taxi driver spoke the Kikuyu language indicated his opinion about Koigi's trial. In his 1992 book The People's Representative and the Tyrants, Koigi wa Wamwere states eloquently the idea behind allegations that the government instigates and gains from the ethnic violence commonly known as the ‘clashes’:

Tribalism in Kenya is a handy tool in the hands of the Moi regime ... When ethnic communities set themselves on a course of hostility and conflict between one another, it is the political carrion crows, led by Moi, that gain from such conflicts by strengthening their domination over all the people irrespective of ethnicity.

The government is eager to depict human rights disputes as ethnic, as President Moi demonstrated by denouncing Amnesty International and the Kenya Human Rights Commission as ‘tribal’ organisations:

What kind of country shall we have if the Kalenjins, Kikuyus, Luos … or any other tribes have their own human rights organisation?

The use of criminal charges: This trial exemplifies the increased sophistication of governments which abuse human rights. By accusing political opponents of common criminal offences rather than detaining them without trial or charging them with ‘political’ offences (such as sedition, holding illegal meetings or possessing illegal literature), the Kenyan government can declare domestic and international attention to their trial inappropriate. This strategy has limited success; though Amnesty International devoted extensive attention to the trial it waited until August 1994 to change the status of the four defendants from ‘probable prisoners of conscience’ to ‘prisoners of conscience’.

The Kenyan government similarly improves its human rights record shortly...
before annual donor meetings to review aid packages (the most recent was in December), and renews repression shortly after those meetings approve aid. Other African governments also abuse rights so as to evade scrutiny; for example, limiting freedom of the press by limiting the supply of newsprint or by taxing it heavily for all non-government newspapers. Domestic and international human rights groups should ensure that these attempts fail by bringing their true nature to light.

This trial is only the most prominent of many cases in which the Kenyan government abuses robbery with violence charges. One human rights lawyer told me that the police bring those charges against anyone they want to intimidate. Its abuse indicates that the law against robbery with violence needs reform. Robbery with violence charges carry a mandatory death penalty and do not allow bail. Unlike other capital offences, defendants accused of robbery with violence are tried in a magistrate’s court and have no right to state-provided legal representation if they are indigent. This combination makes the charge rife for abuse; it threatens the life of defendants, evades some human rights scrutiny because it is a criminal rather than political charge, allows prolonged detention before and during trial, and affords insufficient procedural safeguards.

An interesting aspect of the case is its echoes of colonial Kenyan history. Koigi wa Wamwere’s distinctive dreadlocks have been called a deliberate homage to Mau Mau. Charges of attacks on police stations, possession of illegal weapons including crude ‘homemade guns’, and swearing illegal oaths – elements of this and other contemporary cases – also arose during the 1950s Emergency. When the defence attorney Mirugi Kariuki cited and described fully two cases from the late colonial period, it seemed clear that he intended a historical parallel as well as a legal point.

**Human rights and the rule of law in Kenya:**

In addition to violations of its international human rights commitments, the trial of Koigi wa Wamwere demonstrates defects in the political independence of the judiciary and the rule of law in Kenya. Kenya has improved its openness remarkably in recent years. Although recent developments threaten that openness, as noted below, there have been dramatic changes since my previous visits to the country in 1985 and in 1991. Kenya is a multi-party state, newspapers criticise the government and expose corruption, and people speak out against the government. My freedom to observe the trial and the official welcome I received confirm this trend. Despite increased openness, Kenya’s record has not correspondingly improved in other areas of human rights, a paradox noted by leading Kenyan human rights advocates. Kenya’s performance raises questions about suggestions in the governance literature that democratic and human rights reforms will follow increased openness.

Repression in Kenya has escalated since February 1995. Recent abuses have targeted the political opposition and civil society – NGOs, lawyers and the press. Five trustees of a group advocating constitutional reform, the Mwangaza Trust, were arrested on 4 April. Those arrested included two leading opposition MPs, Paul Muite (one of the defence team for Koigi wa Wamwere and his co-defendants) and Kiraitu Munungi. About 50 of the 81 opposition MPs have complained of official harassment, such as the police detention of Peter Anyang Nyong’o. The government failed to stop or to solve six firebombing attacks against the Kituo Cha Sheria legal advice centre in Nairobi. In February, the Centre for Law and Research International (CLARION) NGO was banned shortly after it reported government corruption. Arsonists attacked offices of the magazine *Finance*. Several Kenyan journalists have been arrested and others have gone into exile to avoid persecution. The government
threatened to expel journalists from *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *Washington Post* for critical reportage. The government has arrested several alleged members of the 'February Eighteen Movement', supposedly a revolutionary group; some of those arrested say they were tortured and required to plead guilty before being permitted to speak with counsel.

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Editors Note: This Briefing is based on the author's report, *Kenyan Justice on Trial in Nakuru: Notes from the Trial of Koigi wa Wamwere et al.* available from The Orville Schell Centre for International Human Rights, Yale Law School, Box 208215, New Haven, CT 06520, US, $3 including postage to US addresses, or $5 to non-US addresses.

Bibliographic Note


Arms Sales to Kenya

SIPRI Data: Between 1988-1992 total arms exports to Kenya were worth $70m (at constant 1990 prices). The UK accounted for $20m; France $27m. Between 1990-92 France negotiated a deal to supply 100 Mistral SAMs (surface-to-air missiles). Note: SIPRI Figures only include the export of major weapons systems.

Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA): Between 1987-1991, ACDA estimates that arms exports to Kenya were worth $200m; the UK accounted for $120m; the US $50m and other European countries, $30m. Military expenditure in 1991 was $218m (constant 1990 prices), representing 2.8% of GDP or 9.1% of CGE (central government expenditure). Between 1987-91 arms imports averaged 2.1% of total imports. Note: ACDA data covers smaller arms, sub-systems and certain dual-use goods.

International Institute for Strategic Studies Data (IISS): In its 1994-95 military balance, gives listings of weapons systems: the UK supplied 80 Vickers Mk.3 MBTs (tanks); Vosper UK supplied 2 offshore missile patrol boats (Nyasos) as well as 3 inshore missile patrol craft; UK Brooke Marine supplied 4 similar offshore vessels; the UK supplied 9 Hawk Jets equipped specifically for counter insurgency purposes.

Editors Note: Data supplied by Saferworld, 33/34 Alfred Place, London WC1E 7DP, UK.
When the Troops Go Home: Somalia after the Intervention

John Prendergast

Although Somalia still represents a potential minefield of intra- and inter-clan conflicts, locally-driven economic, social and political processes have emerged and flourished since UNOSOM's departure. Moved by economic self-interest, war weariness, and a re-emergence of traditional authorities at the expense of the militia leaders, the imperatives for peace inherent in some of these indigenous processes hold great promise for the future of the Somali people, if not for the future of a Somali state.

The widely predicted escalation of the Somali civil war after UNOSOM (the UN Operation in Somalia) troops withdrew in February has still not transpired. For all the extraordinary amounts of financial and diplomatic resources expended by UNOSOM, its legacy is surprisingly small. Now that the international forces have departed, significant internal trends in Somalia have emerged which provide promise that a series of uneasy localised truces throughout the country may actually hold up for some time to come. Nevertheless, these truces have not obviated the primary legacy of the vicious civil war which is thought to have resulted in the deaths of a quarter to a half million people: a geographical realignment of many Somali population groups involving forced displacement, extrajudicial execution, mass rape, and asset transfer (land, livestock, and grain reserves) based primarily on sub-clan affiliation.

The State of the Civil War

The Somali civil war has seen some of the combatants take to the sidelines of conflict, leaving only a few groups actively fighting throughout the country. The main potential locus of military activity centres on Mogadishu, in a Hawiye intra-clan conflict that sporadically pits the Abgal and Hawaadle loosely allied on one side and the Habr Gedir and some Murosade militias coordinating military campaigns on the other. The Hawaadle have almost completely been displaced from Mogadishu, but the Murosade continue to contest territory with the Abgal in the central quarter of the Bermuda neighbourhood of Mogadishu, and they remain an important political, military and commercial force there. Ironically, some of the impetus for the battles between the Murosade and the Abgal, as well as the Habr Gedir-Hawaadle rivalry, have their roots in political meddling by UNOSOM in early 1994, when a particular peace initiative heavily supported by UNOSOM excluded representatives of the Murosade and Hawaadle, increasing their fear of being marginalised.

There are significant fissures within each of these four Hawiye groups that could explode as well, driven in part by competition between traditional elites (which have enjoyed years of ascendancy dating well before the fall of Siad Barre) and Somalia's version of the 'new rich', groups who have profited greatly from the conflict-ridden last half-decade. These internal disputes also include the simmering competition within the Habr Gedir Sa'ad, between Osman Ato and Mohammed Farah Aideed, and splits between Habr Gedir Sa’ad leaders and Habr Gedir ayr leaders; a rivalry between Ali Ugas and Ali Mahdi Mohammed of the Abgal (complicated further by an increasingly important Islamist movement); and a significant split within the Murosade involving Mohamed Qanyere Afrah (who continues to be able to mobilise a significant militia of Murosade Habr Mohamed and access support from Aideed) and some of the significant Murosade merchants and financiers. For the most part, Darod sub-clans have stayed out of this intra-Hawiye fratricide, watching the internal fragmentation with glee.
Potential flashpoints also exist in Galgaduud in central Somalia, between the Habr Gedir and the Marehan in that area, in Hiran Region between the Habr Gedir and the Hawaale, and in Lower Juba between a number of different sub-clans. Bay Region will perpetually remain a possible target of occupation either by the Habr Gedir or the Marehan, who border the Rahanweyne of Bay on the southeast and northwest.

The Habr Gedir may come to dominate militarily in the short run, because of superior firepower. They are all veterans of various wars (Ogadeni war, cross-border skirmishes with Kenya, the civil war, and the war with UNOSOM) and of a variety of modes: insurgency, counter-insurgency, and urban guerilla warfare. All are heavily armed, thanks to UNOSOM, which provided faction leaders with rents, security contracts, employment, currency transactions and a variety of other fringe benefits. One estimate puts the number of technicals now at the disposal of Aideed and Ato at roughly 160, more than in the entire country in 1992.

Nevertheless, most observers feel that the Habr Gedir are not strong enough or sufficiently united to defeat the Abgal, and they are exposed on many fronts and spread thinly throughout the south of the country. It is conceivable that no one will win the war – ever – and a state of low intensity conflict could continue indefinitely.

The Habr Gedir militias have taken some key towns (Merca, Gelib, and Belet Weyne which they re-lost in April) and have expropriated land and homes during the last year, principally in Hiran, Benadir and Lower Shebelle Regions. The full extent is unmeasurable. These areas are not ‘controlled’ by Aideed or Osman Ato, but are certainly subject to their influence. Osman Ato is a key player in Habr Gedir expansionism, formerly paying for the khat for the militia in Belet Weyne and controlling the farms on which the militia subsist in Lower Juba. Ato and Aideed continue to vie for the leadership of the Habr Gedir, with Ato appearing to call many of the shots because of the benefits his commercial interests bring and growing support from the Sa’ad elders, while Aideed retains his value as a mobiliser for defensive or offensive military purposes as well as his historic leadership of the Habr Gedir as far back as during the struggle against Siad Barre. By April 1995, the split between Ato and Aideed was widening; Ato announced that Aideed’s signature would no longer represent the SNA (Somali National Alliance).

The Habr Gedir now control access to the main road arteries: Mogadishu to Kismayu and the roads along the Juba and Shebelle Rivers up to the Ethiopian border and down almost to Kismayu. They can utilise the ports in Mogadishu, Kismayu, Merca, and Brava. The Juba and Shebelle areas under Habr Gedir influence help feed Mogadishu South and provide tax (checkpoints), extortion, and export money. Control of key airports allows them to control a significant segment of the import-export trade, notably much of the importation of khat, and tax much of what they don’t control. It is feared that if they lose control of or access to the ports, they will move further inland more fully to control internal production and trade.

Who Is At Risk?

Lawlessness puts the ethnic and other minorities at increased risk of parasitic looting by the ‘moryan’ – young, armed, bandits. Villages are randomly looted, more often than before the war, but much less than at its height in 1991-92. The extortion is probably the equivalent of much more than pre-war government taxation. There are cases of forced labour and forced displacement, and rape is also common, but the exact scale is difficult to pinpoint. Forced labour and looting is
pure opportunism by the 'moryan', but forced displacement is part of a decades-long pattern of expropriation of the best farmland along the rivers by more powerful groups.

In the last year, forced displacement has taken many forms. The Abgal drove the Murosade out of the Medina neighbourhood of Mogadishu, and the Murosade in turn burned many of the Abgal homes in neighbouring Bermuda. But most of the displacement in Somalia was caused by Habr Gedir advances, pushing Biyaaml leaders (local officials, elders, and the sultan) out of Merca and the Hawaadle from Mogadishu South, Belet Weyne (temporarily), Bulo Berti, Jalalaxi, and Lower Shebelle. Those displaced correspond to those who present a military or political challenge to the Habr Gedir. For example, when the Hawaadle attacked Habr Gedir-occupied Belet Weyne on 26 December 1994, the latter responded by destroying two Hawaadle villages, Badeere and Bowholle in Hiran Region.

Some Bantu have been pushed from the west to the east side of the Juba River, primarily by Ogadeni ‘moryan’ looking to expand their territory. Local estimates range from a third to a half of the Bantu population in the Juba Valley either having died or remaining displaced. Nevertheless, the ethnic minorities also have less employment opportunities than before the war. In the Lower Shebelle, they earn somewhere between 5,000 and 20,000 Somali Shillings ($1-$4) per day working for the plantation owners who sell to Dole and Somalifruit, the two multinational companies buying fruit in Lower Shebelle.

The Rahanweyne in Gedo were displaced originally by the fighting in 1991-92, and when they attempted to return to their lands, found them taken over by the Marehan. This expropriation is fuelled by the latter’s desire to acquire the best farmland next to the Juba River in Gedo and Middle Juba. The Rahanweyne men, who are now perforce farming more marginal lands, often leave their women and children in the displaced camps in Bardera (perhaps 10,000 of the displaced are there) while they go to cultivate.

The Rahanweyne in Bay are steadily recovering from the civil war. Their future security is in part dependent on whether the Habr Gedir believe they can continue to get free trade access to the area without attacking, which would mean facing strong local opposition – both armed and unarmed – as well as international condemnation. In 1991, there were relatively few people in Bay who were armed. In 1995, everyone has arms and the Leyson sub-clan has a small army. Crops were being sold to buy guns in early 1995. The Rahanweyne in Bay still may be no match for the marauding pastoralist militias, but they won’t be the pushover they were in 1991-92.

The level of immunisations is still too low to contain any epidemic. The coverage for measles is below 50%. No health structure or system exists in many places, despite progress by UNICEF and many NGOs. Furthermore, security remains the main constraint to increased production and trade, so progress is obviously tenuously perched. On the other hand, two bumper harvests have begun to put money back in people’s hands, and herds are naturally regenerating rapidly. Therefore, barring a major eruption in the smouldering war, most communities will see slow but steady improvement in their situation.

Political Devolution

At local level, Somalia is a collection of ‘town-states’, some of which have forged loose security arrangements with each other. The decision-making apparatus in these town-states is a balancing act between traditional authorities, merchants, and politico-military figures. There are no real examples of power sharing at the local level. Power is pure: the Marehan in
Gedo Region; the Hawaadle before and the Habr Gedir now in Hiran Region; the Harti in Kismayu; the Ogadeni in Afmadow; the Habr Gedir in Lower Shebelle and Mogadishu South; the Abgal in Mogadishu North and Middle Shebelle; the Majerteen in the Northeast. In some places, the Habr Gedir use local intermediaries, such as in Lower Juba. And in a few places there is divided rule: in Mudug, two districts are controlled by Habr Gedir, two by Majerteen, and one is mixed.

The provision of security and dispute mediation is the main way organised authority is exercised at the local and regional level. In many places, there is insufficient will – or ability – to organise anything beyond these two functions. Where there are airports and ports, some kind of structure is put in place to administer and to divide the spoils. On another level, there is also a generational power struggle between younger ‘anarchists’ and older ‘traditionalists’, though for every story of elder disempowerment is one of elder re-empowerment, and many Somalis argue that the traditional authorities (sultans, elders, ugases, mullahs, imams and sheikhs) are gaining influence. Again, Somalia is a mosaic of realities different in every locale. There are ongoing attempts to improve self-government; the leadership and balance of power is in constant evolution.

Meanwhile at ‘national’ level the soap opera of national government formation continues. The Darods want the Prime Minister post and a weak executive; Aideed wants a strong president – himself. In response to the manoeuvring of Aideed’s SNA and Ali Mahdi’s SSA (Somali Salvation Alliance), some Darod leaders are attempting to set up a third faction which would rival these two for the national-level power grab to come. The militia leaders are strongest when attacking or under attack, when mobilising for defence and offence. Peace erodes their usefulness to the community, and hence their authority. The faction leaders dominate more than control certain areas. They find it easy to mobilise but difficult to sustain their authority.

Aideed has been hurt by UNOSOM’s departure: UNOSOM played the role of outsider which unified the SNA and Habr Gedir. The series of debilitating UNOSOM attacks in South Mogadishu during the search for General Aideed between June and October 1993 created bitter resentment against the UN among the Habr Gedir population in that area; nearly every family lost a relative in the fighting. One particular incident – the UNOSOM attack on the Abdi house in July – served to undercut growing internal opposition to Aideed and solidified his leadership under an anti-UN banner. It took over a year for the cracks in the Habr Gedir front which were quite evident before those attacks to reappear.

The militia themselves are a wild card, opportunistic and politically naive. With no demobilisation plans in place, and no employment or education prospects on the horizon, many young men see little alternative to their current occupation – and demand for their services remains high.

Social Services and Legal Systems

There are no indigenous social services per se, except the Koranic schools and some nascent NGO activity. In Somalia, there is a privatisation of everything. For example, electricity in the Bardera market at night is provided by merchants, as it is in Baidoa, Mogadishu, Bosaso, and Galkaiyo. The telephone service is also private in Mogadishu, Bosaso, Garowe, and Hargeisa, and the schools (Koranic and otherwise) are mostly private, and charge a fee.

There are roughly 8,500 police with guns and vehicles. In many locations, and especially Mogadishu, they are clan-based militia in uniforms. They often hire out
their services to the highest bidder, within the limits imposed by the militia leaders. The police in Mogadishu North were reportedly ferrying arms to the Abgal militia during the fighting in Bermuda in January, at the behest of UNOSOM-appointed police director General Ahmed Jilow. Even in Baidoa, they are riding around in technicals, sometimes quite aggressively.

Throughout most of Somalia, provision of justice continues to be based on the traditional elders' system of negotiation, the diya (blood money) institution. Sharia (Islamic) law has been introduced in Mogadishu North, Luuq (and recently announced throughout the whole of Gedo Region by a newly-appointed Governor), and some areas of the Northeast and Northwest (Somaliland). There is considerable popular support for the hudud (punishments such as amputation and stoning). People are sick of the looting and lawlessness, and see that in Mogadishu North and Luuq the security situations are drastically improved. Many Somalis argue that any Sharia-based legal system introduced country-wide will be a Somali-Sharia, just as the Somalis had their own brand of socialism under Siad Barre. The hudud is the only element of Sharia which appears to enjoy much support; further restrictions on people's freedom (dress, khat chewing, etc.) will meet with resistance. Militia leaders too fear an erosion of their power due to Sharia, and will attempt to water it down or evade it, as Aideed and Morgan have done.

In some ways, the Sharia is a logical extension of the reassertion of traditional clan and religious authorities. There is a 'Committee for the Implementation of Sharia' in Mogadishu North – composed of religious and clan leaders – which is spreading awareness on crime through public lectures, clan meetings, and political meetings. The cases in the Islamic courts there have shifted from primarily criminal cases to ones involving property disputes; the amputated hands publicly and prominently displayed are seemingly putting a damper on some forms of criminal activity. Allegations are mounting, however, about the political nature of some of the activity of Sharia courts. In Mogadishu North, for example, the Islamic police have reportedly occupied the old port, and some of the religious leaders are accused of using Sharia to increase their power and neutralise opponents through trumped-up charges in a legal system lacking any fundamental guarantees of due process.

**Forces for Peace**

It is the confluence of economic interests – especially of the more powerful merchants – which is helping to stabilize some areas of southern Somalia. Most notably, the southern portions of the Juba and Shebelle River valleys are quite calm, and movement of goods and people is pronounced. Osman Ato has been a key player in laying the groundwork for cross-clan economic cooperation, especially in his relationship with Ali Ugas, a key Abgal figure. These two were especially influential in defusing the potential for massive escalation over the port and airport at the time of UNOSOM's withdrawal. A third individual who plays an important role in maintaining commercially-driven stability is the Habr Gedir Ayr businessman, Abdi Farah (long-time financier of General Galal). These men greatly profited from the 1991-92 asset stripping and the 1993-94 UN occupation. In 1995 and beyond, they appear to see peace and stability as the most important guarantor of long-term profitability and commercial expansion. In Mogadishu itself, this confluence of commercial interests has culminated in the establishment of a 'Peace Committee', the most widely supported peace process to date in the capital. This Committee eventually aims to establish a Benadir Regional Authority (to govern Mogadishu and the surrounding area), but as yet excludes the Hawaadde and most of the Murosade,
and most other sub-clans beyond the Habr Gedir and Abgal. How the next stage of negotiations handles these excluded groups will largely determine the long term success or failure of the initiative.

Aideed and Ali Mahdi dislike the Committee, but have to accommodate it. Their own power bases are quite clearly eroding, and they are practically the only ones (supported of course by the UN) continuing to press for the formation of some kind of national government, something which would probably spark renewed civil war. This is perhaps the starkest example of the current divergence of interests between the militia leaders and the communities from whom they have historically derived their support.

Along with these economic incentives for peace, the crude power balance between the Habr Gedir, the Abgal, and a shifting Darod alliance leads to a wary coexistence and a *de facto* prohibition on major offensives by any particular faction. But there are some exceptions. Three examples illustrate the tenuous nature of the current stability: first, the potential for conflict in Mogadishu over the control of the port and airport, inherent in the close proximity of major Hawiye sub-clans to both these installations and the extraordinary benefits which will accrue to the controlling party, and the growing rift between Aideed and Osman Ato; second, the violent confrontations between Murosade and Abgal militias as well as Habr Gedir and Hawaadle fighting in Hiran; and third, the Marehan – Habr Gedir rivalry in Galgaduud. All are complex intra-clan conflicts which may not easily be resolved, and only represent the most glaring of the potential flashpoints.

*John Prendergast* in at the Center of Concern, Washington, DC.

**Somalia: the Balance Sheet**

The world has poured a staggering amount of money into Somalia since 1992. The US alone spent $2 billion, mostly to support its military intervention, while roughly 90% of the $1.6 billion budgeted to UNOSOMII over an 18-month period went to security and military support.

Only an estimated $72 million, or 4.5% of the total, went directly into the Somali economy through rental housing, local guards and vehicles; no money was allocated for demobilisation and disarmament until August 1994 – far too late for it to do any good. The following is the budget for the six-month period ending 31 May 1994.

- $300m military personnel/support
- $50m civilian personnel/support
- $21m infrastructure (roads, port, etc)
- $51m depreciation equipment/vehicles
- $26m petroleum products
- $47m helicopter operations
- $29m fixed-wing aircraft
- $76m other air traffic/handling
- $12m construction UNOSOM village
- $8m communications
- $8m de-mining
- $11m miscellaneous

- Total: $639 million

Note: This Briefing is based on material gathered by the author on a extensive field trip for HRW
Banana Wars in Somalia

Driving along in jeeps-turned-combat-vehicles, the infamous ‘technicals’ commando unit stops near a fine villa in the middle of a banana plantation on the outskirts of Mogadishu. The men open fire on the residence where Philippino employees of the US multinational Dole are taking a rest, gunning down one of the guards. A walkie-talkie in one hand, and a sculpted cane in the other, Ahmed Duale Xaaf, managing director of Somalbana, the Somali subsidiary of Dole, accuses Somalfruit’s militia without any hesitation.

That was on 10 January 1995. Dole has been accusing Somalfruit of having armed a formidable militia, which has been wreaking terror across the Shebele region, Somalia’s banana-growing zone. Dole-Sombana convoys are hijacked on their way to Mogadishu’s port.

Dole also has its own ‘technicals’ who, in turn, accuse Somalfruit of racketeering. One February, on the approach road to the port, shooting broke out for several long minutes: ‘there goes the banana war again!’ joked the locals, relieved that on this occasion none of their people were involved in the fighting.

In a country devastated by faction fighting and abandoned by the international community, big multinational companies are at war for real. The economic stakes are high. In 1990, when Somalfruit – owned by an Italian family – was the sole exporter of the Somali banana, their turnover reached $26m per year. Thirty per cent of the firm’s capital is owned by the producers themselves, while a 20% share is held by ex-President Siad Barre. Shebele has over 6,000 hectares of banana plantations, only 1,500 of which are in production at present.

When Siad Barre was driven out by the civil war in 1991, Somalfruit withdrew to Kenya. It was not until February 1994 that Dole, seeing an opening, arrived in force. For the US multinational, the world’s largest fruit producer with a turnover of some $3.5bn in 1993, Somalia was worth the risks. In its 1993 annual report Dole bemoans the discriminatory restrictions imposed by the European Union on dollar bananas from Latin America. The EU had in fact put in place a system of preferential trade based on import quotas in order to protect ACP bananas from its ex-colonies. Dole lobbied in Brussels and secured a 5,000 tonne quota, over three months. An exclusive contract was signed in March 1994.

But Somalfruit came running back in September when they saw their place had been taken. Somehow, a large proportion of the producers decided to break their contracts with Dole-Sombana, saying that the company had broken its promises, and returned to Somalfruit. ‘Dole’s procedures are dishonest’, declares Mohamed Hussein Guarre, Secretary of the Banana Producers’ Committee. ‘The promised investments never materialised.’

In the context of a country like Somalia, nothing can happen without the warlords getting involved somewhere along the line ... and without them extracting their tribute. Given the task of arbitrator of the banana war, General Mohamed Farah Aideed of the SNA (Somali National Alliance), whose militias reign supreme in Shebele, is personally implicated. With Dole complaining directly to him about growers breaking their contracts, General Aideed decreed that the SNA would have to be consulted before any new agreements were signed. A document signed in Aideed’s own hand on 13 October 1994 declares a free market, undermining Dole-Sombana’s case. But on 3 December, the situation suddenly changed and the SNA declared Somalfruit’s competition ‘illegal’, demanding that compensation be paid to Dole-Sombanana. Aside from the order preventing any grower from selling to Somalfruit, the SNA ‘warns’ of reprisals in the case of any infringement of the
new rule. 'We went to see Aideed', counters Hussein Guarre. 'He told us that if we could deliver 185,000 boxes in December, he would authorise Somalfruit to export them, which is what we did.'

The key to this strange crossfire? Probably money. Like all businessmen, the banana giants end up greasing the palms of one faction or another. If you consider that a hotel manager pays up to $500 per day in protection money to one of the factions, then Dole or Somalfruit's 'political contribution' will be calculated in function of the fact that they are involved in Somalia's number one export, the only others being cattle and weapons. Dole-Sombana's president Ahmed Duaale confirms having paid $8,000 into Aideed's coffers 'from his own pocket'. He also paid, 'out of patriotism', for the rebuilding of the 'Peace Centre', a luxurious villa where Aideed holds audience. At Somalfruit, they are less open about their contributions to the SNA, probably less generous than Dole's. In Mogadishu, businessmen estimate that the General, who has no personal fortune, spends around $40,000 per week to maintain his militias. And that he would not survive without the substantial payouts from the banana multinationals.

Note: Thanks to the Norfolk Education and Action for Development Centre for permission to reprint this from their Spring 1995 Newsletter.

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**Economic Prospects for Africa**

*David Seddon*

Output growth for Africa as a whole in 1994 (c. 2.6 per cent) was better than that of the previous year, but the declining trend of per capita income which started in 1990 continued. The improvement on 1993 (when growth was under 1 per cent), however, came from large changes in Morocco and Kenya, and also a general improvement from the boom in commodity prices. Estimates for Africa as a whole by the African Development Bank suggest a growth of output of 3.6 per cent in 1995 and 5 per cent in 1996 and 1997. In the longer term, output is forecast to grow by 4 per cent a year during the period 1995-2004, with several countries expected to outperform this average. These projections imply an annual increase in GDP per capita of around 1 per cent. The IMF country forecasts suggest strong improvements for many countries, including Algeria, Cameroun, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and significant improvements for some of the rest, with a fall in output for Morocco. The IMF predicts a rate of growth for Africa as a whole of 3.7 per cent in 1995. The UN forecasts growth of 3.25 per cent. The consensus forecast is for growth slightly above the rate of population increase.

Much depends on external factors – the structure of growth in world output and trade, demand for and prices of primary commodities as against manufactures, and perhaps especially, financial flows. The terms of trade, however, do not continue to improve and none of the forecasters appears to expect a large inflow of capital. The principal source of improved growth, for many of the forecasters, appears to be 'improvements in domestic policies'.

The African Development Bank, however, in a balanced assessment, argues that
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Economic Prospects for Africa
David Seddon

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The African Development Bank, however, in a balanced assessment, argues that
the difficulties encountered in attracting resources in a more competitive world and in integrating with world markets for goods, savings and capital, coupled with domestic economic and political instability, remain the main impediments to more robust economic growth in Africa.

For all the primary producing developing countries (which include a high proportion of African countries), the pattern of prices expected in the medium term suggests deteriorating trade performance not offset, according to trade volume forecasts, by any net gain in exports to the industrial countries. One consequence of the fall in oil prices in 1994 and of the distribution of the volume changes in world trade, is that African terms of trade and the volume of its exports fell, the only area to see falls. Africa’s external trade represents only 2 per cent of world trade, so the net effect of the Uruguay Round will tend to be, on the global scale, relatively small. However, according to preliminary estimates (according to the African Development Bank) African countries will incur losses of around £2.6 billion annually, as the agreement will erode Africa’s preferences under the Generalised System of Preferences, the Lome Convention and other preferential arrangements. Africa is the only area where the expected effects of the Uruguay Round are likely to prove negative. The implication of the current price forecasts is a continuing need to finance present imbalances or any increase in imports; a more pessimistic forecast would result in a continued strong deterioration in balances, with serious implications for continued indebtedness.

The agreement will tend to raise international food prices and adversely affect the balance of payments of Africa’s net food importers, although the losses from higher costs of imported food have probably already come through. It could be argued that higher food prices might help stimulate domestic food production in those commodities where African countries have a comparative advantage, which would in turn improve the opportunities for diversification.

But the improvement in 1994 from higher commodity prices was highly concentrated in a few countries, notably the producers of coffee and other beverages. Furthermore, to diversify and modernise African production systems, considerable capital investment is required. Unless the current rates of domestic investment, which are low compared to other developing regions, can be reversed, a great deal will depend on encouraging and making good use of foreign investment.

In 1994, private capital flows to developing countries as a whole exceeded official flows. In addition, the composition of private flows also changed to reflect more non-bank resources, including those of trans-national corporations, managed portfolio investments, money market instruments, pension funds and insurance company funds. Relatively stagnant during the second half of the 1980s, private flows began to increase significantly from 1989 onwards, although they remained heavily concentrated in a score or so of countries. Total private capital flows to developing countries reached an estimated £171.5 billion in 1993 ($212.5 billion if Eastern Europe and Central Asia are included), an order of magnitude not seen since the early 1980s. But most African countries failed to share in these resource transfers.

Total capital flows to sub-Saharan Africa increased during the period 1990-1994 from $16.8 billion to $21.8 billion. By contrast flows to Latin America grew from $19.3 billion to $43.3 billion, to Eastern Europe and Central Asia from $18.5 billion to $40.5 billion, and to Asia from $44.7 billion to $121.6 billion. Sub-Saharan Africa benefitted more than any other region from grant aid ($12.5 billion in 1994 out of a total to all developing countries and ‘economies in transition’ of
$30.4), but was significantly lower as regards net flows on long term debt and bonds, net portfolio equity flows and, particularly, net foreign direct investment. While the developing world’s share of direct foreign investment has been rising fast during the first half of the 1990s, the bulk of this has gone to East Asia and the Pacific area (55 per cent) and to Latin America and the Caribbean (24 per cent), with Europe and Central Asia – the ‘economies in transition’ accounting for some 14 per cent. North Africa and the Middle East attracted only 3 per cent, as did sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, foreign direct investment has not only been limited but has also been largely offset by disinvestment by commercial banks.

As a consequence of this general and widespread dearth of foreign capital, earlier declines in debt and debt service ratios have been wholly or partly reversed, leaving the debt ratio only somewhat lower in 1994 than in 1986 and the debt service ratio higher. Of the 32 countries identified as severely indebted low-income countries (SILICs), 25 are in sub-Saharan Africa: Burundi, Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire and Zambia. Of these, eight (Burundi, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda) have debt-servicing commitments to the international financial institutions equivalent to more than 15 per cent of export earnings.

The debt situation of the SILICs can only be assessed in the context of overall financial flows in and out of these countries. SILICs have not benefitted from the recent surge in foreign direct investment. Negative transfers have been avoided because of much increased grant flows (rising from $3.4 billion 1980 to $10.6 billion in 1993). But the increased volume of grants is no substitute for action on debt, for two reasons. First, if grants are diverted into debt-servicing, imports and growth will be retarded. Second, there can be no guarantee that grant flows will be sustained – indeed, with evidence of an ‘aid crisis’ and donor disillusionment with aid to Africa, reliance on grants looks increasingly risky – and they cannot therefore be relied upon for debt servicing.

It is evident that, although creditors have provided increasingly concessional terms for the poorest indebted countries, they have not fully come to terms with the limited debt-servicing capabilities of the SILICs; there is still a need for greater debt relief. At the same time, there is a pressing need for direct foreign investment and other capital flows directed towards improving the infrastructural and production capacity of African economies.

According to UNCTAD, foreign direct investment inflows to developing countries were $80 billion in 1994, up 13 per cent from the previous year, but indicating a levelling off after huge increases in 1992 and 1993. Foreign direct investment in the developing world has been historically concentrated in a handful of countries, although the number of these has been increasing over the last decade or so. The major beneficiaries have tended to be in East Asia and the Pacific (most recently in China, in particular), but investment in Latin America is now also rising, as is investment in India. Foreign direct investment has not taken off in Africa as it has in other regions – inflows to the region have remained at around $2bn
since 1987. As a consequence, Africa’s share of foreign direct investment has declined to around 3 per cent. Furthermore, investment has tended to be concentrated heavily in the mineral producing countries, with Nigeria, Angola, Morocco and Egypt together accounting for the bulk of all foreign direct investment inflows to Africa in recent years. Over half of the foreign direct investment in Africa is in the primary sector – a much higher proportion than in other regions.

Particularly significant in this regard is South Africa. Following heavy foreign involvement in the previous two decades, South Africa received virtually no foreign investment during the 1980s. There were high hopes of a reversal of this trend after the fall of apartheid, but foreign direct investment seems not to have revived – the latest estimate for all long-term inflows in 1994 is under $0.4 billion. In fact, South Africa has experienced a net outflow of private capital during the 1990s of between $5 million and $9 million a year. Data from the South African Reserve Bank up to the end-1992 indicate that 40 per cent of the foreign direct investment committed in South Africa was in the manufacturing sector, with another 30 per cent in the finance and real estate sector. But at the moment, it seems that foreign investors are waiting before making further commitments. UNCTAD identifies a number of other countries with potential for inward investment, including Ghana, Mauritius, Senegal, Tunisia and Uganda (among others), but for the time being, the prospects look generally gloomy.

David Seddon is at the School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia

Note: This Briefing is based on papers made available to participants at a recent conference held at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London.

Bibliographic Note


Editors Note: In 1991 debt in sub-Saharan African amounted to $152bn, which is 101% of the total GDP. Military expenditure was 43% of the total spent on health and education combined. Examples include Somalia (200%), Ethiopia (190%), Angola (208%), Zimbabwe (66%) and Nigeria (33%). Source: UNDP.

The World Bank at the ASA (African Studies Association) Meetings

The following brief statement was inspired by the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa (CAFA) at the 37th Annual ASA Meeting which was held in Toronto in 1994. For amplification of their position, see the spring 1995 newsletter:

We, the undersigned, urge the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association (ASA) to review its policy which allows the World Bank to hold panels at the ASA’s annual meetings. The World Bank is a bank; it is neither a scholarly nor an educational institution. It has been especially responsible for the degradation of the university system in Africa. Therefore it is neither academically nor morally qualified to participate at the ASA. Please send signed petitions to the coordinators of the Committee for Academic Freedom at one of the following addresses. They will send the signed petitions to ASA’s Board of Directors. CAFA coordinators are:

George Caffentzis, Department of Philosophy, University of Southern Maine, 96 Falmouth St., Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104-9300; Silvia Federici, New College, 130 Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11550-1090, US.
since 1987. As a consequence, Africa’s share of foreign direct investment has declined to around 3 per cent. Furthermore, investment has tended to be concentrated heavily in the mineral producing countries, with Nigeria, Angola, Morocco and Egypt together accounting for the bulk of all foreign direct investment inflows to Africa in recent years. Over half of the foreign direct investment in Africa is in the primary sector – a much higher proportion than in other regions.

Particularly significant in this regard is South Africa. Following heavy foreign involvement in the previous two decades, South Africa received virtually no foreign investment during the 1980s. There were high hopes of a reversal of this trend after the fall of apartheid, but foreign direct investment seems not to have revived – the latest estimate for all long-term inflows in 1994 is under $0.4 billion. In fact, South Africa has experienced a net outflow of private capital during the 1990s of between $5 million and $9 million a year. Data from the South African Reserve Bank up to the end-1992 indicate that 40 per cent of the foreign direct investment committed in South Africa was in the manufacturing sector, with another 30 per cent in the finance and real estate sector. But at the moment, it seems that foreign investors are waiting before making further commitments. UNCTAD identifies a number of other countries with potential for inward investment, including Ghana, Mauritius, Senegal, Tunisia and Uganda (among others), but for the time being, the prospects look generally gloomy.

David Seddon is at the School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia

Note: This Briefing is based on papers made available to participants at a recent conference held at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London.

Bibliographic Note


Editors Note: In 1991 debt in sub-Saharan African amounted to $152bn, which is 101% of the total GDP. Military expenditure was 43% of the total spent on health and education combined. Examples include Somalia (200%), Ethiopia (190%), Angola (208%), Zimbabwe (66%) and Nigeria (33%). Source: UNDP.

The World Bank at the ASA (African Studies Association) Meetings

The following brief statement was inspired by the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa (CAFA) at the 37th Annual ASA meeting which was held in Toronto in 1994. For amplification of their position, see the spring 1995 newsletter:

We, the undersigned, urge the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association (ASA) to review its policy which allows the World Bank to hold panels at the ASA’s annual meetings. The World Bank is a bank; it is neither a scholarly nor an educational institution. It has been especially responsible for the degradation of the university system in Africa. Therefore it is neither academically nor morally qualified to participate at the ASA. Please send signed petitions to the coordinators of the Committee for Academic Freedom at one of the following addresses. They will send the signed petitions to ASA’s Board of Directors. CAFA coordinators are:

George Caffentzis, Department of Philosophy, University of Southern Maine. 96 Falmouth St., Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104-9300; Silvia Federici, New College, 130 Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11550-1090, US.
The State in Africa: Indigenous and Modern Aspects

An international seminar was held in Paris on 18-19 May 1995 hosted by GEMDEV (see separate section) with Codesria and a Canadian African Studies team. GEMDEV will be coordinating the papers which we hope to review when they are published. ROAPE attended as an observer and what follows is a brief summary of the programme.

Scientific Resume: A working group was set up in 1993, within the context of the GEMDEV general research programme on 'The State and citizenship', to structure the efforts of the Parisian research teams. Their research programme, called 'Rethinking the African State', was submitted, discussed, amended and finally accepted as the framework for triangular international research programme linking the Canadian Association for African Studies represented by Bonnie Campbell and Bogumil Jewsiewicki, CODESRIA represented by its research director, Mamadou Diouf and GEMDEV represented by E. Le Roy and P. Marchesin.

Within this perspective, two scientific conferences were planned, with the conclusions of the first, held on the 17 November 1994, determining the objectives of the colloquium to be held on the 18th and 19th of May 1995, which we [Gemdev] are responsible for organising. It is for these reasons, that this resume is presented in two stages: the conclusions drawn from the first phase of research; the directions and the programme for the second phase.

The First Phase (1993-1994): The approach adopted by each of the partners was to use internal seminars to collect the most radical analyses with the idea of juxtaposing them in two phases, at an analytical level in November 1994 and at a synthetic level in May 1995.

The Aims of the Meeting

The organisation of an international multi-disciplinary seminar of the problems of the contemporary African state falls within a long established tradition of cooperation between the various partners who are invited to present their most recent research on a question which seems increasingly sensitive: what is the place and the role of the African state.

GEMDEV has collected numerous studies and articles on this question since 1985, however changes in the social and political situation, the new reality presented by the movement towards the democratisation of societies, the renewed demand for a law based State are all factors which help to explain why the question of the State is still hotly debated and 'problematic'.

The approach adopted by GEMDEV has been to design a two-year research programme which aims to tackle the question of the State using a three level problem solving method (national, international and local) and gives priority to the points of view of the people involved rather than the theories of development specialists. This way of analysing the State, in the 'interval' between multilateral and bilateral interventions by funding agencies and reactions, whether active or not, of the local populations, should allow us to identify the real needs which should be met.

We consider that in order to give concrete meaning to the old saw 'less State but better State' the African state must be reconceived around the primary functions of sovereignty but that its institutional implementation must conform to a new idea of the law based state. The conclusions drawn form the meeting on 17 of November 1994:

Mainly, the work verified two results of GEMDEV analyses:
That rethinking the African State must be conceptualised around three main requirements, which reappear at three different levels and which are thus open to being made complementary; the need for efficiency, which was particularly emphasised by international organisations and funding agencies and could be a condition for adjustment.

The need for legitimacy, expressed by those with political responsibilities and political activists at national level, but which can only arise from more ambitious social projects than those conceive by the democracy movement.

The need for security, which should be approached in a dynamic way as a process of providing producers and citizens with security at local level, in particular so that primitive capital accumulation, without which there can be no development, can occur.

However the institutional implementation of these requirements around the 'core functions of sovereignty' meets a whole host of obstacles. The work done on 17 of November highlighted three aspects which needed to be looked at.

1) The international and national bodies' 'institutional' ideas provoke crises of legitimacy and therefore efficiency. The 'modern' idea of the institution needs to be thought out again;

2) The social dynamics actually practised in Africa are further and further removed from the game plan of the modern world controlled by the State.

3) The social norm which becomes evident, which appears deviant in relation to the officially promoted and often codified norm, expresses, in the form of 'habits', the wish of the majority of African citizens to live according to an existential contradiction: to benefit from a law based State in terms of the values socially shared by the majority (but ignored by the elites, who are too westernised form this point of view).

Therefore it is around these themes that we will centre our research programme with an eye to the syntheses of the second phase (1994-1995).

The Second Phase (November 1994-May 1995): The GEMDEV and CODESRIA's studies, as presented at the seminar on 17 November, show we are faced with a massive challenge. On the one hand to give substance to the requirement for a law-based State by enunciating the regulatory principles which give a concrete form to functions of sovereignty which the African state must assume if it is to respond to the needs we have identified; on the other, to express those needs in conformity with the values and the wishes of the majority, which means the official political options must be reformulated and enlarged. Conversely to what is often said, this rediscovery of identities does not lead to ethnicity (tribalism) but to the construction of open identities, 'chosen'. Given these perspectives, we have given the meeting in May its very pertinent title

Justification: The State is the result of a transfer of institutional models which took place at the end of the colonial period. Like all grafts, it did not take very easily. Because of this after the various ups and downs of the last thirty years, the State can only meet the requirements of African citizens on two conditions:

1) that it becomes indigenous, i.e. more sensitive to the values and the daily problems which are inherent to the African dimension of societies. In this perspective, a change must occur from 'domesticating the State', which has already taken place for the most part, to true assimilation, in the biological sense of phagocytosis.
2) but also that those ‘African’ values become open to the global economy and take the global systems of communication into account. This is the invention of an African modernity, analogous to those tried out in South-East Asia, which must be given a form.

Programme: We will organise seminars to prepare for the colloquium in May on a local basis from December 1994 to April 1995, with the aim of arriving at thematic syntheses about the three types of requirements which are considered to be fundamental.

2) We will organise the colloquium in May 1995 in such a way that: three half-day closed sessions will be used to compare and contrast the results obtained by the Parisian (GEMDEV), Canadian (ACEA) and African (CODESRIA) teams for each of the themes (Efficiency, Legitimacy, Security), so as to identify the core functions of sovereignty the Law should then enshrine.

The results of this work will be communicated to the scientific community and published taking into account the discussions which take place on the fourth half-day session dedicated to a public debate.

Translated by Phil Grantham

L’etat en Afrique: indigenisations et modernités (sommaire)


En Afrique, l’Etat, importé a l’époque coloniale, n’a pas fait l’objet de transpositions institutionnelles pour l’adapter aux ‘espaces temps’ des sociétés africaines.

Il en est résulte des dysfonctionnements plus ou moins graves qui ont pu conduire, à l’époque contemporaine, a rejeter l’Etat avec ses excès autoritaires ou néo-patrimonialistes.

Une telle tendance, souvent liée aux politiques d’ajustement structurel, est manifestement aussi excessive. Un besoin d’Etat existe. Mais comment repondre a l’exigence de ‘moins d’Etat mais mieux d’Etat’?

A l’initiative du GEMDEV, des équipes parisiennes, africaines (coordonnees par les CODESRIA) et canadiennes (ACEA) se sont mobilisées autour d’une démarche cherchant a analyser les conditions d’une ‘indigénisation’ de l’Etat, a partir d’un certain nombre de contraintes émergeant aux échelles internationale, nationale et locale et en fonction des pratiques des différents acteurs.

A l’issue de trois demi-journées en seminaire fermé, une restitution publique des démarches et des conclusions sera assurée par deaux personnes-resssource, Bernard Husson (CFSI France) et Jean-Emmanuel Pondi (IRIC Cameroun), compété par de courtes interventions de chercheurs des differentes equipes.

Un large debat permettra ensuite d’enrichir notre réflexion commune en vue de la preparation d’une publication de l’ensemble de ces travaux.

Nous souhaitons une large mobilisation de la communauté scientifique pour participer à l’enrichissement de cette demarche délicate mais determinante pour l’avenir des sociétés africaines.

Introduction to GEMDEV

GEMDEV, the scientific association for the study of ‘World Economics, the Third World and Development’, is a voluntary federation of research teams and staff teaching doctoral programmes at universities and colleges in and around Paris. It was formed in 1983-84, with the support of the Ministry of Education and the
Scientific and Technical bureau of Ministry of Research and Technology and is at present overseen by the Ministry for Higher Education and Research. Its activities are on several levels:

- it disseminates information about the MA, M.Sc, doctoral teaching programmes and the research carried out by the participating teams.

- it organises debates, discussions and presents updates reports on the research topics in GEMDEV areas of competence.

- it distributes publication and publicises colloquiaums and seminars, etc.

GEMDEV works in close co-operation with other French research teams, apart from those in the Parisian basin, with foreign teams (Switzerland, Belgium, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Brazil, etc.) and/or with international institutions and organisations such as OECD Development Centre, CODESRIA and EADI.

CODESRIA

The following documents are excerpted from the Codesria Bulletin, P.O. Box 3304, Dakar, Senegal. The first is from their 1995 editorial; the second is the Preamble from the 1990 Kampala Declaration - as relevant today as it was then.

Editorial

The year 1995 marks CODESRIA's 8th General Assembly and Symposium dealing with the theme, 'Crises, Conflicts and Transformations: Responses and Perspectives'. It is also the year of two major global conferences: the World Summit on Social Development and Beyond (Copenhagen) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing). The concerns of both events fit into the research areas and questions that CODESRIA over the years has been working on in her multinational and national research networks, conferences and training institutes. These also converge with some of the questions and issues that will occupy the 8th General Assembly albeit in a different and more profound sets of discussions.

As we prepare for the General Assembly and these two major global events, we are reminded again of the mandate of CODESRIA that demands that the questions that are asked and the issues confronted reflect in a significant way the genuine concerns of the majority of African peoples and intellectuals.

Thus issues like democracy, poverty, ethnicity and the wider questions of social integration and exclusion, the gender question, the issue of productive employment and the need not only to 'reclaim development in Africa' but also to integrate important issues of social and cultural development back on the global agenda. But they are issues which one must repeat have never left CODESRIA's attention. They are also issues that cannot and must not be taken at their face value. They must be relentlessly and forcefully problematised and re-examined from the point of view of their relevance to the African condition and needs.

It is these questions, though not directly that some of the pieces in this issue of the Bulletin deal with either as responses to ongoing debates in previous issues or as entirely new concerns. The pieces tackle the questions of ethnicity, gender and the nature of the production of African knowledge in an academic and intellectual manner which might not be exactly the way some policy makers, politicians and activists might want them confronted.

However, the fact remains that an important element of dealing with these social questions is to rigorously confront them intellectually. More than ever, if there is anything that the major global conferences since the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 have
lacked, it is a consistent and coherent African intellectual input.

For CODESRIA therefore this is a challenge which we intend to meet not only by identifying areas of mutual interest between the works of African social scientists and the concerns of these conferences, but also by putting forward in an accessible manner African intellectual contributions of relevance to these questions.

Editorial

L'année 1995 est marquée par la 8e Assemblée Générale de la CODESRIA ainsi qu'un symposium sur le thème: «Crises, conflits et transformations: réponses et perspectives». Cette année est également marquée par deux conférences mondiales majeures - le Sommet Mondial sur le Développement Social et l'Avenir (Copenhague) et la Quatrième Conférence Mondiale des Femmes (Beijing). Les préoccupations des deux réunions se situent dans les domaines étudiés depuis des années par la CODESRIA grâce à ses réseaux de recherche nationaux et multinationaux, ses conférences et ses instituts de formation. Ces préoccupations convergent avec certaines des questions que se posera la 8e Assemblée Générale, bien que les délibérations de cette dernière seront différentes et plus approfondies.

La préparation de l'Assemblée Générale et de ces deux événements mondiaux nous amène à souligner le mandat de la CODESRIA qui exige que les questions et les problèmes soient posés d'une manière qui traduisent d'une façon significative les vrais intérêts de la majorité des peuples et des intellectuels africains.

Ainsi, les problèmes tels que la démocratie, la pauvreté,ethnicité et les questions plus générales concernant l'intégration et l'exclusion sociale, la question féminine, le problème de l'emploi productif et la nécessité non seulement de «reprendre le développement en Afrique» mais aussi d'intégrer les problèmes importants du développement social et culturel se retrouvent de nouveau à l'ordre du jour international. Mais il ne faut pas oublier que ces problèmes n'ont jamais échappé à l'attention de la CODESRIA et qu'ils ne peuvent pas et ne doivent pas être traités tels qu'ils se présentent. Ils doivent être vigoureusement réproblematisés et réexaminés sans cesse du point de vue de leur pertinence pour la condition africaine et ses besoins.

Certains articles dans ce numéro du Bulletin traitent ces questions, d'une façon indirecte ou par le biais des réponses aux délibérations ouvertes dans des numéros précédents ou par celui des débats entièrement nouveaux. Les études confrontent les problèmes de l'ethnicité, du genre et de la nature de la production de connaissances africaines d'une façon intellectuelle et universitaire qui n'est peut être pas celle qui plairait le plus à certains décideurs, politiciens et activistes. Néanmoins, il reste vrai qu'un aspect important du traitement des ces questions sociales est leur confrontation rigoureuse et intellectuelle. De plus en plus, ce qui manque aux conférences mondiales majeures depuis la Conférence de Rio sur le Développement et l'Environnement de 1992 est un apport intellectuel africain cohérent et consistant.

Pour la CODESRIA donc ceci est un pari que nous voulons relever non seulement en identifiant les domaines d'intérêt communs entre les travaux des chercheurs africains dans les sciences sociales et les préoccupations de ces conférences mais aussi en proposant d'une façon accessible des contributions intellectuelles africaines pertinentes à ces problèmes.

The Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom & Social Responsibility

Preamble: Intellectual freedom in Africa is currently threatened in an unprecedented
degree. The historically produced and persistent economic, political and social crisis of our continent continues to undermine development in all spheres. The imposition of unpopular structural adjustment programmes has been accompanied by increased political repression, widespread poverty and intense human suffering.

African people are responding to these intolerable conditions by intensifying their struggles for democracy and human rights. The struggle for intellectual freedom is an integral part of the struggle in our people for human rights. Just as the struggle of the African people for democracy is being generalised, so too is the struggle of African intellectuals for intellectual freedom intensifying.

Aware that the African states are parties to international and regional human rights instruments including the African Charter for Human and People's Rights and convinced that we, participants in the 'Symposium on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Intellectuals' and members of the African intellectual community, have an obligation both to fight for our rights as well as contribute to the right struggle of our people, we met in Kampala to set norms and standards to guide the exercises of intellectual freedom and remind ourselves of our social responsibility (29 November 1990).

Declaration de Kampala sur la Liberte Intellectuelle et la Responsabilite Sociale

Preambule: La liberté intellectuelle est plus que jamais menacée en Afrique. Engendrée par l’histoire, la crise économique, politique et sociale persistante de notre continent continue de saper les efforts de développement dans tous les domaines. L’imposition de programmes d’ajustement structurel impopulaires s’est accompagnée d’une répression politique accrue, une pauvreté généralisée et des souffrances humaines intenses.

Face à cette situation intolérable, les peuples africains ont réagi en intensifiant leurs luttes pour la démocratie et les droits de l’homme. La lutte en faveur de la liberté intellectuelle est une partie intégrante de la lutte pour les droits de l’homme que mène notre peuple. La lutte des intellectuels africains pour la liberté s’amplifie autant que se généralise la lutte du peuple africain pour la démocratie.

Conscients du fait que les Etats africains sont signataires des instruments internationaux et régionaux, dont la Charte Africaine des Droits de l’Homme et des Peuples et convaincus que nous, participants au symposium sur la Liberté Académique et la Responsabilité Sociale des Intellectuels et membres de la communauté intellectuelle africaine, avons une obligation à la fois de lutter pour nos droits et de contribuer à la lutte de notre peuple pour ses droits, nous nous sommes rencontrés à Kampala (Ouganda), afin d’établir des normes et standards qui gouverneront l’exercice de la liberté intellectuelle et de nous rappeler notre responsabilité sociale en tant qu’intellectuels.

Par conséquent, nous avons adopter la Déclaration de Kampala sur la Liberté intellectuelle et la Responsabilité sociale, en ce 29e jour du mois de Novembre de l’an mille neuf cent quatre vingt dix.

Puisse la Déclaration être un porte étoilard autour duquel se rallie la communauté intellectuelle africaine afin d’affirmer son autonomie et de s’acquitter de sa responsabilité envers le Peuple de notre Continent.

This book is an outcome of Codesria's national study group on Algeria. Ten researchers each from a different perspective give an empirical and analytical contribution to the understanding of what was later to be known as the Algerian crisis. The manuscript was ready some months before the upheaval in October 1988 which was the starting point for the current period of turmoil.

All contributions focus on the challenge of modernity that is defined as the goal of the process of modernisation and it results in a common concern with the specificities of the Algerian state and society and the relationship between them whether in the field of agriculture or of industry mass media or town and country planning.

It is the ambition of this work to contribute to a new approach to development. In his introduction, the editor talks about 'modernity as the capacity of a given social body to face the problems imposed on it by its history, even if on occasion it cannot solve them' (p. 5). The State, the Nation, the Society: 'these three corners of the political triangle that emerged from the Second World War ... have been brought back to the centre of deliberation', and are in the Algerian case.

The first group of contributions focus on the societal effects of what was once presented as the central point of Algerian development planning, i.e. extensive industrialisation based on income from oil and gas exports. The economist Rabah Abdoun shows how industrial production has never succeeded in imposing a wage nexus in the society, i.e. a dynamic economic relationship between production, wages and consumption. Said Chikhi, labour sociologist, studies the same issue in its effects on the labour market and labour relations in the industrial plants, while Djillali Liabes, political scientist and specialist on Algeria's private entrepreneurs, highlights the reasons for increasing competition and intensified conflicts among public and private managers. This is done through a study of the evolution of legislation governing public and private enterprises. The article on Algerian agriculture by Slimane Bedrani, although concentrating on the new policy developed in the 1980s to combat the poor results of earlier central planning and state-controlled cooperatives, also contributes to the discussion of societal effects of the state's development planning. Agriculture was given a fundamental task – never fulfilled – as a market for industrial outputs and as a producer of food for the urban and industrial masses.

Another group of contributions address directly the sociological and ideological changes underway in Algeria. Abderrahmane Jiles details demographic evolution and policy stressing the regional and social differences within the country. Mohamed Dahmanie examines the very voluntarist programme for town and country planning, and Brahim Brahimi reviews the principles and the reality of the right to information in Algeria. Three more articles within this group develop a more historical and analytical approach. Ali El Kenz examines the evolution of the national consciousness during the last
decades, and Mahmoud Bennoune assesses the socio-historical foundation of the Algerian state which dates back as far as the pre-colonial period. Both these authors stress 'the beylical nature' of the state, resulting from the history of foreign states (Ottoman and French) cut off from the surrounding society and often rejected by it. To El Kenz the first period after independence was an exception to this historical model, while the 1980s has witnessed a return to this military, oligarchic state, looked upon with suspicion by many Algerians. Finally, Amin Khan, writing about Algerian intellectuals and the role they play, goes back both to a pre-colonial Islamic history and even more to the links between the intelligentsia and the liberation movement. He shows in particular that no space has ever existed for intellectuals except those experts serving the government, but also that some changes have been underway since the beginning of the 1980s.

The articles in this book have as their general framework of theoretical reference, what might be named the Algerian model of development or the theory of economic development based on industrial supply, with a priority given to heavy industry. While implementation of this development policy is not common and the studies might then seem difficult to link to a more general approach, it is clear first that this model has been extensively theorised and discussed (not only within Algeria, but as a model for other developing countries) and second when the contributions put into question the model by showing empirically the manifold effects and independent changes in Algerian society, they do propose a more comprehensive approach to the study of development issues and studies more generally.

Other articles have as their frame of reference either a regional approach, linking them to the discussion of the history and anthropology of society and state in North Africa or in the Arab world, or more generally in Islamic countries. Others have an explicit reference to general discussions of their topics, e.g. the role of intellectuals in society, freedom of press as compared to the right to information, and goals of physical planning, which might make them more easily directly useful for general comparative analysis. All articles are well documented. Primary sources are dominant and in some cases authors are using their own previous analysis of those sources.

This work is without doubt highly relevant for the understanding of societal relations, change and development in Algeria and more generally in the north of Africa. This book also provides in English a framework and approach to help understand the dramatic events which occurred in Algeria after its publication. For the case of Algeria this cannot now be duplicated, as political violence, preannounced by the book, has killed one of the authors and chased others into exile.


The dominant theme in this book is the nature of academic feminism in southern Africa. The authors try to situate it in relation to mainstream Anglo-Saxon feminism, using converging typologies (radical, bourgeois, liberal, nationalist, marxist, post-structuralist and third-world feminism). The authors examine different disciplines (economics, sociology, history etc.) quoting the most important among contributions as the problematisation of the gender issue, which have highlighted the oppression or domi-
nation of women, or treated the issue of the sexual division of labour or the devalorisation of the image of women, or their occultation.

From this basis the authors want to define an approach which could be appropriate for future research in Southern Africa. Their hypothesis is that mainstream perspectives have not integrated the gender question and accordingly failed to contribute solutions to under-development. Their own proposition is to deconstruct mainstream sciences and reconstruct it taking into account the gender bias. At the same time they aim to investigate the relevance of these concepts within an African context. Finally they discuss possible fields and source material to use in such a research process (scientific works, oral testimonies, art, literature, music). A contribution by Rudo Gaidzanwa also includes an analysis of the history of women’s struggles in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Tuoane Manaana’s contribution is a thorough presentation of the integration of the gender concept into economic theory. She proposes the necessity of desegregating data in order to quantify gender relations and evaluate economic policies. An article by Patricia McFadden, applies a problematic in terms of gender relations to the study of the AIDS issues.

To evaluate these contributions it is necessary to refer to the books stated objective which is to ‘re-define gender and clarify conceptual and theoretical frameworks of gender analysis within the Southern African perspective’.

It is an ambitious project conditioned by a thorough knowledge of the different disciplines and internal debates. With the exception perhaps of the contribution by Manaana the contributions are not written by specialists, the different disciplines are just evoked, their conceptualisation rapidly described and the debates only touched upon. Quite evidently it is not possible in one article to look seriously into economics, sociology, political science, history, literature, biology, medicine etc. Yet the original contribution given in the analysis by McFadden and the historical elements by Gaidzanwa are an exception. They stress the importance of convincing the reader of the necessity to integrate the ‘gender’ dimension into scientific works concerning the region. This is principally done with the help of two types of arguments: women’s status as victims within several dimensions (gender relations, colonisation, the post-colonial state, development and adjustment programmes); the failure of all existing development models in those countries.

The objective is in fact more to turn those arguments into evidence than to begin the elaboration of a scientific approach. There are theoretical perspectives, but they are difficult to evaluate because they are generally just mentioned at the end of the articles and not at all drawn out. The content of many of the articles is more of a programme than a formulation of real theoretical alternatives. Trying to integrate everything within gender relations and to be exhaustive, nothing new or original is contributed in the other general articles. In fact it would have been more fruitful if each researcher had treated one point thoroughly instead of several trying to make a critical synthesis of Western feminist approaches which are already the object of a huge literature. There are also repetitions as the topic of each article is not clearly circumscribed. Four among them have, for example, a section on ‘women in development’ (pp. 20, 47, 86, 144).

With the exceptions already mentioned no new empirical findings are produced; most sources are secondary. Contributions on gender issues have however been quite extensively and exhaustively studied and a critical and synthetical presentation has been given. An effort has been made to quote if possible
African sources and use them as much as possible. Bibliographies at the end of each article are well furnished, but it is a pity that the Authors' Index at the end of the book is incomplete (in one page only, p. 89). There are 15 references which are not in the index.

Inga Brandell is in Stockholm and Fatiha Talahitte is in Paris.

And Finally ...

Erratum: ‘Manufacturing Consensus: (Geo)political Knowledge and Policy-based Lending’ in ROAPE No. 62. On page 536 I included a discussion of the work of Laski by David Slater. I argued that Laski was a pro-market thinker, but I now realise that I mis-read Slater's interpretation. Indeed, Laski was highly sceptical of market mechanisms and I apologise to both his memory and David Slater for my misinterpretation. Giles Mohan, University of Central Lancashire, UK.

Conferences

Transitions in West Africa: Towards 2000 and Beyond, 1 – 3 September 1995, at the University of Central Lancashire in association with the African Studies Association, UK.

The papers will be on the following themes: democratisation; West Africa and the diaspora; the neglected rural sector; gender and empowerment; indigenous alternatives to neo-liberalism; environmental management; globalisation and neo-liberalism; wars and intervention; the regional question; religion and cultural politics.

Contact Dr Tunde Zack-Williams, Dept. of Historical and Critical Studies, or Dr Giles Mohan, Dept. of Environmental Management, University of Central Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE, UK.


Provisional Programme includes: Conflict & Environmental Change; Coping with Environmental Change; Structural Adjustment & International Agencies; Exploitation of Natural Resources; Cultural Perceptions of Crisis; Food Security; Pastoralism.

Editors Note

During the past year we've had a flood, two burglaries in which the computers, back-ups and miscellaneous equipment was taken and now we've had to move premises (still at the same box number, though). This all happened as we were getting issues 61 and 62 to press.

As you can imagine, we have been struggling to reconstruct files and all the data that a publishing office maintains. Please bear with us a little longer and apologies to all those who are waiting to hear from us. We should be back on schedule by the end of the year. Please also note that our new phone number is (0)114 + 267-9660; the fax is 267-9661; e-mail: roape@mcrl.poptel.org.uk. Look for us on the world-wide web at the end of the summer!

In issue No. 63 edited by Bonnie Campbell and Trevor Parfitt, the title should have read, 'Virtual Adjustment: Whose Reality?'. Also in issue no. 63, we began to focus on French-speaking Africa which is continued in this issue. We hope this proves a useful contribution. CA & JB •
And Finally ... 

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Contact Dr Tunde Zack-Williams, Dept. of Historical and Critical Studies, or Dr Giles Mohan, Dept. of Environmental Management, University of Central Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE, UK.


Provisional Programme includes: Conflict & Environmental Change; Coping with Environmental Change; Structural Adjustment & International Agencies; Exploitation of Natural Resources; Cultural Perceptions of Crisis; Food Security; Pastoralism.

Editors Note

During the past year we’ve had a flood, two burglaries in which the computers, back-ups and miscellaneous equipment was taken and now we’ve had to move premises (still at the same box number, though). This all happened as we were getting issues 61 and 62 to press.

As you can imagine, we have been struggling to reconstruct files and all the data that a publishing office maintains. Please bear with us a little longer and apologies to all those who are waiting to hear from us. We should be back on schedule by the end of the year. Please also note that our new phone number is (0)114 + 267-9660; the fax is 267-9661; e-mail: roape@mcrl.poptel.org.uk. Look for us on the world-wide web at the end of the summer!

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African sources and use them as much as possible. Bibliographies at the end of each article are well furnished, but it is a pity that the Authors' Index at the end of the book is incomplete (in one page only, p. 89). There are 15 references which are not in the index.

*Inga Brandell* is in Stockholm and *Fatiha Talahite* is in Paris.

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