

Agendas, Past & Future

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This issue marks the 30th anniversary of the birth of *The Review of African Political Economy* in 1974. At the time, its founders were unsure if it would get off the ground and they certainly never thought it would last thirty years! Apart from debate about what its role would be, there were doubts about their own stamina, and about whether successor generations would emerge to take it on. The challenge was set out by Anderson in relation to another *Left Review*:

*... political journals have no choice: to be true to themselves, they must aim to extend their real life beyond the conditions or generations that gave rise to them (Anderson, *New Left Review*, 2000).*

Our first editorial expressed the hope that ROAPE might 'return' to an African base. The founding editors were a disparate group (as Gavin Williams' article spells out). One distinct element had been in Tanzania in its heyday of socialist debate. Others shared a similar 'radical' perspective and had experience in West or Southern Africa. Several, like Ruth First, were simultaneously scholars *and* activists from those regions. Ideologically diverse on many issues, we were all committed to the project of an overtly *political* journal of the left. We were amateurs in running and editing a journal but were determined not to be beholden to grant bodies or commercial publishers and were wedded to the 'self-help' philosophy of the 60s. Thus the Editorial Working Group, as it insisted on calling itself, did its own pasting up of page-proofs to cut down printing bills (this shows in the crude layout of the first issues) and hand-wrote envelopes to subscribers. That we survived this phase owes much to the support of two left publishers Merlin Press (producers of *The Socialist Register*), who gave us a home and an address, and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and its partner Russell Press.

Over thirty years the technology and organisation of production of the journal has been transformed, whilst the pitch and agenda of ROAPE have evolved. Having reached this milestone there is a need to reassess our position in the light of a vastly different global and continental context from that of the 1970s. In Africa, the changes since 1974 have been profound. The primary objectives of the liberation struggle were achieved with the end of apartheid. Yet the realisation of democratic sovereignty and sustained development seem as distant as ever. Several independent states have 'collapsed' or become broken-backed; almost all have succumbed to the economic prescriptions of the Washington Consensus. Internationally, 'imperialism' has become 'globalisation', whilst capital accumulation processes and the

new technologies incorporated in them have generated further 'globalisation'. The Cold War has ended, but instead of ushering in peace, new types of major conflict have ensued. The option (such as it was) and the support offered by 'actually existing socialism' have not been removed. Now the sole superpower, no longer content to be the first among equals, is bent on a brutal restructuring of the international system in its own interests.

The main purpose of this anniversary issue is to signal areas of debate, the better to understand this current conjuncture and what it implies for Africa's prospects, to question the thinking about basic issues that has appeared in the *Review* and in current writings on the left, to ask what it means to be true to ROAPE's original aims in a vastly changed world and what this implies for the practice of political 'solidarity' as one of the explicit original aims of this journal.

The contributions included here reflect some of the key issues in a changed agenda. Building on the first article, in which one of the founding editors reflects on the nature of 'political economy' and the role of ROAPE itself, this editorial attempts to provide some ideas which might be the starting point for our 'renewal'. The current African predicament, which we believe to be as worrying as any during the last fifty years, also offers opportunities to chart a different course from decades of intellectual dependency on western orthodox views. We agree with Williams' rejection of *a priori* theorising and his assertion of the need to draw on a variety of analytical perspectives – those which offer explanations in terms not only of interests and economic forces but also in terms of agency and contingency – and not just of power-holders, African or imperialist, promoting their policy agendas, but of ordinary people struggling to survive.

This requires us to prioritise certain issues that should top a radical agenda, a task that must start from an examination of the changing context and determining what matters most in it.¹ For the editors of this issue, the current African conjuncture and the international disorder in which it is set, suggests five dominant themes in this agenda:

'Globalised capitalism'. An increasingly interlinked and privatised global economy is emerging, marked by massive inequalities, orchestrated by the Washington Consensus, but with outcomes not always as intended. The model of liberalisation sparking foreign, private and productive investment has passed Africa by. Most of the continent is locked into patterns of *primitive accumulation*, to be discussed below.

US Militarism and Unilateralism. The unparalleled military supremacy of a single super-power is being used to redefine the international political system: The US state gives itself the right to intervene anywhere, to change regimes, construct contemporary forms of 'direct' and 'indirect' rule, secure bases and assemble ad hoc military alliances

The Reproduction of Labour and Society. The continued reproduction of primitive accumulation in Africa has shaped the forms of labour and social formations. Most marked are the processes of *de-peasantisation* without full *proletarianisation*, the multiplicity of livelihood sources and distinctive forms of stratification. Profound changes in social structure have been in turn deeply affected by war, AIDS, famine and donor interventions. The changing form

and role of class and gender struggles, of worker and peasant associations and new social movements in resisting or coping with these processes, is evident.

States, State Failure and Conflict. 'Development states' are largely a thing of the past; adjustment policies and privatisation are increasingly forced on those that still have some capacity. Many states have lost effectiveness and legitimacy, and face increasing challenges to their authority. Violent conflict, in various forms, affects about a third of African countries and associated phenomena of ethnic cleansing, genocide, warlords and militias are the new agenda of politics to be critically understood.

Resistance and 'Solidarity' Today. There are new terrains of struggle. A movement for *Global Justice* confronting globalising capitalism has generated protests in Africa. So too has global resistance to US imperialism from anti-war movements, and from the fight-back against invasions and interventions. Africa has also been the site of civil society protests.

A number of these themes are explored in the articles and briefings assembled here, some in detail, others in a preliminary way. For the rest, we hope that this editorial will offer a coherent agenda and stimulate critical debate for future issues. We include here several contributions on US militarism and unilateralism, on problems of social reproduction and a review of solidarity struggles. An agenda for future issues of ROAPE must include further explorations on the nature of 'class' in Africa, and of class and other social formations under prevailing conditions of primitive accumulation. Theoretical and analytical elaboration of the nature of the contemporary African state, a theme covered in these pages in the past, and of the diverse and devastating conflicts that have beset the continent in the last decade, is urgently required. Equally, analyses of the tap-roots of current US strategies towards Africa, of the basic global strategy of which they are part, and the underlying political economy which drives the particular policies of the US state, need to be pursued.

The Continued Relevance of Political Economy

The first article in this anniversary issue provides a reminder of some of the main themes tackled in the first years of the journal, highlighting some of the areas where our contributors pushed debates forward – and some key issues that we overlooked. If ROAPE could be said to have made any lasting input, it has been in helping to chart a particular approach to thinking about Africa's circumstances and challenges. Williams' piece sets the scene for a set of contributions which in diverse ways seek to apply a 'political economy approach' to contemporary African issues.

More basically Williams offers a restatement and reconsideration of the key ideas of a 'political economy' approach that we take as our defining intellectual starting point, and addresses their relevance in the current intellectual climate. Williams calls not for Africa-wide generalisations, but detailed, inter-disciplinary study of specific African realities. He proposes a different stance on the relation between study and practice from that which initially motivated the *Review*, namely to study Africa in order to change it. He questions our original aim of informing policy through identifying a correct development path, remembering that the failures of the national, import-substituting formulae of the first generation of nationalist governments gave way to even more disastrously inappropriate structural adjustment policies. His answer to the acute dilemma facing radical intellectuals is to lay bare

actually existing development policies and their actual outcomes; to criticise not the policies espoused or the motives behind them, but their *consequences*.

His recommendations are not offered as a new paradigm for ROAPE, but to stimulate debates about the practical and intellectual implications of old and new ways of thinking. Thus a priority item on our future agenda is to reconsider the link between analysis and the practice of state and political agencies and, in turn, the role of intellectuals in this dynamic. After a decade of stunned inertia, several contributions have begun to emerge that seek to refocus radical thinking. One of the contributors to this issue, Michael Burawoy, here continues some of the themes that he developed in an earlier paper (2003) in which he called for three basic – and treasured – propositions in classical Marxism to be rethought:

- Instead of the capitalist economy sowing the seeds of its own demise, capitalism creates an active civil society that contains but does not end tendencies toward crisis and contradiction.
- Instead of class struggle intensifying with the polarization of class structure, class struggle is organised on the terrain of civil society (in part through class hegemony).
- Instead of the spontaneous maturing of the conditions of socialism as a result of fetters on the development of capitalist forces of production, socialism is a political project requiring conscious and purposive action and struggle (Burawoy, 2003:213)

These views both complement and challenge Williams and go beyond political economy in an attempt to integrate sociological analysis into a reformulated Marxism.

Capitalism & Imperialism in the 21st Century: the Implications for Africa

Patterns of accumulation are becoming even more 'global', but, as in previous eras, generate their own distinct and geographically varied patterns. They are premised on a fairly explicit, but not always realised, contemporary imperialist strategy for orchestrating the political economies of developing countries. But in correctly stressing this, the contradictory role of capital itself – especially finance capital and the massive illicit economy – should not be overlooked. Many countries, especially in Africa, are systematically disadvantaged and impoverished by contemporary trade regimes and other institutional arrangements, despite the anti-poverty rhetoric. These consequences have generated widespread popular resistance in Africa, and an 'anti-globalisation' movement across the world – the implications of which are central to our discussion of 'solidarity' below.

Analysis of where 'globalisation' is taking Africa seems to suggest that the liberalisation model of opening up the continent to direct foreign investment and trade has eluded Africa. Instead the characteristic patterns of accumulation of the continent remain those of *primitive accumulation*, albeit in new as well as old forms (illegal trade in arms, the looting of natural resources, speculation and criminality, trade in people and so on). Further discussion of how far that thesis fits the facts and its implications is a crucial agenda item.

US Militarism & Unilateralism

Under Bush the post-Cold War pattern of international politics has become clear. The unparalleled military supremacy of a single super-power is being used to redefine international structures, going beyond a hegemonic position in a multilateral system to 'unilateralism'. Under the banner of the 'war on terrorism', itself a meaningless phrase, the US over-rides notions of sovereignty, constructs contemporary forms of 'direct' and 'indirect' rule, and creates ad hoc alliances with strategically placed countries.

Around the world two topics have dominated the discourse of those troubled by the contemporary world situation: US militarism and imperialism, and capitalist globalisation. Following the demonstrations in Seattle in 1999, several truly global and largely spontaneous protests have erupted whenever the dominant international financial institutions meet. More of a network than an old-fashioned 'movement', the 'global justice movement' is not based on any centralised political organ, nor does it have any kind of manifesto. It communicates and mobilises for specific events and purposes employing the tools of modern IT. It embraces a wide range of concerns – environmental, gender, third-world developmental – but there is a common thread of anti-globalisation and even if only implicitly, an anti-capitalist rhetoric. With the preparation for and eventual invasion of Iraq and the build-up of Bush's 'grand coalition' of states (a handful of them African) there has been a massive global anti-war feeling, manifested in the biggest popular protests in half a century.

Gaining strength in all continents, the two movements often intermeshed, involving the same people. In many of the recent outpourings on the two issues, they are addressed as though the international economic forces and the military strategy of the US state were in fact two aspects of the same phenomenon. In its crudest form, this often gave rise to functionalist assumptions that US militarism and unilateralism was the 'necessary' means to achieve a globalised economy or that US 'protectorates' like Iraq or Afghanistan or dependencies like Saudi Arabia or Uzbekistan were simply settings for liberalisation and privatisation. Thus in one informative collection on US militarism (Boggs, 2003), one contributor sums up 'the logic of US intervention' (Parenti) as follows:

In sum, US politico-corporate elites have long struggled to make the world safe for the system of transnational corporate capital accumulation ... To achieve this, a global military machine is essential. The goal is to create a world populated by client states and compliant populations completely open to transnational corporate penetration ...

Socialist Register 2004 is another valuable collection looking at the relationship between US imperialism and global capitalism, but offering a more sophisticated approach that does not assume there is a single coherent agenda. Stating its concern about the 'lack of conceptual tools capable of analysing the nature of imperialism today' and about 'recycling theories developed in a much earlier era,' it explores *how exactly* the phenomenon of US militarism is related to globalised capital accumulation, including contradictions between the two processes.

In a very recent book, *The New Imperialism*, David Harvey pursues the same task of developing a theoretical perspective on these two processes, treating one as deriving from the 'logic of capital' (international economic forces) and the other from the 'logic of territory' (state-based political forces) – two dimensions that have

characterised all stages of modern imperialism. This may offer a productive platform for exploring the inter-related dynamics, and we commend it to readers' attention. We need to explore the juxtaposition of unparalleled military power with the crisis-ridden nature of the US economy, between its political domination of other developed states and its relative economic weakness. Is the use of military power a sign of weakness (as Wallerstein argues, 2003), or a means to a more sustained economic position, primarily by control of the world's oil supplies?

What the two logics imply for the continent, which may be quite different from what they mean for the Middle East or Latin America, can be derived from uncovering their dynamics. Is it correct to conclude, as the Abramovici Briefing and Keenan's article in ROAPE 101 emphasised, that oil is at the centre of what the US and the oil companies want from Africa's new producers – together with the geo-strategic leverage to exert control over oil from Africa, and into the Middle East and beyond? How important are other mineral resources on the shopping list? And beyond these resource and strategic objectives, is there any real interest in Africa at all? If both capital and western capitals are generally indifferent to Africa's marginalisation, how do we explain such seemingly contradictory initiatives as Blair's Commission? Is it a sign of some residual conscience, as Plaut speculates in his Briefing here, or, as Abrahamsen suggests, a shift towards a 'securitisation' of discourse on Africa, or as other British commentators have suggested, essentially a smoke-screen for his government's failures, notably in Iraq?

Class & the Reproduction of Labour & Society

ROAPE's founders set out a series of issues for analysis with regard to class. This agenda had its critics (charges of '*narodnism*' and of ignoring the prospects for socialist class struggle surfaced from time to time, for example) but, looking back, it is remarkable to what extent these questions and debates set the agenda for the left in analysing Africa.

A key area of consideration concerned the prospects and problems confronting the mass of peasants and workers on the continent. The founding editors sought to examine the extent to which the peasantry and working class might be able to develop a politics challenging colonial capitalism and neo-colonial subordination. Could development strategies be pursued which might promise the peasantry some way out of poverty and famine? Could the African working class develop a radical political agenda or was it compromised by what was perceived as its 'labour aristocracy' position within the post-colonial social formation? Above all, could African workers and peasants, linked together through migrant labour as *worker-peasants*, become a force for radical social transformation? The analysis developed in these pages and elsewhere, by Harold Wolpe (see Burawoy's tribute here) and others (Van Onselen, Burawoy himself) had shown how the process of *migrantisation* rather than *proletarianisation* of labour allowed capital to impose part of the costs of reproduction of labour on the indigenous modes of production in the rural areas and so to set wage rates *below* the cost of subsistence and reproduction of labour power - below the level therefore which Marx had identified as the lowest at which the working class could survive. Various contributions to the journal sought to examine how far the traditional political weakness of migrant workers and the 'conservative' tendencies of a 'labour aristocracy' might be transcended in the struggle against exploitation.

Conversely there was a sustained consideration of the role of national bourgeoisies and the possibilities, if any, that they might use the post-colonial state to challenge neo-colonial structures and pursue substantive anti-imperialist strategies. Was this class 'nationalist' or 'comprador'? Was its goal the fundamental re-orientation of African economies in order to move away from the export-enclave pattern of dependent development or did it simply want to appropriate petty bourgeois forms of property for itself? Could it lead a mass democratic movement capable of weakening the dominance of imperial capital in Africa? Was its class project aimed at winning national sovereignty and promoting a sustainable bourgeois 'revolution' or was it more concerned with negotiating better terms and conditions for itself within global capitalism? It is to the credit of most of the founding editors of the *Review* that they were sceptical of the capabilities of this class from the start and expressed at best a *critical* support for its efforts.

Since those early years, class analysis has fallen on hard times in Africa as elsewhere in the world. So too class politics. The change reflects the changed global and intellectual environment we already noted; the same process that reshaped the capitalist world economy and the role of the imperialist state has also rendered socialist politics peripheral and largely disarmed its intellectual project. The world crisis of the 1970s and 1980s opened the door for neo-liberal economics and armed the metropolitan capitalist class in defence of its own interests. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War left this class in charge of the only global superpower and willing to use its power to try to impose its hegemony. In the face of the new assertiveness of the right came an accompanying timidity on the left, culminating in full-scale intellectual retreat. Those who had once professed themselves Marxists and anti-Stalinists now found themselves fearful of remaining Marxists in the wake of the collapse of Stalinism (Geras, 1990:32). They joined 'the Great Moving Right Show' (Geras, 1986:xvii). The retreat is most clearly represented in post-modernist sensibility, where class divisions and exploitation are no longer fundamental problems, replaced instead by a reformist discourse happy to subordinate itself to the rule of neo-liberalism and to assert the universality of liberal values. As Wood (1990: 60) observes:

Just when more than ever we need a ... Marx to reveal the inner workings of the capitalist system, or a[n] ... Engels to expose its ugly realities 'on the ground', what we are getting is an army of 'post-Marxists', one of whose principal functions is apparently to conceptualize away the problem of capitalism. The 'post-modern' world, we are told, is a pastiche of fragments and 'difference'. The systemic unity of capitalism, its 'objective structures' and totalizing imperatives, have given way (if they ever existed) to ... a pluralistic structure so diverse and flexible that it can be rearranged by discursive construction'.

In this pastiche, exploitation and class conflict are replaced by a particular conception of 'civil society', a loose and arbitrary collection of more or less autonomous identities, interests and associations no longer embedded in the mode of production. Thus disconnected from class struggles, the idea of 'civil society' can come to express everything and nothing:

... after a series of milestones in the work of Hegel, Marx and Gramsci, this versatile idea has become an all-purpose catchword for the left, embracing a wide range of emancipatory aspirations, as well ... as a whole set of excuses for political retreat. However constructive its uses in defending human liberties against state oppression, or in marking out a terrain of social practices, institutions and relations neglected by the 'old' Marxist left, 'civil society' is now in danger of becoming an alibi for capitalism (Ibid.)

The same process of abandoning class analysis and substituting a notion of a disembodied 'civil society' naturally has its counterpart in African studies and politics. The global changes we have reviewed disrupted processes of class formation underway on the continent through much of the 20th century and undermined both the political capacity of workers and peasants to resist local and foreign capitalist interests and the struggle of the broad left in Africa against neo-colonialism. In their place has been put a dialogue between benefactors and dependants with its discourse of 'donors', 'stakeholders' and 'partners' substituting for foreign and local classes. This shift has also had its effect on contributions to ROAPE. Despite some important work on class struggles published in these pages in recent years, the emphasis has moved inexorably towards a state and governmental rather than a class focus. The role of 'aid donors', the impact of restructuring and adjustment programmes imposed on African governments, and the institutional decay and disintegration which has followed in the wake of crisis, have consumed much attention. The journal has promoted an important and trenchant (and, we would suggest, unanswerable) critique of this 're-colonisation' process and contributors have explored ways in which the African state might resist. But, with a few notable exceptions, there has been little class analysis in such critiques. In the wider area of African studies, too, there has been a retreat from class (either to the safety of donor-funded research on governance and reform or to explanations about how class realities are irrelevant to the conditions of Africa given their difference from the classical European form analysed by Marx).

There is a profound irony that class analysis should be neglected at a time when it can be argued such analysis is most urgent. As Glaser (2001:130) observes of South Africa, 'the current conjuncture is a curious one for class analysis':

The 1990s have, from one point of view, offered a profound confirmation of the importance of class. We have seen the leading politicians and dominant capitalists of the ancien regime throw overboard their loyalty to white power and ... to their ethno-linguistic compatriots, in order to secure a deal that preserved capitalism and their own private property, jobs and pensions. Amongst Africans, we have seen ... a burgeoning of the black bourgeoisie and professional elite, accompanied by a shamelessly individualistic jettisoning of solidarity with the black oppressed. This has occurred against the backdrop of a longer-standing deepening of inequality

And yet, observes Glaser, class analysts cannot point to a political project which can successfully 'follow through the vindication of class analysis with an effectively egalitarian project' (Ibid., p. 131).

For any meaningful project of the left to be sustainable, it is important that the continued and changing salience of class relations should be a point of departure for analysing African social dynamics. For us (and it should be so for any socialist) the social categories of class, race and gender are crucial for any understanding of how people and households live and survive, of how they act socially, politically and culturally, and in so doing of how they reproduce themselves, their social formations and their livelihoods. We also believe that rooting an analysis of even such a crucial issue as the AIDS pandemic in an analysis of the reproduction of labour and of social formations, as Janet Bujra and Roy Love both do in this issue, illuminates that major issue in new ways.

What is also needed in future is to link such crises of social reproduction to the persistence of patterns of primitive accumulation on the continent, not just in their

traditional forms as explored by Wolpe and others, but also in the new forms that have arisen which rest on the exploitation of ultra-cheap labour power. Contemporary patterns of the reproduction of labour have become more complex than the traditional base in rural families from which male migrants venture out to seek wages. Emerging patterns of multiple sources of livelihood, which Bryceson summarises so well in this issue, mark an enormous evolutionary change and are of central social and ultimately political importance. They are the contemporary form of ultra-cheap labour power for capital, but also the basis for expanding 'petty commodity' production of a massive range of goods and services. They represent the survival initiatives taken by large numbers of marginalized and excluded people who are surplus to capital's requirements and whose reproduction is not provided for by capitalist institutions or the state.

We must look again at the place of the African petty bourgeoisie in the light of the changes being imposed on Africa. Its failure to promote an autonomous development has compromised not only the continent's hopes of sovereignty but also severely curtailed its freedom of manoeuvre. Adjustment programmes have eaten into its capacity to appropriate parts of the social surplus through state office and ruined its small businesses. With the western 'aid donors' increasingly taking over the financial management of the African state, its political base has also been circumscribed. And with the advent of market reforms, it faces competition (political as much as economic) from new bourgeois elements more in tune with donor demands. There is a need to explore how far this class dynamic drives the spread of civil strife in Africa and, more lastingly, how western capital hopes to consolidate dependent capitalist systems when it has removed state power from its nominated ruling class.

Above all, there is urgent need to bring class back in to studies of the state, of gender and race relations and of policy debates. The articulation of class relations with other social relations and identities needs to be more fully and critically related than it was in the past and it needs to be done in ways that give centrality to social class as the expression of relations of production and distribution. It is thus important, for example, to begin to explore more clearly the ways in which class relations have a gender dimension in Africa, as it is also important to examine how gender has a class character (see, for example, Bujra, 2000). Clearly the profound transition which Africa is experiencing makes the understanding of class relations increasingly complex and multi-faceted, and the political actions of social groups less determined and predictable than traditional theory usually accepted. Perhaps Burawoy's rejection of the inevitability of an in-built tendency to polarisation of classes under capitalism and the ultimate revolutionary role of a working class is a response to these contemporary African realities? Whatever the case, the meaning and salience of class under these conditions demands further debate and considerably more prominence in a new agenda. Without it, we would suggest, there is no adequate means of assessing the contending forces which are engaged in violent conflicts throughout the continent and in the wider developing world.

The State in Africa and the Political Economy of Conflict

These columns have seen their share of characterisations of the state. Early debates focussed on the post-colonial state, attempting to generalise about its class base, and its status with regard to imperialist powers and international capital – neo-colonial, comprador, or national democratic. More recent debates have focussed on the

mechanisms that power-holders use and the economic booty they grab and compete for: the neo-patrimonial state. The validity of such models and their continued relevance are still matters for debate. So too is the issue of the role of the state as opposed to the market, its role in running a capitalist economy and in economic development, with the IFIs themselves beginning to concede that their prescriptions about the withdrawal of the state went too far. It should be conceded, however, that the prospect of a developmentalist state, to which some of the early post-colonial states aspired, disappeared in Africa decades ago – an option that was undermined by international, mainly US pressures, despite economically powerful exemplars in East and South-east Asia.

Analyses of the patrimonial state have offered a perspective on the phenomenon of the 1990s: state failure. Such approaches have not satisfactorily explained why and how such failure led in several instances to state collapse, illustrated so completely and for such a long period by Somalia. A whole literature has grown up around internal conflicts and wars which were often the result, or even the cause of failing states (e.g. Berdal & Malone, 2000) – unfortunately not represented as thoroughly in these pages as these human disasters warranted. We must critically explore the political economy of war and endemic conflict, going beyond cataloguing victims and devastations, and investigating the long term damage to livelihoods and livelihood systems.

The ‘political economy of war’ has been used as a label for a perspective on civil wars in Africa and elsewhere that challenges orthodox perspectives on the ‘causes’ of such conflicts and their dynamics and on the appropriate responses to resolve conflict or provide humanitarian relief. A number of propositions characterise this approach:

Wars and major conflicts wreak havoc on people’s lives and livelihoods, but also transform social systems and political economies, in particular patterns of trade and production and reproduction suited to such conditions, often based on the use of violence (Kaldor, 1998).

Such patterns thrive on the dislocations of globalisation, and benefit from illicit or hidden globalised networks (sponsoring flows of arms, trade in drugs and minerals, laundered money and other illegal finance or the activities of diasporas and refugees). Duffield (2001) points to the need to understand the global context and its fractures, and also serves as a reminder how large a proportion of the globalised economy is invisible and ‘illegal’– e.g. the drugs trade is on the scale of the oil industry! Africa’s wars have to be seen as phenomena associated with emergent patterns of capital accumulation.

Alongside the destruction and impoverishment they bring, conflicts, like famine, have clear beneficiaries, economically and politically (Keen, 1998). At international, regional and national levels, the conduct of war economy businesses and the mobilization of non-state militias is profitable. Within local communities this enrichment is seen in deepening differentiation, as people acquire land and herds that the poor are forced to abandon or sell. War situations embody changing patterns of social reproduction and class formation evident throughout Africa.

The dynamics of these political economies, the structures and interests they throw up, all in turn create conditions which should be, but rarely are, taken on board by those intervening to resolve or manage them (Cliffe & Luckham, 2000). Building peace becomes more than just addressing original causes.

Debates around this perspective are pursued vigorously among those who study war and peace; they have even been taken into account by agencies concerning themselves with humanitarian relief and post-conflict recovery. But they have received only passing mention in the columns of a Review that takes political economy as its defining focus. The substantial Briefing on Darfur included here is a welcome exception and shows the benefit of an approach that situates an analysis of the present crisis within the long-term background forces that generated it. Given the impact of war and violence in recent African history, such perspectives need to be much more mainstreamed in intellectual discourse and in development policy agendas. In the process the methodology of the political economy approach might benefit and provide even sharper insights. At the same time, we also need to analyse the difference between liberation wars in Africa (which ROAPE steadfastly supported in the past) and current civil conflicts. Few armed movements today, whether insurgent, by state security agencies or warlords, represent a benevolent force that can improve the lot of ordinary people or that deserve any form of endorsement. Our emphasis must be on promoting solidarity with popular forces to further peace with social justice – particularly initiatives deriving from the most exploited sectors of the population.

‘Solidarity’, the Role of Intellectuals & the Political Stance of ROAPE

Our inaugural editorial pledged support for both the continued liberation of Africa and the struggle against neo-colonial domination. These commitments were given expression in supportive material on liberation movements and ‘progressive’ states. Today, however, we have a transformed political and economic landscape. With the exception of the struggle for self-determination in Western Sahara, there are no longer any of the classic liberation struggles in train. Whilst we continue to support the aspirations of people in some regions to reverse their marginalisation and exclusion, few of us would unequivocally espouse their cause for statehood or even regional autonomy. The image we once had, of states led by national regimes defiantly keeping imperialist forces at bay in the interests of benefiting their people, is no longer a sustainable picture, given contemporary realities. Thus an examination and evaluation of these original positions is timely, and not merely to help reorient a particular journal. We must critically seek to understand existing conflicts and their dynamics, the problems, mechanisms and experiences of conflict resolution, the prospects for democratisation and aspirations for political and cultural ‘renaissance’ and what these mean for contemporary strategies of solidarity in pan-African and global terms.

Lloyd Sachikonye offers an entry into this kind of discussion, providing an overview of the premises and practices of the past fifty years of solidarity between African people’s struggles and outside movements. Considering the possible contemporary relevance of solidarity, he argues that the issues that ought to be central are the same: poverty reduction, democracy, citizenship and human rights, migration and labour rights. He also refers to what might be termed the solidarity between the world’s people, manifested in the World Social Forum and in the anti-globalisation protests. Within Africa he points to similar protests, and these will be reviewed in an article by Zeilig and Seddon on popular protest held over to the next issue. But he acknowledges their weakness thus far, with solidarity between African countries being limited to a few NGOs, some pan-African umbrella movements of trade unions

and a few other interest groups. New forms of 'solidarity' are seen mainly at the inter-state level in bodies like NEPAD and by the new African Union.

The role of intellectuals, discussed most incisively as a 'responsibility' by Paul Baran in 1969, was also the subject we focussed on in our 10th Anniversary issue (No.32). The courageous stand taken by Ngugi wa Thiongo, for African intellectuals to take their cue from ordinary people, is a position more honoured in the breach than in the real world. International radical scholars took as their mantra Marx's call to study the world in order to change it. Reference was constantly made to Gramsci's notion of 'organic intellectuals' who situated their work in the struggles of contending classes. Gramsci's perspective seems to have been rejected by the radical Palestinian scholar, Edward Said, in the months before his recent death. He argued that intellectuals ought to steer clear from too direct an involvement with movements like PLO or the Palestinian Authority so as to retain their critical perspective. The same challenges were faced by Harold Wolpe and other South African intellectuals who were active in the national liberation movement. The challenges to those working in that context are brought out well in the three principles that Burawoy's tribute isolates. The third of these – a post-liberation stance whereby the researcher 'takes as point of departure party priorities on the reconstruction agenda' – was in fact a point of contention for this journal in the past. The shift in Wolpe's position in his last years to a position more critical of the reconstruction agenda in South Africa is a more tenable position from which the critical intellectual may foster debate about future goals. Burawoy extrapolates this further, arguing that it calls for a different sort of committed intellectual, the 'interpreter', rather than the 'liberator'. He also poses the challenge that while Wolpe's insistence on a structuralist analysis may be a useful corrective to those who reduce the social formation to a matter of consciousness, analysis of consciousness cannot be ignored if one is to understand classes and other social groups as actors. These fundamental questions need further debate by everyone engaged in a 'committed' venture like ROAPE, including its readers.

For any journal that has tried to define its purpose in terms of political engagement, anniversaries offer an opportunity to redefine themselves. One notable example of redefinition was attempted in the *New Left Review's* editorial statement, 'Renewals', in its January 2000 Issue (the new issue No. 1). Its editors signalled both an intention to 'publish articles regardless of their immediate relationship, or lack of it, to familiar radical agendas' and to maintain a political stance relevant to what they saw as the 'principal aspect of the past decade ... the virtually uncontested consolidation, and universal diffusion, of neo-liberalism'. In these circumstances the stance would be 'an uncompromising realism: ... refusing any accommodation with the ruling system, [whilst] rejecting any piety and euphemism that would understate its power'. An alternative formulation was that of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, which in its 50th Anniversary issue linked the values of 'resistance' (a word which has great resonance in France) to contemporary concerns with 'globalisation' and US imperialism, whilst embracing the developing coalition of new social movements.

The debate between these different positions must concern ROAPE and its readership. ROAPE has not come up with a formulaic statement of a new political stance. The opinions here are those of the individuals who sign this editorial. However, we feel that we do speak for the EWG in restating the view that ROAPE remains a *political* journal, which continues to promote wide debate rather than state an editorial line. The views here offer one set of themes about a possible agenda for

such debates and one that is relevant to this era. Focusing our attention on the forces that determine current African realities, including the external ones, it should offer what Wolpe called 'the continuous critique of the social order'. Petras provides an attack from the left on the *New Left Review* position. This does not mean staying at the level of generalised theoretical discourse; it means prioritising analysis of the devastating forces with which people in Africa have to contend, such as AIDS and violent conflict, and the often innovative ways they pursue to survive. Greater insights into these problems can derive from analyses that root the detailed particulars in a theoretical context – seeing AIDS as integrally linked with the changing patterns of social reproduction and global capitalism, viewing civil war as being shaped by the existent and emerging frames of political economy.

Endnote

1. These formed the framing agenda for invitations to contributors for a small conference that was held in May 2004, jointly sponsored with the African research body, CODESRIA, also celebrating its 30th anniversary. Some of the articles printed here and forthcoming in the next Issue started life as presentations to that meeting.

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Political Economies & the Study of Africa: Critical Considerations

Gavin Williams

This paper is a revised version of a keynote address to the *Review of African Political Economy* Conference in Birmingham on 5 September 2003. It situates the contributions of the *Review of African Political Economy* to understanding Africa in relation to the defining texts of political economy and economic science and of political domination. It rejects culturalist, rationalist and causal explanations of African societies in favour of historical analyses. It argues for the importance of studies of Africa for the historical and social sciences. It considers the conditions necessary to create and sustain democratic citizenship. It questions the idea of 'development' and argues for the need to examine 'really-existing policies'. It follows Max Weber in contrasting the conflicting responsibilities of political action and scientific enquiry.

On Political Economies & their Critiques

David Ricardo identified as 'the principal problem in Political Economy':

... to determine the laws which regulate the distribution of the produce of the earth – all that is derived from its surface by the united application of labour, machinery and capital – among the three great classes of the community; namely, the proprietor of the land, the owner of the stock or capital necessary for its cultivation, and the labourers by whose industry it is cultivated (1973:49)

Karl Marx, following Friedrich Engels, gave *Capital* the subtitle *A Critique Of Political Economy* (1967; 1973a). Marx began his reflections: 'Political economy starts with what needs to be explained, alien labour.' For Marx, 'Capital is not a thing but a social relation between persons which is mediated through things' relation' (1973b:271; 1973a:932). It is not the *K* of neo-classical production functions. Surplus, in Marx, always refers to a relation: it is always an adjective – 'surplus-labour', 'surplus-value' – and never a noun, 'the surplus'.

In *Capital*, volume one, Marx sets out the relations that constitute capitalism production. Marx builds on Feuerbach's account of the alienation of Man in religion to resolve the mystery, which Ricardo could not solve: if labour is the source of value, and labour is paid at its value, how do the capitalists come out with a profit? Labour produces the surplus value, which is appropriated by the capitalists and landowners in the forms of profits and rents. As Man makes God in his own image and subordinates himself to the product of his own imagination, so workers produce Capital, to which they are subordinated and on which they depend for their livelihoods.

Subsequent political economy has tended to pass by the relational character of class, civil society, or state. These are all, in Emile Durkheim's words, 'social facts', going beyond their individual manifestations and imposing external constraints (1982:59). But, as Philip Abrams has insisted, they are *not* to be treated as things (1988:58). They refer to systems of relations, which necessarily involve ideas and processes. Max Weber (1991:82) and Antonio Gramsci (1971:12-13 and *passim*) realised that the exercise of domination (*Herrschaft*), or hegemony (*egemonia*), extended beyond the pursuit of class interests through the instrument of the state.

Neo-classical (marginalist) economics provided an analytic framework for explaining relative prices. It provided an analytic framework for explaining relative prices and for identifying conceptually the conditions for the most efficient combinations of fungible capital and homogenous labour to maximise the value of output. Lionel Robbins reduced economic science to its parsimonious limits: the study of 'human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses' (1952:16; I owe the contrast between Ricardo and Robbins's conceptions of their disciplines to Weeks, 1973).

The subtitle of Harold Lasswell's study, *Politics: Who gets what, when, how*, contrasts neatly with Robbins's impersonal account of the study of economics (1952). Albert Hirschmann (1970) shows in *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* that people have more choices than just to enter and exit from markets or to decide to vote in an election for one or another candidate, or neither. C. Wright Mills drew out the inseparability of political and economic institutions and insisted on the necessary collusion between the respective alliances of power elites, which dominated Nazi Germany and post-war USA (1956, 1963).

The new political economy extends Robbins's conception of economics as the study of choices among alternative uses to incorporate all the social sciences. Market behaviour becomes a template for explaining voters' choices or the preferences of public officials. Marxist and new political economies both tend to reduce politics and policies to the play of economic interests in the utilitarian manner. Policy choices provide the clue to their own origins and can in turn be explained by the naming of classes or interests. The critical political economy, which the *Review* was founded to promote, took it for granted that politics, economics and society could neither be separated from nor reduced to one another.

On the *Review of African Political Economy*

When we founded ROAPE in 1974, we sought to understand Africa in order to change it. We created a forum, which provided both space and encouragement to critical studies of Africa through the perspectives of political economy and we hoped to inform debates among African intellectuals and political activists. We did not set out a specific intellectual agenda, let alone a political programme. Nor did we prescribe the meaning of 'political economy'. The 'new political economy' has now become fashionable in policy-oriented circles distant from our own and we should reflect on our own intellectual relationship to its analyses and prescriptions.

In conversation, Chris Allen once described our practice of political economy as the study of Africa without any economics and little reference to politics. Our focus tended to be on the global issues raised by Andrew Gunder Frank's theory of underdevelopment (1967) and on the possibilities of realising socialist development in Africa. Politics and state policies initially were to be explained by identifying the

interests of classes, or fractions of the capitalist class: agrarian, bureaucratic, or commercial; international, comprador, or national. National class alliances and state policies tended to be explained by the ways in which they did or did not fit in to the strategies of capitalist imperialism. Marxists preceded rational choice theorists in their tendencies to reductionism.

The *Review* was committed to continuing national liberation struggles against imperial governments in Sahara, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, the Portuguese colonies, and Namibia, and to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, and gave space to them and to others in its regular Briefings. These movements claimed the radical credentials born of periods of extended, armed struggle and declared their commitments to socialism or even Marxist-Leninism. With the benefit of hindsight, the leaders appear to share the concerns of modernising nationalists in other countries. Had we inquired more critically into the ways they prosecuted their military and political struggles and looked behind their declared objectives before they came to power, we might have been better placed to understand their subsequent policies and institutions.

We grounded consideration of theoretical issues in empirical studies, published documents, and created space for political debates. We were slow to place gender relations at the centre of our agenda. We lacked enough ethnographic studies and attention to the *longue duree* of historical changes to appreciate fully the complexities of social relations and the intractability of changing the legacies of policies and institutions which tended to perpetuate themselves, often behind the backs of policy-makers.

The *Review* did not stand still. Over the last twenty-five years, the editors have addressed some of the original lacunae, sustained a wide-ranging coverage of *all* the regions of the continent, and taken up the critical questions arising from the generalisation of structural adjustment policies across Africa, the significant if partial gains for democratic politics, and the impact on the continent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

From the outset, the editors were divided on theoretical issues and their political implications. Authors questioned the orthodoxies of the left and the right, though not without provoking some bitter political arguments among the editors. At a workshop in Sheffield, at which the founding of the journal was broached, east Africanists tended to see merit in Giovanni Arrighi and John Saul's theory of the 'labour aristocracy' (1973); west Africanists, notably those who had studied west African workers at first hand, such as Adrian Peace (1976) were sceptical. These differences cut across the intellectual divides between left and right, as was illustrated by the debates over the real wages of Nigerian workers in the period before and after independence (Cohen, 1974:1890-215, for discussion and full references). Rival opinions may have reflected differences in the timing of independence and of the rise and fall of workers' real wages, and the mechanisms by which they came about in different countries.

Contributions to ROAPE by Andrew Coulson, Philip Raikes and Henry Bernstein were among the first to question the viability of Tanzania's policies of *ujamaa* socialism and villagization from the left, to emphasise their colonial antecedents, and to identify the state's concern to extend its sway over the countryside (1975, 1977; 1975; 1977, 1980). Paul Kennedy, Nicola Swainson and Bjorn Beckman challenged the dismissal of the capacities of African capitalists for autonomous

class action and productive investment by African capitalists (1977; 1977; 1980, 1981, 1982). Chris Allen and Morris Szeftel raised key questions about the significance of the transitions to multi-party politics and laid out frameworks for how to understand spoils politics in Africa and how not to do so (1995; 1998).

The themes that ROAPE pursued from the outset continue to be relevant to understanding policy debates in Africa. Arrighi and Saul's theory of the 'labour aristocracy', stated in different language, is at the centre of Robert Bates's inclusion of the working class in 'the development coalition' (1981:121) and of the World Bank's arguments against trade unions and state interventions in labour markets. Bates selectively constructs the historical evidence to argue that this coalition of manufacturing, mining, trade union and bureaucratic interests promoted the nationalisation of agricultural marketing, the taxation of peasants and a policy of supplying food cheaply to the cities at the expense of the interests of rural people and the urban unemployed.

Bates' work complemented Berg's Report on *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* for the World Bank, which exposed the faults of the interventionist marketing and pricing policies of African governments and laid out a policy manifesto for the 1980s (World Bank, 1981). The Berg Report obscured the World Bank's contributions to funding state spending, enhancing debts, and promoting expensive and ineffective rural development projects, which provided profits for consultants and contractors but did little for agricultural production or rural people.

Authors debated in ROAPE the necessity or otherwise, and the consequences of, structural adjustment policies and new forms of globalisation. The limitations of 'import substitution' as a strategy for growth, continued dependence on primary exports, profligate state spending, widespread speculation, rising oil prices, easy access to commercial loan finance, all left governments unable to repay their debts and confronted by high real interest rates and stagnant or declining export revenues. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as receivers of bankrupt governments, now had the leverage to require governments to liberalise foreign exchange, foreign trade and internal markets and to sell off state assets (Williams, 1994; Bracking, 1999). Ironically, just when analysts abandoned theories of dependency, economies and governments in Africa and in Latin America found themselves more dependent on external markets and subordinated to the requirements of international agencies than ever before.

The costs of structural adjustment, like the costs of the economic policies that preceded them, fell particularly on the wage and salary earners. Initiatives to reduce foreign debts and protect the poor have not enabled governments to shift their budgets from debt servicing to spending on health or education. Left-wing critics of the international financial agencies tend to be bereft of alternatives to structural adjustment other than the statist policies, which had encouraged the demand for imported manufacturing and agricultural products and lavishly rewarded those with access to foreign currency or imported goods at official exchange rates or controlled prices.

US and other corporations draw up the rules of world trade agreements to suit their interests; they continue to protect their own markets and to subsidise grain exports, undermining the capacity of African countries to produce grains in which they have a comparative advantage. Critics of the World Trade Organization divide into those who wish to make the rules governing international trade free and fair, and those

who wish to opt out of global markets as far as possible (OXFAM, 2002a, 2002b; Shiva, 2002; Williams, 2002). Radical opponents of globalisation appear to be reverting to the demands for economic autarchy, which were implied in earlier theories of underdevelopment.

On How Not to Study Africa

Africa and Africans are widely interpreted as working according to different rules from the rest of humankind. The continent is presented as increasingly marginal to the international economy, characterised by failed states, tribal conflicts, and a culture of corruption, and in need of external succour through aid and development.

Exceptionalist explanations of the histories of Africa since independence take different forms. Cultural explanations focus on negative images. Many African governments are very corrupt and suffer from tribalism. African culture encourages and legitimates tribalism and corruption. The circularity of the argument is evident.

Afrocentrism privileges its understandings of the continent and its people, rooted in the experiences of Africans or people of African origin, over the Eurocentric perspectives, from which Africanists construct Africa as the 'other' to the European experience. Afrocentric perspectives may recognise the wide diversity of the societies of Africa and its diasporas; they, too, tend to construct for Africa a distinctive culture, premised on the communal values of *ujamaa* or *ubuntu* which nationalist politicians refashioned to their own purposes.

A radical view interprets Africa and Africans as victims of past imperial exploitation and present economic dependence. Africans were subject to – and also active participants in – the trans-Atlantic, Indian Ocean and trans-Saharan slave trades. Colonial powers marked out the territorial boundaries within which colonial states and their successors claimed to exercise a monopoly of the legitimate use of violence. International financial institutions impose economic policies and rules of governance. Firms compete for contracts and resources by paying commission to African beneficiaries and their international agents. Multinational firms, international financial agencies, African governments, businessmen, and arms dealers share responsibility for economic crimes, the burdens of debt, and political violence. To focus only on the imperial side of this axis is patronising and absolves Africans from complicity.

These different perspectives assume uncritically the uniformity of diverse African societies, and their complex histories, beliefs and institutions, and their differences from any others. If we define Africa as exceptional, we deny our capacity to make more than a marginal contribution to the study of other continents.

Generalising social sciences make the opposite claim. They dissolve any regional specificities into comparative propositions. The new political economy constructs theorems from axiomatic assumptions and applies them across historical, cultural and institutional contexts. 'Rationality' refers to the choice of means to realise a given end; it is not clear what could be a 'rational end'. Without some criterion for defining ends as rational and delimiting the values, resources and institutional arrangements that shape people's diverse choices, we cannot escape what Joan Robinson called the 'impregnable circularity' of the concept of utility: '*utility* is the quality in commodities that makes individuals want to buy them, and the fact that individuals want to buy commodities shows that they have *utility*' (1964:48). The

new political economy thus falls back on counting money, or votes as a proxy for utility. The rationality of choice is defined by its institutional context. So the 'new institutionalism' comes back round to where the old institutionalism left off and 'historical institutionalism' recognises their historical origins and continuing legacies.

Rational choice theory has drawn attention to the problems of collective action, in which free riders leave it to others to achieve common goals and each appropriates common resources at the cost of all. It identifies the difficulties that principals have in getting their agents to carry out their instructions. These assumptions may explain some significant phenomena, such as the elaboration of patron-client relations or the difficulties encountered by the international financial agencies in imposing ever more complex conditions on reluctant governments. Public choice theory points to the ways in which the interests of officials or politicians in securing re-election or extending the scale or scope of their domains take precedence over considerations of public interest. Students of African, or any other, politics had generally worked all this out for themselves without needing an overarching theory to which to pin their explanations.

A society founded on self-interested utility-maximising behaviour is no society at all. What may be most interesting about rational choice models, like statistical and other models, is not what they can explain with their parsimonious or limiting assumptions but what they cannot explain: why people bother to vote at all, even in 'safe' electoral constituencies; how rural people manage access to common resources; why as Anne Whitehead (1994) observes, mothers have different commitments to meeting the needs of members of their families than fathers.

To explain interventionist economic strategies, Bates combined the pursuit of economic interests by political means with the dominant doctrines of post-war development economists and the concerns of state officials to extend their effective control of rural people. Explanations in terms of interests cannot stand on their own but must be contextualised with reference to ideas and institutions: to *all* the social relations of production.

Scholars and international agencies have sought to make empirical generalisations across N cases to identify the correlates of democracy or the relations between structural adjustment and economic growth. The measures used are often of questionable provenance, dependent on subjective judgements, or presented to conform to the requirements of policy makers. As the contrasting experiences of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire since independence show, the attributes of any country will vary according to the date when they are measured and the period over which changes are observed. The answers depend on what questions you ask, what counter-factuals are assumed, and when you ask them. The comparative study of politics cannot escape the difficulties of comparing like with unlike, which become more and not less intractable the greater the number of cases being considered.

Culturalist, rationalist and causal explanations are logically closed. Comparisons across societies are not grounded in overarching homologies, which specify identical processes at work through different instances. They work through analogies, which are always partial and raise interesting questions precisely where they break down. The point of models of any kind is not to sweep up a range of cases into a generalising basket but to enable us to make better sense of particulars by thinking more clearly about the logics of the processes which shaping them.

Historical explanations should be open-ended, always allowing for complexity and contingency. They can recognise contingency and agency and appreciate and make sense of the achievements of people who find ways to make a living and to make intellectual sense of their lives, often under very difficult circumstances.

On the Importance of Studying Africa

In the historical and social sciences, with the revealing exception of social anthropology, the study of Africa has always been marginalised to the exotic fringes of the disciplines. Studies of Africa have pioneered analytic approaches to the historical and social sciences. The study of Africa extends our understanding of nationalisms and decolonisation; of economic development strategies, international agencies and their limitations; of ethnicities and nationalisms; and of electoral politics and political transitions; of free and unfree labour; of agrarian capitalisms and peasantries.

African nationalists collaborated in the uneasy process of decolonisation through which they realised their ambitions to inherit the colonial state. Colonial development planning provided the template and institutions for the policies of independent governments and the international 'development community'. Since independence, ministries of colonial affairs have been transmuted into ministries for development aid and colonial relationships have been multilateralised through the Lomé.

Conventions and the subordination of governments to the fiscal authority and policies of the international financial agencies. International non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their national counterparts extended the work of the missions, and inherited their necessary but uneasy need to work with governments.

African economies show the limits of import-substitution strategies of economic growth and the inherent problems of escaping dependence on primary exports. They also demonstrate the difficulties of imposing liberal economic reforms and managing political transitions from without. Critical studies, from different analytical vantage points, have revealed how private and official interests, the concern to extend the reach of state authority, policy discourses, and the perpetuation of institutional continuities have prevented projects and policies from achieving their goals.

The rise of nationalisms, of communal conflicts and even civil wars in Europe led to the revival of studies of ethnicities and nationalisms in Europe. These themes were long familiar from studies, firstly by anthropologists and sociologists, and then by historians and political scientists, writing on Africa. Colonial governors may have invented tribes. African elites were actively involved in forming new community and pan-ethnic identities, which responded to the needs of people to make sense of their different experiences and to pursue their political and economic interests. African subjects demanded their own chiefs, with the status and authority to operate effectively within the colonial political arena. Nationalist leaders had to imagine the new 'nations' in whose name they claimed the right to political authority.

The opening of elections to competition among parties and presidential candidates in the 1990s produced a variety of party configurations, including dominant-party, three-party and fragmented systems. Nigeria provides case studies of both parliamentary and presidential systems of government, and their limiting condi-

tions. The politics of Niger between 1992 and the military *coup d'état* of 1996 reveals the classic problems of cohabitation between President, Prime Minister and legislature in the absence of a presidential parliamentary majority. Senegal offers an example of a managed transition from one-party rule to multi-party representation.

We can examine South Africa as a transfer of power from a white minority government to majority rule. It was also a classic 'elite pact', in which the apartheid regime could not address the sustained economic crisis, which began in 1981, without negotiating a transition to a democratically elected government. The economic situation, the problems of dealing with it, and the possibilities of a democratic solution were all shaped by changes in international circumstances, to which developments in South Africa itself were often marginal. Africa provides rich materials for a properly comparative study of politics in its historical and international context.

Studies of migrant labour in Africa revised classic liberal and marxist conceptions of 'capitalism' as a system of 'free labour'. The South African mining industry, like that in Southern Rhodesia, had to find labour that was 'both plentiful and cheap'. They evaded the laws of supply and demand by drawing far and wide for their labour, taking advantage of legal compulsion and controlling workers lives by the compound system. Migrant labour was reproduced in the countryside, and provided the means to sustain rural livelihoods and institutions. Studies of Africa showed that unfree forms of labour are not a relic of feudalism but always have been, and continue to be, integral to capitalism, in Europe and the USA as much as in Africa. The histories of Africa reveal most starkly how, from its origins, capitalism has always recruited and controlled labour on a global scale.

Similarly, studies of the complex forms of rent, share and labour tenancy in Kenya and South Africa identified social relations of a distinctly non-capitalist kind at the centre of settler agriculture and showed up the falsity of evolutionary models of the development of capitalist agriculture. These studies can inform and complement the work of historians on the emergence within capitalism of sharecropping systems in the south of the USA, of Italy and of Spain, and in the agrarian relations of the Andean *latifundios*.

Studies of the forms and limits of differentiation among African peasant producers provide additional evidence and alternative interpretations to those set out in the debates between V.I. Lenin and the agrarian marxists and A.V. Chayanov and the neo-Populists in pre- and post-revolutionary Russia (1961; 1996). Feminist scholars undermined the terms in which these and other debates are conducted. They placed gender relations at the centre of interpretations of dowry and bridewealth; rules of inheritance; access to and control over labour, land and income; sexual mores; and priorities in allocating resources within households and wider kinship networks.

Studies of African agricultural practices in different ecological environments have questioned the commonsense equation of more people with more erosion or desertification, less land, less food, and more communal conflicts. They have exposed the misconceptions of evolutionary models of land tenure and brought a historical perspective to the varied and complex determinants of population growth, forms of land use, land tenure, food availability and vulnerability to epidemic and endemic disease. We must now enhance our understanding of Africa's gravest problems by further extending dialogues between historians, social scientists and natural scientists.

The exemplary strength of African studies is that the task of making sense of the world has called on its practitioners to be open to and to draw on a variety of analytic perspectives from different disciplinary traditions. For example we need to combine different approaches to interpreting the layered forms of gender relations. We fetter our explanations by confining them to the tramlines of a priori theories and can best advance them by adopting a methodological pluralism. There is no theoretical high road to knowledge.

On the Scope for Democratic Citizenship

Democratic elections enable people to choose who will represent their views, interests and concerns in legislatures and other public arenas. They also enable people to decide collectively who will govern them. These may take place through the same mechanism, casting a ballot, but are not the same thing. If the purpose of democracy is simply to represent groups, interests, preferences or views, it can only rest on the atomistic foundation of individuals or groups, each pursuing and negotiating over their interests or preferences. These may coincide or overlap but provide no reason, other than *force majeure*, for people to accept decisions that go against their interests.

The realisation of the aims of representative democracy requires that its forms are grounded in the shared institutions of a common citizenship, which in turns raises the question of who are to be recognised as citizens and on what terms. If the state is, as Weber says, 'a compulsory association which organises domination', it cannot make any contractual claim on our consent to its commands (1998:82-83). The democratic justification for accepting its authority can only arise out of our common obligation to our fellow citizens to accept the rules that enable us to live together in society.

Evolutionary models enable us to bring order and significance to social facts but at the expense of begging questions about the complex ways in which they may be recombined or decomposed. The literature on democratisation frames it as a series of stages, which can be identified so that institutional arrangements can be put in place to consolidate democracy or ward off the dangers of reversal. The politics of democracy is not like a game of snakes and ladders, in which eventual progress, with occasional assistance towards the final end, is interrupted by long slides backwards to the start. T.H. Marshall identified the evolution of three forms of citizenship: civic, political and social (1992). He also recognised that they each defined one another and that their achievement could not be taken for granted.

Democracy is not a state of being; citizenship is not an end state. Both are Ideas, whose essential conditions and relations to one another are a matter for 'permanent dialogue' (Todorova, 2002). They also refer to complex and often contradictory processes of becoming. As Laurence Whitehead has shown, transitions from authoritarian to democratic government are shaped by the dramatic interplay of words, intentions, coincidences and outcomes, which often emerge from behind the backs of the *dramatis personae* (2002). The metaphor of the play can only be taken so far: this play lacks an author to fix the text for the actors and it must go on without reaching a dramatic resolution.

Citizenship and democracy have historically been limited to specific classes, status groups and races and defined by gender. Claims to recognition of full citizenship and to engage in defining and exercising the rights of citizens were contested and

resisted at every stage. This is evident from the continuing, varied and never completed struggles for the rights of women. As McFadden argues, women and men are only ever *becoming* citizens (2003). How men and women, or people of different races, or classes become citizens, and what this means in practice, depends on their relations with one another, with the markets in which they participate, and the states that rule them.

Only in 1965 did the movements of Afro-Americans to achieve their civil, political and social rights finally enable the United States to meet the minimal conditions for the democratic citizenship. The rights guaranteed by the US Constitution and recognised in international law do not today extend to its sovereign base area, to the countries it occupies, to citizens of other countries or of the USA itself. The British government subjects foreigners to, and does not protect its citizens from, arbitrary and indefinite imprisonment. As these examples show, democratic citizenship must a continuing battle to spell out its claims and conditions, to hold those in power accountable for their actions, to protect the liberties of citizens, to secure their effective political representation and to give people a say over decisions which affect their lives and the rules by which they are governed.

Politics, says Weber, 'is a strong and slow boring of hard boards' (1998:128). So is the struggle to create and sustain the conditions for democratic politics. Certain of these enable democratic decisions by limiting their scope. They create a framework of broadly accepted constitutional conventions and reciprocal respects for the rights of citizens. These need to be embedded in everyday political practice if they are not to be employed selectively by those in or out of power. The problems are how to reach agreement on the rules in the first place and to persuade people of the importance of adhering to them, even when it is against their interests (Williams, 2004a).

On the Need to Understand the World, Not to Change it

Current arrangements to enumerate the value of research create incentives to fit intellectual work to the dominant trends within 'the discipline' and its methodological protocols. Space is allowed within the funding regime for 'inter-disciplinary' research but that is not the same thing as defining our research methods by the intellectual problems that we have set ourselves. We are less able then before to define our own problems, whether they are of a practical or theoretical nature. Public institutions fund research that accords with the priorities of the potential 'users' of our work and makes it difficult to question their motives and actions.

Debates about the merits of different policies have tend to take as given the goal of 'development'. Policy debates are framed by the idea of development. The issues are still how to balance the competing claims of growth, equity and efficiency and how to realise these goals. Socialism is justified as a fairer and more effective means of realising the goals of development.

Development is an ideological project, which is manifest in numerous practices. As Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton have shown (1976), the dual conception of development as a process and as a *telos* derives most particularly from August Comte (1875-76). Comte aimed firstly, to apply the methods of the natural sciences to the empirical study of society and history, and represent their findings in mathematical form; secondly, to apply the knowledge of experts to promote human progress and devise a proper order of society: to understand the world in order to change it! The state and its agents act as the 'trustees' of development. The

combination of immanent process with an historical *telos*, under the trusteeship of the party to direct the state was central to the politics of Leninism. Comte, Lenin and the World Bank all inherited Saint-Simon's vision of turning 'the government of men into the administration of things' (1975; cf. Nove, 1983:32-33).

Development extended to Africa a social democratic conception of the responsibility of the state to promote the public interest. It promoted state centralisation, supported by the transfer of external funds, and an unsustainable expansion of government activities. The failures of the state to realise its promised goals led to the imposition of liberal economic strategies and to a counter-discourse of 'participation', and 'empowerment', elaborated most particularly by NGOs as trustees for an alternative development.

Radical intellectuals share with development agencies, policy institutes and non-governmental organisations an orientation to realising future plans. They start from the wrong end by postulating a desired state of affairs and then working back to the present. This assumes a degree of control over the social landscape that is likely to be lacking. It depends on the ability to get beneficiaries to act in accordance with the policies devised for them by their betters, which is unrealistic and sits uneasily with any commitments to 'participation' or 'empowerment'. Policy interventions are but one of many processes at work. These operate across a multiplicity of periods and spaces, and produce unanticipated responses and divergent and unforeseen chains of consequences. The one thing we can reasonably predict is that things will not turn out as we expect.

Policy-making is primarily a discursive activity. It is engaged in for its own sake, with little immediate regard for the world beyond. It is framed by its own rules and shaped by its characteristic metaphors. Its language is drafted with an eye to current fashions among locally and internationally powerful institutions. Its standardised forms are ill equipped to manage diverse and complex situations. Implicit assumptions, everyday practices, and institutional interests are more likely to shape the ways in which policies are implemented than are the declared intentions of policy-makers. New governments confront the same problems of establishing their authority and carrying out their routine activities as their predecessors did with, at best, much the same organisational equipment. Not surprisingly, they do many of the same things.

A better approach is to study 'really existing' policies: the historical processes in which policy makers, private interests, and public officials interact to produce outcomes that are often at variance with the intentions of any of them. This will not produce a coherent and planned programme of action directed towards achieving clearly defined goals. The empirical study and of past and contemporary policies, their implementation and outcomes might allow those who are responsible for making and implementing policies to make better judgements as to which courses of action to follow (Williams, 2004b).

Where do our own responsibilities lie? Max Weber spelt out the dilemma. We cannot have it both ways, as policy makers, developmentalists and marxist intellectuals, like we who founded of the Review of African Political Economy, have all wanted to do. We must choose which of the warring gods we wish to serve. Those who would engage with the *daimon* of politics and policy cannot expect to be judged by the validity of their ultimate ends but should be prepared to accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions (1991:125-127). The Faustian demand is awesome,

since we cannot know in advance what these outcomes might be. For those who wish to follow the calling of science, our duty is to act consistently in accordance with the demands of intellectual integrity (1991:152-156) – a path which in these times demands as much moral courage and personal commitment as the political alternatives.

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Beyond Bush: the Future of Popular Movements & US Africa Policy*

William G. Martin

This article reviews US policy towards Africa, arguing that continuity over the past four administrations far outweighs differences between presidential candidate Senator Kerry and President George Bush. If Kerry were to win the Presidential elections in November, this would not lead to any radical change in US-Africa relations. What is new over the longer term, and is posed so starkly by Bush's unilateralist and militarised actions, is the relentless development of a post-liberal world order and policy agenda. Opposition to this agenda by progressive movements and organisations focused upon such issues as debt cancellation, privatisation, and public health has already born fruit in Africa and elsewhere. The successes, failures, and contradictions of these new campaigns and organisations reflect the post-liberal conditions they work under, and are thus significantly different from the solidarity struggles of the past.

There is very little likelihood that the US presidential elections this November will bring any dramatic change in American policy towards Africa. Despite claims and hopes to the contrary, continuity is far more likely, extending the policies developed through two Republican administrations and eight years of Democratic President Bill Clinton.

President George W. Bush's use of the last four years to solidify the most militarist, unilateralist and openly arrogant US administration in recent history has caused many people in the US to embrace the slogan 'anybody but Bush,' and provoked world-wide protests and the defections of long term European and Asian allies.

But there is very little at stake for Africa in the US presidential elections. If anything, it appears likely that President Bush will feel more obligated to provide increased levels of funding for development assistance and more focus on situations of concern to Christian fundamentalists such as the conflict in Sudan. Although Kerry's election platform includes demands for enhanced AIDS assistance, a Kerry presidency will be under much less pressure to fight for higher levels of economic assistance or to engage with the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) or other crisis areas. Thus advocates of a policy of benign neglect for Africa,¹ as the best US policy given the havoc wrought when Washington does engage, might be more satisfied with a government led by Senator Kerry.

But beyond the question of official policy, the more important question for readers of ROAPE may be what is the future of individual or movement support in the United States for progressive struggles in Africa? The local and national movements in

support of African liberation movements that ultimately culminated in a powerful anti-corporate movement in support of the end of white minority rule in South Africa have essentially disappeared. But they have not left a vacuum. In their place has emerged a smattering of local and national organisations calling for debt cancellation, supporting demands for fair trade not free trade, as well as acting in support of African movements for health care and treatment access for persons with HIV/AIDS. These issue-focused campaigns and movements have been complemented by groups, often based in the African diaspora, that are focused on the situation in specific countries such as Liberia, the DRC, and Sudan.

Examining these organisations and efforts reveals that 15 years of growing continuity in US policy is matched by the emergence of a new ordering of Africa policy, organisations, and struggles – a development for which old nationalist and solidarity frameworks provide little guidance. It is thus not just the marginalisation of Africa and its importance to the US state and capital that we are watching – as many economists and activists argue – but a new set of struggles over a post-liberal, post-nationalist liberation movement paradigm. And herein lays the importance of placing policy and party concerns alongside the rise of new, and often confounding, movements and organisations.

This essay, written in August before the November presidential elections, charts these claims by providing first a brief overview of US policy, and what progressives can expect from the US government, regardless of which candidate wins the election in November, and, second, by attempting to place popular movements and individual actions in support of African progressives within the new post-cold war, post-national liberation movement, and post-liberal context.

US Policy: the Big Five

For many observers, US policy towards Africa has narrowed to a concern with, to use the words of one longtime activist, 'oil, Islam, terror, and AIDS'. There is certainly much long-term, bipartisan evidence of this. The recent bipartisan report by the Africa Policy Advisory Panel, authorised by Congress in early 2003 and conducted by the conservative Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), focused on five policy 'drivers': HIV/AIDS, terror, oil, armed conflicts and global trade.² Of these oil and energy figured first in its published concerns, with increasing attention being given to Central and West African oil states – principally Nigeria, Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Given the pace of new discoveries, it is expected that Africa will in ten years provide up to 20 per cent of all US imported oil.

Bolstering rich and authoritarian oil states has been a constant, bipartisan policy. In the starker and harsher post-9/11 era the language of democratisation and development has been replaced by language of support for the war on terror and unruly states. While a post-Bush administration might replace the language of unilateralism with a more inclusive rhetorical approach, and thus win greater international legitimacy, the policy will surely be extended (witness candidate Kerry's reaffirmation that the US will never rule out unilateral action).

More innovative Africa actions by the Bush administration also seem likely to be continued by any successor administration. Key here are actions in the wake of 9/11, using militarist conceptions to cement alliances between African and US policymakers, and placing policy and alliances within a terror framework. Much of

this preceded Bush of course. As I wrote during the Clinton presidency, Clinton broke new ground by forcefully applying free market policies to Africa and, often unnoticed, by placing Africa on the US foreign policy map by casting it as a transnational security threat.³ As Susan Rice, Clinton's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (and currently a key Kerry advisor) put it at the time,

*We have consistently articulated two clear policy goals: integrating Africa into the global economy ... and combating transnational security threats, including terrorism, crime, narcotics, weapons proliferation, environmental degradation and disease.*⁴

Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright was equally blunt in 1999: 'Africa is a major battleground in the global fight against terror, crime, drugs, illicit arms-trafficking, and disease.'

Bush's discourse and web of military engagements after 9/11 have turned these Democratic policy statements into concrete actions, sustaining compliant allies in the hope they can contain local unrest and resistance to corrupt local states, international capital, and imperial interventions. The discourse of internal and international terrorism is thus not simply substituting for the ideology of the Cold War, but is forging new military and ideological networks as capable of repressing internal dissent as pursuing 'foreign' terrorists.

For example, Bush has moved farther and faster than any recent administration in constructing a network of military and political alliances, with military-to-military linkages being expanded all across the continent as part of the Pentagon's growing 'war on terror'. As General Charles Wald, Deputy commander of the European Command (which oversees all operations in Africa outside the Horn), said by way of justification while visiting Ghana recently: 'there have been indications that al Qaeda is operating [in Africa].'⁶ The Horn, always seen as part of the Middle East, has received the most attention, with the creation in 2004 of a Combined Joint Task Force for the Horn of Africa, now based in Djibouti. In June 2003 Bush also launched a \$100 million Eastern Africa Counter-Terrorism initiative involving Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and Eritrea as well as Djibouti. Another new State Department programme, the Pan-Sahel Initiative, is being implemented by Pentagon and civilian contractors in Mali, Mauritania, Chad, and Niger.

These actions suggest the obvious targeting and encirclement of Islamic Africa. Yet the number of African armies involved extends well beyond Islamic or oil-rich areas, and well beyond the countries listed, at one time or another, as members of the 'coalition of the willing' supporting the invasion of Iraq (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Rwanda and Angola). More than a 120 senior African military officers and defense officials from 44 states participated, for example, in seminars this past February at the Pentagon's Africa Center for Strategic Studies.⁷ Compliant African states and militaries offer Washington far more than checks to radical Islam; they are increasingly seen as a counter-weight to rival core powers in the North and unruly states and leaders in the South. African peacekeeping forces, the thinking goes, may be especially valuable in replacing, as the occupation of Iraq has so starkly indicated, European and other allies now unwilling to occupy areas conquered by direct US military action or deploy to areas the US is unwilling or unable to (due to overextension in Iraq and Afghanistan). And even if South African troops are not sent to Iraq, the South African government seems more than willing to allow their mercenaries, now converted into 'private military contractors', to play major roles in the US occupation.

African states are clearly judged by some US policymakers to be more politically compliant as well as more militarily dependent – and have a proven track record. This may prove especially valuable as the ‘war on terrorism’ transmutes into a broader discourse that supports a global, post-liberal order including repressive regimes in the South. The current top ten contributors to UN peacekeeping operations are Third World states, with Africa providing four of the ten (Nigeria, 2,930 troops; Ghana, 2,790 troops; Kenya, 1,826 troops; Ethiopia, 1,822 troops). Indeed, a recent US proposal to create with other rich states a 75,000-strong, standby peacekeeping force depends heavily on African participation; of the \$660 million pledged by the US approximately \$480 million is targeted for African militaries.⁸ Senegal, Uganda, Nigeria and soon South Africa already participate in the US’s African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance which has trained 12,000 African peacekeepers since 1997.⁹ None of these actions will create independent African militaries capable of launching and sustaining peacekeeping operations, even in Africa; the lack of airlift capacity alone guarantees this. But as the US support for Uganda has illustrated, these programmes also have strengthened some of the most brutal and corrupt militaries in Africa.

The militarisation of African studies and attacks on academic freedom are similarly accelerating, as new funds flow into area studies, including the study of Africa with its large Islamic cultures and populations.¹⁰ Again, this is not new. Over the course of the last decade scores of US students, funded by the National Security Education Program (NSEP) – which requires student grantees to pursue careers in federal agencies with intelligence and national security functions – have studied at many African universities.¹¹ Led again by the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS), all large federal African study centres publicly re-confirmed their boycott of funding from military and intelligence agencies throughout the 1990s.¹²

In the wake of 9/11 a wholesale campaign has been launched by neo-conservatives against those area studies programmes and individual scholars that adhere to the boycott. Spearheaded by Stanley Kurtz of the Hoover Institution and the *National Review*,¹³ the campaign led to hearings in Congress attacking both Middle East Studies centres – supposedly driven by the anti-American ideas of Edward Said – and Africanist faculty and centres that reject the determination of language and areas studies by the needs of military and intelligence agencies. David Wiley of Michigan State University has been a particular target of Kurtz’s, while Kurtz has lavished praise on supporting statements by other faculty at major centres, such as Professor Eyamba Bokamba at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.¹⁴ Proposed legislation would create a new federal oversight agency, with appointees from homeland security agencies. The progressive response to these manoeuvres has been weak, and as academic institutions face additional funding cuts, the temptation to take such funds will increase.

Trade, Aid, AIDS

While these policies are pushed forward, few if any new measures related to economic development assistance are on the horizon. Democrats in Congress have offered no alternative to Bush’s trade and aid bills, and indeed protectionist and patriotic language is greater among Democrats. The extension of the AGOA trade agreement was recently passed after lobbying by Bono, Republican Senators, NGOs (e.g. World Vision, Bread for the World, Africare, Goodworks International) and black (e.g. Coca Cola’s Carl Ware) and white businessmen (e.g. ChevronTexaco, Coca Cola). Most of the major figures in the Democratic Party also supported the bill,

as did candidate Kerry, who characterised this expansion of AGOA as part of the road to 'a brighter future for many of the continent's poorest countries.'¹⁵

However, AGOA offers only the shortest of advantages, since the current global system of quotas on textile and apparel is set to expire on 1 January 2005 when WTO rules will finally apply. And even if the US and other countries use temporary measures to delay the implementation of this provision, there is no evidence to date that African producers will be able to compete against China's cheap and repressed labour, and protected currency and national markets. Here one need only refer to the fate of the Caribbean under Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative, which momentarily stimulated textile production and foreign plant investment, only to see foreign owners rapidly shift location when the passage of NAFTA opened up Mexico and, shortly thereafter, the door opened to even cheaper Chinese imports.

The simple facts are that the full incorporation of China and Eastern Europe into the world trading system over the next decade will more than double the number of workers in the global economy in just ten years time. The AGOA legislation passed in 2004 provides some preferential access for certain categories of African textiles until 2008, but there is no evidence that any African state will be able to build up viable domestic textile industries capable of competing with Chinese producers before that deadline.

The lack of any capacity or strategy for sustainable, broadly distributed development through expanding trade is a dilemma not only for Africa. Indeed it is a dilemma that ties together much of the rest of the developing world. For the corporate world has essentially bid individual countries, or in some cases enclaves in specific countries designated as 'Free Trade Zones' or 'Enterprise Zones', against each other in a grand race to the lowest wages and worst working conditions.

In short: the prospects of long-term sustainable African development via negotiated access to the US market are not good. It is hard to see any future administration granting more favourable terms given protectionist claims and the pressure to meet international textile and fabric regulations under the WTO. In the absence of other proposals from Africa or from the US, the only advantages in this system for Africans will be providing oil and other raw materials not available from other areas.

It is similarly difficult to see any significant changes in AIDS programmes or debt relief, to name but two additional, key issues. President Bush may be forced to deliver at least part of the \$15 billion he has promised toward combating the AIDS pandemic, particularly in Africa. But he will almost certainly in a second term be under more pressure to ensure that these funds are channeled through conservative religious organisations that are undermining a science-based approach to this disease and working to destroy proven multilateral efforts. But here too, Kerry and other Democrats have offered little new beyond bland promises of higher AIDS funding through more multilateral agencies.¹⁶ To be sure, Bush's fundamentalism over condoms and birth control would likely be reversed, but increased funding, especially to basic health care programmes, is unlikely to be advanced.

Certainly, opposition to the breaking of pharmaceutical patents and international property rights was greater under Clinton and Gore than under Bush. In the area of debt relief, where so little advance has been made even under the meagre HIPC programme,¹⁷ Kerry has said nothing and the nature of Kerry's economic advisors offers little hope for major relief – the team advising Kerry on Africa policy consists of

former officials from the Clinton administration and the authors of the CSIS report referenced above. Most of the motivation for Africa policy under the Clinton administration was a desire to cultivate linkages with African-American constituencies in the United States, but there is almost no evidence that candidate Kerry has been responsive to that constituency. Nor is there any evidence that Kerry's wife, who was born and grew up in colonial Mozambique, will be a force for positive change. She has publicly stated she hasn't wanted to visit there given the changes after independence.

The Movements Strike Back: the Failures of Neo-liberalism & Naked Empire

To stress the continuity and narrowness of US policy over the last four administrations does not lead to the conclusion that weak progressive movements face implacable and immovable state policies and bureaucracies. Indeed, the constellation of US policies and programmes today are a response to the unexpected consequences of the growing failure of the stark neo-liberal policies that core states imposed in the wake of the unruly markets and states of the 1970s. It is thus not only post-World War Two, liberal state-building and development, and nationalist and national liberation movements, that have disappeared; a new constellation of programmes, organisations, ideologies and movements have fitfully emerged in their place.

The neo-liberal policies at the heart of this new order have failed, and are recognised to have done so, all across the periphery of the world economy. This is especially the case in the one continent where these policies were most directly applied: Africa. The World Bank may trumpet a global decline in the number of persons living on under a dollar day between 1981 and 2001, but it fails to highlight that the number of Africans in this situation increased from 164 million to 314 million.¹⁸

Nowhere is the increasing illegitimacy of late neo-liberalism more evident than in the development of 'anti-globalisation' movements across Latin America, South Asia, Africa – and even North America. In Latin America, for instance, these movements have forced changes in governments in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Venezuela, to name just a few countries. In Africa, there are small, but growing movements challenging this development path not just in South Africa, but in Mauritius, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and other countries. Although they may not have won their battles with capital, movements to challenge the bankrupt development policies behind particular mega projects such as the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline or the Bujagali dam have delayed programmes and forced concessions.¹⁹

This failure of the neo-liberal model has placed US administrations, like international financial institutions, in a difficult position as they search for means and policies to legitimise market and capital rule. The Millennium Challenge Account,²⁰ which offers dramatic increases in development assistance linked more explicitly than ever before to neoliberal economic policies, is just the latest of these efforts. The movement to the language of 'poverty alleviation' and AIDS charity is another face of these efforts, as is the formative use of the 'war on terror' to cohere a new global partnership. But none of these efforts have succeeded in delivering even the modest advances in Africa that might provide leaders on the continent with crumbs with which to placate growing unrest or persuade impoverished communities to abandon the search for salvation through conservative religious ideologies.

These contradictions are most evident in Bush's policies. September 11 provided a conceptual opening to cement and legitimise the harsh realities of a post-liberal order that relies on raw economic and military power. But even the Bush administration, particularly in Africa, does not want to shoulder the burden of imposing order for capital alone. Bush's brute unilateralism and costly military adventurism is likely to give way to new networks with more social-democratic faces and voices – including alliances with Europe and prominent African, Latin American, and Asian leaders. The transition in World Bank discourse to a concern with poverty, state capacities, and working with 'civil society' (mainly contracted NGOs) offers a parallel development.

As this is being written, the divisions between the US and European powers have prevented the developed nations from bringing sub-regional powers such as Brazil, South Africa and India into alliances through preferential trade deals – as was starkly evident at the failure of the Cancun negotiations of the WTO. But local economic expansion could, if it resulted in some redistribution of world income to favoured powerful regional states such as Brazil and South Africa, cement alliances among northern states, international institutions, and global capital. The advantages of bringing Lula and Mbeki aboard such a project are clear, and in both cases there is much evidence that even these most nationalist leaders can become willing partners, opening their doors to capital while performing difficult peacekeeping tasks in areas like Haiti, Burundi, and the DRC.

Yet for most of Africa, and similarly located countries in Asia, such a scenario would be a disaster, matching increasingly subservience to world markets and capital to long-run tendencies toward poverty and incapable and undemocratic states. The few concessions that the developing world have been able to wring out of the WTO – mostly in the form of stalling the advance of negotiations on issues such as the Singapore round – have come because of the unity between sub-regional powers and the rest of the developing world.²¹

More direct action against individual African responses to the failures of neo-liberalism has also been built into US policy. As increasingly marginalised populations demand access to work and wealth, we have witnessed a growing flight of Africans to Europe, and, to a lesser degree given distances, North America. As immigration and asylum rules have tightened, this has triggered not only growing racism, but a deadly ring of new state and private prisons and detention centres surrounding Europe, Australasia and North America.

North America stands out here as the exemplar in constructing this increasingly racialised and global carceral system: as jobs, wealth and welfare fled urban areas after the 1970s, prisons emerged to contain newly marginalised and especially black populations. By 2003 over 2 million persons were imprisoned, with one in eight black men between the ages of 20 and 34 behind bars. After 9/11 new controls over immigrants have also accelerated,²² as has a protest movement calling for prison abolition in general and the freedom of immigrant detainees in particular.²³ The growth of European prisons follows this pattern, with foreigners, most notably those of colour, constituting a growing proportion of the prison population.²⁴ Multiple racial identities may now be accepted by even conservatives, marking the abandonment of liberal hopes for assimilation, yet this acceptance of more fluid racial differences has only served to justify accelerating racial inequality and profiling.

Regional powers, particularly those with Euro-American populations and investments, have similarly been constructing the language of crime waves and dangerous foreigners to justify xenophobic policies and accelerating prison populations. Nowhere is this more evident than in South Africa, where private US and European firms have built prisons at great government expense, while the state and the media have legitimised campaigns against foreign Africans.²⁵ Mozambican immigrants are now more likely to be murdered in Gauteng than in Germany. This too reveals the contradictions of post-liberal racism: the language of equality and human rights ensured by the international community and national states has been replaced by the language and policies to check international movements of colour. The African state may have been deracialised, as Mamdani argues,²⁶ but this has come at the cost of the increasing inter-state racial difference and repression.

This is then the likely future for US policy: attempting to manage the results of accelerating class and racial inequality across national boundaries, without the possibility of amelioration by development and the liberal redistribution of income and employment. Post-liberal rule thus increasingly turns upon legitimising the new ideology and institutions required to guard the centres of privilege and capital accumulation. As global liberalism has been abandoned, novel modes of linking African and Euro-North American dominant classes, new international and civil society (NGO) political agencies, and new institutions capable of controlling unruly black populations are likely to grow. US Africa policy, which for almost two decades has been searching for a way to sustain this new world order, is likely to continue to focus upon isolating and controlling a threatening Africa, and doing so in alliance wherever possible with new political and commercial classes in Africa itself.

Linking Protests & Movements: the US Side

These bleak conclusions follow directly from a focus on power and policy. Yet one may be more optimistic by turning attention elsewhere. As we have suggested above, popular perceptions of and protests against US power have served to successively undermine neo-liberalism and foreign interventionism. This is likely to continue and even accelerate, even when a post-Bush administration puts a more multilateral and social-democratic face on current North-South relationships in general and Africa policy in particular.

Indeed a good case can be made that the most important focus for ROAPE and other progressive forces is not the policies of London or Washington, but transnational linkages among the new radical movements that have emerged over the course of the last ten years. It is certainly the case, as Jennifer Davis, past-Director of the African Fund and current, interim Director of the Washington Office on Africa, put it: 'the old international solidarity linkages that used to exist are now gone.' When crises or calls to action emanate from Africa 'there are no automatic responses' as the past.²⁷

What does emerge in the US in response to African developments, as in Darfur or West and Central Africa, are new lobbying coalitions variously composed of humanitarian and refugee groups, aid agencies and NGOs, African states, religious groups – including fundamentalist Christians – and the narrowing circle of activist and Africa organisations, most notably Africa Action, the Washington Office on Africa, TransAfrica, Jubilee USA and the Africa programme at the American Friends Service Committee.

In the case of Darfur, Africa Action led by organising a petition signed by over 28,000 persons. On 25 August 2004 a protest outside the Sudanese embassy, reminiscent of similar anti-apartheid protests outside the South African embassy, led to the arrest of Salih Booker, executive director of Africa Action, Bill Fletcher Jr, president of TransAfrica Forum, Emira Woods, co-director of Foreign Policy in Focus, Rev. William G. Sinkford, president of the United Universalist Association of Congregations, and actor and activist Danny Glover. Yet even in this case organising beyond petitions outside Washington was minimal.

Africa does figure prominently in anti-globalisation campaigns, as in the anti-debt campaign waged by Jubilee USA and the World Bank Bonds Boycott, both of which have union, church and municipal endorsers.²⁸ Activists from the continent often come to Washington in relation to these efforts, particularly at the moment of anti-IMF/World Bank protests, and through such actions movement linkages are formed.²⁹

Yet with rare exceptions these linkages have yet to form sustainable networks, much less led to a direct impact on government policies or a broad public consciousness. And at times direct conflict between US and continental African NGOs and civil society groups is quite open. When US NGOs participated in the official NGO Forum at the AGOA Ministerial Forum in Mauritius in early 2003, for example, they were denounced by the local Platform Against Bush Politics – a coalition of local trade unions, women's organisations, and other civil society groups which regard AGOA conditionalities and privatisation as 'the recolonisation of Africa.'³⁰

Exceptions provide signs of new directions. Here the parallel campaigns against Northern and Southern governments' inaction in the face of HIV/AIDS are most notable. The growth and success of the well-known Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa, which holds itself separate from past party political models, has matched a long history of US HIV/AIDS campaigns. The militant activists from ACT UP first took up this call in the US with a highly successful targeting of former Vice President and then presidential candidate Al Gore for his defence of the drug companies. More recently, Africa Action has spearheaded efforts to bring the historic Africa activist community in the United States into alliances not just with allies in Africa but also with the AIDs activist community in the United States. Africa Action has organised forums and begun the slow, difficult task of linking up local networks of activists working on these issues in Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles and other regional areas, but none of these campaigns have yet reached a critical mass that translates local action into a powerful national movement. Nonetheless, the sustained direct action led by the groups in Africa has in this area scored real victories against pharmaceutical multinationals as well as, slowly, the policies of and AIDS funding by the South African, African, and the US governments.

This is all the more remarkable on the US side given the steady decline in the appreciation of AIDS as an public health crisis in the US itself-in part reflecting the widespread use of antiretroviral drugs, and in part the calculated invisibility of both the lack of health care for poor African-Americans and the high proportion of new cases within the African-American community. While African-Americans are 12% of the US population, they account for over 50% of new AIDS cases while almost twice as many African-Americans die from HIV/AIDS than whites.³¹

Organising in these areas must and does draw upon persons now a generation distant from the anti-apartheid struggle, and two generations removed from the

national liberation support movement. 'There is a tremendous interest in learning more about Africa and people are spurred to act', says Imani Countess of the African Friends Service Committee, the Quaker organisation that has one of the most powerful networks of local offices and activists around the country (although Africa work is not the principal focus of the AFSC network). In the last year Countess has organised two regional 'Peace Tours' bringing Africans and activists together to speak at community meetings and other venues around the country.

But the community activists attending forums and actions today are not, by and large, veterans of the anti-apartheid movement, but are a new group of activists, says Countess. In an interview for this article, she insisted that the problem is not a lack of interest in these issues in communities around the US: 'There is an enormous interest out there. We have such a huge obligation to figure out ways to tap into that interest.'

Individual groups have organised some issue specific campaigns, but as yet there is no development that would signal the emergence of cohesive nationwide support for African struggles. There is nothing on the horizon, for example, that would parallel past anti-apartheid and national liberation support movements, much less the support networks generated by the Chiapas rebellion.

To look for such developments, and lament their absence, may however be falling into the trap of searching for replications of past solidarity struggles. As the examples discussed above of protests in Africa and Latin America suggest, the future is unlikely to pivot upon mass movements supporting liberation parties in different countries. Far more likely are solidarity linkages among local movements organised around labour, land, and basic rights (health, education, citizenship) movements. As everyone recognises from struggles over health and AIDS, industrial production and factory wages, or land and seed crops, these local struggles are increasingly linked internationally.

This does not make forging North-South movement relationships any easier, particularly as single-movement organisations centred on capturing state power are increasingly rare. While many movements may originate within or support specific political parties, most increasingly resist being brought into party politics much less central state power. This poses a great dilemma of course for many movements, as can be seen in the case of trade unions in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, not to mention the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores) in Brazil. This is less a dilemma for the far more numerous, newer movements that have taken on civil society or NGO forms, such as those surrounding land and health issues. For progressive activists in the North, solidarity work in the post-liberal era may indeed develop along the lines suggested by current AIDS, debt, or trade campaigns: a steady networking by smaller groups working around centralised states.

None of this is cause for unbridled optimism. As the survey above suggests, conscious support for such solidarity work in the United States is at a low ebb. Past predictions of growing black support for Africa, driven by the Afrocentric wave of the late 1980s and early 1990s that culminated in the Million Man and Million Women Marches, have ebbed with that movement's decline. Yet current cultural connections across the African world, particularly for the majority youth population, are nevertheless stronger than ever due to the influence of commercialised hip-hop culture.

As one progressive cultural activist told us, however, 'you don't get a sense of political engagement'— despite considerable coverage in hip-hop media and acts of AIDS, reparations (e.g. comedian Dave Chappelle), artists' visits to Africa (e.g. musicians Beyoncé, Dead Prez), and the incarceration crisis. Recent hip-hop conventions have called attention to Africa's AIDS crisis and the need for debt relief, but there have been no concrete follow-up actions. And in the ongoing battle in lyrics and print between the 'bling bling' commercialisation of black youth culture, and the demand that hip-hop return to its political and consciously black roots, the former is clearly dominant across the Americas and Africa.

Still, the most widely-applauded song at a free Dead Prez concert in Harlem this past summer was 'I'm A African', while star performer Nas' free concert in New York City's Central Park broadly attacked the US empire and racial oppression. The latter sentiments are, of course, completely absent in the widely-publicised get-out-the-vote work by mainstream artists from P. Diddy to Bruce Springsteen. In return, radical rap artists challenge even the value of voting, given selection processes which eternally ensure the lack of any candidate who might plausibly represent their communities.

How such battles will work out in a climate where poverty and polarisation increase within the US as well as between Africa and the North is uncertain. Over the course of the last four US administrations US policy has assumed new and narrower forms, designed to address the failures and increasing illegitimacy of the neo-liberal order developed in the 1980s and 1990s. As new movements slowly emerge both in Africa and the US, one thing seems certain: they will not replicate past issues or modalities of struggle. As ROAPE readers have always known: *a luta continua*.

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Endnotes

* The assistance of Jim Cason was invaluable in constructing this essay, for which the author is very grateful.

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The ANC's 'Left Turn' & South African Sub-imperialism

Patrick Bond

The South African government is widely considered to play a progressive role in Africa and the world. Indeed, there was an expectation after the 2004 election that Pretoria would be part of a global backlash against neoliberalism. However, the radical rhetoric often emanating from Pretoria these days barely disguises its post-apartheid record of promoting of strategies which promote global integration. These include the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); 'normalised' bilateral military relations with the Pentagon and geopolitical alliances with Washington across Africa; trade liberalisation; collaboration with Western financial power and facilitation of transnational capital in Africa; and opposition to demands for reparations for the West's apartheid-era profits. While some academic commentators have not yet grasped the essential nature of this policy direction, activists in the African Social Forum networks have periodically demanded the adoption of alternative strategies. Their vision is grounded in values of social justice and international solidarity; Pretoria's appears to be merely sub-imperialist.

Some reviews of South Africa's 'ambiguous' foreign policy during 2004 were based partly on a presumption, as Alden and le Pere (2004:104,106) argued recently, of Pretoria's 'loftier aims to play a key role in reshaping current international norms, institutions and process to further global justice for Africa and the South.' This is an important claim, especially when the ruling African National Congress (ANC) is allegedly moving leftwards in geopolitical, ideological and economic terms. In June 2004, according to *Business Day* (24 June 2004), 'President Thabo Mbeki set the seal yesterday on a decisive broad policy shift to the left for his final term in office, lashing out at what he called the "new conservatism" sweeping the world, which enshrined the individual and denigrated the state in a way which could never bring a better life for SA's millions.' The 'full-frontal attack on free-market economics' was interpreted by *The Economist* in these terms:

Since attaining power, Mbeki has governed in a reasonably market-friendly manner. But he has recently started to veer back to the left, in word if not yet in deed ... Two years ago he fought trade unionists and communists, who are formally allied with the ruling ... [ANC], when they threatened to strike against privatisation. He beat them down, but he fears they may bounce back (1 July 2004).

Certainly, the government has been talking tougher since the elections. For example, SA deputy foreign minister Sue van der Merwe opened the August 2004 Non-Aligned Movement ministerial conference in Durban with this argument:

There is a growing tendency on the part of countries of the North to mount global 'campaigns' against threats that are perceived and defined in the North but allegedly originate ... in the countries of the South. ... These unilateral actions, disregarding ... the United Nations Charter and international law, [are] ... further exacerbated by the re-emergence of a type of state behaviour reminiscent of the colonial era, with the emphasis on greater interference in domestic affairs of states in the developing world ... The re-writing of the rule-book that at present condemns the majority of the world's people to perpetual economic and social marginalisation and rewards the minority with infinite wealth is at the heart of the endeavours of this Movement. Fundamental among our concerns are the current processes of globalisation and liberalisation that in effect create a wider gap between the rich and the poor of the world.

Yet, it is important, and fair, to ask if 'talking left' is the same thing as 'a decisive broad policy shift to the left', or instead if, despite recent rhetorical shifts, Pretoria continues its post-1994 policy of 'walking right', not only in domestic politics but also in regional and international affairs. Such proclamations do not address questions about Pretoria's relationship with the US-led empire, in the aftermath of the marriage between the apartheid regime and Western interests during most of the 20th century. In a host of controversial areas – arms dealing, trade, finance, regional investment and reparations – the evidence indicates relatively durable, not shifting, policies and practices. Notwithstanding a more vocal radical nationalism, these policy areas fit a specific South African role within the international capitalist mode of production. The 'left turn' advertised is, hence, a distraction from the underlying problems that African anti-imperialist activists – such as the African Social Forum, Jubilee Africa or the Africa Trade Network – face when confronting Pretoria's agenda.

Spinning Left ...

'African scholarship has a responsibility to educate us about the consequences of the colonial system on the birth and practice of neo-colonialism that has characterised much of Africa during the years of its independence', Mbeki wrote in his weekly message to constituents on 9 July 2004:

There is a continuing and urgent need for Africa's historians, sociologists and others to assess and write about the long-term impact of these three historical phenomena on Africa: slavery, colonialism and racism. There are some in our country and the rest of the world who demand that we should view and treat these phenomena merely as a matter of historical record, with no relevance to our contemporary struggles for Africa's rebirth. In part, this is driven by the determination to compel the victims of gross injustice to forget the harm that was done to them, inducing a collective African amnesia, the better to be able to persuade the victims to blame themselves for their wretchedness. We see this clearly in our own country, where some insist that apartheid is a thing of the past, and that all references to the continuing impact of that past constitute an attempt to 'play the race card' (2004b).

Mbeki provided further indication of a renewed interest in radical development theory a week later, in seeking

to understand the extent of the success of the struggle of African Americans to free themselves from poverty and underdevelopment, in a situation in which, principally, this challenge was and is being addressed through reliance on the market. In principle this should help to improve our own success in confronting our own challenge of poverty and underdevelopment, given that we are striving to overcome the legacy of 'colonialism of a special type' (2004c).

The anti-market rhetoric was to some extent a reversion to an analysis learned within the exiled ANC and at the Lenin Institute in Moscow, and it worried Peter Bruce, editor of *Business Day*: 'Has President Thabo Mbeki lost his mind? Has he lost his temper? His patience? Or has he just lost his faith?' (25 June 2004). (Just a year earlier, Bruce had been more confident: 'The government is utterly seduced by big business, and cannot see beyond its immediate interests' (4 June 2003)).

Mbeki's reminder of 'the consequences of the colonial system on the birth and practice of neo-colonialism' should be taken seriously. After all, the colonial system's main consequence for Africa was the structuring of capitalist – noncapitalist relations in a manner described so well by Rosa Luxemburg (1968), and updated eloquently as 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2003) or more simply permanent 'primitive accumulation' (Perelman, 2000). While playing its subordinate role within world capitalism, Africa thus cannot hope to 'develop' but instead remains caught in various trade, debt, investment, technology and cultural traps which correlate growing international economic integration to worsening inequality (as even World Bank staff have come to admit).

On this basis, the way forward from colonialism and neo-colonialism to a fairer world economy and better-balanced geopolitical system does not pass through Washington, London, Geneva, Brussels or the G8 meeting-ground resorts where Mbeki and his two key allies – finance minister Trevor Manuel and trade/public enterprises minister Alec Erwin – have promoted reform. Were Mbeki serious about challenging 'global apartheid' (as he calls imperialism), he might have addressed international power relations rather differently. Thus, for instance, instead of selling US\$250 million worth of arms to the US and UK (and welcoming Bush a few weeks after his occupation of Baghdad), what if Mbeki had followed Mandela in snubbing Bush and supporting anti-war resistance and boycotts in the Non-Aligned Movement and African Union?

Or, instead of rejecting calls for reparations from erstwhile investors in apartheid, what if Mbeki and his colleagues had nurtured the cause of anti-racism?

Or, instead of opposing the global justice movement and African trade demands from Seattle through Doha to Cancun, what if trade minister Erwin had tried uniting the continent and its allies behind a counter-hegemonic trade agenda?

Or, instead of rejecting debt cancellation as a strategy, what if Manuel had joined the Jubilee movement, denounced World Bank and IMF plans for crumbs of relief and helped organise a debtors' cartel?

Or, instead of a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) – welcomed by the Bush regime and ridiculed by many Africans – what if Pretoria had promoted a bottom-up African recovery programme?

Or, instead of accepting the World Summit on Sustainable Development's orientation to commodification (not to mention repressing dissent), what if ANC leaders tried to promote poverty-reduction and environmental reclamation?

Or, instead of promoting water commercialisation and large dams, what if South Africa helped establish principles of social responsibility and respect for nature? (examples taken from Bond, 2004 a, b, c, d, e, f)

As I have argued here and elsewhere (Bond, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2003), the ideology adopted by Mbeki and his colleagues since liberation has been radical rhetorically, but essentially integrationist and reformist in intent. It follows classical modernisation analysis, today dressed up in dualistic terms. Mbeki typically describes global apartheid, as well as post-apartheid South Africa, as having 'two economies'; impoverishment in the second is caused by its 'marginalisation' from the first. This, in turn, justifies NEPAD as a homegrown version of a 'Washington Consensus' strategy for the continent's deepening global integration, and promotes personal enrichment as 'Black Economic Empowerment' (BEE) – despite the many debt-based failures of first-generation BEE's.

Unfortunately, the SA Communist Party has helped to give the integrationist analysis a progressive spin – as in this statement (denying that the ANC had suddenly shifted to the left, on the grounds that it had always occupied this terrain) by general secretary Blade Nzimande (2004):

The idea that there has been a dramatic 'U-turn' in policy comes mainly from those who, over the last decade, have attempted from the outside to put words into the mouths of senior ANC leaders. Liberals (and, indeed, various anti-ANC ultra-left groups) have portrayed government policies as uncomplicatedly 'free market capitalism'.

Referring to Mbeki's June 2004 budget speech (2004a), in which he contrasted US-style neo-liberalism unfavourably with European social democracy, Nzimande interpreted,

These important value statements from our President, like the many positive socio-economic policy indications and commitments from the ANC election manifesto and government in the recent period, once more reaffirm these basic truths. They create a constructive climate in which meaningful and ongoing discussion and debate can be carried forward.

... While Moving Right

The reality is different – the persistence of neo-liberal policies, with two minor exceptions: privatisation has been slowed (mainly due to popular resistance and adverse market conditions) but not halted, and the tight post-apartheid fiscal straightjacket has been loosened very slightly. The climate for debate between the centre-left ruling party and its Alliance partners (the SACP and COSATU) on the one hand, and the independent left, on the other, remains chilly. The ANC continues to implement neo-liberal macroeconomic and microdevelopment policies – orthodox monetary policy is maintained, liberalisation of trade and finance proceeds apace, corporatisation of state enterprises speeds up, and the ongoing attack by state service providers against low-income people continues. According to chief water bureaucrat Michael Muller (*Mail & Guardian*, 25 June 2004), for example, '275,000 of all households attributed interruptions [in supply] to cut-offs for non-payment' in 2003 alone, a far higher rate than prior academic and government studies estimated.

To illustrate the confusion, in June 2004, Cosatu expressed confidence in minister of public enterprises Alex Erwin:

We welcome the fact that the minister has, like the president, placed the issue of employment creation at the centre of restructuring of the State-owned Enterprises.

But by September, the only logical reply was for unions to threaten 'the worst strike in Spoornet's history if the railway company went ahead with plans to retrench 946 employees in the next two months' – in the immediate wake of parent parastatal firm Transnet's R6.3 billion pretax loss. According to Chris de Vos, secretary-general of the Spoornet union Utatu, at his first meeting with labour in July, 'Erwin had said Spoornet as a state-owned company had the responsibility of creating jobs, not shedding them.' By the end of August, Erwin had changed position, 'saying state-owned companies were not employment agencies and that managers had to do everything possible to make businesses profitable, including cutting jobs' (Faniso, 2004).

Moreover, there are ongoing reports of state repression and judicial harassment of social movements which resist. *Mail & Guardian* editor Ferial Haffajee ridiculed as 'melodrama' the observations of Naomi Klein, who wrote of South Africa:

There's a huge amount of struggle going on in this country. There are movements exploding. They are resisting privatisation of water and electricity, resisting eviction and demanding land reform. They are reacting against all the broken promises of the ANC. This is a security state. It spends three times as much on private security as it does on affordable housing – just to keep the rich from the poor (Sunday Times, 1 September 2004).

A month later, the *Mail and Guardian* revealed:

The killing of a 19-year-old boy in Phoenix, Durban, two weeks ago by city council security guards has again cast a spotlight on the measures state authorities use against impoverished communities in protest. Marcel King was shot dead on Thursday June 24 by a member of a security company hired by the Durban council to disconnect electricity that had apparently been illegally reconnected in the impoverished Durban suburb ... This incident is one of many recent clashes between state security, social movement activists and community members in suburbs in Gauteng, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Marchers and protests are a regular feature of political life and are governed by a series of regulations governing gatherings. ... On election day this year (14 April 2004) three Landless People's Movement activists were arrested and were detained and allegedly tortured. On Freedom Day (21 March 2004) police fired on a group of Anti-Privatisation Forum members protesting outside the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg against electricity cut-offs (Mail & Guardian, 12 July 2004)

There are many more such cases, of course. Moreover, if we project Pretoria's style of governance to the regional scale, it is easy to comprehend the processes of domination and exclusion that allow the South African government to exploit its semi-peripheral position within imperialism. For example, in spite of promoting the globalisation of *capital*, Pretoria is opposed to the globalisation and regionalisation of *people*. According to a recent Refugees International (RI) report (14 June 2004):

South Africa is denying ... political asylum to thousands of Zimbabweans seeking to escape persecution. Of the 5,000 applications for political asylum filed by Zimbabweans to date, fewer than 20 Zimbabweans have actually received political asylum in South Africa. But more troubling still is the fact that few Zimbabweans are able even to apply for political asylum ... RI interviewed people who told of being asked for a bribe merely to receive a letter giving them an appointment to present their asylum claim. Police officers ask for bribes to look the other way when rounding up undocumented asylum seekers or those whose temporary permit of stay has expired.

The best explanation for Pretoria's increasing repression of poor and working-class people locally and regionally is growing desperation. As conceded even by Joel Netshitenzhe, in a review of post-apartheid accomplishments,

the advances made in the first decade by far supersede the weaknesses. Yet, if all indicators were to continue along the same trajectory, especially in respect of the dynamic of economic inclusion and exclusion, we could soon reach a point where the negatives start to overwhelm the positives (The Presidency, 2004).

The negatives, combining economic austerity and financial vulnerability, are certainly formidable. According to Nenad Pacek of The Economist Corporate Network,

portfolio investments accounted for ... 24% of SA's gross domestic product and 65% of the rand's trading took place offshore (*Business Day*, 19 July 2004).

Moreover, South Africa's cumulative trade balance fell into deficit during the first half of 2004 (*SA Press Association*, 1 August 2004) while job shedding continued unabated with unemployment reaching 32% in 2002 (43% when frustrated jobseekers are added) (*Statistics South Africa*, 2001, 2002:iii). And, in spite of a minor upturn in domestic fixed investment, this remained far below the 25% required for a 5% GDP growth rate. The economy's 'slow rotting' (Gelb, 2003) and the political concern it had produced was understood thus by Michael Power (*Business Day*, 16 July 2004):

... we lag in: gross domestic product growth, 25/25; foreign exchange reserves, 25/25; industrial production, 21/25; current account, 20/25. A little digging reveals our real interest rates, cost of capital and unemployment is among the highest; our foreign direct investment inflow is among the lowest. No wonder our president is asking his advisers hard questions. No wonder he is tasking his ministers with hard delivery targets. And, unsurprisingly, he is doubting parts of the Washington Consensus package adopted by SA in 1994.

Yet, for all Mbeki's concern, trade union economist Neva Seidman Makgetla (2004:73) notes that:

in response to the crisis within the economy, the government has adopted limited reforms involving increased spending on basic social services and housing, greater emphasis on job creation and equity, a renewed stress on planning and coordination and greater support for cooperatives. Yet these new initiatives do not constitute a systematic plan for transforming the economy.

The same can be said of international policy. Thus, the main question before us remains: when will Pretoria cease polishing the economic chains of global apartheid, and begin to break them? We can consider geopolitics and military affairs, trade, finance, regional investment, and reparations claims to help illustrate the options and the choices made in Pretoria during the period of the alleged left turn.

Geopolitical & Military Postures

How are we to interpret Pretoria's recent global political zigzag? On the one hand, Pretoria's grand continental plan, NEPAD, was declared 'philosophically spot-on' by the Bush regime, and Mbeki anointed Washington's 'point man' for resolving the

Zimbabwe crisis (during Bush's July 2003 visit to Pretoria) in spite of his soft-peddalling of Mugabe's repression (Bond, 2004a). In January 2003, Nelson Mandela remarked that, 'if there is a country which has committed unspeakable atrocities, it is the United States of America' (CBS News, 30 January 2003) but, in May 2004, he retracted his criticism, simply because 'it is not good to remain in tension with the most powerful state in the world' (CNN.com, 24 May 2004). As Greg Mills of the SA Institute of International Affairs explained,

I think there was a bluster by the South African government, or those associated near or around it, prior to the American invasion of Iraq in March last year, but that was toned down fairly quickly by the South African government and most notably, President Mbeki. Really, there has not been much in the way of condemnation of the American position since March last year (Business Day, 21 July 2004).

In July, the US House of Representatives extended a ban on military assistance to 32 countries – including South Africa – which agreed to cooperate in future with the International Criminal Court against alleged US war criminals. Nevertheless, Washington's ambassador to Pretoria, Cameron Hume, quickly announced that several bilateral military deals would go ahead in any case. According to Peter McIntosh of *African Armed Forces* journal, the US 'had simply re-routed military funding for South Africa through its European Command in Stuttgart.' Hume reported the Pentagon's desire 'to train and equip two additional battalions to expand the number of forces the [SA National Defense Force] have available for peacekeeping in Africa' (*ThisDay*, 19 July 2004). The two countries' military relations were fully 'normalised' by July 2004, in the words of SA deputy minister Aziz Pahad. In partnership with General Dynamics Land Systems, the State-owned Denel began marketing jointly produced light armoured vehicles (*SA Press Association*, 21 July 2004). This followed a period of serious problems for the SA arms firm and others like it (Arm Scor and Fuchs), which were also allowed full access to the US market in July after paying fines for apartheid-era sanctions-busting (Batchelor & Willett, 1998; Crawford-Browne, 2004).

Given Pretoria's 1998 decision to invest US\$6 billion in mainly offensive weaponry such as fighter jets and submarines, there are fears that 'peacekeeping' covers a more expansive geopolitical agenda, and that Mbeki is tacitly permitting a far stronger US role in Africa than is necessary (Black, 2004). On the surface, Pretoria's mediation in the conflicts in Burundi and Congo (DRC) during 2003 appeared positive. However, on the ground the agreements more closely resembled elite deals locking in place 'low-intensity democracy' and neo-liberal economic regimes. Moreover, because some of the belligerent forces were explicitly left out, the declarations of peace were often followed by massacres of civilians in both countries and a near-coup in the DRC. By mid-2004, the leader of the *Rassemblement Congolais la Democratique*, Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, was publicly critical of Pretoria's interference:

When a [transition process] takes off on a wrong footing, unless a real readjustment takes place on the way, the end cannot be good ... Some feel like South Africa has actively put us in the situation we are in. They had a lot of leverage to make sure that certain structural problems were anticipated and solutions proposed. They seem to have fallen in the Western logic of thinking that mediocrity is a less evil for Congolese, if it stops the war. They also have a lot of leverage to get a clear on-going commitment to resolve the contradictory fears of both the DRC and Rwanda; they do not seem to use it. This is why some feel that South Africa is too close to Rwanda (<http://www.zmag.org>, 22 June 2004).

Trade

At issue in developing trade relationships is not only the growing role of bilateral deals linking South Africa and its hinterlands to the US and European Union but, as important, Pretoria's active role in supporting global corporate interests and those of the largest Johannesburg-based firms (whose financial headquarters shifted to London during the late 1990s). To illustrate, eleven months after the Seattle debacle, the then director general of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Michael Moore, actively pressured the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) countries at Doha to fall into line with the demands of the US and European Union. Robert Wade describes it thus:

*Moore, according to one delegate, took to phoning ministers at home at the weekend to pressure them for cooperation. A week after Tanzanian trade minister Simba had expressed his 'sense of happiness' at the final outcome, Dar es Salaam received \$3 billion in debt relief from the IMF. The murderous attacks of September 11 were, of course, very helpful in forging the consensus at Doha, two months later. Moore, with US trade representative [Robert] Zoellick and EU trade commissioner [Pascal] Lamy, toured developing-country capitals to insist that the new free-trade round would be a blow against al-Qaeda – and that objectors would be considered as renegades in the war on terror. Once gathered at Doha, as Moore recounts in his book **A World Without Walls**, the trusty lieutenants went to work: 'The wise and experienced minister from Brazil, Celso Lafer, South Africa's Irwin [sic], Egypt's Boutros Ghali and Nigeria's Bello worked the African caucus.' ... Erwin played a crucial role in talking a joint ACP-LDC-Africa Group meeting through the reasons why they should accept it, nevertheless.*

For Erwin, the Third World's disarray at Doha produced a 'fantastic' result. But no subsequent progress was made in cutting European/US/Japanese/Canadian farm subsidies. Hence in September 2003, the Cancun WTO session broke down in acrimony, a result that was, for Erwin, 'disappointing' – in contrast with much of the Third World, which felt empowered, especially as it was the ACP bloc that repeated its Seattle feat of walking out, blocking consensus and halting the proceedings. Alongside Brazil and India, by contrast, South Africa had wanted to continue negotiating. Although Erwin was subsequently mentioned as a candidate for WTO director-general when the current occupant leaves the job in 2005, he was redeployed to Pretoria's Ministry of Public Enterprises in May 2004.

As for the WTO, it was reborn in Geneva in July 2004 once the US and EU had made a few concessions which gave renewed momentum to the Doha framework. Without the stitched-up deal, Larry Elliott observed (*The Guardian*, 2 August 2004) 'the WTO's authority as a multilateral institution would have been shattered; the prospect of the global trading system fragmenting into regionalism and bilateralism would have been real.' In fact, as Columbia University economist Arvind Panagariya explained, Geneva was a victory for neo-liberalism:

*barring a few exceptional cases such as cotton, the least developed countries will actually be hurt by this liberalisation. The biggest beneficiaries of the rich country cuts in farm subsidies will be the rich countries themselves, which bear the bulk of the cost of the associated distortions, followed by the Group of 20 (*The Financial Times*, 3 August 2004).*

Agricultural producers expecting to gain most were Brazil, Australia, Thailand, the Philippines and South Africa, according to the SA Institute of International Affairs, while African food importers would be faced with higher-priced European and US

products (*Business Day*, 3 August 2004). Most major environmental groups and NGOs condemned the deal, on grounds that further liberalisation would deindustrialise many weaker countries and hasten ecological crises associated with mining, fisheries and forests. According to Friends of the Earth's Alexandra Wandel, 'Corporate lobby groups will be the big winners, the environment and the poor – the big losers.'

South Africa's role in fostering liberalised trade was not limited to the WTO. Relations between the US and Southern Africa increasingly centred around the transition from the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) – overwhelmingly favourable to South Africa in contrast to other countries – to a free trade area encompassing the Southern African Customs Union. The EU and SADC began negotiating a similar package of 'Economic Partnership Agreements' featuring market access for agricultural and non-agricultural products, trade in services (often amounting to privatisation), and the 'Singapore issues' of investment, competition, trade facilitation, government procurement, and data protection. South Africa already has such an agreement (<http://www.tralac.org/scripts/content.php?id=2762>). In mid-2004, Pretoria also began bilateral trade liberalisation negotiations with China, which again will have enormous implications for the region's industries, without consulting the smaller, more vulnerable countries.

Pretoria's approach stands in sharp contrast with the position taken by activists in the Africa Trade Network who have rejected the liberalisation agenda, especially the Economic Partnership Agreements, and instead called for trade cooperation that:

- is based on a principle of non-reciprocity, as instituted in General System of Preferences and special and differential treatment in the WTO;
- protects ACP producers domestic and regional markets;
- reverses the pressure for trade and investment liberalisation; and
- allows the necessary policy space and supports ACP countries to pursue their own development strategies. (http://www.mwengo.org/acp/state_ments/default.htm; <http://www.stopepa.org/>).

Finance

As with trade, Pretoria's 'left turn' is not that evident when it comes to international finance, with one exception: pressure on the World Bank to penalise a Canadian firm found guilty of bribery on the massive Lesotho-Johannesburg water transfer project. Otherwise, it substantively supported the main processes associated with worsening international financial injustice during 2004: failure to democratise the Bretton Woods institutions; resistance to reform of the World Bank's social and environmental policies in the minerals and energy sectors; and the ongoing extraction of excessive debt repayments from the Third World. South African officials bear substantial responsibility for these because of their high-profile position on some of the specific issues, including finance minister Trevor Manuel's role as chair of the IMF/Bank Development Committee from 2002.

The reform rhetoric continues, to be sure. As Mbeki himself put it at a March 2004 conference dedicated to increasing Africa's 'voice' in the Bretton Woods institutions,

although we agree that there are already processes towards reforming these multilateral institutions, many of us are understandably impatient with the fact that these have largely been at protracted discussion levels. Accordingly, we are faced with a challenge to ensure that the urgent need for radical reform is translated into a concrete and tangible programme underpinned by effective participation, especially by the developing countries (Mbeki, 2004d).

Yet Pretoria did virtually nothing to organise effective African or middle-income country resistance, and indeed undermined civil society efforts to change North-South financial power relations.

Sub-Saharan Africa has only two executive directors on the 24-member Board of Governors of the IMF and World Bank, while eight rich countries have one seat each. The US enjoys veto power, and has used it to punish its political enemies, a voting arrangement criticised even by Manuel on occasion, as on 15 April 2000 when he called it a situation which 'cannot be correct'. Again, in Mexico, on 19 March 2002, Manuel further complained that

reform of international financial governance is critical to [ensure] that developing countries benefit from globalisation through participation. The consensus on enhanced partnership, which would entail clearly defined responsibilities for all stakeholders, cannot be met by a reluctance to change the status quo regarding international financial governance.

And, on 1 June 2003, Manuel chaired a United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) meeting in Addis Ababa, where he remarked of an IMF proposal to split the continent in half for internal organisational purposes:

Will it be along colonial lines, or into north and south? We don't know. What we do know is that Europe is not being divided, nor is America (Bond, 2004a:ch. 5).

In practice, however, Manuel has done little to turn his frustration into action, and his Development Committee provided merely a narrow, technocratic, governance strategy which would add merely one additional representative from the Third World to the board. At the 2003 IMF/ World Bank annual meeting in Dubai, when asked why no progress was made on Bank/IMF democratisation, Manuel answered, 'I don't think that you can ripen this tomato by squeezing it.'

The reluctance to squeeze was again evident in March 2004, when Manuel wrote a sparing two-page letter to fellow Development Committee members, arguing that reforms on 'voting rights' within the IMF and Bank were 'likely to be postponed for some time', so in the meantime the committee should address 'those situations where countries' quotas/capital shares were egregiously out of line with their economic strength.' That would lead to the interim empowerment of wealthier countries, especially Japan, which would gain greater voting rights, alongside increasing IMF quotas and World Bank capital contributions. The upshot is that the two institutions would get much more money, in the process of strengthening the systemic inequality by which rich countries control these institutions.

The weakness of his strategy can be seen in the inability of Africa to challenge the convention of appointing only Europeans to be IMF managing director. There is a (figurative) apartheid-style 'Europeans Only' sign on the door to that office with the appointment of the ultra-right Rodrigo Rato in 2004. In contrast, in 2000, Africa's finance ministers had nominated Stanley Fischer, the Zambian-born, South African-raised acting managing director of the IMF, to become director. But Fischer's 'fatal

flaw' was his US citizenship, so Germany's Kohler got the job instead (*Business Day*, 13 March 2000). In 2004, there was no such attempt, Africa's finance ministers merely expressing the hope of a few more advisors to Rato and a few more resources for the two African executive directors (*Business Day*, 15 March 2004). Manuel remained largely silent on the matter.

On the matter of the World Bank's own minerals and energy sector reforms, Pretoria actively opposed progress, because it would curtail some of the activities of the large mining houses. Bank loans to pipelines in Chad-Cameroon and the Caspian, as well as subsidising of global warming through other fossil-fuel activities, attracted numerous criticisms from the environmental, human rights and social justice communities. A Bank-sponsored, multi-stakeholder 'Extractive Industries Review' chaired by former environment minister Emil Salim of Indonesia argued in December 2003 that public funds should not be used to facilitate private profits in the destructive minerals and energy sector, and hence the Bank should phase out oil and coal lending by 2008. Bank staff vigorously opposed the recommendations (*World Bank Press Review*, 10 December 2003). The South African minister of minerals and energy, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, gave the staff her support in February 2004, advocating that the Bank ignore the 'green lobbyists'. In August, less than a fortnight after the Bank's 60th anniversary, the Bank's board rejected the main review recommendations. According to Samuel Nguiffo of Friends of the Earth Cameroon, 'The World Bank's response is a deep insult for those affected by its projects.' A Friends of the Earth spokesperson, Janneke Bruil in Amsterdam, added: 'Billions of misspent public dollars and sixty years of outcries by people around the world have not been enough. What more does it take?'

Bank ambivalence about reform of this sort suited mining magnates across Africa. A striking example occurred in mid-2002, when officials from Pretoria, Kinshasa and the IMF arranged what the South African cabinet described as 'a bridge loan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) 75 million [about R760 million]. This will help clear the DRC's overdue obligations with the IMF and allow that country to draw resources under the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility.' What this represented, in essence, was South Africa underwriting the old links between Mobutu and the apartheid government. Moreover, IMF staff would be allowed back into Kinshasa with their own new loans, and with neoliberal conditionalities (disguised by 'poverty reduction' rhetoric) again applied to the old victims of Mobutu's fierce rule. In the same statement, the South African Cabinet recorded its payment to the World Bank of R83 million for replenishment of its African loan fund, to 'benefit our private sector, which would be eligible to bid for contracts financed from these resources.' A few months later, the UN Security Council accused a dozen South African companies – including the huge former parastatal Iscor – of illegally 'looting' the DRC during late 1990s turmoil which left an estimated three million dead, a problem that went unpunished by Pretoria. In January 2004, Mbeki's state visit to Kinshasa generated a \$10 billion trade/investment package and the chance for South African firms to participate in \$4 billion worth of World Bank tenders.

Instead of promoting the cancellation of African debt, Pretoria's strategy, therefore, has been to accommodate past financial support for odious regimes, ranging from Mobutu to Botha, as we consider in more detail below. An alternative approach, still within the realm of establishment orthodoxy, was proposed by UN secretary general Kofi Annan's economic adviser Jeffrey Sachs, a reform-minded neo-liberal. He told heads of state at a July 2004 African Union meeting in Addis Ababa, 'African

countries should refuse to repay their foreign debts' and instead use the funds to invest in health and education. (At the time, the IMF was controversially prohibiting expenditure of health funds donated to Africa, especially for HIV/AIDS mitigation, on grounds that civil service pay would rise to above 7% of GDP.) Pretoria maintained its NEPAD stance: namely, that Africa's foreign debt should be paid, and that Africa should adhere to Bank and IMF programmes such as the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The most critical comment about HIPC's notorious inadequacy made by Manuel came in 2002, when he appealed to a Commonwealth Business Council audience that 'the HIPC Trust Fund be fully funded, and that provision is made for topping-up when exogenous shocks impact on countries' debt sustainability' (Manuel, 2002).

The single instance where Manuel's anger at World Bank behaviour appeared to result in reform was in the case of Lesotho dam corruption scandal. The Bank had vacillated for a decade, initially (in 1994) prohibiting the Maseru government from firing the official later convicted of taking \$2 million in bribes; then promising support for funding Lesotho's prosecution in 1999 but not delivering; then finding the first company – Canada's Acres International – innocent in a 2001 probe, prior to Maseru's guilty verdict in 2003; and then delaying a re-examination of Acres until 2004, during which time Acres received three Bank contracts worth \$400,000, in Tanzania, the West Bank and Gaza, and Sri Lanka. Acres meanwhile refused to pay its \$2 million fine to the Lesotho government. At one point, Manuel became sufficiently embarrassed by the Bank's sloth on the Lesotho corruption to remark that 'the World Bank is giving us the runaround' (*Agence France Press*, 4 June 2004). Finally, according to the main NGO watchdog group, International Rivers Network, a humiliating US Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing about billions of dollars of Bank project corruption in May 2004 led the Bank to 'debar' Acres for three years, the first instance in which a major transnational corporation was held accountable for its malpractice on a World Bank project.

Meanwhile, African resistance movements voiced their own anger against international finance. The most striking single indication of African popular anger was probably the February 2004 work stayaway of half a million workers called by the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, in which half a million protesters descended on parliament in Lusaka to reject a civil service wage freeze promoted by the IMF, demanding instead a minimum wage and other budgetary concessions (*Southscan*, 24 February 2004). In June 2004, a Cape Town meeting of Jubilee members from Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, and partners from Brazil, Argentina and the Philippines, all working on a comprehensive Illegitimate Debt Audit 'expressed deep concern with South Africa's sub-imperialist role and its use of NEPAD to promote the neo-liberal paradigm to further dominate the rest of the African continent politically, economically, culturally and militarily, serving the interests of transnational corporations' (<http://www.aidc.org.za>). The groups demanded:

- Full unconditional cancellation of Africa's total debt;
- Reparations for damage caused by debt devastation;
- Immediate halt to HIPC and PRSPs and the disguised structural adjustment programme through NEPAD and any other agreements that do

not address the fundamental interests of the impoverished majority and the building of a sustainable and sovereign Africa; and

- a comprehensive audit to determine the full extent and real nature of Africa's illegitimate debt, the total payments made to date and the amount owed to Africa (<http://www.aidc.org.za>).

Investment

The most important ways that South African investments in the region foster subimperial relations are through retail trade, mining, agricultural technology and the NEPAD private infrastructure investment strategy (Miller, 2003, 2004). The impact of these activities is uneven but an indicator of subimperialism is the highly visible manner in which South African retailers are deindustrialising many African countries by sourcing their goods from Johannesburg instead of local producers, so as to take advantage of economies of scale. As noted above, South African mining firms became an embarrassment in part because of the DRC looting allegations, and in part because of the role the DeBeers diamond conglomerate and its Botswana government and World Bank allies played in the displacement of the Basarwa/San bushmen in 2003-04.

It may well be, however, that the longer-term implications of South African subimperialism can best be observed in the agricultural sector. While the governments of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Angola all attempted to resist genetically modified organisms in food crops, in part because that would shut down their European export potentials, South Africa became the GM gateway to African agriculture. 'Despite comprehensive objections raised by the African Centre for Biosafety and Biowatch South Africa', Pretoria 'approved a United States funded project that will soon see genetically engineered potatoes sprouting in six secret locations in African soil. Similar potatoes were first grown in the United States but were withdrawn from the market due to consumer resistance' (*Mail & Guardian*, 27 July 2004; <http://www.biosafetyafrica.net>; <http://www.biowatch.org.za>).

Surprisingly, perhaps the most significant *potential* factor in South African corporate sub-imperialism, NEPAD, was apparently stillborn as an operative investment framework. According to *Business Day* (24 May 2004) 'in three years not a single company has invested in the plan's 20 high-profile infrastructure development projects [roads, energy, water, telecommunications, ports]. The private sector's reluctance to get involved threatens to derail NEPAD's ambitions.' In contrast, a 2002 World Economic Forum meeting in Durban provided NEPAD with endorsements from 187 major companies, including Anglo American, BHP Billiton, Absa Bank and Microsoft. According to the programme's chief economist, Mohammed Jahed, 'NEPAD is reliant upon the success of these infrastructure projects, so we need to rethink how we will get the private sector involved, because clearly they have not played the role we expected' (Ibid.).

The highest-profile area in which South African foreign economic policy appears, at surface level, to challenge the privileges of transnational capital is monopoly drug company patents on anti-retroviral medicines. However, the famous 2001 lawsuit by the Pharmaceuticals Manufacturers Association against the South African government ended with the corporations dropping their objections, once Pretoria pledged that it would only use generic anti-retroviral medicines sparingly. As a result of both 'denialism' about AIDS and the high costs associated with treatment

by brand-name medicines, the South African presidency and health ministry perpetually delayed roll-out of AIDS medicines. The Aids Law Project and Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) issued a July 2004 report showing that fewer than 10,000 patients had access to antiretroviral medicines at state hospitals and clinics, in contrast to 53,000 who should have been provided medicine under the Cabinet's November 2003 plan. According to the report, 'advertisements regarding antiretroviral treatment have disappeared from television and rumours have it that this was ordered by [health minister] Manto Tshabala-Msimang.' Moreover, overall health system breakdown also threatens the success of the programme: 'at some hospitals in Johannesburg patients have to wait until next year to get an appointment' (*News-24*, 6 July 2004).

Reparations

A final example illustrates how inaccurate it is to consider Mbeki's government capable of taking a 'left turn'. The end of June 2004 witnessed a surprising defeat for numerous multinational corporations and the Bush regime, in the United States Supreme Court. In the case of *Sosa v Alvarez*, the corporate plaintiffs requested that foreigners not be permitted to file lawsuits for human rights violations committed elsewhere in the world under the Alien Tort Claims Act. According to the corporations, the danger was that US courts would infringe upon the sovereignty of nations and interfere with the business of free trade. The conservative Supreme Court's ruling, in finding against the corporations, was a 'huge blow' to the firms, according to the Khulumani Support Group and Jubilee South Africa lawyers. Current cases are pending against companies for repressive operations in Burma, Nigeria, Indonesia and apartheid South Africa. According to Jubilee South Africa and Khulumani, representing 32,000 South Africans, 'today the door is open to a narrow class of international norms'. The option was maintained to sue 23 financing, technology, transportation, oil, and arms corporations for their role in apartheid-era human rights abuses. The companies included IBM, General Motors, Exxon Mobil, JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, Caltex Petroleum Corporation, Ford Motor Company and the Fluor Corporation (*Business Report*, 5 July 2004).

Yet the victory was tempered by the obstruction of the South African government as it sought to block the suits brought by Jubilee and Khulumani. According to the Apartheid Debt and Reparations Campaign (2004),

... the US Supreme Court cautioned that the right to civil relief must be balanced by the domestic policy interests of the foreign nations in which the conduct occurred and the foreign policy concerns of the United States. Regrettably though, in a footnote in the judgment, the US Supreme Court referred to the declaration submitted by the former South African Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Dr Penuell Mpapa Maduna, submitted to a district court where the Khulumani and other Apartheid cases are pending as an instance where the caution should be applied. The declaration expressed the South African government's concern that the cases before the court would interfere with the policy embodied in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The South African government has specifically asked the court to abstain from adjudicating the victims claims in deference to its paramount national interests (Apartheid Debt and Reparations Campaign (2004), 'Support for the Khulumani Lawsuit', Johannesburg, 13 July).

Yet the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission contained a different sentiment, namely that the New York reparations cases pose no conflict

with South Africa law or policy: 'business failed in the hearings to take responsibility for its involvement in state security initiatives specifically designed to sustain Apartheid rule.' The TRC also found, according to Jubilee, that 'it is also possible to argue that banks that gave financial support to the Apartheid state were accomplices to a criminal government that consistently violated international law. The recognition and finding by the international community that Apartheid was a crime against humanity has important consequences for the victims of Apartheid. Their right to reparation is acknowledged and can be enforced in terms of international law.' Yet in a speech delivered from the former Cape Town headquarters of DeBeers, in which he rejected the reparations strategy whilst praising Rhodes, Nelson Mandela argued that 'South Africans are competent to deal with issues of reconciliation, reparation and transformation amongst themselves without outside interference, instigation or instruction' (SA Press Association, 25 August 2003).

Conclusion

Again and again progressive activists have confronted Pretoria with genuine challenges to its rhetoric and criticism of its actions. Not all South African politicians, of course, are as pro-corporate as those noted above. In mid-2004, for instance, the deputy minister of environmental affairs and tourism Rejoice Mabudafhasi commented on Thor Chemicals' slow payment of fines for apartheid-era mercury dumping: 'we are not yet through with the company. If they want me to wave a big stick, I will. All over Africa these companies are undermining us as developing countries' (*Business Report*, 4 August 2004).

However, when the stakes are as high as they remain today in global geopolitics and economics, Mbeki ensures that a pro-business environment continues, and that the US regime is comfortable with its 'point man' in Africa. After all, the core (and most durable) aspect of the project pursued by the Mbeki government is attaining global-scale status. Under the circumstances, this is no time for intellectual equivocation on the part of progressive activists. Yet many commentators are finding it hard to make up their minds whether South African regional hegemony is good or bad. Part of the problem, it appears, is the tendency of analysts to believe government rhetoric. Without any documentation, University of Pretoria professor Maxi Schoeman (2003:356) recently claimed that the Mbeki government

forcefully articulated critical standpoints on the issue of international debt and on the new round of multilateral trade negotiations in the WTO. In both instances one finds evidence of a seemingly increasingly confident South Africa taking up a leadership position in and on behalf of the global South, but always with particular emphasis on the needs of Africa.

Nothing could be further from the truth: Pretoria has been largely uncritical of the standard Washington Consensus debt strategy, and indeed played a decisive role in undermining African interests in the main 1999-2003 WTO summits at Seattle, Doha and Cancun (Bond, 2004a: chs. 4, 5).

Equally, with regard to Mbeki's ambiguous Africa strategy, Daniel, Naidoo and Naidu ignored the neoliberal spectre of NEPAD in their documentation of Johannesburg capital's march up-continent. The vast state support structure required to lubricate sub-imperial capital accumulation is met only with apologetics by Daniel et al:

A distinction needs to be drawn between the behaviour of South Africa's corporates and its government ... it is not possible for Africa's politicians to make the same charge ['they bulldoze their way around'], according to a Kenyan MP on Johannesburg business leaders in 2001] against those who represent South Africa's political interests in Africa ... Here there has been a sea-change from the past ... non-hegemonic co-operation has in fact, been the option embraced by the post-apartheid South African state (Daniel, Naidoo and Naidu, 2003:388-8; see also Daniel, Lutchman and Naidu, 2004:343-8).

The reality, as even journalists have surmised, is very different. In August 2003, the *Sunday Times* (24 August 2003) remarked that SADC delegates at a Dar es Salaam regional summit felt that 'Pretoria was "too defensive and protective" in trade negotiations [and] is being accused of offering too much support for domestic production "such as duty rebates on exports" which is killing off other economies in the region'. More generally, the same paper reported from an AU meeting, Mbeki is 'viewed by other African leaders as too powerful, and they privately accuse him of wanting to impose his will on others. In the corridors they call him the George Bush of Africa, leading the most powerful nation in the neighbourhood and using his financial and military muscle to further his own agenda' (*Sunday Times*, 13 July 2003).

Daniel et al. found only Pretoria's reprehensible post-2000 policy towards Zimbabwe and the September 1998 invasion of Lesotho worthy of criticism (for other critiques of Pretoria's Zimbabwe strategy, see Bond & Masimba, 2003; McKinley, 2004). In the latter case, Daniel et al. recall, 'the operation was widely condemned and criticised at the time and the exercise has not been repeated anywhere else on the continent' (Daniel, Naidoo & Naidu, 2003:389). A more realistic assessment of that incident would be that it was not a one-off mistake but 'policy': 'the recent military intervention by South Africa and Botswana in Lesotho had demonstrated the Southern African Development Community's commitment to creating a climate conducive to foreign investment, deputy president Thabo Mbeki told a high-powered investment conference in the city yesterday' (*Cape Times*, 2 December 1998). In other words, Lesotho dams were worth defending in even the most egregious style, so that Johannesburg capital and rich suburbanites could continue drawing water in an unsustainable manner. The tendency to overlook structural power relationships of the type represented by Pretoria's stake in the Lesotho Highland Water Project offer justification for a long overdue return to South Africa's older political-economic traditions of intellectual engagement. In doing so, the reasons for and implications of dubious geopolitical arrangements, the failed reforms of international trade and multilateral institutions, counterproductive investments and Pretoria's resistance to reparations arguments fit into place. The problem can be summed up in a word, sub-imperialism.

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AIDS as a Crisis in Social Reproduction

Janet Bujra

Using the conceptual framework of social reproduction as a way of reassessing the AIDS crisis in Africa, this paper finds contradictory tendencies: a devastating impact on agricultural modes of livelihood which sustain the majority and which enable workers to present themselves as cheap labour, but also a crisis for the reproduction of capital as its supply of such labour is depleted. The impact on and response to the epidemic by the state is explored as well as its reflection of marked gender and class inequalities. Conversely the impetus to certain fractions of capital which benefit from AIDS and the confrontation of the state and pharmaceutical companies by an emergent populist movement demanding the right to treatment, exposes the extent to which transformation rather than simple reproduction is in evidence.

In 1974, when ROAPE's first issue was published, AIDS had no name, though the epidemic was already in the making. What we identified then were the processes of social reproduction – of labour power, of emergent class formations, of state power and of globalising capitalism – that would eventually both reflect and enhance the transmission of HIV/AIDS. In our first issue there is no acknowledgement of what feminists were already naming, but which seemed both trivial and taken for granted in Africa at the time, which were the forms of gendered oppression through which the disease would fast forward into a pandemic. Nor did we note the ways in which processes of social reproduction were so markedly gendered. Our tone was resolutely upbeat, untinged by the Afro-pessimism which passes for analysis today and in which AIDS stands along with brutal and pervasive armed conflict as symbolic of Africa's descent into chaos and decline.

In this essay I want to consider the ways in which AIDS is implicated in a crisis of social reproduction and production in Africa. But what is a crisis for the many becomes an opportunity for some, in ways which mark out the competitive forces within capitalism and restate the terms of an expanding system of production and reproduction. Whilst the threat (and reality) of AIDS has bred a deep-rooted pessimism about Africa's future, it has also generated new forms of organised resistance, and struggles to make the state accountable to ordinary people. Setting such a discussion in the frame of social reproduction reminds us that AIDS is not just about death and dying, but also about rethinking ways of living and making a living, of mutuality between the sexes, of sexuality and desire as something to be celebrated rather than hidden, of commitment to our children and to future generations.

Conceptually, social reproduction has often been associated with functionalist forms of reasoning as it directs attention to the regularities of social and economic

life and the social relations through which these are maintained. In Marxism the key focus has been on the circuits of capital, the reproduction of the circumstances in which capital is created and expanded. These go beyond the economic sphere in which capital exploits labour power to include the social formations of capitalist society, the state and civil society. As noted in a recent formulation, 'Social reproduction also depends upon the household or family system and the more general areas of private activity, not least consumption and other activities of the working class that induce and enable it to present itself for work on a daily basis' (Fine and Saad-Filho, 2004:71-2). Such processes cannot be guaranteed to work in capital's interest, given its need to exploit labour power in order to profit and the politicising impact of that realisation. It is by focusing on this potential for agency to fracture and transform processes of social reproduction that we avoid the functionalist trap.

Globalising capitalism has first to *produce* the conditions for capital accumulation before it can *reproduce* them. In Africa it has produced some uneasy accommodations with other modes of livelihood and with parasitic state formations. We used to describe this in formalistic and functionalist language as the 'articulation of modes of production'; whereas in reality it is a charged confrontation of social forces with opposing interests generating expedient and unstable compromises. Emergent capitalist relations of production in Africa entail continuing processes of primitive capital accumulation¹ involving both the looting of resources and the exploitation of labour still anchored in rural semi-subsistence economies. Economies built on migrant labour power have persisted in Africa because capitalism has barely shifted out of its primitive accumulation phase. The insatiable interests of employers for cheap labour coincide with the needs of families for cash incomes to supplement meagre rural production. Wherever migrant labour predominates (as in Eastern and Southern Africa) it creates a prime context for HIV transmission – as Msimang (2003) notes, it might have been designed for this purpose, with its gendered separation of families, its concentration of male workers in plantations, mines and urban workplaces acting as a magnet for providers of sexual services and constraints on sexual behaviour lessened. Although women are increasingly migrating on their own account, it is often as young single women who rarely become wage labourers in the industrial economy and who are the most vulnerable to coercive sexual encounters. It is the social reproduction of this kind of labour force, one whose relation to capital may be direct or indirect, that is now increasingly threatened by the impact of AIDS. The labour migration system is predicated on the assumption that backward (or emergent) capital does not carry the costs of social reproduction – these are off-loaded onto hard-pressed rural families to which the migrant returns in sickness and in death and in which new recruits for the labour force are nurtured. Now this transmission belt of new labour for old is fraying as the hidden virus is spread to rural wives or sexual partners, incapacitating those who labour on the fields and in houses and turning the next generation of migrants into orphans and street children cast adrift even from the insurance policy of rural subsistence. Funerals may still be lavish affairs which draw back the successful migrants of an earlier phase from urban centres to rural gravesides, but in the process they can devour the living by feasting off their remaining assets.

In Africa it was production in rural households which enabled the working class to present itself at work for capital; now the reproduction of that social relation is threatened as much by AIDS as by other pressures such as land appropriation, in what Bernstein calls a 'systemic crisis of livelihoods and reproduction of labour in

the South' (2003:220). The way this system was gendered is also exposed. Kofi Annan put it starkly: 'A combination of famine and AIDS is threatening the backbone of Africa – the women who keep African societies going and whose work makes up the economic foundation of rural communities' (*Independent*, 1 Jan, 2003). The threat is often hidden – as Baylies uncovered in her account of how and why governments and international donors fail to respond to the depredations of AIDS on agricultural production in the way they respond to famine or drought, even though the impact may be more far-reaching (2003). Msimang puts it bluntly: 'there is a myth of coping that pervades the development discourse on AIDS. What it really means is that women will do it' – and they are collapsing under the weight of responsibility (2003:111; see also Rugulema, 2000; Nnko et al. 2000).

Meanwhile armed conflicts substitute for the proletarianisation of labour by tearing away a generation from their agrarian means of subsistence and concentrating them in predatory forms of securing a livelihood. Such population movements also transmit the deadly virus from one region to another, from soldiers to camp followers and civilian victims of rape, and from battlefields to demobilisation camps and homeland villages. That the patterns of mobilisation are again gendered and that demobilisation does not solve the problem should not escape our attention.

If there is a crisis in the social reproduction of labour generated by AIDS, there is a subsequent crisis for the social reproduction of capital. Citing World Bank statistics, Mwikisa (2003) argues that HIV/AIDS exerts a downward pressure on economic growth in Africa and this is more marked where prevalence is high. Vass (2003) records the dilemma for South African enterprises. The costs of recruiting and training labour for the skilled and complex tasks associated with its relatively advanced capitalist economy are high and currently jeopardised by AIDS deaths. Firms are responding to this situation in various ways, depending on their market location. More advanced capital (and this applies largely to multinational conglomerates) may be able to sustain programmes of care or even the provision of anti-retrovirals to extend the working lives of its labour force. Others find in the crisis a rationale for substituting capital for labour lost, only to be brought short by the higher cost of the skilled labour required to operate complex machinery and the greater subsequent replacement costs due to AIDS. A third pattern involves the renewal of backward labour-intensive systems relying on imported and casual cheap labour which can easily be laid off and replaced. Vass describes this as 'burden shifting' and it is a pattern which is familiar from other places and phases of capital accumulation in Africa:

the increased replacement of ill or dying permanent employees with temporary or contract workers with little or no benefits may become a viable option, increasing especially at lower skilled levels ... The overall effect will be to shift the burden to the most vulnerable and marginalised in the labour force (2003:64).

The marginalised engage in even more desperate efforts to straddle different forms of employment – cultivation and petty trading as well as taking on more than one wage job – what is sometimes called 'multi-sourcing' of livelihoods (see Bryceson, this issue). Despite this shift, the overall effect of AIDS will be economic contraction with a fall in the demand for labour and higher unemployment. Vass adds here that women will be disproportionately affected as they have higher prevalence rates and lower economic participation rates.

The state in Africa has come to be heavily implicated in the reproduction of backward forms of capitalism in so far as it buttresses its hold on power through forms of corruption, land grabbing and deals with international capital. Political choices are made which perpetuate kleptocratic states, a non-developmental capitalism and, inevitably, a disregard for public welfare. At the same time as thousands of Kenyans were facing rising HIV prevalence rates, and public health services were suffering cutbacks and the introduction of user charges, the then President was said to have been conspiring with an Asian businessman to export non-existent gold and diamonds which lost Kenya around \$1 billion, more than 10% of the country's annual GDP (the so-called Goldenberg scandal, presently proceeding through the Kenyan courts).²

If the social reproduction of primitive accumulation via systems of migrant labour was a perfect channel for transmitting HIV from urban to rural communities, the imposition of neo-liberal structural adjustment fanned an epidemic into a disaster. Responding to popular pressure, and by way of international aid and borrowing and a degree of postcolonial economic growth, African governments had invested heavily in health and education systems in the early years of independence. Sustaining a welfare state requires more than public acclaim – it demands a widening and deepening of the tax base if it is not forever to be dependent on foreign aid. This in turn demands either the construction of industrial economies and the completion of the process whereby the labour force is effectively and fully proletarianised, or it requires the establishment of alternative forms of socio-economic restructuring. Neither were achieved and the debt crisis overtook the opportunity to draw on external sources. At the point when the death toll from AIDS was beginning to mount, international capitalism, through the IFIs, deliberately subordinated local states to its will – notably in the phase of neoliberal structural adjustment – and limited their capacity to deal with the epidemic via public spending. It was not only the state that was cut down to size but also the emergent model of health and education free at the point of need.³ User charges were introduced, health facilities became run down and short of drugs, doctors and nurses fled to more financially welcoming shores. Given the general levels of impoverishment, private health initiatives struggled to survive and did not provide a real alternative. What this meant in practice was not only that those living with AIDS could not access the drugs that would have enabled them to live and work for many years ahead (and which were turning the AIDS threat in the West into an expensive but manageable issue) but that they were unable even to gain relief for the minor opportunistic infections by which HIV announces itself, the constant diarrhoea, the coughing, the mouth ulcers.

In a situation of state retreat, the state's role in public welfare – real or aspirational – did find some substitute. There ensued a period in which NGOs, local or international, were seen as the major actors. In the AIDS field, funding began to flow into a range of organisations, which whilst generally unaccountable to the public, nevertheless harnessed local and global concerns and initiated many novel ways of addressing the epidemic. These included pioneering preventative work, the mobilisation of voluntary effort, especially of women and of youth, the creative use of media, the development of home-based care and the distribution of palliative drugs and condoms. But in coverage and delivery they could not compete with an adequately funded national health system, and whether local or foreign they were dependent on donor funding and agendas.

As arms manufacturers (and traders and warlords) profit from war, AIDS comes as an opportunity for accumulation by certain kinds of capital. This encompasses both giant pharmaceutical manufacturers and enterprising petty local entrepreneurs. The coffin makers in Uganda for whom 'business is never slow' and in South Africa where the 'hottest new business is hustling for corpses', and where 'a lively black market has grown up in stolen burial equipment' and 'hearse drivers carry pistols', are good examples of the cut-throat competition to profit from death.⁴ So too are the faith healers and traditional doctors who in some countries still offer miracle cures.⁵ Then there is the 'social marketing' of condoms – a device whereby international producers sell in bulk to local suppliers who franchise out the prophylactic to local traders and AIDS organisations for distribution to those at risk at minimal profit (this way everyone appears to profit). There is the extra profit made by pharmacists and private doctors and by drug importers. Locals have also noted the parasitic way in which some benefit from NGO activity in this field, from accessing employment to chasing allowances for seminar attendance. Unsurprisingly, AIDS has been seen as a 'business'. Whilst thriving, all this is insignificant compared to the success of the globalising multinationals who have seen the potential of a dying continent for the marketing of patented anti-retrovirals and coincidentally for 'the reproduction and expansion of capital in (neoliberal) globalisation' (Obi, 2003:7). The capacity of capitalism to satisfy need is contradicted once again by its drive for accumulation, underwritten by its political leverage in organisations like the WTO which have backed up bids for protection for branded AIDS drugs.

The protection sought is not against the puny entrepreneurial activities of African faith healers and herbalists, but against the threat to advanced capitalism from the developing economic might of China and India, both of which have copied Western pharmaceutical companies in producing drugs to enable people to live with HIV. Generic equivalents have cheapened the cost and simplified the administration of anti-retroviral drugs. They are not produced in direct response to humanitarian needs in India and China (where governments have denied for several years that they are facing an epidemic of crisis proportions) but for the advantage of exporting to areas where profits can be made by undercutting the branded goods of Western companies. Following a confrontation with the WTO, high prevalence Brazil now both imports and produces generic AIDS drugs (Redding, 2003:76). With its limited industrial base, Africa cannot compete, despite the enormous potential of its market for AIDS drugs. It has small-scale drug manufacturing capability in a few countries but as yet little capacity to exploit this market for home use or for export. As Bazika notes, the 'lack of a national pharmaceutical industry in Africa leaves the latter with no choice but to import large quantities of pharmaceutical products at very high cost' (2003:79). It is hardly surprising that South Africa has become the first country in Africa to establish an anti-retroviral manufacturing industry, given its higher level of capitalist development and its growing success in exploiting export opportunities in Africa. The rest of Africa has to rely on international handouts and the pioneering work of agencies like *Medecins Sans Frontieres* to deliver imported generics. As the West has come to manage its own epidemic there is less charitable will to help other sufferers and the WHO and UN have continuing difficulty in funding initiatives.

AIDS both reflects and exacerbates and thereby helps to reproduce the socio-economic disparities which are a product of Africa's underdeveloped economies. In South Africa HIV prevalence rates seem to mirror the patterns of social inequality, with women more affected than men, whites having lower prevalence levels than

Africans and the lower-skilled and more poorly paid (where Africans and women predominate) having the highest levels of all (Vass, 2003:63, citing a study conducted by ABT Associates, 2001). Whilst thriving in situations of gendered and economic inequality AIDS in fact decimates both winners and losers, with some of the better off more at risk. Since the virus does not discriminate, it can bring down men who utilise wealth to expand their sexual networking or add more wives – and is then spread to existing wives, partners and future generations. Even street children in Ethiopia had observed this, arguing that

rich people are more exposed because they have the money to do what they want and to win whatever girl they like [whereas] the poor ... are preoccupied with earning a living (Tadele, 2003:103).

Conversely, with private access to antiretrovirals, good nutrition and care, the better-off may live longer, whilst the vast majority die in misery and want.

Whilst AIDS divides it also levels. And this may generate enormous reserves of political energy, especially in the absence of a cure and wholesale exclusion from access to palliative drugs. In Tanzania and Uganda it was deaths amongst people from higher social strata which first led to campaigns against the epidemic. NGOs like WAMATA and TASO, led by women, brought together a coalition of the infected and the affected to devise preventative and protective strategies and to lobby on behalf of the voiceless⁶. So long as access to life-prolonging drugs was prohibited to all, there was a solidarity of the afflicted across the social divide. Such organisations not only built political strengths on gendered energies, they also introduced for the first time the idea that people living with the virus could speak for themselves to break the shameful silence around the disease and act as a potent pressure group fighting for rights to health and support.

In South Africa we have an even broader AIDS movement, exemplified in organisations like TAC and ACT-UP, celebrated as models of what Redding calls 'global participatory democracy' (2003:73) and equated by Robins and von Lieres with the 'new social movements' characterised as 'grassroots, bottom-up, network-based modes of organisation that operate simultaneously in local, national and global spaces' (2004:84). TAC in particular is a very innovative populist organisation which draws support from varied urban class locations – 'working class township youth and the unemployed [mainly African women, often themselves HIV positive], the trade unions, black and white middle class business professionals, health professionals, scientists, the media and ordinary South African citizens' (2004:84), though it has yet to make serious inroads into rural areas. It also has strong links with gay rights activists. As a powerfully grounded movement linked into influential international networks, it has frequently confronted the state and the multinational pharmaceuticals operating in South Africa and largely won its case. Not only have the big drugs companies been forced to retreat from insisting on their patent rights, the state's own policies and stances on AIDS have been challenged, leading to a decision in 2003 to launch a national anti-retroviral programme – which TAC will be active in putting into effect.

Robins and von Lieres note how the TAC leadership drew on its experience in the anti-apartheid struggle of the 1980s. The nearest equivalent in the rest of Africa were the national liberation struggles of the sixties, whose cross-class alliances of political expediency barely survived the achievement of independence. But in this new volcano of political energy over the tragedy of AIDS we see exposure of global

and local inequalities and of the linkages between states and international capital, generating a will to change the world and offering examples of how capitalism and the state might be fought, not just in the fields and factories but in the streets and on the internet. AIDS constitutes a stunning blow to processes of social reproduction, particularly of labour power, but also, by way of the politicisation of those affected and infected and their creation of innovative class alliances, to unbridled capital and the states which back it up.

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Endnotes

1. 'Primitive capitalist accumulation' refers both to the looting and plunder which preceded colonialism and the forcible separation from land or other means of livelihood of those who become wage labourers for capital. What Harvey calls 'accumulation by dispossession' can evidently co-exist with capitalist forms of accumulation.
2. Calculation cited in *Guardian Weekly*, p.29, 28 May-3 June 2004, referring to the period in office of President Daniel arap Moi. Currently the country is gripped by accounts of the fraud trial at exactly the same time as the present government of Mwai Kibaki is facing renewed charges of state corruption from international donors. It may be some indication of changing times (the growing politicisation of civil society) that the government announced on 21 June that it was scrapping 'cost-sharing' in Government dispensaries and health centres and ushering in an era of 'free health care for all Kenyans' (*Daily Nation*, 21 June 2004).
3. For one example see Richey on Tanzania (2003)
4. *The Guardian*, 1 December 2001; *Newsweek*, 17 September 2001.
5. For example, Nairobi's Maximum Miracle Life Centre, Kenya – *The Independent*, 31 January 2003.
6. See Bujra and Mokake 2000 on WAMATA; Kaleeba, 1991 and *Newsweek*, 8 March 2003 on TASO.

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HIV/AIDS in Africa: Links, Livelihoods & Legacies

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Of the significance of HIV/AIDS at household, village and community level throughout Africa there can be no doubt. By 2002, the cumulative number of deaths from the disease in Africa had been estimated to be of the order of 19 million (calculated from Barnet & Whiteside, table 1.1 and UNAIDSa), almost 30 million Africans were estimated to be HIV positive, and by 2010 some 6 million of the then total deaths will have been in South Africa alone (Lewis, 2004). Although it is impossible to be precise, such figures considerably exceed those of around 11 million often (conservatively) estimated to have been transported during the entire period of the Atlantic slave trade (Austin, 1987). As with slavery, HIV/AIDS also primarily claims adult victims where the impact on economic production is greatest – another recent estimate is that between 1985 and 2020 over 20% of adult farm workers in the nine hardest hit African countries will have lost their lives because of AIDS (UNFAO, 2004a). While the impact is likely to be similar in many respects, two obvious differences from slavery are that the perpetrator is less easy to identify and moral judgements more readily confused, producing many examples of politically loaded policy decisions and value-laden interventions. Moreover, debates about ‘being faithful’ to one partner, possibly in marriage, and postponing teenage sex are institutional camouflage over the fact that a primary means of transfer of this disease in Africa has been through a physical activity as natural as eating and drinking, and which often involves great emotional and affectionate intimacy between two people. It can also of course be a violently imposed act by men on women and girls. In either case, there is the heightened pathos of human tragedy to which we as commentators should not lose our sensitivity and potential for empathy as a result of excessive intellectualising.

When we attempt to fully understand how HIV/AIDS has become so prevalent in so many countries, especially in Southern Africa, we very quickly find ourselves discussing structural economic change, poverty, globalisation, transnational corporations, imperialism, gender bias, and capitalist property rights. Our understanding also calls for a comprehension of the dynamics of peasant societies and of urban and peri-urban links with rural households through migration, remittances and the mutual interdependence of kinship and family obligations. In addition, there is also the role of belief systems, and the problem of how we interpret these as ideologies premised on pre-capitalist versus capitalist, or global capitalist, produc-

tion imperatives, touching on such areas as stigma, 'family values', women's role, or clinical versus faith based treatments.

It is through such channels that HIV/AIDS strikes at the heart of the labour reproduction process, and in the various responses, which it then prompts from capital and state it serves to highlight both the adaptability and the fundamentally entrenched nature of that process within a system that is no less capitalist than it is global. These aspects are explored further by Bujra elsewhere in this issue but we should note here that the process does not occur in a historical medico-social vacuum. Important questions arise when trying to account for widely different experiences across the continent, ranging from the exceedingly high rates of much of Southern Africa, where the history of migrant labour and divided families is strong, to the relatively low rates of HIV prevalence in most of West and North-East Africa, but where low national rates disguise wider regional variations within countries which are difficult to explain, together with more obvious rural-urban differences. In other parts of the continent there are unknown, but very probably high, levels of incidence in war-torn regions with large numbers of displaced people. Yet it is an oversimplification to identify poverty and civil disorder alone as a key driving force in the spread of the pandemic when one of the highest rates in Africa is found in Botswana, which also has one of the highest levels of per capita income south of the Sahara.

In the most stricken societies, where rates of both infection and affliction of HIV/AIDS are highest, the impact on everyday economic production is profound. Macroeconomic calculations often put the impact at a reduction of between 1% and 2% in the annual rate of growth of GDP for the duration of the pandemic where levels of positive seroprevalence of above 20% of the adult population prevail, as in South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, or Lesotho (UNAIDS, 2004). On a day to day level, in rural areas these aggregate percentages manifest themselves in reduced time preparing, tending and harvesting crop and livestock, in absence for funerals, in reduced marketed surplus, and diminished skill acquisition by orphaned children, while in the employed sector the direct impact is felt in high rates of absenteeism due to sickness and attending funerals, in low levels of productivity, in high rates of attrition, loss of skills, and high annual recruitment costs.

Globalisation

It is ironic that the direction of these trends should coincide with that of those global forces which are ensuring that African production remains predominantly agriculturally based, or at most at the preliminary stages of processing. The combined impact of trade liberalisation in developing countries, continued agricultural subsidies in the European Union and the US, and restructuring of the food supply chain by transnational corporations to favour contract producers all have made it increasingly difficult for African countries to escape from their historical dependency on raw material exports, creating, according to Gibbon, a revived form of mercantilism (Gibbon, 2004) within the global economy. Globalisation thus has many facets. The trend towards contract farming which favours large commercial farms or plantations (in tea, coffee, green vegetables, cut flowers) increasingly marginalises small peasant producers together with their local traders, forcing many to take employment as day labourers on commercial farms, others to migrate to urban centres and, particularly young men, to engage in extra-legal activities or banditry or young women as bar workers. These examples of peasant

labour displacement are seen by some as the manifestations of a wider restructuring process of de-peasantisation (Bryceson, 2000).

If we add the impact of HIV/AIDS to these trends it is clear that the small farming household, or low-wage earning household, has come under increasing pressure from two arms of a pincer movement: the direct and indirect costs of adult morbidity on farm production due to the effect of HIV/AIDS, on the one side, and the driving forces of international capitalism favouring large scale commercial agro-production, casualisation, outsourcing and contracting out of wage labour, on the other. The net result is that the burden of the costs of AIDS falls primarily upon the families of those infected, generating at the micro level a downward spiral of decreased productivity, diminished income, reduced nutritional levels, increased proneness to opportunistic disease, eventual death of one or more adults and the likely collapse and break-up of the household. The latter outcome in turn puts pressure on other households within the extended family as increasing numbers of orphans and other dependents have to be accommodated, often accompanied by significant gender implications for widows and orphaned daughters. Where the disease affects family members working in urban areas or in migrant jobs elsewhere then remittances will decline and possibly cease altogether while the person suffering from AIDS will frequently return to their home village seeking help and support in their illness. The effect of the loss of productive ability is compounded by the high costs of medication from both formal and informal sources and in social terms by the stigma which appears universally to be attached to this disease. Poor peasant households thus break up and middle peasantries find themselves increasingly impoverished. Rather than the generalised de-peasantisation of Bryceson and others, perhaps a more accurate description is a re-peasantisation, at least for the many for whom the process of primitive accumulation which produces a middle peasantry (or yeoman class) is halted, while the abandoned land holdings of the worst afflicted households are taken up by richer peasants and consolidated into fully market oriented small-scale commercial farms. Thus the process of capitalisation of agriculture accelerates while income and wealth differentials widen.

The impact on the poor and the impoverishment of others is not, of course, unnoticed by many governments and international agencies – resulting in a multitude of aid programmes, with varying degrees of coordination and commitment, now being implemented. The humanitarian response is invariably compromised, however, by the geopolitical objectives of donor nation states and those who control them – hence conflict and social dystopia in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo attracts less international attention than the fear of instability in the oil rich Middle East. Yet, in so far as these compromises are the product of the drive to create the conditions for further capitalist globalisation, they also do not neglect totally those troubled parts of the world which are not necessarily of immediate concern to international capital and its agents but whose continuing instability carries potential threats. So the advanced capitalist nations of the world, led by the United States, have also responded to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa as a crisis, which is not in their interests to ignore. This is evident in the fears by both the Clinton and Bush administrations that HIV/AIDS raises serious strategic and security threats to the USA itself through a perceived potential for political and economic destabilisation in the worst affected areas (O'Manique, 2004; Tsadkan & de Waal, 2003).

The nature of the response by the West, however, reveals the complexity of contemporary links between capital and state (national and international) and their

various ideological mutations, representing in the United States, for instance, the outcome of intensive lobbying by 'faith-based' groups in civil society on the one hand, and by US based transnational drug companies on the other. The influence of each of these major constituencies is subsequently felt in US policy on international forums such as the WTO and UNAIDS conferences. At the national level of countries with high rates of HIV prevalence, a parallel set of internal confrontations and negotiations are present. Thus, indigenous churches, local branches of international churches, village committees, and Cabinet members alike, often highly patriarchal, tend to promote 'traditional family values', prohibiting sex before and out of marriage as the principal means of turning the epidemic around. A similar pattern is present in Islamic communities in Africa, though there can be a tendency there to see HIV/AIDS as a disease of Christian societies. At the same time, western trained medical professionals seek extra funding for clinical research and treatment while, as in the Western industrial complex, representatives of local business - those who wish to manufacture, import or sell drugs and other medical aids to counteract the effect of HIV in all its manifestations - press their interests on national governments.

International Capital & ARVs

The various points discussed above, which are the constituents of a political economy of HIV/AIDS, come together again in the example of the provision and availability of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to control the growth of the HIV virus within the human body, and in particular the combination of three drugs known as HAART (highly active antiretroviral treatment). Here we have, at one end, the consumer, victim or patient, and at the other, a series of strands leading to different suppliers, which include the major international pharmaceutical companies. Between these, and intercepting according to how their remit is defined and interpreted, there are the international trade institutions such as the WTO and national governments representing the interests of consumers and producers (sometimes both within the same country). Consumers, or patients, may not be the same as the purchasers who are likely to be Ministries of Health, while suppliers will also include generic producers who are not tied to brand names and who may be located in Brazil, India, Thailand or South Africa. The usual questions then arise of who gains and who loses; who are the principal suppliers and who the main consumers, and how and why is the pattern as it is?

Antiretroviral drugs can have a dramatic effect on sufferers from HIV, not only in creating the conditions for substantially prolonging life but also, if accompanied by appropriate diet, enabling life to be fully active and therefore economically productive. It is for this reason that many larger corporations have programmes to supply ARVs to their core workforces where the cost of drugs and ancillary support are less than those of recurring recruitment and training. For peripheral workers and others less fortunate, including peasant farmers and virtually all who struggle in the vast informal sector of most African countries, the cost of effective drug treatment for HIV is totally prohibitive. For governments too, the cost of any meaningful subsidised provision to their citizens is similarly proscribing, especially in a context of often (IMF imposed) public expenditure constraint. At the time of writing, this remains so despite the fact that the drug component of treatment for HIV has fallen from \$10-12,000 per annum in 2000 to around \$300 in 2004 (UNAIDSb, 2004), a sum which is still out of reach of the vast majority of households in the least developed countries and elsewhere where the per capita cash income for many is no more than the equivalent of a few dollars a week.

The context for this scenario provides a revealing illustration of how 'globalisation' may be both a useful and a limiting concept. Continued dependency of transnational corporations on the state, where it suits them and where they have been able to exercise control, is epitomised in national patent laws which protect the right to produce and sell those drugs which any given company has created. The limited time monopoly which this provides is intended to allow the inventing company to recoup its research and development costs. Given the ubiquity of the nation state, it is the national laws of each country which provide patent protection for operations within its geographic boundaries and although the WTO is often regarded as the epitome of a global organisation operating in the interests of capital, transcending the nation state in its powers, for the actual implementation of its policies it still requires national legislation. An illuminating example is found in WTO agreements on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) in which all but the least developed countries must have patent legislation in place by 2005 and the least developed themselves by 2016. With this in place transnational pharmaceutical companies can patent, for sale or production, their brand named drugs in those countries. The principal reason driving this internationalisation of common legislation is the difficulty corporations have in protecting their new products from plagiarism. Drugs formulae seldom remain secret for long (otherwise the need for patent protection would disappear) and competitor companies, often in middle-income countries, are able to produce 'generic' versions under different brand names to be sold at considerably lower cost. These competitive market forces, which proponents of the market system proclaim as so beneficial, do not in this case suit the large pharmaceuticals, and it is the purpose of the TRIPS agreements when they are fully in place to control generic production (Subramanian, 2004; Shadlen, 2004; Correa, 2004; Ford, 2004).

However, although the international TRIPS agreements have been promoted and driven through by the governments of industrially advanced countries representing the interests of the major pharmaceuticals, they do not leave institutional purchasers in developing countries totally powerless: by issuing, or threatening to issue, a 'compulsory licence' to allow either local manufacture or importation of generic alternatives to branded drugs, a third world government can exert pressure on suppliers to reduce prices. Of course, the transnational pharmaceuticals may get around this, partially, by establishing or acquiring their own subsidiaries for the local manufacture of generics or, as in the cases of Brazil and South Africa, pressure the US Government to threaten trade and aid sanctions unless the restrictions are removed (O'Manique, 2004; Gray & Smit, 2000). Sometimes public concern (expressed for example, through campaigning groups such as TRAC in South Africa) over the severity of the AIDS problem in certain countries, such as South Africa allows a series of compromises, albeit tightly controlled, between the pharmaceutical transnationals and governments of developing countries, negotiated partially in the Doha meeting in December 2001 and clarified to some extent in the subsequent 2003 Geneva statement whereby least developed countries without their own manufacturing facility and others in a crisis situation with HIV/AIDS may continue to import generics from countries like India or Brazil (World Trade Organisation, 2004). This particular struggle is ongoing. In May 2005, the US Government announced a 'fast track' registration process for foreign generics to be approved by the US Food and Drug administration (USFDA), prompting a collaborative response from Bristol Myers Squibb, Gilead and Merck to counteract with their own cheap combination ARV drug (*The Guardian*, 18 May 2004). What is given with one hand is, however, taken away with the other: At the July 2004

International AIDS Conference in Bangkok both President Chirac and Oxfam accused the US of introducing stricter patent laws into the terms of bi-lateral trade agreements with a number of developing countries which were capable of producing generic ARVs (*The Guardian*, 14 July 2004). If, therefore, cheap anti-HIV drugs are seen as an inevitable concession, then the pharmaceuticals will make sure that it is they who either control or produce and profit from them, though it is interesting that the site of legal challenge includes not only the WTO but national courts with notable examples particularly in South Africa and China (*The Guardian*, 18 August 2004 and 21 August 2004a).

The debates and negotiations over ARVs at the WTO arise automatically from the way in which the provision of health care through the market favours those who can pay most. Thus, most research is into diseases which affect the affluent consumer market in the West such as ageing, heart disease, and various cancers, while those which are most pressing in many poor communities, especially in the tropics, such as malaria, TB, dysentery, cholera, receive relatively little attention by comparison. One may argue that the very existence of effective ARVs is as a response to the initial fears about HIV and AIDS in the West and to powerful lobbying by well-organised interest groups, though the counterpart is their high cost. The outcome of providing branded varieties to poor communities elsewhere in the world at reduced prices, as a result of public pressure, is for prices in the industrialised West to remain high. This is only possible if arbitrage between markets is prohibited and can be monitored – hence the regulations which have to be in place in all countries by the deadline of 2016. It is thus the consumers of the high-income countries who are subsidising the provision of cheap ARVs in low-income countries. In somewhat old-fashioned terminology, it is the labour aristocracy of the West which, through its various medical insurance programmes, is allowing pharmaceutical capital to recapture sufficient economic surplus to be able to offer low price drugs to poor countries, and hence to soften its public image. To recap on an earlier point, it is an alliance between nation state and international capital, which facilitates and sustains such market discrimination. Such observations remind us that our understanding of the social reproduction of labour depends not upon debates between ‘the West’ and ‘the rest’, or America and Islam, but between capital and labour in a complex local-global nexus. Signs of this are evident, for instance, in attempts by the state of Illinois (US) to import cheaper drugs from Canada in contravention of local US regulations (*Guardian*, 21 August 2004b).

Cures, Culture & Commodification

Even at the vastly reduced prices at which generic production of anti-HIV drugs are now available, the cost of ‘rolling these out’ to the large and diverse community infected with HIV in many African countries – including the associated administrative, testing, follow-up, and monitoring costs – remains prohibitive for both governments and the majority of individuals, except amongst the better off in a few countries such as South Africa or Botswana. This, of course, is not a new phenomenon having been the situation regarding treatment and prevention of many other diseases for many years – but the additional costs of HIV related medication vastly intensify the pressure on existing resources. A pressure, which once again is being squeezed on one side by international forces, this time those of the International Financial Institutions as they impose fiscal discipline on conditions for debt relief and official aid. It may be argued that some attempt is made to soften

the impact by linking the former with Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSP) to ensure that economic efficiency gains will benefit the poor, but in a context of externally determined public expenditure limitations this is window dressing of what is essentially Structural Adjustment continuing under another name in which the patient is forced to dance to the piper's tune. Moreover, governments are locked in not only to the rules of official lenders and donors but also, by virtue of subsequently depending upon private charity, to the values, objectives, fads and fashions of NGOs from the West; and while many of these are honourable, open minded and sympathetic in their dealings with host governments, others carry a set of beliefs and values which promote and perpetuate a longer term agenda of religious or neoliberal right-wing ideology, and which as a result will support only a strictly defined range of assistance to HIV/AIDS problems which ignore historical and structural factors.

The absence of effective biomedical treatment, even for many in the middle class in most African countries, either for reasons of cost or because of a focus on preventative behavioural change means a dependence on other more readily available, but less effective, forms of medication. At the local and personal level a variety of often overlapping networks of traditional and civil society organisations come into play – each offering a sanctuary to those many thousands of infected and affected individuals and household members who feel helpless in facing up to the implications of the disease when they cannot afford sustainable treatment. Amongst the most important of these, organisationally and politically in many countries, are the religious communities, particularly those with continuing links to international parent bodies, such as the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Seventh Day Adventist churches. Others are independent offshoots of these, many of which also claim to provide miracle cures, which have mushroomed to such an extent in Nigeria that the government has banned television channels devoted to their promotion (*The Post*, 11 June 2004). In so far as communicants pay financially to their church, there is considerable commodification of belief which therefore incorporates the possibility of cures for HIV/AIDS and other diseases into its domain. For many people living with HIV/AIDS, their faith also extends to the skills of traditional doctors and herbalists, while for others their religious faith overlaps with non-Christian or non-Muslim belief in traditional cosmology and the spirit world as expressed through witchdoctors.

This extensive informal array of traditional, religious and spiritual practices plays an important role in many societies in providing explanations for the appearance and transmission of HIV, in interpreting the official messages regarding its prevention, and in offering alternative cures and palliatives. In one sense, the strength and pervasiveness of these institutions may be regarded as a response to exclusion from Western scientific bio-medical treatments: an exclusion determined by political and economic structures often with global tentacles as outlined above, but in another, they also reflect the depth and institutional complexity of 'traditional' societies in their negotiation with externally introduced change. To the extent that a parallel 'market' in medicines, palliatives and 'cures' (including 'miracles') remains separate from the formal health sector, there are similarities with the argument of Heald (2002) that such organisations represent a local reclamation of the power inherent in knowledge that appears to have been appropriated by Western medicine

Conclusion

The observation was made above that the appearance and rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in many parts of the African continent has coincided with major changes in the structure and dynamics of international capitalism, and has impacted on land use and the composition of the labour market, affecting both extra-household and intra-household relationships. In a sense, one might say that the coincidence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic with the various manifestations of capitalist adjustment is no more than that – a happenstance or conjuncture of a disease-related disaster and the impact of certain international trends at a particular stage in their development. This would be too simple, however, and not only because of the links between vulnerability and social disruption, structural adjustment and changes to international markets. These have been present in other continents where the impact and prevalence of HIV/AIDS has, at least to date, been less severe. The questions to ask are – why Africa, and why so soon in Africa?

To point, as many Afro-pessimists do, to such factors as corruption, political instability, civil war, or long-term economic mismanagement, is only to beg the further question of what lies behind these direct causes were we to accept their validity. Although the answer to that question is elusive and complex, by taking the longer view we can approach some form of understanding which goes beyond mere conjuncture, an approach which begins by returning to my opening paragraph where reference was made to the impact of the slave trade. Although almost impossible to quantify, the long-term costs of that episode in terms of state formation and economic development have been assessed as critical, most notably by Walter Rodney writing in 1972, some two years before the first edition of this *Review*. The intergenerational impact on stunted institutional development and transfer of skills, knowledge and experience created by the trade in slaves extended into the later expansion of colonial penetration (with important variations in the settler colonies of east and Southern Africa), which, as has been well documented, at its best in various forms of 'benign neglect' did little to lay the foundations of any sustainable form of 'economic take-off' during the immediate period of independence in the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, the advanced capitalist nations, building in great part on their colonial assets, experienced continual expansion, especially during the second half of the 20th century, to metamorphose into their globalised character by the later decades of that century – just at the time when the HIV virus was entering the human chain and ready to take off at its weakest points, many of which were to be found in the legacy of exploitation, neglect and structural dislocation in Africa, especially Southern Africa. The consequence, if unchecked, will amount virtually to a repetition of the impact of the slave trade with considerable threat once again of extended intergenerational negative consequences (substantiated even by mainstream economic projections (Bell 2003) – and by FAO field studies (UNFAO, 2004b).

The point, however, as readers of this *Review* will appreciate, is not only to understand society but to change it and hence to pre-empt the dire outcome predicted at the end of the previous paragraph. For this it is not sufficient to join calls for changes of attitude amongst young people or for governments to provide more publicity and education. The challenge presented by HIV/AIDS is a challenge against the established order and its historical legacy, it is a call for intensified struggle to remove exploitation that creates poverty, to provide free medical treatment at point of delivery, to divert resources to the improvement of public health services such as clean water and efficient sewerage, to equalise male and female legal rights and facilitate access to their benefits, to eliminate protectionism by

private business interests whether in the form of patent laws or farm subsidies, and to create an effective general educational base for both sexes. And finally, to remove religious and ethnic bigotry and stigma. The social and economic factors which lie behind the spread and depressingly high levels of HIV/AIDS in so many African countries today are the product of the same international capitalistically driven forces which were so relevant at the foundation of this *Review* in 1974, and the human tragedy of its impact underlines the continued relevance of the *Review* in providing a channel for oppositional debate, awareness raising and the intellectual and moral support that is essential for those among us who are activists in the field and behind the scenes.

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Solidarity & Africa in the New Century

Lloyd M. Sachikonye

Solidarity is an awareness of a common humanity and global citizenship and the voluntary acceptance of the responsibilities that go with it. It is the conscious commitment to redress inequalities both within and between countries. It is based on recognition that in an interdependent world, poverty or oppression anywhere is a threat to prosperity and stability everywhere ...¹

The second half of the 20th century witnessed the most sustained upsurge in the process of national liberation and independence in the developing or 'Third' world. This upsurge reached a climax in the attainment of national liberation in such diverse countries as Vietnam in 1975, the Lusophone states also in the 1970s, in Africa, and in Zimbabwe in 1980. The transition to independence and democracy in Namibia and South Africa in the 1990s represented a fitting climax of this liberation and de-colonisation process. The last quarter of the century was similarly momentous in that it witnessed the flowering of the international solidarity movement. The struggles against United States imperialism in Vietnam and elsewhere in the world, and against apartheid in Southern Africa and Portuguese fascism took on a special resonance during this period.

This was the conjuncture in which the *Review of African Political Economy* was born in 1974. An era of tremendous political and ideological ferment, it was not an accident that most of its early editors had an African connection having had spells as teachers and researchers in different African countries, and having been associated with liberation movements. This framework and experience was the motivation behind the first editorial of the *Review* that pledged solidarity with national liberation movements and 'progressive states' in Africa (ROAPE, 1974).

However, if there was concerted progress towards national liberation during this last quarter of the century, there were also major countervailing developments. These included the neo-liberal backlash by the major Western powers, particularly in the US under Ronald Reagan and in the UK under Margaret Thatcher, and by financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF under the auspices of the 'Washington Consensus'. At the end of the 1980s, the end of the cold war effectively sealed the hegemony of the US and the ascendancy of the 'Washington Consensus', and the demise of Soviet-style socialism. The earlier reverses of imperialism were thus mitigated as the gains of 'national liberation' and 'anti-imperialism' were undermined. By the end of the century, there were ambiguities relating to the content of national liberation – especially in the realm of development, social and economic policies.

This paper attempts to provide a synopsis of the changing content and forms of international solidarity since the 1970s. Solidarity responses have shaped, and

themselves been affected by, developments both in the developing countries and in the industrialised and developed heartlands.

What regional and global issues have been the focal points for mobilisation by the solidarity movement(s)?

What has been the overall impact of the campaigns by the movement?

Which issues are likely to predominate in terms of solidarity with Africa in this new century?

Finally, how are these reflected at the national level (in this instance, the present author's own national context of Zimbabwe)?

Solidarity in the Last Quarter of the 20th Century

In many respects, the struggles against colonialism were relatively straightforward to the extent that they were aimed at attaining self-determination through political independence. Particularly following the end of World War Two, it became clear that the days of old-style colonialism were numbered. The sun began to set on the British, French, US, Portuguese 'empires' amongst others although the pace of imperial decline would vary. Some of the early landmarks were India's assumption of independence in 1947, and that of Ghana in 1957, and by most African states in 1960. The struggles for independence were more protracted in Southern Africa and in the Portuguese colonies, and ROAPE devoted considerable space to analysis of developments in that region with some of the more interesting contributions emanating from some of the future leaders of the region (Mbeki, 1978). Such institutions as the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations and the former Socialist Bloc were prime movers in support of de-colonisation with the former playing a catalytic role in coordinating moral and material support for liberation movements. Countries that bordered colonial Southern Africa expressed their solidarity through provision of sanctuary to the movements and refugees at enormous cost. In various ways, African communities garnered moral and material support for the liberation movements in gestures of solidarity.²

Colonialism and apartheid had become anachronisms. The anti-colonial movement was a powerful force in the territories struggling for independence and international solidarity with national liberation movements grew in the 1960s and 1970s. In the international arena, colonialism and apartheid became crimes against humanity. The socialist bloc centred around the Soviet Union and China tipped the balance in favour of national liberation movements through their political and material support for liberation movements. While Western governments desisted from providing training and weapons to liberation movements, the support of the socialist bloc was decisive in strengthening the hands of the movements in Southern Africa. Nevertheless, this was a rare conjuncture in recent history in which the Western public participated actively in a solidarity movement for national liberation movements simultaneously with the Socialist Bloc. Such was the role, for example, of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Even some of the Western states, particularly the Nordic countries, took a prominent role in support of liberation movements.

There were high hopes that national liberation would unleash long-suppressed energies and initiatives of the oppressed and usher in a new era of freedom or *uhuru* and development. The newly independent states would acquire stability, peace and

prosperity, it was hoped. There was a whiff of idealism to the international solidarity extended to the national liberation movements, but it was genuine in its optimistic expectations that the new governments would be fully committed to respecting freedoms and pursuing equitable social policies.

However, as the century drew to a close, the ambiguities and shortfalls of national liberation were becoming clearer and clearer. Stability, peace and development proved elusive for most of the newly independent states. Civil wars soon wracked countries such as Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Human rights and other basic freedoms were early casualties in a regional context of destabilisation orchestrated by South Africa but also due to splits within the movements themselves. Elsewhere, neo-colonialism characterised the relationship with former colonial powers. Class divisions grew with the small ruling elites amassing most of the national wealth by hook or crook. The era of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a further weakening of state capacity in policy design and implementation as well as cuts in a broad swathe of key social services such as education and health. Poverty levels deepened in most countries.

The end of the Cold War was significant in shifting much of the attention of western governments and solidarity groups to Eastern Europe, a region that was in their backyard. This had enormous implications in terms of diversion of aid resources that had previously been routed to Africa, and in loss of strategic value by those countries (such as the Congo and South Africa) that had been feted by either of the Super Powers. It was a new international context in which priorities, balance of power and forms of solidarity were changing.

Solidarity in a Changing Context

From the 1990s, there was a new international context following the end of the bi-polar world that was succeeded by a uni-polar one in which US hegemony consolidated itself. It was a hegemony based on *consent* (massive economic power through multinational corporations, influence and leverage through international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF); and *force* through ownership of the largest military firepower in the world. International trading agreements were another avenue through which hegemony was exercised. Such terms as *imperialism* were no longer in vogue; *globalisation* became the new mantra (Mohan & Zack-Williams, 1995). The conditions and issues for solidarity thus underwent change. The imposition of neo-liberal reforms in developed countries themselves challenged the foundations of the erstwhile generous welfare system. Economic restructuring resulted in an increase in unemployment and curtailment of the social welfare net in most of the developed countries in the west. This provided propitious conditions for the spread of anti-immigrant sentiments, indeed xenophobia, in most of these countries. Erstwhile fringe groups that campaigned around immigration and job losses to migrants began to garner support that mainstream parties could not ignore. There were thus contradictory processes at work: globalisation in the economic sphere and growth of national chauvinism and certainly anti-immigrant sentiments in most developed countries.

Meanwhile, developments in the independent states in Africa had a mixed record. While there was a process of democratisation and economic growth in some, there was stagnation, if not regression, in others (Saul, 1994; Arrighi, 2003). Stability and development were undermined by chronic conflicts in more than a few countries

with the major cases including Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan amongst others. To make matters more complicated, some of these countries were endowed with immense natural resources – particularly oil and minerals such as diamonds and gold as well as timber. Conflicts were fuelled and prolonged by a scramble for resources. Both internal forces and external actors participated in this scramble (UN, 2003). Although some of the conflicts have been wound down, there had grown a pervasive image of Africa as a continent perpetually at war, and triggering enormous human displacement and poverty.

In the region that had inspired a great deal of hope during the heyday of liberation struggles, developments during the post-independence period have given rise to need for serious, if not self-critical, reflection. Southern Africa has had its own fair share of conflicts such as civil wars, as well as elite enrichment, corruption and repression of basic rights. At best, democracy has remained fragile in most countries, while in some (such as Zimbabwe) there have been reverses. There are a few islands of wealth and growth in a region in which poverty is widespread.

This is the wider context in which we can consider the new forms and focus of solidarity. A major development in 2000 was the formation of a global forum of social movements to counter the corporate-driven World Economic Forum, which holds the famous Davos conferences each year. The World Social Forum in 2000 began to organise regular annual gatherings at Porto Alegre in Brazil. The meetings were on various themes ranging from economic rights, trade inequalities, debt, gender and ecological issues to anti-globalisation. Bringing together not only social movements but also parties, NGOs, civil rights groups and unions amongst others, the Social Forum has been unprecedented in its diversity. It proposes to formulate global alternatives to current capitalist practices, and strategies for their implementation; recreates the possibility of an alliance between radical forces in the periphery and those in the core (Sader, 2002). Furthermore, the Forum

allows theoretical, social and political contributions to the project to converge in the same space, without a hierarchy being defined – recovering, in a sense, the legacy of the historical left, by addressing the themes of an alternative globalisation (Ibid.)

It is interesting that the formation of the Forum occurred at about the same time as the massive Seattle demonstrations against trade policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and further demonstrations in Genoa. The Forum held its annual meeting in Mumbai in India in 2004 and there is a possibility of a meeting in Africa in 2006. Clearly, the Forum is becoming a broad solidarity movement on economic and social justice issues especially in the South. In the perspective of some analysts, the Forum is likely to grow more solid and probably more militant while the ‘camp of Davos may well increasingly split between those who seek to join, to come to terms with or co-opt the Porto Alegre camp, and those determined to destroy it’ (Wallerstein, 2003).

In Africa, there has been a proliferation of social movements and NGOs but most remain organisationally weak. Even so, labour unions, women’s groups, student unions and the media have sought to push the frontiers for basic rights and social justice with varying outcomes in different contexts. What is of similar interest is the attempt to forge solidarity between states. The African Renaissance idea as articulated by Thabo Mbeki in South Africa represents an attempt to forge closer political and economic ties between states in Africa. The transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) may have been superficial but initiatives such the New

Partnership for Development (NEPAD) represent an attempt to promote economic and political development leading to closer integration between countries. However, one built-in shortcoming is that citizens and civil society have not been consulted nor mobilised to play a role in these initiatives for integration, which could potentially bring positive benefits. Such solidarity as has been nurtured has been between states. This solidarity has sometimes shielded repressive governments from international criticism, and to that extent, it is self-serving. Such has been the case with the solidarity expressed by the SADC group of countries toward the Mugabe government since 2000, as we will see below (ICG, 2002; Sachikonye, 2004).

The Wider Solidarity Agenda

While the international and regional contexts of solidarity have undergone change, the issues around which it has been mobilised remain stubbornly most of the old issues. These include poverty and redistribution; democracy and human rights; citizenship, migration and labour rights; as well as the role of academia (national and international) in forging solidarity.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the poorest continent and unlike Asia where the proportion of the poor has been decreasing, it has been increasing in the former. In the last analysis, it is the African governments and societies themselves that should implement sustainable poverty reduction measures. In the meantime, however, there is a great deal of scope for solidarity work on poverty reduction. NGOs have played an increasing role in supporting poverty reduction programmes; combined budgets of such NGOs as Oxfam, Action Aid, Save the Children, World Vision amongst others run into hundreds of million dollars each year (Marcussen, 1996; Wallace, 1997). Aid to reduce poverty should be an act of solidarity if it is sustained in such a manner that it empowers the recipients to become self-reliant and overcome dependency on handouts. The role of the rich nations is crucial in contributing to poverty reduction and so they have an obligation to contribute to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which prioritise poverty reduction. However, the majority of rich countries have not met their target of converting 0.7% of their GDP into development aid. Sub-Saharan remains 'a scar' on the global conscience. While governments can drag their feet on the issue of development aid, people and their organisations can make positive inputs. As it has been observed:

they can decide to assume global responsibility for solidarity, just as they did in neighbourhood schemes and friendly societies at the outset of the European welfare states in the 19th century. The development work of many NGOs is based on voluntary contributions, some of them on a large scale ... We welcome initiatives which permit voluntary contributions to be used for international solidarity such as the idea of a 'Global Social Trust' ... (ILO, 2004).

In addition, private philanthropic initiatives by foundations have made a major contribution to global social programmes such as those for health, HIV-AIDS, education and the environment.

Similarly, there has been a great deal of attention paid to issues relating to solidarity on democracy and human rights issues. Both states and civil society organisations have devoted resources to the promoting of 'good governance' and human rights issues particularly in developing countries but also in Eastern Europe. This focus on 'good governance' and human rights has not been entirely altruistic. While it has set certain conditions on aid to states and drawn criticism for 'interference' into internal affairs, it has put the spotlight on those governments that have perpetrated human

rights abuses and repression. Such organisations as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Red Cross amongst others have played an important watchdog role in monitoring and reporting on human rights issues. Similarly, a plethora of organisations contribute to international solidarity through their campaigns on gender rights, minority and aboriginal groups rights, gay and lesbian rights as well as on environmental issues. However, the support of these rights by some states is equivocal or lacking. For instance, motions to censure countries violating human rights are often blocked in what should be an influential body, the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

Other issues that put the spotlight on the limitations of international solidarity relate to migration and labour rights. We have already observed the backlash against migrants by developed countries in a situation of a drift towards xenophobia. In response, most developed countries have introduced tougher controls on immigration. Further, for those migrants fortunate to gain entry, it is often a complicated and prolonged process for them to acquire citizenship rights. Migrants are viewed competing for jobs, and placing a burden on the welfare system, by the nationals of developed countries. This is an arena in which solidarity between the indigenous and the foreign has been lacking. Against this background, it has been argued that:

steps have to be taken to build a multilateral framework that provides uniform and transparent rules for the cross-border movement of people and balances the interests of both migrants themselves and countries of origin and destination. All countries stand to benefit from an orderly and managed process of international migration that can enhance global productivity and eliminate exploitative practices ... (ILO, 2004).

There remains a great deal to be done to build solidarity between workers across national boundaries. The role of bodies such as the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and the Southern Africa Trade Union Co-ordinating Council (SATUCC) in Africa and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and ILO globally is crucial in this respect as they strive to promote basic labour rights and orderly international migration.

Finally, an important arena for solidarity is that with the academia in Africa. The colleges and universities in Africa held the promise at independence of being institutions for the training of human resources for the new states, and of being centres of excellence in research and critical thought. However, they have not been isolated from the wider economic crisis and turbulent politics. Although some have begun to recover from these shocks, most experience meagre resources and out-migration of lecturers and scientists in search of better working conditions (Sachikonye, 1998; Mohan and Zack-Williams, 2002). Those who leave search for better equipped libraries and laboratories and reasonable salaries among other things. For some countries, such as Ghana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe (to name a few), the number of their scientists, professors, doctors and technicians in the diaspora far exceeds that working at home. This has implications for the quality of instruction and administration in the tertiary institutions in most African countries. Some of the issues that emerge from this situation are the extent to which institutions in rich countries can collaborate with those in Africa to mitigate the exodus into the diaspora. While the long-term solution lies in government programmes to stem the tide and create more favourable conditions for the upkeep and expansion of their higher institutions of learning, there are some niches in which progressive institutions and journals like ROAPE can use to develop solidarity with African institutions. Possible activities would include joint research programmes such as

those that the *Nordic Africa Institute* and *CODESRIA* are well known for. Joint publication or sponsorship of special journal issues is another activity that could unlock some of the scholarship in Africa that does not find expression in international publications of repute. The advent and spread of information communication technologies (internet, e-mail, web-based publishing etc.) should provide an advantage to institutions in both Africa and rich countries to allow for access to electronic and other resources to the former on a scale only imaginable before. But solidarity on this scale requires a conscious political commitment on both sides, and a long-term vision for development and social justice in Africa (Leys and Saul, 1998).

Unfinished Business of Solidarity: Zimbabwe

There is a narrow sense in which the potentialities and problematic of solidarity have been amplified in one national context that the present author is more familiar with – that of Zimbabwe. In its struggle for liberation, the country inspired significant international solidarity, which included in-depth analysis and regular briefings in the pages of journals such as *ROAPE*. Perhaps the climax of the fruition of that solidarity was the celebration of independence in April 1980. The country continued to receive a favourable rating during its first decade of independence despite the blot of the civil war in Matabeleland between 1982 and 1987.

The situation changed dramatically in 2000 when the Mugabe government began to suppress hard-won rights and freedoms by instituting terror as a political tool and reshaping the judicial system in its favour. Subsequent elections were held under conditions of extensive intimidation and violence against the opposition movement. New laws were soon introduced to narrow democratic space; for example, draconian media legislation to ban some of the independent newspapers. Land reform was instituted without compensation to former owners, and land grabbing by the ruling elite was rampant. Property rights of small and large businesses were extensively tampered with. Production in the economy (including agriculture and manufacturing) declined precipitously; between 2000 and 2004, and the economy declined by between 30 and 40 per cent. International criticism of the Mugabe government made it 'a pariah state'.

What role, if any, has solidarity played in the struggles against deepening authoritarianism? Zimbabwe illustrates the ambiguities of present-day solidarity in a post-independence context. Within Southern Africa, the Zanu-PF government of Robert Mugabe has received succour from governments (such as those of Angola and Namibia, if not South Africa as well) from within the region. There has also been solidarity from governments further afield, governments as diverse as Cuba, Malaysia and China; and from organisations such as the African Union and the Non-Aligned Movement. Thus a paradoxical situation in which support to forces pressing for democratic change mainly emanates from western countries and groupings such as the European Union and the Commonwealth.

A major source of support for internal democratic forces has been NGOs both in the West and Southern Africa itself. Material and moral support from these organisations has made a significant difference to the fledgling civil society organisations and opposition movement in Zimbabwe itself. In particular, labour organisations such as the powerful Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and legal federations as well as the independent media together with regional human rights federations have been vocal in their criticism of the Mugabe regime. A new bill

to curtail the activities of local NGOs especially those engaged in human rights and governance issues was put before the Zimbabwe Parliament in September in 2004 and, despite domestic and international condemnation, was expected to be 'fast tracked' into law. In addition, there is plan for a new law to police e-mail and internet communications more stringently in a bid to monitor dissent. More needs to be done to scale up the role of the international solidarity movement. Like 'aid fatigue' there is a possibility of 'solidarity fatigue' particularly where there now prevails cynicism over whether a change of government would signify a real end to authoritarianism and lead to a fresh beginning. This has to be guarded against and overcome by those who retain optimism for change and belief that Zimbabweans deserve better than the current dispensation.

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From Liberation to Reconstruction: Theory & Practice in the Life of Harold Wolpe

*Michael Burawoy*¹

Writings from exile have a long and distinguished pedigree. Trotsky wrote his *History of the Russian Revolution* while in exile in Turkey and *The Revolution Betrayed* in Norway; Lenin wrote *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* in Zurich and had to escape to Finland to write *State and Revolution*; Luxemburg wrote *The Accumulation of Capital* in Switzerland, and Gramsci wrote his *Prison Notebooks* under the eye of fascist jail guards. Marx wrote his *Capital* while exiled in London which is also where Harold Wolpe wrote his most important analyses of South Africa. Being in exile gave him the space to develop a new research program for the study of South Africa, its present, its past, and its future.

Removed from his public Wolpe made a virtue out of necessity, proclaiming the analysis of consciousness to be the monopoly of political organs while the sociologist determines the structural conditions that lie behind and give rise to consciousness – structural conditions that also define the strategic possibilities of any given historical conjuncture. Here surely was a convenient division of labour – structure for the social scientist and agency for the party – a division of labour that flew in the face of South Africa’s rich traditions of social history.

Wolpe returned to South Africa in 1991, for 5 long years before he died. He did not take up a position at one of the privileged historically-white universities but at the resource-poor University of Western Cape. There he set up an Education Policy Unit to continue the work he had begun in England, elaborating a framework for reconstructing South African tertiary education. Although his critical faculties were not always appreciated, his loyalty to the movement and then to the ANC government knew no limits. Indeed, it might be said that it was his dedication that killed him on his 70th birthday as he was putting together what would be his last report for government. It is daunting to revisit his legacy, but what better time than now to assess the fate of his vision for a new South Africa – ten years after the inauguration of the Government of National Unity? Others have paid tribute to Wolpe the man² – his life and his influence – I will pay tribute to him by dwelling on his texts, on his scholarly oeuvre. Just as he took the texts of others seriously – often more seriously than the authors themselves – so I will try to return the compliment. I will examine his texts not for their own sake, and not only to hold up Wolpe as an exemplary theorist, but also to demonstrate their contemporary relevance. Here too I am trying to be true to Wolpe’s insistence that theoretical work be directed to ongoing political projects.

I will set out on this journey from Wolpe's 1985 statement of the relation between intellectuals and politics, interrogating his three propositions: (1) that social research should take as its point of departure the priority of the liberation movement, (2) that the study of social consciousness should be left to political organs, and (3) the equivalent position of politically committed intellectuals under liberation and reconstruction. I shall examine the first two propositions in relation to Wolpe's own 'theoretical practice,' first in England and then back in South Africa. This will give me the basis for assessing his third proposition – the political equivalence of liberation struggle and national reconstruction. I will argue that in the last years of his life Wolpe was groping toward an alternative vision of the intellectual as interpreter rather than legislator – a vision that I will try to elaborate in the concluding part of the paper. In short, my intent is to revise Wolpe's 1985 praxis statement in the light of his own work and life.

I: Theory & Practice, 1985

The 1985 praxis statement was originally given at a memorial conference to celebrate the intellectual and political work of Ruth First.³ Brief though it was, the 1985 praxis statement was probably Wolpe's most controversial statement, and that is saying something since almost everything he wrote was controversial. Its rhetorical style followed a pattern that was the hallmark of Wolpe's writings, namely to play off two dialectically opposed alternatives, letting each reveal the limitation of the other with respect to some fundamental issue. He would then, like an eagle, soar above the fray with a third position that transcended the difficulties that beset the first two. It was akin to Hegel's thesis-antithesis-synthesis, with the one important difference – Wolpe presented the final synthesis as an unequivocal rejection of both thesis and antithesis! There were no redeeming virtues to thesis and antithesis, so that 'breaking' with them was a necessary condition for arriving at the correct perspective. His logic of argumentation put his adversaries on the defensive, since there was no space for reconciliation. As a result the originality of his work could be easily misunderstood and its brilliance could get lost. Nowhere is this truer than with his praxis statement of 1985. Let me discuss each of its three principles in turn.

Principle I: Starting with the Priorities of the Liberation Movement

Wolpe begins by saying that the relation of intellectuals to politics has been misconceived in two mutually opposed ways. In the first the intellectual provides materials for and justifications of already defined policies, reducing research to an ideological function. The intellectual becomes a servant or instrument of power. This is as unacceptable as the second position, which is a reaction to the first, and defends the unqualified autonomy of intellectual work, held to be ethically and politically neutral, or, as it is said, value free. The latter has a more sophisticated variant that recognizes the political relevance of research but claiming that the actual priorities emerge from the logic of the research process itself rather than political goals. Wolpe, by contrast, claims that politics both within and outside science, whether recognized or not, impose themselves on the priorities of the researcher to make nonsense of any claims to autonomy. And so Wolpe argues the simple opposition of intellectual-as-instrument and intellectual-as-autonomous has to be transcended. In their place he substitutes the following principle, derived from his experience in Mozambique with Frelimo:

In this sense, the priorities defined at the political level became also the priorities of social research. But, and this is the fundamental point which cannot be overemphasized, not as conclusions but as starting points for investigation.⁴

The priority from which his South African research embarks is 'winning state power', leading Wolpe to examine the relation between racism and capitalism and, as we shall see, questioning the South African Communist Party's theory of internal colonialism. The same point of departure led him to examine the nature of the South African state and to question the SACP's characterization of fascism. Starting from the SACP's assumption of a unified African opposition to apartheid, Wolpe examined the class composition of racial groups and identified those African classes or class fractions with a potential interest in rather than against apartheid. Thus, starting from the liberation movement's goal of winning state power, he was led to question many of its claims and assumptions.

One does not have to look far to discover the source of controversy! Obviously, for some, adopting the priorities of the liberation movement was the prostitution and denaturing of science, while others emphasized the plurality of goals within the liberation movement, and opposed their definition by either the ANC or the SACP. Both these criticisms folded Wolpe back into his 'ideological function', labeling him a servant of power – a party functionary. On the other hand, the liberation movement, and particularly the SACP and ANC, were not too happy with some of the conclusions Wolpe reached, especially when those conclusions questioned their strategy.

He had offended everyone, it seemed, when in practice he had put forward a very interesting position, very different, for example, from Gramsci's distinction between traditional and organic intellectuals, and yet curiously compatible with Weber's separation of science and politics. It was a position that was very influenced by the notion of 'theoretical practice', which was Althusser's attempt to rescue some (relative!) autonomy for the intellectuals in the French Communist Party during the era of post-Stalinist thaw, new social movements, and Eurocommunism. Like Althusser Wolpe wanted to create a space for independent theorizing within the framework of liberation, and like Althusser attracted detractors and enemies on all sides.

Principle II: Leaving Consciousness to the Movement Organizations

This first principle led him to the second principle. In taking the priorities of the liberation movement as point of departure, the role of research is to establish 'the structure of the period and of the conjuncture' in order to help in 'the formulation of viable strategies and the calculation of possibilities.'⁵ For Wolpe this means replacing general histories with of histories that demonstrably contribute to an 'analysis upon which strategies are or should be based.'⁶ To Wolpe, too many studies of South Africa appeared to be aimless history, unrelated to the present conjuncture. This was emphatically not a dismissal of historical work tout court but rather, as he will show in his own research, the endorsement of history that sheds light on the meaning and possibilities within the present.

More controversially, he goes on to argue that the then fashionable academic study of consciousness should be left to the organs of the liberation movement. This is his second principle.

In my view the acquisition of knowledge of the 'consciousness' and propensity to struggle of individuals is a political not an academic research function. It depends above all upon the links between organisation and masses and is the fundamental condition for successful struggle.⁷

Here, then, is the division of labour, the scientist analyzes the 'concrete structural conditions' that underlie 'the myriad individual acts of persons, parties, organizations and governments'⁸ and that set the limits of the possible, while the political organization tries to shape consciousness. One is reminded of Marx's 1859 Preface where he distinguishes between the transformation of economic structures that can be determined with the precision of science and the ideological forms through which men become conscious of conflicts and fight them out.⁹ Or, as Marx famously said in his analysis of the French political conjuncture between 1848 and 1852, 'Men make history but not under conditions of their own choosing.' Scientists map out the possibilities of social transformation by the study of conditions, whereas parties, trade unions, social movements do or do not realize those possibilities.

While Wolpe does not spell this out, he is saying that social analysis should not be monopolized either by the scientist or by the party, but that each has its own sphere of expertise. So he is criticizing 'interpreters' who would reduce the social formation to consciousness (without recognizing its underlying structural determinants), but, more interestingly, he is also distancing himself from those who would monopolize knowledge of structure and consciousness, who stand outside history in order to reduce it to the interaction of structure and agency. This loses sight of the central goal which is to transform rather than simply understand the world. On the other hand, he is firmly opposed to giving the party a monopoly of knowledge. Its commitment to organizing gives it insight into consciousness but by the same token its political involvement obstructs its grasp of the totality of social relations and thus what makes political sense, which requires a more autonomous 'theoretical practice.'

As we shall see Wolpe is no less true to this second methodological principle as he is to the first. In all his writings he tries to tease out the structural limits of possibility. For example, where others would dismiss the reforms of apartheid as cosmetic – whether it be the pouring of corporate resources into education, the registration of trade unions, or the creation of Bantustans – Wolpe always focused on the new openings, new possibilities for contestation that they created. He proposed to the liberation movement that it simultaneously recognize the limits and the possibilities of reform.

At the same time it is hard to find an analysis of consciousness in any of his writings. Whether that is a sustainable position is something we shall have cause to examine. For now it might help to distinguish between on the one hand, 'lived experience', which is the refractory effect of participation in economic and political structures, and on the other hand 'consciousness', which is the more malleable 'common sense' that grows out of lived experience but is not determined by it. Thus, the African petit bourgeoisie's experience of its class position may be racialised but that experience could be compatible with a consciousness that supports liberation or apartheid. Although Wolpe never makes this distinction I think it is present in his writings and that he does examine lived experience as the foundation of consciousness.

Still, we cannot leave this matter without asking why and under what conditions knowledge of consciousness 'derives directly from political organisation'? Does the political organisation always have privileged insight into consciousness? For example, if the organizations are in exile or underground, can they shape

consciousness, can they even know about the consciousness of the people they claim to lead? It raises the question, which, if any, political organizations have an understanding of consciousness! And finally, there is the Gramscian question: is there no space for the scientific analysis of the formation of consciousness that might guide political organization?¹⁰

As I said one of the virtues of Wolpe's writings is their consistency. He is astoundingly true to his own methodological principle of focusing on structural conditions at the expense of consciousness. I do not believe it was only a function of his being in exile since he stuck to the same principle when he returned to South Africa in 1991. It was a deeply held conviction that came from his involvement in the liberation movement and his reading of Marxism through French structuralism. We need to suspend judgment and examine how far it advanced the understanding of South Africa and, in particular, of the limits and possibilities of regime transformation.

Principle III: The Equivalence of Liberation & Reconstruction

Finally, we come to the third proposition, which is not actually a principle because it is more implicit than explicit. It is the equivalence – from the point of view of the relation between intellectuals and politics – of liberation and reconstruction, the world of apartheid and the world of post-apartheid. In examining the relation between politics and research, Wolpe does not distinguish the postcolonial situation in Mozambique where he worked for a time at Maputo's Centre for African Studies – until the South African police terrorized the researchers and killed Ruth First in 1982 – from research for the National Liberation Movement. No less than in the liberation struggle, the relation to Frelimo as the ruling party of Mozambique was one in which the intellectual took the priorities of the party as point of departure and focused on the structural conditions for their realization.

Wolpe sees his two principles as guiding the relation of politics to research in all contexts. Destroying the old regime is equivalent to building a new one – in the former the party-in-opposition defines priorities and organizes consciousness while in the latter the party-in-power sets the reconstruction agenda and organizes a new hegemony. The intellectual takes as point of departure party priorities or reconstruction agenda. From what I can glean of Wolpe's experience at the Education Policy Unit at the University of Western Cape that is exactly what he did.¹¹ With consummate dedication he applied national priorities to the reconstruction of higher education, exploring problems, such as the tension between equity and development, short term and long term transformation, that were left obscure in official programs.

Toward the end of his life, however, Wolpe began to have second thoughts about his 1985 principles. In the light of his experience in the New South Africa, he began to question his involvement in policy research and to extend his role to critic of the new regime. Instead of taking national priorities as given he began to question them. Although Wolpe never took the next step, it followed directly from the first – that the formation and investigation of consciousness could not be left to the ANC or SACP but intellectuals had an important contribution to make in an independent public role. They too should foster, elaborate and engage with popular consciousness as part of or in addition to their scientific work. Wolpe never took on this role as public sociologist or 'interpreter', though many others had.

Just as Marx left this world as he was about to embark on his all-important theory of class, so Wolpe left us with tantalizing hints as to where his theorizing was heading. Reconstructing Wolpe's vision for today's world requires, as a first step, the careful interrogation of his work, first in exile and then in South Africa. This is what I attempt in the next two parts of this paper, before assessing the relevance of the 1985 praxis statement for contemporary South Africa in the final part.¹²

II: Liberation: Modes of Production, the State & Class Analysis

We begin with Wolpe's classic paper, 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid', which helped to transform our understanding of South Africa.¹³ Here he takes issue with two literatures: on the one hand the literature of the South African Communist Party with its internal colonial model and the more conventional sociological literature that saw South Africa as a plural society held together by coercion. Paradoxically both assess South Africa in a similar way, namely as a society in which racial divisions – the domination of white over black – trump all others. The SACP defined South Africa as an archaic colonial superstructure fettering the spontaneous development of capitalism. This gave political priority to the National Liberation struggle that would mobilize Africans against apartheid, and either immediately or in a second stage, bring South African capitalism down with it.¹⁴

Wolpe develops a more contingent understanding of the relation between racism and capitalism, insisting that apartheid was not simply the deepening of segregation but reflected the transformation of the underlying economic order. But here again he locates himself against two opposed alternatives: his economic turn dwelt neither on the racial division of labour nor on the distinction between forced and free labour,¹⁵ but on the articulation of capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production. He brought to life this rather arcane conceptualization by showing how it could be used to describe the specificity of the South African racial order. It proved to be Wolpe's most significant contribution to the theory of racism as well as the analysis of South Africa.

The African redistributive mode of production, based on kinship, cattle and tilling the land subsidized the reproduction of labour power, so that capitalists, especially mining capital, could pay their workers a wage that corresponded to little more than what was necessary to maintain a single worker. The wage did not have to support children, elderly, disabled, women so long as the reserves – 13% of the land area into which Africans were herded in accordance with the 1913 Native Land Act – did indeed provide a subsistence existence. This was the period of *Segregation* when the state's function was to maintain the circulatory flow of African migrant labour between town and country, by protecting the reserves from white expropriation on the one hand and by making it difficult for African to settle permanently in urban areas on the other.

Segregation prevailed, Wolpe claims, from 1870 to the 1930s whereupon population pressure, soil erosion, and the concentration of land ownership began to undermine the reproductive role of the reserves. Rural impoverishment led to urban impoverishment, especially affecting workers in the expanding manufacturing sector, giving rise to intensified class struggles in the 1940s, and creating a deep crisis for the political regime. A new mechanism for producing cheap labour had to be found: either the racial order (with its colour bars, limited education for blacks, migrant labour system, etc.) would be modified to allow Africans to take over positions

monopolized by the white labour aristocracy or the latter - by combining with Afrikaner farmers - would shore up the racial order with intensified repression. The latter solution - *Apartheid* - won the day and cheap African labour was perpetuated not through the reproduction of pre-capitalist modes of production but through an elaborate political and ideological edifice that outlawed African organizations, regulated urban residence, and turned the reserves into dependent homelands, or, as they were officially called, Bantustans - satrapies for a small African elite.

'Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power in South Africa' became a foundation stone for a new research program into the study of South Africa, the extent of which I cannot explore here. Rather I will follow the logic of Wolpe's own writings. Focusing on the mechanisms of the reproduction of cheap labour turned his attention to the state. In the original formulation, the state was a mere reflection of the need for cheap labour. It did what it had to do - maintain cheap labour power - because that was its function! But how was it that the state so effectively and seemingly miraculously always managed to create the conditions for the reproduction of cheap labour power? How was it that it understood what to do and had the capacity to do it? Was this animal acting of its own accord or at the behest of a master? The knee jerk response of Marxism has always been that the state is an instrument of the capitalist class. And indeed such crude views were often found in the SACP literature wherein the South Africa state was regarded as a species of fascism created by and for a unified capitalist class. But that assumed away the problem. How was it that out of individual competing capitalists sprung a coordinated ruling class that magically comprehended and enforced its common interests?

This was the point of departure for a group of young Marxists - known as the gang of four - influenced by one of the icons of Marxist structuralism, Nicos Poulantzas.¹⁶ They argued, following Poulantzas, that the dominant class in capitalist society is made up of class fractions (mining capital, manufacturing capital, land owners, merchant capital, etc. in the case of South Africa) that become organized into a 'power bloc' in which one fraction - the hegemonic fraction - comes to represent the interests of all. In a series of essays and books the Poulantzians periodized South Africa capitalism as a succession of different power blocs, handing the initiative for change to forces within the dominant class. While not discounting this approach altogether Wolpe took them to task, first, for neglecting the fundamental contradiction between capital and labour and second, for perpetuating an 'instrumentalist' view of the state.¹⁷ Although it was a major advance to break up the dominant class into its different fractions, still it was the hegemonic fraction that wielded the state in the general interest of capitalism. In identifying the hegemonic fraction by the policies the state pursued the Poulantzians assumed precisely what had to be demonstrated, namely that the state was indeed an instrument of some hegemonic fraction.

The trouble with the instrumentalist view of the state, Wolpe argued, is that when it is not tautological it too often lapses into its opposite. That is to say instrumentalists tend to work back from some given policy, say pass laws and influx control, to the fraction of capital that benefits, say mining capital, and concludes that the state is the instrument of mining capital without ever showing that mining capital was indeed the force behind the legislation. Alternatively, when the state does something in opposition to the supposedly reigning fraction of capital, e.g. when colour bars are introduced against the will of mining capital, then the instrumentalist position is given up for one that stresses the autonomy or potential autonomy of the state. From being an instrument of the hegemonic fraction it suddenly becomes a subject with a will of its own!

Here then, once again, Wolpe constructs a debate between two opposed perspectives: the state as an object (instrument) and the state as subject (autonomy). Both suffer from the assumption that the state is a unified organ whereas it is made up of contradictory apparatuses between which, within which, and over which there is much contestation. The two opposed perspectives cancel each other out and Wolpe comes away with his preferred theory: the state is a *contradictory unity*, neither subject nor object but a terrain of struggle. The structure of the state, therefore, shapes not only internal struggles on its own terrain but also influences external struggles in civil society. Wolpe refocuses the debate onto the nature of the state, viewed not as an external object to be conquered, but as having a specific structure with specific effects.

This is all very abstract but Wolpe tries to make it concrete in his book, *Race, Class and the Apartheid State*.¹⁸ Its major thesis is that the state creates opportunities and sets limits on struggles both on its own terrain, especially within and among the judiciary, the legislature, executive, and military, as well as outside the state in civil society and the workplace. Just as Wolpe's earlier work highlighted the discontinuity between segregation and apartheid on the basis of economic change, so now he seeks to distinguish three periods *within the era of apartheid* on the basis of forms of state and their effects on patterns of struggle.

In the first period, 1948-1960, the judiciary, although nominally independent, became increasingly subordinated to the executive through parliamentary edicts. Even though spaces for political action were increasingly restricted, mass struggles nevertheless continued to expand, culminating in the Sharpeville massacre of 1960.

The second period, from 1960 to 1973, saw the abandonment of even the pretence of the rule of law, and the extra-parliamentary political terrain was systematically destroyed, organizations were banned and activists imprisoned. The liberation movements went underground and turned to armed struggle. The state responded with declarations of emergency, enhancing its police powers and closing down virtually all possibilities of reform.

The third period, which Wolpe calls the 'rise of insurrectionary struggles', begins in 1973 with the Durban strikes, and the Black Consciousness Movement in communities and schools. How are we to explain these new developments? Certainly, as Wolpe claims, the state is not weaker. If anything it has become substantially stronger: the government arrogated greater power both to itself as well as to the military and security forces. Along with the militarization came a series of reforms – recognition of trade unions, representative bodies in urban areas, greater autonomy for Bantustans, tricameral legislature. While many maintained that these reforms were a facade, Wolpe insisted that they opened spaces for the mass democratic movement which was also being fueled by changes in the economy.

To recapitulate: if Wolpe's first contribution was to identify the economic structure that underlay apartheid, that is, the *(re)articulation of modes of production*, and if his second contribution was to foreground the changing *form of state* that is always creating new political possibilities as it sustains (or not) that articulation of modes of production, then the third contribution, to which we come to now, was his analysis of *class formation*, viewed as the combined effect of economic and political structures. Thus, in the analysis of the third period Wolpe focuses on the way the economy restructures the relation between class and race. The concentration and increasing capital intensity of industry called for skilled blacks to move into positions vacated

by outwardly mobile whites. As compared to the migrant workers, these 'urban insiders' were better educated and had deeper roots in the city, which therefore meant increased *class capacity* of the most unambiguous opponents of apartheid. At the same time economic changes reconfigured *class interests* within the white society. Unprecedented growth in manufacturing and service sectors overtook mining, so that ever-larger fractions of capital depended on a wider and more stable labour force that would not only produce more but also consume on a bigger scale! At the same time that as capital's opposition to apartheid stiffened, support for apartheid from white workers and the white petit bourgeoisie also waned. They were displaced by a black petit bourgeoisie, growing in the towns, and the consolidation of a black 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' in the Bantustans. Wolpe warned, however, that these classes – the black petit bourgeoisie in the cities and bureaucratic bourgeoisie of the Bantustans – also had a growing interest in apartheid's racial segregation of consumer markets and administrative apparatuses.¹⁹

So how did Wolpe see the future of South Africa in February 1987, when he was finishing *Race, Class and the Apartheid State*? This is how he assessed the conjuncture then. As the social forces around apartheid were refashioned, and popular struggles intensified, so the state adopted a dual strategy of repression and reform. Intended to contain opposition, the effect was the opposite, namely to galvanize struggles and thereby open up new political spaces. South Africa soon faced an unstable balance of power, an organic crisis. The state no longer had the capacity to destroy the extra-parliamentary terrain as it had done in the 1960s – it faced greater opposition not only within its own territory but also in the Southern African region as a whole and internationally. A military solution was out of the question. So what of a negotiated compromise? This too seemed unlikely. Although there was pressure from the US and Britain, and from large-scale capital for 'constructive engagement', for the apartheid regime to concede majority rule would be tantamount to political suicide. From the side of the liberation movement a negotiated settlement seemed equally unlikely because its military weakness would limit its bargaining power and the reforms, therefore, would be too limited to be acceptable.

What is common to mass democratic opposition is the demand for dismantling of apartheid and the establishment of a unitary democratic political system based on one person one vote, together with some degree of redistribution of the economic resources as outlined in the Freedom Charter. What is involved, as a minimum, over and above the political demands is: (a) the dismantling of the giant corporations which now exercise decisive power over all sectors of South African economy, in order to ensure that a non-racial democratic regime can exercise a degree of control over the major economic resources in agriculture, industry, mining and finance; (b) the rapid removal of the extreme inequalities in access to land through its radical redistribution and (c) the massive redistribution of resources in education, welfare, housing, health and so forth in favour of the black people, which even a reformed capitalism would be unable to undertake. It is implicit that the transformation of South African society in this direction depends pre-eminently on the development of structures of 'peoples' power' based on the working class and the full involvement of the democratic trade unions and the mass organisations of the people.²⁰ (emphasis added.)

How was it that four years later both government and opposition were prepared to compromise their supposed interests and enter a negotiated settlement? Wherein lies his mistaken conclusion? Let us go over his argument.²¹

Wolpe starts out with the analysis of the SACP and the ANC, their view of South Africa as colonialism of a special type, the superimposition of an advanced white

society over an exploited and dominated black society. Through a series of articles culminating in *Race, Class and the Apartheid State* he interrogates this view of the primacy of racial divisions, focusing the subterranean shifts in class alignments within each race that transformed their interests in the apartheid order necessarily leading to divergent visions of a post-apartheid order. He did not have the courage of his class convictions, however, and could not imagine separating the socialist project from the national bourgeois project. At most he saw this as a clash of short term and long terms interests so that that the National Democratic Revolution would be the first stage and the socialist revolution the second stage. He didn't see what Frantz Fanon saw: two very different, opposed projects that existed side by side, that vied with each other within the decolonization struggle. If the national bourgeois road were taken then, according to Fanon, hopes for a socialist road would be ground to zero.

Why did Wolpe remain with a united front strategy, when his analysis was pointing to divergent interests? Was it that he simply wished to preserve the unity of the liberation movement? Or did he indeed believe that the consciousness, emerging on the basis of the lived experience of class, could be shaped by the ANC and SACP, even though the leadership was underground, in exile or in prison?²² Did he believe the unity claims of the organs of mass mobilization? Or did he see the claims of the leadership as a product of their structural circumstances, and of the need to deny internal divisions? As a theoretician who takes the priorities of the movement as point of departure, Wolpe must have recognized that the ideology of the dominant classes as well as those of the subordinate classes are themselves objective conditions that set limits on subjective possibilities. They need to be studied! Nor is it simply a matter of reading ideology off from class position. Class interests and class consciousness are shaped by a variety of organizations in civil society, including but not exclusively those of the liberation movement, as well as by the sedimentations of earlier struggles. This is no argument for studying ideology on its own, just as it is no warrant for leaving it in the hands of the liberation movement.

Wolpe has amply demonstrated that one can get quite far with structural analysis, but it nevertheless faces its own barriers when it stops short of the examination of the lived experience held by the participants, whether of the dominant or subordinate classes.²³ To be fair to Wolpe, consciousness can change quite rapidly with the conjuncture and it is more than likely that no amount of studies of lived experience would have anticipated the clandestine move toward a negotiated transition. But it is nonetheless important to understand the ideological content of opposition to apartheid to assess its likely trajectory in post-apartheid South Africa.

In studies of lived experience that have been undertaken there is not much evidence of socialist consciousness. Take Karl von Holdt's, *Transition from Below*, an ethnography of worker opposition to apartheid at Highveld Steel.²⁴ First, the struggles he recounts are unequivocally against the racial despotism of the apartheid workplace regime, struggles to improve wages and working conditions, and to remove racism from relations between workers and management. Von Holdt also found that the working class was itself divided into two opposed groups: migrant workers who lived in hostels and the more urbanized workers who lived in the township. Migrant workers organized themselves into strike committees whose militancy clashed with the more cautious trade unionism of the shops stewards. The divisions ran deep but neither side paid much attention to the radical redistribution of resources, and much less to the socialist transformation of property relations.

They may not be Fanon's most 'pampered' and 'privileged' section of the colonized population, yet still it is more than likely working class radicalism was tamed by how much they had to lose. Militant though they may have been, their political demands were limited to deracialization and majority rule. Similarly, Gay Seidman's comparison of workers' movements in Brazil and South Africa, while drawing attention to the convergence of community and labour struggles, portrays class consciousness as a collective identity defined by the common enemy – apartheid.²⁵ It did not extend to the demands of the Freedom Charter, which might have had more appeal to a dispossessed peasantry. But the ANC relegated the land and peasant question to a secondary concern.

The limited socialist consciousness of the ANC and the African working class has merged with class divisions within racial groups – so acutely analyzed by Wolpe – to produce a deepening class apartheid in contemporary South Africa.

III: Reconstruction: Education for a New South Africa

Race, Class and the Apartheid State is not an easy read. It is a series of rather dense arguments whose significance might be lost on anyone not steeped in Marxist theory. It is an extensive preparation for a major mountaineering expedition that ends up as a walk in the foothills. Wolpe's claims about the periodisation of the state and the balance of class forces are suggestive but unelaborated. We need to turn to his parallel work on South African education to discover where the theoretical expedition was taking him.

Research on Education in South Africa

Already in 1985 Wolpe had begun to work on a project called *Research on Education in South Africa (RESA)* that would later turn into the research he did at the University of Western Cape. From the beginning it was a collaborative project, focused on education for a post-apartheid South Africa. Papers began to appear in 1988, trying to understand the context and consequences of the Soweto School Uprising of 1976.²⁶ Of the causes of the uprising Wolpe had a number of ideas. First, he documented the development of Bantu education, in particular the rapid expansion of secondary education in the 1960s, designed to win over politically large sections of the African population and at the same time provide for industry's ever expanding need for skilled workers. Neither the ideological nor the training function proved very effective. In explaining the rebellion in schools – and there had been fermentation on a less dramatic scale for a number of years all over South Africa – Wolpe simply said that all other arenas of extra-parliamentary struggle had been closed down and schools were the only arena left within which political discussion and oppositional ideology could develop. The precipitating factor in the Soweto uprising was, of course, the imposition of instruction in Afrikaans language, but the groundwork for the uprising had been laid long before.

With his eye on the future Wolpe focused on the possibilities created by the struggles within education. Once again, he takes a stance between two opposed positions, parallel to the stance he took with respect to theories of the state – rejecting both the view of education as subject with full autonomy and education as object with no autonomy. That is, he opposed the position that holds education to be a panacea that will solve South Africa's problems – a view held by well-meaning liberals and by corporations who poured money into the reform of education. On the other hand, he also opposed the Marxist view that education merely reflects and reproduces the

inequalities of class and racial orders – a view held by those who would subordinate the struggles in education to those of the liberation movement as a whole. According to this view schools should be boycotted under the mantra ‘liberation first, education later!’ Wolpe, by contrast argued that education is a contradictory terrain and its relation to the existing order is contingent on the balance of forces. Against both boycott and reform he defends the ongoing struggle for ‘people’s education’ – a schooling that would eliminate ignorance and illiteracy, cultivate an understanding of apartheid and all its oppressions and inequalities, that would counter competitive individualism with collective organization, that would equip people with the capacity to realize their potential. People’s education did not have to wait for the end of apartheid but could begin now by connecting, but not subordinating itself, to the liberation movement.

People’s education was very different from the proposals of the government and corporations which were concerned only with upgrading skills. As the negotiated transition was looming Wolpe feared that servicing the economy with skilled personnel would take precedence over education’s role in the transformation of society.

Preoccupation with the question of the provision of education and skilling which fails to link this, on the one hand, with a programme of people’s education and, on the other hand, with the question of restructuring of the social and institutional order, threatens to allow education to be edged towards performing a predominantly reproductive rather than transformative role.²⁷

His premonitions were on the mark, as he would discover when he returned to South Africa in 1991.

Before turning to his work at EPU it is important to note not only the parallels with his theorizing of the state, but also the shift in Wolpe’s perspective on the post-apartheid transition and the priorities of the liberation movement. In his praxis piece of 1985 he wrote that the ‘fundamental objective of political struggle is the winning of state power,’ but the meaning of ‘winning state power’ was not interrogated. In his writings on the state he spoke of the appearance/dissolution of the extra-parliamentary terrain. Civil society, if it appeared at all, was the crucible of class forces rather than the locus of prefigurative politics. In short, whereas before he had endorsed a Leninist seizure of state power, now in his analysis of schooling he refers to dual power, and the importance of building alternative forms of education as preparatory and critical to the transition to a democratic South Africa.

Although he never mentions Antonio Gramsci, nonetheless he is now making the Gramscian argument for a War of Position that would restructure civil society *before* winning state power, warning against a War of Movement (boycott education and liberation first) or succumbing to a War of Position from above (expansion and reform of education for upgrading the labour force). Once one enters the terrain of civil society, however, it is hard to leave the study of ‘consciousness’ to the party! It calls for an altogether different type of intellectual, an interpreter rather than a legislator, an issue to which I will return in the conclusion of this paper. What is important for my argument here is that these writings at RESA validated struggles outside the state, and in that sense were very different from the policy work he undertook once he returned to South Africa – research that would be on the terrain of the state.

Education Policy Unit

When amnesty for members of the opposition was announced for February 1990, and the phone started ringing from South Africa, it was Jakes Gerwel, then Vice-Chancellor and Rector at the University of Western Cape, whose voice was the most insistent, urging Wolpe to take RESA to UWC and there create an Education Policy Unit. Created as a university for coloured students in 1959, as early as 1982 UWC had adopted an oppositional Mission Statement that foregrounded its commitment to the advancement of the Third World communities of Southern Africa. Gerwel's own inaugural address of 1987, was even more forceful in its defiance of apartheid, declaring UWC 'an intellectual home for the left.' Wolpe could have taken a more comfortable position at one of the 'historically white universities,' but he chose this beacon of opposition to apartheid.

AnnMarie Wolpe's *The Long Way Home* suggests that it was not hard for Wolpe to accept Gerwel's offer. Yet it did immerse him in a bewildering quadruple transition: transplantation from one continent to another for family as well as himself; second, the transformation of South Africa that he had last seen nearly 30 years ago; third, a shift in intellectual orientation from theorist to practitioner, from engaged and loyal critic of the liberation movement to serving a new government of national reconstruction; and fourth the collapse of the Soviet Union and the movement's corresponding loss of socialist vision. Things were moving quickly and there was little time to adjust. He had to set up a new centre in a new country with mainly new collaborators and he had to delve into new projects.

Reading the papers that came out of the EPU one sees Wolpe, not surprisingly, struggling in his new role. The transition itself was real enough and peaceful – although violence continued in the townships just as fortresses were built in the suburbs – but by the same token the institutions of yesterday had a powerful inertia. He set about defining the parameters of higher education in the new democratic dispensation. Without an overall development plan there could be no reconstruction of higher education. There was a danger that the apartheid system of higher education would dissolve into its many parts, with many harmful effects, not least a deepening divide between the historically white universities (HWUs) and the historically black universities (HBUs), throwing up huge barriers to mobility between them. He wrestled with the tension between education for economic development and education for equity, insisting that neither side of the scales could be overloaded. In pursuit of short term objectives he feared that the transformative mission of education would be reduced to a footnote.

In his most thorough analysis of the legacies of apartheid he argued against those who claimed that HBUs received as much if not more subsidies than HWUs as well as against those who claimed that the HWUs represented the new South Africa while the HBUs were distorted creatures of apartheid. Wolpe and his collaborators argued that both branches were the product of apartheid, that both had their distinct functions under apartheid and both, therefore, had to be radically transformed in the new South Africa.²⁸

Even if one accepted the bifurcation of higher education – with HBUs limited to a vocational function, largely in the arts and humanities, while the HWUs had an academic function with faculties of sciences, professional schools and extensive research facilities – still the deficit between the resources offered and the resources necessary was much greater for the HBUs than for the HWUs, and it was a gap that was increasing as students poured into the HBUs. South Africa was faced with the

frightening prospect that higher education was deepening rather than redressing the maldistribution of resources. The obstacles to change were not simply vested interests, backed up by ideology of university autonomy, and built-in features of the apartheid order, such as the remote geographical location of HBUs in areas without an urban or intellectual infrastructure. Without an overall development plan Wolpe was pessimistic that past injustices could be reversed.²⁹ As early as 1991 he wrote:

My central concern has been to highlight the fact that, in different ways, in the absence of coherent development strategies, there is a strong tendency for ad hoc education and training policies to be advanced. A consequence of this is that education and training programmes may contribute only to a highly limited degree to a process of social transformation and, indeed, may serve to help reproduce powerfully entrenched structures generated by apartheid. What is needed is the preparation of democratically reached development strategies and, within these, appropriate policies of education and training.³⁰

Perhaps it was frustration at the absence of a development plan and a feeling of despair that led Wolpe in his last writings to emphasize the critical role of the university. I think Wolpe became less sanguine about the spaces within the post-apartheid state, and began looking for spaces in civil society from which to engage the theory and practice of reconstruction. There was a subtle shift of emphasis in his view of education: from the tension between development and equity to the tension between training in technical skills and social transformation.

*The difference between the two approaches is that one rests on a technical rationality which leaves unquestioned the extant social relations and, hence, the social purposes of technique; the other puts in question the social relations which are being or are intended to be served by technical knowledge. ... The task of **continuous critique of the social order and of the theoretical issues about continuous social transformation** is a compelling one and consistent with UWCs traditions. It would be fully consonant with this interpretation of UWC's redefined mission to establish, for example, an **Institute for Social Theory**.³¹ (emphasis added)*

This was Wolpe's last published statement on the university, you might say it was his last testament. In it he proposed an Institute for Social theory! If the government can't provide a satisfactory programmatic for social transformation, a framework in accordance with which higher education can be reorganized, then the university should set up its own centres for critical thinking.³²

Wolpe had been trying to actualize his first principle, to take the priorities of the Government of National Unity as point of departure and to then interrogate them. He found himself, however, continually being forced back into a more ideological function, legitimating policies he wanted to question. If there was no space within the state for critical work, Wolpe seemed to be arguing, then it was important to form independent centres of critical thinking outside the state. Only from a strong base outside the core institutions of the state could intellectuals be effective in their policy work.

In short, his work in education led him to question just how contradictory the post-apartheid state was, or, if it was contradictory, then how difficult it was to exploit, at least, for the forces of social justice. Once more he was insisting on the institutional autonomy of the intellectual. In England that autonomy had been assured, now in the New South Africa it would have to be created.

IV: From Legislators to Interpreters

In engaging with the liberation movement Wolpe followed the guidelines he laid out in 1985. He took the priorities of the liberation movement as point of departure but came perilously close to abandoning them, especially with respect to the relation between the national and socialist agendas. In the end he sought to preserve unity rather than accentuate the contradictions between different class projects for post-apartheid South Africa. Similarly he did not entertain the study of consciousness. To the last he stuck with structure even when it left him helpless to assess the compromises and class alliances that might develop. Still, he demonstrated that one can travel a long way without considering consciousness and in so doing Wolpe offered a powerful corrective to those who only focus on the subjective and discursive.

He continued his commitment to these same two principles into the period of reconstruction. By force of circumstance and by political commitment, it was obvious he would serve the ANC in power, continuing the policy work in education that he had begun in England. As best he could, he took the Government of National Unity's platform as his point of departure. He wrote about the dilemmas of quality and equity in higher education but it was becoming clear that the priorities of the government were increasingly not his own. As regards the second principle, Wolpe continued to duck the question of consciousness which finds no trace in the documents written for the EPU. There were figures, tendencies, conditions, principles but no attempt to analyze the social forces at work. But as he began to depart from the government's priorities he inevitably raised questions about whose priorities they were and what interests they concealed.

Wolpe gave expression to his doubts in one of his last papers – his interrogation of the government's Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP).³³ This was his 'coming out as a critical theorist,' or rather his return from internal exile, his own long way home. More significantly, it took a major turn away from the 1985 praxis document, published exactly a decade earlier. If, in the past, his point of departure was the taken-for-granted priorities of the liberation movement and why, therefore, one strategy was more appropriate than another, now he argued that the priorities of the Government of National Unity were elusive and vague so that strategies had become meaningless. The RDP papered over conflicts of interest in civil society between classes and between races, and within the state between different agencies, especially in the light of sunset clauses that protected white civil servants. The RDP presented a spurious picture of consensus and unity, obscuring contradictory forces and clashing priorities. Indeed, certain priorities had been explicitly removed from the table, in particular the introduction of socialist property relations. Instead privatization was rearing its head, trumping public ownership. '[W]hat the RDP does not put in issue,' Wolpe writes, 'is the question of the continuity of the capitalist system in South Africa.'³⁴

Rather than determine the appropriate means for a given goal, or the possibilities for realizing a given end in any historical conjuncture, the purpose now was to expose the ends themselves, to stimulate debate about the goals of society. A major task of the intellectual now becomes 'the continuous critique of the social order,' opening up the imagination to different possible futures that are off-limits to government reports. By focusing on the capitalist character of South Africa, mystified by the rhetoric of RDP, Wolpe was able to raise the question of socialist alternatives. It was not only a matter of examining what is feasible in any given historical moment but what may be unfeasible, yet imaginable.

Challenging official ideology is one important intellectual task in the period of reconstruction, but there is a second one that follows from the first. The social scientist not only engages with ends but also with publics. The investigation of consciousness cannot be left to the party in power when it is more than likely to substitute its interests for those of the people it represents. Intellectuals need to develop organic links with different groups, classes in society. Here too there is a long tradition in South Africa, a long tradition of social commentary based on lived experiences – literature as well as a public sociology – that flourished, particularly, in the struggles against apartheid. It is a tradition to which Wolpe in exile was at best indirectly or virtually connected. Today there is no less a need for public sociology, whether to bring publics into being, to help articulate identities, to pursue their interests, and most generally to bring them into civil society as fully responsible and autonomous actors. It is not simply a matter of the intellectual as spokesperson, but the educator too has to be educated, discovering in the lived experience of others those imaginary alternatives that fuel the critical mind and give hope for a better future.

In short, we have two types of intellectuals, which, following Zygmunt Bauman,³⁵ we can call ‘legislators’ and ‘interpreters,’ corresponding to two divergent strategies of transformation: War of Movement and War of Position. In War of Movement – winning state power under apartheid or designing and implementing state policy in the post-apartheid period – the intellectual-as-legislator engages with the priorities of party or state, discerns the possibilities within any given structural context, so that the social scientist can support the projects of the political organ. Wolpe’s 1985 praxis statement is a manifesto for intellectual as legislator. It presumes a War of Movement.

On the other hand, the War of Position - the reconstitution of civil society – calls for a very different type of intellectual, the interpreter, who is concerned to create a new moral and political order. It calls for an imaginative construction of an ideology that will galvanize a national popular will around social justice for all races and genders as well as suppressing class inequality; it calls on intellectuals to engage directly with publics and to recompose the institutions of civil society. Wolpe hinted at such an intellectual in his account of the movement for people’s education following the Soweto uprising, and it reappears in his last vision of the University of Western Cape. However, he never distinguished the intellectual-as-interpreter from the intellectual-as-legislator. Perhaps this was because he was in exile and therefore removed from South African publics. Perhaps it was because he was so deeply implicated in the War of Movement first to dissolve the apartheid state and then in the state-driven reconstruction of South Africa.

It would be wrong to identify *liberation* with War of Movement and the intellectual-as-legislator, while identifying *reconstruction* with War of Position and intellectual-as-interpreter. Each period call for both War of Movement and War of Position; each period, therefore, calls for both legislators and interpreters. To be sure, the specific combination of the two modes of political transformation will vary in the two periods – one will dominate but never to the exclusion of the other. Thus, one might argue, that the struggle against apartheid places War of Movement at the forefront whereas building a new South Africa prioritizes a War of Position. That was the position of Frantz Fanon, for example. The directors and spokespersons of the post-apartheid state, however, seemed to take the opposite view: intellectuals had played an effective interpreter role in the trenches of civil society during liberation, but now they must return to the barracks to be legislators – focusing on training and policy

research. It was against this legislative conception of the intellectual that Wolpe was rebelling in 1995 – ten years after he himself had presented it as the only correct position. Wolpe's Institute for Social Theory would be a home for both legislators and interpreters, in dialogue with each other, each correcting the excesses of the other.

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Editor's Note: This is a shortened version of The Harold Wolpe Memorial Lecture, presented in July 2004 in South Africa. Among the ideas on which it reflects are those Wolpe originally published in ROAPE and which this issue revisits. It is not only a tribute to Wolpe's singular contribution to the African liberation struggle but also an acute reflection of the struggles for liberation and reconstruction that lie ahead, the political practice they demand, the uses of state power required for these tasks and the obligations of intellectual responsibility they impose. See, <http://www.wolpetrust.org.za/index.htm>

Endnotes

1. I would like to thank the Harold Wolpe Trust, and in particular AnnMarie Wolpe, for inviting me to give this lecture. It is an honour indeed. For nearly 20 years I was a close student of Harold Wolpe's writings. It has been a daunting task to come to terms with them as a whole, in fact far too big a task for a single individual. This lecture, therefore, is part of a collective enterprise, nurtured and sponsored by the Wolpe Trust, to continue the intellectual legacy of Harold Wolpe. In rewriting this paper I have relied on the comments of AnnMarie Wolpe, and Eddie Webster, Stephen Gelb and on the lively and strangely different responses of audiences in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town (July 21, 22 and 29th, 2004).

2. See Saleem Badat, 'Harold Wolpe: Reminiscences and Reflections'. Keynote Address at the launch of the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust, Spier Auditorium, Stellenbosch, 31 March 1997; Dan O'Meara, 'The Engaged Intellectual and the Struggle for a Democratic South Africa: The Life and Work of Harold Wolpe'. Address to Inaugural Conference of the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust, University of Western Cape, 1-2 April, 1997; Jakes Gerwel, 'Inaugural Memorial Lecture', Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust, Old Assembly Hall at Parliament, Cape Town, September, 2002.

3. Harold Wolpe, 'The Liberation Struggle and Research', *Review of African Political Economy*, 32 (April, 1985): 72-78. I will refer to this as Wolpe's 1985 praxis statement.

4. Ibid., p.75.

5. Ibid., p.77

6. Ibid., p.76.

7. Ibid., p.76

8. Ibid., p.77

9. 'In studying such transformations [social revolutions] it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production.' Karl Marx, Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.

10. As he reflected from prison on the failure of the Italian factory council movement and of revolution in the West more generally, Gramsci focused on the role of civil society in absorbing revolutionary impetus, which in turn led him to analyze politics in terms of a struggle for hegemony

and the development of class consciousness. I believe Wolpe was following a similar trajectory and in his last articles he too was groping toward a study of hegemony in South African society. I return to this question in the last part of this paper.

11. While I spent a lot of time with Harold Wolpe in London, that was not the case in South Africa. The last time I met him was in Cape Town on 5 July 1990, when he had just come back to South Africa for the first time since his escape.

12. The original version of this paper developed a Wolpean research agenda for today: (a) mechanisms for the reproduction of cheap labour power, (b) new processes of extracting surplus, (c) race, class and the post-apartheid state, and (c) comparative perspectives. In the interests of space this part had to be excised.

13. 'Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid', *Economy and Society* 1(4) (1972): 425-56. It should be emphasized that Wolpe's theorizing of South Africa was very dependent on the work of historians, such as Colin Bundy and Martin Leggasick. He was regular participant in Shula Marks's London seminar on the history of South Africa.

14. Wolpe takes on the internal colonial model or 'colonialism of a special type', in 'The theory of internal colonialism: the South African case', pp.229-252 in Ivar Oxaal, Tony Barnett and David Booth (eds.), *Beyond the Sociology of Development* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

15. For the former see Jack and Ray Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969); for the latter see John Rex, *Race, Class and Colonialism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

16. Rob Davies, David Kaplan, Mike Morris and Dan O'Meara, 'Class Struggles and the Periodisation of the State in South Africa', *Review of African Political Economy* 3(7) (1976): 4-30. Nicos Poulantzas shifted his analysis quite considerably, but it was *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: New Left Books, 1973) that influenced Davies et al. while Wolpe would turn to his later book, *State, Power, Socialism* (London, New Left Books, 1978) for a very different view of the state.

17. See Wolpe, 'Towards an Analysis of the South African State', *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 8(4) (1980): 399-421; 'The Analysis of the South African State', paper presented to Conference on 'Southern African Studies: Retrospect and Prospect, 30 May – 1 June 1983.

18. *Race, Class and the Apartheid State* (London: James Currey and Paris: Unesco, 1988).

19. This class analysis can be found in *Race, Class and the Apartheid State* but its foundations lie in two superb articles – one on the white working class and the other on the African petit-bourgeoisie. In the first he cuts through much confusion by first determining white workers' exact locations in relation to the means of production and then, and only then, considering the effects of political structures. In the second paper Wolpe again gives priority to relations of production in distinguishing between new and old African petit-bourgeoisies in both urban and rural areas where political structures are so different. He admonished Joe Slovo for prematurely subsuming the interests of the African petit-bourgeoisie under Africans in general. Where the SACP gave primacy to the racial divide, Wolpe still insists on putting class first. Again Wolpe was not making a definitive claim about the consciousness of the African petit-bourgeoisie but directing the SACP to a possibility it should examine and take into account! See, 'The "white working class" in South Africa', *Economy and Society* 5(2) (May 1976): 197-240; and 'The Changing Class Structure of South Africa: The African Petit-Bourgeoisie', pp.143-74 in P. Zarembka (ed.), *Research in Political Economy*, 2 (1978).

20. *Race, Class and the Apartheid State*, 104-5

21. There is no evidence, therefore, that Wolpe knew of the negotiations that were taking place between the highest levels of ANC and either the South African government or South African corporate capital, even though his advocacy of 'insurrectionary struggles' dovetailed well with a negotiated transition.

22. Interestingly, the two Marxists who were especially aware of questions of consciousness – Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963) and Antonio Gramsci's *The Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971) – never appear in Wolpe's texts.

23. Wolpe is in good company. After the English working class, which had been enfranchised in 1867, voted disproportionately for the Tories, Engels wrote to Marx: 'What do you say to the

elections in the factory districts? Once again the proletariat has discredited itself terribly' [cited in McKenzie and Silver, *Angels in Marble* (London: Heinemann 1968:14)]. They too got carried away with theory. It was Marxist social historians Edward Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm who made sense of English working class consciousness during the 19th century. They were Marxists who didn't believe that the study of consciousness is best left to any party!

24. Karl von Holdt, *Transition From Below: Forging Trade Unionism and Workplace Change in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2003).

25. Gay Seidman, *Manufacturing Militance: Workers' Movements in Brazil and South Africa, 1970-1985* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

26. 'Strategies on Education and training in South Africa, 1960-1987: The Role of Corporate Capital' (RESA, Paper 1, 1988); 'Bantu Education as a Reformist Strategy of the South African State' (RESA Paper 2, 1988); 'The Struggle Against Apartheid Education: Towards People's Education in South Africa' (RESA Paper 3, 1988), 'Three Theses on People's Education' (RESA, Paper 5, 1990).

27. Harold Wolpe and Elaine Unterhalter, 'Reproduction, reform and transformation: the analysis of education in South Africa' in Unterhalter et al. (eds.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles* (London: Zed Books, 1991), p.15.

28. Badat et al., 'Differentiation and Disadvantage: The Historically Black Universities in South Africa', Report to the Desmond Tutu Educational Trust. Education Policy Unit, 1994.

29. See, for example, the following two papers of the EPU that appeared in 1993, Harold Wolpe and Zenariah Barends, 'A Perspective on Quality and Inequality in South African University Education' and Saleem Badat, Harold Wolpe and Zenariah Barends, 'The Post-Secondary System: Towards Policy Formulation for Equality and Development'.

30. Harold Wolpe, 'Education and social transformation: problems and dilemmas' in Elaine Unterhalter, Harold Wolpe, and Thozamile Botha (eds.), *Education in a Future South Africa* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1992), p.16.

31. Harold Wolpe, 'The Debate on University Transformation in South Africa: the case of the University of Western Cape', *Comparative Education* (1995) 31(2): 288-9

32. Wolpe added that South African universities should not slavishly seek 'international standards' or uncritically adopt the rhetoric of 'quality' and 'excellence,' but do so only within the context of specifically national problems of social transformation. The university has to be responsive to national conditions.

33. 'The Uneven Transition from Apartheid in South Africa', *Transformation* 27 (1995): 88-101.

34. *Ibid.*, p.100.

35. Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-modernity, and Intellectuals* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1987). Gramsci's distinction between traditional and organic intellectuals is entirely different since it attaches intellectuals to classes rather than to strategies of transformation.
