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PEASANTS, CAPITAL AND THE STATE

The masses of Africa are peasants. This does not mean that they are timeless, independent cultivators outside the modern world. On the contrary, we speak of them as peasants just because they have been subordinated and incorporated by that world, by social forces outside their own communities. Incorporation and subordination are effectuated by economic and political means. Relations of exchange and appropriation have been established. The state plays a crucial role in this process. The state also imposes its own claims on the surplus of peasant production.

Peasant is a category of class when it is used to define producers in their relations of dominance and subordination in the process of production and in the way in which produce is disposed. This does not mean that peasants constitute one class. Peasantries are differentiated in class terms both internally and vis-a-vis outside forces. We find peasantries which have been proletarianised and reduced to sources of cheap labour. We find peasants tied as sharecroppers or outgrowers to industrial capital, either directly or through monopolistic trading organisations and credit institutions. We find rich peasants who establish themselves as capitalist farmers exploiting the labour of fellow peasants as well as poor peasants, forced to sell their labour. In between, we find a middle peasantry, marked by internal contradictions.

Relations with outside forces, capital or state, often serve to unite rich and poor peasants in their demand for higher prices, less taxes and better public services. But these relations are themselves sources of differentiation and class formation. Rich peasants have special access both to the state bureaucracy and to merchant capital through which they exercise economic and political control over their communities. The class nature of peasantries is affected by numerous divisive and unifying factors, including communal systems of authority, ethnic and regional divisions. While not themselves divisions of class, they interact with such divisions, reinforcing some, obstructing others. Africa’s modern peasantries have not arisen out of an unstructured natural economy. The particular way each has been incorporated in the world capitalist system has been moulded and conditioned by the dynamic development of social institutions passed on from earlier formations.
African peasants have a proud record of political organisation and resistance to colonialism. How can it be that they have so little say in the running of their own countries? They continue to be harassed, manipulated or ignored. The political subordination of the peasantry is a principal feature of the neo-colonial state. This does not draw its power from the support of the rural masses. Its primary source of power is instead its ability to administer a neo-colonial economy to the satisfaction of its ruling class: the imperial bourgeoisie and its local allies. The state can be assured of international financial support as well as a share in whatever is extracted from the neo-colony. Only in few countries, mainly in those facing armed struggle, have liberation movements offered a political role for the peasantry of any significance.

The neo-colonial state continues to serve as vehicle for the subordination of the peasantry to capital accumulation on a world scale. It performs its role with varying efficiency and it is faced with major contradictions within its own class base. There are conflicts between factions of capital, including attempts by the local, comprador bourgeoisie to improve its relative position vis-à-vis the dominant imperial faction. There are also conflicts between sections of the bourgeoisie seeking to manipulate regional divisions among the peasantry to their own advantage.

Capital seeks to extract export produce, wage labour and wage goods as cheaply as possible from the peasantry. The colonial state established the institutional conditions for such appropriations. The neo-colonial bourgeoisie claims an increasing share. Through taxes and price regulations it has been possible to finance an expanding state bureaucracy, which has established itself as the principal faction of the local bourgeoisie. At one level, these state appropriations are a nuisance to the imperial bourgeoisie as they raise the cost of supplies. But costs can be passed on to others. As a customer, the neo-colonial state is much superior to the peasantry: it is more profitable to sell refrigerators to bureaucrats than tinned sardines to peasants. There is thus a mutual interest of state and capital to get as much as possible out of the peasants. But the means of coercion are limited and so is the level of appropriation. The hen that lays the golden egg must be kept alive. Everywhere in Africa we have seen how excessive state appropriations or suppressed market prices have led to stagnation and decline in peasant commodity production. We also occasionally see how peasants rise in organised resistance.

No regime, however neo-colonial, can afford to ignore the problem of stagnating or declining peasant production. While some depend directly on peasant exports to finance the state, others need them to maintain or raise the import capacity of the economy. There is also the general need to substitute imported locally grown food. The non-agricultural population has grown dramatically everywhere. Local food production has lagged far behind. Prices of local food have contributed heavily to price inflation, despite increasing food imports. Attempts to solve the food problem by by-passing the peasantry, introducing large-scale, high-technology production have usually failed miserably. There is also the need to stop the flight from the countryside. Only peasant production seems to be able both to raise production and to keep people employed.

This is the ‘peasant problem’, as seen by the present ruling classes in neo-colonial Africa. The answer, according to the ideologies of the World Bank, is ‘integrated rural development’. It is intended to stabilise peasant communities while raising
simultaneously the surplus available for appropriation. It is a strategy full of contradictions. Productivity is raised with imported technology, improved seeds, fertilisers and credits. These serve to subject peasants to the imperative of producing for an external market under monopolistic relations of exchange. Those who can afford to use the services offered are the rich or middle peasants who thereby further strengthen their position, raising their claims to local productive resources, land as well as labour. While a minority may benefit, they do so at the price of an increase in the outflow of resources and of heightened internal contradictions. Politically, the new stratum of dependent, 'improved' farmers may be useful allies of the ruling classes and as such serve political control as well as surplus generating functions. The surplus, however, is easily consumed by the costs of administering the new services. From the point of view of a foreign-exchange hungry state the strategy may still pay off if food imports can be reduced.

It is sometimes argued that capitalism feeds on the underdevelopment of peasant agriculture. Peasantries, in this view, provide a basis for superexploitation and primitive accumulation as capital does not have to pay the full cost of reproducing peasant labour. While there may be theoretical difficulties involved, the argument is highly suggestive. It should not be taken to mean, however, that the subordination of peasant production under capital leads to stagnation. In fact, this century has witnessed a remarkable growth in peasant production in many parts of Africa. There is no reason to assume that this development has reached its limits. We cannot expect the World Bank-type strategy to fail in that sense. The level of produce available to the market and to the state may well rise. What we must ask is instead: who will benefit and at what costs to whom?

To the mass of poor peasant such strategies of rural development are likely to offer little except greater pressure on land and a need to sell labour to more favourably placed commercial farmers. The superior costs, however, are borne by the entire community and not just by peasants alone. These are the costs of blocking and obstructing an alternative development which takes its point of departure, not in surplus appropriation and commodity production, but in raising the level of consumption and welfare of the local communities. In World Bank philosophy it is expressed as the need to raise the 'purchasing power' of the peasants. But this can only be secondary to the need to raise dietary, housing and clothing standards. It requires that production resources are redirected from the commodity market, not further tied to it.

Ideas of 'self-centred' and 'basic-needs'-oriented development have been incorporated into the ideology of international rural developmentalists. At the level of concrete politics, however, they cannot challenge the very logic of capitalist development which is to promote the expansion of commodity relations. In the context of neo-colonialism, this logic also means that the fruits of any such expansion is largely appropriated by imperial capital and its local allies.

Any real alternative must confront the external forces which now maintain peasant production as a source of cheap labour and cheap commodities. These are forces which are increasingly built into the very structure of the peasant communities where they block the road to self-improvement for the rural masses. Radical scholars can study and expose the way in which the economic and political institutions of neo-colonialism generate and maintain these blockages. They can document the struggle of peasants and their allies in resisting and fighting them.
The first three articles in this issue of the Review deal with the subordination of peasants to capital and the state. Adams and Coulson examine these relations at the concrete level of rural development and agricultural policies in Senegal and Tanzania. Bernstein discusses the domination of capital in theoretical terms. Adams studies peasants in the Senegal river valley and their confrontation with state institutions involved in the expansion of agricultural production. Coulson looks at a wide variety of state policies at the national level. On the theoretical side, Bernstein examines the way in which capital exercises its domination over peasant production. We shall give a brief outline of the three contributions and discuss the ways they connect with one another.

Adams tells us of the confrontation between the state and peasants who seek to improve their own economic situation through cooperative action. The state is represented by the SAED, a state corporation in charge of developing the Senegal River Basin. Development to this body means primarily irrigated and mechanised rice cultivation to meet urban needs (Senegal imports some 100,000 tons of rice annually). Having undertaken excessively expensive settlement schemes in the little populated delta, SAED has moved up-river to more densely populated areas, seeking to reorganise peasant production, much in line with current World Bank thinking. Through credits, fertilisers, pumps and machinery, SAED tries to get peasants to commit their land and labour to rice production. The peasants, on the other hand, are anxious to get access to new technology but they also wish to protect their independence and freedom of choice. They do not mind growing rice when prices are favourable but they want to grow local crops as well in such a mix that will balance the risks. Above all, they fear that they will be bound to rice and SAED through growing indebtedness, something which they have seen happen to other villages further down the river.

Adams allows us to follow the independent organising efforts of the peasants and the way in which this is gradually pre-empted by the state. She paints the historical background but it is essentially a report on an ongoing struggle in an area so far ignored by the colonial and neo-colonial state, except as a source of labour migration.

Coulson's survey of agricultural policies in Tanzania spans the period from the disastrous groundnut scheme of the 1940s, over decades of official support for 'innovative' middle farmers, to the ujamaa and villagisation policies of the 1960s and 70s. The state, according to Coulson, has consistently overestimated what the use of state intervention could achieve in rural development. There is an excessive belief in aid, modern technology and a military type of organisation. In the suppression of the Ruvuma Development Association in the late 1960s we find the same contradictions between state development programmes and the autonomous organising efforts of the peasantry as documented by Adams for Senegal. Both emphasise the conflict between peasants and bureaucrats, which they see as the main contending groups or classes. Both see foreign aid as an important factor in shaping this contradiction. Adams stresses the role of international finance (World Bank, USAID) in making possible the extraction of a surplus from the peasants. Peasants are required to subordinate themselves to state agencies in order to get access to foreign aid and technology. For Tanzania, Coulson argues that massive foreign aid has been a prerequisite for the enforced villagisation programme, ensuring the stability of the Tanzanian government during a period of greatly reduced production.
Bernstein argues that the pre-capitalist mode of production has been destroyed by the penetration of commodity relations. Only the forms of production have not been fully transformed. It is therefore necessary, according to him, to see peasant households as units of production confronting capital within the capitalist mode itself rather than as elements of a separate peasant mode of production, articulated with capitalism. Bernstein thinks it is useful to see peasants at least as wage-labour equivalents, if not as full proletarians. His argument stresses the role of capital in the 'vertical integration' of the peasantry through the regulation of production and marketing. He relates the appropriation of surplus value from the peasants to the ways in which their labour-time is 'devalorized' through its relations with other economic forms in the social division of labour. What clearly matters is the concrete ways in which peasant production in this particular context is controlled by capital. It makes nonsense of any talk of independent producers and free exchange. The class character of the peasants involved is obviously affected. This is important whether we think of them as semi-proletarians or not. A stand on the theoretical issue does not solve the problem of the position of such peasants in the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggle. Bernstein rejects facile conclusions of that sort.

Bernstein holds the view that differentiation in class terms is in fact an important dimension of the intensification of commodity relations. As a result, important divisions and restrictions have been created which affect access to resources and influence the pattern of class formation and political organisation. A labour-hiring middle peasantry of the sort which presently dominates West African cocoa production, for example, must obviously be distinguished from the mass of migrant poor peasants who constitute the bulk of the labour force. Similarly, the strategic role attributed to the need to create a stable middle peasantry in current rural development thinking should warn us against underestimating the political significance of the differentiation which does exist.

In Bernstein's discussion, capital, more abstractly, is the principal actor of the process of subordinating the peasants. Adams and Coulson focus on state institutions and bureaucrats as the concrete agents of domination. What are the relations between the two: between capital and state in their relations to the peasants? Which are the theoretical implications of Adams' and Coulson's empirical analysis? Adams sees the rural development schemes of the Senegalese bureaucracy as part of an international attempt to extract fresh surplus from the peasants. It is meant to support an export-oriented strategy of industrialisation controlled by foreign capital. To this end independent peasantries must be proletarianised. The contradiction between bureaucrats and peasants can therefore in this case be derived from that between the latter and the class forces, local and international, which support this industrial strategy.

How far can this interpretation be applied to the Tanzanian case? Coulson's emphasis is different. He speaks of the contradiction between peasants and bureaucrats as antagonistic and based on the inability of the latter to produce their own means of subsistence. They therefore depend on what they can get out of the peasants. How do they succeed in the Tanzanian case? The villagisation programme, according to Coulson, is very unlikely to raise production, even in the long run. The bureaucrats are thus unable to secure their own reproduction on the basis of peasant production. The reason is their lack of understanding of peasant agriculture and their misplaced preferences for bureaucratic
type solutions. The state receives international financial support to protect it from the full consequences of its failure. It is not clear, however, why this is done. Unlike Adams in her analysis of the Senegalese case, Coulson does not seek to explain the logic of bureaucratic rural development in terms of the logic of international capital. Adams is concerned with the neo-colonial dimension of the bureaucracy: its international subservience. Coulson sees it primarily as a local class force engaged in securing its own productive base.

Who is right and who is wrong? Can they both be right in their respective contexts? Do the differences reflect the different political realities of Senegal and Tanzania? Neither Coulson nor Adams claim to offer a class analysis of the bureaucracy and the state and too much should not be made of the differences. In our view, however, they point at fundamental problems with consequences for our understanding of the contradictions facing the peasantry.

Bureaucrats or cadres everywhere must be fed from the surplus of peasant production, even in Vietnam and Mozambique. Does it mean that there is an inevitable (antagonistic) contradiction? Of course not. The nature of the relationship is determined by the nature of the exchange and the character of the political relations. The exchange involves commodities as well as public services and political protection. The state and its functionaries may be more or less accepted or supported by the peasants. The direct exchange does not need to be 'equal' to justify such acceptance and support. Appropriations by the state may serve structural changes and the advance of productive forces to the benefit of coming generations who will not necessarily be engaged in peasant agriculture.

It is vital that we study closely the class politics of the state itself before we jump to conclusions about the character of the peasant-bureaucrat contradiction. Bureaucrats have their separate, sectional interests which are not necessarily identical with those of the state and the class forces on which it is built. They may act as middlemen in the transactions between peasants and state or between peasants and capital, imposing its own dues, with or without legal sanction. In some cases, we find that these sectional appropriations are contradicting the basic aspirations and class orientation of the state itself. The struggle against such bureaucratic tendencies is on the agenda in all socialist or socialist-oriented societies.

In other cases, we find that the exploitative behaviour of individual bureaucrats is in fact part of the very logic of class formation and surplus appropriation in that society. The bureaucracy as such acts as part of a ruling class, a bureaucratic bourgeoisie, engaged in a process of accumulation, more or less closely allied to other factions of the bourgeoisie, local and foreign. Such alliances, with their internal balances and contradictions, are the primary determinants of state power in contemporary Africa. The dominant position of imperial capital within them ensures the neo-colonial subordination of Africa's peasantry.

_Björn Beckman_
THE HORN OF AFRICA

It has been four years since the wave of revolutionary movement and struggle, that had built up throughout Ethiopia and had turned into a thundering storm, overthrew the Haile Selassie regime and completely changed the picture in the Horn. The Emperor was replaced by a revolutionary Dergue. Nevertheless the struggle waged against the Dergue is very intense, both from the right and the left.

As rival parties, movements, states and super powers become deeply involved in the region, it has become more and more difficult to sort out and clarify political developments. The events in the Horn have already divided the revolutionary left all over the world. Some strongly and fully support the Dergue while others give them qualified support. Others have given their loyalty to the liberation movement in Eritrea and raised the problem of the National Question, and supported the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party against the Dergue. The question is which, if any, of the parties in the Horn disputes is acting consistently with any Marxist or Leninist principles regarding the National Question and Proletarian Internationalism?

We believe that a positive contribution can be made in the analysis of the disputes in the Horn in a scientific, international and an historical context. The series of articles and documents to be published beginning with this issue will seek to achieve this aim. The first of these articles, 'United States and Arab policy in the Horn of Africa' is by Fred Halliday. The analysis of the role of the United States and its allies in the contemporary situation in the Horn is beset with many difficulties. But Halliday tackles those difficulties and presents us with a comprehensive study of US policy in the Horn and of that of Washington's allies.

In a forthcoming issue, Peter Lawrence will survey the socialist states' involvement with the countries of the Horn region. His article will, we hope, open up a constructive discussion of the whole question of the foreign policy of socialist states and a socialist foreign policy.

This discussion will be supplemented by documents reflecting the thinking and analysis of some of the groups or movements actively engaged in the disputes of the Horn. The document published in this issue is on the Eritrean Question as expressed by the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front.

The articles and documents are by no means exhaustive, but we believe that they will contribute to a more scientific understanding of the situation in the Horn. Some readers might feel that the articles and documents have not reflected the diverse viewpoints of all the parties concerned; they are invited to contribute by comments or by short articles as part of the debate.

Mustafa Khogali

CORRECTION

In our introductory paragraph to the article by Kren Eriksen, Zambia: Class Formation and Detente in Review no.9 a horrendous typographical error. We suggested that the contradictory elements of Zambia's stance on the liberation of southern Africa included "shooting of refugees and liberation movements . . . ". Whatever qualifications we might have about Zambia's role we would not accuse them of that. It should in fact have read "hosting of refugees and liberation movements . . . " and we apologise for any wrong impressions that our error might have given. (Ed.)
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US Policy in the Horn of Africa: Aboulia or Proxy Intervention?

Fred Halliday

Among the many questions raised by the dramatic events in the Horn of Africa none is more important or more misunderstood than that of the role played by the USA, and by its various Middle Eastern allies, in the region. The Carter Administration claims that it has avoided direct involvement in the conflicts and has berated the Soviet Union and Cuba for their intervention on the side of Ethiopia. By contrast, the Ethiopian government has stressed the links between the Somali invasion of Ogaden and the various opposition forces inside Ethiopia on one side and the USA, and the rightwing Arab states, on the other. What has been the role of the USA and its Middle Eastern clients in the disputes of the Horn? And how has US policy evolved in recent years? These are the questions which the following analysis will try, in a preliminary manner, to answer.

Such an exploration immediately encounters a number of substantial difficulties, three of which can be listed here:

1. Events in the Horn have moved very rapidly since the fall of Haile Selassie in 1974 and especially since early 1977. In terms of international relations, there has never in the post-war world been a reversal as dramatic as that which, in the course of months, transferred Somalia from almost total dependence on Russia to a situation of abject reliance on the west, and which, simultaneously, broke Ethiopia's ties to the west and made it into the recipient of massive Soviet bloc aid, to the tune of thousands of Cuban and Russian military personnel and an estimated $1 billion in military aid. This rapidity of events alone makes analysis difficult, for there is no certainty that the present post-1977 pattern will persist: in the wake of the Ogaden defeat the Somalis, embittered at western failure to aid them more, are hinting at renewed links to the Soviet Union, whilst the Ethiopian government has not adopted a consistent position vis a vis the west: it has on some occasions threatened to break all diplomatic ties, but the USA has begun in early 1978 to supply a few military items and has reappointed an ambassador to Addis Ababa, in the hope of rebuilding some workable relationship with a more firmly-established Dergue. As we shall see there have been several shifts within US policy towards the Horn even after the major break with Ethiopia in early 1977 and it is by no means clear what the international alignments will be a year or two from now.
2. US policy has been seemingly indirect, inconsistent and weakened by conflicting priorities in Washington. Many critics inside the USA have attacked Carter for failing to play a more active role, for what Senator Henry Jackson has called his *aboulia* (lack of will) in the Horn (*New York Times*, 15 March 1978). But the fact that the USA has not played an evident, direct, role in the recent conflict does not mean it has not played any part, through indirect means (the Arab states, Iran) and through a wait-and-see policy consciously aimed at ensnaring the Russians and Cubans in a situation from which they will find it hard to escape. The official Ethiopian account of recent events oversimplifies in that it sees the Somalis, Eritreans, conservative EDU and far left EPRP as all part of a concerted imperialist and reactionary Arab offensive against the Ethiopian revolution. Such a picture is, as we shall see, untenable. But the picture put out by some left-wing opponents of the Ethiopian regime tends to ignore the very substantial western imperialist attempt to weaken the Ethiopian revolution and to exploit the Horn in the context of the global conflict with the Soviet Union.

3. This brings us to the burning problem of what an anti-imperialist and internationalist position on the Horn should be: for everyone knows that the left outside the Horn has been grievously divided on events there, more so on this issue than on any other major issue in the recent history of the world revolutionary movement; the one exception may be Palestine, but even here there is now a greater degree of basic agreement than on the conflicts in the Horn. There are, grosso modo, those who extend some sort of support to the Ethiopian regime, and those who regard their primary loyalty as being to the guerrilla movements in Eritrea and Ogaden. This article will, as far as possible, avoid discussion of the internal social and national problems of the region, and hence of the political issues they raise. This is not merely for reasons of space or prudence, but because of an underlying methodological principle that is often ignored in anti-imperialist discussions of the region, namely that there does not exist a direct correlation or identity between the regional and international forces at work. The political character of the Dergue, or of the Somali state, or of the different guerrilla forces in Eritrea cannot simply be deduced from the character of those who support them. Whilst any characterisation of these regional forces must take the international situation into account, it must also deal with the specific social and national forces behind them, and with the disjunctures that may exist between a local and regional force, and its international allies at a specific stage. Such an overall political characterisation lies far outside the scope of this article.

The following analysis subdivides into four sections. The first two are devoted to the evolution of US policy in the Horn during the post-war era, covering the periods up to and succeeding 1974 respectively. The rest of the discussion relates the conflicts in the Horn and US policy there to two wider strategic contexts—the Middle East and the role of the USA's allies in the Horn, and Africa and the relationship of the Horn to counter-revolution in the rest of the continent. At the end some summary conclusions are drawn.

**US Policy to Ethiopia: 1942-1974**

The lynchpin of US policy in the Horn has always been its relations with Ethiopia: policy towards other issues has, in the main, followed from this and it is in terms of the changes in US-Ethiopian relations since the early 1970s that the recent developments can be situated.
Although the US established relations with Ethiopia in 1903, it did not have an African policy till after the Second World War. During the Italo-Ethiopian war it tried, while giving some formal support to Ethiopia, to remain neutral and declined Haile Selassie's request for asylum in the USA. During the Second World War, it was the British who drove the fascists out of Ethiopia and they retained a dominant position in the country till after the war ended. Yet during the war the USA had already acquired a foothold on which it was later to build. Ethiopia, from which fascism had been driven in 1941, was hailed by Roosevelt as the 'First to be Freed', it qualified for aid under the wartime lend-lease programme, and in 1942 the US armed forces established a small communications station at Asmara in Eritrea, which was later to be greatly expanded. In 1945 Haile Selassie had a meeting with Roosevelt on a US ship in the Gulf of Suez, while the latter was returning to the USA after the Yalta conference with Stalin and Churchill.

The real consolidation of the US position in Ethiopia came in the post-war decade, as it became evident (a) that the US would now play a global anti-communist role i.e. including Africa and the Middle East and (b) that the British would be unable to continue playing the main role in many of the countries for which they had been assigned primary responsibility during the war itself. Hence the USA, under the Truman Doctrine, took over the main functions of imperialist support in Greece and Turkey in 1947, and began to supply military aid to Iran on a considerable scale. A similar changeover came a bit later when in Ethiopia the British military mission to the Ethiopian army withdrew in 1952, and in 1953 the USA took over.

The instruments of the US policy in Ethiopia were two agreements signed on 23 May 1953. The first was a Military Assistance agreement which provided, like its counterparts in other countries, for US aid in equipping and training the Ethiopian forces. Between 1951 and 1976 Ethiopia received over $350 million in economic aid from the USA and a further $279 million in military aid. The US was by far the main supplier of Ethiopian equipment, and in addition 2,813 Ethiopian officers and pilots were trained in the USA itself at a cost of $6.8 millions. The MAAG — the military advisory group — also arrived in 1953: between 1953 and 1960 it trained up three Ethiopian army divisions of 6,000 men each. With the alleged threat from a newly independent Somalia after 1960 a fourth division was trained and the original ones expanded so that by the mid-1960s the Ethiopian army had around 40,000 men. In 1971 the MAAG had 101 members, including a general, five colonels and 17 lieutenant-colonels. This US military programme was the largest in Africa. Just as the aid programme was special by African standards, representing almost half of all US military aid to Africa in this period, so the MAAG was the largest on the continent. And in 1964 when the US provided twelve F-5A jet fighters these were the first supersonic jets provided to any state in black Africa.

The other agreement signed in 1953 was on Defence Installations. In this case the installation was the communications base at Asmara, renamed ‘Kagnew’ after the Ethiopian contingent which fought with the USA in the Korean war. Kagnew was ideally situated for the USA’s global radio communications network, since it was far from the north and south magnetic poles, and in a zone comparatively free of magnetic storms. From 1953 onwards it formed part of a world-wide circuit running from Arlington Virginia, through the US bases in Morocco to
Asmara, and then on to the Philippines. It also acted as the link-up in the western Indian Ocean to the radio communications base in North-West Australia which the US maintained there. However, despite this importance, the US declared publicly that it would not use this base for activities inside Ethiopia. It refused a request by Haile Selassie formally to commit itself to defending the base if it was attacked, and when the guerrilla movement in Eritrea began in 1961, the US tried to insulate Kagnew from it. It claimed not to be providing counter-insurgency personnel for actual operations inside the province itself, a claim that was, as we shall see, untrue.

If the initial rationale for the US-Ethiopian alliance was, therefore, Ethiopia's generally anti-communist position and the Kagnew base, a number of further developments added to this commitment over time. In 1960 the USA and Ethiopia signed a new military agreement, the terms of which were only partly revealed; this stressed the USA's commitment to the territorial integrity of Ethiopia, without committing the USA to send in troops if this integrity were threatened. In response to the 1960 attempted coup in Ethiopia against Haile Selassie, and to the fears in Addis Ababa from newly independent Somalia, US aid was increased. Once Somalia began to receive Soviet military aid, the importance of Ethiopia as an anti-communist bastion was allegedly all the greater. The other development in this context was the increasingly active role that Ethiopia played in Africa, once the colonised states there became independent. Ethiopia sent a military contingent of over 3,000 troops with half an air squadron to support the UN in the Congo in 1960. In 1963 Haile Selassie mediated in the war between Morocco and Algeria; in 1964 Ethiopia provided logistical support to the Nigerians who were taking over from the British force sent to Tanganyika after the mutinies there, and in 1967 further aid was sent to Mobutu when he was faced with a threat from the left. In addition to these policies there was the convenient fact that in 1963 Addis Ababa was made the site of the headquarters of the Organisation of African Unity, a factor that gave Ethiopia a special diplomatic weight, and the fact that, as we shall see later, Ethiopia maintained a close relationship with another US ally, Israel. It therefore seemed to the State Department that support for Ethiopia had a number of benefits, both vis-à-vis the Middle East and vis-à-vis Africa.

While Ethiopia maintained a generally open policy and tried not to clash with other African states, there were two specific policies on which Haile Selassie was insistent and on which the USA, in order to provide him which maximum support, cooperated. These were Somalia and Eritrea. Haile Selassie's hostility to, and fear of, Somalia was enormous, and hence when Somalia became independent in 1960 he was quick to sign his new military agreement with the USA. But he also seems to have ensured that the USA refused to give Somalia any military aid, despite the fact that the government that ruled in Somalia was generally of a pro-western orientation. The details are not known, but it seems that the Kennedy Administration, pressured by Ethiopia, refused Somali requests for aid. Somalia wanted an army of 20,000, the west would agree to only 5,000 and it was this that in 1963 turned Somalia towards a state that was quite willing to provide the arms requested, the Soviet Union. The result was of course that Haile Selassie became even more alarmed, and those in Washington who saw matters in simple cold war terms felt justified in continued backing Addis Ababa against this apparent Soviet menace in the Horn. The USA did intervene in 1964 to stop Ethiopia invading Somalia but this was to prevent a major destabilisation of the Horn situation.
US policy on Eritrea took some time to form. When the Italians were ousted in 1941, the British administered it as a separate colony; and when negotiations began after 1945 the US at first supported the idea that Italy should take it over again, as Italy was to take over Italian Somaliland. The reasons for this were of an immediate electoral kind: the desire by Truman to win the Italian-American vote in the 1948 presidential elections, and the desire to foster pro-American sentiments in the general elections being held in Italy that year. But by 1950, when Haile Selassie had opportunistically become ready to send his forces to fight with the USA in Korea, Washington backed the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia and helped the resolution to that effect pass through the UN. From then onwards, the USA endorsed the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and refused to countenance any demand for Eritrean separation. The US did not protest at the forced amalgamation of Eritrea into Ethiopia in 1962, and while occasionally calling for a settlement of the dispute through negotiation continued to back the central government. The US did claim that it refrained from a front-line involvement in Eritrea, leaving the main work in counter-insurgency to the Israelis. But even this was less than the truth since in 1964, after the Eritrean guerrillas had been active for three years, 55 members of a counter-insurgency team were sent to Ethiopia and in 1966, 164 counter-insurgency advisers were brought for two to three years under a scheme known as ‘Plan Delta’. They advised and trained Ethiopian counter-insurgency forces; there is no doubt that until military aid was cut off in 1977 the main supplier of arms and ammunition for Ethiopian army operations in Eritrea was the United States and that Washington approved of the use of its military supplies for this purpose. The main form of US intervention was hence indirect, but it was untrue to claim that the USA was not directly involved at all.

As long as Haile Selassie remained securely in power, and the internal threats seemed to be at a level where they could be contained, US policy towards Ethiopia was able to continue along these straightforward lines. Indeed the official US view of its interests in Ethiopia was at times remarkably shortsighted. The US Ambassador to Ethiopia between 1963 and 1967 later described his government’s policy in the following way:

The US interest in Ethiopia was simple then for Washington. The Government defined it as ‘the unhampered use of Kagnew Station’. This facility was deemed then to be ‘strategically vital’ to the United States, the only such military installation in Black Africa.

We had 1,800 officers, men and civilians working there, plus 800 dependents; a total of 2,500 with plans well advanced during my briefing period to raise that number to 3,500 within a year, as did occur. The de facto price the United States paid for Kagnew was military aid, roughly $10 million to $12 million a year on the books...

The reports on the use of our military aid in Ethiopia were depressing. Much of the equipment was quickly ruined and junked by ill-trained soldiers. The Ethiopian Army was regarded as little more than a rag trade force, and when I asked the briefing officer at the Pentagon what we were doing about it, he said that there wasn’t much we could do with the Ethiopians, and it was really Kagnew rent money, and if the Emperor wanted it in ‘solid gold Cadillacs’ that was his term, he could have it that way. (Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, p.36).

It would appear that during the 1960s Washington made some attempt to encourage the Addis Ababa regime to introduce reforms.* In Latin America,

**“While there are those who would identify our position solely with that of the Emperor, we feel this is a narrow evaluation. Our close ties with Ethiopia have every chance of surviving an orderly succession”, David Newsom, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, in US Security Commitments, p.1909.**
and in Middle East monarchies such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations promoted administrative shake-ups and land reform in order to stabilise regimes that would otherwise have been swept away by popular opposition. Under the pressure of events in Cuba and Vietnam, it was believed that pre-emptive reform was the only way to prevent revolution. In this light, no country was more obviously in need of such reforms than Ethiopia, and between 1963 and 1967 the US Embassy in Addis suggested reforms under the rubric of 'stability-with-progress'. These included land reform, legal modernisation, decentralisation with greater rights for Eritrea, and a stronger role for the Ethiopian parliament. But these were in the end to no avail and the policies that had worked in some other countries, such as Iran, were not implemented in any degree in Ethiopia.

The story of how and why basic capitalist reforms were not carried through in Ethiopia in the 1960s would take us into an analysis of the Ethiopian state itself; some aspects, such as the blocking of land reform, have already been described by Gilkes and others. But, in the light of what happened later, it is of utmost importance that the USA, which was in a position to influence events in Ethiopia to a considerable extent, succeeded so little, and faired to force through the very elementary reforms which were essential in the long-run interests of capitalist stability. The price of sustaining the imperial state without reform was the suffering visited upon Ethiopia in the 1972-73 famine.

It was in the early 1970s that the first major shifts in US-Ethiopian relations began to be evident. Two developments in particular brought this change about. The first was the fact that the Kagnew Base at Asmara began to be of less importance. Developments in satellite communications reduced the base's importance to some degree, and in addition the USA decided to construct a major new base, to include communications equipment, on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, 1,000 miles south of India. The first decision was in the mid-1960s; the big expansion after 1973. The Kagnew Base was therefore run down, from a peak of over 3,000 in 1971 to only 35 personnel in 1976. The precise issues involved here are not clear, in that the official US position is that it was technical rather than political reasons which led to the scaling down of Kagnew. But in discussions on Diego Garcia US government spokespeople have on several occasions stressed the value of having a base on an island where there are no inhabitants. Speaking to a House of Representatives committee in 1974, the then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Security Affairs, James Noyes detailed the advantages of Diego Garcia in the following terms:

The advantages are simply to have in this huge body of water a facility whose use does not require abrasive discussions or potentially abrasive discussions involving the sensitivities of littoral states when a requirement comes to use it. It has no indigenous population . . .

It must be remembered that Diego Garcia is intended to fulfill functions that Kagnew did not, such as storing fuel and harbouring ships. But, leaving this difference on one side, it is obvious that the decision to transfer to Diego Garcia was in part a political one, and was speeded up as the situation in Ethiopia deteriorated in the 1970s.

The rundown of Kagnew began in 1971; the real change came in 1973, the year in which, it is claimed, the decision to expand Diego Garcia was taken as a result of US difficulties in resupplying Israel during the October war. From that moment on, the USA lost one of the main reasons, if not indeed the main
reason, for supporting Haile Selassie. A further prop was also knocked away in
the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973, when Ethiopia finally, after years of Arab
pressure, broke off diplomatic relations with Israel. The Israeli connection did,
as we shall see, continue, but it was now no longer so feasible for officials in
Washington to argue for aid to Ethiopia on the grounds that Ethiopia was
important for Israel's strategic posture. However the most immediate factor in
encouraging Washington to cool on Haile Selassie was the manifest crisis through
which his country was passing in 1972-1973, with the famine and the regime's
inability to face up to the disaster through which Ethiopia was rising, and more
concretely the fact that it was at last evident that some kind of explosion was
looming in Ethiopia, of a kind that would sweep Haile Selassie away. It was
therefore in Washington's interests to take its distance from the Ethiopian
regime and to wait for events to run their course. While US officials had, since
the mid-1960s at the latest, been expecting Ethiopia to 'blow up' and for the
Emperor to go, few could have predicted the especially gruesome form in
which the final crisis did unfold, and few in the US regime could have foreseen
how incapable they would be of having any influence on events.

The first real indication of a cooling in relations was in May 1973 when Haile
Selassie made the last of his several visits to Washington. He asked Nixon to
supply modern equipment to match the aid which the Russians had given to
Somalia. He was promised ground-to-air missiles and a new brigade of armoured
cars, but his requests for new jets and for M-60 tanks were refused. With the
decision in October to phase out Kagnew and a limitation of US military aid
to Africa voted through by Congress, it followed that 'the clear implication of
the US decision is that it has relegated Ethiopia to the outer perimeter of its
defence priorities' (Legum, 1975: 22). From January 1974 onwards, the USA
was so concerned about not appearing to be too close to the Emperor that it
posted no Ambassador in Addis Ababa; it was represented there during the
months of rapid political change that began in January 1974 by a mere charge
da'affaires. The US hope was apparently that it would, despite its long-term
association with the imperial regime, be able to recoup its position and establish
ties with the new government, whatever form it might take. It is the failure of
this strategy over the three years 1974-1977 and the consequences which will
now be discussed.


It is at this stage possible to summarise the interests of the USA in Ethiopia in
the period immediately after the fall of Haile Selassie. While the Ethiopian
armed forces were almost wholly reliant on US supplies, the US itself no longer
had any great military interest: it might have been convenient to keep a small
communications facility at Kagnew, but the main transfer of function took place
in June 1974 and the number of personnel fell, as we have seen, to a handful.
Once the political climate deteriorated, it was possible to leave altogether.
Economically, the USA was an important partner for Ethiopia but not vice-
versa: the USA provided aid valued at $36.4 millions in 1974, out of a total of
about $220 millions, and was the largest single aid supplier. The USA also took
most of Ethiopia's main export, coffee, but foreign investment in the country
was low, despite what one writer has called 'the most generous investment
policy in Africa' (Gilkes, 1975: 139). This applied to US firms too: the only
ones of substantial importance were oil firms (Tenneco, Mobil, Gulf, Sinclair)
and they had not begun production on any significant scale. Hence while the USA was economically of considerable importance to Ethiopia, there was no comparable reason for the USA to retain its links with Addis Ababa.

The argument that the US should continue to support the Dergue, and one which was dominant in Washington until early 1977, rested on three basic premises, each of which related to the two contentious issues mentioned before, viz. Somalia and Eritrea. First, that if the US cut off aid, Eritrea would become independent and aligned with the Arab world, and that this would give the Arab states control over both shores of the Bab al-Mandeb, the narrow mouth of the Red Sea through which Israeli-bound tankers and other shipping pass. The second was that if Eritrea broke away, and if the USA was seen to be permitting this, it would have a negative impact throughout Africa where the permanence of existing borders was a matter of cardinal diplomatic and political importance. The third, and the one most used in public pronouncements, was that since Somalia was under Soviet domination, and was in particular armed by the Soviet Union, the US should continue backing Ethiopia as a counter to Somalia, and as a guarantee of US credibility in the world as a whole.

In general, the US government was not opposed to stabilising reforms in Ethiopia and was prepared to countenance alliances with some apparently left-wing governments if these fitted the USA's strategic concerns. In the case of Ethiopia this expectation was especially possible for two reasons in addition to those stated. First, the USA had no major economic interests that were vulnerable to nationalisation so that there was no stumbling block on this issue, either within the Administration or in the Congress. Secondly, the political character of the Dergue was itself uncertain. US officials were for the time being able to dismiss the 'socialist' statements of Dergue officials as being indications of an instability that would pass and were able to point to continued requests for US arms as signs that the Dergue was not basically anti-America. In addition, it must be remembered that the Dergue was a loose body: it would appear that the USA did have contacts with, and expectations of, some of the members of the Dergue, at least with some of those who made it up originally in 1974. These could have been via US diplomats, the CIA or the MAAG, which remained until 1977; and whilst we do not have detailed figures, some at least of the officers who formed the Dergue have been trained in the USA.* There was therefore some room for the US to think it could ride the storm and re-establish ties with the Dergue. The examples of Tito's Yugoslavia and post-Nasser Egypt were there to show how regimes that were internally bent on some kind of 'socialist' development (at least in Washington's eyes) could be included amongst the USA's allies. It must have appeared to be all the more possible where the new regime was dominated by an army that had been trained and equipped by the USA and which relied almost totally on US supplies to meet the very real challenges it faced.

Military aid to the Dergue continued through 1974 and 1975. In fiscal year 1974 the Dergue received $11 millions in military assistance, half of all such aid for the whole of Africa, and a further $11 millions in military purchase credits.

*According to one report (US Arms Policies: 168), at least twenty-two high-ranking Ethiopian officials in 1976 were graduates of US training programmes. These included: Mengistu Haile-Mariam and Tseferi Banti, chairman of the Dergue till February 1977, as well as the Armed Forces Chief of Staff (Maj. Gen. Gizaw Belayneh), the Commander of Ethiopian Ground Forces (Brig. Gen. Gahri Tofa), the Commander of the Navy (Capt. Tesfaye Berhanu).
In fiscal year 1975 the figures were $11.3 millions and $25 millions. For 1976 a further amount included eight F-5A fighter bombers and as late as summer 1976 Washington committed itself to $6 millions in military equipment aid for 1977. The US government also authorised, in addition to this aid, the sale of US military equipment to the Dergue. Following the failure of the November 1974 Ethiopian offensive against the Eritreans, the Dergue made a request for arms worth $35 millions, and the USA, anxious neither to antagonise the Arab states, nor to see the Dergue collapse, agreed to sell $7 millions worth in early 1975. Sales continued at a greatly increased level through 1975 and 1976. Training also continued: in 1976-77, 190 Ethiopians trained in the USA. This policy was therefore one that continued the level sustained prior to 1974. It was designed to keep the Dergue dependent on the USA, and responsive to US policy.

On the policy side, we have only a fragmented picture of what the US tried to do after Haile Selassie was overthrown in 1974. In public, Washington continued to make cautious remarks about the Dergue, while distancing itself from what it considered to be the unacceptable facets of Dergue policy. It seems that the US Embassy had friendly relations with Brigadier Andom, the head of state in the period up to November 1974. When Brigadier Andom and dozens of other leading officials were killed on Bloody Saturday, 23 November 1974, US aid was suspended for a while. But in February 1975 military aid was re-authorised after a renewed Ethiopian request. In late February 1975 a meeting of the Washington Special Action Group chaired by Secretary of State Kissinger agreed to provide more aid, and on 17 March 1975 it was announced that at least $7 millions in small arms would be supplied. At the same time, Ethiopia turned to other suppliers for extra weapons — getting some F-5As from Iran and further material from private arms dealers.

In January 1976, after months of deliberation, under the impact of events in Angola, and with a confrontation looming with Somalia after France had announced that Djibouti would become independent, the Pentagon asked Congress for $22 millions in military aid and declared that it would intensify its programme of modernising the Ethiopian Army. Later, in the summer of 1976 the US Embassy seems to have exerted strong pressure on the Dergue not to go ahead with the planned peasant march on Eritrea, and US officials claimed that they had had a role in getting the Dergue to stop the march. According to unconfirmed reports, two of the Dergue officers most in favour of the march, Majors Sisay Habte and Kiros Alemayehn, were also rumoured to favour close links with the USA, and, in the embittered disappointment following the failure of the march project, both were executed. If this is true, it may mark a further step in the process by which the US lost contact with the Dergue officers to whom it had maintained links and on whom the hope of orientating the Dergue in a pro-western direction rested.

**US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grants in US$,000s</th>
<th>Sales in US$,000s</th>
<th>Personnel Trained in USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>10,494</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>11,763</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>10,645</td>
<td></td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>9,439</td>
<td>7,440</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>11,719</td>
<td>22,127</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>12,999</td>
<td>135,339</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *United States Arms Policies in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea Areas*, 172, 175.
However, until the end of the Republican Administration in January 1977 Washington officials were prepared to defend their policy of support to the Dergue, both by evoking the three strategic reasons mentioned above, and by stressing the politically inchoate form of the Dergue’s policies. Kissinger’s policy seems to have been that so long as the Dergue retained some pro-western orientation it was important to back it in the face of the Soviet diplomatic and military buildup, both in southern Africa and Angola. Speaking in August 1976 to a Congressional Committee, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, William Schaufele stated that:

We believe we would incur much criticism from our friends in Africa and elsewhere were we to withdraw support from the Ethiopian Government during this time of difficulty — such a move would also be attributed to distaste for Ethiopia’s brand of socialism . . . Whether we can continue this degree of cooperation with Ethiopia will depend largely on the course finally taken by the new revolutionary regime which assumed power in 1974. It has deliberately decided to alter Ethiopia’s previous reliance on the West, and has consequently strengthened its relations with the Socialist countries.

To the extent that this does not lead to systematic opposition to the United States, it still leaves ample opportunity for continued cooperation particularly as we are sympathetic to many of the new regime’s ambitions to improve the living conditions of its people. But the situation is sufficiently volatile to bear close watching.

Later, when asked if he would call the Dergue ‘anti-American’, Schaufele replied:

No, sir, I would not. Certainly in the press there are attacks on the United States but by and large the government, although it is attempting to set up some kind of a leftist or socialist system in Ethiopia, however unfocused and disorganized it may be, is not systematically or instinctively anti-United States . . . I don’t find that the government, despite its sometimes inconsistent attitudes, is basically anti-United States. (Ethiopia and the Horn: 114, 123).

There were, however, voices inside the USA raised against this policy. The paradox was that it was rightist elements inside the US state who favoured continued support for the Dergue, for the anti-Russian strategic reasons given above, whilst it was liberals who tended to oppose aid to the Dergue, either on the grounds that the Soviet threat was exaggerated, or could not be countered in this way, or on the grounds that the Dergue, by suppressing the Eritreans, and by its summary executions of opponents, was not to be supported on human rights grounds.

One such critic, Tom Farer, an expert of the Horn, countered the three main arguments of the State Department in the following terms. First, it was of little strategic interest to the USA or Israel what happened in Eritrea or at Bab al-Mandeb. If the Arab states wanted to attack Israel-bound shipping they could do so anyway, since theybordered the whole Red Sea; however, they were unlikely to do so except in the event of an allout war, and then Israel, by attacking the Suez Canal, could retaliate in kind. Israel had, in any case, ample reserves of fuel for any such war. Secondly, the idea that a US shift could foster secessions in Africa was, in his words a mass of airy speculations, beside ‘the bloody quiddity of Ethiopian policy in Eritrea’. Thirdly, it was not legitimate to support the Dergue just because the Russians backed Somalia. Indeed the political character of the Dergue was quite alien to the USA. Farer therefore concluded in the following terms:

Ethiopia can be distinguished on easily understood grounds from cases in which the United States has real commitments the prolongation of which is in the national interest. Washington is bound to Addis neither by a mutual defence treaty nor shared strategic benefits nor a common ideology nor American investments nor ascriptive ties between Ethiopians and some segments of our population. That is the reason I find very little persuasiveness in the
whole credibility argument as it operates both in the public press and, I think, in the mind of the Secretary of State. (Ethiopia and the Horn, p.173).

The situation in which the USA found itself in late 1976 was therefore still a fluid one, in which rivalry with the Soviet Union and a degree of optimism about the eventual character of the Dergue combined to justify some continuation of the USA's traditional policy in Ethiopia. While there was criticism inside the USA, this was probably not a major factor in altering policy; few Congressmen or state officials felt warm to the Dergue, yet there was no strong movement against the Dergue as there had been, for example, against aid to Turkey after the 1974 invasion of Cyprus, where Greek-Americans had played an active role. The problems which the USA did face were of another kind. First, they were not in any systematic way able to influence the Dergue's policies: the Dergue has been at best a loose executive body and with the deaths of Andom and later Sisay the Americans lost the contacts they did have. Secondly, there was opposition to the US support for Ethiopia from one influential source – the conservative Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia. In any elementary tabulation of where US interests both economic and strategic lay, it was obvious that the US had far more reason to align with the Arab states now increasingly opposed to Ethiopia than with a beleagured Dergue. Within a few months of 1977, a major shift had taken place in US policy and the long-standing link with Ethiopia had, apparently, been broken.

The course of events was as follows. In February 1977 the new Secretary of State Cyrus Vance told a Senate committee that, as a result of ‘human rights’ violations by the governments concerned, US military aid to Ethiopia, Argentina and Uruguay would be reduced as from the fiscal year beginning 1 October 1977. There was no immediate Ethiopian reaction, but on 23 April the Dergue ordered all US-run installations in the country to close, with the exception of the US Embassy and the AID office: within four days the remaining MAAG officers, as well as the last remains of the Kagnew garrison, had gone. Radio Addis Ababa attacked Carter's decision on arms pointing out that no military aid had been withdrawn when human rights were violated under Haile Selassie. Then on 27 April the Pentagon announced that all US arms supplies to Ethiopia had been suspended. None of the F-5E fighter-bombers, M-60 tanks and ammunition approved under an early $65 millions request had been in fact delivered. A further request for more ammunition made in the past two months had also been turned down. The break was now complete except for the rupture in diplomatic relations. Within two months the USA had gone on to announce that it was prepared, by contrast, to sell arms to Ethiopia's rivals, Sudan and Somalia, and the new US policy of cooperating with Saudi Arabia to wean Somalia from the Soviet Union was underway.

In so far as it is possible to separate out the many strands involved here, it would seem that four different developments in early 1977 combined to produce this change. In the first place, in January 1977 the Arab states took up a much more active and aggressive stand towards the Dergue. On January 30 Sudanese President Nimeiry declared that Sudan supported the Eritrean movement, in terms far more explicit and committed than he had ever adopted before. In May there were reports of clashes along the Sudan-Ethiopia border. While Sudan had given considerable support to the Eritreans on and off since 1961, Nimeiry had agreed to suspend aid in 1972, and before this break with the Dergue in early 1977 he had been engaged in negotiations with the Ethiopian authorities.
His new policy, coinciding as it did with a renewed Eritrean offensive on the ground, had the backing of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, with whom Nimeiry had signed a defence pact in July 1976. As we shall examine later, the policy of these three Arab states towards the Horn is linked to other issues in Middle East policy, and any consideration of the new Arab presence in the Horn and the Red Sea will have to take these wider, strategic, considerations into account.

The second development was the advent to office of the Carter Administration. Although Nixon, Ford and Kissinger had had doubts about Haile Selassie and the Dergue, they had, as we have seen, continued to provide some aid to the Ethiopian state and had regarded the Emperor and the Dergue as counters to a Soviet presence in Somalia. The Republican Administration had also not been too concerned about the issues subsequently subsumed under the term 'human rights'. Carter’s policy marked a break with these previous tendencies. On the one hand, he was much less mesmerised by the Soviet-Somali connection; he hoped to win Somalia, with Arab support, to the west, and he did not continue the Republican policy of aiding regimes just because they were in some way anti-communist. His inauguration at the end of January also marked the start of Washington’s ‘human rights’ campaign, and it was in terms of this issue that the initial break with Ethiopia was phrased within a month of Carter coming into office.

The third development, which occurred within a week of the two already mentioned, was the latest in a series of disputes within the Dergue. On 3 February 1977 the controlling influence within the Dergue fell into the hands of Mengistu Haile Mariam, and the group around Teferi Benti, which had, it appears, a less hostile attitude to the west, was liquidated. The manner of Mengistu’s consolidation of power was bloody; his new policies opened the way to closer ties with the Soviet Union. For these two reasons and even in the absence of the changes in Arab policy and in the US Administration, it would have been more difficult for the previous relationship to have been maintained.

The fourth and most important change was the switch in Somalia’s position. Somalia had for some time been under pressure from Saudi Arabia to oust the Russians; and the regime in Mogadiscio, whose attachment to the Soviet Union had always been of a rather pragmatic kind, was known to be willing to change. Since 1974 Somalia, a country where very few people speak Arabic as a first language, had been accepted as a member of the Arab League, as part of the rapprochement with the Saudis, and during his visit to President Ford in October 1974 Siad Barre had actually offered the USA naval base facilities at Kismayu in the south to balance the Soviet facilities at Berbera in the north. Around the same time the Saudis offered to the Americans to oust the Russians by offering large sums of aid to the impoverished Somalis. We know that both these offers were rejected by Washington on the grounds that such successes in Somalia would have weakened the case for the new US base on Diego Garcia.* In 1977 the climate was more favourable. Somalia strengthened its ties with the west and after the failure of Fidel Castro’s mediation between Ethiopia and Somalia in March the door was open for a western initiative. In May the west offered to

provide arms to Somalia and later, in November, the Somalis abrogated their treaty with the Soviet Union and expelled all the Soviet advisers. The western enticement of Siad Barre's regime appeared to have been successful.

By the middle of 1977 the system of international alliances prevailing in the previous three decades had therefore crumbled. The course of US ties to the region over the next few months is only partly discernible, but on closer examination it becomes evident that the USA, whilst adopting a distinctly counter-revolutionary position, was unable to take the initiative in the region in the way that might have seemed possible and even inevitable after the dramatic break with Addis Ababa at the beginning of the year. The main component of Carter's Horn policy was contained in a general foreign policy statement issued on 11 June 1977. In it he stated:

My own inclination, though, is to aggressively challenge, in a peaceful way of course, the Soviet Union and others for influence in areas of the world that we feel are crucial to us now or potentially crucial fifteen to twenty years from now.

Among the countries where he thought such a challenge was possible he mentioned Vietnam, Iraq, Somalia, Algeria, China and Cuba. He went on to say that he was 'quite concerned' about the tensions in the Horn of Africa which were those 'involving Somalia and the Afars and Issas, Ethiopia, Sudan and to some degree Eritrea'. He said that his Administration was trying to improve relationships with Somalia and was 'trying to understand the Eritrean movement in Ethiopia' (International Herald Tribune, 13 June 1977).

As this speech indicates, Carter's policy towards the Soviet Union is in some respects a more aggressive one, or at least a more adventurous one, than that of his Republican predecessors and the campaign to win over Somalia follows logically from this. Whereas previous US statements had in a critical way emphasised the Soviet role in Somalia, and especially the Soviet facilities at Berbera, Carter has made no secret of his desire to wean the Mogadiscio regime. In a story published by Time magazine on 'a day in the life of Jimmy Carter' the President is quoted as calling up Vice President Mondale telling him to get in touch with Secretary of State Vance and National Security Adviser Brzezinski. He is quoted as saying: 'I want you to tell Cy (Vance) and Zbig that I want them to move in every possible way to get Somalia to be our friend'. The President then mentioned other African countries where he wanted to see new initiatives taken. 'We're just sitting around' he tells Mondale, 'I've told Cy that before'. (Sunday Times, 17 April 1977).

When then was US policy towards Somalia? And what was the US role in the Ogaden war which Somalia launched against Ethiopia in June 1977 and which lasted until the Ethiopians drove the Somalis out in March 1978? The evidence suggests strongly that the USA switched policy in mid-stream, initially encouraging the Somalis to invade Ogaden as a counter-revolutionary measure and then backing away from this commitment. On their side, the Somalis were keen to exploit the opportunity given by Ethiopia's turmoil and needed no outside encouragement to want to invade Ogaden. But they were also encouraged by Saudi Arabia to believe the west would come to their aid if they attacked Ethiopia, and they made direct enquiries to Washington. The Somali ambassador in Washington saw Carter twice in May-June and reported favourably to his government; and the USA sent a special envoy with experience of the Horn, Dr
Kevin Cahill,* to Mogadiscio to talk to Siad Barre. Cahill, described by one acquaintance as ‘a man who does not get messages wrong’ gave Siad Barre two messages: (a) the USA would not resupply Ethiopia in the event of a Somalia invasion of Ogaden; (b) the USA would not look askance at a Somali request for arms, and was not totally opposed to such a venture in Ogaden. The official US offer to consider sales to Somalia plus Carter’s speech of 11 June combined with these private meetings to convince Siad Barre that the west would support the Ogaden attack.

In the event direct western support was inadequate. First of all, the offer to sell arms to Somalia, made by the USA and Britain, provoked angry protests from Kenya such that no official arms sales were made. Then the reaction throughout Africa to the evidently aggressive Somali move was such that the USA was forced to proclaim that it opposed acquisitions of territory by force. But western arms supplies were sent to Somalia through other channels: the Germans, grateful for Somali cooperation in freeing passengers from a hijacked Lufthansa jet at Mogadiscio airport in October ferried in material; Saudi Arabia and Iran also provided equipment, some of that provided by the latter probably being Russian weaponry purchased by Iran; Egypt gave 30 millions in Russian equipment; and at least $7 millions worth of weapons is known to have been flown in a covert operation by the CIA towards the end of 1977.** But no explicit support for the invasion of Ogaden was given; the major western and Iranian commitment to step up aid was premised on an Ethiopian occupation of Somalia territory and in the event the Ethiopians stopped at the border.

A cautious policy was pursued in other respects by Washington. If it had wanted to, it could have greatly increased its aid to other forces fighting the Dergue — to the EDU and the Eritreans — but although covert links no doubt exist between the EDU and the US government the USA has not aided them in the way it has aided, for example, the UNITA forces in Angola. The USA has also, so far, avoided any assistance to Eritrea, although Washington may be tempted to give some, not because it backs independence, but as a spoiling operation against the Russians and Cubans. The USA has never publicly abandoned its historical position of support for the territorial integrity of Ethiopia; Carter’s sympathetic remark about Eritrea in his June 1977 speech does not seem to have gone further. Relations with the Dergue itself remained at a low level: two Congressmen, Representatives Don Bonker and Paul Tsongas, met Mengistu whilst on a visit to Addis Ababa in November and in late February 1978 the USA announced it was supplying a few jeeps and spare parts to Ethiopia, part of a $40 millions order the previous May. But the main emphasis of US policy in the Horn was the denunciation of the Russian and Cuban role and this left little room for an improvement in relations with the Dergue.

The one initiative undertaken by Washington was in the closing stages of the Ogaden war when it negotiated with the Russians on the terms of a Somali retreat, the latter being agreed to in return for Ethiopian commitments not to cross the frontier. How far the result was a consequence of such negotiation and how far it was a result that fell naturally into place we do not know: certainly

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*Cahill is described by Paul as “an experienced professional in the world of politics and diplomacy and has devoted his entire career to using medicine as an opening wedge for high-level political action”. Merip, No.62, November 1977.

**On the CIA arms delivery see 7 Days (New York), 19 March 1978.
the Ethiopians had enough reason to stop at the border, and the Somalis to pull out, without having to be coerced into doing so by either of the two major powers. In more general terms however the US response was one directed outside the Horn itself, since the massive influx of Russian and Cuban forces placed the Horn conflict more thoroughly than even before into the context of global relations and detente.

In this perspective, two antagonistic approaches emerged within the US administration. One advocated by Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was that the USA had to respond to the Soviet position in Ethiopia by retaliation in other spheres — particularly in the fields of detente and negotiations on strategic arms limitations. The other, advocated by UN Representative Andrew Young, held that the Soviet presence in Ethiopia was a temporary one, and was, in certain respects, beneficial. The Soviet Union was after all carrying out policies which the USA also supported — helping the government to defend itself and to establish a stable administration — and was taking the blame for so doing. Moreover, in the longer run the nationalistic Ethiopians would grow resentful of the Russians and show them the door as the Egyptians, Somalis, Nigerians and Indonesians had already done. Young, who in general had advocated 'African solutions to African problems', does not see the Soviet and Cuban presence in Ethiopia as such a long-term threat; his calmer approach has already been borne out to some extent by the Ethiopian decision not to cross over into Somalia when it could easily have done so during the Somali retreat in March 1978. (On this clash, see The Guardian, 15 February 1978).

It would seem that the belligerent Brzezinski line on linkage has not so far prevailed in Washington. No overt retaliation through 'linkage' has occurred and the USA is now pursuing the gentler approach: the gamble on Somali aggression failed and Washington is now hoping to insulate the Ethiopian revolution and to protect Somalia, keeping whatever doors it can open within Ethiopia itself. It can in this way play both sides of the game — making propaganda out of its attacks on the Soviet Union and Cuba, whilst allowing these states to pay the price of helping the Ethiopian government to stabilise the internal situation. The USA has, in the longer run, gained considerable from the course of events in the Horn: the Soviet Union has been ousted from its position in Somalia, and Washington has so far avoided any costly involvement in the conflicts of the region. While it will almost certainly never regain its previous exclusive dominance in Ethiopia, it is still hoping that, over a period of years, it may regain some of its lost ground in that country.

The strategic vision in terms of which the Horn is seen from Washington incorporates both the Middle East and Africa and can be summarised as follows. Since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 south-east Asia has ceased to be an area of concern to US policy-makers, and the place occupied for ten years by Vietnam has been replaced by the separate but equally pressing issues of the Arab-Israeli dispute and southern Africa. In each of these conflicts the USA is trying to use its influence to put pressure on both sides in the dispute, and in so doing to safeguard its long-term interests (strategic, economic, political) and prevent the Soviet Union from gaining a foothold. The Russians have been almost completely ousted from the Middle East since 1972, but they retain a position in Libya, in Iraq and in South Yemen and the continued failure to get a Middle East settlement makes a return of Soviet influence a possibility, if not a great one. On the other hand, the situation in southern Africa, where until 1975
the Soviet Union had no influence to speak of, has gone very much against the Americans. The Angolan campaign by MPLA and Cuban forces opened a new flank in the campaign against US imperialism, and subsequent events in Zaire, Zimbabwe and Namibia have demonstrated that there may be further repercussions in southern and central Africa. The events in the Horn are to some extent separate, relating to a special region that is rather separate from the rest of Africa and following a course dictated by local events, in particular the social and ethnic contradictions inside Ethiopia. But the facts of continental geography make it inevitable that the USA, and its allies should see events there at least partly in terms of their broader implications and in terms of the protracted and intense conflict now being waged both in the Middle East and in southern Africa as well as in terms of the global rivalry with the USSR.

Strategic Context I: The Middle East
US thinking is considerably affected by the position adopted towards the Horn by the conservative Arab states. Since the oil crisis and Arab-Israeli war of late 1973, Washington has developed a strong relationship with these countries, and in particular with the two dominant ones, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. It has done this both to fend off another Arab-Israeli war, and also to give the USA a privileged position in the economic development of the oil states. This is a policy which Nixon began and which the Carter administration has continued; indeed Carter has laid special emphasis in his foreign policy on developing ties with rising powers in the third world, as opposed to what is seen as the excessively bi-polar (Moscow-Washington) diplomatic perspective of the previous two Presidents. The USA and the Arab states both need each other, in diplomatic terms vis-à-vis Israel, and in the long-run disposal of the oil revenues which these states are earning.

It is this general background which has to be taken into account when considering the specific forms of US-Arab cooperation in the Horn. A close diplomatic coordination over Israel already exists between Riyadh and Cairo on the one hand, and Washington on the other, and there is no doubt that the many high-level talks that have occurred between Arab and American officials have, in addition to discussing Israel, also covered the Horn. The difference is that the public accounts given of these talks have focused on the first question, and the problems surrounding Arab-Israeli negotiations, certainly important in their own right, have also acted as a cover for negotiations on the Horn. One example was the visit of Amir Fahd of Saudi Arabia to Washington in May 1977: this was presented and reported as a visit concerned with the Arab-Israeli question, but it subsequently emerged that Fahd had used this occasion to discuss with Carter the Saudi campaign to dislodge Somalia from the Soviet Union, and to offer it $300 millions in aid if this occurred. A similar “cover” operates in the case of US-British discussions: here it is Rhodesia and South Africa that is the official reason, but, without any comparable publicity, discussions on the Horn take place on the same occasions.

From Washington’s standpoint the intensified Arab concern about the Horn serves a number of functions. In the first place, it is an exemplary case of the Nixon doctrine: Saudi Arabia has undertaken day-to-day control of the anti-communist offensive towards Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Djibouti and has acquired a direct hold on forces in these countries that the USA could never match, because it would be more visible. There are also no pressmen and Congress-
men in Saudi Arabia, demanding to know how state money is being spent. Secondly, Washington has been keen to counter Soviet influence throughout the area, and this has accorded well with Arab thinking, especially since the Egyptians and Saudis, like Washington, see the Russian presence in the Horn of Africa in the context of an overall anti-communist perspective, stretching from Syria, Iraq and Lebanon in the north to Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa in the south. The two parties have independent but converging approaches. Thirdly, there is just the slightest hint of compensation in US encouragement of the conservative Arab offensive in the Red Sea. The major concern of the Arab states, as of Washington, is some settlement of the Arab-Israeli question: even before the May 1977 Israeli elections it was evident that the hopes placed by Sadat and the Saudis in the USA were not being satisfied. With the advent of Begin to power this became even more evident, and despite Sadat’s initiatives there is little prospect of any substantial progress in this field. Events in the Horn have escalated at a very convenient time, since they provide the Saudis and Egyptians with another major preoccupation, and in some ways a distraction, from the Israeli problem; at the same time, by uniting Washington, Cairo and Riyadh in what appears to be a pressing and successful campaign they make it more difficult for rifts to appear because of Washington’s failure to force Israel to make substantial concessions.

It is tempting to see events in the Horn of Africa as derivative of events in the Middle East, and certainly conflicts to the north have, so far, played a much greater role than those to the south. Any such reduction, painted up into one of those bemusing and all-encompassing conspiracy theories that the third world generates, would of course be erroneous, but there can be no doubt that the states to the north do play a major role in the Horn and that their policies in it are dictated to a large extent by considerations outside the Horn itself. The problems involved in analysing this result mainly from the fact that there is not just one Middle East problem, but at least two major ones, plus a batch of other secondary ones, each of which has its effects on the Horn itself. For, while the conservative Arab states seek to justify their intervention in terms of fighting Israel, their actions are to at least an equal extent motivated by the desire to counter leftist forces in the Arab world itself, and to curtail the influence of those states in the Middle East which still retain some links with the Soviet Union. This superimposition of two Middle East conflicts onto the already complicated Horn situation makes for a very complex picture indeed. All we can hope to do here is provide a few, initial, clarifications.

Until the mid-1970s, the Horn was influenced by the Arab-Israeli dispute in a mild, but straightforward, manner. Ethiopia, as a pro-western, non-Arab state, where traditions of concern about a Muslim Arab menace run strong, maintained a low-level but active relationship with Israel. The latter saw Ethiopia as a friendly state at the mouth of the Red Sea, and as the natural conduit for Israel’s African policies. Israel used Addis’ role as the centre of the OAU to conduct a wider African policy, and Ethiopia was the largest recipient of Israeli economic aid in Africa. A number of Israeli firms also operated in Ethiopia (cotton, pharmaceuticals, construction, kosher meat canning) and a regular trading route between Eilat and Massawa developed. Exports from Israel to Ethiopia rose from $4.3 millions in 1969 to $5.5 millions in 1974, with imports rising from $1.7 millions to $4.6 millions over the same period. (See Israeli Economist, February-March, 1972).
The closest area of cooperation was in the military field. From 1962 onwards Israeli advisers trained the Emergency Police, an elite counter-insurgency group of 3,100 men established to operate in Eritrea. The official number of Israeli advisers is stated to have been around 40 (see *Washington Post*, 28 May 1972; *Jerusalem Post* 25 July 1977). The other important military concern was the Eritrean coastline along the Red Sea, where Israel was afraid of attacks on its shipping, either from Palestinian guerrillas (as happened, once, in 1971) or in the event of an Arab naval blockade during war (as happened in 1973). There is no doubt that Israel had and maintains a strategic concern to stop the Eritrean coastline falling into Arab hands, but in addition there have, since 1971, been several reports (e.g. *Time*, 19 March 1973) of Israeli commandos establishing positions of a permanent or temporary nature on uninhabited islands just off the Eritrean coast (Halep, Fatima). Israel has always denied such reports, and it is improbable that any permanent Israeli force is now positioned there. But Israeli naval units have periodically visited Massawa and such landings may have occurred in the past; hence similar operations could be carried out in the future.

Matters became more complicated in October 1973, when, under pressure from the Arab states, Haile Selassie terminated diplomatic relations. But it is by no means clear how far this led to a real break. The one indisputable link, trade, has continued to increase. In 1975 Israel exported to Ethiopia goods worth $4.4 millions, and in the first seven months of 1976 alone the total was already $4.0 millions. When Djibouti became independent in June 1977 (by which time Israeli-Ethiopian trade had been re-routed through Djibouti from Massawa) it was reported that 5 ships were regularly plying the three-day route to Eilat. Hard information on military cooperation is impossible to come by. Israeli officials deny that any of its personnel have been operating in Ethiopia; Ethiopian officials also do so, and have suggested, unofficially, that whatever role the Israelis did play is now being carried out by Russians and Cubans. But Arab states have continued to claim that Israel is active in Ethiopia, and a number of American reports, claiming to have official information, have supported this claim. In reality, a few Israeli technicians are still servicing Ethiopian jets, and in February 1978 Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan made the revelation that Israel had sold some spare parts for American equipment to the Ethiopian air force. But in any broader perspective Israel's role is a very small one and Israel is incapable of playing a significant role in the Horn.

The importance and extent of the Israeli connection have been greatly exaggerated by the conservative Arab states to justify their own intervention against the Dergue. In the first place, Israel now has a naval and air capacity to attack Arab ships and positions at the Bab al-Mandeb in the event of a future blockade; it does not therefore need bases in Ethiopia to deter such a development. Israel has also made clear that if Bab al-Mandeb is blockaded, it will retaliate by closing the Arab ports of Suez and Aqaba and the 1975 Israeli-Egyptian agreement specified that Bab al-Mandeb was an international waterway. Secondly, even if there is a small Israeli military contingent advising the Ethiopians, it is trivial compared to that of the communist forces. There is moreover an element of hypocrisy in the conservative Arab position, since they have remained comparatively silent in the face of the much larger and much more significant Israeli intervention in southern Lebanon since 1975: the reason is that this intervention has weakened the positions of the leftist and Palestinian forces in Lebanon, something that the Saudis and Egyptians welcome. The reverse is the
case in the Horn, and hence it is in the interests of the Arab states to play up the Israeli role, using it as a distraction from other, more substantial, concerns.

Prior to 1973, the Arab states did not have a forceful role in the Horn of Africa. Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, and Libya gave some aid to the Eritreans, but this was on a modest scale and did not prevent active diplomatic ties between Addis Ababa and a number of Arab capitals. Nasser and Haile Selassie cooperated within the context of the OAU, and in 1972 Sudan and Ethiopia signed a major agreement covering both Eritrea and the southern Sudan, whereby each state agreed not to aid dissidents in the other's country.

Since 1973 the situation has, however, deteriorated, even though in October 1973 Haile Selassie removed the most specific cause of Arab-Ethiopian disagreement, the formal diplomatic link with Israel. A number of factors have contributed to this. In the first place, the rise in oil prices and the change in Arab politics generally have given Saudi Arabia the financial and political power to play a leading role in the region; this has meant that an aggressive anti-communist policy, based on indirect forms of intervention (money rather than troops), has become dominant. The first place where such a policy was evident was in the North Yemeni civil war of 1962-1970, when Saudi Arabia helped to arm, train and finance the royalist forces that were fighting the forces of the Yemeni Republic. Then in 1972 Sadat, with Saudi backing, expelled the Russians from Egypt, and soon afterwards Nimeiry in the Sudan began to move closer to Saudi Arabia and like Sadat, open his country to private foreign investment even though his relations with the USA were troubled. The 1973 changes have given Saudi Arabia even greater freedom that it previously enjoyed, and it has used this power to consolidate its influence in both of the strategic waterways that run along its frontier – in the Gulf, and in the Red Sea. In both cases a certain, covertly counter-revolutionary, concept of security has been used to justify Saudi policies, and in the case of the Red Sea this has taken the form of the Arab Lake policy.

Egypt has gone along with this Saudi policy, and Sadat has adopted a militantly anti-communist policy towards the whole African continent. He has sent pilots to help Mobutu in Zaire; he has aided the right-wing EDU in Ethiopia; he has sent 10,000 troops to bolster Nimeiry in the Sudan; he has hosted Holden Roberto's representatives in Cairo. In his speeches he has time and again linked his campaign against communism in Egypt and the Arab world, to the conflicts further south – in the Horn, Zaire, and southern Africa. In the light of this policy, the Soviet influence in Somalia and the more recent growth of this influence of Ethiopia have caused great alarm in Riyadh and Cairo, and this helps to explain the force with which the 1977 Arab offensive has been launched. During his visit to the USA in February 1978 he harped on the danger in the Horn. Beyond this counter-revolutionary, Saudi-Egyptian policy, there are other factors at work. Libya has been in conflict with Egypt and Sudan over several issues, and although it supported the Eritreans up to 1974 it has now turned to aiding the Dergue. Nimeiry and Sadat, for their part, both of whom have been involved in armed clashes with Libyan or Libyan-backed forces, see Qaddafi's intervention in the Horn as a further cause for concern on their own part. Egypt and the Saudis also oppose South Yemen, now an ally of the Dergue.

A different kind of rivalry is that between Syria and Iraq: both are military regimes professing loyalty to the Baathist brand of Arab nationalism, and both
claim to support Somalia and the Eritreans. However, whilst in this case their rivalry impels them to support the same side (in contrast to Egypt and Libya), the Iraqis seem to have acquired the upper hand: in the summer 1977 conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia, Iraq supplied Somalia with MIG pilots and with spare parts for Russian equipment, with the result that the Syrians refused to supply quantities of material equipment, even though they publicly adopted a position as militant as the Iraqis. An important difference between the two states was, of course, the fact that Syria could not as easily spare pilots and equipment, since it was embroiled in Lebanon and faced the possibility of an Israeli attack, whilst the Iraqis, who had settled their dispute with Iran and defeated the Kurds in 1975, had a free hand to assist their allies in the Horn.

It is, to some extent, possible to tabulate four different “interests” that the Arab states have in the Horn, bearing in mind that these often overlap and that different states entertain these interests in varying degrees:

1. *Counter-revolution and ousting the Soviet Union*: the fear of revolutionary movements and of Soviet influence is the dominant preoccupation of the Saudis and Egyptians. They want to stifle the Somali experiment, crush the Ethiopian revolution, gain control of the Eritreans, and encircle the revolutionary government in South Yemen. Whether developments in these countries in reality pose a threat to the Saudis and the Egyptians is debatable, but they certainly believe this to be the case.

2. *Sudan*: this is a specific, and extremely important, component of the Saudi-Egyptian perspective. Egypt has a traditional interest in the Sudan, and the Saudis have recently acquired one. It is via the Sudan that events in the Horn most immediately affect the Arab world, and both Sadat and the Saudis are concerned to keep Nimeiry in power. A revolutionary Ethiopia is seen as a threat to the Sudan.

3. *Israel*: the Red Sea is seen by both sides as an area of potential dispute, and the Arab states would like to prevent Israel from having any influence at all. Yet the Arabs are forced, by US and Iranian pressure, to permit Israel to import oil from Iran via the Red Sea, and in any case they exaggerate the significance of the Israeli presence in Ethiopia for diversionary reasons.

4. *Arab nationalism*: the rhetoric of Arab support for forces in the Horn is normally couched in a nationalist, and sometimes chauvinist, manner. In the Arab press it is universally alleged that the Eritreans, the Somalis and the people of Djibouti are Arabs,* whereas this is, in each case, only a partial truth. In the Saudi case, considerable emphasis is laid on the ‘Muslim’ character of these forces as well. For example, the Saudis have aided Muslim as against Christian elements within the Eritrean movement, and their overtures towards Somalia have been couched in Islamic as much as Arab terms. The Iraqis, for their part, present the peoples in the area as part of the Arab national liberation struggle, and Baghdad’s support is seen as part of Iraq’s self-proclaimed pan-Arab anti-imperialist role.

*An Arab is someone whose mother tongue is Arabic. Between a third and a half of the population of Eritrea have the Tigrinya language as their first tongue and under 5 per cent Arabic; the first language of all Somalis is Somalia; and an estimated 3-5 per cent of the population of Djibouti are native Arabic speakers, the rest being either Somalis or Afars.*
A number of other factors contributed to the worsening of conservative Arab relations with Ethiopia, and to the marked escalation of Arab support for Somalia and the Eritreans in early 1977. The growth of Soviet influence in Ethiopia in late 1976, coinciding with the worsening of relations with the USA, was one factor. There was also the failed coup attempt in the Sudan in July 1976: allegedly aided by Libya and Ethiopia, it led to a defence agreement between Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan that formed the basis for more active military cooperation.* Then there came the switch in Somali policy which Saudi Arabia had long pressed for and which meant that Saudi money would not now be reinforcing a pro-Soviet regime. On top of all this there was the fact that the Eritreans appeared to be gaining ground, and began to talk, in more convincing terms than ever before, of achieving independence on the battlefield. Arab support for the Eritreans was, in addition to its evident nationalist benefits, a distraction from the terrible inter-Arab carnage in Lebanon, and a compensation for the stalemate vis-à-vis Israel.

This still leaves open the question of what the Arab states actually want. They obviously have a firm anti-communist stand and are alarmed by events in Ethiopia; but their determination and capacity to implement this policy are in doubt. The overture to Somalia, and the general rhetoric about Somalia being an ‘Arab’ and ‘Muslim’ country, have led to a relatively straightforward policy of financial inducement, backed by promises of some military aid. Here the process already visible in Egypt and Sudan was repeated in Somalia with the expulsion of the Russians in late 1977. Saudi Arabia has also taken responsibility for keeping the bankrupt state of Djibouti under control, and introduced it into the Arab League — on grounds as bogus as those used to introduce Somalia.

On Eritrea the Arab stand is far less clear than might at first appear. The Sudanese, Egyptians and Saudis have vacillated on the Eritrean question, and have not made a clear commitment to Eritrean independence. In early 1977 the Sudanese seemed to be making such a stand, but by the end of the year they had backed away from this and as Nimeiry reconciled himself with the opposition forces of Sadiq al-Mahdi the Sudanese regime felt much less threatened by Ethiopia and thus less liable to favour the Eritrean guerrillas. The Arab states have certainly used the question of Eritrea, as they have the Palestinian issue, to bolster their diplomatic positions and win popularity at home but as with the Palestinians they have deployed money and weapons to manipulate dissensions inside the Eritrean movement. The Saudis have been alarmed at the socialist orientation of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Forces (EPLF) and there is no doubt that a socialist independent Eritrea would be unwelcome to the conservative Arab states. Hence, whilst there is an Arab interest in Eritrea it is less substantial and less consistent than either the Arab states or, for different reasons, the Ethiopian government would have us believe. It is also improbable that the Arab states

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*Sudan's relations with the USA lagged behind those of Egypt and Saudi Arabia for some time, in particular because Sudan released from custody a number of Palestinians who had killed the US Ambassador to Khartoum in 1974. By 1976, however, relations had improved and Nimeiry visited the USA. A link of considerable importance between Washington and Khartoum has been Mansour Khaled, Foreign Minister up to September 1977, who was the recipient of CIA funds estimated to be $2 million, between 1975 and 1977 (Seven Days, New York, 25 April 1977). Although the Sudanese armed forces have been in the past supplied by the Soviet Union, Nimeiry has now switched to the USA: Carter has agreed to sell six C-130 transport planes, and is considering the sale of F-5 jet fighters. A US military sales team visited Khartoum in August 1977.
could effectively control an independent Eritrea after independence: the case of Bangladesh is instructive in this respect since although created by the intervention of the Indian army in 1971 it was, in the space of a few years, in direct conflict with India on a number of issues.

The rhetoric of the official conservative Arab position on the Horn is therefore false in more than one way. The emphasis on the Israeli role is a distraction, designed to mask the essentially counter-revolutionary character of current Arab policy. The real content of ‘Red Sea security’, as with ‘Gulf security’, is the elimination of pro-Russian influence and the extension of Saudi influence. Official Arab policy is designed to stabilise Nimeiry’s regime in the Sudan, to make the Eritreans and Somalis, as well as Djibouti, dependent on Saudi aid and hence open to Saudi political pressures. This is important not only because of the specific situation in the Horn, but also as part of the wider Arab context and the aim of Saudi Arabia to consolidate its already enormous predominance in the Arab world.

Strategic Context 2: sub-Saharan Africa

The implications of events in the Horn to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa are considerable, if not as evident as those for the Middle East. The countries most immediately implicated are Kenya, Uganda, Zaire and Chad. Because of Kenya’s long-standing territorial dispute with Somalia over the Northern Frontier Area, there is undisguised anxiety there about Somali aggressiveness. The general expectation is that just as Mogadiscio waited for the crisis in Ethiopia to develop, before invading Ogaden, so it will wait till the post-Kenyatta succession crisis in Kenya provides a comparable opening. Historically Britain has provided Kenya with its military support but in 1977 the USA announced that it too would be prepared to supply Kenya with weapons, and as long as Kenya maintains a pro-Western stance, it is unlikely that Washington will alter its position to meet Somalia claims. The Carter Administration has also shown itself willing to supply arms to Zaire and Chad — the former to meet the risings in Shaba province in April 1977 and May 1978 and the latter in July 1977 to meet a guerrilla threat which is backed by Libya and therefore, Washington claims, by the USSR. A similar if less immediately threatening problem exists in the Spanish Sahara where Polisario, backed by Algeria, is fighting the Moroccan and Mauritanian armies, themselves backed by Saudi Arabia, France and the USA. The Ugandan situation obviously has its own peculiarities, but Amin has made a point of declaring his support for the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia, and even though he helped Mobutu in Zaire Washington would certainly like to see him replaced by a government more amenable to western pressure; here again, criticism over ‘human rights’, however justified, is used to cover a wider strategic offensive against the state in question.

The USA’s African policy is a somewhat low-key one, except in the northern (Egypt) and southern extremities. But it should not be forgotten that the USA has stepped into a more forward position over the past few years. First, it has become a potential arms supplier to the governments mentioned for the first time — with the added irony that it is Carter, the proponent of arms control, who has placed Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Zaire and Chad on the US shopping list. The British and French have also cooperated with the USA in supplying arms in a non-competitive way to the same regimes: Britain announced it would supply arms to Somalia immediately after the USA did, but similarly backed
away after Kenyan protests, whilst France airlifted the Moroccan troops to Zaire in 1977 and sent in the Foreign Legion in 1978, and has stepped up its long-standing military assistance programme to Chad with 1,500 troops stationed there.* Secondly, the USA now possesses the capacity to intervene militarily in Africa, from its base on Diego Garcia. The most effective instrument here is the aircraft carrier which, using Diego Garcia as a home base, can sail to positions off the African coast for contingencies either in the Middle East or East Africa. During the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, when the Arabs briefly blocked the mouth of the Red Sea to prevent Israeli-bound shipping from going through, a US aircraft carrier hovered nearby; similarly, during the emergency over the Entebbe hijacking in 1976 a ship based at Diego Garcia took up a visible deterrent position off the Kenya coast when Nairobi airport was being used by the Israeli paratroop commandos as an intermediary base on their way back to Israel. So far there has been no dramatic US intervention in this arena, and current doctrines make such actions a final resort: but the quiet consolidation of a new US posture in the Africa/Middle East/Indian Ocean area is both indicative of US thinking and may have many implications for the future. While avoiding a direct presence the USA has now consolidated a new, indirect, strategic position.

Conclusions

Contrary to the two prevailing images of US policy, it emerges that Washington’s role has been neither one of inaction, nor one of direct, sustained, assault on the Ethiopian revolution. Instead a more varied, and still fluid, situation emerges:

1. The Americans ‘lost’ Ethiopia after 25 years of unchallenged domination because they failed to induce the capitalist reforms prior to 1974 that could have ensured an orderly pro-western transition after the departure of Haile Selassie. Subsequent to the Emperor’s fall they failed both to establish a viable new relationship with the Dergue, and to find a counter-revolutionary force outside it, such as the EDU, to act as a realistic conduit for US intervention.

2. Current US policy is less concerned about events inside Ethiopia than about the strategic impact of developments there on (a) Red Sea and Indian Ocean shipping (b) the US-Soviet contest for influence in Africa and (c) detente and disarmament on the global level. The US wants to protect its new client in Somalia, to limit the influence of the Russians and Cubans elsewhere in the Middle East and Africa, and in the longer run to maintain relations with the Dergue such that, possibly, Washington could benefit when a rift between Moscow and Addis Ababa opens up. Hence current concerns are much more in the Arab-Israeli sphere and in southern Africa, as well as in global politics, than in the Horn itself.

3. The one clear instance of a vigorous counter-revolutionary initiative is in Somalia both in the enticement of Siad Barre’s regime away from the Russians and in the urging of the Somalis to invade Ogaden. The Americans, like Siad Barre, seem to have thought that a quick and successful invasion would topple Mengistu’s government; when this failed Washington abandoned this stand, and concentrated on extricating the Somalis with minimum further cost. However, without US encouragement of Siad in May-June 1977 it is inconceivable that the

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*In 1978 France took the lead in intervening against the Angolan-based rebels from Zaire.
Somalis would have invaded Ogaden, and it was this that led to the Russian and Cuban military buildup in Ethiopia. Carter and his aides have only themselves to blame for this major Soviet-Cuban advance in Africa.

4. The USA has collaborated with client states in the Middle East to pursue further options. Israel has kept a small foothold in Ethiopia — useful for symbolic and, one assumes, intelligence purposes, if of no real practical weight. The Arab states and Iran* have supplied finance and arms to Somalia, the Eritreans and Sudan, although none became directly implicated in Ogaden and, despite some bombast from Sadat and the Shah, none has sent any troops to Somalia. Following the Somali eviction from the Ogaden, the Saudis even began to criticise Washington for its pusillanimity in the Horn although they too seem to have realised that their flagrant attempts to urge on Ethiopia’s enemies have only helped to increase Soviet and Cuban involvement.

5. In Eritrea, the guerrillas are fighting without any firm backing from outside. The USA has never supported them, and the Arab states, while manipulating the issue, have stopped short of a reliable commitment. It is unjustified to argue, as the Dergue does, that the Eritreans are in any sense ‘agents’ of Arab reaction: the causes of the Eritrean revolution lie in the imperialist-backed destruction of the federation with Ethiopia under Haile Selassie and in the inconsistent manner in which the Dergue has handled the question since 1974. The Eritreans have turned to the Arab states because no-one else will help them: no-one argues that in the case of the Palestinians such Arab aid makes them ‘counter-revolutionary’, and the same applies to the Eritreans.

6. Events since 1974 show above all that whilst the USA and the Soviet Union can influence events in an area like the Horn in a number of ways, there are also real limits on what these two countries, often inaccurately called ‘superpowers’, can do. The Americans could not hold Ethiopia, and the Russians lost Somalia. Neither country has a controlling grip on the internal political dynamic in their newly-acquired Horn allies, and it may be a long time before a new stable system of international alliances emerges in the region.

Bibliographic Notes

*The Iranian role has been almost comic: Iran sold F-5 jets to the Dergue in 1976 and sent Russian equipment to Siad Barre in 1977. But whilst Iran expressed great concern about the Soviet role in the Horn, the Shah was reluctant to become embroiled in the Ogaden war, for two reasons. He feared what would happen to his forces in a real conventional war, distinct from the low level counter-insurgency war his forces had waged in Dhofar, and he was suspicious of Siad Barre whom he suspected of still being a socialist at heart and liable over time to swing back to the Russians.

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The Senegal River Valley: What Kind of Change?

Adrian Adams

'Développement de fonctionnaires' or 'développement paysan'. At the meeting with which the paper opens, peasants and SAED officials were unable to come to terms, because each group held different and incompatible views about what constituted 'development'. For the SAED delegation, there was only one kind of development, defined in terms of technological innovation. Modernization therefore imposed its own objective constraints; once the peasants had chosen progress, there could be no sound reason for them to reject the production techniques and styles of organisation which progress required. For the leaders of the peasant association, on the other hand, there were two kinds of development, two ways of bringing agricultural change to the area; the choice was not between innovation and stagnation, but between change evolved from within, and change imposed from without. They had organised on their own, and had shown themselves capable of adapting to new crops and new techniques: that was 'développement paysan'. The SAED takeover, they felt, could not be justified in objective terms; its purpose was to deprive them of the freedom to control their own productive activity and its fruits, and make them work for outside interests rather than for the good of their own community. That was 'développement de fonctionnaires'. The SAED officials often spoke in terms of nationalist interest, one and undivided; but the peasants saw no necessary fit between their interests and those of officialdom. The evidence available suggests that the peasants' view of the situation is nearer the truth.

Late in April 1975, in a village on the left bank of the Senegal River, a meeting took place. It was held in the courtyard of a private dwelling-house, not in the village forum; for it involved, not the village as a whole, but the members of the village association for collective agriculture, which had been in existence for just over a year. They numbered about 270 at the time: 200 men and 70 women, almost half the active population then present in the village, evenly distributed throughout its 70-odd households. Many of them were at the meeting. Their designated spokesmen were seated on mats at the front of the gathering: six

This article was written for the 1976 conference of the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom, and has since been incorporated into the third and final part of the author’s *Le long voyage des gens du Fleuve* (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1977).
chefs d'équipe, heads of work groups, and the association’s chairman, vice-
chairman and treasurer. Near them sat observers from neighbouring villages
where similar associations had been formed. Seated at a table, facing the as-
sembled people, were the visitors who had caused the meeting to be held. One
was a familiar figure, a French agricultural technician who had been in the area
for a year. The others were not. One was the organiser of an agricultural improve-
ment scheme about 200 miles downstream; the other was a representative of the
Société d'Aménagement et d’Exploitation des Terres du Delta du Fleuve Sénégal
(SAED), which had shortly before been placed in charge of agricultural develop-
ment on the river. These two men were Senegalese, but from nearer the coast;
they spoke in French, which was then translated into Soninke, the language
locally spoken. The three men, accompanied by assistants who took no active
part in the meeting, had arrived in the village together.

The man from downstream spoke first. He understood the people’s worries, he
said, because he had experienced the same problems himself. When the youth
centre he ran started a farming scheme, they were anxious to preserve their
freedom of action, because they had seen for themselves, in their own village,
how peasant farmers working for SAED could be drawn into a cycle of debt.
But they had solved the problem now. By coming to terms with SAED, they
had gained access to international aid; the Senegalese authorities had sent
observers, and the scheme was now receiving substantial support, especially from
USAID. ‘You must cooperate with SAED’, he urged. ‘You need modern tech-
nology; if you say No to SAED, you are saying No to modern technology. You
should say Yes to all organisations which can help you. It is to be hoped that
God will help us to be like Europe or America. SAED is the government’s agent;
it is your agent. It belongs to all of us.’

The SAED representative spoke next. He announced that SAED had been placed
in charge of development along the river, and that the area within which the
village was located was one of the few which was suitable for extensive rice
cultivation. His task, he said, was to explain how SAED was going to organise
work in the area, so as to dispel any misunderstandings. As the son of a peasant,
he understood their problems well. ‘A technician, in Senegal, is a peasant. The
son of a peasant is no other than a peasant.’ Once they had talked things over,
everything would be clear.

The chairman of the village association then spoke briefly. People in the village,
he said, had heard about SAED; but they had heard nothing from SAED, until
now. They had started working on their own, with the help of the French tech-
nician; then they had suddenly heard, through this technician, that they should
work with SAED. ‘One day we were told that SAED would send us a master.’ If
they were all fellow-countrymen, why could SAED not address them directly,
instead of treating them like things? In reply, the SAED representative said
that now that the Government had given the Senegal River Valley to SAED, the
technician referred to was the direct agent of SAED, in which capacity he would
continue to do all he could to help the peasants. There was no need to worry
about debts; debts were caused by foolish rivalry between neighbouring villages.
The man from downstream added that they were lucky to have a technician
to advise them; they would achieve take-off all the sooner, and then rich people
would help them.

These initial exchanges set the pattern for the entire meeting, which lasted
several hours. The line put forward by the SAED representative, and supported, with variations, by the man from downstream, denied that there could be any real difference of interests between the peasants and the authorities; the peasants' reasons for thinking otherwise were presented as trivial, arising from parochialism and fear of change. 'We are all peasants', they said, 'my father was a peasant'. Although the village's technician now worked for SAED, they should continue to trust him; there was only one way to modernize. The peasants could rest assured that SAED would not favour the nearby town at the villages' expense. 'You must work hard; then you will see what has been done for you.' The spokesmen of the village association, on the other hand, stressed their sense of separateness, their fear that cooperating with SAED might weaken their control over the future of the work they had begun on their own. Their technician had come to help them develop, they said, now they heard he had become a SAED agent. If SAED's interests were the same as their own, why not explain clearly what SAED wanted? The association's chairman recalled how he had been left waiting outside, while the French technician conferred with SAED officials in Saint-Louis. Was that right?

Towards the end of the meeting, patience wore thin, and a revealing exchange took place. One of the chefs d'équipe, a middle-aged man locally renowned as a Koranic scholar, asked whether they would be compelled to work with SAED. 'We live in a democratic country', he was told. 'In that case', he said, 'ever since the village was founded, we have been able to live by farming. God will give us a living. Let SAED make the sky fall; then we'll join SAED.' The SAED representative protested that he was 100 per cent Muslim. The man from downstream went further. His activities, he said, were based upon the Koran. Peasants were stubbornly opposed to the diffusion of new ideas and techniques (he used the words consciencisation and vulgarisation); God had said so. God helped those who helped themselves. 'It is God who created SAED. We must collaborate with SAED. I advise you to do so.' The French technician remained silent throughout, except to say that he had no official connection with SAED, a statement directly contradicted by the SAED representative.

This meeting was inconclusive; it was not the first of its kind in the village, nor would it be the last. For one observer at least, it seemed a particularly clear sign of a general predicament, with far-reaching implications: for the people of the area, for Senegal and her neighbours on the river, and for the prospects of agricultural change in Africa. To understand why, one has to understand what the meeting was really about.

1. THE RECORD TO DATE

Until the War

Seen on the flight from Paris, as the plane, leaving Mauritania's air space, begins the descent towards Dakar, the Senegal River looks surreal: a band of blue-green water meandering through desert. Close at hand, it retains that quality. After months without rain, when the countryside is bleached and tinder-dry, and the river itself choked with sand, the green grass at its edge still draws the eye. Like the Gambia River, the Senegal flows down from the heights of Futa Jalon; but the Gambia flows west to the sea, while the Senegal flows north. Fed by the rains of Futa Jalon, it crosses regions of steadily-decreasing rainfall; when
it finally curves westward towards the Atlantic, true desert lies not far north. For much of its course, the Senegal River Valley is like an oasis, set apart from the tropical world. From its earliest recorded history, the area has indeed been known as an oasis, a granary, a magnet for peoples of the surrounding semi-arid lands. Arab chroniclers spoke of the settlements on the 'Nile': of Tekrur, whence derives 'Tukulor', the name now used to designate the dominant sedentary population of the Middle Valley, the historical region of Futa Toro; of Yaressi and Silla, on the upper rivers, near goldfields, which may refer to the earlier settlements upon which waves of Soninke migration built the state of Gajaaga after the 12th century decline of the central Soninke kingdom of Wagadu. Moors, Fulani and Bambara encroached upon, but did not disrupt, this pattern of population. From the 17th century, French travellers explored the length of the river. Some, like Mollien, remarked upon its farmlands: "The land on the banks of the river may be compared, for fertility, with the best French soil. The inhabitants till it with great care." (1818, in Deschamps, 1967: 160)

The relative agricultural wealth of the Senegal River Valley, was of secondary interest to such travellers. Their chief concern was with trade: gold, gum from the Moors on the right bank of the Middle Valley, slaves from the Soninke merchant-clerics who brought them from the east to trading stations on the upper Senegal. Agriculture in the Valley concerned them only as it affected the availability of supplies for trading posts, and for the French establishment in Saint-Louis; thus Futa Toro, where a system of twice-yearly harvests drew upon the potential of the Middle Valley’s alluvial floodlands, was noted less for its millet surplus than for its rulers’ obstruction of trading vessels bound upstream. It was not until the early 19th century, when the export slave trade was officially prohibited, that some notion emerged of using the river’s agricultural resources. It was decided, in 1818, to establish colonial plantations on the banks of the Senegal, in order to provide France with a new source of tropical agricultural produce, especially cotton and sugar, which would compensate for the decline in productivity of her West Indian plantations. Futa Toro seemed the most promising location; but its hostility to the French shifted the first plantations to the Wolof kingdom of Waalo, on the lower river. From the beginning, the scheme was beset with countless difficulties. The local population took a dim view of French attempts to establish ownership of the land required; the habitants of Saint-Louis, set in the ways of trade, were averse to investing in agriculture; and there were great difficulties in obtaining labour. As Baron Roger, the governor most actively involved in the plan, remarked: 'The habit the Negroes have of working for themselves, makes it very difficult to employ them in our plantations. These men have very independent ways; they rightly say, "We are as free as you are", and their chiefs have very little authority.' (Barry, 1972: 253). These difficulties could not possibly be overcome, given the nature of the French presence in Senegal at the time; the technical difficulties alone were enough to discourage the venture, in spite of the efforts of Richard, a gardener brought from France for the purpose, whose efforts are remembered in the place-name Richard-Toll, ‘Richards garden’. In 1831, the plan for an agricultural colony was a failure.

The vagaries of French interest in the agricultural promise of the Senegal River Valley during the 18th and early 19th century, in fact established a pattern of response which was to endure throughout the colonial period, and beyond: persistent lack of interest in existing subsistence agriculture in the Valley, unless
it could be seen as servicing other, profitable enterprises; with fitful surges of speculation about the potential of the River for producing some export crop, usually coinciding with periods when the other enterprises seemed less profitable. The main difference, from the mid-19th century, was that the focus of French economic interest was no longer trade on the river, but trade in the groundnuts being cultivated for export in Western Senegal. The Senegal River remained of some interest until the end of the century, as the axis of French military penetration of the Western Sudan; while that lasted, the ‘granary’ was needed to provide supplies. After ‘pacification’, the servicing role of subsistence agriculture in the Valley became indirect; under pressure of taxation, it began to supply labour to the groundnut-growing areas of Senegal. The Senegal River basin was divided into three, its geographic unity unheeded since unneeded. The area became marginal, in both a real and a figurative sense, to the central preoccupations of the French colonial administration in each territory.

Perusal of 20th century colonial archives is instructive in this respect, the scarcity of information on the Senegal River Valley, an area notionally covered by three sets of territorial records, being significant in itself. The normal focus of the archives’ coverage of economic activity, is groundnut production: directly for Senegal, and indirectly for Soudan, where the main concerns are the supply of seasonal agricultural labour to Senegal, then the extension of groundnut production by the construction of the Dakar-Niger railway line, and later still the supply of labour to the Office du Niger. (The Mauritania archives neglect the sedentary populations almost entirely; their prime concern is the turbulent affairs of the Moors.) There was little groundnut cultivation in the Senegal River area. Outside periods of crisis in the groundnut trade, the records note this fact with melancholy, if at all, and tend to ascribe it to natural factors; in fact, the main reason appears to have been the lack of viable marketing circuits, due to high transport costs, which made commercial groundnut cultivation unprofitable even in areas where groundnuts were grown for local consumption. Millet cultivation is mentioned only as an early source of income for tax payment. The 1922 *rapport économique* for Senegal, for instance, notes that ‘it seems likely that the inhabitants of regions adjacent to the River will find it difficult, if not to supply their own wants, at least to derive from their harvests the wherewithal to pay taxes’. However, the compensating dry-season floodland crop provides a solution, for the administrator at any rate: ‘They have grown beans, manioc and sweet potatoes, which will enable them to sell their millet and maize in order to procure the cash needed to pay their debts and taxes.’ Crop failures along the Senegal River are also noted because, as well as directly affecting the inhabitants’ ability to pay taxes, they lead to increased seasonal labour migration to the groundnut-growing areas of Senegal; while acceptable in itself, this causes administrative anxiety because the migrants may elude taxation.

In periods of crisis in the groundnut trade, however, as during World War I and again in the early 1930s, the records display a sudden awareness of the fact that ‘groundnut cultivation has done harm to subsistence farming; millet is having to be supplied (from outside the groundnut areas)’. The endurance of subsistence farming in the Senegal River Valley, is consequently seen to have advantages: ‘This year [1917], the River will be able to supply the requirements of cercles less rich in sorghum.’ (Sorghum is a floodland crop along the River.) During the 1930 crisis, the *rapport économique* for Senegal stresses the dangers of a one-crop economy and the need to encourage *cultures vivrières*, then notes with
relief: 'At any rate, no such measures will be necessary in the River cercles... In this region, the difficulty of evacuating groundnuts has kept subsistence crops in constant favour. Furthermore, a fortunate peculiarity of the region is that its inhabitants can grow an additional yearly crop on land flooded when the river overflows its banks.' In 1932, an abundant grain crop 'will help compensate for the collapse of the groundnut market'.

This intermittent rediscovery by the French colonial administration, in periods of crisis, of the Senegal River's potential for agriculture, never led to any suggestion that its people might be systematically encouraged to produce a constant surplus of grain to supply the groundnut-growing areas. There is no mention, for instance, of the possibility of organising a marketing system for millet, sorghum or maize, as an alternative to importing rice from Indochina. There is, indeed, a marked inability to connect awareness of the groundnut areas' growing food deficit, with awareness of the plight of the 'marginal' grain-producing areas, where lack of a local cash-earning outlet for surplus production forced farmers to seek work elsewhere, so that food production steadily regressed there too, year by year. In the same year (1936) one administrative report deplores that Senegal should be 'dangerously dependent upon outside sources for its natives' food', while another deplores that Soudan should still be predominantly a subsistence economy, with trade confined to the colony itself and neighbouring territories, for 'Soudan, like the other colonies, has a duty to develop trade with the outside, and in particular to supply the Métropole with raw materials'. Subsistence agriculture was a convenient safety-net; but to invest in local food production was quite simply unthinkable. Whenever the notion of increased grain production is evoked, the end in view is always its potential use in France. Thus in 1916, there is a note to the effect that a good harvest had made it possible for Senegal to export 5,000 tons of sorghum for use as fodder by the French cavalry. In 1920, it was suggested that increased millet production could be exported to feed cattle in France, thus enabling French farmers to devote more of their energies to producing wheat. A canny early explorer of the economic potential of the Western Sudan, had already suggested that the Senegal River Valley could best be used for growing millet and maize... to transform into alcohol. (Bailland, 1902: 23)

With that order of priorities, there was no particular need to restrict the search for likely export crops to those already grown as food crops; there was no necessary connection between the ad hoc short-term usefulness of the Valley as supplier of surplus grain or surplus labour, and the possible long-term role of the Senegal River as an asset of French colonial strategy. The potential of the Senegal River for hydro-agricultural development on a large scale, is a recurrent theme of administrative reports. Several missions were sent to explore the possibility of reviving Baron Roger's old dream; they all confirmed that, in the words of a 1910 report, 'the Senegal River is an immense reservoir, well able to supply the quantities of water needed to irrigate large surfaces'. The World War I crisis, and the attendant fears that groundnuts might not be a viable export crop, caused schemes for the mise en valeur of the Senegal River to be given serious consideration. But the groundnut economy recovered during the 1920s, and the Dakar-Niger rail link was completed. In 1929, Governor-General Roume announced that the Niger was more suitable for large-scale irrigation than the Senegal; in 1932, the Office du Niger was instituted to conduct a massive cotton-growing scheme. In the 1930s, economic crisis revived interest in the Senegal
River, in a minor key; the Mission d'Aménagement du Sénégal, set up in 1938, was not to become active until after the war.

An article by A. Minot (1934; 387-388) gives a particularly clear account of colonial attitudes towards the Senegal River Valley between the wars, and is worth quoting at some length:

It may be stated that at the time of the war, the river was no longer an immediate preoccupation of the colonial administration.

For a long time, only its role as a navigable waterway had been considered. Mazeran, in his report, had made a few suggestions about irrigation, and Hardel had said a few words on the same topic. The idea did not catch on, because it bore no relation to current interests: the country's activities were centred upon groundnut cultivation, which spread to new areas as the railway line was extended.

At the beginning of the war, however, interest shifted slightly, and Younes and Yves Henry were sent to look at the area of the Lac de Guiers. Later, especially after the end of the war, this move was intensified. The métropole's needs were growing, and its energies were being channelled first into war industries, then into the reconstruction of devastated regions; its sinking currency caused growing fears of foreign economic domination. All this led governments to try and use the colonies to bolster national production; and the agricultural potential of the Senegal Valley began to arouse active interest.

However, the administration's initial efforts were directed towards the Niger Valley, more densely populated, with a better labour supply. Senegal's activities were centred upon groundnuts. This crop, which could be sold for sterling whereas the necessities of life were paid for in francs, was indirectly favoured by the exchange-rate battle, and trade in groundnuts grew considerably. This meant that its collapse was all the more brutal, and the world crisis had an even more disruptive effect on the life of the country. This has caused acute awareness of the need to develop Senegal's resources in various ways, and has made the problem of the mise en valeur of the River Valley more topical than ever.

After outlining the technical specifications of engineering work suggested by previous studies of the river, he concludes:

It must be pointed out that the problem of mise en valeur of the lower Senegal Valley, needs to be seen in agricultural and demographic terms. In the river's natural state, water supplies are available and can be put to use by technicians and engineers. The first question to ask, is what crops are possible and desirable. Is there a suitable plant which could be sold in Europe, while leaving the farmer in Senegal a reasonable profit? Is there an equivalent for the clay soils of the River Valley, which can be irrigated with a bit of effort, of what the groundnut has been for the sandy soils of Cayor, of Baol, of Sine?

This statement is interesting, not only for what it clearly states, but for what it implicitly assumes: that the Niger Valley was more suitable than the Senegal from the point of view of labour available, and that mise en valeur of the Senegal Valley would naturally focus on the lower reaches of the river. In fact, it was not true that the Niger offered better supplies of labour; the history of the Office du Niger is one of systematic recruitment of forced labour from outside the area of the scheme. The Senegal River Valley is densely populated on its upper and middle reaches, but the Lower Valley is thinly populated. The choice of the Niger by the colonial administration may have been prompted by considerations transcending demography, rather like the considerations which caused Baron Roger's short-lived plantation scheme to be located in the lower Senegal: the presence, in the Middle Valley, of an active, well-entrenched population with a highly developed land tenure system. In 1919, the archives note that 'the regions where irrigation would be feasible, are precisely those where the land belongs to the natives, who will never consent to give it up'. In 1923, a mission was sent to ascertain what land in the Middle Valley was free of customary tenure, and whether any other land might by some device be made over to European agricul-
tural enterprises. And in 1935, when the River Valley was again of interest, three detailed studies of land tenure in Futa Toro were published (Gaden; Vidal; Kane; 1935). Thus the enduring relative prosperity of African agriculture in the Senegal Valley, may have deflected colonial interest towards the Niger, where such impediments did not exist; and may have directed colonial interest in the Senegal itself, towards the sparsely populated Lower Valley. Outlining the background to the post-war activities of the Mission d'Amenagement du Sénégal, Lucien Papy (1951) writes, 'The presence of populations attached to their techniques, their customs, their property rights, was a barrier to undertaking large-scale agricultural projects; all hopes were therefore placed upon the Niger Valley, a new, thinly-populated zone ...' He also writes that whereas in Futa Toro, the land has been used for centuries by a peasant population, in the Lower Valley and especially the Delta 'there is ample scope for experimenting with modern European techniques'.

Since the War

After the War, which had starkly revealed the extent of Senegal's dependence on imported rice, the colonial administration focused renewed attention upon the Senegal River; more specifically, upon the Delta. At Richard-Toll, where the first attempt at a colonial plantation had been made 125 years before, the Mission d'Aménagement du Sénégal (MAS) determined to establish rice cultivation on a large scale. An experimental 120-hectare plot was established in 1946; by 1949, work had begun on a 6,000-hectare scheme. This project did not involve the population of the Valley. It was located in a thinly populated area: 1 to 5 inhabitants per square kilometre, as against an average density of 32 for the Valley as a whole, according to 1951 estimates. Cultivation was highly mechanized, on the American model, and required very little manpower: 18 workers per 100 hectares at peak periods. A small area (330 hectares) of the project's land was made available, under pressure, to Senegalese settlers, who were to hire farm machinery and services from MAS; but this came to nothing. As an experiment in new methods of rice cultivation, the scheme was a mitigated success: the area under cultivation expanded fourfold, from 1,335 to 5,400 hectares, between 1953 and 1960, although average yields receded; average yearly production was 15,000 tons, one-tenth of Senegal's consumption. Financially, it was an unmitigated failure: the scheme cost a total of 2,700 million CFA Francs, and a State subsidy was needed every year to cover deficits ranging from 8 to 50 million CFA.

After Independence, Richard-Toll was entrusted between 1961 and 1965 to the Government-run Société de Développement Rizicole du Sénégal, while the Organisation Autonome du Delta (OAD) was entrusted with the remainder of the Delta. In 1965, it was decided to renew the attempt at rice-growing on a large scale: 30,000 hectares of the Delta were to be brought under cultivation within a period of ten years, through a combination of mechanization and planned settlement. A new organization was created, replacing both SDRS and OAD, to handle the manifold tasks involved: the Société d’Aménagement et d’Exploitation des Terres du Delta du Fleuve Sénégal (SAED), described as a Société d'Etat à caractère industriel et commercial. Peasant farmers were to grow the rice, on land made over to SAED by the State and distributed through cooperatives, but SAED would exercise close supervision, providing seed and fertilizer, hiring out machinery and marketing the crop; SAED itself would be accountable to the Ministry of Rural Economy.
As the area of the project was peopled largely by nomadic Fulani herdsmen, with only one sedentary village, population was to be shifted to the area from outside. The plan was to have 9,000 families settled in the area by the time the entire 30,000 hectares had been brought under cultivation. Six new villages were built between 1964 and 1967, and peopled by retired soldiers, immigrants from the Middle Valley, and a high proportion of people from villages on the bank of the lower Senegal. Plans proceeded at the intended pace until 1967; about 20,000 people moved to the project, and there were 29 cooperatives, with 4,436 members. Difficulties had arisen, however, even before the disastrous season of 1968, when 8,000 hectares yielded only 500 tons of rice. The terrain itself presented certain difficulties. 19,000 of the planned 30,000 hectares were found to be too salty to be used. A substantial part of the remaining land had been brought under cultivation, but crop losses were heavy, averaging 30 per cent, because of the technique of flooding unlevelled ground, which gave only limited control over the supply of water. After the 1968 crop failure, due to lack of water, SAED began to install pumping stations and improve the irrigation network; but it also called a halt to further settlement of the Delta. The settlement scheme had also presented certain difficulties.

The decision to aim for rapid extension of large-scale rice cultivation, meant intensive mechanization and heavy investment in the hydro-agricultural infrastructure; in other words, SAED intervention on a massive scale. The work which could be done by untrained peasants amounted to very little: sowing and threshing, only 40 days or so a year. SAED did the rest. SAED built and maintained houses, roads and irrigation works; this was not charged to the peasants. Fertilizer, seed and hired machinery were provided on credit to the individual peasant farmer, whose work was closely supervised by SAED personnel: an engineer for every 1,500 hectares, a technician for every 400 hectares, and for every 100 hectares, an encadreur de base to supervise the day-to-day organization of work. Obtaining credit, purchasing supplies, marketing produce, reimbursing debts – all these activities were channelled through SAED.

The high cost of SAED services, the peasant farmers’ low productivity, and their tendency, in the absence of subsistence crops, to consume much of their harvest themselves, combined with technical difficulties to draw the peasants ever deeper into debt. The year’s debts often exceeded the cash value of the year’s produce, and debts accumulated from one year to the next; at the end of the 1969-70 season, unpaid debts averaged 20,000 CFA Francs per hectare. A French company specialized in advising on the diffusion of agricultural techniques, the Société d’Aide Technique et de Coopération (SATEC) was called in as early as 1967; in the circumstances, it proved difficult to improve peasant productivity.

The role imparted the cooperatives was negligible. Like their counterparts in the groundnut-growing areas of Senegal, they were essentially administrative devices for marketing and credit allocation; unlike the groundnut cooperatives, which might be based in established peasant communities, the Delta cooperatives were based in new or displaced villages, with no communal land-holdings, and had no contractual rights on the land parcelled out among their members. Accounts were kept by SAED. The members of the cooperatives had little in common. A SATEC report remarks that ‘positive factors exist only where village organization provides some basis for solidarity: when the shift to the Delta involved an entire village, or when a new village is populated by retired
soldiers'. After 1968, peasants left the Delta in increasing numbers, either returning to their former homes, or seeking work in towns. SAED suspended plans for bringing further surfaces under cultivation.

A report on SAED (Rodts, 1971) comes to this conclusion:

SAED's main object in the Delta was to reduce Senegal's food deficit. The aim, therefore, was increased production. But this aim was to be achieved under satisfactory economic and social conditions, among which one may cite the following:

- financial equilibrium at SAED level;
- financial equilibrium at cooperative level;
- self-management of SAED and cooperatives;
- regionalization of the development process.

At the present time, it may be said that none of these goals have been achieved.

As long as all efforts are concentrated upon rice cultivation, which affords peasants only two or three months' employment a year, rather than agricultural activity as a whole, it will be impossible to integrate peasants into a progressive monetary economy. They will remain SAED sharecgrappers; but temporary sharecgrappers.

From 1972, while attempting to consolidate activities in the Delta by improving irrigation systems and dividing large cooperatives into small groupements producteurs of 15 to 20 members, SAED has sought to extend its operation to the more densely populated areas upstream, where heavy mechanization and settlement schemes would not be appropriate. Here, a larger proportion of the work would be done by the peasants already living in the area, trained through small-scale experimental plots, petits périmeters, which would rapidly be expanded into grands périmeters. SAED control would cover the same range as in the Delta: allocating credit; providing seed, fertilizer, fuel and machinery, technical supervision; crop marketing. There would be some diversification of crops.

At Dagana and Nianga, in the Lower Valley, work began in 1973-74. At Dagana, 200 hectares were being farmed in 1975: 160 hectares of tomatoes, 30 of wheat. The Nianga project was expected to have 810 hectares under cultivation by October 1975, involving five villages, over 4,000 people; this was later to be extended to a grand périmeter involving 32 villages and over 8,000 people. In 1975, SAED activities moved even further upstream: to Matam, in the Middle Valley, where there had been no previous attempt to introduce new crops or techniques. Since Independence, the valley upstream from the Delta had been under the nominal control of the Organisation Autonome de la Vallée, which had undertaken a few small pilot-projects, notably at Guédé; at Matam, there was only the recently-established FAO research station.

Rice-growing at Matam began on a very small scale. An expatriate SATEC agent, whose original brief had been to improve sorghum production, set up three petits périmeters, 25 hectares in all. People were recruited locally, in Matam and neighbouring villages — Diamel, Tiguere, Nabadjji — where farmers were in distress because of drought: about 150 in all. They were given food, and lent picks and spades; they cleared land for the project, built irrigation canals, then were each allocated a small individual plot of land within the périmeter. After the rice, peasants were encouraged to grow wheat; as they could not process this for consumption themselves, they would have to sell it, thus obtaining cash which could be used to cover the costs of irrigating the rice-fields. It was planned to extend operations in the Matam area; both by multiplying petits périmeters, and by undertaking larger schemes, 200 hectares or so. This would presumably mean a reinforcement of SAED organizational control, hitherto more notional than real; all the more so, as SAED was since December 1974
officially in charge of all agricultural development projects along Senegal’s stretch of the left bank of the river, from Saint-Louis, where SAED headquarters are, to the Mali border. By then, SAED was already moving further upstream: to the Bakel area, where they met with some unexpected difficulties.

**Peasant initiative in the Bakel area**

The shift of interest towards the groundnut trade, affected the Senegal River Valley as a whole. It might be said, however, that Soninke country, the historic state of Gajaaga, which had been at the centre of the river-borne trade in the 18th and early 19th century, has become the most marginal area of all. The Tukulor of Futa Toro remain a presence on the Senegalese scene, whether as local notables, religious leaders, or, increasingly, city-dwellers; Futa Toro stagnates, land remains untilled, but there is a road from Matam to Dakar, and by now roughly 100,000 Tukulor, one in three, live in Dakar or other urban centres of Senegal. The Soninke refer to Senegal as to a foreign country. Divided between three colonial territories — now 30,000 or so in Senegal, the same in Mauritania, 300,000 in Mali — and peripheral to the main interests of all three administrations, left stranded by the ebb of the European trade to which they had so thoroughly and successfully adapted, they took to temporary migration in search of cash earnings. Typical Soninke labour migration has been long-distance, international migration. Soninke have worked as stokers and stewards in the French navy and merchant marine, as petty traders in all the countries of West Africa; but this recourse to temporary migration has always been superimposed upon a relatively stable system of subsistence agriculture. Migrants supported their families at home; and they always returned home in the end. Since the early 1960s, the loss of earlier employment opportunities, as shipping declined and newly independent nation-States sought to reserve the petty trading sector for their own nationals, combined with French demand for a new source of cheap labour to replace Algeria, redirected Soninke labour migration towards France. More and more men travelled to France, living in communal hostels, working as sweepers, as dustmen or in factories, sending money home and returning home every three years or so, often to leave once more. In most of the riverside villages near Bakel, almost half the men of working age, and almost all the young men, are away. These massive departures, combined with the severe drought of recent years, have weakened the fabric of subsistence farming. In recent years, money sent home has been used to buy millet; and even, now that the rains have returned, to hire agricultural labourers from outside the area. Older men had derived pride from the feeling that whatever happened, they could feed their families as they had always done: tilling their fields with the *daba* or short-handled hoe, sowing millet, waiting for rain; and growing sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes and beans as a second crop, as the river receded from flooded ground. They express some confidence that things could return to normal; but sometimes recognize the possibility that labour migration, which in the past acted to compensate imbalance and preserve a kind of equilibrium at home, has now become increasingly difficult, and is doing harm to the society it was intended to preserve. One old man said:

The young people should stay here to work, but there’s no way of paying the tax; we have to let them go, so that they can send money for taxes and food. Now they’re having trouble . . . We old men are here in the village, powerless; we let the young men go, to get something to live on, but they can’t manage now. We have nothing. The village will die. The country will die.
In recent years, some people in the Bakel area began to think of a possible way out of this cycle: not permanent emigration, which for most Soninke is unthinkable, but returning to the land, making it more productive, growing new things.

It all started in the early 60s, when a man from Jamaane, a large village on the river-bank upstream from Bakel, returned there after 25 years as a cook in the French navy and merchant marine, to find that things had not changed; there was still no way of obtaining locally the cash needed to supplement subsistence farming. Yet the soil was good; would it not be possible to develop its resources, to grow new crops as well as the old, to use oxen for ploughing? He had seen what was done in other countries. The thought remained with him, until finally, in the late 60s, he went to Paris to find work, as many others were doing, but with a central aim in view: to acquire some means of improving farming at home. When he returned home, in early 1973, he brought with him a cultivator and a small pump; but he also brought the promise of an agricultural technician for the area. He had discussed his ideas with people he had met in Paris, in particular with an engineer who had worked in Africa and elsewhere, and who knew of an organisation called the Compagnie Internationale de Développement Rural (CIDR), which trained personnel for work on small-scale agricultural projects in Third World countries, funded by international relief agencies. CIDR was contacted, and set things in motion by writing to the députe of Bakel. Back in Jamaane, people were non-committal. 'They said, 'Would we be working for ourselves, or for Europeans? And I said, For ourselves; it's called development. Then they said, We'll see when he gets here.'

In March 1974, the technician arrived; a Frenchman, who had worked in South America before. His salary was to be paid by two British charities; he was to help the villages along the river, in the vicinity of Bakel, to improve the productivity of traditional crops and try out market gardening. He stressed that this was to be a collective undertaking, for the people themselves; that he had come to the area as a result of their fellow-villager's initiative, to help people work for themselves, not for him. At the first village meeting, only 40 people came forward. A plot of land near the river was chosen for the champ collectif. The group fenced the one-hectare plot and dug a well; this was done by May 1974. Another meeting was held, to urge village people to give more support to the undertaking. 'Old people,' I said, 'you have travelled a great deal, you have lived a long time. Travel makes people clever. I wish you would help with this development, since you know what it is. If you don't help, that means you want the country to remain undeveloped forever.' The old people said, 'Yes, you're right, we'll help you; in three years, we'll think again.'

By the time the well had been dug, the rains were near; so the first crops grown on the Jamaane champ collectif were millet and maize. These were sold locally, to provide the group's first working funds; and tomatoes, lettuces and onions were grown, for the first time in the village, with some measure of success.

It seems that the hardest task, in that first year, was to convince the people of the river-bank villages that it was both possible and desirable for them to undertake agricultural improvements on a collective basis. More people in Jamaane joined the initial group; by early 1975, it had 270 members, 200 men and 70 women, and had organised as an association, designating as chairman the man who had started the group. Soon after the French technician's arrival, he and the Jamaane chairman had visited neighbouring villages, to explain what was
planned and encourage them to take part. The villages of Gabou, Gougnian and Aroundou grew vegetables the first year, as did people in Bakel, the nearby administrative centre. Other villages came to agree in principles, although they did not become active until 1975, when most of them grew collective fields of millett. By mid-1975, groups had been formed in all the villages along the river, from Balou, near the Mali border, to Moudéri. The villagers had been somewhat wary of the plan at the outset; but it was presented to them by someone they knew and trusted, and came to seem something they themselves could control. Wariness turned to hope, in some cases to enthusiasm.

Was it local civil servants, the fonctionnaires of Bakel, who first drew official attention to these new developments? Was it the French technician, eager to acquire new means for 'his' development project, who sought to consolidate his position in order to be able to obtain aid more readily? Did the authorities then bring pressure to bear upon him, to integrate his project with their plans? Probably a combination of all three. At all events, the technician went to Saint-Louis to consult SAED. Shortly thereafter, on 13 December 1974, the Minister of Rural Development visited the Bakel area, accompanied by the Director of SAED. The French technician made a speech on that occasion in which he stated that the purpose of his work in the region was 'the technical and moral preparation of the population for the great task of aménagement of the Senegal Valley'; that ‘CIDR was working in close collaboration with national agencies like SAED'; and that in the near future, the area's basic crop would be rice. He soon left Jamaane and went to live in Bakel. In January 1975, a team from USAID came to visit the area and inspect work already done by the villagers; as a result, USAID made a grant of 14 million CFA Francs (US$60,000) for the purchase of equipment requested by the technician: essentially motor-pumps and other material for motorized irrigation. The question then arose, How was this aid to be channelled? The technician and the chairman of the Jamaane association travelled together to Saint-Louis; the peasant leader was left waiting outside, while the technician met with SAED officials and fonctionnaires from Bakel.

In mid-March 1975, the technician came to Jamaane, to explain that it would be necessary to place the village associations under the aegis of SAED, in order to take delivery of the machines promised by USAID. There would be no harm in doing so, he said. He did not bring up the points he had made in his speech to the Minister of Rural Development. When he left, the responsables of the Jamaane association — the chairman and other officers, the heads of the six men's work teams — discussed what he had said. It was clear that they regarded this new step as contrary to the basis upon which collective agriculture had been set up in the villages; the peasant associations were to be free and independent, geared to the needs of local communities. They said that if outside aid were conditional upon subordination to outside control of any kind, they would do without outside aid, and continue with collective fields of millet and maize, until they had saved enough to acquire by themselves whatever equipment they might need. A few days later, the technician returned for another meeting, to explain that the peasants could make use of SAED, without risk to their autonomy. The connection with SAED, the nature of which he did not specify, would be a mere formality, to comply with Senegalese legislation prohibiting a non-citizen like himself from receiving foreign aid funds. The responsables once more stated their unwillingness to accept the idea of administrative sub-
ordination to SAED; they refused to be coopted on the pretext of aid transfers. They had been working hard for a year now, on their own. SAED had never been heard of before in the region. Let SAED make contact with them directly; weren’t they Senegalese citizens?

The result was a series of meetings involving peasant associations and personnel from SAED, which took place in Jamaane and in other villages; the Jamaane meetings can stand for all. The first was the meeting which has already been described; it took place at the end of April. That meeting’s failure to achieve any agreement, was attributed by the authorities to a ‘misunderstanding’. On 2 May, the Préfet of the département de Bakel visited Jamaane to express strong displeasure at the peasants’ mistrust of the authorities’ plans. He was listened to politely; then the same arguments as before were stated.

On 15 May 1975, another SAED delegation, higher-ranking than the previous one, arrived in Jamaane to hold another meeting. The tone was less urbane, more explicit than at the previous meeting. In Senegal, the visitors announced, all official decisions were to be shared by la base. The programme for Bakel had been decided by the government; however, le Sénégal, c’est le dialogue. Just as no Muslim could be a good Muslim without knowing God’s law, no peasant could be expected to accept SAED without first knowing about it. At the base, knowledge must start with elementary things. We will tell you about cooperatives and how they function; solidarity, of course, is an African tradition. Their cooperatives would be provided with personnel d’encadrement. In the Delta, the population had made an effort to learn, with the help of their SAED supervisors; they had one for every 30 or 40 peasants. People were even learning to read in their own language. Peasants in the Bakel area could learn to read in Soninke; the textbooks were ready. ‘We are all one family. Our development is one and the same. I have spoken to you as a Muslim. May God help you to understand what I have said.’

The peasants answered this, in terms they had already used at previous meetings. A speaker told once again how their développement had started, stressing the part played by their chairman. They had begun work before ever hearing of SAED interest in the area, and from what they had heard of SAED’s activities in the Delta, it seemed that SAED-run cooperatives were not free to choose what crops they wanted to grow, and had to organise their work according to SAED specifications, which meant contracting debts for equipment, and having to grow more and more cash-crops; this was also the plight of peasants in the cooperatives of the groundnut areas. The chairman of the village association repeated that they did not reject mechanisation and technical advice as such; they merely wanted to control its use themselves, not commit themselves to wholesale acceptance of plans dictated from outside. A local government official suggested that this amounted to being against the Government; the village chairman became angry at this, and spoke in anger, denying the accusation. He was rebuked by another member of the official delegation, a man half his age, who stated that without Government control, there could be no development. If the chairman of the village association had been to France, it was because the Government had enabled him to do so. ‘I advise you to work hand in hand with the administration.’ Once more, the French technician remained silent.

A few days later, the CIDR team (the initial technician having been joined by two assistants) were informed that they were henceforth to consider themselves...
SAED agents, and implement SAED directives; the village agricultural associations were to become cooperatives on the SAED model, so that their activities could be more closely supervised by SAED. The peasants, they were told, were not murs pour le dialogue. It was suggested that they had fomented opposition to government plans among the peasants. Surfaces had been mapped out, and norms established, for expanded rice production in the vicinity of Bakel; the technicians accepted this as a fait accompli.

The Jamaane association received yet another visit from SAED: the Director himself came, to assure them that they would not be forced to do anything against their will. The matter rested there as far as the peasants were concerned; the rains were near, and in addition to their own millet-fields, they were preparing to grow rice for the first time, on a 4-hectare field where they had dug irrigation canals. They would be using a motor-pump they had received as part of USAID's initial grant. Balou, and of course Bakel, would also be growing rice.

The confrontation between the peasants and SAED was revived a few months later in muted form, as a confrontation between village associations and Bakel. The Bakel association had always differed from the others, in that while members of the village associations were peasants who did the work that needed to be done with their own hands, many of the members of the Bakel association, 25 out of 70 at one stage, were local civil servants who hired others to do the work for them. Village members felt that this was not right, and suspected that the Bakel civil servants might have been partly responsible for SAED's attempts to impose its own methods on the area; would it not have meant new jobs, and a chance to exercise new influence, in an area where Government presence had previously been tenuous and restricted to Bakel? This latent opposition flared into open conflict, as a result of events associated with the visit to Bakel of civic representatives of the town of Apt, in the South of France. This visit took place towards the end of July, and was intended to explore the possibility of twinning the two towns. Some local civil servants, members of the Bakel agricultural association, made contact with the Apt delegation on their own account; and two of them accepted the offer of a round-trip ticket to France. They also composed a circular letter dated 28 July 1975, addressed to migrant workers from the département of Bakel residing in France. This letter, written in a somewhat high-flown style, praised the migrant workers for their efforts to keep their village alive, but suggested these efforts were misdirected. Rather than continue to remit money to their villages, where it would at best keep things as they were, and at worst, who knows, be embezzled, they should invest their earnings in a series of projects hazily outlined in the letter—hotels to develop tourism in the Bakel area, local industries... The present development which made such hopes possible was, of course, the emergence of agricultural development plans in the area, this was ascribed to government interest. The three motor-pumps newly installed in the area, were cited as 'a gracious gift from the Senegalese Government, whose constant solicitude towards our peasants no longer needs proof'. To this document were appended the names of the heads of the village associations. When they became aware of the contents of the letter, the village associations took exception to what they regarded as a breach of trust, compounding their grievances against Bakel. The villages upstream from Bakel threatened to cut themselves off from Bakel; whereupon peasant women in the Bakel association announced that in that case, they would no longer work in the Bakel field, but would walk to Jamaane and work with the association there. The
matter was smoothed over somehow; but there remained a feeling that the position of the Bakel group, at least that of some of its members, was not straightforward.

In September 1975, representatives of one of the funding agencies which had from the beginning provided financial support for the French technician's activities, visited the Bakel area. They had become increasingly uneasy about the prospect of SAED assuming control of the village agricultural associations, and more specifically about the role imparted the CIDR team in this move. They learned that USAID was to grant the Senegalese Government US$3.1 million to be used to finance the extension of rice cultivation in the Bakel area. In the first instance, 15 petits périmètres, totalling 1,320 hectares, were to be brought under cultivation in the river-bank villages, by cooperatives working under SAED supervision and control. USAID would provide, through this grant, the equipment needed to install and maintain surface irrigation systems: pumps, bulldozers, tractors, trucks. This project was seen as the nucleus for later larger-scale périmètres, totalling 2,000 hectares, to be implemented as soon as possible. The CIDR team would be useful, in this perspective, in grafting the SAED type of structure onto existing collective work groups. (The CIDR team had known about the USAID plan for some time; bemused by its scale, they tended to regard it as probably destructive, but inevitable. Peasant association leaders knew scarcely anything about it.)

These matters were discussed at length with the technicians and with representatives of the village associations, in particular the chairman of the Jamaane association. The funding agency representatives expressed their disquiet, and suggested that the CIDR team revert to the objectives of the original project. Peasant leaders hoped that this would be possible, as the technicians, however discredited, still constituted their only source of information and advice; shortly thereafter, however, it appeared to the funding agency that the CIDR team would not be able to do this, and they terminated their financial support for the technicians, considering it inappropriate to finance SAED's agents. Subsequently, USAID agreed to make funds available for the salary of the first-arrived French technician, now officially designated as head of the 'Bakel project', and his assistants.

On 15 January 1976, representatives of all the village associations met in Bakel. Several matters were discussed, including the letter circulated in France by the Bakel civil servants, and the recent distribution of relief grain supplies, which the peasants felt had been inequitably handled by the CIDR technicians. The main subject, however, was the need to create a formally instituted federation of village associations, to ensure solidarity between villages and the coordination of work. The matter had arisen the previous summer, when the matter of the circular letter had caused dissent between groups; the January meeting decided that statutes of the Fédération des Paysans Organisés en Zone Soninké de Bakel should be drawn up on the basis of drafts submitted by the Jamaane and Bakel associations. This document was later drawn up; it laid down detailed regulations governing the operations of the Fédération, designed to ensure regular consultation and exchange of information, joint planning of work, and open discussion of any conflicts which might arise, while maintaining the discipline needed for the association to present a common front. The document sought to define clearly the form of future relations between the Fédération and SAED; crucial
sections in this respect are III, IV and V. Chapter III states that the Fédération and its constituent associations intend to manage their own administrative and financial affairs, 'in accordance with the spirit of the reform of local government in Senegal'; while accepting the principle of technical assistance from SAED when needed, they reserve the right to obtain supplies from another source if it proved advantageous to do so, and to market their produce likewise. SAED cannot require the associations to contract debts. Chapter IV asserts the Fédération's right to accept help from development agencies other than SAED. Chapter V declares the non-political nature of the Fédération. It was intended to submit the statutes of the Fédération’s existence. The peasants continued work. Jamaane, and the other villages which had grown rice, harvested their first crop. The French technician came to collect the money owed SAED for fuel and fertilizer. These villages, and several others, planned to grow more rice in the coming season; but they worried about costs. It seemed unlikely that they would receive any outside technical assistance or material aid; USAID’s equipment was for SAED, not for them. The Fédération was determined to continue as before; but the future seemed uncertain. In April 1976, the chairman of the Jamaane association summed up the position:

We, the peasants of the Senegal River, have formed an association to try and develop our country, which has never been developed. We all agreed to begin working together, with our daba and our hands. The first year, our technician came to live in my house, and we all agreed on the work to be done. Our brothers, our children, have all vanished to work elsewhere. If the country were developed, we could work for ourselves.

Our technician came from Paris to live here. Nine months later, SAED came to him and said, “Now we’re going to organise you”. I said, “What do you mean, organise (encadrer)? Four hundred people in one town all working together, that’s organisation for you. That’s what I call development: free, independent, peasants working together. Since SAED is available, if we want something on credit, we’ll ask you for it; if we want to buy something, we’ll ask you for it. Apart from that, just let us work independently.” We discussed that a great deal, last year. This year, too, the SAED technicians are in Bakel, saying they’ll help us; but the peasants still have the same way of thinking.

Last year, two towns grew rice; one grew four hectares, the other ten. This year, several of them are growing five, six, seven hectares. The season before, after the rice we in Jamaane grew maize, and it did well; we grew tomatoes, and they did well too. Up to now, all of us, men and women, are determined to work independently. I think we have the heart for it. If this peasant development continues, it will be good for the people of the River. If there’s too much SAED development, it will be bad for us; we’ll have to give up. But if the peasants themselves benefit from their own work, we’ll continue. That’s certain. That’s what we want.

We’re not against SAED. But we’ve seen how SAED tells peasants nothing, and gets them into debt. Early in the season, they tell you “Look, you need so much fertilizer, so much this, so much that”. At the end of the season, they say, “Now you owe me 400,000, 500,000 francs.” Even if the peasant sells all his crop, he can’t earn that amount; he’s left with debts. The following year, a determined man thinks, “I’ll pay off those debts”. He takes the same fertilizer, hires machinery, and so on: that year too, he has 400,000 worth of debts. So the peasant is always in debt. A man like that is not free. In the end, all he wants is to be released from debt and forget about development. That’s what we’re against.

SAED doesn’t make anyone any presents. SAED makes profit out of peasants, and makes them incur debts. So if people farm 20 or 30 hectares, they’ll be 500,000 francs in debt. On 20 hectares there’ll be 400 people working. SAED gets 500,000 francs; and what of the man who does the work, and all the people in his household, 10 or 20 people? Will he be able to make ends meet? No. He can’t possibly manage. So people give up. If SAED takes over development on the Senegal River, people who understand things will stop taking part. Then development will have failed. This first year, we grew four hectares, and we owed 174,000 francs for fertilizer and fuel; at that rate, if we have 20 hectares, we’ll owe 500,000 francs. That’s what we have against SAED. We don’t reject SAED; we want to be free to say what we want to buy, and to keep our own accounts. We don’t need much fertilizer, because the soil is good. It’s not old soil. SAED would say, take 20 sacks, 30 sacks — then we’re in debt. We don’t want that.
SAED works for SAED, not for the peasants. All the Senegal River peasants know that. We've seen what goes on in Matam. So we want to work as free independent peasants; even if we earn only a little, it will be our own. If peasants can't profit by their own work, then they can just continue with their own farming, as before. Our grandfathers made a living out of farming; so long as we have our daba, no one need be in want. Now we hoped to have something more; by working together, for ourselves. What little we get is for ourselves. This year we had 10 tons of rice; we sold it in the town, at 50 francs a kilo, and everyone was pleased. If we had sent it off to SAED, we would have had nothing.

So, we know about SAED. SAED is the government; and we are the peasants. We are here. SAED exists; but the peasants have to exist as well. We have to live, like the rest of the world. Our development is based on that idea. If that is set aside, development will be worthless.

2. FUTURE PROSPECTS

‘Développement de fonctionnaires’ or ‘développement paysan’

At the meeting with which this paper opens, peasants and SAED officials were unable to come to terms, because each group held different and incompatible views about what constituted ‘development’. For the SAED delegation, there was only one kind of development, defined in terms of technological innovation. Modernization therefore imposed its own objective constraints; once the peasants had chosen progress, there could be no sound reason for them to reject the production techniques and styles of organisation which progress required. For the leaders of the peasant association, on the other hand, there were two kinds of development, two ways of bringing agricultural change to the area; the choice was not between innovation and stagnation, but between change evolved from within, and change imposed from without. They had organised on their own, and had shown themselves capable of adapting to new crops and new techniques: that was développement paysan. The SAED takeover, they felt, could not be justified in objective terms; its purpose was to deprive them of the freedom to control their own productive activity and its fruits, and make them work for outside interests rather than for the good of their own community. That was développement de fonctionnaires. The SAED officials often spoke in terms of national interest, one and undivided; but the peasants saw no necessary fit between their interests and those of officialdom. The evidence available suggests that the peasants’ view of the situation is nearer the truth.

The type of development which SAED has sought to promote in the Senegal River Valley, is directly related to the earlier initiatives described above. It shares their reliance on capital-intensive techniques and large-scale irrigation schemes for cash-crop production; it also shares their indifference to the people of the area, their wishes and needs. The only difference is one of scope, not of perspective. Whereas previous ventures confined plans for systematic direct exploitation to the Delta, leaving the Middle and Upper Valley to be exploited directly as an intermittent source of surplus millet and constant source of labour, SAED’s most recent ventures are designed to extend direct exploitation of labour to the more populous areas of the Valley. Baron Roger was in no position to compel the people of the Valley to work on his plantations. Direct colonial exploitation, after a period of vacillation, bypassed the Senegal River in favour of the Niger, where a vast irrigated cotton scheme was worked by Mossi forced labour. In the colonial powers’ post-World War II rush to be seen to develop their territories, such techniques were out of the question; MAS’s efforts to turn the Delta into a major rice-producing area treated it as virgin land, using intensive mechanisation. When SAED inherited the Delta, it had recourse to the formula
of colonat paysan, in the hope that it would prove more economical as well as politically more acceptable. This was not the case; given the initial decision to grow rice on a large scale, bringing 3,000 additional hectares under cultivation every year, very little of the work could be done by inexperienced peasant farmers, who therefore incurred large debts for services rendered by SAED, and could not hope to pay off these debts because there was insufficient work available to them. They fell back upon subsistence farming in their home areas, or wage-earning in towns. In the words of the report quoted above, they became part-time sharecroppers for SAED.

It is sometimes suggested that SAED has altered its priorities as a result of this experience, and that its current activities are based on new principles. It seems more accurate to say that SAED's priorities and aims remain unchanged, but that its short-term tactics have changed, to suit conditions up-river. Reliance on immediate introduction of large-scale rice cultivation, has given way to the petit périmètre strategy, where peasants are gradually drawn into cash-crop production, initially presented as a way of earning locally the indispensable cash supplement to subsistence farming. In areas where subsistence farming is still a major component of the peasant economy, part-time share-cropping becomes a viable transitional stage; local food production, and income from labour migration, can act as safety nets, enabling peasants better to bear the costs and risks of the new scheme. The essential aim, however, remains large-scale production of rice, to be marketed through SAED; ultimately, therefore, full-time share-cropping, with some diversification of crops in order to employ peasants over a longer period of the year. Claims that SAED's new strategy is intended to improve local food production and provide an alternative to labour migration, seem in fact more suitable for export, than for local consumption; they improve the tone of foreign aid negotiations, but the facts of the matter rather contradict them.

A three-part article which appeared in Senegal's daily newspaper, Le Soleil, for 4, 5 and 6 February 1975, may serve to illustrate the version of SAED's priorities approved for presentation. Part 1 is headlined: 'Avec la SAED, c'est maintenant LE DELTA DE L'ESPOIR'; and announces, "All the tomatoes we need, from 77". The article reports the forecast by SAED's Director that SAED will be able to supply all of Senegal's rice by the year 2000, and that if the dam at Diama is built, it will also be supplying the country's wheat requirements by 1985. It then suggests that this forecast is excessively cautious; with research, unheard-of new agronomic wonders may become possible. Part 2 discusses the different types of project implemented by SAED: their technical specifications, the hydro-agricultural works required, their production, the number of people employed. It is sometimes difficult to tell whether the article is referring to present achievements or plans for the future. Part 3, title 'Développement du milieu humain', in fact describes the machinery hired out by SAED, and the processing and marketing of rice and tomatoes. This article addresses the urban consumer, who is quizzed for his addiction to the national dish of rice-and-fish, and told that 'we' must make sacrifices to help achieve SAED's goals; 'we' must force ourselves to eat Senegalese rice, instead of the Indochina rice for which we have acquired a taste. 'Let us become conscious of what is required of us, that these hopes may be fulfilled.'

If you and I are the consumers, who are the producers? The answer: SAED, its machines, its technicians, the dams which will be built. There is an Eisenstein
film called Spring, which presents the collectivization of Russian agriculture as a lyrical crescendo of plenty: beaming peasants are surrounded by heaving seas of corn, floods of pigs, and their rural bliss is contrasted with the sterility of the town’s bureaucracy, which the heroine successfully beards in its den. The Soleil article enthusiastically portrays the reverse process: the bureaucracy miraculously conjures up bulldozers, irrigation canals, tons of tomatoes. The sky’s the limit; SAED will have its own ‘planes. And those who are remote and passive, are the peasants.

The peasants, we are told, are grateful. ‘Many times we observed their commitment, which borders upon fervour. (A peasant woman) told us how SAED’s action among the peasants was appreciated. A young schoolboy also expressed his gratitude.’ But peasants as producers are invisible; they don’t exist. Machinery is progress; peasants can only become worthy of machinery, hence progressive, by long training. It is the 400 permanent SAED technicians, not the 30,000 peasants involved in SAED schemes, who do the work: ‘Not only have they spared neither time nor trouble, nor yet their knowledge; they have also carried out admirable training efforts in the vicinity of their pérимètres. The idea that agricultural development is something which is imposed from without upon a passive peasantry, is linked in the article with the assumption that the only suitable crops for development are those for which urban consumers in Senegal acquired a taste during the colonial era — rice, tomatoes, wheat; not the crops grown by Senegalese peasants for their own use. The only such crop mentioned is sorghum; and it is mentioned only because a new experimental variety is being tested in SAED’s laboratories. The negation of peasants as consumers matches their negation as producers.

Part 3 of the article is headed by two photographs. One, captioned ‘The peasant can already do this’, shows ten men riding in an ox-cart laden with agricultural machinery. The second shows a single man driving a tractor; it is captioned, ‘The peasant must achieve this’. Where will the others go to find work? Is that new? When SAED representatives met peasants in Jamaane, they did not claim that SAED intended to bolster local food production and provide an alternative to labour migration. These were the aims of the peasant association which SAED wished to supplant; yet when the peasants stated these aims, the SAED delegation did not assent, but attempted to demonstrate the convergence of SAED interests and peasant interests in abstract terms — shifting uneasily from modernity to Islam, from Islam to Government authority. It would have been useful to be able to claim that SAED’s concrete aims were identical with the peasants’, but that was not possible; for the peasants knew that SAED had never acted in support of local agriculture, and that the authorities’ main concern about labour migration from the area, was to find some way of channelling the money remitted home into more productive forms of investment. The SAED representatives had no choice but to be evasive; not because they were dishonest men, but because claims that SAED was promoting a new, peasant-based form of development, which can be heard in Dakar and read in reports, could not survive confrontation with a genuine attempt at peasant-based development. SAED’s strategy would have been shown up for what it was: développement de fonctionnaires, not the objective embodiment of modernity, but the expression of the interests of a particular sector of Senegalese society.

There are grounds for considering that peasants and bureaucrats are the key
groups in Senegalese society today. The question is too complex to discuss here (see O'Brien, 1971; Dumont, 1972), and there would be no reason for confining it to the present context, which is not unique. That peasant resistance to innovation is not to be ascribed to a supposed 'peasant conservatism', but to a perception that such innovation is often not in the interests of peasants, has been demonstrated in other settings (e.g. Raynaut 1975). The peasants of the Bakel area would generally be considered more 'conservative' than others in Senegal, not less; 'Saracolés bavards, criards, nonchalants, les plus conservateurs aussi', as Sembene Ousmane, cumulating the more common stereotypes, described them in an early (1956) novel. What makes their case particularly clear, is that resistance to alienating innovation is expressed in terms of a positive alternative, resulting from peasant initiative. That may be due in part to that very 'conservatism': the sense of self-reliance induced by a century of marginality, during which the continuity of life at home was sustained by resourceful temporary migration. If peasant initiative in the Bakel area were to be defeated, they would probably become bitter opponents of 'development'. It must be acknowledged that their present position is vulnerable.

This vulnerability is due to outside factors, not internal dissent. The present associations are not seen as a direct challenge to village order, although they cut across the hierarchy of 'royal' families, clerical families, artisans and 'slaves', and their internal organisation by no means invariably reflects that hierarchy. Opposition to the associations cannot be ascribed to any particular stratum within village society. Latent opposition seems rather confined to those persons in village society who might be seen as new notables, signs of a tentative reproduction, within the villages, of the class structure of Senegalese society as a whole: persons who have accumulated wealth, often parlayed out of migrant workers' earnings, and have sought to establish links with officialdom on their own account. In time, these latent conflicts of interest would no doubt give rise to internal divisions. At present, however, the main threat to the peasant associations lies outside the villages: in Bakel, for a start, where signs of SAED presence multiply daily, where teams of experts come and go; where there is equipment and technical knowledge to which the peasants cannot have access on their own terms; where plans for the future of the area are laid down, in meetings and reports which the peasants do not know about. It is this growing isolation, this encirclement, which makes the future uncertain.

Lack of equipment is not at the moment felt as keenly as might have been expected, because of peasant leaders' awareness that technology is not neutral, and 'presents' always have to be paid for in the end. As the associations seek to develop their activities further, the lack of mechanical aids, and the lack of transport, is bound to prove crippling, and will severely strain their members' resolve. The lack of impartial technical advice inhibits planning; commonsense and extrapolation from previous experience cannot compensate in the long run. But these are secondary issues at present; that which makes the associations most vulnerable, is their lack of information about what is planned for the area. Most peasants in the area are unable to read or write French, although some are literate in Arabic. This means that while their mastery of the spoken word, through memory and oratorical skill, is often considerable, they are vulnerable to mystification through written words. A man's 'papers' — household tax rolls, identity cards, birth certificates, seaman's papers, social security forms, addresses of former employers — are both instruments of survival and signs of bondage,
as ambivalent as labour migration itself. That which circulates in writing, is quite beyond the peasants' control. The meetings at which they have spoken have left no trace; the opposition they voiced there, cannot compete with the reports being circulated which make no mention of the existence of autonomous peasant associations, and subsume all past and present organised agricultural developments in the Bakel area, under the heading 'SAED projects'. The drafting of the statutes of the Fédération des Paysans Organisés en Zone Soninké de Bakel, is an attempt to break through this barrier, by requesting official recognition of the Fédération's existence. Under present circumstances, it is difficult to see how it can succeed.

The very existence of the draft statutes, points to the fact that the peasant associations do have some contacts with the literate; but these relations are themselves ambiguous. This is not the place to discuss the role of the petty-bourgeoisie intelligentsia, if indeed that is the correct term, in Senegalese society. (But see Cabral's 1967 analysis of Guinea-Bissau.) The account given of recent events in the Bakel area, indicates the diverse and fluctuating positions adopted by representatives of that group: the Bakel fonctionnaires, the 'man from downstream', even SAED technicians. The local fonctionnaires first courted SAED, then sought to establish a dominant position within the Bakel association; the ensuing conflict with peasant members has subsided, but has not been forgotten. The 'man from downstream' who spoke at the April 1975 meet-
ing, is the organiser of an agricultural development project which resisted SAED attempts to take it over, and managed to retain some degree of autonomy. He suggested that this created a hopeful precedent for the peasant associations in the Bakel area, but it might equally well stand for the exception which proves the rule: his relative success might be attributed to the fact that his project was based on a nucleus of literate young people, he himself being an ex-schoolmaster, and managed to bypass SAED control by becoming directly dependent on outside aid. As for the SAED representatives, their repeated appeals to the bonds of filial respect and shared belief which linked them with the peasantry, would seem to indicate some uncertainty about the part they were playing. It seems possible that these various positions might shift and become clearer with the passage of time; but there may not be time. SAED's haste to be seen to operate effectively along the full length of Senegal's territory on the left bank, is certainly not unconnected with the recent rush of plans for the development of the Senegal River Valley as a whole: plans which now seem likely, having received international financial backing, to be implemented within the next few decades. A full discussion of their implications is beyond the scope of this paper. It is clear, however, that their aims and methods resemble those of SAED.

The OMVS plans: a case for the silent technicians

The Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal (OMVS), the member-States of which are Senegal, Mali and Mauritania, was formed in 1972. It succeeded the Organisation des Etats Riverains du Sénégal (OERS), founded in 1968, which broke up when its fourth member, Guinea, withdrew after conflict with Senegal; before OERS, there had been an inter-State committee, founded in 1963, which met to discuss river development plans. The constituent members of OMVS, having declared the Senegal and its affluents international, pledged themselves to close cooperation in developing the river's resources, continuing the work begun by OERS, while stressing the purely economic nature of the relationship. In late 1973, the OMVS programme was announced: centred, as OERS plans had been, on dam-building (one at Manantali, in Mali, and another at the mouth of the river), improving the navigability of the river and providing both Saint-Louis and Kayes with modern harbour installations. Intensive, double-crop irrigated agriculture would become possible along the river, and industries would be created to process agricultural produce and make use of the power generated at Manantali. It has been estimated that over the next forty years, a total of 800,000 million CFA Francs (about £160 million) will be invested in agriculture and industry; the initial stage of construction work alone will cost 40,000 million CFA, with Manantali dam, to be built by China, accounting for some 16,000 million. By 1974, 30,000 million Francs had been pledged from various sources, and studies were financed; the key study being perhaps the twelve-volume Programme intégré de développement du bassin du Sénégal, prepared for UNDP and OMVS by a French consultancy firm. This document, a computer-written extrapolation based on an uncritical collection of all available written sources on the area, is rather difficult to link with reality. In its outline of agricultural developments which are to take place concurrently with the construction of the Manantali and Diama dams, certain familiar traits may nevertheless be recognized.

The Programme intégré du développement du bassin du Sénégal states at the outset that its chief purpose is 'to provide the people of the Senegal River Valley with an adequate basic diet and increased cash income, enabling them to progress
beyond the hazardous subsistence economy in which they live, into a modern consumer economy'. (I:150) These are odd terms to apply to the River societies; odder still is the notion that the OMVS States should be undertaking such a vast project on behalf of the million or so people of the Senegal River Valley, a marginal one-tenth of their combined populations. Things become rather clearer, when it is added that ‘however, in order to ensure an appropriate rate of self-financing for the programme, the system instituted must promote reinvestment of a substantial part of the balance'. This is restated in a later volume: ‘The crops chosen must, while meeting as quickly as possible the food requirements of the people of the Valley, generate high cash flows leading to rapid progress towards the stage of economic “take-off”.’ (V:25) As the SAED precedent might lead one to expect, the latent contradiction between the two stated goals becomes manifest as soon as the intended style of agricultural development is outlined.

The ultimate aim is to have three to four hundred thousand hectares of irrigated farmland under double-crop cultivation. From 1975 to 1983, total surfaces cultivated are to increase from 3,250 dry-season hectares and 6,536 rainy-season hectares, to 58,776 and 72,841 hectares respectively; in other words, they are to increase 14-fold in nine years, with an average yearly increase of 13,500 hectares. (I:103) Emphasis is to be on rice and wheat, with a combination of manual and mechanized techniques; sorghum and maize surfaces are to diminish gradually. For a period of 20 years, the river’s yearly spate will be artifically maintained, although at decreasing levels, so that the population may continue to engage in some traditional farming of the alluvial floodlands; at the end of this 20-year period, it is anticipated that the entire population of the Valley will be employed on the périméters irrigués. This will require resettlement:

The veritable agricultural revolution which will take place through this agricultural development, will gradually change the habitat structure, as it implies a transfer of population from the floodland farming zones, or others, to the irrigated land.

We would recommend a semi-dispersed type of habitat. Every périmètre would have a series of villages, each village grouping the people working the land in the vicinity, say 500 hectares or 1,000 people or so. There would be about 160 family plots to each village. (VIII:103)

The ‘Programme intégré’ refers only in passing to other factors likely to affect the peasants’ lives, such as increased incidence of malaria, river-blindness and other water-associated diseases as a result of irrigation, or the loss of half the yearly catch of fish, the main source of protein at present, in the stretch of river downstream from Manantali dam. (V:335) It says little about the actual organization of work on the périméters irrigués, assuming that the land will usually be worked by family labour, while acknowledging industrial plantations as an additional possibility. What is made clear, is that agriculture is expected to become self-financing as soon as possible, so that it may bear the full burden of generating the cash-flows needed for re-investment and repayment of the loans which provided the initial capital. The full cost of the planned development is therefore to be borne by the peasants.

An OMVS report calculated that on the basis of the crops and ultimate total area of irrigated farming specified in the ‘Programme intégré’, an average of 1 or 1.5 hectares would have to be allotted each family, if one were to avoid the extremes of crippling indebtedness (with 0.5 hectares per family) and unspecified social tensions (3 hectares per family). This would provide employment for 300,000 families, enough to employ the whole of the population of the area; charges levied for water, services, etc. would amount to 70 per cent.
of gross production, and the average income derived from 1 hectare would be 84,000 CFA Francs. (This will not seem much, if one notes that the average per capita income in the Middle Valley was quoted 15 years ago as 10,200 CFA — with the comment that it was one of the lowest in the world. Diop, 1965:41) The report adds that the logical outcome of this approach is a State farm system, which yields the widest margins for covering costs and repaying loans, since labour need be paid only by the working day.

Until some further official evaluation of its implications is made public, the ‘Programme intégré’ needs to be taken seriously; all the more so, as its priorities in many respects reinforce those of SAED, with which they will have to mesh in Senegal. Neither organisation has as a priority the needs and wishes of the people of the Senegal River Valley. It seems, to put it baldly, that OMVS is to borrow large sums from international sources, in order to establish irrigation schemes, which will make it possible for peasants to be put to work producing cash crops for processing and national consumption. The surplus generated by the profit margin on these transactions, and on the charges paid by peasants for the use of the services provided, will soon make it possible to finance further cultivation from the proceeds of existing cultivation, and to begin repaying the international loans. In other words, international loans will make it possible for fresh surplus to be extracted from the peasants of the River Valley, now that the potential of former cash-crop areas is largely exhausted.

The notion seems to have gained currency of late, that ‘rural development’ is unequivocally a good thing: modest, realistic, a new beginning. This notion stems from a profound, one might think a wilful misinterpretation of the fact that there is a difference, for rural communities, between ‘developing’ and ‘being developed’. It is difficult to interpret the slogan of ‘self-sufficiency’, as proclaimed by Dr Kissinger in Dakar, (Sunday Times, 2 May, 1976; cf. Comité Information Sahel, 1974) as anything other than a decisive step back from the hopes of the previous decade; in the case of Senegal, a decision to stabilize the country by establishing a de facto two-tier system, whereby production for national consumption — the role being assigned the people of the Senegal River Valley — serves to create a sufficient level of economic and political stability to allow present trends towards export-oriented agri-business and concessions to labour-hungry or polluting industries to develop in the rest of the country. It is difficult to see, at the moment, how the planned mining industries based on Manantali and the upper river can provide a nucleus for regional development, as they are to be massively financed by international loans (well over half the estimated 800,000 million CFA). It seems difficult to term this version of ‘rural development’ ‘rural’, when it involves the proletarization of an independent peasantry; it is also difficult to see how it can be termed ‘development’.

The OMVS programme is to be financed, in the first instance, by an impressive array of nation-States and international organisations: Saudi Arabia, Canada, the United States of America, France, Great Britain, Sweden, the Soviet Union, and others; IBRD, UNDP, OECD, WHO, UNESCO, the European Development Fund, and so on. Without imputing anything but good intentions, there is something to be learnt here from the case of the silent technician.

At that April meeting in a village near Bakel, the French technician remained silent because there was nothing he could say. He had come to the area under the best possible auspices: his presence had been actively sought, there was a
good response to the modest programme of collective farming he was able to introduce, and the relief agencies which paid him were explicitly committed to that style of project — small in scale, alert to the needs of the local community. He himself had good intentions, and worked hard. Yet the help he brought may prove to have been worse than none; because he did not see that development is not one and undivided, available for all in motor-pumps and tractors, and that between change courted from within, and change inflicted from without, there is all the difference in the world.

Postcript (January 1978)
The village associations and the Fédération remain in existence. The Jamaane association in particular has extended its activities, heightened active solidarity between its members and achieved a clear sense that what distinguishes their approach to ‘development’ from SAED’s is their determination to use diversified, collective irrigated farming as a complement to rainy-season family-based subsistence farming: as a safeguard in years of poor rainfall, with increased production of irrigated maize and group purchases of grain, and as a source of revenue in good years, for reinvestment in production and also, it is hoped, in community projects. The difference between développement de fonctionnaires and développement paysan, first perceived in terms of long-term priorities and organisational control, is seen to extend to concrete choices to be made here and now.

Until late 1977, Jamaane saw relatively little of SAED. Technical assistance was nominal: ‘we have become our own technicians’. The French SAED agents (who have now left the area) suggested repeatedly that collectively farmed land be divided into individual family plots; this was rejected). During this period of surface tranquility, there was a build-up of SAED presence in Bakel; and since December 1977, there has been renewed SAED activity. The Director of SAED toured the area to announce the start of the new USAID-financed project; this meant, he said in Jamaane, that villagers must grow much more rice and sign a contract with SAED. He also announced that SAED policy required, in the interest of the peasants themselves, that irrigated land be divided among individual families. This was followed by a visit from local government representatives, urging the same message. Village spokesmen forthrightly stated their own priorities, as outlined above. ‘What will you pay us for rice? Forty francs a kilo? That’s four thousand francs for a hundred-kilo sack. The cheapest millet costs six thousand francs a hundred-kilo sack. And we live on millet here; not rice.’ They once more rejected the idea of a shift to irrigated farming on an individual family basis, and suggested that the proposed contract was not relevant to their needs.

SAED remains free to pay lip-service to the Fédération in speeches, while denying its existence in reports and projects; the Fédération has still not applied for official recognition. This is now due to the delaying tactics of ‘educated’ members of the Bakel group, who have also been playing on peasants’ fear of the authorities with suggestions that the Fédération leadership is anti-government, and that it would be wise to accept SAED’s conditions.

The situation has not yet changed fundamentally; it has developed further, as latent tendencies have become more explicit. The village associations represent the only visible form of agricultural development in the area so far; and a solid core of peasants, Jamaane foremost, are determined to continue work in their
own way. But SAED plans for the area, massively financed by USAID, leave no room for développement paysan. The future remains uncertain. Given the odds, that in itself seems an achievement.

Bibliographic Notes
This paper has drawn on several years' study of labour migration to France from the Senegal River Valley utilising documents from Archives Nationales du Sénégal (ANS), Dakar and interviews, taped and untaped, with Senegalese civil servants, expatriate technical advisors, Senegalese and expatriate academics and research workers, and peasants during two periods of research in Senegal (January-June 1975, March-April 1976). Tapes recorded in Soninke were translated by Demba Diabira. Translations from French are all my own.


Specific references in the text are to:
Dumont, René, Paysanneries aux abois: Ceylan, Tunisie, Sénégal.
Notes on Capital and Peasantry

Henry Bernstein

Bernstein examines the diverse ways in which capital and the colonial state incorporated rural producers into the production and consumption of commodities as the means of securing their own subsistence. Regulations, services and the monopoly of crop producers have been used to require an often recalcitrant peasantry to organize production to meet the requirements of international capital and the local state for particular commodities, for trading profits, and for revenues and foreign exchange. The peasantry must be analysed in its relations with capital and the state, in varying concrete conditions, which means within capitalist relations of production. These are mediated not through the wage relation, but through various forms of household production by producers who are not fully expropriated, and who are engaged in a struggle with capital/state for effective possession and control of the conditions of production.

Introduction

1. The purpose of these brief notes is to set out in a preliminary way some of the issues concerning the relations of capitalism and peasantry, and some of the concepts that can be employed in the analysis of these relations. To avoid unnecessary complication at this stage, questions concerning various modes of production prior to the penetration of capital are ignored, as are recent debates concerning the articulation of modes of production (stimulated by the work of C. Meillassoux and P.P. Rey in particular).

2. These notes try to avoid the following errors that often occur in discussions of this theme:

(a) an essentialist conception of capitalism in which homogenous 'interests' or 'laws of motion' of capital (in general) serve as predicates from which all else follows (see J. Clarke in Critique of Anthropology No.8);

(b) an essentialist conception of peasantry as, notably, in concepts of a 'peasant mode of production' and its equivalents (see Ennew, Hirst and Tribe in Journal of Peasant Studies Vol.4 No.4);

(c) a functionalist conception of the relations between capital and peasants in which the latter are 'reproduced' by the former (in the pursuit of its interests
etc.). It is not capital nor imperialism which reproduces the peasantry — the peasantry reproduce themselves through their own labour. The question is how the conditions of production and reproduction are determined by the operations of capital (in particular social formations and at the level of world economy) and of the state;

(d) any assumption of either peasant ‘irrationality’ or peasant ‘rationality’ — the latter is often counterposed for progressive ideological reasons against the stereotypes of peasants held by e.g. many economists, ‘experts’ and bureaucrats, but it derives from a subjective view of the problem like that associated with the attempt to theorise a ‘peasant economy’ by A.V. Chayanov (see G. Littlejohn in Sociological Theories of the Economy, ed. B. Hindess).

The Destruction of Natural Economy

3. The category of natural economy suggests social formations in which the production of use-values is dominant, which does not exclude simple exchange (exchanges of material surpluses between producers at a rudimentary level of the social division of labour). The postulate of natural economy is taken as a useful abstraction from which to begin, and is not a historical observation as such; it makes no presuppositions about different forms of natural economy, nor the relations governing production and the appropriation of surplus-labour (whether on a communal or class basis) in different pre-capitalist modes of production.

4. The destruction of natural economy takes a variety of forms according to the character of pre-existing social formations, the destructive force and its historical context. Our concern is not with the kinds of destruction associated with the epoch and methods of primitive accumulation, i.e., slave raiding and trading, the collection of natural products by coerced labour, and other forms of plunder.

5. The primary focus here is on the destruction of natural economy by the penetration of commodity relations in a more or less systematic fashion. In much of Africa this process is connected with the advent of colonial rule and has occurred mostly in the present century. In many instances various means of compulsion were used to effect the initial break in the reproduction cycle of systems of natural economy, means which were supplied by the colonial state.

6. The thrust of the colonial state was to supervise the initial and necessary penetration of pre-capitalist formations, to organise the conditions of exploitation of labour and land. As is well known, there were different patterns of exploitation — land was alienated and appropriated for the production of agricultural and mineral commodities on estates run by settlers or capitalist companies, and in mines established by productive capitals of varying size and degrees of concentration. These forms of production require a continuous supply of labour, and again the state’s intervention in establishing labour reserves and ensuring a flow of migrant labour was often crucial.

7. Another pattern was the establishment of peasant commodity production which does not involve the direct separation of the producers from the means of production, nor such drastic changes in the instruments and forms of the labour process. Despite the limited technical changes in production, however, this process involves fundamental social changes in the conditions of production and exchange in which most African producers are engaged. In what follows we
concentrate on this aspect of the incorporation of African social formations in the circuits of world economy.

8. The crucial moment in the penetration of natural economy by capital is the breaking of its cycle of reproduction, which is accomplished through the initial monetization of at least some of its elements. The methods used to effect this rupture are equally well-known: the imposition of taxes necessitating sources of cash income; the use of corvée labour in public works (the creation of infrastructure necessary to the movement of commodities and the maintenance of 'law and order') or in farms organized by the state, by missions or by private capital; the forced cultivation of particular cash crops.

9. Without involving the direct expropriation of the producers, the pre-existing economic systems were undermined by the withdrawal of labour from use-value production whether in agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting or fishing, or in branches of craft activity: house building, the manufacture of tools, weapons, and other artifacts. The rupture of the reproduction cycle of natural economy was also affected through the substitution, in the sphere of necessary consumption, of commodities for use-values previously produced locally or acquired through simple exchange. The needs of simple reproduction come to include the consumption of commodities and new needs develop. As Meillassoux and Rey have pointed out, this process involves the erosion of an entire culture of production and the 'disqualification' of many traditional production skills, particularly in non-agricultural activities.

The Process of Commoditization

10. In elaborating some of the issues and concepts relating to commoditization, there is no suggestion that this process is a uniform one, that it 'unfolds' through a sequence of necessary stages, nor that it is complete. Indeed the striking feature of the commoditization of African peasant economy, as it has occurred historically, is its extreme unevenness both between social formations and within them (regional differentiation). This unevenness is tied to the concrete conditions in which various capitals confront and penetrate different pre-capitalist formations, and is therefore not susceptible to general theoretical formulation. On the other hand, concepts which help distinguish the forms and extent of commoditization can contribute to the analysis of social formations in their specificity.

11. At the level of generality employed here, we are trying to pose relations between capital and peasants as simple commodity producers 'deposited' historically by the destruction of pre-capitalist modes of production. It is necessary to emphasize that simple commodity production is a form of production that can exist in different historical periods and in variant relations with other forms of production. In the present context, the question concerns the ways in which the conditions of existence of this form of production in Africa are established and affected by the penetration of the capitalist mode of production.

12. Simple commodity production designates a form of production the logic of which is subsistence in the broad sense of the simple reproduction of the production of the producers and the unit of production (descriptively, the household). The needs of simple reproduction are satisfied, at least in part, through commodity relations: on one side, the production of commodities as means of exchange to acquire elements of necessary consumption (C-M-C), on
the other side the incorporation of commodities in the cycle of reproduction as items of productive consumption (e.g. tools, seeds, fertilizers) and individual consumption (e.g. food, clothing, building materials, kerosene, domestic utensils). Other more specialized elements of reproduction may also come to be realised through commodity relations, for example, the monetization of bride-price.

13. In very schematic terms, simple commodity production is distinguished from capitalist commodity production by its logic of subsistence (meeting the needs of simple reproduction), as opposed to the logic of the appropriation and realisation of surplus-value and the accumulation of capital. On the other hand, the simple commodity producer is not a proletarian as (a) he/she retains some control over the organization of production (though this is problematic as we shall see), (b) household production, while occupying a definite place in the social division of labour internal to the production process (relative to that of capitalist production enterprises) and therefore cannot produce the ‘collective worker’ in Marx’s sense. The spatial concentration of peasants, when this occurs, is not equivalent to the social concentration of workers in capitalist production.

14. Following an initial phase of coercion to establish the conditions of peasant commodity production, the reproduction of these conditions becomes internalized in the simple reproduction cycle to the extent that it cannot take place outside commodity relations. In other words, commodity production becomes an economic necessity. To meet its needs for cash the household produces commodities which become, through the circuit of exchange, material elements of constant capital (raw materials) and variable capital (food).

15. Except for the limiting case of completely specialized commodity production, the peasant household continues to produce use-values (agricultural and non-agricultural) for its direct consumption alongside its production of commodities. The social organization of production and distribution within the household can vary a great deal, and this reflected in the differentiation of labour processes (along sexual lines, for example) and in different modes of distribution of use-values and income earned from the sale of commodities.

16. Once commodity relations are incorporated in the reproduction cycle of the household as an economic necessity, the question of how much of its resources (in terms of labour-time or of land) are devoted to the production of use-values and of commodities is secondary, though still important. Simple quantitative measures which might show, say, that only 20% of labour-time or 20% of land is devoted to commodity production, are misleading if they imply that the household is still basically a ‘subsistence’ unit (in the narrow sense), only marginally involved with commodity relations and therefore easily able to withdraw from them. (To the extent that a low degree of commodity production in this sense correlates geographically with labour reserve areas or socially with strata of poorer peasants, this is because the principal commodity produced in these cases is labour-power itself).

17. So far our discussion does not necessarily indicate any form of capital other than merchant’s capital which organizes the exchange of commodities produced by peasants, and consumed by them. However, the characterization of capital-peasant relations at the level of exchange is inadequate. First, it suggests the peasant as an ‘independent’ commodity producer, which is not the case. Second, it suggests a situation of ‘superimposition’ (of capitalist exchange
relations on pre-capitalist forms of production) rather than a dynamic analysis which investigates the ways in which capital attempts to regulate the conditions of peasant production (as well as exchange) without undertaking its direct organization.

18. There were various interests involved in the production and supply of cash crops in the colonial economies. These included the metropolitan industries which consumed the crops as elements of constant capital; the large trading companies which organized the collection of cash crops (directly or through intermediaries) and their subsequent export to the industries of the particular colonial power or to the world market; the colonial state which was interested in the extension of commodity relations for several reasons: to increase its sources of revenue (to meet the costs of administration, and of infrastructural development, and to contribute if possible to imperial investment funds), to ensure the supply of raw materials to the industries of the home country, and at the ideological level, to turn Africans into 'economic men', producers and consumers of commodities, as part of the programme of the 'civilising mission'.

19. These various interests could not depend for the supply of the commodities required — in sufficient quantities and of sufficient quality — on the apparent whims of the peasant producers (e.g. the notorious so-called backward-sloping supply curve of labour or of commodities, resistance to new cultivation practices). The industrial interests, the trading companies and the state combined to attempt to regulate what was grown, how it was grown, the quality of the produce, as well as to establish monopolistic pricing and marketing arrangements. This means in effect that the branches of the imperial trading companies and the apparatuses of the colonial state — despite their mercantile and politico-administrative form — had to perform certain functions associated with productive capital. While the immediate organization of the production process remained in the hands of the peasants, their production and reproduction was determined by the development of commodity relations, including the economic and political measures such as cultivation bye-laws, compulsory land-improvement schemes, and credit and extension services, which tied the producers more closely to particular kinds of production.

The Simple Reproduction 'Squeeze'

20. As the logic of household economy is determined by the needs of simple reproduction and not by a logic of accumulation regulated at the enterprise level by the operation of prices of production (realisation of an average rate of profit), its economic 'behaviour' is different to that of a capitalist economy. For example, falling prices are experienced by household economy as a deterioration of the terms of exchange of the commodities it produces relative to those it needs for simple reproduction (the circuit C-M-C), which means a reduction in levels of consumption or an intensification of commodity production, or both simultaneously. This can be termed the simple reproduction 'squeeze' and it has a number of implications.

21. The simple reproduction 'squeeze' does not operate at the level of the terms of exchange only as their deterioration raises the costs of production both directly (increased costs of means of production) and indirectly (increased costs of reproducing the producers). The costs of production can also be raised in other ways — (a) by the exhaustion of both land and labour given the techniques
of cultivation employed, (b) by rural development schemes which encourage or impose more expensive means of production (improved seeds, tools, more extensive use of fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) with no assurance that there will be increased returns to labour commensurate with the costs incurred. Both these points deserve fuller comment.

22. The precariousness of the material and technical basis of peasant production combines with the pressures exerted by commodity relations to determine the simple reproduction ‘squeeze’. As much of peasant production in Africa is fuelled by human energy, and as techniques of land use in many cases exhaust the soil after a certain period, the intensification of production occurs (more labour-time on poorer or more distant soils) which increases the costs of production and reduces the returns to labour. Costs of production can increase both in terms of labour-time and, as indicated, in monetary terms — the replacement of means of production and acquisition of new means of production in the attempt to increase yields. The low level of development of the productive forces in peasant agriculture means that the household is extremely vulnerable to failure in any of its material elements of production. The vagaries of climate; the deterioration in soils which are not easily substitutable because of competition for land or the costs of clearing new land (a deterioration not uncommonly caused by the very techniques of cultivation promoted by ‘development’ schemes); the incidence of crop disease (especially of crops which represent a major investment of labour-time), of animal diseases (affecting draught animals or animals with other functions in terms of use or exchange), and of disease and death or infertility in the household (reducing the supply of labour — all testify to the vulnerability of peasant farming.

23. As far as rural development programmes are concerned, these objectively operate to incorporate the peasantry further into commodity relations, and attempt to standardize and rationalize peasant production of commodities for the domestic and international markets. The regulations of such schemes often dictate very precisely the forms of the labour-process to be employed and represent a more direct intervention in the organization of production. They tie the producers in various ways to the use of particular techniques of cultivation, often to a greater expenditure of labour-time, and to direction and sanctions by the development agencies concerned.

24. The more commodity relations and acquisition of a cash income become conditions of reproduction, then shortfalls in production and/or income can lead to a cycle of indebtedness. Studies of peasant economy in a number of capitalist social formations have demonstrated the phenomena of ‘starvation rents’ (the payment by poorer peasants of higher than average rents to secure a plot of land for minimal reproduction needs), and of peasants selling their food crop after harvest in order to meet immediate cash needs, and subsequently having to buy food at higher prices. Similar in principle to the latter is the practice of crop-mortgaging (to richer peasants, local traders or larger-scale merchant’s capital) in order to acquire cash in the case of emergencies.

25. The objective of the simple reproduction ‘squeeze’ then is to act as one of the mechanisms of intensifying the labour of the household to maintain or increase the supply of commodities without capital incurring any costs of management and supervision of the production process.
The Extent of Commoditization

26. Our remarks so far have concerned the establishment and extension of commodity relations described in general terms. It is necessary to introduce the concept of the intensification of commodity relations which can help distinguish the various ways in which, and degrees to which, peasant production is constituted and household reproduction realised through commodity relations.

27. In any concrete analysis this entails consideration of the extent and forms of capitalist development of the economy of a social formation as a whole, that is, examining the place of peasant production in the social division of labour, its relations with other forms of production including capitalist agriculture and industry, the overall development of the circulation of commodities and money, and so on. At the level of household economy the intensification of commodity relations refers to the degree to which the reproduction cycle is realised through the production and exchange of commodities. Both these aspects can be illustrated in the case of food production and the satisfaction of food needs.

28. Peasants specializing in the commercial production of food can, in principle, consume a greater proportion of their crop in the event of a poor harvest although this restricts their ability to purchase other commodities. Those peasants who specialize in cash-crops which have little or no use-value to the producers are more vulnerable to short-falls in production, to the extent that the labour-time, land and money used in commodity production reduces the resources available for food production.

29. When food needs are satisfied on a regular basis by purchase this signifies that commodity relations have developed to a higher level. It reflects a more advanced social division of labour in which some peasants specialize in the commercial production of food, some of which is directed through to the market to peasants engaged in other branches of commodity production, or in which food is produced on capitalist farms with higher levels of productivity (of labour) and is available more cheaply than food produced within the household.

30. The coexistence of peasant and capitalist forms of production in agriculture raises the question of competition between the two. It was observed by Engels, Kautsky and Lenin that the ability of simple commodity producers both to reduce their standards of consumption and to continue to produce commodities in the face of deteriorating terms of exchange, means that they compete effectively with capitalist enterprises producing the same commodities (this being precisely the effect of the simple reproduction 'squeeze', and a form of competition involving the devalorization of peasant labour-time — see below).

31. There is also the situation where industrial consumers of agricultural commodities promote their production by peasants (under contract agreements) to ensure a continuous and regulated supply to the factory or processing plant. This is another particular form of specialization which signifies an intensification of commodity relations, bringing small producers into a more direct relation with productive capital. The latter (like the rural development agencies already mentioned) is then able to determine to a greater degree the forms and conditions of production.
Differentiation of the Peasantry

32. The differentiation of the peasantry is a subject of considerable confusion and to avoid such confusion a clear analytical distinction has to be established (although empirically, as those who have done research in rural areas of Africa will appreciate, the distinction is often less easy to establish). The distinction concerns differentiation in the sociological sense — indicators of inequality derived from a problematic in which 'social class' is constituted in terms of some or other scale of privilege and deprivation, and differentiation in the materialist sense which poses class in terms of the social relations of production.

33. On the first and more descriptive sense of differentiation, a wide range of variation in the relative wealth or poverty of households is encountered in many rural situations. In the first place these are differences in the accumulation and consumption of use-values, which in itself is unable to indicate socially significant differences at the level of production. Much of the time these differences in standards of consumption are related to factors that are random with respect to the relations of production. They include the vulnerability of individual households to disasters of the kind indicated above, sources of income outside household production (e.g. regular remittances of presents from relatives in wage or salaried employment), and the 'demographic differentiation' stressed by Chayanov which correlates the size and relative prosperity of households with their position in the cycle of generational reproduction. Advantages in the conditions of production which are initially distributed randomly (household size and composition, more fertile land, better access to sources of irrigation or transport, savings accumulated from wage-labour) can contribute to class differentiation but this is by no means a necessary development.

34. Differentiation in the materialist sense is tied to the conditions in which wealth becomes capital, when it is not consumed individually but productively through investment in means of production. It is this which gives a content to the tripartite classification of 'poor', 'middle' and 'rich' peasants in terms of the relations of production:

(a) 'Poor' peasants unable to reproduce themselves by household production exchange their labour-power on a regular basis and come to form a category reproduced through the scale of labour-power. It was in this context that Lenin warned against 'too stereotyped an understanding of the theoretical proposition that capitalism requires the free, landless worker' (Development of Capitalism in Russia, p.178). He was referring here to agricultural workers who retain a small plot for cultivation. The access to a small plot does not make them 'peasants' but insofar as it contributes to their subsistence reduces the wages paid by those who employ them. They constitute a rural proletariat in the process of formation.

(b) 'Middle' peasants are able to reproduce themselves through family labour and land but in specific relations with other strata of the peasantry and with other forms of production. It is these relations through which middle peasant households are constituted that determine the relative stability or instability of the reproduction of a middle peasantry.

(c) 'Rich' peasants or kulaks accumulate sufficiently to invest in production through the purchase of superior means of production and/or labour power; in short, insofar as they initiate and maintain a cycle of extended reproduction based on accumulation they come to form a category of capitalist farmers.
35. Several further comments are in order. Evidence of the exchange of labour-power is not sufficient to establish class differentiation. On one hand, it is not uncommon to find peasant households which both sell and buy labour-power for different purposes and at different moments in the annual cycle of economic activity. On the other hand, the exchange of labour-power may be concealed by forms of payment other than money-wages, and may be disguised by ostensibly ‘traditional’ forms of cooperation and reciprocity.

36. Differentiation in class terms is another dimension of the intensification of commodity relations to be added to our previous observations, in that the homogeneity of the conditions of household economy (as an economy of simple reproduction) is broken up as means of production are capitalized and labour-power becomes a commodity, exchanged on a systematic basis within the rural economy. However, differentiation of the peasantry is not a necessary condition nor effect of the intensification of commodity relations — this will depend on the concrete conditions in which intensification occurs.

37. It is worth recalling the original Russian connotation of ‘kulak’ as an ‘all-round’ agent of the extension of commodity relations — an economic agent who not only operates as a commercial farmer employing labour-power but also rents out farm machinery, acts as a local merchant’s and moneylending capital, investing in crop purchasing, retail business, transport and credit, and as a productive capital establishing small-scale processing and manufacturing enterprises. This is particularly important in Africa where, given the relative backwardness of circuits of exchange in many areas, capital accumulated in agriculture is often invested in mercantile and transport activities which yield a better rate of return than reinvestment in production. This can help account for the limited formation of agrarian capital and the limited differentiation of units of production simultaneously with the extension (and intensification) of commodity relations.

Capital, State and Peasantry
38. The question of conceptualizing the relations of production through which peasant production is constituted has not yet been posed directly, although it has been suggested that this question is to be pursued in the relations between peasant households and capital rather than by invoking modes of production other than the capitalist mode. The latter approach, that of various versions of the ‘articulation’ of modes of production, is precluded for reasons which can only be briefly summarized here.

39. Fuller discussion of the arguments against a peasant or simple commodity mode of production will be found in the papers cited in the introduction (para 2). It should be noted that formulations of a peasant or simple commodity mode of production (and some versions of a ‘domestic mode of production’) ultimately come down to relations within the unit of production (the household) and its mode of economic calculation (as a unit of simple reproduction). At best these formulations may elaborate the nature of simple commodity production as a form of production but cannot satisfy questions concerning the relations of production through which it is constituted, a problem that is not resolved by appealing to an articulated combination of peasant and capitalist modes of production.

40. Another type of articulation theory suggests that pre-capitalist modes of
production are subjected to a process of ‘dissolution/conservatism’ by the capitalist mode. In this case, the relations of production in which peasants are engaged represent particular and determinate combinations of pre-capitalist (e.g. the domestic community, the lineage mode, the feudal mode) and capitalist relations of production. While attempts to pursue a theory of articulation have been useful in emphasizing the variant modes of penetration of pre-capitalist formations by capital, and the variant forms of the development of commodity relations, they encounter several basic problems. One is that it makes little sense to talk of the ‘conservation’ of modes of production whose conditions of reproduction, it is admitted, have been destroyed by capitalism even if the forms of production have not been completely transformed. Second, theories of articulation tend to be functionalist in the sense that the degree and forms of ‘dissolution/conservation’ are held to be determined by what is functional for capital. Third, in these theories pre-capitalist modes of production and the capitalist mode ‘meet’ essentially at the level of exchange (although pre-capitalist ruling classes are sometimes suggested as the agency mediating capitalist relations of production).

41. Two alternative lines of approach to the relations of production have been indicated above. The first is that of investigating the relations of simple commodity producers with (various forms of) capital in varying concrete conditions. The second is that of investigating the internal differentiation of simple commodity producers (towards capitalist farmers and wage-workers). We have been at pains to emphasize that the latter ‘classic model’ is a special case of the first set of relations, and not its sole or necessary form of development.

42. Without providing any definitive answer to the question of the relations of production, a number of issues can be indicated within the framework employed here. One set of issues concerns how the conditions of production are determined by the circuit of capital, and the question of effective possession of the means of production and effective control of the production process. While the degree of effective control exercised by capital sometimes appears to be virtually total (e.g. as in out-grower arrangements, and as in some rural development schemes) — and this has prompted characterisations of small commodity producers as ‘semi’ or ‘disguised’ proletarians — the process stops short of full proletarianization in that the separation of the producers and the means of production is not complete, and the individualized production of the household is not replaced by a socialized production process, ‘set in motion’ by capital.

43. This suggests that the content of the relations between peasants and capital has to be related to the struggle between the direct producers and capital over the conditions of labour in the sphere of production and over the distribution and realisation of the product, up to the moment of complete expropriation and direct control of production by capital (which is the basis of a different kind of struggle). The resistance of peasant producers is manifested in a number of ways: refusal to adopt new cultivation practices or their sabotage (thus peasant ‘conservatism’), bearing in mind that such measures introduce further elements of risk in the already precarious basis of household production; peasant ‘strikes’ involving the refusal to grow certain crops or cutting back on their production, i.e. attempts to withdraw at least partially from commodity relations, or to find alternative sources of cash income (e.g. labour migration); evasion of crop-grading regulations and of the terms of exchange imposed by state or other monopolistic agencies of merchant’s capital (by smuggling and other forms
of illicit marketing) in order to realise a higher return to labour; as well as political actions, including acts of violence, against agents of capital and state functionaries who confront the peasants.

44. On the other side, the movement of capital to determine the conditions of small commodity production and exchange can be described broadly in terms of the 'vertical concentration' of the producers. The 'classic model' of capitalist development in agriculture incorporates the expropriation of the peasantry and the horizontal concentration of means of production (land, machinery, labour-power) in units of production equivalent to industrial enterprises in their organization of production and modes of economic calculation. Vertical concentration refers to the coordination, standardization, and (greater or lesser) supervision of the production of numerous individual small producers through a central agency whether this represents productive capital directly (as in out-grower arrangements), forms of merchant's capital which thereby actively intervene in the organization of production, or whether the agency is that of a cooperative or other state-managed scheme.

45. In *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* Lenin gave examples of the process of vertical concentration in conditions in which it was more profitable for productive capital to invest in processing and manufacturing enterprises consuming commodities produced by peasants (production it could find ways of regulating) rather than undertaking the production of those commodities itself. A.V. Chayanov in the final chapter of his work on *Peasant Farm Organization* also drew attention to vertical concentration brought about by the intervention of trading capital in the conditions of production, and by certain kinds of cooperatives.

46. At this point it is useful to make more explicit the operation of state forms of capital. It is generally true that in Africa, as compared with Latin America or Asia, there has been less direct involvement in agricultural production of large-scale productive capitals (for example, international agri-business companies). The further development of commodity relations since independence cannot be discussed without considering the role of the state, of which there are two important aspects in this context. The first is that the economic role of the state has to be located in relation to the possibilities of accumulation by the ruling classes which have formed since independence, whether they are reproduced and accumulate on the basis of individual or state property or some combination of the two forms. Their reproduction as classes and their ability to accumulate are tied to the development of the economies of the particular social formations in which they exist; that is, their ability to appropriate surplus-labour and to establish an accumulation fund is closely related to the further development of commodity production within their countries. In this sense, they have a more direct interest in the development of commodity relations within *any given country* than international companies which mobilize capital and switch investments on a global basis.

47. The second aspect (related to the first) is that the state acts to promote the extension and intensification of commodity relations in conditions where it might not be immediately profitable for productive and finance capitals to do so. The lack of capital for investment on the necessary scale as well as the lack of technical and managerial expertise to help explain the major role of aid (bilateral or multilateral as in the case of the World Bank) in the promotion of rural
development schemes which provide infrastructure for the further development of commodity relations (communications, energy, storage, local processing facilities, education and health schemes), or the planning and financing of production schemes (agricultural machinery, irrigation equipment, improved seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides etc.). In the past such schemes have concentrated on the production of export crops and have usually incorporated ‘progressive farmer’ incentives (which contribute to the differentiation of the peasantry). In recent years another strategy has emerged, not necessarily a contradictory one, of encouraging food production for national self-sufficiency and providing production inputs and credits to the ‘poorer rural sectors’.

48. The reasons for this new emphasis can be hypothesized — the chronic state of food production, particularly the commodity production of food staples in many African countries; the political instability associated with food shortages and inflationary food prices in the cities; the cost in foreign exchange of food imports to make up the shortages in domestic production. While capital in general has an interest in the extension and intensification of commodity relations, there is also the more specific interest in extending the market of those capitals engaged in the production of agricultural inputs (see Feder in *Journal of Peasant Studies* Vol.3 No.3, also S. George, *How the Other Half Dies*, Penguin Books), as well as the interest of the ruling class, already alluded to, in deepening the material basis of appropriation and accumulation. This means, in short, that alongside the commoditization associated with the differentiation of the peasantry and the investment of large-scale productive capitals in agriculture, a major impetus to the further development of commodity relations comes from the operation of state-managed forms of capital. These represent an alliance between the apparatuses of the state which organize the political, ideological and administrative conditions of the further penetration of capital into peasant agriculture, and the provision of the financial and technical means of this penetration by either private capitals of the particular form of finance capital represented by the World Bank and other aid agencies.

49. Rural development schemes promoted through this alliance need not have the same rationale nor the same objective effects as far as the particular forms of the development of commodity relations are concerned. In some cases they amount to a quasi-dispossession of the producers by converting land and other means of production into state property (in the economic sense, not necessarily juridically), which is related to the struggle of the direct producers and capital/state over the effective possession of the means and organization of production (e.g. the process occurring in Tanzania from villagization). Alternatively, differentiation may be encouraged with incentives to ‘progressive farmers’ which consolidates and develops further private property in land and other means of production. Again, the effect may be to reproduce a relatively stable middle peasantry engaged in specialized forms of commodity production in particular relations with productive capital (this situation is analysed with great specificity in the work by M.P. Cowen on household production in Central Province, Kenya). These different possible paths of development indicate the heterogeneity of forms of peasant production, the dangers of facile generalization, and the need in investigating particular peasantries to examine their relations with other forms of production and the overall development of commodity relations.

50. The second set of issues concerning the relations of production in which
peasants are engaged concerns the mechanisms and forms of the appropriation of surplus-labour. The most obvious solution to the question of appropriation is to see it as effected through exchange, the necessarily unequal exchange through which merchant’s capital (whether private or represented in public corporations — state marketing boards, crop agencies etc.) makes its profit. This solution is inadequate for two reasons. The first is that at a theoretical level it can only suggest relations between merchant’s capital and ‘independent’ commodity producers, whereas we have tried to argue that the site of capital-peasant relations in the first place is the struggle over the condition of production, which affects the specific modes of appropriation of surplus labour.

51. Second, the operation of the law of value in relation to peasant production is problematic. Short of full specialization in commodity production the reproduction of the producers and of the unit of production is realised partially through use-value production which lies outside the operation of the law of value (and may be said to ‘resist’ it). This is one key to the ‘cheapness’ of peasant produced commodities (more often noted in discussions of the ‘cheap labour’ of migrant workers): that the exchange-value of the commodities is lowered to the extent to which the reproduction of the producers is ‘subsidized’ through use-value production drawing on the labour of all members of the household above a certain age.

52. A second key to the ‘cheapness’ of peasant produced commodities is their competition with the same commodities produced under capitalist conditions (with a higher development of the productive forces and a higher productivity of labour — both for technical reasons and because of the socialization of the production process). The objective effect of this competition is the devalorization of household labour-time and hence of the value of the commodities produced. This makes it impossible to sustain the ‘unequal exchange’ theory put forward by A. Emmanuel and S. Amin which argues the exchange of unequal values, failing to distinguish this from the exchange of unequal amounts of labour (the relationship between labour-time and value being mediated by the co-existence and relations of different forms of production and of differential labour productivities in the circuit of capital as a whole).

53. It is because of the intrinsic backwardness of simple commodity production in peasant agriculture and its relations with capitalist production in agriculture and industry, that the value of commodities produced by peasants cannot be measured solely in terms of the labour-time required for their production, but is subject to all the determinants of exchange-value, which converge and are regulated at the level of the world market.

54. Of course for the peasant, as for the wage-worker, there is no ‘surplus-labour’ insofar as all labour is expended in order to meet the costs of simple reproduction. While the mechanism of appropriation of peasants’ surplus-labour takes the form of exchange, our argument suggests that appropriation has to be located first in terms of production. This raises the question of the production and appropriation of surplus-value, albeit in less determinate conditions than those of capitalist production. Several issues follow. Attempts to establish, at least in principle, the rate of exploitation of peasants and the mass of profit realised from such exploitation will need to take into account the ways in which peasant labour-time is devalorized through its relations with other economic forms in the social division of labour, both within particular social formations and at the level of world economy.
NOTES ON CAPITAL AND PEASANTRY

55. Second, the mechanisms of surplus-value appropriation would appear typically to be those of absolute surplus-value (lengthening of the working day, intensification of household labour). However, the extraction of relative surplus-value becomes a possibility with the intensification of commodity relations when these involve the widespread use of superior means and techniques of production (the production of a greater mass of commodities within the same time), and/or the reduction of the value and monetary cost of the commodities consumed by the producers — both of which reduce the time necessary for the reproduction of the producers.

Conclusion

56. These notes have tried to outline in a provisional way some of the issues raised by contemporary forms of the agrarian question in Africa, issues which clearly require far more theoretical and empirical investigation. No definitive solutions have been offered but the position taken here is that peasants have to be located in their relations with capital and the state, in other words, within capitalist relations of production mediated through forms of household production which are the site of a struggle for effective possession and control between the producers and capital/state. It may be inferred that in this way peasants are posed as ‘wage-labour equivalents’ (Clarke in Critique of Anthropology No.8, also Banaji in Capital and Class No.3), but in a relative sense that limits the subjugation and real subsumption of household labour by capital to the extent that the producers are not fully expropriated not dependent for their reproduction on the sale of labour-power through the wage-form.

57. These notes are also limited by their primary focus on the level of economic relations but the conclusions at this level of analysis — that there is no single and essential ‘peasantry’ — militates a fortiori against any such homogenization of peasants at the level of politics and ideology. There can be no uniform ‘model’ of class action by peasants nor any single and abstract formulation of the relation of peasants to revolutionary politics, whether such a formulation expresses a blanket optimism or a blanket scepticism concerning their ‘revolutionary potential’.

Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania

Andrew Coulson

The years 1946-76 cover the last fifteen years of colonial rule in Tanganyika, and the first fifteen years of Independence. In that period Governments attempted a wide range of policies relating to agriculture. The more important of these are summarised in Table 1. This paper attempts to bring out the historical sequence to show how the perceived weaknesses in one set of policies led to the choice of the next. A general conclusion is that those who controlled the State consistently misunderstood fundamental aspects of peasant agriculture, and over-estimated what the use of State power could achieve in rural development. More specifically the paper charts a conflict of interest between peasants and bureaucrats beginning in colonial times and continuing today. From a bureaucratic point of view, the peasants are an important section of the economy which they cannot fully control, but which they must attempt to manipulate to extract a surplus of food to feed the cities and export crops to extract the foreign exchange to maintain or expand the State. The peasants view the bureaucrats with mixed feelings: they know that the bureaucrats possess power — to set prices for crops or call in the police force, but they are uncomfortably aware that that power is often used to exploit their labour power.

Government is taking an ever-increasing part in stimulating development; the old idea that Colonial governments exist solely to maintain law and order with the addition of social services is fast giving way to a more active conception . . . John Wakefield, Planner of the Groundnuts Scheme (1946).

The 1974 Operation (Planned) Villages was not to be a matter of persuasion but of coercion. As Nyerere argued, the move had to be compulsory because Tanzania could not sit back seeing the majority of its people leading a 'life of death'. The State, had, therefore, to take the role of the 'father' in ensuring that its people chose a better and more prosperous life for themselves. Juma Mwapachu, District Development Director, Shinyanga (1976).

The Groundnuts Scheme

World War II influenced the ways in which Government looked at development. It demonstrated what could be achieved by management of a command economy run by the Government in collaboration with the multinational corporations. It encouraged beliefs in mechanical power, technological solutions to problems, and in the superiority of European (or American) expertise. The Keynesian revolution legitimised the use of 'aid' to relieve the situations in backward areas
of advanced countries, and the same logic was applied to the backward countries themselves.

These ideas were present to greater or lesser extent in the three main agricultural policies attempted in Tanganyika in the post-war years. The first, about which little more will be said in this paper, was the encouragement of white settlers. They were expected to have capital, and to quickly gain expertise if they did not have it already. Their main problem was lack of land, and it was this that brought the policy to a sudden halt in 1953, after the emerging nationalist movement had successfully taken the Meru Land Case to the United Nations. The second agricultural policy of the post-war years was the Groundnuts Scheme, in which European expertise was to be applied not in the private sector but on very large Government-run state farms. The third policy was ‘land development and soil conservation schemes’ under which the mass of the African population was compelled, by the threat of fines or imprisonment, to carry out agricultural practices supposed to be to their good.

The East African Groundnuts Scheme was suggested in 1946, by the General Manager of the United Africa Company, as a means of dealing with the post-war shortage of edible fats and oils. The Tanganyikan Director of Agriculture prepared the first outline plan. The more detailed proposals that were accepted by the British Labour Government a few months later meant that the Government took all the risk, while the United Africa Company and some other companies were employed as subcontractors on cost-plus contracts. The project was costed at £24 million (this included a new harbour and 150 miles of railway) and the target was the cultivation of three million acres of groundnuts. By the time the scheme was wound up less than ten years later £35 million had been spent, and what remained was little more than three large areas of cleared bush.

The failure was discussed in detail in the British press. It transpired that the planning had been rushed: only nine weeks had been spent in field reconnaissance, and much of this was from the air. No detailed mapping of soils or topography had been carried out, and there was a marked lack of information about rainfall patterns or likely crop yields (Frankel, 1950).

In more detail, the scheme failed for the following reasons:

1. The rainfall at the largest site was insufficient for groundnuts. This site had been approved on the basis of only seven years of rainfall readings at a site which was later shown to receive somewhat more rain than the land actually cleared. (Overseas Food Corporation, 1956: 31).

2. Some chemical tests of the soil were made, but no mechanical analysis. This would have shown up a clay content which ensured that the land set hard in the dry season, effectively confining agricultural operations to periods when the soil was wet. It would also have identified an abrasive content in the soil which led to rapid wear of implements. (Wood, 1950: 179-181; OFC, 1956: 31-32).

3. The mechanical equipment was untried in the conditions. (Wood, 1950).

4. Even with new machines there were problems with spare parts and maintenance, made worse by difficulties with inexperienced drivers and delays in clearing goods through the congested ports of Dar es Salaam and Mombasa.

5. Where groundnuts grew, as they did briefly at Urambo and Nachingwea, they were attacked by rosette disease, for which, at the start of the project, there
were no resistant varieties (OFC 1956: 33-5).

6. Headquarters sites at Kongwa and Nachingwea were built before adequate water supplies had been found. This would have made it impossible to switch to more labour intensive production methods, if this had been thought desirable. (Frankel, 1953: 151-2).

7. Although most of the points above were obvious to technicians in the field by the end of 1948, policy changes were not made until well into 1950. This was partly because responsibility was shared between a Board of Directors in London, a headquarters organization at Kongwa, and two leaders on each site (the second for the firms of contractors hired for the land-clearing operations). The London officials were particularly unwilling to believe that all was not well. (Wood; 1950: 147-150).

The most experienced agricultural officers in Tanganyika were involved in this project, and yet, of these seven reasons for failure, five were agricultural considerations of a most elementary kind. Rosette disease was identified as a major constraint on groundnut production in the literature produced by the Ministry, such as the handbook for extension workers, Rounce (1946), or the 1931 Annual Report. The possibility of soil compaction making cultivation difficult in the dry season is common in tropical agriculture, the vegetation at Kongwa was typical for a marginal rainfall area. And the difficulties with supplies and untested machinery should have been predicted by those who had served in the War. Blind faith in machinery and large-scale operations organized by Government led the most experienced agriculturalists of the day to use £35m on a project that had so many flaws that if it had not failed for one reason it would still have failed for several others.

**Land Improvement and Soil Conservation Schemes**

The Groundnuts Scheme was administered by the British Ministry of Food. The main activity of the Tanganyikan Department of Agriculture in the post-war years was the administration of land improvement and soil conservation schemes. Bye-laws covering almost every conceivable aspect of agricultural production were passed under the 1927 Native Authorities Ordinance and enforced with fines or imprisonment in Native Authority Courts, i.e. by the chiefs. The largest of these schemes were the Sukumaland Development Scheme, the Mbulu Development Scheme, the Uluguru Land-Use Scheme and similar schemes in the Usambara and Pare mountains, and the Iringa Dipping Scheme. But less formal schemes of similar conception covered virtually the whole country by the mid-1950s, and were the back-bone of agricultural policy towards small farmers in the period.

These schemes shared with the Groundnuts Scheme a belief in the correctness of Government technical prescriptions and a military type of organization. The detailed inspection of farms and prosecution of offenders was carried out by the Department of Agriculture, whose staff were thus effectively turned into an army of policemen. (Cliffe, 1964: 17).

By 1953 or 1954 the Sukuma peasant felt that he was being pushed around... Everywhere new rules, regulations and taxes seemed to require this, prohibit that, or take a few shillings yearly from his pocket. He had to tie-ridge and manure certain portions of his fields, plant specified minimum acreages of cassava (as an anti-famine measure) and cotton, plant at certain times and pull out cotton stalks by certain dates for burning after harvest, refrain from cultivating near gullies, cutting trees, or transporting cattle without a permit, have his cattle dipped or inoculated against disease, slaughter or sell a certain percentage of his
cattle each year and produce on request a certificate indicating sale or attesting that the hides from the slaughtered beast had been seen by the appropriate government officer. These were just a few of the more salient natural resources measures which had begun to accumulate by 1952. (Maguire, 1969: 30-31).

The bye-laws were unpopular. Passive resistance meant planting cassava seedlings upside down or seeds after they had been boiled in water. The other extreme was the rioting and civil disobedience in the Uluguru mountains during which an African was shot dead by a white policeman in July 1955. By 1956 it was no longer possible to enforce the rules. As soon as they were relaxed the terraces were broken down, the manuring and tie-ridging ceased, and it was clear that a moral victory had been won over the colonial state (Young and Fosbrooke, 1960: 166-7; Molloy, 1971: 60).

The effect was not just to undermine the trust of the people in the extension staff. More significant was the fact that the legitimacy of the chiefs was destroyed, in the eyes both of the peasants and of the colonial administrators. Austen (1968: 215) has shown that this process began before the war in parts of the country where the chiefs were used by the administration to enforce unpopular policies. The post-war schemes completed the process, and so destroyed the foundation of British colonial policy up to that time. The door was open for the nationalist politicians who, by promising the peasants freedom from this sort of oppression, quickly gained support in the rural areas, and were able to lead the country to Independence in 1961, only seven years after the foundation of their political party, TANU. It is now clear that the agricultural and economic logic behind many of the rules are wrong, so that the peasants were absolutely right to oppose them.

The rules about terracing in many parts of the Uluguru and other mountain areas were under suspicion even before the Schemes were abandoned. It was discovered that in one demonstration area terraces were completely sterile, and the 1956 annual report of the Uluguru Scheme concluded that rice yields are frequently better on untreated land than on terraces. These conclusions have recently been confirmed (Geografiska Annaler, 1972) in a study which also discovered that the most serious threat to the soil in the Uluguru’s was from landslides, the danger from which is greatly increased by the type of bench terraces forced on the peasants in the 1950s.

In Sukumaland, tie-ridging has been questioned because, while it undoubtedly results in soil and water conservation and so raises yields in dry years, it is intensive in its use of labour at a critical time of the year, and therefore reduces the total area that can be cultivated by a given labour force (Collinson, 1963: 30, de Wilde, 1967: 429-430). The same principle affects ridging, and so it too is only economic in certain situations (Rottenham, 1968: 69-70). Saylor (1970a: 27) showed that farmers who accepted the recommendation for cotton spacing suffered losses varying from 55 kilogrammes per hectare in Mwanza District to 85 kilogrammes per hectare in Shinyanga District; he also found, in 1969 at least, that it made no significant difference in which month cotton was planted — quite contrary to the extension advice always to plant early.

The problems with attempts to improve the cattle economy are similar. Dipping is fine if it can be carried out regularly, for the whole life of the animal; but if dipping ceases, as well it may if the supply of chemical and maintenance of the dip and water supply depends on Government bureaucracy, then the animal will
be more susceptible to disease than if it had never been dipped and had achieved a resistance to East Coast Fever. Destocking is of no benefit to an individual if grazing is communal unless all stockowners destock together; even then the poor suffer proportionally more than the rich. Thus Parkipuny (1976:28) is probably right when he claims that destocking will never be acceptable until there is a more or less even distribution of cattle — and in most parts of Tanzania this would mean revolutionary changes.

In retrospect, it is even questionable whether the crisis in soil fertility was not itself exaggerated. This is not to deny that there is soil erosion, or misuse of land in many parts of Tanzania. But twenty years later livestock numbers and cash crop production have both more than doubled without any dramatic crisis of soil erosion. Ridging was becoming popular in parts of Sukumaland even before the Scheme (Agricultural Department, 1938 Annual Report, p.7); the same report played down the dangers in other parts of the country:

It is only in the Lake Province ... that the land has suffered any visible drain of fertility through over-cropping.

Just as with the Groundnuts Scheme, many of the technical foundations of the Land Conservation Schemes were wrong. But the peasants were allowed no choice. And so time and resources were wasted:

Bench terraces were dug to order in the knowledge that they were useless; the Luguru deliberately chose sterile sites in order to avoid damaging fertile land: (Geografiska Annaler, 1972: 118).

The Focal Point Approach

By 1956 mass compulsion was no longer possible, and there was little alternative but to concentrate resources where there was hope of success.

Agricultural extension work in Africa frequently finds itself up against a brick wall of peasant conservatism, sometimes strengthened by political misconceptions ... It becomes necessary to withdraw the effort from some portions and to concentrate on small selected points, a procedure which has come to be known as the "focal point approach". Under this method limited areas or progressive individuals are chosen for the initial attack ... Once success has been achieved and appreciated at these points, it is then a comparatively simple matter to spread outward from them. (Department of Agriculture, 1956: 1).

The change of policy was rationalised by the use of ideology which described the African peasant as stubborn, lazy, ignorant, conservative, uncooperative ... failing to appreciate that there was often reason behind his refusal to cooperate with what the extension staff advised. It was inevitable that it would increase inequality. In the words of an economist a few years later:

Extension officers are ... expected to approach the interested and the important ones in a village and to group them together as progressive farmers ... The grouping together of the progressive farmers can be called an attempt to establish rural elites with progressive attitudes ... Extension work is thus exploiting the amazing difference which exists between good and bad, industrious and lazy, intelligent and stupid, farmers. (Ruthenberg, 1965: 65).

These selected individuals were to be given credit, a reputation through high-ranking visitors, newspaper reports, etc. and encouraged to hire labour. Although their numbers as a proportion of the total rural population were not great, these larger labour-hiring peasants soon existed in almost every part of the country (Gottleib, 1973). In two important areas — Ismani, where Awiti (1972: 61 and 75) found that 9% of the farmers held 53% of the land under cultivation, 96% of the capital equipment, produced 69% of the maize and earned 76% of the cash
income derived from maize in the area, and Mbulu (Raikes, 1971:95) — they soon farmed much of the best land and produced the greater part of the marketed surplus.

The possibility that a small group of farmers might become a land-owning class, with most of the rest employed as their agricultural labourers was opposed by Nyerere and TANU:

If we allow land to be sold like a robe, within a short period there would be only a few Africans possessing land in Tanganyika and all the others would be tenants ...

When a lot of people accept the introduction of a method which will enable a few people to claim ownership of a thing which is actually God's gift to all His people, they are in actual fact, voluntarily accepting slavery ... (Nyerere, 1958: 55-6).

The Administration was certainly conscious of the weak moral foundation of a rural policy based on helping the most prosperous farmers. As a counter-weight, they espoused the ideology of Community Development, under which new 'modern' methods of food preparation, child-care and health were to be brought to the community as a whole. Again the assumption was that the traditional practices were 'primitive' or 'backward', to be replaced in the main by 'superior' Western technology. It amounted to an attack on African culture. And since women were responsible for cooking, and child-care, most of this cultural attack fell on them. The Community Development Division recruited women staff, and had some influence where mission (i.e. European) influence was already strong (von Freyhold, 1972: 4-5). But its scale of operation was too small for it to successfully counteract the class formation of the focal point approach.

Since very few staff were employed, both agricultural extension and community development work were in practice elitist, whether they wished to be or not. As late as 1969 there were only just over 3,000 trained agricultural officers in the country, or approximately one for every 1,000 farm families (Second Five Year Plan, 1969: 35). It was inevitable that they would get better cooperation from some farmers who, if they were not big farmers already, would soon become so, a point that has been belatedly recognised in relation to the Green Revolution in India and other countries.

Production rose splendidly in this period, but a number of careful studies of the extension service suggest strongly that the extension workers had very little impact, except perhaps on some of the larger farmers. These studies have shown, firstly, the extent to which extension workers and other Government staff associate with each other, and with the richer farmers (Van Velsen, 1973: 159-196; Sender, 1974: 30). Secondly, they have shown that most extension workers visited an extremely small number of farmers. Hulls (1971: 6) found that the average extension worker visited only 73 households (some of them more than once) in a year. Cliffe et.al. (1968: 5) employed students from the University who accompanied extension workers during a week of their working lives. They discovered that the average extension worker worked a 32 hour week, of which about 9 hours was spent on farmers’ farms. But the time spent on other types of agricultural work (meeting in schools) totalled nearly as much.

But thirdly, the studies show the limited extent to which the farmers were actually following the extension recommendations: Hulls (1971) found that only 38% of the cotton in his sample taken across Sukumaland was planted during the recommended period (p.11); the average plant population per acre was about half of the recommended (p.16); only 3% of the sample used fertilizers
or insecticides (p.18), and 40% did not know why it was good to uproot and burn cotton stalks at the end of the season (p.23). He concluded (p.30):

There seems to be no valid reason for altering the conclusions that the Extension Service in Sukumaland is at present having no measurable influence on the cotton husbandry standards of the vast majority of farmers in Sukumaland. Since the major extension effort has been concerned with cotton production it seems extremely unlikely that such extension effort as there has been with other crops has been any more effective. In short, the failure to communicate modern agricultural technology to the vast majority of the farmers of Sukumaland appears to have been almost total.

Finally, and not surprising given the conclusions above, many studies have shown that much of the advice given by extension workers is not appropriate to small farmers.

The clearest case of this concerns inter-cropping. In almost every part of Tanzania, extension workers are still trying with very little success to persuade farmers to plant their crops in pure stands. Meanwhile the advantages of inter-cropping (planting more than one crop in a field) have been realised by agricultural economists, and it is now being demonstrated on research stations that a given field inter-cropped will frequently yield more than the same field divided into two halves, and each half planted with pure stand (e.g. Finlay, 1974, reporting on the Morogoro inter-cropping Project). Belshaw and Hall (1972, p.55) give nine separate reasons why intercropping can benefit farmers. These include agronomic reasons such as plants with different types of roots not competing for nutrients, labour savings (e.g. in weeding), and minimization of risk if one of the crops fails.

As long ago as 1963, Beck established that the low yields of many coffee bushes on Mount Kilimanjaro were not due to the presence of bananas and Collinson discovered that addition of groundnuts to a crop of maize did not lower the yield of maize. A recent study of Bukoba coffee brings out the complexity of the issues, and the potential dangers of disturbing a farming system established over centuries:

In the major coffee-growing areas of the Region, coffee is grown inter-planted with bananas, as it was in the pre-colonial period. This arises both from land shortage and from the nature of the husbandry system on the very poor and infertile soils of coastal Bukoba. These have been characterised by one agronomist as little more than a rooting medium and though this is an exaggeration, there is no doubt that they are very poor in plant nutrients. This was overcome by the Haya and their predecessors in the area by planting permanent banana Bibanja ... on which fertility was gradually built up by manuring and mulching with manure and crop residues, banana leaves, grass and manure from cattle grazed on the poor Rweya grazing land. In this way, soil nutrients from a relatively large area were concentrated upon the Kibanja in which beans, coffee and various other annual crops were inter-planted with bananas. The only cultivation outside the permanent banana plot was shifting cultivation of groundnuts and bambara nuts with a cycle of approximately one year's cropping and five to seven years fallow. Thus even if land was available, to produce pure-stand coffee would have required turning over part of the permanent food plot, on which fertility had been laboriously built up over generations and whose size would in most cases be tailored to family subsistence requirements.

Nevertheless, for the past 40 years, the agricultural extension service has been encouraging farmers to plant pure-stand coffee and considering this practice the sine qua non of modern farming ...

Since bananas provide virtually complete shade from the sun and are voracious users of both soil nutrients (especially nitrogen) and water, it may be appreciated that an optimal husbandry regime for pure-stand coffee may be largely irrelevant or incorrect for inter-planted coffee. The net result of this is that virtually all the extension advice offered (and sometimes enforced) ... is of relevance only to that small minority of farmers who have the space to plant pure-stand coffee. It is scarcely surprising that the extension service has had minimal success ... (Raikes, 1976: 2-3).
Belshaw and Hall give many other instances where the researchers who produced extension recommendations failed to put themselves in the shoes of small farmers. For example if land is available in plenty, a farmer wanting to increase production has the choice of intensifying his production (by use of chemical inputs) or of expanding extensively (by using more land). But often there is more risk in the former, even if he gets his inputs on credit. A recent conference between extension and research officers (Garnes, 1975) recommended use of fertilizer on maize; their own figures showed that the average gain in income from using fertilizers was only 50 shillings per acre; in a bad year a farmer who used fertilizer could easily be worse off. A series of trials (Sperling, 1976) subsequently showed that fertilizer on improved varieties of maize does pay in some parts of the country, but not in others, such as Tanga Region. But the extension service continues to advocate use of fertilizers almost everywhere.

Similar problems are found when it comes to the choice of crops recommended. Often these are not the best-paying crops in that area. Collinson (1970) demonstrated this with regard to a long campaign in parts of Tabora Region to grow aromatic tobacco when flue-cured tobacco was far more profitable. In Songea Region as late as 1968 each farmer was being compelled to grow one acre of fire-cured tobacco, a crop that gave an extremely low return for the labour involved. Coulson (1977) has made a similar point with respect to cotton in most of the Eastern parts of Tanzania. In 1974 the Government was proposing to make Dodoma one of the centres for its US financed National Maize Programme. By the following year they were recommending millet and sorghum — but changes in Government extension recommendations between maize (the crop with the greatest average yield) and millet and sorghum (the crops with the greatest yields in a poor year) go back far into the colonial period. The farmers are understandably confused by such sudden changes in policy.

Finally we can get an idea of the success of extension by looking at the projects claimed as success stories. In 1964 Ruthenberg published a well-researched defence of extension, and as examples of success he gave: the expansion of coffee growing; pyrethrum; higher cotton yields in Kilosa; Tanga cattle/coconut schemes, and the introduction of ox-drawn equipment. Today, with the possible exception of coffee, these cannot be regarded as successes. Even with coffee Saylor (1971) showed that production rose because of increased acreages rather than because of new methods and then for almost ten years it stagnated. Pyrethrum production subsequently declined, as did cotton production from the whole Eastern zone including Kilosa. The Tanga cattle/coconut schemes collapsed not long after Ruthenberg wrote (Groenveld, 1968), and encouragement of ox-cultivation has had to start almost from nothing every five years or so — see the First, Second and probably also the Third Five Year Plans.

In more recent years, the small-holder tea schemes in the Usambara mountains, in Bukoba, and in the Southern Highlands have been described as success stories (Moody, 1970; Luning and Venema, 1969; 39). But recently these schemes too have been criticised (Sender, 1974; 30); Raikes (1976c: 7) found that yields in the Bukoba small-holder tea project were only 50% of the anticipated, while only half the planned acreage had been planted.

In the period of the focal point approach production certainly rose. Some of that increase was no doubt due to the provision of better communications, and some to the availability of better varieties from the research stations. But the
main increases appear to have come either from a relatively small group of larger farmers using mechanisation and/or hired labour, or from the cultivation of greater areas (i.e. by use of more labour and land) by the mass of the peasants using the same techniques as before. Moreover, the evidence summarised above suggests that the role of the extension service in producing this increase can easily be exaggerated. President Nyerere had a considerable body of research behind him when he said that even if he was to sack all agricultural officers, agricultural production would in no way be affected, because the experts confined themselves to statistics and report writing anyway. (Report of an election speech, Daily News, October 21, 1975).

Marketing Cooperatives

At the same time as it followed the focal point approach in its extension work, the Government encouraged development of a cooperative movement to take over the marketing of peasant-grown crops from Asian and Arab traders.

A Cooperative Societies Ordinance was passed in 1932. The initiative to start cooperatives came from Africans, such as Joseph Merinyo who started the Kilimanjaro Native Planters Association in Moshi in 1925 (Rodgers, 1974) and Paul Bomani whose Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions, founded in Mwanza in 1950, rapidly became one of the biggest African-controlled commercial organizations in the whole Continent. Merinyo was a civil servant in the Moshi District Office, while Bomani had previously worked as accountant for the Mwanza African Traders Cooperative Society, a group of African traders in Mwanza town. Neither were typical peasant farmers: both were young, ambitious, educated Tanzanians, frustrated by the racial discrimination and indirect rule policies of the colonial Government, who found in the cooperative movement a way to African success in business.

In much of what they did they were supported by the colonial administrators. In 1933 Lord Lugard explained the reasoning behind this support:

The fundamental principle of the (cooperative) system is identical with that of Indirect Rule – which could be better named 'Cooperative Rule' – the essential aim of both being to teach personal responsibility and initiative . . .

The illiterate and very conservative agricultural majority is apt to regard with some distrust the trousered and Europeanized African as a townsman ignorant of the things that matter most. But as education spreads, the influence of the Europeanized native and of the press which he owns and controls and reads to village audiences tends to increase, and the peasant population becomes 'politically-minded' – a phase already reached in India, and already becoming visible in Africa. This changing outlook constitutes in my view one of the major problems of Africa today. The intelligentsia have the opportunity in this era of transition and adaption to be of inestimable service to their country, or to clog the wheels of progress by causing racial animosities and preaching doctrines as yet impossible of realization. Work in connection with cooperative societies will, as Mr Strickland points out, create new openings for the educated African. By engaging in such work he will no longer 'deprive the countryside of the mediation which he . . . might provide between the old dispensation and the new'.

Not the least attractive feature of this movement is that perhaps no other system offers better prospects of producing leaders from among the people. (Lugard, 1933, vii-xi).

Socialism provided the ideology, but otherwise it had no part to play. As President Nyerere was to point out more than thirty years later, there was no reason why such cooperatives should not be groups of capitalists combining together to improve their efficiency in buying and selling. But in contrast to a system of private traders, the cooperative societies ordinance gave the Government the control it wanted.
Lugard required cooperatives in Africa to avoid politics:

It will go far to disarm misgivings and assure support for the cooperative movement that Mr Strickland . . . is able to tell us that in no country whatever — with the exception of Great Britain . . . has this movement taken part in politics or agitation. Of the many thousands of societies known to him in India only one assumed a political attitude by adopting ‘Non Cooperation’, and thereby ceased to exist. (Lugard, 1933).

He insisted on close Government control in the form of a Registrar with the power to set up societies and if need be to liquidate any which do not obey the rules. The Registrar could thus decide the size of societies, and employ a cadre of inspectors and auditors to ensure that the societies were run in the interests of their members.

Cooperatives received support from the Agricultural Department, as the Annual Reports show. The agriculturalists disliked the Asian and Arab traders, principally because they could not control them, but also because they felt they cheated the African peasants. The Agricultural Department favoured Government control of marketing which required a lower level of bureaucracy to actually purchase crops from the farmers. Cooperative primary societies provided this lowest level of bureaucracy in a Government controlled marketing system.

In the nineteen fifties, cooperative development in Tanganyika worked out as Lugard foresaw it could. Once a cooperative was started it received support from the Administration, but also direction. For example, Bomani was not allowed to register his Mwanza cooperative societies until a suitable (Government) cooperative officer was seconded to watch over the development, and he was lucky to be sent one as sympathetic as Gavin Green (Maguire, 1969: 98). From 1932 on, the KNCU had to accept a European manager. He was eventually redesignated economic adviser, but in the early 1960s he was still there receiving as salary a percentage of the crop sold worth over £6,000 in 1960/61, and causing resentment among the university graduates of the period who felt he was keeping them out of jobs.

Keeping out of politics meant accepting certain forms of organization. For example the Kilimanjaro Native Planters' Association of 1925 consisted of a single organization covering the whole mountain (it later expanded to include Meru and the Pares as well). It held mass meetings, which inevitably meant that it spoke for the Chagga as a whole (this was especially important since there were many Chagga chiefs). But when it was reformed in 1932 as the Kilimanjaro Native Cooperative Union the Government insisted on a structure with at least one separately registered primary society in each chiefdom, with a Union nominally run by delegates from these societies. This gave the chiefs much more influence — and there were no more mass meetings. (Rodgers, 1964: 109).

In a similar way, Green insisted that Bomani organise the Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions on the basis of individually registered primary societies of 500-600 members (Maguire, 1969: 99). Bomani would have liked larger units, one for each of the Sukumaland chiefdoms. This did not prevent political organization — Maguire shows the important role played by the Mwanza cooperative movement in keeping a nationalist movement alive during the four years in which TANU was proscribed in the Lake Province. But it did mean that by 1960 it was generally accepted at the local level that the cooperatives were for marketing and not for politics.
Finally, the cooperative leaders had to accept that they would work in a framework of government controlled marketing: they would not be entrepreneurs. Legislation passed before and during the War enabled the Government to control farm prices, and to organise the disposal of crops to suit its interests. After the War the local produce boards were consolidated into national marketing boards, such as the Lint and Seed Marketing Board (for cotton — established in 1952) and a few years later, the Coffee Board. The grain crops were monopolised by the Grain Storage Department, but this lost money in the 1954/5 season when it was forced to export surplus maize at a loss, and was disbanded in 1956. From then on grain marketing was uncontrolled (i.e. left in the hands of Asian traders and millers) until just after independence when a new marketing board, the National Agricultural Products’ Board, was set up to buy grain crops, oilseeds, and cashew nuts from cooperative societies.

It was never argued that cooperatives were efficient in the sense that they could compete with Asian traders on a price basis. The agricultural staff argued that they gave orderliness to marketing which more than compensated for their higher costs. What they meant — and this is clear enough reading between the lines of the Annual Reports — was that they were a way of replacing the Asian produce buyers, who were as unpopular with the Government officials as they were with many of the peasants.

While there is obviously a tendency to exaggerate the stories of Asian exploitation in order to justify the cooperatives, there is little reason to doubt that it took place. It is not a coincidence that the VFCU grew out of an independent weighing scheme — where farmers could for a small fee get an independent estimate of the weight of their cotton before selling it to the traders. What is also not in doubt was that potentially the Asian and Arab traders could offer an extremely low-cost service. This was especially true when they combined produce buying with the running of a retail shop — for then the same lorry that brought consumer goods to the village could take the produce out, and no extra storage space was required: the crops purchased could accumulate in the storage space of the shop, as the stock of consumer goods was sold. The trader might not even need an overdraft, since as he sold his consumer goods he would gain cash with which to buy produce, and when he sold this produce to a larger merchant in the town he would again get cash to buy his next stock of consumer goods. There was no need to move large sums of cash around the country. All these advantages were lost with the change to cooperative marketing — and the costs were especially high when staff had to be employed all the year round in areas where the actual buying of produce was concentrated into six or seven months in the year.

Thus the cooperative societies had to be protected by compulsory marketing orders which made them the only legal purchasers of specified crops. In the case of coffee produced by Africans on Kilimanjaro this power dates from 1929 (Kriesel et.al, 1970; 41); with Mwanza cotton it was established in 1959, the year in which the VFCU first purchased all the crop, and confirmed in 1960 when Nyerere’s first administration refused to register ‘Saidia Waafrika’, an organization of African traders who wanted to buy cotton as well above the VFCY price (Maguire, 1969: 300-310 refutes the idea that Saidia Waafrika was merely a front organization for some Asian traders in Mwanza).

In view of all this it is hard to understand the enthusiasm for cooperatives, in the
cotton and coffee areas at least. There were sharp rises in prices of export crops in the Korean war boom of 1951-4, and no doubt many farmers credited these price rises to the newly-formed cooperatives, although they might well have occurred without them. (Bowles, 1976: 79). It may well have been necessary to seek a political explanation — acreages of crops grown and quantities marketed through the cooperatives rose alongside the growth of nationalist fervour as national Independence became a legitimate goal.

There was much less enthusiasm for cooperatives in the drier cereal growing areas. Here the margins deducted by cooperatives were known to the farmers, since cereals could be purchased from, as well as sold to, the cooperatives. The differential between the two prices quickly widened. Kriesel et.al. (1970: 36-7) calculated that single channel marketing of maize meant that the consumers' price rose by 50% in the period 1964-9, while the producers' price stayed constant. Moreover, since there was very little processing involved, there was no necessity to sell to particular processors, as with cotton or tobacco; if they wished they could simply store and eat the crop.

Thus in the food crop areas cooperatives had to be imposed. This was done after Independence:

When Tanganyika achieved independence in 1961 some important decisions were taken by the Government vitally affecting the movement. It was decided to embark on a crash programme for the organisation of cooperatives in vast sections of the country which until then were largely untouched by the movement: the central and coastal parts, Mtwara and Ruvuma in the south, and the western areas. It was decided that the cooperative form was well suited to the African setting and to the achievement of independence in the economic sense: control of the economy by the indigenous people rather than by expatriates and others non-African in origin.

Thus, the number of registered cooperatives increased from 857 in 1961 to 1,533 at the end of April 1966 ... To help bring about this great expansion the Cooperative Societies Ordinance was changed in 1963 so that the Registrar of Cooperative Societies no longer had the final power to refuse to register a cooperative because he was not satisfied as to its viability ... The political pressures were considerable. Societies were organised from on top, without genuine local demand or even understanding, but in their enthusiasm in the first flash of freedom, people went along. (United Republic of Tanzania, 1966: 5).

The result was inefficient, corrupt and undemocratic cooperatives. The Special Committee reported in 1966 that losses averaged around 3% of turnover in a sample of 300 societies (ibid: p.10). The farmers were aware of these situations, but unable to do anything about them because of the lack of democratic control at Union level. (Ibid: p.11).

The gainers included the committee men of the primary societies — often themselves the more successful progressive farmers of the focal point approach. They received generous allowances merely for attending cooperative society meetings. Migot-Adholla studied one particular society where each committee man received nearly 700 Shillings per year just for attending. The opportunities for fraud increased as the number of societies expanded faster than the supervisory staff of the Cooperative Development Division. When the cooperatives became the main vehicle for Government credit schemes for small farmers, the committee-men were usually the first to receive the credit, and often avoided repayment.

But Migot-Adholla (1969a: 238) concluded that most of the committee-men made their largest earnings from illegal transactions connected with the cooperative tractor schemes. In 1964 and 1966 the cooperatives were persuaded by Government to take responsibility for two large fleets of tractors. These
fleets operated at a substantial loss until the schemes were abandoned in 1969. The accounts showed that on average each tractor only ploughed 125 acres per year. Unofficially they often stopped on the way home and did some private ploughing for which the driver and the committee-member split the difference (ibid., p.238-9). Migot also documents the stories of mechanics and mechanisation field officers who were able to increase their incomes by using Government facilities and spare parts to repair private tractors (ibid., p.246-9).

A recent example of a similar process is the scheme to import dairy cattle for small coffee farmers on Kilimanjaro. In 1972 each in-calf heifer cost about Shs. 1,500. To qualify for the scheme one was supposed to have at least half an acre of improved pasture — on Kilimanjaro only a rich man could afford to uproot coffee and bananas on half an acre — so richer farmers received the cows. They were subsequently slow to repay the loans — for which the cooperatives rather than the individuals were legally responsible. So in effect the savings of all the farmers (i.e. all the members of the cooperatives) were used to buy the dairy cattle which went to the rich few.

Thus the cooperative did not challenge the focal point strategy. In fact they complemented it by allowing larger-scale farmers to expand their operations under a socialist ideology. At the same time they provided an institution where educated non-chiefly Africans could become officials, and demonstrate that they could use power.

Their success in the late 1950s alongside the opposition to the rules and regulations of the Land Conservation Schemes, provided the basis for TANU support in the rural areas. Both TANU and the British administrators (from Governor downward) could support cooperatives as a means of increasing peasant production and African control of marketing. Without the cooperative movement, TANU could not have mobilized rural support so quickly, and the British would have found it much more difficult to hand over power. (Compare Leys (1972, Chapter 2) for the way the British stabilized the Kenyan countryside in order to hand over power). In the early 1960s, when their inefficiency and corruption became obvious, they became the first nationalist institutions to be attacked by the peasants. The 1966 Report of the Presidential Committee of Enquiry into the Cooperative Movement and the Marketing Boards is a monument to the fact that the peasants were conscious of what was happening within five years of independence.

The Transformation Approach

If farmers could not be forced, or persuaded, the only alternatives were to ignore them altogether and go for mechanised agriculture controlled by outsiders (as in the Groundnuts Scheme, or on settler farms controlled by Europeans), or to take them right away from the traditional surroundings, to settlement schemes where in return for receiving land they might perhaps agree to follow the instructions of the agricultural staff. As the 1961 World Bank report rather optimistically explained:

When people move to new areas, they are likely to be more prepared for and receptive of change than when they remain in their familiar surroundings. And when people are under pressure to move or see the advantage of doing so, they can be required to abide by the rules and to adopt new practices as a condition of receiving new land (IBRD, 1961: 75).

The first settlement schemes of this sort were started on the land cleared for the
Groundnuts Scheme at Urambo and Nachingwea. The deliberate aim was to create yeoman farmers, who would learn modern agriculture on relatively small holdings, but then graduate to 30 to 50 acre farms, which they would own on leasehold, and farm with hired labour and machinery (Overseas Food Corporation, 1955: 159-163).

At Urambo the main cash crop was flue-cured tobacco, a crop whose world price reflected the assumption that it could only be grown by European settlers. Growing the crop profitably was certainly more complicated than most other crops grown by peasant farmers, and it required credit for fertilizers, for curing barns, and for labour. To receive credit the farmers depended on the recommendation of the extension workers. But the returns far exceeded those in the ordinary agriculture of the area and the scheme proposed (Scheffler, 1968).

At Nachingwea the plans were for mechanised production of groundnuts, soya beans and maize. Here prices were similar to those available to peasants growing the same crops, and fees were deducted to cover the overhead costs of the scheme. Settlers left the scheme as fast as they came in, until it was effectively abandoned in the early 1960s.

It was not till after Independence that settlement schemes became the major recipient of Government investment in agriculture. In the late 1950s there was very little difference between the tobacco settlement scheme at Urambo and a successful focal-point scheme with a new crop such as tea, cocoa, or pyrethrum (Fuggles-Couchman, 1964, passim, especially p.61ff). In each case the result was development under close supervision and when the price relations were right production rose.

Ujamaa and Villagization

It remains to consider the post-independence agricultural policies ushered in by the speeches of President Nyerere. The main dates and policy changes have been summarised in Table 1.

In April 1962 Nyerere published his pamphlet Ujamaa – the Basin of African Socialism in which Ujamaa is described as the socialist attitude of mind which, in the tribal days, gave to every individual the security that comes of belonging to a widely extended family. The paper is a statement of philosophy rather than a programme for action or institution building.

Later in the same year, in his inaugural address as President, Nyerere introduced the idea of villagization:

The population of this country is about ten million. Of that ten million not more than 250,000 to 300,000 live in the towns. All the rest work on the land. Which is to say that Tanganyika is, in fact, a country of peasant farmers . . . For this reason, in drawing up our three-year Development Plan, Government decided that to lay the greatest emphasis on agriculture.

But it is ridiculous to concentrate on agriculture if we are not going to make any change in our old methods of cultivation and our old ways of living . . . The hand-hoe will not bring us the things we need today . . . We have got to begin using the plough and the tractor instead. But our people do not have enough money, and nor has the Government, to provide each family with a tractor . . . The first and absolutely essential thing to do, therefore, if we want to be able to start using tractors for cultivation, is to begin living in proper villages . . . Unless we do . . . we shall not be able to use tractors; we shall not be able to provide schools for our children; we shall not be able to build hospitals, or have clean drinking water, it will be quite impossible to start small village industries, and instead we shall have to go on
depending on the towns for all our requirements; and even if we had a plentiful supply of
electric power we should never be able to connect it up to each isolated homestead (Nyerere,

Spontaneous settlement schemes where groups of committee farmers lived and
worked together sprang up all over the country. A rough estimate (nothing
better is possible) suggests that by the end of 1963 there were about 1000 of
these. (Cliffe & Cunningham, 1968: 133).

Some were started by groups of workers on sisal estates who had expected that
when Independence came they would be able to take over the estates: instead
they were told to go away and start producing on their own. About half the
total — including some of the sisal schemes — were started under the auspices
of the TANU Youth League. Some involved groups of unemployed from the towns,
often with more enthusiasm than experience of farming. Yet others — like the
villages of the Ruvuma Development Association in south-west Tanzania —
grouped themselves around leaders of exceptional ability who were dismayed
by the visible consequences of the focal point approach, and were willing to try
out new ways of living.

Most of the spontaneous settlement schemes did not last more than a year or
two. Conditions were tough. 150 ex-sisal labourers at Mbambara (Wisner et.al.
1975, p.380) slept in four communal houses, eating the food provided from the
earnings of ten of them who went on working as labourers on a nearby estate,
while the remainder planted communal maize between the rows of their growing
sisal crop. They had come with the hope of getting rich, but when the price of
sisal fell by nearly half in 1964 it was clear that this could not happen for many
years to come. Mbambara was held together by the leadership of Bernado
Kilonzo and survived: many other villages gave up.

In the 1964 First Five Year Plan the Government concluded that the long-term
future for agricultural development lay in the transformation approach:

The zones with average population density which receive 30" to 50" irregularly distributed
rainfall are usually the object of extensive and shifting cultivation most often associated
with nomadic pastoralism. Although the improvement approach can contribute to increasing
production in these zones, it cannot in all events give rise to very substantial results because
of the dispersal of the farmer producers, the impoverishment of the soils by the practice of
bush burning and considerable difficulties in the marketing of products. The policy which
Government has decided to pursue with respect to all these zones consists in re-grouping and
re-settling farmers on the most favourable soil, installing there a system of private or collec-
tive ownership, and introducing supervised crop rotation and mixed farming that would
permit the maintenance of soil fertility.

Such a policy, being the first aspect of the transformation approach, aims at the creation of
villages which become centres of social and commercial development. By 1980 it is hoped
that about one-half million people will be settled in this manner on new locations.

... The second aspect of the transformation approach is the reduction of agricultural
underemployment in the relatively densely populated areas. In this regard Government
policy is aimed at river basin development since these offer large potential for resettlement
with their vast stretches of fertile areas ... by 1980 the Government hopes to settle in the
Pangani, Wami and the Kilombero river basins approximately half a million inhabitants ...
(United Republic of Tanzania, 1964: 15).

The agricultural assumptions here once more show a total unawareness of the
achievements of traditional agricultural systems (including pastoralism) in
increasing production without long-run soil deterioration (Kjekshus, 1976). And
they greatly underestimated the problems — social as well as agricultural — of
bringing the river basins into agricultural production — discovery of widespread
salinity soon brought the process virtually to a standstill in the Wami and Pangani valleys.

The actual projects of the First Five Year Plan were less ambitious. Most of the work in the river basins was to be investigative, and there was only enough money for 49 village settlement schemes (Newiger, 1968: 254). On the ground, the Village Settlement Agency never controlled more than 23 schemes — and this total included seven taken over from the Overseas Food Corporation on ex-Groundnuts Scheme land (Rural Settlement Commission, 1966: 9). There were also a number of supervised settlement schemes — some of the old spontaneous schemes which the Government considered suitable for more investment.

In April 1966 Vice-President Kawawa announced the end of the policy. The schemes had been heavily over-capitalised, the settlers had worked far less hard than settlers on spontaneous or unassisted schemes, and had expected the Government to give them everything. Over £1 million had to be written off (figure based on Newiger, p.268). Instead Kawawa suggested improving existing traditional agriculture through the cooperative movement, a policy seconded by Paul Bomani, who suggested that ‘the creation of a need and desire on the part of our farmers to acquire a variety of consumer goods should . . . be the strategy of rural development’ (Bomani, 1966:24). But Nyerere was convinced that this strategy would in practice mean a return to the focal point approach, and by the end of 1966 a whole series of events, of which the failure of the settlement schemes was only one, demanded a more militant set of solutions (Pratt, 1976: 227-237).

February 1967 saw the Arusha Declaration followed by nationalisation of the banks, the largest multi-national corporations, eight import/export houses, and the most profitable sisal estates. In March 1967 President Nyerere introduced ‘Education for Self-Reliance’. And in September 1967 ‘Socialism and Rural Development’ specifically rejected rural capitalism (i.e. the focal point approach) and turned the ujamaa of the 1962 paper into a national policy: from that time on it was the responsibility of ‘every rural worker who understands the objective’ to found or encourage ujamaa villages (Nyerere, 1967c: 357):

We can be made to work together by, and for the benefit of, a slave owner, or by, and for the profit of, a capitalist; alternatively we can work together voluntarily for our own benefit. We shall achieve the goals we in this country have set ourselves if the basis of Tanzanian life consists of rural economic and social communities where people live together for the good of all, and which are interlocked so that all of the different communities also work together in cooperation for the common good of the nation as a whole (Nyerere, 1967c: 347-8, emphasis in original).

This can be done. We already have groups of people who are trying to operate this system in many parts of the country. We must encourage them and encourage others to adopt this way of life too. It is not a question of forcing our people to change their habits. It is a question of leadership. It is a question of education. (Nyerere, 1967c: 365).

Yet as early as 1968 some Regional Commissioners were forcing peasants into ujamaa villages. Nyerere wrote another pamphlet to make it quite clear that ujamaa villages were voluntary:

The ujamaa village is a new conception, based on the post-Arusha Declaration understanding that what we need to develop is people, not things, and that people can only develop themselves.

No one can be forced into an ujamaa village . . . For if these things happen — that is if an outsider gives such instructions and enforces them — then it will no longer be an ujamaa village (Nyerere, 1968b: 67).
The same people recognised that ujamaa living would have to start with small groups of people rather than with large villages:

The policy is, in fact, the result of learning from the failures which we have had and from the successes of those small groups which began and grew on a different basis... the decision to start must be made by the people themselves...

For if a group of 20 people discuss the idea and only 7 decide to go ahead, then that ujamaa village will consist of 7 people at the beginning. If 15 decide to start, then it will begin with 15... There is no other way forward, because... 5 who come unwillingly can destroy the efforts of 15 who want to work out a new work pattern for themselves. (Nyerere, 1968b, p.68).

But shortly afterwards Nyerere seems to have decided that this sort of ujamaa would be both slow and divisive. And so during the next year - 1969 - there were four policy changes which between them legitimised the use of force and led to a national policy of large villages. “Presidential Circular No.1 of 1969” ordered all Government departments to give preference in their investment policies to the new villages, and a “Regional Development Fund” was created putting one million shillings a year (later this amount was doubled) into the hands of each Regional Commissioner, to be spent on small projects. The sudden availability of funds allowed officials and politicians to promise groups of farmers who agreed to start villages that they could be provided with whatever social services they wanted. Since local politicians were judged according to the number of villages they could report in their areas:

Continuous bargaining set in between the villagers and the district authorities... The District would offer aid and infrastructure on the condition that the villagers responded by self-help activities. The official document in which this bargain - as defined by the District - was laid down, was the village five-year plan, which stipulated some often utopian labour targets for the village and the aid which the District had promised to supply in return. In some cases... the promised aid was more than the villages wanted, and Districts often found that they could not supply what they had promised within the specified time. On the other hand, no village has ever tried to meet the unrealistic targets that have been set... though most have attempted to show that they are doing something. (Freyhold, 1972:12).

Villagers soon found that the officials had very little interest in whether or not production succeeded, and that they were very reluctant to de-register villages. The water supply, school, or dispensary still arrived even if communal work diminished, or disappeared. Production figures from communal farming were never collected, but by 1973 (if not much earlier) they would have been negligible as a proportion of total production.

Presidential Circular No.1 of 1969 was important for a second reason. It went out of its way to give the same weight to State Farms as a means of raising production, that it gave to ujamaa villages. The Second Five Year Plan (then in its final stages of preparation) was revised to include provision for 40 state farms under the Ministry of Agriculture. In July 1969, with totally inadequate preparation, investment was begun in 15 of these. All proved extremely unprofitable.

There were very few civil servants available with experience of managing large-scale agricultural production, and the Government accounting system encouraged purchase of expensive farm machinery before basic management systems had been worked out. Costs were high, yields were low, and there was considerable corruption. Responsibility for the state farms was transferred for a Division of the Ministry to a Government parastatal holding company, the National Agricultural and Food Corporation (NAFCO). Several farms were closed down. All
AGRICULTURAL POLICIES IN MAINLAND TANZANIA

along they had been opposed by many officials in the Ministry. The sudden appearance of the policy in 1969 showed that the President no longer saw ujamaa as the only acceptable way of raising agricultural production.

The third significant event of 1969 was the abolition of the Ruvuma Development Association. In theory and practice, the 16 villages of the RDA were closer to the President’s writings of 1967 and 1968 than any other villages in the country. These villages had begun as small groups of committed individuals, and not only their cash crops but a large part of their food requirements were communally grown. They also innovated in devising an educational programme in which every child was able to specialise in particular skills that were needed in the villages; much of the President’s paper ‘Education for Self-Reliance’ was modelled on the school at Litowa. Above all, the 16 villages, although geographically dispersed, were interlocked and shared their experiences and expertise through regular meetings, just as Nyerere’s paper ‘Socialism and Rural Development’ recommended.

From the start the RDA had enemies. In the early years these included expatriates who felt that it was attracting settlers away from the village settlement schemes. Later they included several regional commissioners — one of whom tried to force every peasant farmer in the region to cultivate one acre of fire-cured tobacco. In marked contrast to individual isolated farmers, those in the RDA had an organisation through which they could argue back — in this case pointing out correctly that fire-cured tobacco was a time-consuming crop, whose low yield and low prices did not justify the labour involved.

In September 1969 Nyerere allowed the RDA to be gazetted as an illegal organisation. Its assets were confiscated by the Party, and the most advanced ujamaa organisation in the country was destroyed. He was no longer satisfied with the speed of progress that would be implied by leaving ujamaa to small groups of committed individuals. Nor was he prepared to allow a new form of differentiation — between committed socialists and the rest — to emerge. He specifically rejected calls for a vanguard party, or for cadres such as the Social and Economic Revolutionary Army of the RDA. Instead he stressed the need for a frontal approach — i.e. the need to involve everyone in the country, and, in particular, everyone in TANU, in some move, however small, towards socialism. The RDA was one of the first casualties of the frontal approach.

The fourth event of 1969 was ‘Operation Rufiji’ and it gave an indication of what this frontal approach might consist of. The peasants who cultivated in the Rufiji valley were some of the richest in the country (Sandberg, 1974: 1-14, describes the agricultural system). Their use of the flood waters of Tanzania’s largest river for irrigation has been compared with the agriculture of the river Nile, and provided food surpluses for export to Zanzibar long before the coming of colonial rule. Yet in British days the Rufiji peasants had manipulated the Government into giving them famine relief in years of extreme floods, and this continued after Independence. By 1968 the Government was determined to change things. The logic of the situation demanded a system of crop insurance or crop storage, but the Government thought that the cause of its problems was the fact that people lived on the flood plain. It decided to make the Rufiji a demonstration of the frontal approach.

In 1968 the amount of famine relief given was less than usual, and in 1969 the
Government used the opportunity of unseasonable floods to insist that the people move right out of the valley. Village sites on higher ground were laid out by surveyors from the regional offices. Several of these were some miles from the flood plain itself, or on the opposite side of the river from much of the best land. Many houses were built by the National Service. Communal cultivation failed: some officials hoped that the villagers would continue to cultivate in the valley, and arranged for fields there to be ploughed by tractor, but the farmers refused to harvest the resulting crop of rice, perhaps fearing that this was a nationalisation of the land and that they would be turned into agricultural labourers. Despite the failure of communal production, several of the villages were registered as the most advanced type of ujamaa village.

So here was the new policy — the semi-compulsory movement of all the farmers in an area into ‘planned villages’ usually with 250 or more families. It could be seen as a return to the villagisation ideas of 1962. Certainly communal work was no longer the most important feature. From the Government point of view it had the great virtue, in contrast to the RDA’s type of socialism, of being acceptable to the technical officers and political appointees in the Regional and District offices, who welcomed the possibilities for planning and the execution of these ideas that were now opened up.

Between 1970 and 1973 more of the ‘Operations’ were planned and implemented. In 1970 ‘Presidential Planning Teams’ were sent to Dodoma (three teams), Kigoma, Mtwara, Tabora, Mara, West Lake, and Sumbawanga, to work out sites and plans for villages into which people would move the following year. The teams were composed of young Tanzanian specialists, and led by members of the TANU National Executive Committee. They had to work fast — one of the Dodoma teams allowed only one day per village plan. Some of the specialist members of these teams clashed with the more experienced staff in the regional offices. One Regional Commissioner, Dr Klerruu of Mtwara Region, disowned the Presidential team, and instead used his own staff for village planning. By the end of 1970 Mtwara Region reported 750 villages, out of only 1956 villages in the whole country.

Klerruu was transferred to Iringa Region — where, by the end of 1971, there were 651 villages registered. But on Christmas Day 1971 he was shot dead by an African capitalist farmer in Ismani, not far from Iringa town. Klerruu was a Chagga, the most academically qualified politician in the country (with a Ph.D. in political science) and the most effective at founding villages — few others would have been out campaigning on Christmas Day. He was trying to persuade the Ismani labour force to group themselves into villages and take over the land of the small group of African capitalist farmers who had got rich by commercial farming of maize. After Klerruu’s death, politicians were reluctant to use ideas of socialism or confrontation to persuade farmers to form villages. Moreover production declined — not least in Ismani. The 1972 TANU statement on agricultural policy Siasa ni Kilimo (politics is agriculture) pointed this out, and was noticeable for its lack of emphasis on ujamaa as a means of increasing production. Instead it stressed technical methods — oxen, early planting and spacing, use of manure etc.

Operation Dodoma was implemented in 1971 and 1972 and Operations Chunya and Kigoma in 1973. In July 1972 there was a ‘decentralisation’ of Government. More accurately it was a decentralisation of the civil service: for elected local
government was abolished and replaced by a civil service administration under
the Prime Minister — the civil servants to man this administration had to be
‘decentralised’ from Dar es Salaam to the Regions. A similar reorganisation
of the Party strengthened the salaried Party officials at the expense of elected
representatives, and for the first time created a strong well-paid party bureaucracy
at regional, district, divisional and ward level. It was clear from the start that the
main job of both the Government and the Party bureaucracies was to organise
Operations. In September 1973 the Biennial Conference of TANU approved the
resolution that the whole population should live in villages by the end of 1976,
and in December a Daily News headline quoted Nyerere as saying ‘To Live in
Villages is an Order’.

The move was effectively completed by the end of 1976, by which time over 13
million people were reported to be living in villages (Nyerere, 1977, p.41) — a
village being defined as a site acceptable to the Party, with adequate agricultural
land and at least 250 families. The move was not voluntary, as numerous research
reports make clear: nor had Operation Rufiji or Operation Dodoma been volun-
tary. Nor, probably, could any movement of people on this scale have been
voluntary. A recently published account by one of the ‘decentralised’ civil
servants makes it clear how it was done:

In some instances houses were burnt down when it was realised that some people, after
having been moved, returned to their former homes after a few days. But this method was
rarely used and in all cases officials concerned made sure that goods and food were removed
from the houses prior to their being put on fire. Many more people moved on their own
without waiting for Government assistance. There are two good reasons why this happened
in Shinyanga District. First, there was news from neighbouring Geita and Maswa districts,
that peoples’ houses were being put on fire indiscriminately, sometimes with food and goods
inside them. So the people decided not to wait for Government help lest a similar catastrophe
happened to them as well. Second, good leadership. For example, in the Tinde Ward . . .
everybody had moved on his own and had started building by the time the ‘moving squad’
arrived . . . The TANU chairman in this area . . . is an excellent leader, notable in the district.
(Mwapachu, 1976, 7-8).

Reports from other regions confirm that a large amount of force, or the threat
of force, was used, so that the majority of peasants found it prudent to move
first and argue later.

This is not to say that all peasant farmers opposed the move. Many no doubt saw
the advantages of being nearer to roads, or to schools. Others may have had
reservations about moving away from land they had farmed for years, but then
house movements had been regular events every five or ten years in many areas.
They might have resented the timing (if, as in Shinyanga, it was done during one
of the main agricultural seasons), but generally they were given a choice of
which village site to move to.

The village sites had been chosen by Ward Development Committees and approved
at District and Regional level. Even so there were problems in some areas, as
Nyerere himself admitted in his speech celebrating ten years of the Arusha
Declaration:

Some few leaders did act without thinking, and without any consultation with the people
who had to move. Therefore we did have cases of people being required to move from an
area of permanent water to an area which is permanently dry. We had other cases where the
new villages were made too large for the amount of land available. And there were cases
where people were rounded up without notice, and dumped on a village site, without time
to prepare shelter for themselves.
But it is absurd to pretend that these cases were typical of villagisation. They did occur; and they were bad examples of leadership failure. (Nyerere, 1977, 42).

The move certainly involved short term costs. It was implemented in the middle of several very poor years for food production, when Tanzania had to import food worth 1,200 million shillings (equal to one cow worth 500 shillings for every family in Tanzania, as Nyerere dramatically pointed out in a speech to the Nation, Daily News, August 16, 1974). Mwapachu reports that cotton production was directly affected by the villagisation, and other cash crop growing must have been affected too.

There may also be an agricultural cost in the long run. For the soil in areas of cultivation immediately around the new village sites will be in danger of getting exhausted, and where there are many cattle there will be a danger of soil erosion along cattle tracks and near watering places. In fact in any area with cattle there are definite advantages in a dispersed pattern of settlement: it ensures that all the available grazing areas and water points are used, while enabling the animals to be stockaded near the farmers’ dwelling houses at night to protect them against theft or attack by wild animals. Even with crop agriculture, it is often easier to guard the crops against attack from baboons or birds if the farm-house is near the crops.

In order to try and understand the move, we shall consider some of the theories that have been put forward to explain it. At the time the President, the Daily News, and most of the bureaucrats (Mwapachu’s paper is a very fair exposition) defended villagisation for reasons very similar to those that Nyerere had given in 1962: that it would make it easier (or possible) for the Government to provide services — water supplies, schools, dispensaries, agricultural extension, or famine relief in a bad year. This is undoubtedly the reason why the over-riding requirement for village sites was always that they should be on or very near all-weather roads.

There are two simple difficulties with this argument. The first is that these are all services that the Government has to pay for — in fact services which the Government was finding it difficult to maintain even before villagisation. Why should the Government create impossible demands for services which it must have known it could not fulfil? The second problem with the argument is that in several parts of the country (e.g. the Sukuma heartland) people were moved even in areas where the population density was so high that the services could have been provided within perhaps a range of two miles of every house, but without more than a very few people having to move. It is clear that provision of services cannot have been the only consideration behind the move.

More recently Nyerere has claimed that the object of the move was to increase agricultural production. This is certainly an over-riding imperative of national policy. Frances Hill (1975) sees it as the motive behind all Nyerere’s moves. But neither she, nor Nyerere, explains precisely how villagisation is supposed to increase production. We have suggested above that in the short run, and very probably in the long run too, it might have exactly the opposite effect. Leonard (1976) has suggested that communal work will now be used to finance a process of accumulation. This would occur if every village was forced to cultivate a communal farm, the proceeds of which were invested in village projects. The failure of communal farms in the past gives little reason to think that this would be successful.
Finally, a set of arguments deriving from Shivji (1976) and put forward in different ways by Boesen (1976) and Leonard (1976), claim that the object of villagisation is for the officials to control peasant production and thus achieve control of all the means of production in the country. In Boesen’s analysis, as in Coulson’s of 1975, there are two antagonistic classes, the peasants and the bureaucrats, with the bureaucrats unable to produce themselves and thus dependent on getting production out of the peasants. Leonard adds a third class, the kulaks, or emerging African capitalist farmers and small businessmen. In his view collective agriculture is the only alternative to kulak production if peasant agriculture is to be expanded in scale and ultimately raised to a higher technical level. (Leonard; 1976: 18).

Control over the peasants can mean another attempt to enforce minimum acreage rules, or other rules governing crop and animal husbandry. Minimum acreage rules were indeed introduced in many parts of the country during 1974 and 1975. Leonard goes much further and confidently expects communal agriculture to be imposed in the near future, and to be used to extract surplus from the rural sector as happened in the Soviet Union. Thus once the first stage against the kulaks and traders had been taken, there was, in his view, no alternative but for the state to take over the organisation of production and surplus extraction which otherwise the kulaks and traders would have carried out. Leonard (1976: 18) recognises that ‘in the process the bureaucracy has inherited the kulaks’ objectively antagonistic relationship with the peasantry, with a much heightened consciousness of its existence’, but he still thinks that the State will solve its problems of production, at least enough to guarantee its survival.

The bureaucracy has already been driven to seek solutions which by-pass the peasants altogether. There has been a very considerable expansion of state farms. Since the abortive 1969 attempt by the Ministry of Agriculture, these are now run by a series of parastatals – NAFCO (mainly cereals), the National Ranching Corporation, the Dairy Farming Company and the Sugar Corporation. All of these have received foreign technical assistance and investment – NAFCO from the British and the Canadians, the livestock corporations from the World Bank, and the Sugar Corporation from the Dutch. The Sugar Corporation in particular has invested in hugh labour-intensive plantations, specifically rejecting both small-scale technology and the use of outgrowers to any large extent (Phillips, 1974, 11-15; Raikes, 1976b).

Tanzania was, perhaps, lucky in that its strategic importance was suddenly heightened by Frelimo’s success in Mozambique. It became clear that Independence in Zimbabwe could be delayed for only a few years more, and that Tanzania would have a major influence on the form this took, and hence on the whole political complexion of Southern Africa. The Tanzanian emphasis on equality, rural development, and education fitted in with some of the views of MacNamara, and of many Social Democrats in Europe, and this enabled most of the Western aid donors to justify aid to Tanzania.

The greatly increased foreign aid for agriculture (to approximately 400 million shillings a year) lessened the short-term problems of production. This aid included gifts of food grains in 1974/5 from the US, Canada, various European countries, and even small contributions from North Korea and India. It also included World Bank IDA credits for every crop of importance, and for village plans in Kigoma, Tabora, Mwanza and Shinyanga Regions (villagisation, unlike ujamaa, has an
attraction to donors such as the World Bank as a way of bringing orderliness into rural investment). USAID is involved in producing and multiplying improved varieties of cereals, and in an important project with the Maasai pastoralists; Sweden has financed rural water supplies and grain storage; West Germany is heavily committed in Tanga Region; Denmark gives more aid to Tanzania than to any other country; and so on. The staff of the headquarters of the Ministry of Agriculture can be forgiven for thinking that it is more important for them to keep on good terms with the aid donors than to bother about what happens to the peasants.

Conclusion

To prophecy the future in such a complex situation would be rash indeed. It clearly depends on the extent to which the ruling (bureaucratic) class continues to believe that it, and it alone, holds the key to increased agricultural production.

A look at the history of the last 30 years should encourage it to be cautious. Ever since the Government started intervening directly in agricultural production, in the Groundnuts Scheme, it has made technical mistakes which have led to failures and waste of resources. It was wrong to think that it could produce groundnuts by mechanisation; wrong in making the peasants construct bench terraces to protect the soil in the Ulugurus; wrong to spend so much time fighting inter-cropping; wrong to encourage the uncontrolled registration of cooperatives after Independence; wrong in the planning of the settlement schemes; wrong in state farms; wrong to suppress the Ruvuma Development Association in 1969; wrong to rush through villagisation without some counting of the cost in terms of production.

The cost is not only financial. The social cost is an uncooperative peasantry. Before colonial times they devised agricultural systems (in Ukara Island, in the Rufiji, the irrigation systems on Kilimanjaro, and many others) that were agriculturally rational uses of nature's raw materials. In the 20 years of the focal point approach they demonstrated that in certain conditions they could innovate and increase production. The motivation then was of course the possibility of getting rich. It seems very unlikely that Tanzania's problems of agricultural production will go away while bureaucrats think that they understand what peasant farmers ought to do and see the solution to those problems in terms of forcing the peasants to work.

We are departing from our normal practice in publishing a long list of specific references, as one aim of this article is to survey a host of historical evidence, and the citing of sources is both necessary to help establish his claims and potentially useful to students of Tanzania — Ed.

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Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Policy Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-</td>
<td>The Groundnuts Scheme 3 sites — 50,000 acres cleared, but very little harvested. Cost £35 million.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>White settlement Settlers encouraged to re-open farms abandoned during the War, and some new land alienated. Abandoned after the Tanganyika African Association took the Meru Land Case to the UN in 1953.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-</td>
<td>Land Development &amp; Soil Conservation Schemes 6 big schemes, but smaller schemes covered virtually the whole country. Based on byelaws which every farmer had to follow. Abandoned in 1956 after peasant opposition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-</td>
<td>The Focal Point Approach, or The Improvement Approach Extension workers concentrated on progressive farmers or groups. Renamed the Improvement Approach after Independence to avoid the impression that only certain groups were covered, but the policy stayed much the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-</td>
<td>Marketing Cooperatives selling to Government Marketing Boards Cooperatives expanded (with some Government assistance) to cover the whole country by the early 1960s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Settlement 'Under Close Supervision' Land cleared for the Groundnuts Scheme was used to establish African Capitalist farmers on plots of 20-100 acres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-</td>
<td>‘Spontaneous’ settlement Schemes Perhaps 1000 groups started villages and communal farms, but only a handful survived after 1963.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-</td>
<td>‘Planned’ settlement Schemes The main agricultural policy of the 1964-69 Development Plan. But only 23 schemes were started, most of which were expensive, over-capitalised failures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>schemes, including river basin development (‘The Transformation Approach’) Socialists communities — small groups of committed individuals carrying out communal agriculture. There were about 800 of these at the end of 1968.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-</td>
<td>Ujamaa Villages Starting with ‘Operation Rufiji’ in 1969, the Government moved all the people living in an area into ‘planned villages’. Communal cultivation was de-emphasised. In 1973 the policy was extended to cover the whole country. By the end of 1976, 13 million people were living in 7,684 villages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-</td>
<td>Villagisation These became national policy in 1969, and 50 of them were included in the 1969-74 Development Plan. Most of these failed, but the Government continued to seek foreign partners to develop new state farms or plantations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-</td>
<td>Crop Authorities The Marketing Boards gradually extended their activities to cover extension, provision of agricultural inputs, and processing, so that over time they gradually made Cooperative Unions redundant. These were abolished in 1976. Under the 1974 Ujamaa Villages Act, the new villages took over the crop purchasing functions of the cooperative primary societies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TANZANIA STUDENTS PROTEST POLITICIAN'S SPOILS

The documents here explain the circumstances in which over 300 students from the University and two other institutions were summarily dismissed. Some reports have said that a few students were detained, and this has not been confirmed or denied.

At the end of May 1978 President Nyerere announced the intention of reinstating the students, but this is apparently to be conditional on certain undertakings by them and (for some) in five years' time. Meanwhile the criticisms the students made in their memorandum to the party of the decision of MPs and Ministers to award themselves huge rises in the light of overall policies and the economic situation, and their more basic questioning of the nature of the Tanzanian state in a leaflet they distributed (in Swahili) to the public, these are still very relevant questions.

MEMORANDUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM STUDENTS TO CHAMA CHA MAPINDUZI (CCM), 5 MARCH 1978

"CCM should put leaders on the correct path"

The birth of the Party is the result of conflict in the various strata within the society. The party was born in order to safeguard and perpetuate the interests of those who are exploited, persecuted and oppressed or to liberate those who are exploited, persecuted and oppressed. It is in this situation of struggle that the two parties of TANU and ASP were formed to liberate Tanzanians who were being oppressed and exploited by German, British, Arab and American imperialists. The peasants and workers under the leadership of these two parties, in their desire to eliminate feudalism, imperialism, and capitalism sacrificed everything to liberate themselves from this situation.

Our two parties i.e. TANU and ASP continued successfully leading the people until we attained flag independence. We now had our own leaders, we had a seat in the UN, we also had diplomatic representatives in other countries. But from their declarations and resolutions, the two parties demonstrated very clearly that we had not achieved complete liberation. This is made obvious in the 4th section of TANU Guidelines of 1971, which says:

The present situation in Africa is that there is not a single people of any African country who have attained true liberation. Africa is still a continent of people who are gripped in
the misery of exploitation and persecution. This means that revolutionary political parties in independent African countries, like TANU and ASP, are still parties of liberation.

The dissolution of TANU and ASP was not an end to the struggle. The birth of CCM had the aim of carrying on the struggle against exploitation, colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. This task is made clear in the preface to the CCM constitution, which says:

We have together decided to form a new party for continuing with the struggle for socialism in Tanzania, together with the struggle for the liberation of Africa, on the foundation laid by TANU and ASP. The party which we shall build must be a strong vehicle in its structure and especially in its policies and actions. These must be revolutionary to exterminate totally all kinds of exploitation in the country.

The people’s hopes in CCM
Tanzania’s peasants and workers are aware that the struggle is still going on, for they know that even now their economy is still under imperialist control. Even the Chairman of the Party in his important speech at Ibadan, Nigeria, in August 1976, reiterated that we had not yet achieved economic independence, and that it would therefore be idle to talk of a national economy in countries which are still neo-colonies. That is why, in clarifying this question, the CCM constitution Section 5 para 7, 14, 16 and 17 explains lucidly which form the Tanzania revolution of peasants and workers will take. To emphasize this, we quote the following:

paragraph 7
To safeguard the rights and development of peasants and workers, and particularly to ensure everybody’s right to get pay equal to his work.

paragraph 14
To ensure that the spending of the country’s resources concentrates on the advancement of the people’s welfare, particularly on efforts to eliminate poverty, ignorance and disease.

paragraph 16
To ensure that all kinds of favouritism and injustice are eliminated in our country.

paragraph 17
To continue to fight against colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism and all kinds of discrimination.

The True Position of CCM in the Struggle
Just as in everyday life we distinguish between a person’s words and his actions, so in the struggle we must distinguish between constitutions, guidelines, resolutions, declarations on the one hand and actions of the party on the other, in order to be able to weigh the successes and failures of the Party.

This is the time to examine what has been done or sanctioned by the Party, keeping in mind the true objective of the Party, that of achieving socialism and self-reliance. The Government paper of 27 February 1978 announced the decision of MPs to increase their salaries and benefits. This action has shocked the peasants and workers, particularly since we must consider the present conditions of this country’s economy, as we know it and as we are informed of it by government and Party leaders. It is clear that the whole economy is in bad shape. The price of goods essential to peasants and workers have risen tremendously; the standard of living of peasants and workers of lower categories is very low; 20% of the workers have recently had to be made redundant because of the bad condition of the economy; on top of all this the country is in the grip of the calamity of cholera which is spreading like wildfire. Yet our leaders, our MPs,
whom we have elected so that they could safeguard the interests of the workers and peasants, have sat in Pemba and agreed to increase their salaries and fringe benefits twofold...

The real job that we expected the MPs to do, that of discussing the 5-year development plan, as had been planned, this important work was postponed without any reasons being given...

While the peasants and workers keep tightening their belts in order to pay back the loans which, we are told, were taken on their account from international banks, the MPs and various leaders of the Party have forgotten that we are in the midst of a bitter struggle. Instead, they have decided to take from the people even the little that remains. The difficult situation we are in is manifested clearly by instances like that of the problem of the tobacco farmer who will have to sacrifice 60% of his rightful earnings in order to pay back loans from the World Bank.

The programmes for carrying out our revolution do not reveal that we are really serious about building socialism. We seem to totally throw overboard our aim of building a socialist economy, when we assign the various development plans for the regions to different capitalist countries, like Kilimanjaro to the Japanese, Dar to the Canadians, Tanga to the West Germans, Coast to the Swedish, etc. Since when have capitalists been able to build socialism?

Do the actions described above really agree with the objectives of safeguarding the interests of the workers and peasants as stated in Section 7 of the Party Constitution?

Does the way the nation’s resources are spent as has been shown — on fat salaries and fringe benefits for leaders of CCM — emphasize the people’s development, especially in efforts to eliminate poverty, ignorance and disease, as stipulated in Section 14 of the Party Constitution?

Does the practice of allowing capitalist countries to plan our economy in the rural areas, and of piling up debts while continuing to get loans agree with Section 7 of the Party Constitution, of fighting neo-colonialism? If this is the true situation, then the Party must put leaders on the right path.

Thus we present the following recommendations:

1. The new pay structure for MPs, passed in Pemba, should be cancelled immediately, and the whole question taken to the peasants and workers, who are in effect their employers and electors.

2. The whole structure of paying benefits and salaries in the Party should be examined by the Party.

3. The minimum salary level and the prices of the peasants’ crops should be examined and raised, and the Government should subsidize the prices of essential goods for peasants and workers.

4. The high-level leaders of the Party and government should refrain from their present practice of opposing revolutionary actions which tackle fundamental national issues, even if these actions infringe upon their interests, by using bureaucratic hurdles.
TRANSLATION OF LEAFLET
ISSUED BY DAR ES SALAAM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

To all citizens:

This morning, Sunday the 5th March, 1978, we, the students of the University of Dar es Salaam organized a demonstration from the University to the city. The purpose of the demonstration itself will be explained further down, but we would first like to point out that in this demonstration we were confronted with ruthless and concentrated police brutality.

As soon as we arrived at Manzese we met a contingent of police who threw tear gas at us and started to baton us indiscriminately. Our demonstration was peaceful and none of us had a weapon of any sort. We did not even throw a stone, but the police attacked us in the most brutal fashion. Many of us, including women, were seriously injured as a result of the police ruthlessness. Nevertheless, we were not discouraged and continued with our demonstration after regrouping ourselves. Our aim was to go to the offices of the Government newspaper, Daily News, on Maktaba Street where we planned to read out our memorandum in front of reporters. Instead, as soon as we arrived there we were surrounded by the police amid intimidation and threats of more brutality. Because our intentions were peaceful we sat down in order to avoid any disturbance. Just then, we saw police vehicles arriving at the scene and starting to load the students into the vehicles. A large group of our comrades is now, without any offence, under the police custody.

We condemn this police ruthlessness. We know that the order to round us up was issued by high authority, and the ordinary policeman was simply used as a club to oppress his comrades. This incident has made it clear to us that the state is an instrument of oppression of the downtrodden of this country.

Now why did we demonstrate? We had organized this demonstration in order to oppose the step taken by parliament in its recent sitting in Pemba where the salaries and fringe benefits were increased substantially. Now they will be paid bigger salaries, and in addition to getting a variety of other benefits, they will be paid fat gratuities after serving the parliamentary term of office.

This step has been taken at a time when workers and peasants are in great suffering and misery: their real income continues to decrease, the cost of commodities continues to rise, various commodities are not available, essential services continue to deteriorate, cholera continues to spread in the country, and a host of other tribulations. At a time when we are facing all these problems, the honourable members of parliament sit down to increase their salaries and fringe benefits! Why wouldn't they increase the salary of the lowest paid? Why wouldn't they reduce the price of essential commodities which are needed by the citizens?

These are the questions which we ourselves failed to answer and that is why we decided to organize a demonstration in order to express our opinions hoping that they will be listened to and reflected upon by those concerned. But our expectations were not correct. Instead of being listened to we were beaten up and arrested by the police — in a country which boats to be building Ujamaa!

After today's incident, we now think we have an answer to our questions. We believe that the action of the parliament is in conformity with its obligation in our class-ridden society. The parliament is a state instrument whose function is to enact laws which promote the interests of the exploiters and which suppress
the interests of the workers and peasants. The parliament is not an instrument of the downtrodden, it is only a part of the State whose major function is to oppress the downtrodden. The police too is an instrument for oppressing the downtrodden and for protecting the interests of the exploiters. That is why it was necessary to be beaten up when we ventured to raise the questions concerning the incomes of the big-shots.

Therefore, this is what we should know from today: the interests of the workers and peasants can never be championed by the Parliament in this country. The job of the parliamentarians is to champion their own interests together with the interests of their fellow exploiters. The peasants and workers have no choice but to fight themselves for their own interests.

We, the students, earnestly implore all peasants and workers to join us in opposing the action taken by the parliament and we thank the students of the Water Institute, Ardhi (Land) Institute, various workers, and all citizens who come forward to join hands with us in today’s demonstration.

WORKERS, PEASANTS, PROGRESSIVE STUDENTS, AND ALL CITIZENS WHO OPPOSE EXPLOITATION: UNITE.

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ERITREA: INTERVENTION AND SELF-RELIANCE

The first of the two documents from the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) is a statement of their position on the most recent events and on the role of various international forces, especially the Soviet Union and Cuba, who they claim, despite undertakings not to get involved in Eritrea, already had a presence there in March 1978.

Two arguments are advanced to support the actions of these countries: that the Eritrean question is not one of self-determination (and is thus different from Western Sahara) but of changing the frontiers of Africa; that the Eritrean liberation struggle has forfeited any support from ‘progressive’ forces as it is a puppet of the most conservative Arab states and Iran. “The Sudanese-Egyptian-Saudi front is . . . trying to impose rightist movements — imperialist fiefdoms — in Ethiopia”, says Fidel. While there is some partial truth in this, the EPLF claim it is not true of them and that they are still observing a liberation strategy of “self-reliance”. The second document spells out some of the theory and the practice of this self-reliance.

PROSPECTIVES OF PEACE IN THE ERITREAN QUESTION

. . . In 17 years of armed struggle against US-Israeli backed Ethiopian colonization, the Eritrean people have been subjected to barbarities that have few parallels in history. Now, when the Eritrean people are on the verge of victory the conflict is being internationalized with forces of all colours interfering to rob the Eritrean people of the victories they have scored in long years of resistance. While US imperialism and Israel are still active in and intensifying their support to the Ethiopian military junta, Soviet military junta, Soviet military hardware sold on long-term credit to Ethiopia in the last 6 months alone amounts
to almost US$1 billion. Contrary to what was being claimed some months back as to the exact role of Cuban troops in Ethiopia, all sides now admit that the 12,000 Cuban troops are actively fighting. Two thousands of these are in Asmara. What should be stressed here is not only the quantity of the arms being poured into Ethiopia but the quality of the destructive weapons. Along with American F-86s and F-5s, MIG 19s, 21s, and 23s are flying side by side and sowing destruction. American M41 and M-60 tanks are rumbling side by side with Soviet T-34, T-54, T-62 tanks and amphibians and sowing terror. As in Vietnam cluster bombs, napalm and phosphorous bombs are being used systematically in a scorched earth policy.

Ethiopian objectives are the physical destruction of the Eritrean people — and thus maintain control of Eritrea. To this end, the bombardment with napalm of villages and towns in the liberated areas has more than quadrupled in the last weeks. The residential areas, all economic infrastructures in Massawa have been turned into ashes. From Massawa alone more than 30,000 people have fled the town and become refugees — some in their own country and some in the Sudan. The hospital in Keren, whose service was mainly limited to the civilian population, has been napalmed. These acts of naked aggression have, to a great degree, impeded the Eritrean people from reconstructing and consolidating the liberated areas and disrupted the economic situation. But this is only a preamble to a greater tragedy that is in the making. Recently the capital, Asmara, has witnessed the arrival of large stocks of armaments and thousands of troops, among whom are Cuban troops. Ethiopia is preparing electrified barbed wire for the whole city of Asmara with which it intends to keep the civilian population as hostages. Apart from creating naval bases in the Dahlac Islands from which to bombard Massawa, there is massive troop reinforcement in Tigrai, South of Eritrea.

In this situation the Eritrean people have to:

(Either)
a. Capitulate, and thus abandon a revolutionary process that has far-reaching significance not only to the Eritrean people alone but to the entire worldwide revolutionary forces.

(or)
b. Persist on the road of protracted people’s war, counting on our forces primarily and consolidating our internal unity until the demand of “Nothing short of total independence” is met.

For the Ethiopian aggressors, too, two roads are open:

a. Continuation of its futile war of aggression until defeat, which means the senseless destruction of human lives and material resources which could be used in the economic development of the Ethiopian people, or

b. The road of peace — that of dialogue, of the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Eritrean people to national independence and sovereignty and accept to live in good neighbourly relations with the Eritrean people.

In view of these facts, the Central Committee of the EPLF in its last regular meeting . . . has issued a statement directed towards the international community:
1. To the UN and OAU.
The UN and OAU have until now, in clear contradiction to the declared principles in their respective charters, given a deaf ear to the Eritrean people's just, popular and revolutionary struggle. While strongly criticizing their unprincipled position, we call on all peace-loving member-states in these two organizations to condemn Ethiopian atrocities in Eritrea clearly state their support to the Eritrean struggle and use all means at their disposal to exert pressure on the Ethiopian regime to stop its senseless war of aggression and genocide in Eritrea. In the absence of such stand, while affirming our resoluteness to persist in armed struggle, we bring to their attention that they are partly responsible for these injustice and destruction.

2. To The Ethiopian regime's supporters:
The massive support that is being given to the Ethiopian regime is, no matter what the justifications are, directed against the liberation of peoples and is a concrete contribution to Ethiopia's war of annihilation in Eritrea. While fully convinced that arms will not decide the outcome of the war, we would like to remind all those countries involved that they will shoulder the bulk of the responsibility of this criminal and counter-revolutionary war. As a pre-condition of peace we request that all foreign troops — Ethiopian, Cuban, South Yemeni and Soviet — should be withdrawn from Eritrea. Failing to take such measures, the EPLF strongly warns of the consequences that will result from this intervention.

3. To those countries interfering in our internal affairs:
As efforts are being made to reach principled unity between EPLF and ELF, a number of countries in the surrounding region are actively scheming to sabotage the unity efforts while at the same time to consolidate in Eritrea forces through which they can impose their influence and through which they can physically interfere in Eritrea. The recent declarations by Osman Saleh Sabbe in which he claimed that Ethiopian troops, with Soviet and Cuban support, broke through EPLF lines has far reaching implications. Time and again Sabbe has made appeals for 'Arab friends' to send 20,000 troops to 'liberate' Eritrea. His last statement is therefore an invitation to these '20,000 liberators'. Presently, 1200 mercenaries are being trained in Iran and some other countries, and a part of these has already reached Eritrea. The EPLF will frustrate these conspiracies aimed at robbing the Eritrean people of the gains of the revolution. The Eritrean people are their own liberators and any attempt to interfere in our internal affairs, any mercenary, whatever his origin will be fought with ferocity.

4. To all governments and humanitarian organizations:
To provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to the hundreds of thousands of Eritreans suffering from famine and disease caused by Ethiopia's arrogant war of aggression and to take urgent measures to alleviate the plight of 6,500 Ethiopian prisoners-of-war whose presence in the hands of EPLF. Despite all efforts by EPLF, in the last two weeks 70 prisoners of war have died because of typhoid. Endemic disease is liable to spread and the EPLF will not bear the responsibility . . .

Speech by EPLF Representative,
SELF-RELIANCE . . . ONLY WAY TO VICTORY

World Revolutionary experience has shown that unswerving adherence to the principle of self-reliance is an absolute necessity to lead the struggle for national liberation and proletarian revolution to victory. Self-reliance is a question of political line. It means developing an independent political line for one's struggle on the basis of an analysis of the concrete conditions of your country in the light of the universally applicable truth of Marxism-Leninism. Self-reliance means to rely on the masses, to mobilize them and release their boundless energy and revolutionary zeal. It means to rely primarily on the material and human resources of your country.

Self-reliance is not a tactical necessity imposed on a revolutionary movement by internal hardship or external pressure. As Comrade Enver Hoxha has pointed out: 'Self-reliance is not a temporary policy imposed by circumstances, but an objective necessity for every country, big or small, advanced or backward, a principle applying both in the liberation wars and the proletarian revolution, and in the construction of socialism and the defence of the Homeland' (Report to the 7th Congress of the PLA).

The revolutionary principle of self-reliance is vehemently attacked and distorted by the imperialists, reactionaries and opportunists of all hues, who misrepresent it as an attitude of withdrawing into one's shell, 'going it alone', 'opposition to internationalist aid', etc. Others narrow the scope of the principle, taking only one aspect — the question of the major source of the material supplies of the struggle.

Self-reliance, however, does not mean opposition to internationalist aid and solidarity. It does not signify national seclusion and narrow-mindedness. What it means is that relying on one's own efforts is primary and decisive, while outside aid is secondary — important but not decisive. Outside aid can only complement the self-reliant efforts of the people, but should never substitute for it. If it does, the consequences are disastrous. Self-reliant struggle is the only real foundation for fraternal aid and solidarity, which find their loftiest expression in the mutual support of peoples' waging self-reliant struggles. On the other hand, reliance on outside support opens the door wide open to undue pressure and interference and paves the way to dependence. What is more dangerous, it encourages isolation from the masses, indifference to their needs and attitude. It is only when you strive to be self-reliant that you have of necessity to root yourself deep among the masses and rely on their inexhaustible energy and wisdom, and continuously work to raise their cultural, political and technical level.

Self-reliance assures the active role and participation of the masses, develops their self-confidence and guarantees that they become and remain masters of their revolution and country. On the other hand, only a liberation movement that follows a correct line and is deeply rooted among the masses can be self-reliant. If a liberation movement is not rooted in the masses, then it cannot be self-reliant and is bound to end up relying on imperialism and reaction. The principle of self-reliance is therefore an important touchstone with which to distinguish a genuine liberation movement from a sham.

Self-reliance and the Eritrean Struggle

The Eritrean armed struggle was not started on the basis of self-reliance. It was
launched on the ridiculous belief that the shooting of a few rounds of ammunition would draw the attention of the UN which would then 'grant' Eritrea its independence. The leaders of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) pinned their hopes on the UN and on neighbouring countries whom they called upon to raise the question in the UN. They paid no attention to the task of mobilizing and organizing the masses for protracted armed struggle.

The consequences of this reactionary line and policy were disastrous. The ELF was progressively isolated from the masses who had greeted the launching of the armed struggle with deep enthusiasm. On the military sphere, although numerous battles were fought and heroic feats performed, the victories could not be consolidated and no stable base areas were built, as the ELF leaders were not interested in waging protracted struggle. Abroad, the revolutionary anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, anti-zionist and anti-feudalist line of the struggle was distorted in order to curry favour with this or that would-be supporter. The door was opened wide open for various countries to interfere in the internal affairs of the Eritrean Struggle. Bitter experience soon showed the bankruptcy of the reactionary line and policy of the ELF leaders. To this day, however, there are elements within the Eritrean movement who rely on outside support and have no faith in the heroic Eritrean masses.

The leaders of the ELF still place primary emphasis on external support. They have explicitly stated, that the countries which have won national liberation 'cannot solve their internal and external problems on their own by following the principle of "self-reliance".' (*Ghedli Hizbi Eritrea*, No.16, November 1976) Here the ELF leaders are resorting to the usual opportunist distortion of self-reliance (which they even put in quotation marks), presenting it as an attitude of 'going it alone', in order to cover up their real opposition to the revolutionary principle.

The Osman Sabbe clique — a handful of reactionaries trying to rig up a 'third front' in Eritrea — is notorious for its blind faith in weapons and external support, its contempt for the masses, and its sellout of the people's interest to the imperialists and reactionary regimes. Osman Sabbe has made numerous statements exposing the out and out lackey nature of his clique. For example, on May 5, 1977, speaking on the junta's preparations for a new "offensive" on Eritrea, Sabbe said: 'The Eritrean struggle will be crushed in three months if we do not receive huge assistance from the Arab countries.' (Quoted in the *Washington Post*) Osman Sabbe has even called on US imperialism to come to the 'aid' of the Eritrean people, proving once again that unless one relies on the masses, he is bound to end up relying on imperialism.

The Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) was born in 1970 out of the long and bitter struggle of the democratic forces inside the ELF. Summing up the experience of the Eritrean struggle, the EPLF, right from its birth, educated its fighters and the masses on the necessity of waging protracted armed struggle on the basis of self-reliance. It sternly denounced the reactionaries in the Eritrean movement who trampled on the national democratic principles of the revolution to satisfy the whims of various countries. The EPLF resolutely fought and repulsed the efforts of the Sabbe clique and other reactionaries to make it succumb to their dictates by threatening to cut off supplies to the field. In September 1975, the Sabbe clique, at that time in control of the Foreign Mission of the EPLF, actually cut all supplies to the field in an effort to impose the
reactionary ‘Khartoum Unity Agreement’ on the EPLF. The EPLF denounced the blackmail and resolutely declared, ‘We will not barter our principles for a mess of pottage. Self-reliance is the underlying basis for the proper execution of our political line’ (Vanguard, Vol.1, No.13, January 1976).

Self-Reliant, Peoples War
The EPLF implements the principle of self-reliance in all fields – military, economic, social, foreign affairs, etc. In the military sphere, the EPLF firmly maintains that ‘Self-reliant protracted people’s war is the only way to victory’. It relies on the masses to defeat the Ethiopian occupation troops who are armed to the teeth by imperialism and zionism. It has formed a formidable and steeled people’s army from among the peasants, workers and revolutionary intellectuals – a people’s army which has learned warfare through warfare and trained its commanders and cadres in the heat of battle. The EPLF has also established the people’s militia which defends the liberated acres and assists the people’s army. In major battles, such as in the battles to liberate the cities of Decamere, Keren and Nacfa, the entire masses – men, women, children and the old – assist the people’s army and militia by transporting ammunition and supplies, nursing the wounded and even attacking the enemy with whatever weapons in their hand. The EPLF has also mobilized the masses to construct air shelters to frustrate the enemy’s savage air war.

On the question of weapons and other military supplies the EPLF has raised the slogan, ‘Destroy the enemy with his own guns and bullets’. It has captured huge quantities of heavy and light weapons – including tanks, armoured cars and heavy artillery – from the Ethiopian aggressors. In the first seven months of 1977 alone, the EPLF has captured over 10,000 light and heavy weapons. The constantly growing people’s militia is being armed almost exclusively with captured enemy weapons. By the beginning of 1976, 50% of the EPLF’s people’s army was also armed with weapons captured from the Ethiopian aggressors. The EPLF manufactures spare parts for weapons, makes brand new rifle butts and repairs damaged weapons. It has started the production of its own hand grenades. It also produces bullet and pistol cases.

Self-reliant Economy
In the Economic Sphere – the national democratic programme of the EPLF calls for the building of an independent, self-reliant and planned national economy. The foundations of the economy of the new, independent Eritrea are being set up in the liberated areas where the EPLF is developing agriculture, establishing small scale industries and setting up a transportation system.

At present, the EPLF gives highest priority to the achievement of self-sufficiency in food. Although Eritrea has rich, fertile land and its people are hard working, colonial domination and feudal exploitation had turned it into a grain importing country. While the foreign capitalists grow fruits, vegetables and other cash crops for export, making millions of dollars every year, the Eritrean people are forced to starve. The Ethiopian aggressors’ genocidal policy of burning crops and agricultural fields had made the food situation even more desperate.

Today, the EPLF is leading the masses in the liberated areas to increase agricultural production in order to meet their needs and support the front. Since existing production relations have become fetters hindering increases in production,
the primary step in correcting this is to lead the peasants, especially the poor and middle peasants, in waging land reform. Through this struggle, land is expropriated from the feudalists and rich peasants and redistributed among the landless, poor and middle peasants, so each one acquires an equal share of land. The formation of cooperatives is then encouraged. In addition, the people's army participates in agricultural production, helping the peasants in their work. The EPLF assists the peasants to synthesize their rich experience and adopt scientific methods of farming. It puts out a special publication, *Aquai* (the Peasant) which strives to raise the political and cultural level of the masses and disseminates scientific knowledge among them.

The EPLF has taken up large scale farming in land expropriated from the Ethiopian occupation regime and big foreign capitalists. Some of these areas, for example Marsa Gulbub, where the capitalists used to grow cash crops, like cotton, have been turned to grain farms. Constantly expanding the areas under cultivation by reclaiming new land, using scientific farming methods and employing tractors and other machinery expropriated from the foreign capitalists and Eritrean compradors, the EPLF has been increasing its agricultural production over the years. In 1975, the EPLF was able to harvest 25% of its food requirements. In 1976 it harvested 50% of its needs. This is a remarkable achievement scored in the hard conditions of war.

The EPLF has also taken over the operation of large plantations formerly owned by Italian, Israeli, and other foreign capitalists. The multi-million dollar fruit, vegetable and cotton plantations at Ela Bered, Keren, Decamere and other areas, whose substantial products were exported to the Middle East and Europe, are now under the control of the EPLF. Their products are distributed to the masses at low prices through the people's markets, and used in the EPLF's hospitals and clinics. There are plans to export some of these products to neighbouring and friendly countries.

The EPLF attaches importance to the development of livestock breeding. It has made extensive livestock surveys, provided veterinary services and prepared vaccines. Last year, it vaccinated some 450,000 heads of livestock against a variety of diseases. The EPLF has started cattle ranches in a number of areas, with cattle mostly captured from the enemy. Chicken farms have also been set up. The produce of the cattle and poultry farms are at present serving to supply protein necessities to patients in the EPLF hospitals. The EPLF has also started large scale production in the liberated areas. Eritrea has rich salt deposits and is a salt exporting country. Nevertheless, there had been shortages of salt in the liberated areas due to the junta's economic blockade. For a while, salt had to be imported from the neighbouring countries to serve the needs of the masses. Today, in the liberated two-thirds of the 1,000 km. Eritrean sea coast, the EPLF has set up several work teams to extract salt, and is producing enough to fulfil its needs and that of vast sectors of the masses.

Small Scale Factories
The national democratic programme of the EPLF calls for the development of both agriculture and industry. Just as in agriculture, the foundation of the independent industry to be built in the new Eritrea is being laid in the hard conditions of war. The EPLF has set up a number of workshops and small factories in the liberated areas. Mobilizing workers, technicians, and revolutionary
intellectuals, pooling every bit of knowledge and experience available in the Front and using local resources and materials captured from the enemy, the EPLF has been able to manufacture necessary goods for the front and the masses. The small factories and workshops set up so far include: small arms and spare parts, metal works, electronic repairs, carpentry, cloth, and hide sewing. In these factories damaged weapons, tools, motor vehicles and all the Front's communication equipment are repaired and serviced. In these factories, chairs and desks for the EPLF's schools, beds and operation tables for its hospitals, pots pans, knives and oil lamps for the masses, rudimentary weapons and uniforms for the people's army, artificial limbs for wounded fighters and hundreds of other necessities and spare parts are manufactured. The EPLF has plans to set up textile and other industries in the near future. Almost all of the machinery used in the EPLF's factories has been captured from the enemy. Everything salvageable from destroyed enemy planes, tanks and vehicles, bombshells, used tin cans and every scrap of iron is carefully collected and sent to the metal workshops where it is turned into hundreds of useful implements.

In all the workshops and small factories, the EPLF organizes the training of a large number of fighters in all technical fields. Veteran workers and technicians work closely with a number of trainees each learning from each other, with the aim of spreading the technical knowledge wide among the fighting masses. Conscious attention is given to the systematic training of women in all technical fields. Young fighters are also given practical technical training in all fields and encouraged to deepen their theoretical knowledge.

Transportation
In the field of transportation, EPLF fighters, working almost with bare hands, have constructed a 1,500 km (almost 1,000 miles) long road, called the Liberation Road. Traversing a difficult terrain of steep mountain sides, deep valleys and extensive plain, the Liberation Road connects all the liberated areas, from the Sudanese border through the heart of the country to the Ethiopian border. It alleviates the problems of transportation, creates efficient communication among the administrative zones and greatly accelerates the revolutionary work. Using the numerous vehicles captured from the enemy, the EPLF traverses the Liberation Road, day and night, transporting arms and fighters to the battle front; agricultural produce and medical supplies to serve the masses. The EPLF has recently started public transportation on the Liberation Road enabling the masses to travel throughout the liberated areas. Commenting on the significance of the Liberation Road, the EPLF has stated: 'Successive colonial rulers have deliberately perpetrated a state of mutual isolation and backwardness among our people and the different parts of our country. Today, the Liberation Road firmly heralds the shattering of this vicious colonial policy forever.' (Vanguard, Vol.2, No.1, February-March, 1977)

Self-Reliance in All Fields
The EPLF's adherence to the principle of self-reliance also finds its application in the fields of health, education, foreign affairs, and in all the other activities of the Front. Implementing the principle of self-reliance in the field of health, the EPLF has set up an extensive medical network in the liberated areas. It has set up four hospitals, 20 clinics and hundreds of mobile medical teams. In the first half of 1976 alone, it treated 487,000 patients.
The extensive medical work of the EPLF is based on the principles of self-reliantly serving the masses. Emphasis is placed on prevention. Extensive vaccination programmes, including the vaccination of 100,000 peasants against BCG have been undertaken. In every village they visit, the mobile medical teams explain elementary principles of hygiene to the masses. They also distribute the medical department’s newsletter, *Tchura Teena* (Ray of Health) which aims at combating superstition and disseminates elementary medical knowledge among the masses. The EPLF has trained hundreds of medical personnel, including over 500 barefoot doctors so as to serve the masses in all corners of the country. As part of its self-reliant efforts, it is preparing basic medicines such as cough syrup, ointments, antiseptics, from local raw materials. The EPLF’s peoples’ army has also made daring attacks on enemy positions to capture medicine and medical equipment. In just one such mission in September 1976, the EPLF captured US$100,000 worth of drugs and medical equipment from the Ethiopian Junta’s central medical store in Asmara.

The EPLF’s work in the field of education is geared towards advancing the self-reliant development of the national liberation war and the transformation of the liberated areas. The department of education gives priority to eliminating illiteracy from the masses — which facilitates the eradication of ignorance and the deepening of the political consciousness of the masses. Schools up to the 4th grade level have been opened throughout the liberated areas; 36 schools were established in 1976 alone. The literacy as well as the more advanced classes are closely linked with the revolutionary struggle. The curriculum as well as the school texts are prepared by the Front. The schools of the EPLF established under shades of trees, in underground shelters, in the liberated villages, are centres for the dissemination of the political line of the Front. The importance of the revolutionary principles of self-reliance is particularly stressed. The students participate in production — for example the ‘Revolution School’ — a boarding school for the children of martyrs, fighters in the people’s army and the displaced — is self-sufficient in vegetables. The students are so imbued with the spirit of self-reliance that they carefully collect the paper covers of used tin cans and make note-books out of them.

In the field of foreign affairs the EPLF pays great importance to establishing close fraternal relations with all national liberation movements, revolutionary organizations and socialist countries and friendly relations with neighbouring countries. It highly values the moral, political and material support it has received from revolutionary forces throughout the world, which has accelerated its self-reliant struggle. As stated in its national democratic programme, it ‘welcomes the assistance of any country or organization which recognizes and supports the just struggle of the Eritrean people without interference in its internal affairs’.

At the same time, the EPLF has made it clear that under no circumstances will it tolerate the interference of any country in the internal affairs of the Eritrean liberation movement. Under no circumstances will the EPLF barter its principles and political line in exchange for arms and other supplies. As early as 1971, at a time when Eritrean reactionaries were distorting the very nature of our struggle to gain support from various countries, the EPLF boldly stated, ‘We would like to repeatedly remind those governments or peoples who support our struggle to avail us of their help because we are engaged in a just struggle for national liberation. If they offer assistance for any ulterior motives, however, we do not need such support and will firmly reject it. We are convinced that whatever aid comes
in exchange for our national rights is more injurious than beneficial to our struggle. (*Our Struggle and Its Goals*)

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The National Democratic Programme of the EPLF is reproduced in MERIP Reports No.62, special issue *Upheaval in the Horn*, (from P.O. Box 3122 Washington, D.C., 20010 or Merag, 5 Caledonian Rd., London, N.1.).

An Eritrean Liberation Support Committee has recently been launched in Britain. For information contact Chairman, Mary Dines, 467 Caledonian Rd., London N.7.

This is an important attempt to write an economic history of nineteenth and early twentieth century East Africa in terms of the development of underdevelopment. It draws on a wide range of documentary material to support the view that East Africans were still learning to increase their control over the environment up to 1890, and that declines in population and loss of environment control only set in after that date, and were directly or indirectly associated with the European colonization. The main sources are as follows:

1. The demographer R.R. Kuczynski whose chapters on East Africa in his two-volume *Demographic Survey of the British Empire* (Oxford University Press, 1949) questioned the idea that either inter-tribal warfare or the East African slave trade could have led overall to population reduction in the nineteenth century;

2. The historian Abdul Sheriff whose 1971 London Ph.D. thesis on *The Rise of a Commercial Empire: An Aspect of the Economic History of Zanzibar from 1770 to 1873* remains unpublished. Sheriff’s argument, supported by a careful examination of shipping returns in Europe, Asia and the United States, as well as on Zanzibar itself, is that after 1830 the main demand for slaves from East Africa was for the newly-established clove plantations on Zanzibar itself, and that Zanzibari merchants no longer depended on selling large numbers of slaves outside the island. Sheriff shows how the British seamen sent to search for slave smugglers in the 1860s and 1870s exaggerated the numbers of slaves and slave ships, and how several generations of historians then accepted their figures uncritically. All this provides powerful support for Kuczynski’s position;

3. The agriculturalist W. Allan whose *The African Husbandsman* (Oliver and Boyd, 1965) demonstrated the sophistication of a wide range of traditional agricultural systems as means of controlling the environment;

4. The diaries of the explorers, missionaries, traders and early colonial adminis-
trators who recorded their impressions as they crossed the country. These show that many people lived in large permanent settlements, where food was grown in systems of ‘permanent cropping’ in places where ‘shifting cultivation’ was reported later; they made good use of irrigation water from rivers and streams, and possessed considerable skills in iron working, salt extraction and textile weaving. Large quantities of manufactured goods were traded for food long before the caravans reached the coast. Above all the diaries show that cattle were widespread, and able to survive virtually throughout East Africa.

5. Today tsetse fly prevent cattle keeping in many of these areas. Kjekshus draws on the work of John Ford (The Role of Trypanosomiasis in African Ecology, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1971) to show how the existence of human settlement itself kept the fly under control. John Ford also outlined the mechanism which led to the breakdown of this control: rinderpest outbreaks which wiped out 90% of the cattle in many areas in the 1890s; outbreaks of smallpox; the colonial conquest (Kjekshus contributes a table and map listing 54 major battles between 1889 and 1896); the Maji Maji; the First World War, when two opposing armies lived off the land, and the famine which followed it; and the effects of German imposed forced labour. All of the above (even rinderpest) can be traced back to the colonial intervention. Their cumulative effect was loss of population, loss of control over the environment, return to a more primitive agriculture, and the invasion of the tsetse fly. The loss of cattle meant greatly increased vulnerability. ‘Famine’, insecurity, a low standard of living, and dependence on the outside world were the end results.

Forcibly confining the people to ‘planned villages’ as a protection against sleeping sickness and declaring the resulting depopulated areas as game reserves, had the opposite effect to that intended: it allowed the tsetse a free run of large areas where it had been controlled before. Kjekshus compares the arguments used for villagization in the 1930s with the present Tanzanian government’s arguments for villagization, and finds them equally questionable.

If I have one caveat, it is in the treatment of external trade. Kjekshus is so concerned to point to the internal dynamics of his nineteenth century societies that he plays down the role of external contacts in bringing both ‘development’ and ‘underdevelopment’. Agreed, as he points out, that the total tonnages of food, salt and iron hoes transported were probably far more than those of exported ivory or imported textiles or firearms. Yet without the firearms the political centralisation of the nineteenth century would have been difficult, the imports killed off the local industries (Kjekshus is well aware of this), while several writers have pointed to the ill effects of ivory export and porterage on the agricultural economy of the Nyamwezi/Kimbu areas.

Some historians will feel that Kjekshus creates a rosy picture of East Africa in the nineteenth century. They will have to see if they can use substantially the same historical sources to prove him wrong. Even if his position is a little exaggerated, his book is a corrective to what has gone before. Its impact in assisting Africans to understand the effect of the colonial intrusion on their history will continue for many years.

Andrew Coulson
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It would be wrong to deny the possibility of capitalist development in Nigeria. But an examination of the conditions necessary for the establishment of capitalist society shows how precarious is Nigeria’s strategy for the development and regulation of capitalism.

This quote is from the introduction to this important collection of essays. This Review article discusses some of the propositions about the nature of Nigerian capitalist development which are contained in Williams’ very substantial introductory essay (a quarter of the book) and his joint piece with Paul Collins and Terisa Turner which concludes the book. In an admirably condensed form, these two essays present a summary of Nigeria’s political economy from the origin of colonial domination to the early post-1975 coup situation. Directly related to the main theme of this review is E.O. Akeredolu-Ale’s essay on private foreign investment and the underdevelopment of indigenous entrepreneurship. I will refer only very briefly to the other contributions.

The book raises fundamental questions about the development of capitalism which go beyond the specific Nigerian experience. The issues, and difficulties, as I see it, relate mainly to three sets of questions. The first concerns the nature of contradictions under neo-colonial capitalism; the second, the role of such contradictions in determining the conditions of capitalist development; the third, refers to the special role of the state and the government in generating or solving them. In my opinion, Williams’ and co-authors give too much importance to contradictions of a secondary nature in arguing their main thesis about the failure of successive governments to establish the necessary conditions for capitalist development.

First, a few more quotations. Referring to the first post-independence government, Williams notes that it ‘failed to resolve the contradictions inherited in the neo-colonial political economy’ (43). On the subsequent military government, he says that it sought to ‘promote the development of capitalism and regulate its contradictions’ but that as yet it has proved ‘unable to establish the conditions for accomplishing this’ (4). ‘Neither the Military government nor its political rivals have demonstrated their capacity to establish the social institutions necessary for a successful Nigerian “capitalist revolution”, and the maintenance of a capitalist society’ (54). The Gowon government ‘failed to carry through the “institutional revolution” (Ayida) necessary to the development of capitalist production and the establishment of stable bourgeois domination’ (186).

Which are the contradictions, that, according to Williams and co-authors, continue to block or obstruct capitalist development? General references are made to foreign domination and dependence, conflicts between foreign domination and dependence, conflicts between foreign and indigenous capitalists and among the latter as well as unspecified class conflicts. The specific argument, however, is focused on what is referred to as sectional or factional conflicts and competition, including regional and ethnic conflicts. ‘The state proved incapable of regulating factional competition for money and opportunities for profit’ (12). ‘No impersonal rules governing competition can be established to regulate it when the differences among ethnic groups and again within such groups, discriminate massively in favour of particular groups’ (42). The state is depicted as ‘an instrument of private and sectional interests’ (43). Private profiteering,
corruption, discrimination and other well-known features of Nigerian society are seen as the outcome of these conflicts. The net result is inefficient and unstable government, unable, in the words of the authors, to maintain the appropriate conditions for capitalist development.

Which, then, are these conditions? The development of capitalist production, according to Williams, requires ‘a state able to override particular capitalist interests, both domestic and foreign, in the interests of the overall development of capitalist society’ (44). In order that ‘impersonal rules governing competition’ may be established, it is necessary to ‘weld the bourgeoisie into a coherent bloc able to institutionalize its rule over other classes’ (43). Measures taken by the post-1975 government have aimed, according to the three co-authors, at disciplining state administration ‘so that it can impose its own regulation and direction on foreign and indigenous capitalist interest’ (191). If this is not done, the state will be unable to consolidate bourgeois domination and it will itself remain ‘an arena in which sectional interests compete for resources’ (192).

It is easy to recognize the picture of Nigerian society and politics marked by sectional and factional conflict and competition. Nor is it difficult to find evidence of government inefficiency directly related to such conflicts. But, how fundamental are such conflicts and inefficiencies as threats to capitalist development in Nigeria? Considering the corruption, violence and disorder of capitalist expansion in some of the early industrialising countries, such evidence in the Nigeria case can hardly be sufficient. We must either find signs of capitalist stagnation, when looking back, or have a good theory forecasting such stagnation, when looking forward, for the evidence to fit conclusions about capitalism being blocked or seriously threatened.

What does past performance tell us? As pointed out by Williams, colonialism imposed numerous restrictions on the advance of indigenous capitalism, especially through foreign monopolies in the export-import trade and in banking. Colonial monopoly also killed off much of earlier crafts at the same time as it blocked new industrial developments. At the same time, however, and this is also accounted for in the study, colonialism generated a massive expansion of peasant export production and the proliferation of commercial activities directly or indirectly triggered off by this development. As colonial commercial monopolies were broken up in the 1950s, as part of the decolonisation process, metropolitan capital took a fresh interest in industrialisation in order to protect and expand markets. Around this foreign dominated commercial and industrial activity we have seen the growth of a dependent (comprador) bourgeoisie, in and out of the state apparatus, with a tremendous appetite and much ingenuity in playing the game to its own advantage, without threatening in any serious manner foreign domination. Oil money has been added to all this, enhancing the power of foreign monopoly capital but also strengthening the bargaining power of the federal government in the Nigerian political economy as a whole. Business flourishes.

Where are the blockages? Or, what is it that actually is being blocked? It is quite clear that capitalism in Nigeria ‘has hardly given free rein to the ability of people to produce goods’. It is also probably true that ‘it has promoted the “wealth of the nation”, but only by the impoverishment of the people’ (13). At least this is true for large sections of the people. A thorough examination of such block-
ages may provide a good case for an alternative anti-imperialist or socialist-oriented strategy. It may tell us a lot about how capitalism, in its particular neo-colonial variety develops and about its impact on the people. The case for capitalism being blocked by sectional and factional conflict, however, seems less convincing.

Imperialism enhances the contradiction between the Nigerian people and the neo-colonial state and its supportive classes, local and foreign. Foreign monopolies will no doubt continue to hold back development of productive capacity of the Nigerian people. It will continue to distort the allocation of resources to the advantage of metropolitan capital and its local dependents. Sectional and factional competition, as determined by the specific historical structure of Nigerian society, will also probably continue to play an important role in defining the rules and methods by which imperialist and comprador interests seek to manipulate the system to their advantage. It cannot be excluded that such conflicts may develop to a point where they paralyse, for a longer or shorter period, normal business and government (civil war). For the time being, however, it seems rather as if business thrives from exploiting the opportunities of sectional and factional competition, to the detriment of some, but to the benefit of others. I find it difficult to see such competition as representing a contradiction which seriously threatens the advance of capitalism. It is an entirely different matter that government inefficiency and waste, as brought about by unregulated competition, may provide anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist forces with much useful ammunition in their attempt to challenge the neo-colonial order. So far, however, these forces do not seem to play a significant role.

One factional conflict requires special attention. This is the conflict between the foreign and the indigenous bourgeoisie. The various attempts to promote the interests of the latter is the main theme of Akeredolu-Ale’s contribution to the volume of essays discussed here. Williams writes of the failure of successive Nigerian governments ‘to regulate relations between foreign capitalists and the indigenous bourgeoisie in such a way as to accommodate nationalist aspirations for Nigerian control of economic opportunities’ (43). Could this constitute a threat to Nigerian capitalist development? Yes, possibly in a situation where strong anti-capitalist forces can exploit the anti-foreign sentiments of a frustrated local bourgeoisie. But in the absence of such forces it is more likely that foreign and local capital will continue their love-hate relationship, developing new forms of accommodation. There is reason to believe that the Nigerian bourgeoisie will gradually strengthen its position and that imperialist domination will in consequence seek new forms. There will continue to be competition alright, but the prosperity of the Nigerian bourgeoisie will also continue to depend on its ability to strike profitable bargains with imperial capital. For the time being, conflict is hardly a more striking feature of this relation than is cooperation and mutually lucrative interaction.

The advance of Nigerian capitalism would certainly benefit greatly from a more efficient and stable political regime capable of balancing the various pressures to which it is exposed, be it of a regional, sectional, factional or individual nature. Looking at the sources of such pressures, however, it is hard to see them as representing a fundamental threat to the neo-colonial, capitalist order, now expanding at a fairly high rate. Instability of government (coup) does not mean that the state is unable to maintain the conditions for the reproduction of capital. The government in charge at any particular time cannot be expected
to represent a coherent bloc, where all the various factions of the bourgeoisie are 'welded' together, especially not as the most important faction, the foreign bourgeoisie has no means of direct political representation. Governmental power will shift between different factions, each seeking to entrench themselves in the state apparatus. The failure to reach stable constitutional arrangements do not, as I see it, reflect incomplete bourgeois domination of the state.

An alternative to capitalist development, including the elimination of the comprador state, is outlined on the last page of the book. The joint authors of the concluding essay speak of expropriation of foreign capitalists and their local allies, state control of industry and local trade, and the encouragement of peasant and petty commodity production. In order to accomplish this a strong socialist movement is required (192). To trace the material basis for this vision, however, we must pay more attention to the fundamental contradiction between capital and labour and the way in which this is internationalised in the epoch of imperialism. We must look closely at the connection between the anti-capitalist class struggle and the anti-imperialist national struggle. This is of course more easily said than done. A particularly complex issue in that context is the position of the peasantry. Williams pays much attention to the contradiction between it and the neo-colonial state in his introductory essay. An excitingly detailed piece co-authored with Chris Beer looks at the concrete expression of this contradiction in the rebellion of the Ibadan cocoa farmers in the late 1960s. I hope to be able to return shortly to this theme in a separate contribution to this Review.

This has been more of a comment than a review. I hope that others, and especially the authors of Nigeria: Economy and Society will add their comments to mine. It would certainly be useful to draw other national experiences into the discussion. It must be noted that the book includes a number of interesting contributions, not specifically concerned with the development of capitalism at the very general level discussed here. It should also be noted that the analytical and strategic perspective is by no means homogenous. Akeredolu-Ale's essay, for example, argues energetically a national capitalist position, asking for 'extensive state intervention on the side of indigenous entrepreneurship'. There are contributions on urban growth and urban government (R.K. Home), colonial administration in the Tiv area (J.I. Tseayo), and colonial education (Otonti Nduka). I was particularly fascinated by Dorothy Remy's survey of the position of urban working-class women in Zaria. There is also an interesting piece of survey work by Peter Waterman who discusses conservatism among the Nigerian workers.

Björn Beckman
Uppsala
CURRENT AFRICANA No.15

Compilation date: April 1978
Compiled by Chris Allen

I have not included for some time a full list of abbreviations employed; I apologise to mystified readers, and include such a list now:

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<td>African Affairs</td>
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<td>AD</td>
<td>(New) African Develop (now New African)</td>
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<td>ARB(P)/ARB(E)</td>
<td>Africa Research Bulletin, Political/Economic series</td>
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