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Editorial

This number of the *Review* concentrates on certain areas of Africa where the struggle against imperialism has intensified to the point of open conflict. In particular, the stage reached in both Southern Africa and the Western Sahara is analyzed in some depth. However, a feature of this issue is the diversity of views expressed by those analysing conditions within South Africa itself. The articles by Mbeki, Mafeje, Hirson, Bozzoli, Innes and Plaut, and Mohan all seek in one form or another to come to grips with the problem of the nature of capitalist society in South Africa and, consequently, to throw some light on the nature of the struggle in that country.

In his article dealing with social reconstruction in a new South Africa Mbeki advances the view that South Africa is unique among the bourgeois countries in that profit maximisation is the overt, unhidden and principle objective of state policy. The critical role which the state has played within accumulation in South Africa is in fact the theme taken up by Bozzoli and by Innes and Plaut in their critiques of an earlier article on the state in South Africa carried in *Review* No.7. However, the arguments developed in the articles are different from each other. Bozzoli argues that concepts such as “hegemony” and “fractions of capital” need to be reformed if they are to be constructively employed analytically, while Innes and Plaut put forward their view that it is the capital relation itself — i.e. the contradiction between capital and labour — which must be made the focal point of the analysis of the role of the state rather than inter-capitalist ‘fractional’ rivalries.

The remaining articles on South Africa all concentrate more exclusively on the current stage of the struggle. Mafeje analyses the social upheavals that began in Soweto in 1976 and attempts an assessment of their implications for the liberation movement in exile, while Hirson embarks upon a critical review of the literature which has sprung up around the Soweto Revolt, at the same time providing an assessment of the Black Consciousness movement. These articles all in one way or another take up issues which are of relevance to the struggle being waged at the moment against the apartheid regime. In so doing, some address themselves directly to questions of revolutionary strategy and to the role of particular movements and organisations. In publishing these comments it should be quite clear that the *Review* itself is not necessarily lending its support to the views being expressed. As has been stated before, the role envisaged for this *Review* is not a purely academic one: we are concerned with theory to the
extent that it informs political practice and as such the role which we have adopted is clearly political. But we are not a political organisation and we do not promote a single party position. We provide a forum in which various radical political positions of relevance to the struggles in Africa can be expressed and debated. As such it is imperative that the pages of the Review should remain open to the broadest spectrum of radical opinion on Africa and that, in particular, the Review should reflect the views not only of theoreticians outside Africa, but also of cadres active within organisations in Africa. The struggle to develop a revolutionary theory involves a struggle against academicism and demands an orientation towards concrete questions of contemporary struggles. Here we briefly take up some of the issues of revolutionary strategies raised by Mbeki, Mafeje and Mohan.

Mbeki's argument is that South Africa is a capitalist country of a special kind in that the state does not seek to clothe its nakedly repressive function in the trappings of, for instance, bourgeois social democracy. As a result the state relates to the African not as an individual comparable to a white individual, but as a repository of the commodity — labour power. Of the various possible alternatives open to Africans to struggle against these conditions Mbeki argues that 'the only historically justifiable and inevitable alternative is that we cling very firmly to our position as producers, that we hoist the bourgeoisie with its own petard'. The outcome of a struggle waged along these lines will be a free South Africa in which the position of the black producer will be redefined so that the production of wealth will be for the benefit of the producers themselves. According to Mbeki, this redefinition is implied in the theoretical basis of the Freedom Charter, which is the political programme adopted by the African National Congress.

This analysis and the particular interpretation given to the Freedom Charter should be seen as an extension of the debate which has been going on for some time both within and beyond the immediate ranks of the liberation movement. At the root of this debate is the question of the specific nature of capitalist society in South Africa. As Mafeje points out in his contribution, it is precisely over the question of 'imperialism/capitalism and the class struggle' that serious differences emerge among the various liberation groups. Mafeje provides some critical reflections on the positions adopted by the different groups on this issue. In his view, while all the groups (ANC, Pan African Congress and the Unity Movement) address the question of national liberation and bourgeois democratic rights, it is only PAC and UMSA which explicitly raise the issue of class struggle and socialism in their official documentation. We find Mafeje's argument with regard to the ANC rather difficult to sustain since he refers only to the Freedom Charter, whereas the ANC's 'Strategy and Tactics' specifically declares that the national struggle ... is happening in a new kind of South Africa; in which there is a large and well-developed working class whose class consciousness and independent expressions of the working people — their political organs and trade unions — are very much part of the liberation front. Thus our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass ... This perspective of a speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness.

Be that as it may, Mafeje's claim that the Freedom Charter adopts the position of struggling towards democratic, and not socialist, goals is clearly accurate.
Similarly, Mafeje criticizes the South African Communist Party's conception of the struggle as being that of a two-stage revolution, the first phase of which is a 'national democratic revolution to destroy white domination'. He is also critical of the Unity Movement's position in that it advocates a single stage from a bourgeois to a socialist revolution at the same time as it actually upholds a bourgeois programme. (Mafeje's critique of PAC is somewhat less clear in that he seems to dismiss it simply on the grounds of having borrowed its formulation wholesale from the Chinese.) But Mafeje himself in discussing the way ahead does not actually reject outright the notion of a two-stage revolution. He speaks of a convergence between the existing organisations and the militants inside South Africa which would probably minimise any divergence between the so-called national democratic demands and a socialist programme (our emphasis). But to minimise a divergence is not to overcome or remove it, particularly at a theoretical level, and consequently we are still left with the question of how precisely to reconcile the national struggle with the class struggle.

In his contribution Mohan criticises those who argue that the struggle against imperialism is a struggle 'against capitalism' because they fail to understand the true significance of 'the actual struggles of the African people against colonialism, racism and imperialism'. As far as he is concerned the struggle in Southern Africa is being waged by 'all segments of the oppressed black people' against 'the racist system of settler colonialism' which is in a 'contradictory relationship' with (Western) imperialism. His argument is thus based on a theoretical and strategic demarcation between the present stage of the struggle, when African unity, regardless of class, is the essential prerequisite, and some later stage involving class struggle. (Mohan himself does not explicitly refer to the later stage of the struggle in the post-colonial/racist period but we assume that he does have a later stage in mind or else he would simply be reproducing a standard liberal argument).

But although Mohan argues for the unified resistance of 'all segments of the oppressed black people in South Africa — Africans, Coloureds and Indians, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois, as well as the urban and rural masses', nowhere in his article does he seriously take up the question of the basis on which that unity is to be secured. Surely it is inadequate to argue that the struggle to bring about an end to settler colonialism and racism is a sufficient basis for that unity without confronting the issue of what form of society is to emerge from the ashes of the present? Despite Mohan's assertion that 'the term “people” is no empty abstraction' we must insist that it is not just people who are waging this struggle, but more fundamentally it is social classes. Consequently, we fail to see how the issue of 'class' — of which class is to exercise control over the means of production — can be left out of the analysis for want of space! An end to settler colonialism implies inter alia a transfer of white-owned land to blacks and therefore immediately raises the question of the form which the new ownership will take (such as, for instance, private ownership, communalisation, collectivisation, etc.). The struggle to bring an end to settler colonialism and racism is pregnant with revolutionary implications which cannot be artificially separated from the curent stage of the struggle. In Lenin's words:

We must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics on all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, the popular election of officials, equal rights for women, the self-determination of nations, etc. While capitalism exists, these demands — all of them — can only be accomplished as an exception, and even then in an incomplete and distorted form. Basing ourselves on the democracy already achieved, and exposing its incompleteness under capitalism, we demand the overthrow of
capitalism, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for the complete and all-round institution of all democratic reforms. Some of these reforms will be started before the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, others in the course of that overthrow, and still others after it. The social revolution is not a single battle, but a period.... (Collected Works; Vol. 21, pp. 408-9)

Elsewhere* Joe Slovo has sought to develop an analysis of the two-stage theory which attempts to avoid the rigid demarcation between the stages such as is contained in Mohan's interpretation. Slovo argues that:

There is objective ground for the belief that “under South African conditions the national democratic revolution has great prospects of proceeding at once to socialist solutions”. This follows from the undoubted reality that no significant national demand can be successfully won without the destruction of the existing capitalist structure. It is precisely because in South Africa capitalist production relations are the foundation of national repression that the national struggle itself has an objective coincidence with the elimination of all forms of exploitation. The elimination of national inequality, if it is to be more than a mere gesture, involves a complete change of the way in which the country’s wealth is appropriated. National liberation, in its true sense, must therefore imply the expropriation of the owners of the means of production (monopolized by a bourgeoisie drawn from the white group) and the complete destruction of the state which serves them. There can be no half-way house unless the national struggle is stopped in its tracks and is satisfied with the co-option of a small black elite into the presently forbidden areas of economic and political power. (pp. 140-1)

Slovo’s conception of a revolutionary strategy in South Africa is thus based on the view that a socialist revolution is ‘a process which is not consummated but begun by a successful revolutionary seizure of power’ (p. 147). The Freedom Charter thus emerges in his analysis as representing the principles which will be the basis for any revolutionary seizure of power and usher in the conditions for the advance towards socialism:

If... the liberation struggle should bring to power a revolutionary democratic alliance dominated by the proletariat and the peasantry (which is on the agenda in South Africa), the post-revolutionary phase can surely become the first stage in a continuous process along the road to socialism. (p. 148)

Slovo quite correctly draws attention to the fact that capitalist production relations are the foundation of national repression in South Africa. But what is not quite so clear is why that should necessarily mean that the national struggle has an objective coincidence with the elimination of all forms of exploitation. As he himself argues, national liberation aims at the expropriation of the present owners of the means of production and the destruction of their state, but it does not in itself bring an end to all forms of exploitation. In this regard, the Freedom Charter (to which Slovo refers) declares that there should be an extension of private ownership among Africans in the rural areas and that a non-monopoly private industrial sector should be allowed to continue at the same time as the mineral wealth of the country, the banks and monopoly shall be restored to the people. As Slovo points out, this provides a vital role to the private and exploitative sector in post-apartheid South Africa (p. 147). In what sense then can we ensure that implementation of the Freedom Charter would become the first stage in a continuous process along the road to socialism rather than a further stage in the development of capitalism in South Africa?

As Mafeje suggests in his article, such questions cannot be resolved at the level of abstract theory, but can only be resolved at the level of strategy. For if we accept Lenin’s argument cited earlier that the overthrow of capitalism is a

necessary basis for the complete institution of all democratic reforms, then it becomes clear that unless the alliance of all revolutionary forces in South Africa is based on the leadership of the working class the democratic reforms proclaimed in the Freedom Charter will themselves never be fully realised. Consequently, the revolutionary strategies to emerge from the liberation movements must give expression to that fundamental precondition for revolutionary action. In other words, it is only by utilising the revolutionary potential of the working class to the full within the broad ambit of the national liberation movement that the revolutionary process itself will ensure the march forward to socialism after the destruction of the apartheid state.

We hope that publication of these discussions on the nature of the struggle in South Africa will stimulate a debate around this important topic which will be extended through the pages of the Review in the future.* The debate on revolutionary strategy in Africa should not of course be confined to South Africa and we hope to receive contributions on other areas as well. The question of France's role in Africa has been raised in this issue and is made more immediate by the recent foreign intervention in Zaire. We also hope to publish more material on the Horn of Africa (see No. 12, forthcoming) and to explore the role of the Soviet Union and its allies in Africa.

Duncan Innes
Erica Flegg

*The first contribution to this debate is a reply to Mafeje's article by Ruth First which is published in this issue.

Class and Revolution in Ethiopia
John Markakis and Nega Ayele

The overthrow of the old regime in 1974 was a revolutionary act. But what was the character of that revolution? Has its progress been as a result or in spite of the military regime that replaced Haile Selassie? These are the issues raised in this new book. They are central to any understanding of the dramatic conflict sweeping through the Horn of Africa. This book is the first to detail the complex events following the 1974 coup — the overthrow of Haile Selassie, the emergence of the Dergue, the continuing liberation struggle in Eritrea, the Ogaden war, the Soviet and Cuban intervention.

Nega Ayele, a young intellectual and activist, was murdered in one of the purges of the left in 1977. John Markakis, a scholar who has written extensively on Ethiopia, has now completed the work they began together.

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Modern political science recognises that social systems are founded on definite historical origins. If the saying 'out of nothing, nothing comes' is true, then it must follow that the future is formed and derives its first impulse in the womb of the present. All societies therefore necessarily bear the imprint, the birthmarks of their own past. Whether to a greater or lesser extent must depend on a whole concentration of factors, both internal and external to each particular society.

The latter consideration has often led many observers of the process of social development to over-emphasise the particularity of each society, to deny that this social development is in any way reducible to a science which has general laws, definitions and categories. In this way, the relative is credited with the features of the absolute. Each society is thus presented as unique, its birth and development products of accidental collisions and inter-connections and therefore incapable of scientific prediction and cognition.

We consider that this position constitutes a dereliction of intellectual duty. Those of us who claim to be revolutionaries obviously cannot proceed in this manner. Indeed we must resist all attempts to persuade us that our failure lies in the hands of an ungovernable fate. For the imperative of our epoch has charged us with the task of transforming ourselves from the status of objects of history to that of masters of history. We must, by liberating ourselves, make our own history. Such a process by its nature imposes on the activist the necessity to plan and therefore requires the ability to measure cause and effect; the necessity to strike in correct directions and hence the requirement to distinguish between essence and phenomenon: the necessity to move millions of people as one to actual victory and consequently the development of the skill of combining the necessary and the possible. All this becomes attainable if we have succeeded to discover the regularities of social development, if we have studied our own society critically and in depth to discover the interconnections, the dynamic links that knit together and give direction to what might at first appear to be a chaos of facts, incidents and personalities thrown up by this particular society. Therefore to eliminate the speculative element as much as possible when

This article was originally presented by Thabo Mbeki representing the African National Congress of South Africa at a conference in Ottawa in February 1978.
talking about the policies of a new South Africa, it is necessary to examine the
principal features of the predecessor of that future reality, namely, present-day
South Africa. But again, a penetrating understanding of our country today
requires also that we look at its past.

The first category of social science that we want to use is that of class. To
understand South Africa we must appreciate the fact and fix it firmly in our
minds that here we are dealing with a class society. In South Africa the capitalists,
the bourgeoisie are the dominant class. Therefore the state, other forms of
social organisation and official ideas are conditioned by this one fact of the
supremacy of the bourgeoisie. It would therefore be true to say that in its
essential features South Africa conforms to other societies where this class is
dominant. Yet a cursory comparative glance around the world would seem to
suggest that such a statement is hardly of any use in helping us to understand
the seemingly unique reality of apartheid South Africa. More and perhaps better
explanation is called for. We return therefore to the category, a class society, as
well as step back into history.

The landing of the employees of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape of
Good Hope in 1652 represented in embryo the emergence of class society in our
country. And that class society was bourgeois society in its infancy. The settlers
of 1652 were brought to South Africa by the dictates of the brutal period of the
birth of the capitalist class which has been characterised as the stage of the
primitive accumulation of capital. Of this stage Marx wrote:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment
in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the
East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of Black skins,
signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the
chief momenta of primitive accumulation. (Capital, Vol.1, p.751). The transformation of
the individualised and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, of the
pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, the expropriation of the
great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence and from the means of
labour, this fearful and painful exproportion of the mass of the people forms the prelude to
the history of capital. It comprises a series of forcible methods... The expropriation of
the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless Vandalism, and under the stimulus
of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious
(p.762).

Such indeed was the slave trade: (such also incidentally the eviction of the
Scottish Highland peasants many of whom went to settle in Canada — vandalism
of the most merciless kind). Such indeed was the expropriation of the African
peasantry.

It should therefore come as no surprise that six years after the arrival of the
Dutch settlers, in 1658, the first group of slaves arrived in the Cape Colony. In
1806, when England seized the Cape Colony from Holland by force of arms,
there were 30,000 slaves in the Colony as against 26,000 settlers. There were
also another 20,000 free Coloured, Nama and Khoi in white employ... Equally,
it should come as no surprise that these 20,000 African wage-earners had been
compelled into this position by the process, described by Marx and other his-
torians of this period, of the expropriation of the great mass of the people
from the soil, from the means of subsistence and from the means of labour...
Described as free in relation to the 30,000 slaves in the Colony, they were also
free in so far as they had been liberated by force of arms, disease and starvation
from their status as independent producers with their own hunting, grazing and
arable land, their livestock and their working implements.
Writing of a British Governor-General in India, Marx says: 'His favourites received contracts under conditions whereby they, cleverer than the alchemists, made gold out of nothing. Great fortunes sprang up like mushrooms in a day; primitive accumulation went on without the advance of a shilling.' And there we have the reason why Europe carried out this early accumulation at home and abroad with such merciless enthusiasm and passion — because the process assured men of property stupendous and immediate profit. Brought up in this European hot-house of rapine, the settlers in South Africa could not but continue this process in their colony. The result was that when England abolished the slave trade in 1834, nearly two centuries after the arrival of the first batch of slaves, the descendants of the original colonists rebelled against their decision. Judging themselves too weak to re-impose slavery by arms, the Boers resolved to take themselves out of the area of British jurisdiction. Thus began the so-called Great Trek of the Boers' into the interior of our country.

Of course, all along, the Boers were determined that again they would have to seize our land and livestock and enslave our people. We see therefore that the methods and practices of primitive accumulation which represented a transitional phase in the development of capital in Europe, assumed permanence in the South African economy and life-style of the Boers. They acquired a fixity characteristic of feudal society, legitimised by the use of force and sanctified by a supposedly Calvinist Christianity.

The South African settlers of 1652 had themselves been the expropriated of Europe. But, as in America, Canada, Australia and elsewhere, after a little while, they were able to re-establish themselves as independent producers, acquiring land in the manner we have described, on the basis of the expropriation of our people, despite the most fierce resistance of the indigenous people. It was exactly the blissful regaining of their status as masters of their own house, their re-emergence as independent producers, that froze the Boer community at a particular moment of historic time and thereby guaranteed their regression. Thrown up by the birth of a higher social system, they reverted precisely to that natural economy which capital was so vengefully breaking up. But capital had already taught them that in the pursuit of a better life, everything, including murder, was permissible and legitimate. A natural economy presupposes the absence of accumulation, consisting, as the famous historian R.H. Tawney argued, of the petty dealings of peasants and craftsmen in the small market town, where industry is carried on for the subsistence of the household and the consumption of wealth follows hard upon the production of it, and where commerce and finance are occasional incidents, rather than the forces which keep the whole system in motion. Thus it is the direct opposite of a capitalist economy even when the latter is at its primitive stage of accumulation. When they reverted to a patriarchal economy, the Boers therefore abandoned all that was dynamic and revolutionary in the formation of bourgeois society and transmuted the rest into something stultified and reactionary.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the fate that befell Calvinist theory. Tawney has said: 'Calvinism was an active and radical force ... (Its adherents were) disposed neither to idealise the patriarchal virtues of the peasant community, nor to regard with suspicion the mere fact of capitalist enterprise in commerce and finance ... Calvinism was largely an urban movement ... (Its teachings were directed primarily) to the classes engaged in trade and industry, who formed the most modern and progressive elements in the life of the age ...' The Boers had brought this Calvinism with them from Holland and were joined later by the
Calvinist French Huguenots. But when they grafted this eminently bourgeois theology onto their patriarchal economy, they in fact transformed its content into a species of Lutheranism, which was essentially a theological school which sought to idealise feudalism and save it from destruction by the capitalist mode of production which was springing up all around it. From Calvinism the Boer took the doctrine of predestination and perverted it. For Calvin, the chosen of God were those who survived the jungle of capitalist enterprise in industry and trade and emerged as successful men of business, without regard to race or nationality. In the patriarchal economy this was transmuted to read: the chosen of God are those who are white. For his part Luther had said: 'An earthly kingdom cannot exist without inequality of persons. Some must be free, others serfs, some rulers, others subjects.' Racism, today so much part of South African reality, constituted a justification, an attempt to rationalise, to make acceptable the enslavement and expropriation of the black people by the white.

In Boer Society racism as an ideology acquired the attributes of a psychological fixation, with the characteristic of fixated behaviour that an ineluctably irrational perception of a particular set of relationships coexists with and distorts the perception of all other sets of relationships. In the circumstance that, in any case, ideological formations bear a complex rather than a simple relationship with the material world, generating a momentum which carries them beyond the material conditions that created them, we could expect that this racism would, in time, present itself as an autonomous force. God-given or nature-given, as an incontrovertible condition of human existence.

To go back to Calvin, where his theology had sanctified individualism to detach the bourgeoisie from the narrow and rigid world of feudalism and throw him, unhampered by old prejudices, into the world market, the Boers sang praises to a stultified individualism even narrower than that of the feudal epoch, an individualism which drew its strength from the economic self-sufficiency of each Boer family, the isolation of the homesteads one from another and the isolation of a whole community from the rest of the world; an individualism which became truly itself and complete only to the extent that it despised and set itself in contrast to everything that was black: an individualism therefore which was and is characterised by a rabid racism.

British capital subdued this petrified and arrogant individualism during the Anglo-Boer War. In 1910 Boer and Briton entered into a social contract in which the Briton undertook to help ease the Boer out of the Dark Ages while promising to respect his traditions. For his part, the Boer pledged not to resist the advance and domination of British capital. Between them, Boer and Briton agreed that they would share political power and, finally, that the indigenous African population would not be party to this contract but would be kept under the domination and at the disposal of the signatories, to be used by them in whatever manner they saw fit. There were therefore written into this agreement, the so-called Act of Union of 1910, the continuation of the methods and practices of exploitation characteristic of primitive accumulation of capital which had remained fossilised in the Boer economy but which British capital had outgrown, certainly in Britain.

Why then did the British ruling class, having won the war against the Volksraad, thus regress? One reason of course is that we are here dealing with the post 1885 Berlin Conference period. It could therefore be argued that the predominant colonialist practices and attitudes of the time made it natural and inevitable that
the British ruling class would do in South Africa what it was doing in its other colonies. Yet this explanation would not be complete. For Britain had maintained an uninterrupted colonial hold on South Africa, to one extent or another, since 1806. The decisive point to bring to the fore is that British capital, throughout the hundred years before 1910, had itself, in South Africa, clung tenaciously to the methods and practices of primitive accumulation. Thus while in 1807 the British administration prohibited the importation of slaves into the Cape Colony, in 1809 it introduced a vagrancy Act directed at the Khoi people. Under this law, all Khoi people not in the employ of a white person were declared vagrants. Vagrancy was made an offence. To prove that one was not a vagrant one had to produce a pass. To get the pass you had to enter into a written labour contract with a white employer. This measure was introduced to meet the labour shortfall created by the non-importation of slaves. It was therefore used to drive those Khoi people who still maintained an independent existence, off the land, to turn them into permanent wage earners and to create the means to direct this labour where it was needed.

In the end, it was the British armies which defeated the African people, the British who drove us off our lands, broke up the natural economy and social systems of the indigenous people. It was they who imposed taxes on the African peasants and, starting with the Masters and Servants’ Act of 1856, laid down the labour laws which govern the black worker in South Africa today. In Europe, the economic freedom of the worker to hire himself out freely to the highest bidder, which came with and was part of the bourgeois revolution was of course connected with, accompanied and enhanced by the political freedom of the worker to represent himself in matters of state through the vote, itself an integral part of the victory of the bourgeoisie over feudal society. In South Africa this was not to be. Here, the capitalist inherited the rights of the feudal lord and appropriated to himself the right to determine where, when, at what price and under what conditions the African shall sell his labour power to the capitalist. He also appropriated to himself the right to decide what is good for the native.

It is therefore clear that British capital in South Africa differed from the Boer patriarchal economy with relation to primitive accumulation in two major respects. The first of these was that it outgrew chattel slavery and therefore abolished it: the second, that, as capital, its aim continued to be that of greater and greater accumulation, through the pursuit of maximum profit. It was therefore inevitable that British capital would be all that more thorough in the expropriation of the African peasant, all that more brutal in the exploitation of African labour, more scientific and less wasteful. The historic compromise between the British bourgeoisie and the Boer peasantry represented hence not an historical aberration but the continued pursuit of maximum profit in conditions of absolute freedom for capital to pursue its inherent purposes.

British capital had at other times and in other circumstances made other compromises. One of the most important of these was undoubtedly that made with the British working class. In its struggle against its feudal predecessors, the British bourgeoisie had called upon and received support of the working people. It therefore had to take cognisance of the fact that its political victory did not belong to it alone. It further took note of the fact that the denial of political freedoms to its ally while claiming them as a natural right for itself, posed the danger that these working masses would pass beyond the struggle against the feudal lords and take on the bourgeoisie itself. While convincing the workers of the sacredness of private property, especially its own, bourgeois property, it
nevertheless conceded them their political democracy. Thereby and mainly because of this concession, it destroyed the possibility for capital to continue using primitive methods of accumulation within Britain.

Capital in South Africa never had to contend with such a situation. Historically, it owes the working class nothing and has therefore conceded to it nothing (excepting of course the white workers, about whom later). It is clear that during its war with the so-called Boer republics, the British ruling class consciously avoided putting itself in a state of indebtedness to the black people. For instance, in January 1901, Lord Milner, the British High Commissioner ‘told a Coloured deputation . . . that he could could accept their offer to take up arms against the republican forces.’ The same thing happened when another Boer rebellion had to be put down in 1914. That the bourgeoisie was aware that the denial of democratic rights to the workers was in the interests of capitalism was evident when indentured labour was imported from China after the Anglo-Boer war. Then, the mine-bosses stated that a big body of enfranchised white workers ‘would simply hold the Government of the country in the hollow of their hand’ and ‘more or less dictate not only on the question of wages, but also on political questions’. Translating the advantages of black worker disenfranchisement into cash, the Chamber of Mines stated in its 1910 Annual Report that it viewed the native purely as a machine, requiring a certain amount of fuel. It decreed accordingly that the diet of the African miners living in the mine compounds should be determined in terms of the formula ‘the minimum amount of food which will give the maximum amount of work.’

Of the bourgeois countries, South Africa is unique to the extent that profit maximisation is the overt, unhidden and principal objective of state policy, and can therefore be regarded with respect to this characteristic as an almost perfect model of capitalism, cleansed of everything that is superfluous to its essential characterisation; a model which displays to all, in their true nakedness, the inner motive forces of this social system and its fundamental inter-connections. The position that the black people occupy in this model can be defined as follows:

a. they are the producers of wealth;
b. they produce this wealth not for their own benefit but for its appropriation by the white population; and,
c. they are permitted to consume part of this wealth but only in that proportion which will give the maximum amount of work on a continuing basis.

This may sound harsh and anti-human but it characterises pure capitalism. Let us see for instance what Marcuse in his studies of Max Weber had to say: ‘The “formally most rational” mode of capital accounting is the one into which man and his “purposes” enter only as variables in the calculation of the chances of gain and profit. In this formal rationality, mathemitization is carried to the point of the calculus with the real negation of life itself . . .’ If this sounds too abstract, the white South African Member of Parliament G.F. Froneman translates it into the concrete when he says: ‘without white society, Africans are only supplying a commodity, the commodity of labour . . . It is labour we are importing (into the white areas) and not labourers as individuals . . .’ Froneman went on to say that the numbers of Africans to be found in the so-called white areas therefore make no difference to the composition of Society — society with a capital S — precisely because the African is not an individual, comparable to a white individual. Rather, he is the repository of the commodity labour-power, which can and must be quantified in a profit and loss account to the point of the very negation
of life itself. In that very real sense the African therefore belongs to the category of commodities to an equal extent as gold, diamonds and any other commodity you care to mention, to be bought and sold, hoarded and even destroyed depending exclusively on the state of the market.

The denial of the humanity of the slave which occurred during the period of primitive accumulation of capital is therefore repeated here but at a higher and more rational level. That rationality demands that to ensure maximum profit that portion of the national wealth which accrues to the black people as consumers should be kept at the barest minimum. Consequently, the real wages of the African miners are today lower than they were in 1911. Note also the almost total absence of social security benefits for the African people. To provide these benefits would be to increase the cost of reproduction of the producers and conversely to decrease capital’s share of the national cake.

It might be argued that our thesis might begin to collapse when we tackled the question of the white workers. Appearance would have it that in maintaining a white labour aristocracy, capital is behaving in a most irrational fashion, that capital itself has become so impregnated with racial prejudice that it cannot seek to extract maximum profit from a white worker. Yet we must bear in mind that the capitalist class does not view itself solely as the appropriator of wealth in contradistinction to our being the producers. The capitalist class is also heavily burdened with matters of state administration. It has taken on itself the task of ruling our country. As early as November 1899, Lord Milner had said: 'The ultimate end (of British policy) is a self-governing white Community, supported by well-treated and justly-governed black labour from Cape Town to Zambesi (sic).’ A principal pre-occupation of this self-governing community must therefore be to ensure that the justly-treated and well-governed do not one day rise up and transform themselves also into a self-governing community. From the very beginning, British capital knew that it had to face this possibility and that if it fought without any allies, it would lose in such a confrontation. The historic compromise of 1910 has therefore this significance that in granting the vanquished Boer equal political and social status with the British victor, it imposed on both the duty to defend the status quo against especially those whom that status quo defined as the dominated.

The capitalist class, to whom everything has a cash value, has however never considered moral incentives as very dependable. As part of the arrangement, it therefore decided that material incentives must play a prominent part. It consequently bought out the whole white population. It offered a price to the white workers and the Afrikaner farmers in exchange for an undertaking that they would shed their blood in defence of capital. Both worker and farmer, like Faustus, took the devil's offering and, like Faustus, they will have to pay on the appointed day. The workers took the offering in monthly cash grants and reserved jobs. The farmers took their share by having black labour, including and especially prison labour, directed to the farms. They also took it in the form of huge subsidies and loans to help them maintain a civilised standard of living. The indebtedness of these farmers to the profit-making bourgeois in 1966 was equal to $1½ billion, amounting to nearly 12 per cent of the gross national product. In 1947 a commission of the Dutch Reformed Church included in its report the prophetic words: ‘In the country, one feels dependent on God; in the towns, on men, such as one’s employer.’ In the struggle that marks the growing onslaught of the black producers on the society of the parasites, the white worker will have to pay for that dependence on the employer-industrialist, the white
farmer for that dependence on the employer-creditor. The God of Calvin is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and forth generation of those who hate him: the God of Capital will after all have his pound of flesh!

Engels wrote in 1895 that: 'When Bismarck found himself compelled to introduce (universal) franchise as the only means of interesting the mass of the people in his plans, our workers immediately took it in earnest and sent August Bebel to the first constituent Reichstag. And from that day on, they have used the franchise in a way which has paid them a thousandfold and has served as a model to the workers of all countries. The franchise has been . . . transformed by them from a means of deception, which it was before, into an instrument of emancipation . . . And so it happened that the bourgeoisie and the government came to be much more afraid of the legal than of the illegal action of the workers' party, of the result of elections than those of rebellion.' Engels continued: 'Of course, our . . . comrades to not thereby, in the least renounce their right to revolution. The right to revolution is, after all, the only really "historical right", the only right on which all modern states without exception rest . . . Yet it came to pass that in large measure the working class of western Europe and North America did in fact for some time anyway renounce its right to revolution. The mass parties of the workers became parties of Order and Reform. And to the extent that bourgeois Law and Order was the basis on which the proletariat founded its trade unions and secured for itself higher wages, better working conditions and the right to strike, this was an inevitable outcome.

That bourgeois Law and Order also gave the proletariat the right to form its own political party and the right to install that party in power, all within the legal framework of bourgeois democracy. In the work from which we have just quoted, Engels says: 'The irony of world history turns everything upside down. The Parties (of the property owning class) . . . are perishing under the legal conditions created by themselves. They cry despairingly . . . legality is the death of us; whereas we, under this legality, get firm muscles like life internal . . . (There) is nothing left for them to do but themselves break through this fatal legality.' The condition of the black workers of South Africa, the place in society allocated to us by the capitalist class, demands that we must assert our right to revolution. Capital in its South African mould turns things right side up again. We are perishing under the legal conditions created by the bourgeoisie whereas they, under this legality, get firm muscles and rosy cheeks and look like life eternal. We have no choice but to break down this fatal legality. For the burden of our argument has been exactly this, that in the totality of the social relations that describe the apartheid system, we have a place only and exclusively in so far as we are the ragged-trousered philanthropists — the exploited producers. We are otherwise the outsiders, the excluded — on our own continent, in our country!

In this context, take the Bantustan programme. In its objectives stated by the creators of this policy, the black producers will have the right to be complete human beings only in these areas which have been set aside as our so-called homelands. Otherwise, when we enter so-called white South Africa, we have the following dramatis personae: He who (is the) money-owner . . . strides in front as capitalist; the possessor of labour-power follows as his labourer. The one with an air of independent, smirking, intent on business; the other, timid and holding back, like one who is bringing his own hide to market and has nothing to expect but — a hiding. The Bantustan policy is therefore not a deus ex machina, a contrived and inartistic solution of a difficulty in the drama of South Africa life.
Rather, it is but the legal codification, the pure representation in juridical form, of the centuries-old socio-economic reality of the alienation of the black producer from the society which he daily produces and reproduces.

At the level of abstraction, there are two alternatives out of this condition available to the black workers. One of these is to cut the umbilical cord that ties us to bourgeois South Africa, for us to cease to be producers on somebody else’s account. What would then happen? We could then join the demi-monde of the thieves and murderers, the pimps and prostitutes and, by becoming true and complete outcasts, recast ourselves in the parasitic model of our bourgeois progenitor, outside the bounds of bourgeois legality. Such an alternative is obviously absurd.

The racist regime is on the other hand pushing us into the Bantustans. This constitutes a death sentence for thousands of our people. For South Africa’s land policy, of which the Bantustans are the historical outcome, is founded precisely on the land dispossession of the African people which ensures that hunger compels us to bring our own hides to market. The second, and, in fact, the only historically justifiable and inevitable alternative is that we cling very firmly to our position as producers, that we hoist the bourgeoisie with its own petard.

The irony of the South African situation is that exactly because capital permits us to enter the city, to pass through the sacred portals of a white church, and set foot in the even more sacred sanctuary of madame’s bedroom, but only as workers, capital thereby indicates to us daily that it is in fact our labour that makes the city to live, that gives voice to the predikant, the preacher and provides the necessary conditions for procreation. Since then we are, in a very real sense, the creators of society, what remains for us is to insist and ensure that that society is made in our image and that we have dominion over it. In as much as the producer and the parasite who feeds on that producer represent antithetical forces, the one working, the other idle; the one wanting to escape the obligation of the nurse-maid and the other striving to ensure that he is for ever the fed, in as much therefore must a South Africa over which we have dominion be the antithesis of present-day South Africa.

That free South Africa must therefore redefine the black producer, or rather, since we the people shall govern, since we shall have through our own struggle placed ourselves in the position of makers of history and policy and no longer be mere objects of that history, we shall redefine our own position as follows:

a. we are the producers of wealth;
b. we produce this wealth for our own benefit to be appropriated by us the producers;
c. the aim of this production shall be the satisfaction, at an increasing level, of the material and spiritual needs of the people;
d. we shall so order the rest of society and social activity, in education and culture; in the legal sphere, on military questions, in our international relations, etcetera, to conform to these goals.

In my view, the Freedom Charter (the political programme of the African National Congress adopted in 1956), provides us with the programme within which such a redefinition can occur. It should be of some interest to point out that this programme was written exclusively on the basis of demands submitted by thousands upon thousands of ordinary workers, peasants, businessmen,
intellectuals and other professional people, the youth and women of all the nationalities of South Africa. It is a measure of their maturity that these masses should have so clearly understood the fundamental direction of their aspirations. It is a demonstration in practice of how much the bourgeoisie, by refusing to temper its greed, did ultimately teach us to identify our true interests without any equivocation.

Whenever we stand up and say, as the ANC does, that ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can just claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people ...’ we always meet with three different reactions. There are those, naturally, who agree with us. There are those who howl in derision: these are the white supremacists who are confident of the everlasting power of the repressive force of apartheid South Africa. But perhaps more important, there are those, themselves the offspring of the black producers of our country, together with their sympathisers, who, in anger, throw at us the epithet, traitor!

Yet this is what a free South Africa will be like. For as the masses themselves long discovered, the antithesis to white supremacy, exclusiveness and arrogance is not a black version of the same practices. In the physical world, black might indeed be the opposite of white. But in the world of social systems, social theory and practice have as much to do with skin pigmentation as has the birth of children with the stork. To connect the two is to invent a fable with the conscious or unconscious purpose of hiding reality. The act of negating the theory and practice of white apartheid racism, the revolutionary position, is exactly to take the issue of colour, race, national and sex differentiation out of the sphere of rational human thinking and behaviour, and thereby expose all colour, race, nation and sex prejudice as irrational. Our own rational practical social activity, rational in the sense of being anti-racist and non-racist, constitutes such a negation: it constitutes the social impetus and guarantee of the withering away of this irrationality.

Consider the circumstances in which we might position black capitalism as the antithesis to white capitalism. Fortunately, Fanon has already warned us that one of the results of imperialist domination is that in the colonial middle class ‘the dynamic, pioneer aspect’, the characteristics of the inventor and the discoverer of new world which are found in all national bourgeoisies are lamentably absent. In its beginnings, the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries identifies itself with the decadence of the bourgeoisie of the west. We need not think that it is jumping ahead; it is in fact beginning at the end. It is already senile before it has come to know the petulance, the fearlessness, or the will to succeed of youth. Thus black capitalism instead of being the antithesis is rather confirmation of parasitism with no redeeming features whatsoever, without any extenuating circumstances to excuse its existence. If you want to see a living example, go to the Transkei.

Even more, by thus expelling racism to the realm of the irrational by our own practice we would help to deny those who want to exploit and oppress others, including our very selves, the possibility of finding justification for their actions in such prejudices. We particularly, who are the products of exemplary capitalist exploitation, must remember that when German capital found opportunity, especially during the 2nd World War, to revert to primitive forms of accumulation, under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious, it used exactly these prejudices literally to enslave and
slaughter millions of people. We must remember that the exploitation of the so-called gastarbeiter in Western Europe today is founded, in part, on contempt for their nationality: that in the United States and Northern Ireland the black and the Irish worker respectively are oppressed and exploited on the basis of colour and national prejudice.

The charge of traitor might stick if we were to advance a programme of equality between black and white while there remained between these two communities the relations of exploiter and exploited. But we have already said that our victory presupposes the abolition of parasitism and the re-integration of the idle rich as productive members of society as well as our writing off the debt of the white worker and farmer so that they can start again afresh, as equals with other producers, in law and every other respect, without the heavy weight of blood money in their pockets and on their consciences.

The Freedom Charter itself says that 'the national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people.' It also goes on to say 'all the land (shall be) redivided among those who work it to banish famine and land hunger.' We believe sincerely that it is only in conditions of such an equality as is underpinned by these provisions that we shall each be able to discover and unfold our true individuality, reacquire the right to be human, and thereby create the conditions for the creative realisation of the considerable talent of our people, both black and white, which today is so firmly stifled by the suffocating purposes of a small exploiting and oppressive minority. To transcend the status of mere producer to that of human being, capital has taught us by negative example that we must guarantee ourselves the right to work and to social security, good housing and health services, education, culture, pride and joy in the multiplicity of languages and progressive national traditions among ourselves and among the people of Africa and the world. We must therefore preface our own system of accounting with the provision that our rational calculations must serve to enlarge human life and not to negate it.

We have therefore to strive to banish war and the use or the threat of force in the settlement of international disputes. We must work to abolish the use of fear against individuals and communities as an instrument of policy, and therefore uphold and fight for the right of all peoples to true self-determination, for friendship and mutually advantageous cooperation among the peoples of the world. We are convinced that in this way we would restore our country to its rightful position in the world as a steadfast friend and ally of all who struggle for peace, democracy and social progress, and not the repugnant predator that she is today.

Bibliographic Notes
Soweto and its Aftermath

Archie Mafeje

The student revolt that flared up in Soweto in June 1976 was a clear indication of the extent of mass resistance to oppression and exploitation under apartheid. Yet the revolt posed a number of important questions for a revolutionary strategy in South Africa, especially in terms of its implications for an alliance of workers and students and for its relation with the liberation movements. This article assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy adopted by the student movement inside the country and raises questions about the relevance of the current strategies of the various exiled liberation movements to the changing conditions in the country.

Revolution seems an ambiguous thing. It is a symbol of a new justice and yet not infrequently it is accompanied by prejudice, self-interest, fear and petty jealousies. Nothing illustrates this more vividly than Soweto and its aftermath. At first, stunned, puzzled and yet elated, South African political exiles genuinely felt that their cause had been vindicated. The kids had done it on their own. How? At the moment of elation party gurus on all sides confessed that it was spontaneous and unexpected. Yet, barely three months after the thunderous explosion of 16 June 1976, it was as if all true believers had been put on trial. Without a murmur from the Soweto militants, certain South African movements abroad became extremely defensive and started claiming responsibility for the uprising. This was particularly unfortunate as it deprived the claimants of the opportunity to explain to themselves what had happened so as to see more clearly their own position outside (self-criticism). Concomitantly, they succeeded in provoking their antagonists within the liberation movement to spend a great deal of effort in refuting their claims rather than in analysing the subjects of the process that had sparked off the controversy. Was it merely self-indulgence, deviationism, or an admission of political impotence on the part of those concerned?

The question can be posed without intending to rake up the old skeletons in the cupboard, but as a form of self-criticism. However, to answer it directly would be another instance of detraction, as it would shift the spotlight away from the Soweto movement to the movements that were being indicated. In this occasion our main interest is: (i) the social identity of the movement; (ii) its organisational form; (iii) its political programme and strategy; and, above all, (iv) its historical
In practice this will entail a brief recapitulation of the events in Soweto and elsewhere, a comment on the origins of the people behind them, and an analysis of political reactions to the movement and its aftermath.

The Soweto events

It is well-known that the school-children's demonstration in Soweto on the 16th June 1976 was an outcome of a sustained protest against compulsory instruction in Afrikaans. The slogan, 'Afrikaans is a tribal language', was indicative of the students' attitude towards Afrikaans. But the slogan, 'Afrikaans is oppressors' language' had wider connotations which became clearer as the struggle unfolded. It is also common knowledge that when 15,000 students conducted a protest march to Orlando Stadium, they were intercepted by fully armed police who opened fire on them, the first victim being the thirteen-year old martyr, Hector Petersen. In subsequent confrontations with the police not only in Soweto but also in the East Rand and the Cape Peninsula, it became common practice for the police to shoot student demonstrators at will. Indeed, in the inquiry by the Cillie Commission, the police admitted to having used 50,000 rounds of ammunition against student demonstrators in Soweto, East Rand and the Cape Peninsular and to having killed a total of 284 and injured about 2000. The press, including pro-Government Afrikaans newspapers, thought that this was a gross underestimation and that probably the actual figure was thrice as high. While casualties among the police were nil, it is obvious that the police suffered a tremendous shock at the hands of the students who would not be cowed by the usual show of force.

The spread of the struggle in a few days to such areas as Tokoza and Daveyton near Benoni, to Natalspruit and Katlehong near Germiston and Visloorus near Boksburg; and in a week to Atteridgeville, Mabapone and Mamelodi near Pretoria, Ga-Rankuwe northwest of Pretoria, to Lowveld and Lekozi near Nelspruit in the Eastern Transvaal and to Lynnville in the East Rand was sufficient demonstration of the students' determination. By the end of June more than fifty schools had been burnt down in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and Natal. The University of Zululand was also affected, though marginally. In August, after a relative lull, serious unrest broke out among school-children in the Cape Peninsula. The struggle with the police raged for three weeks (11 August-3 September), resulting in at least 92 deaths according to the police. Around the same time more eruptions occurred in Port Elizabeth and even in smaller towns such as Oudtshoorn, George, Wellington, Stellenbosch, Riversdale and Paarl. The people involved this time were the so-called Coloureds. The message was clear and the sense of solidarity undeniable.

Although the student demonstrations reverberated almost throughout the country, organisationally the struggle was centred in Soweto where the students had formed the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC). The main function of this body was to coordinate student action in the face of increasing police brutality and threatened chaos. However, from the sequence of events it seems that it took the students a fairly long time to realise that their cause was in danger, without the direct support of the working-class. After all, by attacking all the apartheid institutions such as Urban Bantu Councils, Bantu School Boards, beer halls and Government offices wherever they were to be found, the students were not merely protesting against the use of Afrikaans in African schools, but were challenging state power whose foundations lie well beyond their social strata.
The Strikes

As has been indicated, it was not until the beginning of August that the students started to approach the workers as such. At first the workers had got drawn into the struggle by circumstance e.g. demonstrations which threatened their homes, closure of certain yards for security reasons, or merely police nervousness and over-reaction. A perfect example of the latter is the Inhlazane Station episode on 16 June when thousands of workers returning home, with no knowledge of what had happened, found themselves confronted with armed security police. When they began to gather in large numbers inquiringly, the police used tear gas and a baton charge to disperse them. As is now customary, the workers defended themselves by throwing stones and bricks at the police and thus joined the youth who were already out in the streets. Similarly, the detention of people’s leaders such as members of the Soweto Black Parents’ Association and other adult suspects swung the pendulum in favour of the students.

Initially, student militants seem to have been more concerned to prevent the workers from going to work rather than to recruit them as conscious and willing partners in the struggle. Their tactics varied from persuasion, tearing up parts of the railway line which takes the workers from Soweto to Johannesburg, stoning buses which carried workers to the city to jeering at workers who were seen going to work. As would be expected, these tactics did not appeal to the workers who had not been consulted in advance. Although sympathy and admiration for the students prevailed among the black population in general, for the first two weeks very little progress had been made in forging links between the students and the workers. On the contrary, in some areas tension had developed between the two groups, as is evidence by the unfortunate scenes in Mzimhlophe in August – a point to which we shall return later.

For a while the tactics of threats and reprisals against strike-breakers persisted, but barely ten days had passed before the students recognised the folly of their methods and fully appreciated the strategic value of enlisting active and positive support of the workers. Instead of dismissing their elders as being ‘irrelevant’, they started a serious dialogue with their parents at home and their worker-brothers in the streets. Despite (or because) of the extreme violence by the police, the struggle was entering a new phase. In keeping with this new mood, the SSRC declared that ‘the students had gone as far as they could; it had become important to strike at the industrial structure of South Africa’. Another new development was that round about the same time pamphlets in the name of the ANC (African National Congress) appeared in Soweto, calling for a three-day strike. Whatever the significance of this particular strategem, student spokesmen (now in Botswana) are adamant that after two months of struggle they knew where real power lay, although they were unsure of how to cope with the problem of organisational methods and tactics. The students are satisfied that the strike was the outcome of their independent initiative.

The Soweto general strike of 23-25 August 1976 was an unqualified success, despite massive police patrols and intimidation of student picketers with gunfire and anti-strike leaflets. Johannesburg reported an average absentee-rate of about 80 per cent. In some cases absentee-rates of 90-98 per cent were recorded. Bus services to the townships were suspended and trains were cancelled because nobody was using them. It was noted that the highest rate of absentees was among the manual workers. Employers panicked and called upon the Government to do something about the situation. Apart from their individual losses,
inflow of foreign capital had virtually ceased, the price of gold had plunged from the expected average of US$200 per ounce to US$106 per ounce, foreign reserves had fallen by more than 25 per cent in the four months ending in June and the balance of payments had worsened.

All the while the police were looking for a weak link to break the strike. Finally, they found one — the migrant workers. As mentioned earlier, the initial attempts of the students to organise a workers’ strike were not free from coercion. Reprisals were used against strike-breakers. Such was the case with the Mzimhlophe Hostel inmates. In retaliation against the latter’s refusal to cooperation, the students simply set the hostel on fire, burning several rooms occupied by the migrants in the process. This did not escape the attention of the police, who exploited the grievance of the migrants and set them up against the students. In the afternoon of the second day of the strike (24 August), according to the Johannesburg Star, approximately a thousand migrant workers from Mzimhlophe Hostel, ‘carrying butchers’ knives, pangas, tomahawks, intshumentshu (sharpened spikes), kerries and stones, started chasing people’, threatening to kill them.

As it turned out, this was no empty threat. Not only did the migrants systematically destroy houses of urban-dwellers who were thought to be in league with the students but, even more alarming, by the 26th August twenty-one people had been actually killed and 107 injured as a result of the campaign. The same reporter from the Star innocently remarked: ‘What amazed me was that as they assaulted people, heavily armed police stood by and did nothing to protect the residents. The Hostel-dwellers, swinging their weapons wildly shouted: “We are going to kill these people”.’

Without offering an explanation for this event, four factors are nonetheless noticeable about the Mzimhlophe Hostel dwellers: (a) they are all Zulu by ethnic origin, thanks to the South African policy of allocating residence according to tribe; (b) they live as bachelors, while their families stay in the countryside by Government decree; (c) when in town, like all migrants, they keep their savings in their rooms; and (d) their hostel is known to be ‘the stronghold’ of Gatsha Buthelezi’s Inkatha kaZulu. Indeed, it was Buthelezi who eventually came to quell their rampage on the 27th August. Why were the urban-dwellers not able to do the same? Does this not raise some questions about the loyalty of the migrants in general? Answers to this question will be reserved for a later stage.

Suffice it to say, the divisive tactics of the police did not really pay off. By the middle of September the strikers were again in the streets, more unified than before and better prepared. The SSRC had distributed leaflets beforehand in Zulu, Sotho and English throughout Soweto, calling upon the workers to stay at home on the 13th to the 15th of September. The strike turned out to be a massive demonstration of solidarity of the oppressed, even greater than the previous one. Approximately, half a million workers in the Reef responded. Not only that, it also received echoes from as far afield as Cape Town, where masses of Coloured as well as African workers came out in support of Soweto. Leaflets, written in different political styles — some emphasizing the immediate economic importance of the strike and others focusing more on the destruction of all racial institutions, appeared in Cape Town. As is shown by the three youths who were caught in Athlone (a Coloured residential area), the latter type of leaflets came from the Coloured community, whereas the former was said to have been distributed by African students from Langa High School. Nonetheless, in action Coloured and African youths remained united and mobilised the workers in their
respective constituencies. In Soweto even the rift between the migrants at Mzimhlophe Hostel and the township residents had been healed. On the 15th September the students were over-joyed to note that: The Hostels are now on our side. It was total victory for the students! But a revolutionary struggle is a process, not an event.

The threat of economic disruption was bound to elicit a strong reaction from the state and the industrialists. Premier Vorster had warned that 'law and order will be maintained at all costs' and industrialists had urged all employers not to support subversives (meaning workers who had participated in the strike). The result was an all-out effort by the police to crush the student movement — more random killings, mass arrests and frequent raids in the African townships. To create greater insecurity among the workers, employers took the opportunity to get rid of 'undesirable elements' or 'trouble-makers'. Although the struggle lingered on, it was apparent that neither the students nor the workers had a long-term strategy for dealing with such heavy blows from the establishment. From November to December it seemed that the centre of gravity of the struggle had moved from Soweto to Cape Town — especially the African townships of Nyanga, Gugulethu and Langa; and intermitently the Coloured township of Bonteheuvel which is only across the road from Langa. Pitched battles were fought between the students and the police in Nyanga. Once again, as in Soweto, the student tactic of commanding the workers to stay at home led to another confrontation with the migrant workers. As in Soweto, the police were able to take advantage of this and systematically promoted internecine fights between the students and township residents on the one hand, and the migrant workers on the other. Why had the Cape Town students not learn from the Mzimhlophe experience? Why had they failed to form a representative committee where mistakes could be analysed and corrected?

Before we attempt any analysis of the shortcomings of the student movement, it is worth reiterating that their campaign was an unparalleled success. Schools throughout the Rand had been forced to shut and 300,000 students drawn into a massive boycott of Bantu Education. Hundreds of teachers had resigned and Urban Bantu Councils had been obliged to disband and the eyes of the older generation had been opened to the existence of a new potential force, the so-called 'kids'. If the Government had supposed that by banning and forcing into exile the older organisations it had stamped out any consciousness or the will to rebel among the blacks, it had deluded itself.

The Student Movement: its Character

The three movements that have been associated with the Soweto uprising are the South African Student Movement (SASM), composed mainly of secondary school pupils; the South African Student Organisation (SASO), consisting basically of college students; and the Black People's Convention (PBC) — an offshoot of the latter. SASO was the driving spirit behind the formation of the other two organisations. However, the dividing lines among all three of them remained nominal, as individuals often belonged to more than one organisation and attended one another’s meetings. This gave the movement greater cohesiveness that would be suggested by the different labels by which they were known. On the negative side it meant weaker links with groups outside the student or ex-student milieu. Indeed, it is striking that SASO and its sister organisations are the first black student movements in South Africa not to be allied with any of the national movements. What is not unusual, however, is the deep involvement
of secondary school pupils in national politics. It has happened many times before, beginning in the fifties. The only difference is that the leading secondary schools of the time were scattered in the rural areas or small towns and were usually boarding schools. In contrast, Soweto is a huge urban conglomerate, with thousands of students thrown together and not subject to the ever-watchful eye of the boarding-master after school hours. The latter is also true of black schools in Cape Town. Unlike their counterpart elsewhere, black students in the urban areas are predominantly of working-class background. South African labour policy guarantees that. The same is not true of rural boarding schools which tended to draw their clientele primarily from petit-bourgeois elements (teachers, clergymen and richer peasants). Secondly, the present student movement is more activist and less intellectualist than previous ones (Cape Province Students Union, South African Students Union etc.). Thirdly, the degrading of African education under the system of Bantu Education has brought about a great deal of disillusionment among the youth. Possession of higher 'education' is no longer associated with high social status, better paid jobs, or with employment at all. The defiant spirit of the students is a mark of their disillusionment with the system as a whole. The authorities cannot blackmail them by threatening to cut short their careers, as they used to. All the same, the modern youth are burning with frustration from lack of outlets for their youthful energies. Consequently, it does not need much more than the fairly pragmatic grounds enumerated above, for the whole system to stand condemned in their eyes.

Ideology and Consciousness

The relationship between ideology and consciousness is not as obvious as is often assumed. After the Soweto events and the manifest identification of targets for political attack, it would be hard to accuse the student militants of lack of consciousness or awareness of what is at stake. At the same time, it would be stretching a point too far if, on the basis of that, we attributed to them class-consciousness. While both political and class consciousness are political in the emphatic sense (i.e. they are a basis for political action), they do not necessarily connote the same historical phenomenon. The Black Consciousness Movement, of which SASM, SASO and BPC are a part, furnishes the best example of what we have in mind. Like the Black Power Movement in the United States, it created great resonance in the hearts of the oppressed black masses and generated a new sense of self-confidence which not only defied police bullets but also transcended the artificial racial divisions among non-whites in South Africa. For the first time in South African history Coloured popular masses proclaimed their black affinity and in the manner of Soweto denounced Coloured Representative Councils and kindred bodies. Granting that this is a necessary step forward, it may still be asked, Is it sufficient? Ideologically and analytically, the answer must be an emphatic 'NO'. 'Black Consciousness' is a diffuse nationalist ideology. While nationalist movements can be regarded as progressive insofar as they are anti-colonialist and anti-racist, insofar as they do not see this in the context of class struggle and socialist transformation they are limited. From all evidence it is apparent that in mounting their campaign the students had taken the workers for granted. It was only when they were faced with state power in its nakedness that they turned to the workers. Even then, ideologically and organisationally, they were handicapped, while that of the workers is essential for the survival of the system.

However, it should not be imagined that these over-sights or omissions are
peculiar to the student movement. The complexities of a divided working-class in South Africa have proved intractable even to the older movements. Putting aside the known cleavage between white and black workers, in South Africa owing to the system of migrant labour and labour compounds, there has always been latent tension between migrants and the city-dwellers. Migrants are on the whole industrialised, without being urbanised and lead an odd existence as encapsulated bachelors away from their families. In the South African cities, for this oddity or lack of urban sophistication, they are despised and referred to by derogatory terms such as amagoduka (the European equivalent is ‘guest-workers’), iziqhaza (those with facial scarifications), or izikapi (a corruption of the Afrikaans word for sheep — ‘skaaip’). It is more than likely that when the relatively inexperienced urban youth in Soweto approached them, these prejudices were projected and inevitably sparked off latent resentment. In 1960 during the PAC campaign in Cape Town this was the case. The urban youth from Langa assumed that they could dictate to the migrant workers, who in effect constituted two-thirds of the total population of Langa and were the vast majority of the labour force. Although it is common parlance in Johannesburg to think of the Zulu-speaking migrants as being collaborators par excellence (ngabantu bomlungu ooZulu — white man’s stooges), recent events in Nyanga (Cape Town) show that the phenomenon has nothing to do with being Zulu, Xhosa or otherwise.

At the more objective and structural level there is a long-standing argument on the issue between those who, like the South African Communist Party (SACP), believe that by virtue of selling their labour-power to capitalists in industry, migrants are definitely part of the urban proletariat and those who, like the Unity Movement (UMSA), believe that migrants identify more with the peasantry than with the urban population and still have a vested interest in land. As it is an empirical fact that under the determinate conditions of South Africa migrants are both these things, it does not seem that the problem need be resolved at the level of abstract theory. It is at the level of strategy and in the process of answering the question of what is meant by the ‘alliance’ between workers and peasants in the revolutionary struggle that significant differences can emerge. The intricacies of the case aside, it may be pointed out that the fact that the families of migrants are back in the countryside, eking out a living from a subsistence agriculture, does create an important structural predisposition. When confronted with a situation such as Soweto, the first thing that migrants think of are their families back at home and their hopes, materially. Therefore, the decision to strike does not come easily to them. It is even worse when we call to mind that in accordance with their traditions every decision is an outcome of long and tedious deliberations by all concerned. This is a far way cry from the instantaneous and precipitous reactions of the urban youth. What is it that the students offered the migrant workers which carried authority and conviction? For the fully urbanised workers it was sufficient that the police were butchering their children, whose case they knew first-hand. Secondly, they themselves suffered the same insecurity from police raids and blackmail as the students. But even in their case, sympathy is one thing and revolutionary commitment another.

A Programme for Action?
Revolutionary commitment is impossible without a guiding ideology, a coherent programme of demands and a clear policy. It is not unfair to state that the ideology of ‘Black Consciousness’ remains vacuous in the South African circum-
stances. Not only does it eschew the question of imperialism in general and of capitalist exploitation inside and around South Africa, but it can also hardly be considered a historical advance on the older nationalist movement such as PAC (Pan-African Congress) (and somewhat belatedly the ‘ANC-Nationalist’). Like SASO-SASM, PAC has to its credit Sharpeville and Langa. But unlike the student movement, it had in its ranks a strong representation of the urban workers and other classes. This gave it a truly national character, despite the fact that its ‘Black Power’ ideology (Ama-Afrika Pofo) was no less vague than that of the Black Consciousness Movement.

Militancy is another feature which the student movement has in common with PAC in its heyday. Towards the end of 1959, PAC adopted what was called a programme for ‘Positive Action’ which culminated in and alas ended with Sharpeville in 1960. After that PAC, like the ANC, was banned and with its top leadership incarcerated in Robben Island, was forced into exile where it took it 16 years to produce a ‘Programme for the Party’. Like PAC, the students went into militant action without a clear political programme. Rejection of imposition of Afrikaans in African schools of Bantu Education in general, of Bantu Urban Councils and Bantustans is a progressive step but not a substitute for a political programme. Likewise, telling the workers:

Do not go to work or school.
You will go to work at your risk.
If you strike you will hit the system where it hurts.

is no analysis of the class-struggle nor an articulation of the workers’ demands. It is perhaps important to mention here that while all the students were implementing the boycott weapon, it was only the Coloured students from Cape Town who backed it up with a political explanation, as is shown by the leaflets they were caught distributing in Athlone. The explanation is simple. These are the descendants of the Anti-CAD (Campaign Against Discrimination) and the Teachers’ League of South Africa (TLSA) — the most important affiliates of the Unity Movement among the Coloureds in the Cape Peninsular. However, the TLSA and Anti-CAD do not seem to have supported the student movement and from discussions with students, it appears that they have disagreements with these organisations.

In Johannesburg, which is traditionally the stronghold of the ANC (and later of PAC as well), a few things occurred which need some explanation. As was mentioned earlier, a month after the Soweto demonstrations had exploded onto the international scene, leaflets purporting to be ANC’s appeared in Soweto, calling upon the workers to strike. This could have been a timely intervention by the ANC from ‘underground’ or from outside. However, its value is in doubt. It gave the students neither a better political perspective than they already had nor a more viable strategy for bringing the workers into the forefront of the struggle. No coherent programme for the national struggle emerged as a result of the intervention. The student activities continued to be characterised by spontaneity and to be informed by simple slogans. Can their shortcomings and omissions be regarded as a measure of the potency of the ANC ‘underground’ in what is supposedly its traditional grounds? It would seem that even from its point of view, it is absurd for the ANC to claim responsibility for such political immaturity as was revealed during the Soweto uprising. By the end of the day, as in 1960, the leaders of the Soweto movement were either arrested or forced into exile and their organisations suppressed, without any clear policy for future action.
Who is to Blame?

It is not our purpose here to allocate blame, but rather to review critically what happened. To counteract possible emotionalism, subjectivism and defensiveness, we do well by insisting on historical analysis. Soweto is an historical event of great significance. It threw into relief a number of issues which had preoccupied many South African cadres in exile, irrespective of political affiliations. Among these were questions such as:

- What are the people at home thinking or doing?
- Is the leadership of the various South African movements in exile as in touch as it often claims in its propaganda?
- Is there a chance that the people at home have gone ahead on their own and have thus rendered the movements outside irrelevant?
- In the event what would be our possible contribution to their struggle?

Needless to say, a number of independent secret trips have been made to South Africa by individuals and groups to go and find out for themselves. Whatever militancy they reported among the people was not entirely convincing until the Natal strikes in 1973 and then the drama of Soweto in 1976. Both manifestations exposed beyond doubt the isolation of what the Soweto students call the 'expatriate movements' from the home-base. Even more disturbing, interviews with some Soweto student exiles in Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania and Western Europe revealed that they know the movements abroad only by name and not by their politics. Suppression of political literature and political expression by the South African regime has had its toll on the youth. As one of the South African cadres on a recruiting mission in Botswana put it: 'There is a lot of work to be done. The students do not know the history of our country (meaning mainly the history of the political movements)'. This was confirmed by a frequent remark made by certain students in personal interviews that the three South African movements (ANC, PAC and UMSA) say exactly the same thing and, therefore, there is no real difference among them.

This can only be interpreted as an uninformed reaction against what appears to be simply sectarianism among the movements. Some students attribute lack of progress among the 'expatriate' organisations over a period of sixteen years to 'too much concern with their individual identity and not the national struggle'. Consequently, there is among some of them a general sense of disillusionment with and an unwillingness to join the older organisations. When the question of alternative forms is raised, these students remain sceptical and would prefer not to be organised formally, in case they get caught up in the same trap as the 'expatriate' organisations. This partially explains why SASO, BPC and SASM operated as loose organisations with fairly loose boundaries. Whether in addition there is an underlying antipathy towards bureaucracy, it is hard to say (Steve Biko, one time a very popular President of SASO, stepped down voluntarily to give a change to others to run the organisations). On the other hand, it is certain that the students saw a tactical advantage in having a leadership that is thrown up by the group in action, as this deprives the police of the opportunity to kill the movement by removing its established leadership. The same tactic was used successfully by the workers during the Natal strikes. If this is a new organisational technique under conditions of extreme repression and intimidation by the police, then it still has to be reconciled with the need for strong organisation on a non-ad-hoc basis. Formerly, the tactic was to go 'underground' but, as the students and the workers have come to know, most never surfaced again and thus the present political void was created.
Whatever the failures and subsequent disillusionment, it must not be forgotten that the older movements have a history and are an important part of the South African political heritage. Likewise, the differences between them should not be brushed aside, for they are real and ideologically determined. Fortunately, all of them have now written programmes — The 10-Point Programme UMSA (1943), the Freedom Charter ABC (1955) and The New Road of Revolution PAC (1975). They all address themselves to the question of national liberation and bourgeois democratic rights. It is precisely on the question of imperialism/capitalism and the class struggle that significant differences occur among them. While the ANC does not raise in its official documents (and did not during the Rivonia Trial when Mandela made his famous closing speech) the question of socialism and the class struggle, the PAC and UMSA do. In the case of PAC this is made explicit in their 1975 document and in that of the Unity Movement in the African People’s Democratic Union of Southern Africa Inaugural Address and Constitution (1961).

This is not to praise them either. For instance, PAC is liable to accusations of having borrowed their formulations almost wholesale from the Chinese. In contrast the Unity Movement, which is in complete agreement with the Chinese on the question of the alliance between workers and peasants, becomes somewhat inconsistent in advocating a single stage from a bourgeois to a socialist revolution whilst actually upholding a bourgeois programme. This has been a source of controversy inside and outside the movement. In the South African context its chief antagonist has been the CP which believes in a two-stage revolution. Indeed, this was the justification for the formation of the Congress Alliance in 1955. This was fully borne out by subsequent Party statements such as the 1963 Declaration in which it was stated: ‘As its immediate and foremost task, the South African Communist Party works for a united front of national liberation. It strives to unite all sections and classes of oppressed and democratic people for a national democratic revolution to destroy White domination’. If so, what was going to be the status of the Communist Programme in the short-run? Was the declaration tantamount to subordinating the class struggle to the national bourgeois revolution? Theoretically, there could be any number of answers to these questions. But historically and practically, the number of answers can only be finite. Judging by what has happened in most of Africa since independence, there is hardly any evidence to suggest that the ‘national democratic stage’ envisaged by the SACP is any longer a meaningful historical concept. There has been some disillusionment even within the SACP since the seventies. Should not this have been an occasion for revising the earlier strategy or for making true the claim that: ‘The South African Communist Party is the party of the working class, the disciplined and advanced class . . . ’? Here, there is danger of confusing fact with aspiration. Could it be that the SACP, which is historically a white party, is in fact faced with a dilemma? Is it not the case that under conditions of rampant nationalism and increasing polarisation between black and white in South Africa, it can hope to recruit into its ranks neither white workers who are generally right-wing nor black workers who are not short of black leaders? It is my belief that the original strategy based on a ‘two-stage’ theory of revolution has in practice become a rationalisation for ‘entrism’, whereby the SACP reserves the right through its alliance with the ANC to recruit from within leading cadres who are often petit-bourgeois. While it would be absurd to impute any original sin on the part of the petit bourgeoisie especially in underdeveloped countries, we must insist that a communist party is in principle a class organisation whose existence is accounted for by working-class member-
ship and not so much by selected petit bourgeois elements of any colour. Therefore, the question must be raised: who controls the workers in South Africa, or who wields the 'big stick' in any actual or potential National Front in the face of a faltering national democratic revolution in Africa and elsewhere?

It is conceivable that the ANC, reinforced by some elements from the South African Coloured People's Organisation and the South African Indian Congress, boasts of the biggest following among urbanised workers in South Africa. But it is our contention that it has always subjected them to petit-bourgeois rule and demands, with the help of the SACP and its black petit-bourgeois recruits. This is regrettable because in South Africa both the industrialists and the Opposition Parties are trying to capture the privileged strata among the blacks. During the Soweto strikes it was reported that the lowest rate of absenteeism was among white collar workers. Internationally, as is shown by what is happening in Zimbabwe and in Namibia, there is a conscious effort to appeal to black petit-bourgeois aspirations. The national democratic revolution is being aborted and there is a need to identify alternative forces. Earlier we stated that PAC, unlike ANC, has committed itself publicly to a socialist struggle. Next to ANC, PAC can claim a following among the urbanised workers, at least, in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. But has it deployed them in a way which is significantly different from that of the ANC? While it can be said from an analysis of the leadership of the liberation organisations that practically there is greater workers' control in PAC than in ANC, it cannot be said that qualitatively this has given rise to significant differences. Everything is in a state of flux in PAC and nobody can guess where it will all end. In the meantime, control over urbanised workers in South Africa remains equivocal. What of the migrant worker-peasants?

While neither ANC or PAC can honesty claim an organised following among migrant worker-peasants, the Unity Movement, which has no effective following among the workers, can claim a greater following among the peasants and better access to migrant workers. Through the All African Convention (1935) and the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA, 1959), it managed to develop a substantial following among the peasants in the Transkei, Ciskei and northern Natal. This gave it a direct link with the migrant workers which was exploited only to a limited extent in Cape Town and in East London. By the time it decided to tackle the mines in the Rand it was too late, as events showed. Then, how can the Unity Movement speak consistently of a socialist transformation or a single stage transformation, without a solid base among the workers of either category? In theory and practice are, even proletarianised, peasants enough in the transitional stage?

In commenting on the various South African movements it has been necessary to adumbrate their official positions, without identifying them with particular individuals. This has been done advisedly because in each organisation there is a rising new left which is concerned with the issues raised above. Such elements readily discuss these matters among themselves and across party lines. Indeed, part of the observations offered here are an outcome of such contacts. To the leadership, which is naturally concerned with the maintenance of the organisations it heads, such interaction is not totally welcome and often disciplinary action is taken against known offenders.

Such conservative responses are true of most organisations and they are the way organisations normally reproduce themselves over time. They are, therefore, not to be dismissed lightly as 'bureaucratic' or 'sectarian', as some idealists are inclined
to do. Consequently, when organisations talk about ‘unity’ or a ‘united front’, they should not be understood to mean to surrender their identity or leading ideology but rather to enhance it by enlisting support which is thought to be compatible. This continues to be the case until the tide of the revolution dictates otherwise. The ideological ferment among the youth in the various South African movements might be one such signal. Certainly, Soweto marked a turning-point in the South African struggle. It showed unequivocally how irrelevant discussions at the top can be if not prompted by popular action on the ground. In sharp contrast to the dynamic unity of Soweto, the elusive talks about unity among South African movements in exile were inspired by a deep sense of failure which was recognised but never discussed openly. The contrast between the two situations has led some critics to come to the erroneous conclusion that the traditional organisations have become irrelevant to the struggle (a view shared by the Soweto militants referred to earlier).

As an historical, political process, organisations die hard. Apart from everything else, the so-called ‘expatriate’ organisations still possess a significant amount of political capital. That capital can be used destructively or positively, depending on the nature of the forces at work. Challenged strongly by critical cadres outside and in isolation from the progressive forces inside, that power can be, and has been, used destructively. But a combination of external and internal forces cannot be destroyed but only acceded to ultimately in a transformational way. Thus, the current cooptation of the rebellious youth from inside should be seen as a pre-emption of this possibility. The anti-ideology and anti-organisation stance of elements among the rebellious youth has facilitated the process and jeopardised any chance of a serious dialogue between the young and the old. The supposition that old and experienced organisations can be used to acquire military skills and diplomatic protection and then be discarded is naive in the extreme and will, no doubt, back-fire in the end.

One would have thought that even the ‘call to arms’ is due for re-evaluation. As is shown by the existence of several thousands of trained ANC and PAC cadres abroad, the South African liberation movement is not short of military skills. And yet the vaunted armed struggle has not yet begun in earnest. It would be irresponsible to minimise the effort it will require to engage the South African monster militarily. Perhaps, for the same reason it is an inapt to think of armed struggle in conventional terms. Putting aside the illusion, not fulfilled by 16 years of struggle, that South Africa could be invaded from outside, current strategies among the movements are open to question. The supposition, (shared by PAC and UMSA) that it is necessarily the countryside that will ‘encircle’ the cities, prejudices the issue. Irrespective of what happened in China and in Cuba, the new strategy of ‘urban guerilla warfare’ which is being experimented on in Latin-America, with at times interesting results, should be explored first politically. Above all, it should not be confused with mere bravado of opening up with machine guns on a few policemen, as some ANC emissaries are reported to have done in the aftermath of Soweto. Despite the fact that ANC has an urban base, it does not seem to have evolved a coherent theory of urban guerilla warfare. The strategy of the Umkhonto Wesizwe which was exposed during the Rivonia Trial reflected a classical approach, where planners thought of a rural hinterland to which to retreat. However, in the same document it was admitted that the terrain around the Reef is ‘extremely unfavourable’. If in the meantime there has been a radical change in approach, then the ANC should not have sprung surprises on the common populace.
Currently, there seems to be an over-emphasis on armed struggle, without any reference to political methods of struggle. Could this be a growing militarism which will eventually submerge politics? South Africa is an industrialised country which depends on blacks for up to 80 per cent of its labour supply. On the few occasions that labour-power has been temporarily withdrawn, as in the 1973 strikes and recently in Soweto, the effects on the economy were devastating. To date, there is on concerted effort to organise the black workers to use this weapon to the maximum. Why is it, for instance, easier and cheaper to recruit workers for military training abroad than to recruit and finance them for sustained political strikes and other campaigns inside? Is there an antithesis between workers' power and the dominant position of the petit-bourgeoisie in the national movements? It would seem that the articulation between the national liberation movement and the class struggle towards socialism has to be reconsidered at a more concrete level than has been the case so far. By all logic, the best time for insurrection would be when the economy is in chaos and the workers are in a high state of preparedness. The point being made here is that sustained political warfare should precede military confrontation. If urban guerilla warfare is what is being contemplated, then labour action on a large-scale should be regarded as a necessary condition. Otherwise, there is a danger that thousands of valuable fighters will be used, perhaps unwittingly, as cannon-fodder.

But who specifically is going to organise black workers? It is the right of the petit-bourgeois nationalists to organise the workers on their terms in a national democratic movement. On the other hand, it is the duty of the Communist Party to protect the interests of the workers at all stages of the revolution. Therefore, any concentration on the organisation of the workers would devolve upon the Communist Party. However, as was pointed out earlier, the Communist Party in South Africa does not seem suited to this role. Consequently, some groups have suggested that an independent Marxist-Leninist Party be formed within the black liberation movement. Some have opposed this strategy on the grounds that a class programme and party methods of struggle would be in conflict with a programme and methods of struggle for national liberation. Those who advocate this point of view believe that the ensuing schism would create confusion and detract from the common struggle against national oppression. It is sufficient, they argue, that within the general movement there are Marxists whose businesses it is to warn the workers about the troubles ahead. On the other hand, as much as the Marxist-Leninist adherents would like to give prominence to a socialist programme, they in turn are not able to reject outright the idea of a United Front or to deny the existence of a broader national liberation movement. Thus, the discussion is somewhat deadlocked and generally stifled by the established leadership.

The Way Ahead

If the new left from within the existing organisations were to emerge and a convergence between it and the militants inside South Africa were to occur, there is reason to believe that there would be a significant shift to the left which would probably minimise any divergence between the so-called national democratic demands and a socialist programme. It is in the light of this possibility that the militant youth inside South Africa should take seriously the question of ideology, theory and organisation. In the meantime the cooptation of people's organisations by the older movements should be condemned. Perhaps, this is a field more for the critical cadres within the movements than for inter-party
exchanges, as that would lead to useless recriminations. Already party rivalries are turning the members of these new organisations into objects or potential mercenaries. No doubt, there are many more in the history of the liberation movement as a whole.

Bibliographic Notes
Southern Africa: Imperialism, Racism and Neo-Colonialism

Jitendra Mohan

This polemical piece aims to provoke further discussion on the character of imperialism and nationalism in Africa, by focusing attention on the broader continental and international background of the national-liberation struggle in southern Africa. It takes issue with what is seen to be a typical position assumed widely by left commentators in the West that underestimates African resistance and misjudges African nationalism. It argues that that, in its turn, is due to the tendency to isolate and abstract Western imperialism as well as African nationalism from the overarching reality of the growing rivalry between the two superpowers, the US and the USSR, in the context of a marked parallelism and convergence of methods and objectives between the two.

The last few issues of this Review have carried a lot of material dealing with various aspects of the present economic and political situation in southern Africa. While showing some differences of approach and emphasis, the material as a whole adds up to a certain interpretation of what is happening in that part of Africa, particularly as regards the evolving strategy of imperialism and the tactics of the anti-imperialist struggle. Not to put too fine a point on it, this interpretation tends to see imperialism as a single monolithic, all-powerful and virtually indestructible system, as a sort of seamless web free from all fundamental contradictions either between rival imperialisms or between national and international 'capitals'. In this unitary concept of imperialism all underdeveloped countries are by definition seen as 'neo-colonies', with the 'neo-colonial state' cast in the part of the chief agent of 'international capitalism'. So far as southern Africa is concerned, on this view, white racism and black 'neo-colonialism' appear as the twin offspring of imperialism; and not only is a perfect harmony of interest posited between imperialism and racism, but African nationalism, at least to judge from the account rendered of the behaviour of independent African states, is so characterized as to be practically indistinguishable from 'neo-colonialism'. From all this there necessarily follows a particular political 'line' in respect of the presumed strategy of the 'African revolution', with the struggle 'for socialism' and 'against capitalism' — black and white, national and international, equally and without discrimination — being defined as the main content and the immediate task of what might still, through sheer force of habit, be spoken of as 'anti-imperialist struggle'. As for the actual struggles of the African people against colonialism, racism and
imperialism, they are either discounted, misunderstood or misrepresented — their past achievements impugned, their growing strength denied, their final victory questioned, their very authenticity doubted, all because they are felt to be ideologically inadequate or 'impure'.

The present events in southern Africa are in fact capable of another interpretation. It is that which is set out below, in a rather summary and polemical form, with a view to sharpening issues and provoking further discussion. Since a striking feature of the prevalent interpretation is a deafening silence over the present role of the Soviet Union in Africa, the comments that follow take up that issue along with those indicated earlier. There are, to be sure, still wider issues — the question of 'social-imperialism', the so-called 'theory of three worlds', the problems and perspectives of class struggle in particular African countries, and others — that impinge upon the central issue of the African anti-imperialist struggle, which cannot be gone into here for want of space.

The single most important fact about the present situation in Southern Africa is that the final collapse of the racist system of settler colonialism there is not only inevitable but, indeed, imminent. Of that system South Africa forms the main shaft, with Rhodesia and Namibia as its appendages; and its collapse is impending, not only in the latter two countries in the very near future — over this there can scarcely be any serious disagreement — but also in South Africa itself in the not too distant future, say some 10 to 15 years at most. This understanding is in sharp contrast with the prevalent view which promises the present set-up in South Africa a long (or indefinite) and relatively trouble-free lease of life. The failure to notice that the racist system is going through its terminal crisis is, in large part, due to a serious underestimation of the strength of African resistance coupled with an habitual overestimation of the power of white racism; and if the first is, at least in part, the result of abstracting developments in South Africa from the wider pan-African setting, the latter in turn is linked to a serious misjudgement of the contradictory relationship between racism and imperialism. The present system in South Africa may seem impregnable, and even to some permanent, because of the manifestly superior military and economic power of the racist regime, as well as due to the seeming weakness and disarray of the recognised forces of liberation. But in fact that would be to take an extremely narrow and short-sighted view of things. By contrast, the view taken by 'official' South Africa, and even more by the imperialist camp, of the ability of the racist 'arrangement' to survive the tidal wave of African national liberation is a lot less optimistic than the dominant 'left' view in the West.

Black Resistance and White Power

The prospect of the coming collapse of the colonial-settler system in South Africa is, in the main, due to the proven and rapidly rising strength of black resistance in that country. Neither its present strength, however, nor its future growth and final victory, can be separated from the active support and help that it receives from the overwhelming majority of the African people and governments beyond South Africa's borders. This resistance refers to the struggles of all segments of the oppressed black people of South Africa — Africans, Coloureds and Indians, 'bourgeois' and petty-bourgeois, as well as the urban and rural masses — against the white settlers and their racist regime in all spheres of life and activity, economic, political and cultural. The term 'people' as used here is no empty abstraction, no mere catch-phrase; but, particularly in relation to South Africa, it is intended to signify that the phenomenon in question is far
broader and far deeper than the activities (and limitations) of the few known and recognised organizations of the African and other black people (notably, of course, ANC and PAC). The weaknesses of these organizations are not difficult to 'prove', and they do matter to be sure; but this is by no means the fundamental aspect of the matter. What is fundamental is that, despite the inactivity of the established organizations, the mass movements of black resistance have continued to build up in scale and intensity in all important fields — of employment, of schooling, of housing, of democratic rights — even in the teeth of the most ruthless repression by the state. Ideally speaking, these organizations ought to serve as the 'vanguard', so to speak, of the mass movements of black resistance, but if they do not measure up to the task the movements would doubtless find fresh organizational expressions. In any event, it is these mass movements which, particularly since the Soweto mass-killings of June 1976, have been causing mounting consternation and panic in the racist/imperialist camp.

The other aspect of the matter, which is often cited as evidence of the feebleness of black resistance, concerns the absence of any serious armed resistance inside South Africa. Such armed resistance is without a question the 'highest' — that is, ultimately decisive — expression of the national liberation struggle and for the present there is little sign of guerilla activity in that country, or little evidence even that it is seriously in the offing. Yet, here again, the appearances may well be misleading, and things could dramatically change overnight. The impending demise of the racist regimes in Zimbabwe and Namibia will almost certainly make for a marked resurgence of armed resistance inside South Africa, which will in turn be bound to link up with the thriving mass movement of black resistance in the country. In this respect the experience of the liberation struggle in South Africa will and could be no different from that of the armed resistance currently under way in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and earlier in the Portuguese colonies. The development of armed resistance in all these cases was greatly assisted by sanctuaries in and material help from the neighbouring African countries, and it is highly unlikely that the new African regimes in Zimbabwe and Namibia will (or could) stand in the way of similar resistance building up inside South Africa. By grasping the vital connection between mass movement and armed struggle, as well as bearing in mind that the scope of black resistance is far greater than the reach of the present black organizations, it is possible to see that the forces of liberation in South Africa have a lot more going for them than either the apologists of racism or even the 'left' critics allow.

The reverse side of the constant carping at black resistance is the constant harping on the fierce strength, determination and resourcefulness of the racist regime in South Africa, the assumed invulnerability of white power being contrasted with the assumed feebleness of 'black power'. The belief in the invulnerability of white power rests upon two interrelated assumptions, both of which arise out of a common misconception as to the nature and strength of black resistance. One is the assumption that the racist regime could 'easily' crush black resistance; the other is the assumption that it could 'avoid' foreign adventures. Both the scale of the Soweto killings and the continual tightening of the screws of repression since then 'prove', if proof were needed, that black resistance is increasingly harder to crush; and as for the other assumption, Pretoria will be obliged by the very 'logic' of the unfolding of armed resistance inside South Africa's boundaries to pursue an increasingly 'adventurist' and aggressive course against its neighbours, in much the same way as the regime in Salisbury has, in the past year, been obliged to mount major armed attacks against Mozambique,
Zambia and Botswana in a desperate attempt to 'beat back' the rising tide of Zimbabwean resistance. The question is not whether white South Africa wants to get embroiled in 'foreign adventures', but whether it can avoid getting embroiled, and that is not a matter entirely of its choosing; far from it. The matter will only be decided by the tempo of black resistance and disposed of by the African people. Beyond that, any argument from the presumed stubbornness and the 'fighting traditions' of 'Afrikanerdom' is simply a whole lot of colonialist tripe.

Racism and Imperialism

White South Africa, in short, is a paper tiger, and its days are surely numbered. To claim this is not to say that the end in South Africa will be all plain sailing, peaceful or painless, only that it cannot long be delayed. It should be stressed that this is no plea for underestimating the very real military and economic power of the racist regime, or for thinking that its overthrow will be a 'push-over'. The power of white South Africa, however, is in the final analysis the power of Western imperialism, which is its mainstay, economically, militarily and politically. It is here that the growing confrontation between white power and black resistance in South Africa, as well as the growing polarization between white and black Africa at large, is serving to highlight the contradiction between imperialism and racism, whose alliance though strong and of long duration is by no means permanent and indissoluble. It is precisely because South Africa is no longer impregnable and its own power and resources insufficient to ward off the looming threat of liberation, that the imperialist camp has been forced to sit up and take notice, feverishly casting about for a 'peaceful solution' to the 'race problem in southern Africa. It is not wholly impossible that, against the rising tempo of the national-liberation struggle in South Africa, the settler regime there could be deserted by its imperialist friends and patrons, much as is already happening in Rhodesia to the evident disbelief and dismay of the white settlers.

Indeed, some of the writing on the wall already points that way, as even a cursory examination of the 'new' US policy shows. The present 'critical' situation in Southern Africa is causing the US to undergo 'agonising reappraisals' of its time-honoured assumptions and alliances. In the new situation it can no longer afford a policy of 'benign neglect' towards the region. But, in the post-Vietnam world, nor can it afford the old policy of 'malign concern' — the diplomacy of the big stick and of the gunboat. So the US has suddenly set itself up as the champion of change and reform, of human rights and majority rule, in Southern Africa — including, it should be emphasized, South Africa. The so-called 'Anglo-American strategy' is essentially an American product with a bit of British blarney. It seeks first to narrow the 'problem' by isolating South Africa from Rhodesia and Namibia by helping the latter to move speedily towards the goal of African majority rule and independence (and by 'buying out' the settlers, if necessary). Secondly, particularly so far as South Africa is concerned, it seeks to encourage a new political 'solution', codified if possible in a new constitutional scheme, that would serve to join together 'moderate' elements of both black and white 'communities' into a viable and mutually beneficial coalition. This is, in fact, a new version of the hoary doctrine of 'multi-racialism' and is best seen as an attempt at a partial 'decolonization' of the racist-settler system, but this time, if it is to work at all, with the blacks placed on top (or at least at the top). It is not difficult to see that the new strategy' is intended to preserve the vital interests of imperialism, using black rather than white agents. It is a manoeuvre to buy time, and the quicker it can be realised the quicker, in the imperialist
view, the danger of African armed resistance checked and the more easily the region retained within the Western sphere of influence.

The one blemish in this otherwise 'perfect' solution is the political impossibility of imperialism being able to ride the white and black horses at once, so long as the 'structural' contradiction between the two remains as acute and irreconcilable as it must within the framework of a racist settler-colonial society. That, in turn, is forcing upon the imperialists the realisation that they cannot afford indefinitely to support and sustain the racist system and are, accordingly, anxious to see it 'humanized' and 'modernized' — and conceivably even replaced, should that prove unavoidable. Whether such an exercise could be strictly controlled so as to suit the particular needs and wishes of imperialism is, yet again, a matter that would finally be resolved, not by the oppressors, but by the oppressed. Whatever the long-term prospect, however, in the short run the new 'strategy' signifies a marked down-grading of white regimes in the imperialist scheme of things and, as such, surely bodes ill for the racist system. This the white regimes and settlers (and their supporters in the West) know fully well and openly lament, if not some of their 'radical' critics. An absolute and mechanical one-to-one equation between racism and imperialism does not take into account the very real contradiction between the two.

Nowhere is that contradiction sharper or more keenly observed than in the US policy towards South Africa. At the centre (as it were) of a three-cornered relationship with the white regimes and settlers, on the one hand, and the African governments and nationalists, on the other, the US finds itself increasingly caught in the cross-fire between the two, though tending under the Carter administration to lean more and more towards the African camp. Brzezinski and Young are but two sides of the same coin, and it is doubtful that Vorster can derive much comfort from their public differences over how best to handle the Soviet-Cuban 'thrust' in Africa. In the background of these differences, which have once again prompted the Pretoria regime to utter hopeful noises about its own reliability as an 'anti-Communist bastion', what is significant is that no one in Washington dares seriously suggest that it can afford to revert to Kissinger's 'Tar Baby' strategy of 1969 of making the white regimes as the main prop of America's Africa policy. The 'counter-productive' character of racism for the ends of imperialism in Africa is now far too widely perceived for a complete reversal of US policy to be possible.

Paradoxically, this is even more the case since the recent Shaba episode, in which not only some of the EEC countries (notably France) played a singularly vigorous part in the effort to rescue the present regime in Zaire, but which was also followed by vociferous demands that NATO's sphere of 'concern' ought to be extended to embrace the present order in Africa (including the project for an Afro-NATO defence force). This is again a characteristically double-sided affair. Those who may be tempted to see in the Kolwezi 'rescue operation' a Gaullist-style resurgence of European power (or even the vision of the 'second world' coming to the aid of a beleaguered third world regime) might be reminded of the rather plain fact that it was an operation mounted not only with US 'goodwill' but also, more important, with US resources, doubtless marking an important step in the process of revival of the sagging spirit and strength of NATO. As such, it cannot but portend a new 'activism' in US policy in Africa, despite all the talk of the latter's seemingly marginal strategic significance for the American world-empire, and it may appear in fact to augur well for the future of white South Africa's integration into the NATO system could be envisaged would be that of an
on-going ‘decolonization’ of the racist system, a far from reassuring prospect from Coast, Liberia and Senegal are now increasingly pressing the US to force a change of system in South Africa. The only conceivable basis on which South Africa’s integration into the NATO system could be envisaged would be that on-going ‘decolonization’ of the racist system, a far from reassuring prospect from the viewpoint of white settlers. All in all, the partnership between white South Africa and the West is now a troubled and vulnerable one. At the very least, it suggests that the pressures on the racist regime, not only from within but also from without — and increasingly from its friends and allies and not only from its opponents, as before — will grow in intensity, even as Western imperialism fights to reinforce its tottering positions in Africa.

The Superpowers and Southern Africa

The single most important reason for the new phase of US ‘activism’ in Africa which began with Kissinger’s two safaris to the area in 1976 is, however, neither the whites nor the blacks but the reds — or, more precisely, the Russians. In any case, Washington is having to modulate its complex manoeuvre of re-alignment as between white and black Africa with its world-wide competition for power and influence with Moscow. That the Soviet Union is now a growing force in African affairs can hardly be questioned and is, indeed, a pet theme these days with Soviet spokesman from Brezhnev downwards. The question is not whether the Soviet Union is engaged on a major offensive in Africa, but what are we to make of it? At a higher level, the question is not whether Soviet-American rivalry is now a major factor in African politics, but whether it is a help or a hindrance to the total African struggle against imperialism. The fact of growing Soviet offensive and sharpening superpower rivalry can scarcely be in doubt, only its extent and significance, which is a subject for disagreement not only between Western bourgeois and left commentators but also between Western Marxists and African nationalists. That Western imperialist spokesmen may deliberately exaggerate Soviet involvement in Africa as a bogeyman to justify their own increased intervention — as is argued by some who are in no way enamoured of the Soviet Union — is in itself one aspect of superpower rivalry which does not dispose of the plain facts of the matter.

Superpower rivalry is, of course, by no means an absolute or independent factor which can be abstracted from the actuality of the African anti-imperialist struggle, which is indeed a force that the superpowers have to take into account and adapt themselves to in working out their respective ‘strategies’. It is that which accounts for the fact, for example, that in addition to its usual reliance on its ‘traditional’ European allies, each superpower is now tending to turn more and more towards new agents or ‘partners’ from within the third world in pursuit of its objectives — e.g., the US to Saudi Arabia or Iran, the Soviet Union to Cuba or South Yemen. These agents may have their own reasons for intervening, whether ‘revolutionary’ or plainly selfish, and may even at times display a measure of initiative and ‘independence’. In the final analysis, however, what they can or will be allowed to do will be determined by the strategic requirements of their respective principals. There is an uncanny parallelism in the ways of the superpowers in Africa, as well as subtle differences of approach, style and technique reflecting their somewhat different circumstances and priorities.

Insofar as the liberation struggle in Southern Africa is concerned, the keynote of US policy (for the reasons indicated earlier) may be characterized as ‘pacifist’, i.e., the primacy of a peaceful solution. The keynote of Soviet policy, by contrast,
might be described as ‘militarist’, i.e., the primacy of a military solution, leading on to massive foreign military involvement, the prospect of civil war, and even the danger of a new ‘scramble’ for Africa. This ‘militarism’ is, indeed, the master-key to understanding the whole underlying political strategy behind the Soviet offensive, not only in Africa but in the third world in general, and it should be clearly distinguished from its polar opposite, a protracted people’s war type of political-military strategy, stressing mass mobilisation and self-reliance in struggle. Though the ‘fraternal assistance’ offered the young states’ by the Soviet Union is typically a ‘package deal’ consisting of military supplies, economic and technical aid, and political and ideological advice, it is the provision of military assistance, against cash payment and in return for military and diplomatic favours, which is the heart of the matter. In any case, the offensive on which the Soviet Union is currently engaged in Africa is neither primarily ideological nor economic. It refers, quite simply, to Moscow’s systematic use of its very considerable military resources both to alter the strategic balance of power between itself and the US in its own favour and to bring more and more of the African (and third world) countries under its own influence and control, through a policy of active and extensive military involvement and interference, whether in inter-African disputes, in ‘destabilizing’ African regimes not to its liking, or in ‘assisting’ African national-liberation struggles. Its characteristic preference for ‘military solutions’ is what enables the Soviet Union to present itself as an ‘indispensable friend and ally’ of the African people, as the supplier of military equipment and manpower (the latter mostly from Cuba and some from East Germany), except insofar as constrained, to some degree, by higher global considerations.

In looking at the Soviet military backing for the southern African liberation struggles, it is necessary to stress, first, that what is being objected to is not simply political and material support for African armed struggles for national independence, which is wholly proper and useful and necessary up to a point, but outright, large-scale military intervention of the type carried out by the Soviets and Cubans in Angola. But whatever may have seemed to be the justification, at the time, for the Soviet-Cuban rescue operation in behalf of the MPLA, what is still more noteworthy, and even more ominous, is that the Soviet preference for a military solution extends not only to the overthrow of the colonial or racist system, but also to the vital phase of ‘post-colonial’ succession and consolidation beyond. Both in Zimbabwe and Namibia, where the transition to African rule is now rapidly under way — and where, in any case, the days of racist rule are strictly numbered — the Soviet-Cuban partnership is actively preparing for an armed conflict beyond the day of independence, with a view to securing a strategically favourable outcome in those two countries and, in the longer run, in South Africa itself. In pursuit of that objective the Soviet Union is striving to take advantage of divisions within the nationalist movement, by adopting a particular faction for favoured treatment in the provision of military equipment, advisers and training facilities designed for use in ‘regular’ (as opposed to guerilla) warfare. That is to say, the Soviet Union is actively preparing for and encouraging civil war in southern Africa (but not only there) as a means of improving its strategic position vis-à-vis the US, as well as maintaining its privileged position as a ready supplier of weapons and men for use, not against racists and imperialists, but against Africans.

The intensification and ‘internationalization’ of armed conflict, coupled with the prospect of a series of civil wars, is thus implicit in the very logic of Soviet
strategy in southern Africa. It is precisely because the US perceives the grave threat which Soviet strategy poses for its own established position in Africa that it is so loudly pleading for Moscow's co-operation in finding a 'peaceful' solution to the looming 'race war' in southern Africa. This subtle difference of emphasis between Soviet 'militarism' and US 'pacifism' merely provides the note of rivalry and of potential conflict which, within the framework of détente, is the necessary counter-point to their mutual efforts to develop their particular mixtures of 'internationalism' and 'multi-racialism' as a means of subjecting the hurricane of the African liberation struggle to their respective purposes.

Pan-Africanism and Neo-colonialism

It is roughly at this point in the proceedings, in the face of such brazenness on the part of the Soviet Union, that the vociferous 'Marxist' constituency in the West comes to Moscow's aid, by picking upon or building up certain elements or tendencies in the nationalist ranks as 'progressive', 'vanguardist' or 'Marxist-Leninist'. It is here that the Western Marxist weakness for a quick 'socialist' solution coincides neatly with the Soviet preference for a 'military' solution. While an absolute stress on a military solution may alike appeal to both 'Eastern' and Western Marxists as being heroic and virtuous — though for admittedly different reasons — it does not quite have the same attraction for the great majority of African peoples and governments. This is not because they are all 'neo-colonial' puppets or mortally fearful of 'revolution', but because they can see that an absolute and exclusive pursuit of a military solution, given its logic in the context of superpower rivalry, would not only frustrate the objectives of the African liberation struggle but could also put into jeopardy the independence and unity, precarious though these be, of the African countries in general. African nationalism is indeed the real *bête noire* of Western 'revolutionists', while pan-Africanism has usually been dismissed by them as a load of rhetorical hot-air.

Against this background, the politics of the current situation in Southern Africa are strange as well as complex. At one level, they are a continual process of manoeuvring and regrouping between the needs of guerilla war, the zigzags of nationalist politics, and the pressures of international diplomacy. At another level, they can be seen as a triangular relationship between Western imperialists, white racists, and African nationalists, upon which is superimposed (though not perfectly) yet another triangle, of which the African nationalist organizations, the African 'frontline' states, and the superpowers form three sides. The whole complex 'mechanism' is kept ceaselessly in motion by the interlocking contradictions within the racist, the nationalist (embracing both nationalist organizations and independent states) and the imperialist (particularly the superpowers) camps, as well as the conflicts and struggles between them. The great puzzle in all this is the seemingly erratic and unpredictable behaviour of African nationalism.

The two main forms in which the contradictory character of African nationalism reveals itself is, first, in the contradiction between the national and pan-African planes of the struggle, and next in the contradiction between the national and class struggles. As to the first, which is of immediate relevance in the present discussion, the problem of 'neo-colonialism' is posed in two different ways having to do with the relationship, first, between African nationalist organizations and 'frontline' states, and, secondly, between the latter and the world imperialist camp (specifically, the Soviet-US rivalry).

As for the struggle of African nationalists against the racist regimes, it is clear
that the ‘frontline’ states are obliged to react to it in a contradictory manner. There can be no denying that, by and large, the frontline states have given political and material backing to the nationalist guerillas to the best of their abilities. But the help given has of necessity had to be limited, first by the very real paucity of the resources available to the governments in question, and next qualified by the need for every newly independent state to survive and consolidate itself politically and to embark upon the task of economic re-construction and national development in a modest way. Regardless of their ideological predilections, therefore, the majority of the independent states in the region have found it necessary both to support the anti-racist struggle beyond their borders and to implicate themselves in some measure of tacit or informal accommodation with the neighbouring racist regimes. The inevitable asymmetry of this situation has repeatedly expressed itself in sharp disagreements (and at times conflicts) between the nationalist guerillas and their hosts in the frontline states. In this way, these states have found themselves caught between racist regimes and anti-racist wars; and their difficulties have been further compounded by their being caught in the cross-fire between the two superpowers.

Inasmuch as the frontline states, by their backing for guerilla wars, have exposed themselves to the mounting danger of military counter-attacks by the racist regimes, they have felt it necessary to build up their military strength and, in this respect, find the Soviet Union far more willing to oblige than the Western powers. A proneness to seek outside help on military grounds is often coupled with the ‘choice’ of a path of development which accentuates the tendency to solicit foreign assistance for economic reasons as well. All this serves to render these states peculiarly vulnerable to foreign pressure; and once again, the African states react in a contradictory manner, avidly seeking outside help, yet at the same time striving, with varying degrees of success, to avoid coming under the exclusive domination of either superpower, and even under particular circumstances trying to use the one to counter-balance the other. Recently, it would seem that some of the frontline states have begun to tolerate, and even to invite, a more active role for the US as a means of ‘neutralizing’ the impact of the swift Soviet-Cuban advance, and even some of the ‘radical’ states are beginning to turn back towards their erstwhile colonial masters, the European powers, for economic and technical help as a way of averting too close a dependence on either the US or, more particularly, the Soviet Union. This is an indication that the problem of ‘neo-colonialism’ is a lot more complicated and trickier than is commonly supposed in the litany of the ‘revolutionary’ left. To the latter the Soviet Union may appear even in its ‘selfishness’ a benefactor, if not exactly a liberator, of Africa, but the Africans, for the most part, see it rather differently — and not because they are enamoured of the US or ‘know no better’.

The frontline states are, of course, a ‘collective’ of necessarily disparate elements and tendencies, and operate together by means of a kind of informal division of labour both as between rival nationalist organizations and rival imperialist powers (as well as being impelled by the logic of their class character). But there can hardly be any question that the differences of ideology and policy dividing them are much less important than the wide area of agreement and joint action that binds them together. Those, therefore, who would set up, say, Zambia as a model of ‘collaboration’ and Mozambique as a model of ‘confrontation’, as poles apart, are simply ignoring the plain facts of the situation. To hurl stones at particular states as ‘neo-colonial’ is to shoot at a false target, and distracts attention from the main enemy, the racist regimes and the superpowers.
Capital and the State in South Africa

Belinda Bozzoli

This, and the following article, develop different critiques of the article on 'Class Struggle and the Periodisation of the State in South Africa' in Review No.7. The argument developed here is that the article failed to provide an adequate basis on which an explanation of the unique features of the South African state (its successful promotion of industrialisation, without any incorporation of the majority of the working class) could be constructed because of the particular interpretation given to theoretical concepts like 'fractions', 'hegemony' and 'form of state'. The author argues that these concepts need to be reformulated so that changes in hegemony refer to a change in the very nature of capitalism itself rather than simply to some re-arrangement in the power bloc.

The article in Review No. 7 by Davies, Kaplan, Morris and O'Meara, 'Class Struggle and the Periodisation of the State in South Africa' sets out to deal with the 'periodisation of the political in South Africa, i.e. changes in the form of state', and is concerned to 'understand the historical role of the South African state in the class struggle ... which specific interests it serves, and how it came to assume its specific and distinctive form'. It would seem that the authors of this article fall short of their somewhat ambitious aims, and that they thereby raise important questions of a theoretical and methodological nature about the analysis of the state in general, and in South Africa in particular. This critique of their article, which will hopefully be seen as a constructive one, raises two of the most important areas which seem to present problems. First, it asks why it is important to 'periodise' the South African state, and what it is about this state that requires special explanation. It is suggested that the authors have only gone part of the way towards answering these questions and thus towards providing a foundation for understanding the South African state's particular characteristics. Secondly, the question of the value and usefulness of the concepts 'fractions of capital', 'hegemony' and 'form of state', as they are defined by the authors, is raised and it is suggested that many of the inadequacies in the article's treatment of the South African state have their origins in theoretical weaknesses.

There seems to be two major sets of reasons why it is important to understand the nature of the state in South Africa, and the stages through which it has passed. The first set of reasons is that arising from the fact that the Marxist analysis of South Africa is still at an early stage, particularly as far as politics
is concerned. In conventional South African studies the state has usually been considered by writers adhering to a liberal capitalist or a pluralist point of view. Very little has been written specifically on the state by Marxists which effectively challenges the intellectual hold of these interpretations. On one level, there exists the simple need for a wide-ranging reinterpretation of the major political and legislative landmarks in South African history, based on a rigorous analysis of class formation, struggle and decline.

The second set of reasons exists on a deeper level. It arises from what Davies et al call the 'specific and distinctive form' of the South African state. Implicit in much of the Marxist literature on South Africa is a basic agreement that the specific form of the South African state has two aspects to it. The first is the fact that South Africa, a country which experienced imperial conquest of a far-reaching and violent nature, 'broke out' of the vicious circle of underdevelopment and embarked on a path of comparatively independent capitalist development. The implications of this fact for students of the state are many: for as any student of underdeveloped social formations will be aware, the problems of neo-colonialism cannot be solved or understood on the economic level alone. Indeed many a Review article has placed its analytical focus squarely on the state, Bonapartist or otherwise, in an attempt to get at the political mechanics of underdevelopment and dependency. If the South African social formation experienced a breakthrough of the type sought by the national bourgeoisies of innumerable underdeveloped countries, its state form must be an indispensable subject for analysis.

The second aspect of the South African state's uniqueness is the obvious and remarkable fact that it is probably the only existing capitalist state which is not, even nominally, based upon the incorporation of the majority of its working class: and indeed, which bases exclusion from participation in politics on race. Any analysis of the South African state which claims to address itself to that state's 'specific and distinctive form' must go some way towards explaining this.

Of these two sets of reasons it is the first that is best covered by Davies et al. Their detailed reinterpretation of the role of the South African state in the economic and political spheres between 1920 and 1950 provides precisely the necessary groundwork for a comprehensive refutation of the liberal view. A series of legislative measures — from the Tariff Act of 1925, through the Iscor Bill, the 'civilised labour policy', the Marketing Act, and the Native Bills, to the various measures introduced after 1948 — is analysed together with major political events such as election victories, party realignments, and political crises. Together the law and politics are interpreted in terms of what the authors generalise as the 'class struggle'. Capital struggles with white and black labour, while it is itself divided into conflicting parts (called 'fractions') such as mining, manufacturing, and agriculture, which themselves compete for 'hegemony': that is, a position of domination and organisational supremacy with the 'power bloc' constituted by the various fractions of capital. While some of their conclusions are open to debate, and while their claims to a wider and deeper relevance may be challenged, undoubtedly Davies et al have put Poulantzas's theoretical refutations of traditional political science to good practical use; in spite of Clarke's claims to the contrary, Poulantzas's concepts do go some considerable way towards making it possible to understand the class nature of politics without having to resort to economism on the one hand, and to conspiracy theories of political parties on the other.
However, as far as the second set of reasons is concerned, the article seems confused and at times superficial. The thesis put forward here is that Davies et al fail to provide an adequate basis on which an explanation of the two unique features of the South Africa state may be constructed and that their failure is attributable to certain weaknesses in their theoretical conceptions of ‘fraction’, ‘hegemony’ and ‘form of state’. While it is impossible to put forward a comprehensive alternative view in a small space such as this, it is, I feel, possible to outline some of the major areas in which Davies et al fall short.

Davies, Kaplan, Morris and O'Meara certainly tackle the first aspect of the uniqueness of the South African state. Although some writers may go so far as to deny it, it seems that most would agree that whereas before the first World War, the South African economic and social system was under imperial domination of a far-reaching and complex kind, by the 1930s economists of a Rostowian bent could apply to the South African economy terms such as ‘take off’; and by the end of the Second World War the South African system was set on a path of capitalist development, albeit of a peripheral sort. A massive change, both in the nature of the state itself, and in the social formation in which that state was embedded and upon which it acted, seems to have taken place in South Africa some time between the two world wars. The questions that arise from this fact are many. What was it about the South African class structure that enabled it to break out of the underdevelopment syndrome? What was the state’s role in the transformation? And concomitantly, what was the nature of the transformation undergone by the state during the move from an ‘imperially dominated’ system to a capitalist one? The state, it seems, was both an agent and a subject of change in a class society.

Davies et al have turned to the Poulantzian concept of ‘hegemony within the power bloc’ for answers to these questions — or at least their interpretation of this concept. The power bloc, they argue, consists of the various ‘fractions’ of the dominating classes. Within that bloc one fraction (or in some cases a combination of fractions) attains a position of ‘super-dominance’ — in other words, it dominates not only the social formation as a whole, as would any dominant group, but all the other fractions of the dominant classes in addition. It is this fraction that is the ‘hegemonic’ one. If, by an analysis of the legislative and political actions undertaken by the ruling group, the nature of the hegemonic fraction can be deduced in any one period, then the ‘periodisation’ of the South African state may be outlined; part of this periodisation will inevitably provide an understanding of the change in ‘hegemony’ from imperialism to capitalism in South Africa. Their article proceeds along lines dictated by these theoretical presuppositions. They do not confine themselves to the problem of the transition from imperial to national capital, but attempt to put forward a complete explanation of all changes in the power bloc between 1920 and 1950. But the problem of the transition nevertheless occupies a central place in their argument, which may be summarised roughly as follows.

In imperial times, it seems obvious that of all the various fractions of capital, it was the mining fraction that was in a ‘hegemonic’ position. Mining dominated not only the pre-capitalist formations, and the working class, but it also exerted power over the manufacturing, agricultural and commercial sectors of the ruling class. Imperial capital, in other words, could virtually be equated with mining capital, and the character of the South African social formation in the era of imperial hegemony could be traced back to the all-pervading influence of mining.
During the 1920s, however, a series of crises which had shaken mining hegemony came to a head. The First World War and the subsequent depression, the 1922 white mineworkers strike, and the rise of local manufacturing, all provided a complex structure of pressures on the power bloc, opening the way for a different fraction of capital to attain a position of 'super-dominance' within it. Davies et al argue that the fraction poised to take over was what they call 'national capital'. This is a rather poorly-defined category, but it seems at least in the '20s to have consisted of manufacturing and agricultural capital. In the 1924 election the Pact government came to power, as the representative of this fraction of capital. As the article puts it:

Eventually, in 1924, in alliance with a fraction of the new petty bourgeoisie and supported by strata of the white and black wage earning classes, national capital achieved hegemony.

After this victory by national capital, the South African power bloc was the scene of several complex changes in hegemony. First, national capital apparently maintained its hegemonic position until the Second World War; the political turmoil of the early 1930s was not, according to these writers, indicative of a shift in hegemony, but was merely conflict on the level of the 'political scene' — i.e. the party political level — and not on the more basic level of 'political practices' where the real shifts in hegemony took place. But during World War Two, 'agriculture lost its hegemonic position' and 'the special conditions of the war produced an unstable alliance between manufacturing and mining capital within which manufacturing maintained a tenuous hegemony'. (One of Davies et al's many italicised phrases).

After the war had ended things became even more complex, for the 'structure of hegemony collapsed'. Because the United Party was 'unable to accommodate all the contradictory interests of the fractions of capital it represented' the National Party was able to attain political power in 1948, and it defended the re-establishment of the hegemony of 'national capital' against the ever-powerful position of imperial mining. Nevertheless the 'power bloc remained disorganised for much of the fifties' and it was only in the 1960s, in fact, that a clear structure of hegemony could be said to have re-emerged, when the 'NP state ... reorganised the power bloc to establish the hegemony of interpenetrated monopoly capital'.

In summary, the article seems to see South Africa's development something along these lines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>pre-1924</th>
<th>1924</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1948-1950s</th>
<th>1960s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of capital</td>
<td>imperial</td>
<td>national</td>
<td>national</td>
<td>national</td>
<td>disorganised</td>
<td>national + international monopoly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hegemonic fraction</td>
<td>mining + agric.</td>
<td>manuf. + agric.</td>
<td>manuf. + agric.</td>
<td>manuf. but national being defended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several serious criticisms have been levelled at this analysis and others of its type. Clarke has pointed to the inadequate definition of 'fraction', to the explanatory weakness of a framework that allows the most crucial twenty years in South Africa's recent history to be categorised as years of 'disorganisation in the power bloc'; and to the apparent similarity between this form of analysis and conventional 'interest group' theory. Some, but not all, of these criticisms are valid, and most of them are taken up, either explicitly or implicitly, in the following critique. But what seems clear from this diagrammatic representation of the
periodisation of the South African state, and what Clarke’s critique is unable to cope with, is the vividly marked break between the pre-1924 period, when ‘imperial capital’ dominated; and almost the entire post-1924 period, at least until the 1960s, when ‘national capital’ was, it is alleged, either itself hegemonic, or was being defended. Whatever problems there are with their analytical framework, surely Davies and his co-authors have provided confirmation of the existence of the same ‘massive change’ discussed above?

The problem is that the authors do not treat it as a ‘massive change’. It is accorded some significance in the conclusion, where they state that ‘the early assumption of hegemony by national capital is the unique feature of the South African state’. But in the analysis itself, this change is simply treated as a matter of re-arrangement in the power bloc, resulting in legislative and political changes of a variety of sorts. This enormous change, from imperial to national capitalism, is accorded no more importance in their analysis than other changes in the system of dominance. This is puzzling. Surely it is a question of great importance to Marxism? How did imperial capital, which twenty years earlier had supported an imperial war on a vast scale in order to secure its hegemony, suddenly lose that hegemony at a stroke — and an electoral stroke at that? Whereas elsewhere in Africa, such as in Kenya and Algeria, the Second World War, plus local, long-lasting rebellions and wars, involving thousands of troops, deaths, and vast expense, were not sufficient to prevent imperial capital from imposing a neocolonial solution; in South Africa World War One and the 1922 strike (admittedly a highly critical event but one which was effectively and rapidly crushed) seem to have been sufficient to force imperial capital to give up the ghost.

The crux of this criticism is that Davies et al fail to distinguish between basic changes in the nature of capitalism itself, and less basic changes within a definite and relatively stable capitalist system. While the change from imperial-dominated to national capitalism may be said to constitute a basic change, the change within national capital from dominance by manufacturing and agriculture, to dominance simply by manufacturing, may not.

Furthermore, it is for the more basic kind of change that it seems analytical concepts such as ‘form of state’, ‘hegemony’ and even ‘fractions of capital’ should be reserved. It seems that it is their too-liberal use of these concepts, and hence their devaluation of them, that has rendered Davies et al vulnerable to the kind of criticism levelled by Clarke. In their article, Davies and his co-authors use ‘hegemony’ to mean little more than the hidden hand of capital; they reduce ‘imperial’ and ‘national’ capital somewhat economistically to particular economic sectors such as mining and manufacturing, while the ‘form of state’ seems to mean little more than the nature of the interests represented by the political parties in power at any particular time. One suspects that Clarke is right, and that rather than talking about ‘hegemony’ they are talking simply ‘interests’ and their realisation at a political level. This in itself, in spite of Clarke, is an extremely valid and useful exercise, as long as ‘interests’ are separated into political and economic, and as long as they are not defined subjectively. Davies et al make neither of these refinements. And in any case, interest theory alone, however Marxist, does not lead one to an understanding of the ‘form of state’ nor of ‘hegemony’. It rather enlightens one about elections and governments, about laws and their administration. This explains the heavy dependence of this article on elections. Every time there is an election, there seems to the authors to be a change in hegemony. There is a change, but it is not in hegemony. It is in the structure of interest-representation. The Davies article points to so
many 'changes in hegemony' that when a real change does occur, it is barely accorded the attention it deserves.

The major reason for this inadequate treatment of the change in South Africa from imperial to national capital is that too much weight is given to the concept 'fractions of capital'. Because mining capital was imperial, and because mining capital also predominated in South Africa before 1924, it is assumed that 'imperial capital' is simply another fraction of capital, on a par with agricultural capital, commercial capital and manufacturing capital. But surely this is not so? Imperial capital is not a 'fraction of capital' at least in the narrow sense in which the term has been used in most of the Poulantzian literature. It cannot be reduced to, or equated with, an economic 'sector' such as 'mining'. Imperial capital is rather a whole structure of capitals, and it exists on economic, political and ideological levels. It is a class rather than a fraction of a class.

In South Africa imperial capital was not synonymous with mining by any means. Import-export commercial capital, foreign owned manufacturing, and agricultural capital all played vital parts in the political, economic and ideological maintenance of the imperial South African social formation. South Africa, like any underdeveloped country today, was 'locked into' an imperial economic system of imports and exports, of surplus being drained out, of manufacturing for the benefit of the monopoly enclave rather than for the full industrialisation of the economy; and of surviving and exploited pre-capitalist modes of production on the periphery. Within the overall domination of imperial capital in South Africa it is surely true that mining capital held a place of 'super-dominance', or in Davies et al's terms, 'hegemony'. But this was the dominance of one fraction or interest within a whole complex and intertwined structure of interests. Moreover, because imperial capital was a class, it is clear that mining's dominance was not simply a matter of voluntaristic tussles for hegemony in the power bloc, but was the result of the fact that mining was best placed to realise the interests of capital as a whole at that time. The dominance of mining was inseparable from the class dominance of imperial capital in general, and indeed was only a manifestation of it.

The inadequacies of the article's treatment of imperial capital are masked by the fact that mining capital was fairly clearly and consistently in the vanguard of imperial domination throughout, and the identification of imperial with mining capital is therefore easily made. But when it comes to their treatment of 'national capital' the authors flounder. Leaving aside for the moment the vexed question of how the change actually came about in the South African case, when the Davies article comes to discuss 'national capital' it is clearly unable to reach any sort of adequate conceptualisation of it. Sometimes it is clearly meant to refer to agricultural capital; sometimes it refers to agricultural and manufacturing capital; sometimes to manufacturing capital alone; and sometimes it refers to Afrikaner capital (presumably of both an agricultural and manufacturing nature). In their anxiety to equate national capital with a fraction, or a combination of fractions, the authors find themselves unable to cope, and once more open themselves up to Clarke's criticisms of their inadequate definitions and their tendency to enter the realms of 'bourgeois sociology'.

This too arises from the fact that national capital cannot be reduced to, or equated with, its constituent fractions. National capital too is a whole structured combination of capitals, of fractions and even of fractions of fractions. It too could warrant being called a 'class' rather than a fraction of a class, its reper-
cussions on the social formation being far-reaching on the economic, political and ideological levels. By the 1930s, elements not only of agriculture and manufacturing, but also of mining and commerce, were clearly in the national capitalist camp. And by the 1930s this class had become strong enough to alter some of the central features of South Africa's imperial social formation. Most of the major obstacles to the ending of underdevelopment had been removed: surpluses were no longer being drained away at quite such a rate, but were being diverted; key infrastructural state enterprises had been set up; industrialisation had ceased to take place only in the interests of the monopoly enclave; and commerce had ceased to play the role of locking the South African economy into a world system of imports and exports, but had become nationalised instead. At least on the economic level, national capital had brought about significant changes.

Just as had been the case with imperial capital, the question of which sector dominated within national capital it crucial. Here it seems that Davies et al have mistaken the conventional concept of ‘interest group’ for the Marxist concept of ‘interest’. For as had been the case with imperial capital, it is surely the sector, or ‘fraction’, that is most in tune with capital's overall objective interests that is going to be able to lead the capitalist class as whole? And it seems that it is highly unlikely that the agricultural sector could ever be placed in a position to do so, in a phase where national capital is rising to a position of predominance. The history of agriculture in South Africa seems to be one of compromise rather than leadership. Moreover, agriculture has only a secondary interest in industrialisation, not a primary necessary interest. It is therefore unable to lead capital as a whole in a period where the transformation of the social formation in the interests of industrialisation, is necessary. At most, agriculture, (and the same applies to commerce and mining) can act as a crucial political and strategic ally to the necessarily leading and dominant sector in a period of industrialisation – manufacturing. Manufacturing capital must be, and, I would argue in the South Africa case, was, in the vanguard of the class interests of national capital as a whole. And just as manufacturing capital in this era was ‘English speaking’, so was the character of the national bourgeoisie as a whole ‘English speaking’, although its alliances with Afrikaner agriculture lent to this English-speakingness a particular character.

Thus the discussion by the authors of this article of the period in which national capital was allegedly dominant is superficially confused, and deeply wrong. The appearance of agriculture in the ‘power bloc’ is not evidence of the ‘hegemony’ of ‘national capital’, but simply of the political power of the agricultural interest. It certainly cannot be cited as evidence that the roots of the English and Afrikaner traditions lie in the distinctions between imperial and national capital. The claim that national capital achieved hegemony as a result of the 1924 election, based as it is primarily on the clear presence of agriculture in the government, is quite clearly incorrect. The supporting evidence (that industrial capital had switched to support the Pact Government) is flimsy, and may easily be disproved. A reading of the industrial journals of the time indicates that manufacturing capital (which had never clearly supported any party, because of its incompatibility with a political system forged to suit the interests of imperial capital) did not support the Pact government to any significant extent at all, but that it placed its faith in the SAP.

The nature of South Africa’s national bourgeoisie in this period, its composition, its ideology and its ability to replace the imperial bourgeoisie, is far too complex
a subject to be explored here. But what can be said is that it is clear that at least
by the 1930s the bourgeoisie was rising to a place of dominance; and that this
cannot be simplistically explained in terms of the 1924 election. Some wider,
deeper, and more far-reaching change was taking place in the South African
social formation that Davies et al would seem to acknowledge. Although, as I
have said, they may pay lip-service to the magnitude of the change, their con-
ceptual framework does not allow for it to be fully accounted for. A conception
of 'hegemony' which refers simply to alterations in domination within the power
bloc between fractions is hardly adequate. What we have here is a change in the
power bloc itself.

It is for this reason that it would be a pity to abandon the concept of 'hegemony'.
In its original Gramscian form, and in certain passages in Poulantza's writings,
this concept seems well able to cope with the magnitude of the change we are
discussing. Indeed it seems partly to have been designed precisely to cope with
such a change rather than with the more limited changes referred to by Davies
et al — Gramsci's concern with the 'hegemony' of the working class surely going
deeper than simply the 'power bloc'. In his discussion of hegemony Poulantzas
in fact outlines two meanings of the term. The first, he says, indicates 'how in
their relation to the capitalist state the political interests of these (the dominant)
classes are constituted, as representatives of the "general interest" of the body
politic'. Here he is referring to class domination and not fractional domination.
Quoting Gramsci with approval (and some reservations not relevant here) he
points to the ideological, as well as political and economic significance of
hegemony:

Previously germinated ideologists become party, come into confrontation and conflict, until
only one of them, or at least a single combination of them tends to prevail, to gain the
upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society — bringing about not only a unison of
economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions
around which the struggle rages, not on a corporate but on a 'universal' plane, and thus
creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups.

Gramsci too, therefore, refers to 'class hegemony' and not fractional domination.
Furthermore, by his concept of 'intellectual and moral unity' and 'posing all the
questions around which the struggle rages' he makes of the concept of hegemony
something more than a synonym for 'domination'.

The second way in which Poulantzas defines hegemony as 'the particular domi-
nation of one of the dominant classes or fractions vis a vis the other dominant
classes or fractions in a capitalist social formation'. It is only in this second, far
more limited sense, that Davies et al have used the concept. Thus they have
removed from it all notions of class interests (as opposed to 'fractional interests' —
thus laying themselves open to Clarke's criticisms once more), and all notions
of ideology. To them, hegemony refers simply to the supremacy of one fraction
over others. It is not surprising, given this limited definition, that the class
struggle is not, in spite of their claims to the contrary, an integral part of their
analysis, but appears sporadically as a 'factor' in 'periods of crisis'. One wonders
whether the editors of the Review are correct in their statement that although
'some readers might feel that the articles which follow concentrate unduly on
the machinations of capital and the squabbles between its different fractions',
we may rest assured that 'such an emphasis cannot be confused with a similar
bias in much South African historiography which is based on the assumption
that the history of South African whites is the history of South Africa.' Davies
et al seem to come close to treating blacks in South Africa as the objects of
policy, rather than protagonists in the class struggle; this is yet another con-
sequence of their theoretical inadequacies.

It would seem necessary to enlarge the concept of hegemony so that it may
embrace these wider and more significant aspects of hegemonic class domination.
How useful it would be to have a concept such as 'hegemony' to capture the way
in which imperial capital, led by mining capital, was able to mould the South
African social formation, not only in its own objective economic interests, but in
its political and ideological interests as well, so that 'imperial' South Africa came
to be characterised by a particular system of exploitation, by a particular form
of state, and by a particular 'hegemonic ideology' as well. And how much more
illuminating than the narrow 'interest' and 'fraction'-based accounts, would it be
to have an account of the rise of national capital in these complex terms.

Whether or not it is called 'hegemony', if this conceptualisation of the nature of
class domination (whether imperial or national) is used, then the problem of
explaining the transition from one form of hegemony to another becomes far
greater than Davies et al would allow. Instead of an analysis which at times
seems in danger of resembling a game of musical chairs in the power bloc, the
explanation would have to be undertaken on a number of different levels.
Rooted in an analysis of the economic interests of capital as a whole, it would
then have to branch out into an analysis of the political and ideological realisation
of those interests, in both class and 'fractional' terms. The analysis of capital
would have to be undertaken in the context of its class relationships with the
subordinate and intermediate classes, with the existing state, with the form of
state it wishes to bring into being, and with other forms of capital. Only then
could one understand the kind of hegemony needed by national capital and the
long and painful processes necessary to its achievement.

It is on the basis of this criticism of the Davies concept of 'hegemony' that the
second aspect of the South African's state's uniqueness may be discussed. It will
be recalled that this was defined as the fact that it, unlike most (if not all) other
capitalist states, is not based upon what Poulantzas calls 'the general interest of
the people/nation'. This, it should be noted, is a problem which tends to be
confused with the problem of the survival (or revival) of pre-capitalist modes
of production in South Africa. This confusion arises from the fact that two
problems - that of the decline of pre-capitalist modes; and that of the new
militancy and settled nature of the black working class - came to a head in
South Africa during the 1930s and 40s; and that both were solved in a particular
way after 1948. The apartheid system presented a solution to the crisis of the
1940s in this double sense and it is only once the duality of these problems and
their solutions is recognised, that it will be possible to explore the relationships
between the two aspects of the apartheid system - the reproduction of labour
power in the reserves, on the one hand, and the exclusion of the working class
from the state apparatus on the other. While some considerable progress has
been made in the first sphere, very little has been made in the second. In fact,
Davies et al barely mention this aspect of the state in South Africa perhaps
because they consider (incorrectly) that it has been adequately explained by
others. However, it will be argued that in addition their conceptual framework
makes it difficult for them to confront the problem directly.

What is the precise relationship between 'capitalism' on the one hand, and the
need for 'incorporation' on the other? It is, it would seem, essentially a relation-
ship between a particular kind of capitalism, that is, national capitalism, and the
fully-fledged proletariat. Incorporation is not undertaken by any kind of capital—far from it. It is undertaken by capital within social formations where national, industrial capitalism has become entrenched, (hegemonic) and where the processes of primitive accumulation and proletarianisation have been completed.

Thus it may be argued that it is not difficult to explain how the state in South Africa came to assume its exclusive and racist form in the period of imperial hegemony. Many states under imperialism took similar forms; indeed it is a frequent characteristic of imperial states that they succeed in confining their sphere of legitimacy—though of course not their sphere of repression—to the dominant mode of production. The ‘colonial’ state preserves the hegemony of imperial capital as a whole through an efficient repressive apparatus and limited, centralised and usually non-incorporationist, ideological state apparatuses. Imperial hegemony as a result takes on a particular (often hierarchical) ideological and structural form, too complex to be explored here.

But what is difficult to explain is why this characteristically ‘imperial’ state form in South Africa did not change fundamentally as far as the ‘incorporationist’ aspect of it is concerned, with the change in hegemony from imperial to national capital. We have already suggested how in other respects the state took on new forms. The power bloc changed; the economic interests of the dominant class changed; the political interests flowing from those economic interests changed, as did their ideological realisation. In almost all of these respects, the ‘imperial’ state seems to have given way, or at least begun to give way, to a more truly ‘capitalist’ state. And yet in the one, crucial aspect of racial exclusion the imperial state appeared to survive.

Thus the question of non-incorporation is directly related to the question of hegemony. If national capital is reduced to its fractions, and worse, if there is no clear idea of the nature, the interests, the strength and the path of development, of the leading fraction, let alone of the capitalist class as a whole, then the confusion surrounding ‘hegemony’ will be compounded when it comes to ‘incorporation’. For example, Davies et al’s theoretical framework does not require them to acknowledge a really fundamental difference between the imperial and the capitalist states. Indeed, paradoxically, for an article which claims to be concerned with frequent and significant changes in the ‘form of state’, the Davies article points to no real changes in the fundamental nature and structure of the state. To the authors, it seems, a capitalist state, whether imperial or national, is a capitalist state. Once imperial capital has attained hegemony, it has created a capitalist state whose basic structure will remain constant, while the members of its power bloc may change places from time to time. Thus for them there is in fact nothing to explain—for the lack of change between the two eras may simply be accepted as an indication of the fact that South Africa has always had a capitalist state, and that the form it took in imperial times necessarily and unsurprisingly remained with it throughout, unless there was good reason to change it.

In this view they are reinforced by their narrow conception of hegemony, which leads them to conclude, as we have seen, that the change in hegemony from imperial to national capital took place in 1924. Since there was little evidence of that time of so-called ‘national capital’ wishing to change the racist character of the imperial state, it is assumed that this is because the imperial state and national capital were inherently compatible in this respect.

And finally, when they are confronted with evidence that in the 1930s and 1940,
leading sections of national capital had begun to press for the incorporation of
the black working class, they are able to cope by reference to their somewhat
narrow concept of the 'fractional' nature of capital. Because they do not see the
class nature of national capital, but merely reduce it to its fractions, they are
able to relegate this central and significant fact to the status of a 'fractional
interest'. Manufacturing capital, of a particular sort, they acknowledge, was
interested in 'liberalisation'; but its fractional interest is accorded no more
significance than the interests of any of the other fractions at the time. More-
over, their conceptualisation of hegemony does not permit them to acknowledge
that the nationalised sectors of mining and commerce supported the 'liberal'
strategy.

A wider view of these questions would lead to a different approach to the
problem. For one thing, national capital is not able to impose its hegemony
upon the social formation at a stroke. Davies et al cannot 'prove' the existence
of national capitalist hegemony by reference to laws passed in the period im-
mmediately after the 1924 election. Changing an entire social formation is not as
simple as that. But most importantly perhaps, a 'class' view of the nature of
national capital must lead one inevitably to the view that proposals for the
'incorporation' of blacks during the 1930 and 40s should be recognised for
what they really were, the expression of the overall class interests of a national
capitalist class, under the leadership of manufacturing, which was only just
ascending to a position of hegemony. The incorporationist liberalism of the
30s, 40s and 50s was not the ideology of a small and beleaguered minority. It
occupied a central place in the place in the ideological media of English-speaking
culture as a whole — indeed in every ideological state apparatus, from the
universities to the press. And significantly, as would befit a hegemonic ideology,
this liberalism also occupied a central place in state apparatuses whose functions
were to incorporate or redirect grievances of the truly subordinate classes —
blacks.

Thus the continuing racism of the South African state cannot be attributed
simply to the alleged weakness of the single manufacturing fraction. It must be
explained, surely, in terms of some peculiarity in the mode of development of
the incorporationist interest in South African industrialism; and in the nature of
the desire hegemony of the national capitalist class as a whole. And this class
must include, as we have said, mining, agricultural and commercial, as well as
manufacturing interests. Such an explanation would necessarily be far more
complex and difficult than the somewhat simplified accounts based on a 'frac-
tional' view of politics. It would necessarily have to take account of the relation-
ships between the interests of each section of capital, on the one hand, and those
of national capitalism itself, as a system of class rule and economic domination
on the other; it would have to contain a concept of hegemony that reflected the
ability of the capitalist class as a whole to mould a social formation in its own
interests; and it would have to be based on a sure understanding of the clashes
between the dominant and the subordinate classes and their effect on the form
taken by this hegemony. Finally, it would need to be founded on a proper
historical understanding of the crucible of the modern South African state —
the earlier imperial state form. Fractions of capital are a necessary but not
sufficient ingredient in our understanding of how ruling classes rule.

Bibliographic Notes (See end of following article)
Class Struggle and the State

Duncan Innes and Martin Plaut

The authors argue that, although purporting to deal with class struggle, the article on 'Class Struggle and the Periodisation of the State in South Africa' in Review No. 7 fails to focus its attention on the fundamental contradiction in South African society — that of the struggle between capital and labour. The reason for this inadequacy lies in the article's dependency on the Poulantzian method of analysis which incorrectly separates 'economics' and 'politics' from the 'fundamental relations of exploitation' in capitalist society. It is only by establishing the unity between the relations of exploitation and their manifestation as political and economic forms that the state's position in the class struggle can be correctly located.

The article, 'Class Struggle and the Periodisation of the State in South Africa' by Robert Davies, David Kaplan, Mike Morris and Dan O'Meara in Review of African Political Economy No. 7, is an attempt to provide an historical analysis of the changes in the form of state in South Africa by making particular use of the theoretical categories and mode of analysis developed in the recent work of N. Poulantzas. While we do not intend in these remarks to develop a full critique of the Poulantzian position, we would nonetheless argue that many of the inadequacies in the article by Davies et al have their origins in the Poulantzian method of analysis. Consequently, through developing a critique of the article we hope to be able to contribute towards a more general critique of the Poulantzian position.

The central thrust of our critique is that while the article purports to deal with class struggle and the periodisation of the state in South Africa, in fact the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the most important section of the proletariat — i.e. black workers — is never really dealt with except in a most cursory fashion. Instead of providing us with an analysis which locates the South African state in the struggle between capital and labour (as the title of the article suggests), the authors develop an analysis in which the state is located in the 'secondary contradictions' between the different fractions of the dominant classes' (p.4). It is our opinion that the article's near-exclusive focus on these 'secondary contradictions' paves the way for a reformist approach to the question of working class action in the struggle. The opening paragraph of the article outlines what is to be the main focus of the analysis:
This article is concerned with the periodisation of the political in South Africa, i.e., changes in the form of state. As such, it is not principally an analysis of the fundamental relations of exploitation characterising the South African social formation. What it examines then, is not the principal contradiction of the social formation (the relationship between the dominant and dominated classes) but the secondary contradictions between the different fractions of the dominant classes. But, to characterise contradictions as secondary is not to characterise them as unimportant. On the contrary, what we will attempt to show is that the resolution of these contradictions was to have an important effect upon the whole trajectory of capitalist development in South Africa. We are therefore concerned to understand the historical role of the South African state in the class struggle — more particularly, which specific interests it served, and how it came to assume its specific and distinctive form.

Clearly, there can be no disagreement with the argument that 'secondary contradictions' within capitalist society are important and require analysis. But where there is room for disagreement is over the question of how one approaches that analysis — how one conceptualises and relates these 'secondary contradictions' to the broadly determinant struggle between capital and labour. It is our contention that the mode of analysis specified in the above quote, which attempts to introduce a radical rupture of the 'political' from the 'fundamental relations of exploitation', is not only at variance with the Marxist method but as we hope to be able to show inevitably tends towards the path of orthodox bourgeois theory.

In contrast to the various branches of liberal theory, Marxist analysis emphasises the fundamental unity of the social relations of production in a given society. However, in capitalist societies these relations manifest themselves at the level of appearances in the separated forms of economics, politics, ideology, etc. Thus economics and politics which appear as separated are in fact no more than the external manifestatons of the integrated social relations of production. Consequently, any analysis which, unlike most bourgeois analysis, seeks to penetrate beneath the level of appearances cannot start off by arbitrarily isolating 'politics' from the 'fundamental relations of exploitation', is not only at variance with the Marxist method but as we hope to be able to show inevitably tends towards the path of orthodox bourgeois theory.

The failure on the part of Davies et al to adopt this position from the start leads them to develop an analysis which at times comes perilously close to orthodox liberal historiography. Briefly, liberal analyses of South African history run along the following lines: while the sphere of 'economics' develop in accordance with the laws of nature, laws which neither discriminate against nor favour any particular group, the sphere of 'politics' is characterised by fierce struggles between various interest groups, one of which (inevitably white rural Afrikaners) managed in 1948 to seize hold of the levers of government and power in the state and used these as a means to direct or distort the natural development of the 'economy' in their own selfish interests. The Poulantzian position as represented by Davies et al is not all that dissimilar from the above: although they argue that 'classes are constituted principally at the level of production,... unity within the dominant classes is expressed in the concept of the power bloc, denoting the coexistence of several classes/fractions in the exercise of that political/ideological domination necessary to maintain relations to (sic) exploi-
tation — a coexistence ensured and organised through the capitalist state,' (pp.4-5, our emphasis). Thus 'there is always struggle within the power bloc to assume this organisational role, and thereby ensure the primacy of this class/fraction's particular interests' (p.5). And finally, 'differences in the form of state are determined firstly, by changes in the composition of the power bloc and its allied and supportive classes, and secondly, by changes related to which class/fraction is hegemonic (p.5). Thus in this analysis, as in orthodox liberal theories, the political emerges as the major sphere of class and fractional struggle and the classical Marxist position that class struggle manifests itself in both economics and politics is discarded, or at any rate, not reflected here. Consequently, the interpretations offered by Davies et al of particular periods of South African history are not that dissimilar from liberal interpretations. Thus we find them arguing that in the period immediately after World War II, political struggles between the various fractions of capital (interest groups in the liberal jargon) led to one fraction, based primarily on white rural Afrikaners, gaining access to state power and using this as a means of determining the form of development of the economy in their own fractional interests (pp.26-27).

Despite the similarities between the two analyses, there are of course also important differences between the two. For instance, the Poulantzian conception of both the economic and political instances is radically different from that of the liberals: the essential relations are understood as exploitative and oppressive rather than neutral and natural. However, it is our contention that the arbitrary separation of 'economics' from 'politics' in the Poulantzian approach inevitably forces their analyses into one of two positions: either the political instance, and the struggles which occur within it, have to be reduced to the economic instance/base, i.e., classes and fractions emerge as no more than economic interest groups and we have a crude form of economism; or the political instances maintains its autonomy from the economic instance/base in which case we have a form of political pluralism. Having isolated the 'instances' from the 'fundamental relations of exploitation' in capitalist society it is not possible for the Poulantzians to re-establish the necessary unity between them without falling into our or other of the above positions.

In emphasising, and focusing almost exclusively on, the inter-capitalist disagreements ('struggles' in the Poulantzian jargon) between fractions of capital and on struggles between fractions of capital and the white wage-earning petty-bourgeoisie (white workers are not defined as workers by the authors but as 'a new petty-bourgeoisie') (p.8), Davies et al root themselves firmly in the Poulantzian tradition. Poulantzas himself writes that:

The contradictions most directly and acutely reflected within the state are those among the dominant classes and fractions and between these and the supporting classes, far more than the contradiction between the power bloc and the working class. The latter contradictions are basically expressed in the bourgeois state 'at a distance'. (Our emphasis).

By concentrating the analysis on problems within the power bloc, the dynamic of accumulation comes to be situated, not in the relations of conflict between capital and labour, but primarily in the relations of competition within capital itself. These competitive relations then become fetishized, as they very often are in neo-classical theory, so as to become explanatory concepts for the dynamic of accumulation itself. Since inter-capitalist relations are situated in the forefront of these analyses, they become the prime movers of history — the motor of accumulation — while the real class struggle, defined as the struggle between capital and labour, gets relegated to a subordinate position in the analysis, i.e.,
it is only 'expressed in the bourgeois state "at a distance".' Consequently, we find that in the article by Davies et al, which purports to deal with class struggle and the state in South Africa, the resistance waged against capital by black workers (and they constitute the overwhelming majority of the South African working class) over a twelve-year period (1920-1932), is analysed as follows:

So far as the principal dominated classes were concerned the Pact was essentially a period of continuity. The state continued to intervene to secure labour for all the various fractions of capital, and to use its repressive and ideological apparatuses to prevent political organization by the principal dominated classes. The support which the ICU had given to national capital in its struggle for hegemony thus did not prevent Minister of Justice, Pirow, from conducting a campaign of repression against that organization with the full support of all fractions in the power bloc. (p.13)

Again, the effect of the draconian Hertzog Bills on the African workers' struggle during the mid-thirties is dismissed as follows:

As such, the segregationist policy contained in these measures was perfectly consistent with the continuing hegemony of national capital . . . The segregationist measures in so far as they related to the maintenance of tribal structures, denial of rights in urban areas etc, were directly repressive measures designed to ensure continued political domination. As such they received the support of the whole power bloc. (p.20)

These bland generalizations and descriptions are hopelessly inadequate as a basis for a serious Marxist analysis of class struggle, and of the state's involvement in that struggle, in South Africa over a twenty-year period. One cannot dismiss two decades of intensive African working class resistance which gave rise to fundamental contradictions within capital accumulation, simply be claiming that 'the state continued to intervene to secure labour for all the various fractions of capital'. Nor does the general comment that 'the segregationist measures . . . were directly repressive measures designed to ensure continued political domination' actually advance our understanding of the precise purpose of these particular segregationist measures (capitalist legislation of any kind is inevitably 'designed' to ensure the continued political domination of capital).

An approach, such as that reflected in the above quotes, which shifts the focus of the analysis away from the class struggle and towards inter-class and fractional disagreements inevitably leads to a failure to locate the real determinants of specific historical periods and events. For instance, the issue of Black Trade Unions is dealt with as follows in the article:

But, a differing approach with respect to Black Trade Unions became evident towards the close of the period (i.e. 1930s). Industrial capital was beginning to establish a series of informal agreements with emergent Black Trade Unions and the government appeared to be considering a very limited recognition — an approach it abandoned when the Mines intervened to demand that no recognition be granted. This differing approach was the germ of a more serious division between the capitalists as is evidenced in the next period. (p.20 — our emphasis).

In this analysis, the black working class appears only 'at a distance' and plays a passive role throughout. Black Trade Unions are 'emerging', although the forces giving rise to their emergence, the level of that emergence, its implications for capital, etc, are all ignored. Furthermore, the 'emergence' does not seem to have any momentum in the slightest. Thus, in this analysis, the struggle for black unions is presented not as a struggle between capital and labour (which is essentially what it is) but as a 'struggle' between particular groups of capitals, each trying to influence the state to act in its own interest. The state here weighs up the arguments and strengths of the various contending interest groups and then acts to support the one against the other — i.e. it acts to promote the interests of particular groups of capitalists against other groups rather than acting within the
limitations imposed on it by the intensity of the class struggle to secure the conditions for the reproduction of capital in general against labour.

It is difficult to see precisely how the conceptualization of the role of the state provided here by Davies et al differs from the pluralist model. Clearly, it is important to analyse the different ways in which various groups of capitalists perceived the issue of black trade unions, but the point is that unless the analysis focuses on the social forces which gave rise to this phenomenon we cannot understand the nature of the threat these unions posed to capital in general, nor can we understand why various capitalists groups perceived that threat differently. The state's response, of course, can be understood only in terms of the necessity imposed on it as a capitalist state to secure the conditions for the expansion of capital in general at a time of rising working class resistance to oppression and exploitation. Consequently, it is only by placing the black working class at the centre of the analysis that we can avoid the pluralism of Davies et al in which the differing interests and interventions of a plurality of capitalist groups provide the basis for state policy.

Finally, we would like to examine one statement by Davies et al which is particularly illustrative of some of points made above:

... the critical division within the capitalist class was that between imperialist/foreign capital(s) on the one hand and national capital(s) on the other. The conflict between these fractions evolved around the desired trajectory of capitalist development — crudely, whether South Africa was to remain an economic chattel of imperialism or to generate its own national capitalist development. Yet, of course national capital remained capitalist. (We are unsure of the precise purpose of this sentence: DI & MP) Its anti-imperialism did not end the contradictions between it and the classes it exploited. On the contrary, the anti-imperialist policies of national capital in South Africa were made possible by raising the rate of exploitation of the proletariat, and by oppressing it yet further. (p.29)

What we cannot understand is that, even given the terms of their own argument expressed in the final sentence of the above quote (that anti-imperialist policies are made possible only through an intensification of proletarian exploitation and oppression), why then are the forms of these intensifications, and the resistance to them, not the central focus of their analysis?

If no anti-imperialist strategy was possible without the intensification of the struggle of capital against labour, surely one cannot hope to explain the development of the state strategy (its twists, turns, advances and set-backs) without analysing it as a manifestation of the new forms of class struggle — i.e. without situating it directly in the struggle between capital and labour. This is of course not to argue that particular capitals or particular groups of capitals seek the same solutions — there are, of course, differences within capital. But these differences do not evolve around 'desired' trajectories of capitalist development abstracted from the conditions of class struggle. Nor does the state weigh up the various solutions of various 'fractions' and impose one or other, depending on which 'fraction' is hegemonic at a particular moment. The state is the political form of the domination of capital in general over labour and seeks to impose this domination (and not the whims of particular capitals) on labour. The extent to which it can do so — i.e., the extent to which it can wage a successful struggle against labour — determines the trajectory of capitalist development. Its failure to do so results in the destruction of capitalism.

In order to demonstrate more fully the differences between our position and that of Davies et al we intend to develop, albeit in a brief and schematic form, an alternative analysis of the changing historical conditions in South Africa during
the period from the First World War to the Great Depression (a critical period in South Africa's history and recognised as such by Davies et al). One of the most important tasks for those engaged in research on South Africa is to explain the very rapid economic growth rate, and especially the relative increase in the importance of the manufacturing sector, which characterised this period: by 1939 the National Income was 2.35 times larger than it had been in 1918, while the manufacturing sector rose at a faster rate than any other, almost doubling its contribution to the National Income (from 10% in 1918 to 18% in 1939). This particular trajectory of economic development can only be explained if it is located in the changing relations of exploitation and oppression in the society.

The rapid development of mining and agriculture which followed the discovery of gold and diamonds in the latter part of the nineteenth century was based in large part on the emergence of a relatively large African migrant labour force under the political domination of a segregationist state form. Yet resistance to the process of proletarianization was sufficiently strong among indigenous Africans for a substantial labour shortage to exist, particularly on the mines, during the first decade of the twentieth century. Though measures were taken by both capital and the state to overcome these shortages (through an intensification of the internal proletarianization process; through the extension of recruitment activities further afield to other parts of the region; and through the importation of indentured Chinese labour for the mines), the expansion of all the major sectors of production in South Africa, and especially the manufacturing sector, during World War I led to a further intensification of the shortages of black labour. Under these conditions capital's efforts to maintain a low wage policy among black workers throughout the economy came under severe threat as the migrant workers exploited the possibilities created by the labour shortages to intensify their demands for higher wages and better working conditions. Immediately after the war serious strikes by African (migrant) dock and municipal workers were followed in 1920 by the massive African mine workers strike (involving 71,000 workers). In 1919, the first large-scale organisation of African workers and peasants, the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), was formed. This intensification of militancy among black workers (a phenomenon which clearly has to be analysed in more detail than is possible here) developed under conditions in which capital in South Africa found itself weakened internationally by the ravages of the war and confronted by the revolutionary crisis that developed at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Locally too, capital found itself confronted by the more militant demands being put forward by white workers on their return from the war. In 1921 the Communist Party of South Africa was formed with an orientation towards organising industrial workers.

In the face of this offensive by the working class in South Africa (both settled/white and migrant/black) capital and the state were forced onto the defensive and initiated a process of restructuring which sought to concede to certain of the demands being made by workers in such a way that they could be contained within limits which did not unduly limit the conditions for accumulation. The most important element of the capitalist strategy was to seek to develop the divisions which had already been established historically between white and African workers.

In the first instance, capital responded to the demands of African workers on the mines by launching an assault against white mine workers, seeking to expel large numbers of them from production. Capital sought, through a process of
mechanization on the mines, to replace high cost white skilled labour with lower cost black semi-skilled labour in the hope that this would mean they could both 'satisfy' black demands for higher wages at the same time as they cut overall labour costs. White workers responded keenly to this threat to their position — a response which manifested itself most forcefully in the armed uprising known as the 1922 Rand Revolt. Although the Revolt was suppressed with brute force by the state in the first instance, it was clear that the underlying resistance of white workers was so strong that capital's strategy would have to be substantially modified if it were to succeed. At the same time it was equally clear that such modification would have to take account of the dangers which a possible alliance between white and black workers would pose for the future of capitalism in South Africa. The ICU was particularly active among black workers at this time while the Communist Party was active among whites. The state, and in particular the Pact Government which came to power in 1924, sought to respond to the threat posed by white and black workers at this time by initiating a three-pronged strategy: firstly, it sought to provide new job opportunities for those white workers forced out of other sectors of industry (especially mining) by promoting the policy of support for industrialisation which had been begun earlier under the Smuts Governments (though in a somewhat ambivalent form): *inter alia* the Pact Government provided increased protection for South Africa's manufacturing industry, founded the giant iron and steel corporation (ISCOR) to provide a basis for local industrial expansion and introduced important fiscal reforms. Secondly, the state sought to further divide (and therefore neutralise) the working class along racial lines by elaborating on and refining the industrial relations system which had been established immediately prior to the war: the introduction by the Smuts Government of the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 and the establishment of the Department of Labour by the Pact Government were both intended to incorporate white workers in a complex system of official bargaining and arbitration while at the same time explicitly excluding African workers. And finally, as a *quid pro quo* for the above, the state offered to prevent any unnecessary further erosion of white workers' jobs by introducing legislation to protect white workers in certain job categories being replaced by blacks (the Job Reservation Act was introduced in 1926) as well as offering to absorb unemployed whites into the state sector under the 'civilised labour policy' and extending relief work and land settlement schemes among whites. This political assault initiated by the state against the working class thus ran parallel to, and corresponded with, the economic onslaught being waged by capital.

Yet while this was the strategy which the state and capital adopted against the working class in the mid-twenties, there were important countervailing pressures among the various elements of the working class which meant that implementation of the strategy was by no means assured. In particular, militants among the white workers who were opposed to any 'deal' with the Government had to be dealt with as did those among the leadership of the African workers who gave expression to the simmering resentment of the mass of African workers, refusing to accept any political solution which relegated them to an inferior bargaining position. The precise course of the struggle waged by militants within the working class movement cannot be followed here. It is sufficient to note that the defeat suffered by white mine workers in the 1922 revolt rendered white workers in general particular susceptible to the state's onslaught: trade union membership among whites fell from 108,242 to 81,861 immediately after the suppression of the Revolt; the central co-ordinating body of the Revolt (the South African Industrial Federation) collapsed and there was a marked decline in strike activity
with only six strikes between 1923 and 1929 compared with 37 between 1919 and 1922. The number of whites employed on the mines fell to well below the figure prior to the Revolt, while white wage rates in the mining industry were slashed: between 1925 and 1932 these ranged on average between £259 and £327 per annum compared with an average of £419 per annum prior to the 1922 Revolt. Nor were these declines in the conditions of white workers confined to those in the mining industry: white wage rates in manufacturing were reduced after the Revolt and did not regain their pre-1922 levels until the mid-thirties, while white jobs within this sector also came under threat. In particular there was a tendency in manufacturing throughout the post-1922 period to replace high cost white adult male skilled labour with lower cost black semi-skilled/unskilled labour as well as with lower cost white female and juvenile semi-skilled/unskilled labour: between 1915/16 and 1929/30 the number of white male workers employed in private industry rose by 22%, while the number of white females rose by 65% and the number of black males by 49%. Thus Jon Lewis in a recent paper has argued that the period was characterised by the large-scale de-skilling of the white working class in certain sectors of manufacturing. These defeats suffered by white workers were, as we have argued, secured by a combination of economic developments (changes in the labour process, reduction in wage rates, etc) and political developments (changes in the industrial relations system, repression and co-option, etc). By 1930 the autonomy of the white workers’ organisations had been undermined and the conditions for the higher exploitation of white labour firmly established.

White workers’ resistance to this onslaught had been waged initially through their traditional craft (or closed) unions as well as, at a political level, primarily through the Labour Party. Both these forms of institutionalised expression had been based on the principle of white exclusiveness. However, with the undermining of the autonomy of these organisations (the unions became increasingly tied up in the myriad complexities of the new industrial relations system, while the Labour Party as a member of the Pact Government presided over the defeats outlined above) and the changing character of the labour process, elements among the white working class began to seek new organisational forms and methods of resistance. In certain sectors of industry white workers abandoned their closed craft unions seeking instead to protect their position by extending trade union organisation to all workers in the industry regardless of race and giving support to those African unions which existed independently: the South African Trade Union Congress, formed in 1925, did much to foster new industrial unions on this basis at this time. A minority tendency thus developed within the manufacturing industry for white workers, previously organised along skilled/racial lines, to abandon that racialist position and to begin to combine their forces with those of the increasingly powerful black workers. Lewis, in a paper dealing with this phenomenon in detail, has cited a number of cases of joint strike and other action involving white and black workers at this time.

Thus while on the one hand the capitalist strategy had secured the emasculation of the principal organisations of the white workers, on the other hand certain sections of the white industrial workers now sought to merge their struggle with that of the black workers for whom the changing conditions had meant an unprecedented increase in industrial strength. The growth of the ICU (albeit in a relatively loose organisational form) throughout the country led to that organisation being able to boast a membership of 100,000 in 1926-27 at the
same time as the incorporation of Africans into labour in industry for the first time on a large scale led to the emergence of industrial unions among African workers, very often in close co-operation with the Communist Party. The Non-European Trade Union Federation was formed in 1928 with the help of the Communist Party. Thus while by the late twenties capital and the state had broken the back of the bulk of white workers' resistance, the new threat with which they were faced was that of an increasingly well organised and militant black labour force linked to a minority militant section of white workers in industry. This militancy was also expressed politically in the more radical stance adopted by the African National Congress at this time. In order to counter this threat the state mounted a massive campaign of terror to smash the organised expression of black workers' resistance as well as the emerging alliance between sections of the black and white industrial labour force. The campaign, spearheaded by the Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow, aimed specifically at destroying the influence of the ICU as a radical mass movement, breaking the power of the African National Congress politically and of the Communist Party in industrial organisations and undermining the possibilities for unity between black and white industrial workers. Under the legal umbrella of the Native Administration Act of 1927 and the Riotous Assemblies (Amendment) Act of 1930, both of which gave the police widespread powers of repression, workers and their leaders were murdered, imprisoned and beaten up, while their meetings, assemblies and strikes were physically and brutally broken up. By the end of 1932 the ICU had been destroyed as an organisation, the ANC and the Communist Party had become virtually impotent and many of the new open industrial unions, such as the Garment Workers' Union, had been subjected to such harassment that they were unable to mount any serious assault against capital. The state had succeeded in its intention of breaking the militant organised power of black workers. As a result black workers were forced into temporary submission, while those elements among the white workers who had looked to the strength of the black working class for support in their struggle against capital turned their attentions back to the prospect of winning advantages for themselves within the industrial relations structures laid down by the state. Capital and the state had succeeded in creating the conditions for the expanded reproduction of capitalism within South Africa on the basis of the higher exploitation and greater oppression of all sectors of the labour force, though the forms of this oppression clearly differed for white and black workers. It was these struggles and the defeat suffered by the South African working class at this time, which laid the basis for the period of rapid economic growth which characterised the thirties — the so-called 'golden period' of capital accumulation.

The analysis put forward above in outline form is of course incomplete. There are whole areas which require considerable further investigation before we will be able to understand with any precision the exact relationship between the determinant forces at work. For instance, questions relating to proletarianisation and changing relations in agriculture are not adequately dealt with while, at another level, the issue of the demise of the ICU, divided as it was ideologically and straddling a wide range of class forces, is by no means as cut and dried as it appears in the short account presented here. No doubt arising out of these further investigations it may be necessary to modify or even discard some of the propositions advanced above in favour of new ones. The development of a radical Marxist historiography of South Africa is by no means sufficiently advanced for any of us to speak with certainty on any one specific area and it is for this reason that the article by Davies et al which we have addressed ourselves to is to
be welcomed since it does attempt to theorise many of these complex issues over an extended historical period. Yet our contention remains that the fundamental theoretical framework laid down by Davies et al to conceptualise that history is an inadequate basis for a Marxist analysis. What we are urging then is not rejection of the material advanced in the article nor rejection of many of the important insights it contains, but rather a rejection of the theoretical approach and focus of the article.

Perhaps, in conclusion, it would be useful for us to emphasise one of the most important elements of disagreement which emerge between our analysis and that provided by Davies et al: that of the conceptualisation of the white working class in this period. According to Davies et al, 1924 was a landmark in South Africa's history in that it was in that year that 'national capital . . . seized hegemony from mining capital, the principal fraction of international or imperialist capital, which exercised hegemony before that date' (p.6). This shift in 'hegemony' is important in that it is indicative of a radical transformation in the form of state (p.5). This transformation was not, however, achieved without a good deal of complicated and mysterious manoeuvring: 'National capital' (which according to Davies et al, consisted of 'capitalist agriculture and industrial capital') 'alone was not strong enough to displace mining'. It was only 'in 1924 in alliance with a fraction of the new petty-bourgeoisie and supported by strata of the white and black wage earning classes (that) national capital achieved hegemony.' However:

... the state under the hegemony of national capital proved to be a firm defender of the conditions necessary for capitalist production in the mines — often, as we shall see, against the interests of the new petty-bourgeois allied class. (pp.8 & 9, our emphasis)

Thus the alliance between the white 'wage earning' class and national capital, which was so crucial to the latter's successful attempt to seize 'hegemony' from mining capital, was secured despite the fact that it often operated against the interests of the white wage earners. But on what basis then can one argue that there was a class alliance between the two? In order to provide some grounds to support the claim, Davies et al argue as follows:

However, there was one form of state intervention which did result in fairly substantial concessions for white proletarians. That was the state's intervention to secure employment for the previously unemployed, unskilled poor whites. The reason for this intervention was that unemployed poor whites, concentrated as they were in the cities and towns, were considered by all fractions of the dominant classes to constitute a threat to the stability of the social formation . . . In intervening to solve this problem the state was essentially serving the common interests of the power bloc. In fact it was doing little more than enlarging and extending policies which the state had pursued (under the hegemony of imperialist capital. (p.11)

Thus according to this argument, the only sphere in which the state may be said to have given concessions to white workers was that in which they constituted a threat to the reproduction of capitalist relations. But since this was the case — since the whole basis of state policy is to undermine the threat which white workers posed — how can we speak of a class alliance, especially a political class alliance, between white workers and capital? Surely what is being described here is, as we have argued earlier, an assault on white workers — an attempt to effectively neutralise the threat which they posed for capital. Though this neutralising of white workers is carried out in part through the co-option of sections of the leadership of the white workers, expressed at the party political level in the Nationalist-Labour Party electoral Pact, this should not be confused with a class alliance. (The electoral Pact, formed in 1924, in fact produced serious divisions
within the Labour Party which eventually split wide open in 1928).

It is our view that an analysis of the twenties which seeks to argue that a class alliance existed between sections of capital and labour inevitably obscures the essential and critically important features of that period: that it was a period of intense struggle between capital and labour in South Africa and that the defeat suffered by the latter in that struggle created the conditions for the higher exploitation of all sections of the working class. Of course the forms of that exploitation and indeed, oppression, varied according to the racial categories of labour (white, coloured, Asian and African) and it seems to us that future investigations should address themselves to the question of why it was that exploitation took these particular racial forms and what were the relations between them. This, we would argue, would be far more beneficial to the task of building a Marxist understanding of South Africa than the continuation of interminable discussions over the more abstract issue of which class/fraction of capital exercised 'hegemony' and at what precise moment in time.

Bibliographic Notes
Foreign Capital and the Reconstruction of Zimbabwe

Colin Stoneman

The study picks out the dominant characteristics of the development of Rhodesia as a peripheral economy by foreign capital over the last eighty years. The significance of settler capital and the impact of UDI are assessed. The conclusions explain the importance attached by international capitalists to achieving a settlement in Rhodesia, in order to stabilise the whole region and to secure control of its valuable resources. The discussion also poses some of the options for the Zimbabwean struggle in terms of achieving genuine liberation.

The economy of Rhodesia in the late 1970s is clearly a peripheral economy. Only South Africa is a greater industrial power in the continent, but South Africa itself is peripheral to the main centres of capital accumulation. Since UDI, Rhodesia has become peripheral to that periphery, having moved away from direct dependency on Britain. The shortage of foreign exchange caused by international sanctions has brought about a very high degree of import substitution, so that Rhodesia is more nearly self-sufficient than almost any country of so small a size, but the evasion of sanctions in the quest for foreign exchange remains the dominant concern twelve-thirteen years after UDI.

The raison d'être of the white Rhodesian state remains therefore that of diverting a proportion of international purchasing power into the hands of the white population, whether farmers or urban workers. But this international purchasing power is earned, as very largely it always has been, through the export of primary products by enterprises owned and controlled by foreign capital. It is a tribute not only to the settlers' determination to preserve their privileged position but also to the rich endowment of the country (in labour, land and mineral wealth) that this process has continued with only minor interruption despite all the obstacles that could be put in its way through UN sanctions. But it is also a tribute (if that is the right word) to the determination of international capitalists, aided only by the South African and (until 1974) Portuguese states, to continue the exploitation of this endowment. (The fall in Rhodesia's terms of trade by 25 per cent since 1965 is a measure, in part, of a benefit from UDI to foreign capitalists.)

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FOREIGN CAPITAL AND ZIMBABWE

In what follows I try to pick out the dominant characteristics of the development of Rhodesia as a peripheral economy by foreign capital over the last eighty years, and to assess the significance of settler capital. Thus we may begin to understand the importance attached by international capitalists to achieving a ‘settlement’ in Rhodesia, both in terms of the importance of ‘stabilising’ the whole region, and in terms of the importance of the region’s resources. This should leave us in a better position to assess what options are open to the people of Zimbabwe in terms of achieving genuine independence. Estimates of the magnitude and distribution of foreign capital are mostly taken from my study ‘Foreign capital and the prospects for Zimbabwe’ published in World Development in January 1976, and the reader should refer to this for further details and explanation of how they were made. Section I below is a brief survey of foreign capital before UDI. Section II attempts to trace the consequences of sanctions and their evasion, and Section III looks at the likely consequences of a settlement or liberation.

I. The development of foreign and settler capital from 1890 to 1965

a. Significance of foreign capital

For the first thirty years of its existence white Southern Rhodesia was a company country. More important than ideological justifications concerning Britain’s civilising mission or imperial visions of a ‘Cape to Cairo’ railway, was Cecil Rhodes’ expectation of discovering a ‘Second Rand’ north of the Limpopo. His ‘British South Africa Company’ built the railway through Bechuanaland into Southern Rhodesia and on into Northern Rhodesia, and established mine workings and other infrastructure. Gold was found, to be sure, though most of it in mines that had been worked by Africans for centuries, and these were so scattered that a large number were leased to the proverbial one man and his dog. After payment for imported necessities there was little net ‘international purchasing power’ for the company. (See Bienefeld and Innes in Review No. 7.)

From before 1900 it was clear that there was no new Rand, and that the company would have to cut its losses. This it did, not by withdrawal (for the capital investment was of the order of tens of millions of pounds) but firstly by attempting to maximise its returns through the local supply of subsistence to the miners (so appropriating more net international purchasing power) and secondly by trying to raise the value of its assets through finding alternative uses for them. Both aims were partially satisfied by the establishment of a white agricultural community, but new problems were later created through the demands that the new community made. Having paid no dividends at all to its shareholders, the British South Africa Company was content to surrender the costs of administration to these settlers in 1923 when Southern Rhodesia became a ‘self-governing colony’. Thus foreign capital abandoned direct political control over the region, substituting instead a form of settler rule based on a political coalition of white capitalists and workers. In the following period, roughly 1923 to 1945, there was little new foreign investment, and such interest as foreign capital took in the area was rather concerned with exploiting the cheap labour supply. This had been created by the alienation of the best agricultural land to the settlers, and a variety of taxes and legal restrictions which forced the defeated and demoralised blacks into what the whites imagined was their traditional way of life (whilst making sure that it was not so traditional — that is viable — that they could dispense with occasional wage labour). This cheap labour was probably as important as the actual mineral wealth in keeping the foreign capital interests
viable. The only significant new entrants in this period were two American mining companies in chrome, and Turner & Newall in asbestos.

However, this was the period in which a domestic (settler) capital base made most striking progress, initially in gold mining (about half of which, mostly comprising the small workers, came to be in settler hands). The state helped this process through the establishment in 1939 of the Roasting Plant to process low-grade ores. Tobacco growing also developed, and the farmers were helped against the monopsonistic position of the United Tobacco Company by the Tobacco Marketing Act of 1936. Both these products were of course largely for export, and so demonstrate the winning of a share in the country’s potential international purchasing power by domestic capital. Insofar as this was re-invested in export industries (and tobacco-growing was to expand rapidly) a real growth of domestic capital occurred (and in Bienefeld and Innes’ terms its character thereby became more international). However, the demand for imports also increased and domestic capital began to establish import substitution industries (again with state help), in particular in cotton-spinning and the production of iron and steel. Gross manufacturing output increased three-fold between 1939 and 1946.

The total listed value of foreign capital in Rhodesia at the end of this period (that is during the war years) was around £60m, of which about a half was still attributable to the British South Africa Company, and about a half of that was in Rhodesia Railways. In 1946 firms registered abroad earned nearly 45 per cent of the taxable corporate income but moreover 68 per cent of the capital of domestically registered companies was in fact held abroad. Taken together these figures suggest that the settler stake in productive enterprise was perhaps 20-30 per cent of the total. This represented a peak not to be regained for a quarter of a century as foreign capital now began to reassert political as well as economic dominance.

The war thus provided ideal conditions for the growth of settler capitalism: a booming demand for Rhodesia’s exports, and a degree of isolation of the economy from its former sources of investment capital and imports which amounted to involuntary protection. As Arrighi has pointed out, the national character of the settlers prevented the boom merely producing inflation, as happened in so many other underdeveloped countries at this time, by investing locally in infrastructure and productive industry.

With the end of the war it might have been predicted that reduction in demand for Rhodesia’s exports coupled with exposure to cheap imports would kill the infant industries in the cradle. This might indeed have occurred but for several new factors: the continuing post-war demand for raw materials; Britain’s dollar shortage, which stimulated a switch to Rhodesia as a supplier of tobacco; and the flight of capital (and migrants) from Britain and later from South Africa (after the Nationalists came to power in 1948). The continuing boom attracted a new, much larger inflow of foreign capital, which soon swamped the settler capital base. Between 1945 and 1953, the net inflow of capital amounted to £139m, of which £69.5m was in the government and public authorities sector, representing mainly borrowings, stock issues etc, for infrastructural development. So state capital continued to play a complementary role to private, guaranteeing profitable conditions, but increasingly for international rather than settler capital. A later sign of this orientation was the denationalisation of the cotton-spinning and iron steel industries, which in absence of any state restrictions (as in similar situations in South Africa) fell largely into foreign hands.
Adding the capital inflow figures for 1945-1953 to the war-time stock thus suggests a total close to £200m for Rhodesia’s liabilities on the eve of federation. Inadequacies in the statistics, including omission of any estimates of reinvestment by foreign-owned enterprises, suggest that this figure should be raised to £320m; we will however use a more cautious figure of £250m to make rough allowance for depreciation and write-offs.

The political motivation of the British government in establishing the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland was clear, as it seemed to enable it to rid itself of colonial problems without losing the benefits. But there were also positive economic benefits both for Rhodesia and for the foreign capital that used it as a base to produce for other markets, especially in Northern Rhodesia, so valorising more fully the proceeds from the copper mines. Hazlewood has concluded that the one certain result of the Federation was to maintain the foreign capital inflow at levels which although reached before federation could not have been maintained for much longer (indeed they were not maintained into the second half of the federal period).

But the magnitude of this capital inflow is even less certain than that for earlier periods because the accounts were consolidated in the Federation accounts. Rough official estimates suggest a minimum inflow of £230m over the ten years, to which may be added my own estimates of reinvestment of £120m, so that we reach a total of some £500-600m for the stock of foreign liabilities in 1963. Of this about a third, or £150m was in the public sector (government stocks, loans from the IBRD, including those for the Kariba dam). Private liabilities of the order of £250m to Britain, £100m to South Africa, £20m to the USA and smaller amounts to other countries, made up the balance.

Even allowing for considerable overestimates above, the general conclusion is clear: post-war Rhodesia attracted very heavy foreign investment, so that the stock in 1965 was about a third of that in South Africa, which had an economy some ten times larger. This was a result of inflows over the previous years which usually exceeded inflows to South Africa. Looked at another way, the total stock was about £120 per capita (or £2500 per white) at a time when the GDP per capita was only about £80 per annum.

The political balance of forces during most of the period from the end of the war until 1962 reflected the dominance of outward-looking interests, predominantly foreign capitalists. (For a detailed analysis of the shifting class interests and alliances, see the work of Arrighi.) The headlong rush to UDI which followed the election of the Rhodesian Front was opposed by all who had developed Rhodesia as a source of international purchasing power, namely representatives of foreign capital generally, along with a proportion of nominally settler capital, especially industrial, mining and plantation.

b. Sectoral composition of foreign capital
The most detailed statistics that are available on the structure of Rhodesian industry are the results of the questionnaire sent to companies in 1963. Analysis of the report confirms that about two-thirds of the productive investment in Rhodesia was foreign-controlled. Even the domestic sector paid about a third of its investment income abroad. Although 1963 was one of the few years of actual capital outflow, the sector covered by the survey contributed £14.2m out of the total of £43.2m gross domestic capital formation and about 68 per cent of it was investment by foreign-controlled companies. (The BSA Co and financial
institutions were excluded from the survey; around £20m was invested by the state sector.)

Although no stock figures are given, gross profit and capital formation figures show that South African companies were dominant in companies in the agriculture and forestry sector, followed by domestic companies. ‘Other foreign’ (in all cases almost entirely British, although no evidence for this is given in the Report) were relatively unimportant. South Africa, very largely because of investment in plantations (but also financial institutions), was the most important owner of new assets in 1963.

In both the mining and manufacturing sectors the same tables show that other foreign countries accounted for a half or more, with both South Africa and the domestic sector taking between a fifth and a third (although South Africa was more important in investment than in gross profits). The general picture of a minor South Africa share beginning to rise to dominance is thus given, but this should be qualified by the observation that 1963 and indeed the last few years of the Federal period were untypically bad so far as foreign capital flows were concerned, and that furthermore South Africa itself was going through a period of capital outflow. The picture for 1964 and 1965, for which detailed data are not available, may not therefore have continued the trend; thereafter, of course, UDI and sanctions produced a quite new impetus to South African domination.

Pursuing a breakdown of the economy beyond six broad sectors (agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, distribution, transport and communications) can only be done at the expense of loss of any information as to country of origin. Indeed no reliable quantification can be made even on the simple foreign-domestic division. However, it is fairly clear that foreign capital was dominant in beverages, tobacco, chemicals and financial companies, and more important than domestic capital in mining (non-gold), basic metal and metal products, and even building and construction. On the other hand domestic capital seems to have been dominant in wood, cork and furniture and the retail trade, whilst being somewhat more important than foreign capital in gold mining and services. The picture is much less clear in many other sectors, including spinning, weaving and clothing, wholesale distribution, transport and communications, non-metallic mineral products, miscellaneous industries, real estate, transport equipment, paper, pulp, printing and publishing, food manufacture and agriculture and forestry. In most of these cases foreign capital probably had the edge, but there can be no doubt that a significant domestic base existed.

This domestic capital base, especially important in gold-mining, but also in agriculture and forestry, showed a degree of international character (in Bienefeld and Innes’ terms) in that it had some direct access to international purchasing power. However, the national aspect of its character was much clearer in that the other sectors where it was significant were all concerned primarily if not exclusively with the domestic market.

c. Costs of foreign capital

At the beginning of the post-war foreign capital inflow the servicing of the existing stock presented few problems. Official payments of interest, and private or corporate payments of dividends and profits totalled under £4m annually, and from 1947 on were greatly exceeded by the capital inflow. In 1947 total payments at £4.6m were only 33.1 per cent of the capital inflow (38.5 per cent if adjustment is made to allow for reinvestment). But ever since
1960 (with the probable exceptions of two or three years of exceptional inflow of South African capital into the mining industry, coupled with a freezing of payments under sanctions), the foreign investment account has been in deficit. In 1964, the last year before UDI, payments reached a peak of £25.9m, a figure exceeded by capital inflows in only six of all preceding years, but in that year there was a capital outflow of £2.4m. (Adjusting for reinvestment, payments were £41.0m, and net inflow was £12.7m, but the deficit was of course the same at £28.3m).

These then are the easily quantifiable costs of a reliance on foreign investment. Before considering less quantifiable costs and benefits, let us briefly consider what alternatives might have been available, for, at a higher level, the new Zimbabwe is being invited by the carrot of the 'Zimbabwe Development Fund' to re-embark on the same course (albeit starting off with the added disadvantage of being saddled with the costs of servicing the existing stock of capital, and catching up with service payments frozen since 1965). Suppose that inflows of direct investment could have been replaced by borrowing (whether the result of international loans or through government stocks is not significant). If in 1945 Rhodesia had been able to establish a development plan on the basis of borrowing £25m a year for 20 years, repaying capital and interest at 5 per cent per annum over 20 year periods beginning the year after receipt of each loan, then simple calculation shows that inflows and outflows would have been quite similar to those that have been described above. Net receipts would have fallen from £25m in 1945 to £1m in 1957, after which net payments would have risen up to the year of the last loan (1964), when they would have been £13m. The next year there would have been a sharp rise to £40m, after which net payments would decline until the final clearing of accounts in 1984.

The net figures then appear as no significant improvement on the historical record until about the mid-seventies (in practice a smoother repayment schedule might have been arranged), but the point that I am concerned with is that with comparable flows one possibility eventually leaves the country free of debt and foreign political obligations, whilst the other leaves some £500-600m liabilities not merely unredeemed, but growing year by year. The new Zimbabwe might well consider some such planned borrowing programme as an alternative to both autarchy and reliance on foreign private capital. As we shall see in Section III, the proposed Zimbabwe Development Fund (ZDF) is not in any way such a programme but rather a means of ensuring the continuation of the present dependent status in the interests of international capital.

But of course easily quantifiable costs are far from the whole story. Direct foreign investment is certainly a way of gaining access to technology, marketing expertise and experience generally. On the other hand the technology may be inappropriate and the experience may remain uncommunicated to more than a handful of co-opted locals. Arrighi and Saul have pointed to the twin biases of foreign capital investment: the capital-intensive bias in countries with little employment and high unemployment; and the bias away from capital goods industries. Through state intervention both Rhodesia and South Africa have been able to make good some of the deficiency produced by the second bias, but have had no interest in correcting the first. Foreign capital necessarily strengthens elites and results in a widening of differentials. To oppose the resulting social and economic consequences as being harmful for the development prospects of Kenya, or the future Zimbabwe, is in no way inconsistent with accepting that the inflows greatly strengthened the white regimes of Rhodesia.
and South Africa. The subsequent costs of the policy after 1960, or even more after UDI came to be paid not by the whites but by blacks, the employment of whom stagnated from the late fifties, so that average income fell. The final irony would be if an independent Zimbabwe were saddled with the liabilities of the former Rhodesia-liabilities which had been acquired in the process of building up an economic structure supportive of the economic and political power of the largely white elite as against the blacks, and biased in favour of the luxuries of the former rather than the basic needs of the latter.

II. Foreign Capital since UDI

Since UDI Rhodesia has continued to grow in broadly the same pattern. To be sure there have been some significant changes: foreign trade now plays a less dominating (although still important) role; the growth of import substitution manufacturing has gathered pace; the mining industry's output has more than doubled; from being closely linked to Britain and states in Central Africa, Rhodesia's economy is now tightly integrated into Southern Africa; and state investment plays a more important role. But the economy is still largely owned (if not, under present circumstances, controlled) by foreign capital, and the area remains of interest because of its mineral wealth. South African capital has been able to realise the international purchasing power generated, (although it has increasingly preferred to reinvest it). Other foreign capital has in general been required to reinvest profits, which it has been quite content to do in most cases. This has been the case with British-owned mining companies such as Turner and Newall, Lonhro and RTZ, despite protestations from the parent companies that they had no power either to repatriate their profits or prevent their Rhodesian subsidiaries from reinvesting them.

At least four factors can be said to have contributed importantly to Rhodesia's success, not merely in withstanding sanctions, but in growing despite them.  1) the overcapacity of Rhodesian industry and infrastructure produced by the federation's bias, designed to establish Rhodesia as a sub-imperial centre. Fuller utilisation could thus produce gains in output with little new investment.  2) the advantage of a degree of isolation (and, as in the war, involuntary protection of infant industries) in an economy too small to weather comfortably the vagaries of world market conditions.  3) the control that Rhodesia was able to exert over foreign capital once no further threat of retaliation could be mounted, so that non-cooperating capital was in effect 'Rhodesianised'.  4) success in sanctions busting, largely using South Africa and Portuguese connections. All these factors were operative largely because of the importance of foreign capital in the economy. In other words what was naively seen as Rhodesia's weakness before UDI turned out to be a source of strength.

a. Growth of Foreign Capital

Although the sums involved cannot be estimated with any precision, there is no doubt that foreign ownership of the economy remains unimpaired. Official statistics suggest that there was a net inflow of foreign capital of about $350m between 1966 and 1976. Adding estimates of reinvestment would raise the total to about $1,000m (see Table 1). Thus foreign capital was still supplying some 37 per cent of total investment (and of course a much bigger proportion of productive investment) not much below the 51 per cent of the federal period, and considerably above the ratio for 1962-65 (about 25 per cent). The total stock now therefore must exceed £1,000m (see the Appendix).
Order of magnitude estimates are that Rhodesia’s liabilities are made up of about £200m government debt, about £400m private debts each to Britain and South Africa, and about £100m to other countries. The modest increase in Britain’s stake (from about £250m) would be expected from reinvestment alone. However, some British enterprises undoubtedly suffered, and some ceased trading immediately after UDI (car assembly in particular) and Lonrho’s pipeline from Beira has of course been inoperative. But the close intertwining of British and South African capital through mining companies like Anglo-American Corporation and RTZ would make the separation of British and South African assets difficult at the best of times, and an indeterminate proportion of South Africa’s assets are indirectly British.

Plainly, and unsurprisingly, South Africa’s share has increased considerably. Many large-scale investments have been announced (see the next section) and in addition so-called ‘no currency involved’ deals were used by many South African companies to set up or purchase Rhodesian subsidiaries on the cheap, supplying old plant, stocks, etc in exchange for Rhodesian exports — so earning Rhodesia no foreign exchange, but creating liabilities.

America’s stake, valued at £20m in the mid-60s, is still largely restricted to chrome mining (Union Carabide and Foote Minerals), but with some expansion from internal resources is probably now worth about £60-70m. It is known that other countries, in particular France, Germany, Switzerland and Japan have been involved in financial deals with Rhodesia since UDI. Which of these still involve Rhodesian liabilities is uncertain, for with an almost negligible investment base and relatively few links with South African capital, opportunities are few and the results far too visible. Nevertheless the recent major expansion of the Rhodesian Iron and Steel Corporation (Risco), (ironically partly owned by the British Steel Corporation since the nationalisation of Stewarts & Lloyds) costing in excess of £24m, was financed by a very complicated deal involving German, Swiss, Austrian and American finance and technical support. It is probable, however, that a ‘political clause’ in the contract obliged Rhodesia to repay the loans almost immediately on the embarrassing disclosure of the scheme by Kenneth McIntosh.

b. Sectoral changes since UDI

The major sectoral shift under the enforced protection of sanctions has of course been the rapid rise of manufacturing industry, which before UDI accounted for about 18 or 19 per cent of the GDP, but now accounts for over 24 per cent. Other sectors, including agriculture, have fallen back somewhat, with the rather surprising exception of mining (for almost all its output is exported). Despite sanctions, the value of mining output has tripled in money terms, and doubled in real and volume terms. The share of GDP is now around 8 per cent having been below 6 per cent before UDI (it was over 10 per cent in the immediate post-war years). The main growth has been in nickel and copper (the former industry hardly existing before UDI), with AAC investing some £20m in mines and refineries, plus a further £10m through JCI (Johannesburg Consolidated Investments), and about £12m in developing the Wankie colliery. Rio Tinto Rhodesia has been announcing record profits throughout the 1970s, particularly from its Empress nickel-copper mine. Reported investments have been of the order of £10m, and the group is now also active in gold, chrome (otherwise dominated by the American interests), and more recently coal and platinum. Turner & Newall, who have always been the main presence in the asbestos
industry (which earned as much as gold before UDI) have invested £12m of blocked funds in a new asbestos mill. Lonrho have also been extremely successful expanding their copper and gold operations. It is reported that this has been embarrassing for 'Tiny' Rowland (who has greater investments in black Africa), for the ores or metal have been exported with the help of the South African subsidiary, which ought to be under control even if the Rhodesian operations are not. In fact there were links between Lonrho outside Rhodesia and a company owning a fake mine in Mozambique whose purpose was to be a cover for Lonrho's Rhodesian exports. The South African company Rustenburg have recently embarked on a R97m investment in the new platinum industry. Such fragmentary items suggest very strongly that mining investment by foreign capital can hardly have been less than £100m over the last ten years, with British and South African companies contributing about half each.

So far as manufacturing industry (as also infrastructure) is concerned the five or ten years prior to UDI might have been designed with sanctions in mind. Not, that is, in terms of its detailed structure, but in its size and diversity (capable of meeting both some internal demand and of supplying cheap exports to Zambia and Malawi), so that it proved easily adaptable to a much wider range of import substitution industries once this became essential. Detailed studies have shown (Ramsay) that since 1962 capital per worker has decreased almost every year. Before 1969 there was not even a compensating rapid increase in employment involving a substitution of labour for capital, so the increased output has meant a much more efficient utilisation of capital. By 1974 the volume index for manufacturing industries had more than doubled from the 1964 (or 1966) levels. As a proportion of gross fixed capital formation, however, manufacturing industry has very clearly been favoured, especially when compared with commerce, but also in relation to other productive sectors such as mining and agriculture. Before UDI around 30 per cent of investment was in the agricultural sector, twice as much as in manufacturing. By 1974 the ratio had shifted to almost 3 to 1 in the opposite direction (9 per cent in agriculture, 25.8 per cent in manufacturing) although the trend has reversed somewhat since.

Reported major investments have nearly all involved foreign capital or state initiatives. There have also been a number of takeovers of Rhodesian industries by South African capital. One of the major investments has been the South African company Sable's establishment of a nitrogen fertiliser plant, involving about £10m in the first stage. African Explosives (an associate of ICI) has expanded phosphates production, and other reports suggest that the chemical industry is still absolutely dominated by foreign capital as before UDI.

In the non-metallic mineral products sector (where there was already some significant domestic base) most activity reported concerned British and South African firms: Salisbury Portland Cement (UK), Rhodesia Cement (SA) and Plate Glass (SA) have all made substantial investments in diversification or expansion. Marley (UK) were prevented by Britain from divesting their £1.3m holding. UK importance in clothing continues through David Whitehead, although there is local participation as a result of a $Rh3m issue on the Rhodesian Stock Exchange. In food manufacturing the dominance of South African (AAC, Huletts, Barlow Rand and South African Breweries) and British capital (Tate & Lyle, Brooke Bond, Unilever, Cadbury-Schweppes) seems to have increased by major investments. The state has developed government abattoirs, the Cold Storage Commission, and invested heavily in the Sabi-Limpopo development (irrigation), but the major beneficiaries may have been the above-mentioned
corporations through their new sugar and citrus estates. Although over 50 firms are listed in the ARnI Register in the paper sector, the largest, Rhodesia Pulp and Paper Industries, and the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company (publisher of the *Rhodesia Herald*) are South African, whilst BPB Industries (UK) controls newsprint manufacture.

In services there are a number of instances of penetration of South African capital. The Southern Star Group has invested in a number of hotel projects to cater for the tourist boom of the early seventies, and major South African retail chains like OK Bazaars and Pick 'n' Pay have expanded. But the finance and banking sector has seen the most far-reaching developments. Whereas before UDI Barclays and the Standard Bank (UK) were dominant in a relatively simple finance sector, there is now a multiplicity of organisations, with domestic capital active in some simpler functions, but South African/Dutch capital is of growing importance through Rhobank (62.5 per cent owned by Nedbank, previously the Netherlands Bank of South Africa, 32.5 per cent by the Rhodesian state). This is owner or controller of a range of institutions: finance companies, merchant banks, insurance brokers, acceptances houses, investment trusts, executors and trust companies and so forth. Anglo-American Corporation is also parent or associate of an acceptance house, investment companies, finance companies etc. Barclays, with about 40 branches and Standard with 44 (11 of them new since UDI) are still the biggest of the four commercial banks however. US capital has also now got a foothold through National Grindlays (UK/US).

The overall picture then is that foreign capital, and in particular South African, has strengthened its hold on the following sectors: beverages, chemicals, mining, non-metallic mineral products and hotels; it has probably made further inroads into food manufacturing and retailing. These are mostly large-scale activities, and it remains possible that domestic capital has expanded unseen in smaller scale manufacturing. The 1973 census gives 711 firms in manufacturing as employing up to 50 workers, out of a total of 1,302. Between 1966 and 1970 the number of firms almost doubled, although real GDP grew by less than 30 per cent. Domestic capital then may own many hundreds of small firms making a wide variety of manufactured goods and providing services. The industries concerned will be concentrated in clothing, food processing, miscellaneous industries, paper, pulp, printing and publishing, wood and furniture, building, and of course the retail trade, gold mining, farming and services, even though in some cases half or more of the business of the sector will be done by one or two foreign-owned companies. Only very few large companies seem to be Rhodesian-owned: More Wear in heavy engineering; Maceys, Haddon & Sly and Caps Holdings in the retail trade; Johnson & Fletcher in building and construction; and the diversified groups Mashonaland Holdings and Freehold Corporation of Rhodesia. Even some of these have a director and minority shareholding from AAC. For the rest the general picture of the Rhodesian economy in almost every sector is of one or two multinational firms operating in a monopoly situation (this applies to some 65 per cent of the 4,000 products listed in the ARnI register) with a number of small domestically-owned firms picking up what crumbs are to be had.

One major qualification has to be made to the above, and this concerns the state sector. Before UDI, the state was much less important in productive enterprise in Rhodesia than in South Africa. But since then, the situation has changed, partly through the creation of new state organisations, and partly because many existing bodies assumed greater power as part of the strategy to defeat sanctions.
Public sector investment rose 169 per cent in real terms between 1965 and 1973 when it amounted to over 44 per cent of all investment. More significant in quantitative terms than the Industrial Development Corporation (whose total assets are around $10m) are the infrastructural investments in power, water, (especially for irrigation), and particularly Rhodesian Railways which is at present near the end of a long $93m refitting and expansion programme.

c. Cost of foreign capital

With counter-measures to sanctions the immediate cost of foreign capital was drastically cut from £25.9m in 1964 to 13.6m in 1966. This meant a reduction from 7 to 4 per cent of GDP, a factor of some significance at a time when investment was running at only about 15 per cent of GDP. Payments resumed their rise in 1968, reaching £22.6m ($45.1m) in 1971 and $70.9m in 1974 (see Table 1). Payments figures for these later years are then still certainly below 4 per cent of GDP, so the benefit of counter-measures has not yet been entirely lost. Payments, even on this lower post-UDI trend seem to have exceeded capital inflows every year except 1968 and 1975. Between 1966 and 1976 payments totalled about $480m as compared with about $350 new inflows.

UDI and counter-measures to sanctions have thus greatly reduced the cost of foreign capital to Rhodesia. Indeed the freezing of service payments to non-South African capital seems to have come at just about the right time in that payments were consistently exceeding any conceivable inflows. Needless to say, the long-term cost in increased liabilities and their servicing will be all the greater. This is one of the reasons why the Zimbabwe Development Fund is necessary if Zimbabwe is to be reintegrated into world capitalism, and if it is to take over Rhodesia's liabilities — not only those for which there may be a physical asset on the ground, but also those which have only arisen in the whites' attempt to abort its birth altogether.

III. Consequences of Settlement or Liberation

In this section we shall look at the Rhodesian economy as it exists at present, focusing, as in the rest of the paper, on industry and in particular foreign-owned industry, to see how its initial parameters could be adapted to three types of outcome. These will be described as an 'internal settlement' between Smith and 'moderate' elements (i.e. the petty bourgeoisie and the embryo of an African bourgeoisie) as in the agreement signed in March 1978; an 'Anglo-American' settlement of the type canvassed by Kissinger and Owen; and liberation involving appropriation of the economy by the black majority. These scenarios are intended to be neither predictions nor blueprints. The actual outcome is quite likely to be intermediate between two of the positions here described. It is hoped, however that some of the constraints and options available under the different outcomes will be made apparent.

a. An Internal Settlement

For the sake of illustrating this particular extreme it will be assumed that the 'Zimbabwe Development Fund' (ZDF) as proposed as part of the Anglo-American settlement will not be made available to an internal settlement, and that sanctions will not be officially lifted. Some settlement is now accepted as inevitable by most of the white population, but more than that, it is regarded as desirable by a considerable proportion of capitalists. The establishment of the Whitsun Foundation in 1975, over a year before the Kissinger initiative, and when Smith and the Rhodesian Front were still talking uncompromisingly, shows
that the interests of capital had already diverged from those of the white population as a whole. The language used in reports from Whitsun is unusually liberal for material of Rhodesian provenance: for instance there is explicit denial that the African areas constitute a traditional or tribal economy operating in parallel with and largely independent of the modern sector; rather they are recognised as a residual sector excluded from and subsidising the economy of the privileged industrial and rural capitalist centre. And there is much discussion of the need to 'end discrimination', seen as both an injustice and source of economic inefficiency. Of course the hopes of the Whitsun Foundation involve the ZDF (Ian Hume its first director in Rhodesia previously worked for the World Bank which would administer the fund) but whether or not it is received, the reforms envisaged derive from what is for capital a convenient analysis of Rhodesian society (or for that matter South African) as being basically sound, but distorted by racial discrimination. That is it is not seen as a system in which racial discrimination is the basis of the exploitation, so that a fundamental restructuring is required. Capital needs to move to a more orthodox system of exploitation, for a racially based one has become embarrassingly obvious in its mechanisms. But it seeks to restrict the disruptive effects, on the white population as well as on profits, by a limited shift under a multiracial disguise.

Under an internal settlement, safeguards for the whites would, through the entrenchment of property rights, leave the economy almost entirely in white hands. Blacks would be allowed to purchase farms and businesses in white areas (as is already beginning to occur), but only a derisory minority could afford to do so. White farming and plantations would be almost unaffected. Indeed the land issue is the touchstone whereby any settlement should be judged, for it affects the large majority of blacks directly (even those in employment in urban areas, for many have families in the TTLs) and it concerns the better half of the agricultural land that is at present owned by whites. It has, however, been dealt with in detail elsewhere (by Riddell, Clarke and others) so will not be discussed further here.

Foreign-owned industry and government would accept blacks into employment, particularly in the most visible positions (there are already token black directors in some firms, and in the Reserve Bank), but progress would be much slower in basic employment, because with an end to discriminatory wage-fixing, the high cost of raising blacks to the inflated levels of pay of the whites would be prohibitive. (At some stage black political pressure would inevitably make itself felt, and a black bourgeoisie and labour aristocracy would develop as in more normal neo-colonies, but unless economic growth doubles or trebles the real national product, only a few per cent of blacks could expect to reach such levels even if most whites eventually leave). This can be illustrated by comparing recent gross profits of the Rhodesian economy with wage rates. In 1975 (a not untypical year), 934,000 blacks were employed and earned a total of $433.1m. Gross operating profits were $701.1m, so that a theoretical maximum fund would be $1,134.2m (the sum of black wages and profits). Only 223,000 blacks could be paid out of such a fund at an average white wage of $5,093 (allowing nothing for provision for depreciation, investment or taxes). This is only 24 per cent of those presently employed. Or a much smaller number (about 151,000) could be paid at white rates with the remaining 783,000 paid at current black rates (about one eleventh). Alternatively all 934,000 blacks could share the total fund, giving $1,214, or 24 per cent of the current white wage. So black economic aspirations cannot be satisfied, even on the impossible assumption of zero gross profits,
without reducing inflated white wages. (This conclusion would of course be altered somewhat by the multiplier effect of increased wages on industry, but inflationary and balance of payments problems would limit any significant modification of the above conclusion).

Clearly therefore any plausible outcome under the specified constraints, allowing for provision for depreciation and investment, would result in at best the incorporation of a few tens of thousands of blacks in the hundred odd thousand white workers, bureaucrats and capitalists. Overall the extreme income inequality (one of the widest in the world) would be hardly affected; for blacks, extremes of inequality would greatly widen, producing an increasingly unstable situation. Foreign capital would play a major role in shaping the outcome of an internal settlement: South African-owned companies would be crucial (as since UDI) in being the main if not sole channel for new capital and imports. But in addition those which already realise which way the wind is blowing in Southern Africa as a whole (for instance Oppenheimer's Anglo-American Corporation) will wish to be in the forefront of experiments in multi-racial capitalism. They will be joined in this by British firms such as Lonrho whose great interests elsewhere in Black Africa require a multi-racial image to be attached to any future operations in Rhodesia. In this scenario, integration of the Rhodesian economy with that of South Africa will continue with the country being used to some extent by the latter as a testing ground for policies it will ultimately have to follow if capitalism is to survive in Southern Africa.

It is difficult to see any significant prospects for growth of black capital or indeed of white settler capital, in such a Rhodesia. However, the key role of the state will remain, as since UDI, in co-ordinating investment as between industry and commerce, and investing itself in infrastructure and occasionally in productive enterprise.

b. An Anglo-American Settlement

Such a settlement, involving the ZDF, an end to sanctions and the involvement of the Patriotic Front still seems the most likely outcome, whether it arises directly or as a result of the threat of a successful internal settlement. In this case, following the model of Kenyan neo-colonialism, debt will be the main device used to bind Zimbabwe to the world capitalist system, externally in that Zimbabwe will inherit Rhodesia's assets and liabilities, and the ZDF will provide loans for balance of payments relief and for new development, and internally in that white farms and businesses which are sold (and if the fund is successful, a large proportion will not be) will be funded from the ZDF, the debt falling ultimately on the black purchasers. As in Kenya, the stability of the whole will be inter-related: Zimbabwe will not be tempted to repudiate its debts as finance will be available for some years to build up a black bourgeoisie, and it will act as debt collector from the purchasers, because the health of a market in land will divert demands for more radical redistribution to the black population, whether through co-operatives or private holdings.

Over the last two or three years a lot of work has been done with a view to ensuring that Rhodesia and Southern Africa generally are not lost to capitalism. Before the liberation of Mozambique and Angola, America had decided to follow Kissinger's 'Option 2' premised on a belief that 'the whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them.' Therefore 'we would maintain public opposition to racial repression but relax political isolation and economic restrictions on the white states.' America
and capitalism generally could benefit from exploitation in Southern Africa, rather than fruitlessly isolating it, whilst safeguarding interests elsewhere in Africa by rhetorical means. In the new geo-political line-up a move has been made to something more like ‘Option 4’: ‘We would stress our support for black objectives short of force or sanctions against South Africa ...’. The continuation of the white-dominated systems is now clearly questionable, so America has to cut its losses, accept some temporary price for the long-term defence of the area for capitalism. Although America’s interests are not so substantial as Britain’s, there is significant investment, and strategic resources of uranium, chromium and the platinum group metals in particular, mean that America must not be identified with what will eventually be the losing side.

To see how this shift in strategy (though not aims) has come about, and before looking at the Anglo-American settlement proposals themselves, it will be worth considering two American reports which must have provided some of the background to the proposals. These are by the Southern Africa Task Force of the Africa Bureau of USAID (published in February 1977) and the African-American Scholars Council (under contract with USAID, published in the following month).

The former report sees grave problems arising should more than 10 per cent of the whites leave, and the urgent need for foreign capital investment to 'provide jobs' in the wage sector. The importance of a favourable attitude to foreign investment is a theme constantly returned to in the AASC report:

... development investments have to date provided the greatest benefits to whites. A black majority rule government, however, will lose by not taking steps to maintain the benefit of these investments, if they are seen as having a potential to increase the well being of Africans. (page 10)

The southern Africa policies of the United States and other major powers, as they influence international trade, investment, and the operations of the multinational corporations, will do more to affect the outcome of transitional problems and the attack on development issues than might be achievable through traditional aid programs. (page 13)

An incoming government will have to indicate to multinational and foreign controlled corporations its attitudes and developing policies under which these corporations would be allowed to continue their operations during the post-transition period. (page 284).

The role of the multinational corporation in the Rhodesian economy is dynamic and pervasive... A concern of the new government will be its relationship to these corporations and the role it believes they should play in the future Zimbabwe... larger firms produce over 80 per cent of Rhodesia's manufactures and most of these are probably multinationals, integral parts of the world economy. (page 273)

Thus the perspective of the report is that the status quo is in essence unchangeable. Changes may be desirable within the framework of existing institutions, but limited changes only. Most of the Rhodesian economy is an integral part of the world economy, and any change in this is unthinkable, or at any rate unconsidered. To quote from an analysis by Sean Gervasi and James Turner for The Corporate Examiner:

Among the “problems” to be remedied piecemeal, within the existing national structure, were the following: how to ensure the flow of foreign capital; how to prevent a necessary rise in African wages from disrupting the whole economy. (The latter was an insoluble dilemma as stated in the final report) how to carry out land reform without causing too great an efflux of white farmers and too great a loss of foreign exchange earnings (another insoluble dilemma) ... economic growth within the framework of capitalism or a "mixed economy" is the only kind of growth and change talked about in the report. This type of economic climate, of course, is one in which investment and trade by US transnational corporations would flourish.
But of course, given that Rhodesia already has a substantial industry, albeit a foreign-owned one, and about half its land (most of its best land) alienated to the whites, a clear alternative to reliance on the dubious charity of the foreign owners and the World Bank would be to expropriate these assets. It is therefore no surprise to find that some of the most forceful sections of the British government's settlement proposals relate to property rights. The longest and most spelt-out 'fundamental right' of the thirteen to be guaranteed by the constitution begins 'protection from deprivation of property: this will confer protection from expropriation of property except on specified grounds of public interest and even then only on condition that there is prompt payment of adequate compensation . . . and that the compensation may be remitted abroad within a reasonable period . . .'

Similarly the purpose of the 'Zimbabwe Development Fund' would be to promote as well as development, and expansion of economic opportunities for and skills of the African majority, 'basic economic security for all sections of the population so that they might continue to contribute their skills and enthusiasm to the development of the country.' (Emphasis added; it is clear that the only section of the population referred to here is the whites). The fund's efforts 'should encourage commercial capital flows, especially in extractive, processing, and manufacturing industries, supported as appropriate by national export credit and investment insurance agencies.' The fund could also help ' . . . effect a smooth transition to a more balanced pattern of access to ownership of farms, houses, and businesses.' The final clause envisages that the World Bank would manage the fund's resources as an agent of the fund: 'Matters of policy would be discussed and decided by the governing body, which might be composed of the IBRD Executive Directors representing the Governments contributing to the Fund together with representation from the Zimbabwe Government.' Thus in addition to binding Zimbabwe through its international debt burden, funds will not be available 'for the creation or extension of state-owned enterprises except in extremely rare cases when " . . . private capital is not available and . . . the Government's participation will be compatible with efficient operation and will not have an unduly deterrent effect upon the expansion of private initiative and enterprise".' (Policies and Operations of the World Bank, p37 as quoted in Zimbabwe Information Group, Bulletin No. 4).

Another aspect of the proposals, not spelt out, but discernible between the lines is that major South African involvement in Zimbabwe is expected. The tenth clause referring to the ZDF stipulates that 'The Fund could also provide support for regional development projects and take part in any consortium or consultative group established to co-ordinate development assistance to Zimbabwe and relate it to development aid to the southern African region as a whole.' There is evidence (see ZIG 3) that South Africans have played a key role in the working out of details of the fund, partly through provision of information, partly because more than any other country (not excluding Britain) they will be affected by the nature of the settlement. Parts of the ZDF have involved close consultations with American transnational corporations with interests in South Africa and Rhodesia. Finally Ian Hume of the Whitsun Foundation in Rhodesia has conferred with the AASC, itself in close touch with the ZDF planners (Sam Adams, the AASC project director was previously head of AID). All the major capitalist interests have thus conferred to work out the details of a Rhodesian settlement that would suit them. There has been little opportunity for academic or even press debate, and the people of Zimbabwe who will be the beneficiaries (or rather the victims) have not been consulted.
What will the constraints in terms of property rights, dominance of the economy by foreign (particularly South African) capital, restriction on government enterprise and so forth, mean for the aspirations of Zimbabweans? For a start it should be pointed out that 70 per cent of Zimbabweans live in the Tribal Trust Lands, denied access to most of the best agricultural land (40 per cent of the total) which is farmed (or neglected) by the whites. This 70 per cent produces only about 6 per cent of the GDP, partly because of its historical treatment as a labour reserve, discrimination in marketing arrangements, and sitting in climatically poor and geographically remote regions. But also because even now it receives only about 3 per cent of total investment. The Whitsun Report accepts that a greater priority for development of the TTLs is required, but agrees with the AASC and the ZDF scholars in being more interested in and proposing first priority to the wage sector.

The orthodox calculation (as performed by Whitsun or the Southern Africa Task Force) is that to create one job in the latter requires $8-10,000. To create 60,000 jobs per year would therefore require $480m (Whitsun) to $600m (SATF) to be invested annually. Gross fixed capital formation in Rhodesia has been rising recently — from 13 per cent of GDP in 1967 to 23.2 per cent in 1975, falling back to 17.8 per cent in 1976. If we follow the SATF in taking 20 per cent of a GDP of about $2b, $400m would be invested at current prices without further real growth. This would be enough for about 40-50,000 jobs per year. However recent experience shows the following increments in black employment: (in thousands, 1972-76) 57, 42, 41, 10, -7; the average over the last ten years being about 30,000. On top of this it is estimated that with total population increasing at over 200,000 per annum, the total population of working age is already increasing by over 100,000 per annum. So even with a participation rate of only a half (50,000 jobs, rising in 15 years to 100,000) are required, every year, merely to keep up with newcomers, with no account being taken of the massive unemployment through past failure to create enough jobs.

As in the past, any failure to maintain investment at above 20 per cent of GDP, or to prevent the capital cost of a job increasing above $8,000, will return the pressure to the TTLs. Further, Whitsun accepts that even for a high proportion of those in the wage sector, the full cost of their jobs (including urban housing and social services) is not being met, but is subsidised by the TTLs which are obliged to support the wives and families of many workers. To complete the picture in outline we may just mention the overcrowding of the TTLs and their declining productivity through erosion. The conclusion is clear: to improve the lot of the majority of Zimbabweans, the emphasis of any development plan must be transferred from the foreign industrial sector to the rural areas. Apart from a major land reform this implies increasing investment in the present TTLs not just from its present 3 per cent share to about 6 per cent, but of 20 per cent or more.

Major agricultural investments since UDI have been very largely in European areas, such as the irrigation development of the Sabi-Limpopo scheme. The beneficiaries have been AAC with its Hippo Valley Estates, and Huletts with sugar estates at Triangle, Lowveld, Syringa, Mtilikwe and Tokwe. These estates, occupying some millions of acres out of Zimbabwe’s total of under a hundred million, along with the remainder of the 45 million acres of European land, and the settler and foreign-owned industries, are of course the major problem for any settlement and would remain so even if development investment in the TTLs increased ten fold. The wages sector is where the foreign investment is, and it is where the aspirations of Zimbabweans are at present focused. Can these
aspirations be met, or is a radically different strategy required, refocusing aspirations on a revolutionised agriculture?

The protection of property rights is, as we have seen, a key feature of the Anglo-American settlement proposals. This means that although the best land of Zimbabwe was taken from the indigenous peoples by force of arms less than ninety years ago, the settlement proposals are designed to prevent a reversal of this process by force of arms on the part of the liberation forces. Much the same could be said of gold mining, which has been carried on in Zimbabwe for many centuries. As for the rest of mining and manufacturing industry, which is about two-thirds foreign-owned, the experts behind the Anglo-American proposals, the USAID scholars and the Whitsun Foundation appear to have at least bourgeois logic on their side: foreign investors have a right to 'their property'. We have seen, however, that new foreign investment at $350m was exceeded by outflows of $490m property income between 1966 and 1976. Over these years total investment and increase in stocks amounted to $3,262m, including reinvestment of profits of foreign interests. This wealth was created not by foreign investors but by the workers, 88 per cent of whom were black. Further it is clear that expropriation of the surplus from the labour process was largely (if not entirely) from black workers. Over the eleven years they were paid a total of $3,593m below what they would have earned, not at white rates, but at average rates (whilst whites were paid that much more).

We may therefore conclude that black Zimbabweans have already bought the capital stock of their country. The purpose of the ZDF is to enable them to buy it again, unless the white expropriators choose not to sell. Those who choose not to will find that although they have to employ some blacks at 'white' wages, the average black wage will not rise very much as a result, so that blacks as a whole will continue to finance investment without ever receiving title to the wealth they create.

It is not surprising that Joshua Nkoma and Robert Mugabe, the leaders of the Patriotic Front have rejected the Settlement Proposals. Several grounds are involved in this rejection. The most relevant one to take note of here is in Clause 17 of their statement of 12 September 1977:

The problem in Zimbabwe is not the election of a "President" but —
- the destruction of colonialism and its institutions
- the attainment of genuine independence
- the democratisation not only of the vote but of all institutions and the way of life in Zimbabwe.

It is this total objective of democracy that the colonialist fears most, hence his resort to "controlled democracy" to produce neo-colonialist puppets. (Emphasis in original)

c. Liberation

The terms of the proposed settlement imply that the ZDF would not be available to an independent Zimbabwe which took over its own assets. Even expropriation of land in a land reform would render the country ineligible for aid, whether or not foreign investment was threatened. The package must be accepted or rejected as a whole: 'The establishment and continued operation of the Fund are predicated upon the acceptance and implementation of the terms of the settlement as a whole.' (Clause 13 of the Proposals). Therefore any truly independent Zimbabwe would have to look for any aid that it needed elsewhere than from the main capitalist powers. This need not necessarily commit it to expropriation of all foreign investments. Some might be judged to be earning a fair return
for a genuine service; others might have an expertise that could not readily be replaced. But undoubtedly any effort to bring about genuine independence would require expropriation to be the norm, to which some exceptions might have to be made, for longer or shorter periods.

It would be absurd to attempt here to draw up a blueprint for the development of independent Zimbabwe, even were the space available. But we can conclude by pointing out the constraints which would be applied following such a strategy and those which would be removed. Let us begin by taking the extreme (and probably unrealistic case) of immediate and total expropriation of all land and productive investment. In this case Zimbabwe would effectively attract continuing sanctions by the main capitalist powers, receiving no new capital flows, whether private or public capital, loans or grants. As against this, servicing of foreign capital (interest, dividends and profits) amounted to $71m in 1974, considerably more than new capital inflows. Indeed for 1966-1974 as we have seen, service payments at $370m exceeded new capital by $130m. This was despite heavy inflows into the new nickel and platinum mining industries from South Africa, and extensions of existing mining. It is doubtful whether inflows of such magnitude would be stimulated by an end to sanctions and the birth of a neo-colonial Zimbabwe; what is certain is that service payments would continue to grow, and in addition accumulated blocked service and capital repayments would fall due; beyond this some British firms having reinvested profits rather than leaving them idle in blocked accounts might well decide that investment had been carried too far and cease investment (if not actually disinvest) for some years. So an independent Zimbabwe, repudiating the debts accumulated by its oppressors in the pursuit of oppression, might well find itself reaping the same kind of benefits as did Rhodesia after UDI. Rhodesia’s ‘invisible trade’ balance with Britain improved considerably under sanctions; Zimbabwe’s with South Africa could similarly improve on independence.

Trade with South Africa would of course be severely disrupted. But neither party would be able to terminate it as quickly as Britain was able to stop imports of tobacco in 1966, and Zimbabwe should have sufficient time to re-establish trade routes to and through Mozambique and Zambia. The re-opening of Lonrho’s oil pipeline from Beira to the Feruka refinery near Umtali should be an advantage for Zimbabwe as compared with Rhodesia. In fact just as Rhodesia after UDI did not so much become autarchic as somewhat more self-reliant, followed by increasing integration into Southern Africa as opposed to Central Africa so Zimbabwe could become more self-reliant in the process of loosening links with South Africa, but would retain the option of re-integration with neighbouring states and reliance on non-capitalist industrial nations for trade. It is inconceivable that Zimbabwe could find itself as isolated as Cuba.

The main uncertainty would surround manpower for the maintenance of industries, mines, and government, should most of the whites leave precipitously as a result of independence. As has been mentioned, the USAID believe that there would be serious problems if more than 10 per cent of whites left. To a degree such problems would be more concerned with disruption to existing patterns of exploitation; but my preliminary study into skilled labour needs for Zimbabwe leads me to reject such pessimism more generally. I will mention here two points only: firstly there are some thousands of Zimbabwean graduates or equivalent in exile, many of them obtaining work experience in Africa or industrial countries; secondly, inside Rhodesia it is common for blacks described as ‘assistants’ to be as experienced and often more competent than their white superiors in many
skilled and supervisorial postions. Indeed since the escalation of the war, requiring a high proportion of whites to be absent on military service at any one time, much of Rhodesian industry has come to depend on these officially 'unskilled or semi-skilled' blacks. Experience of similar withdrawals of high level and skilled workers from other countries shows that although there would undoubtedly be temporary disruption, possibly aggravated by sabotage, the problems would be relatively short-lived, and more important would not close Zimbabwe's options in the way that continuing dependence on the recent oppressors would.

I hope that I have succeeded in painting a picture of an extreme policy that is neither too implausible, nor too gloomy. But I do not intend to advocate such a policy, for a self-reliant socialist strategy could achieve its aims avoiding both the risks of this policy and co-option by international capitalism.

Such a strategy would start with two main assumptions: that social ownership and control of productive enterprises was the long-term aim; and that initial acquiescence was necessary from a majority of white farmers and foreign capitalists. Precipitate withdrawal or immediate expropriation (as assumed above) would lead to economic and political pressures that might provoke a counter-revolution, and would leave little scope for mass participation.

In the crucial sector of agriculture, maintenance of output on the 2,000 efficient white farms (a further 4,000 are at present subsidised) would be necessary to avoid the risk of starvation. Riddell suggests that this could be achieved by a gradation of 'compensation' for nationalisation related to the extent to which the farmers maintained production levels and trained their employees to take over and run the eventual communes. Inefficient or unco-operative farmers would be expropriated and their farms used for resettlement as co-operatives at once, but those who after, say, four years, had transformed their farms into viable co-operatives might receive something like the compensation envisaged by the ZDF. Such payments should not be seen as settlement of property rights, but rather as the costs of a successful revolution.

Multinational corporations own some millions of acres of sugar, citrus fruit and other plantations and grazing land. Maintenance of their output is also important in the short run, both for internal subsistence and export earnings. But their holdings too must eventually be incorporated into the overall land structure. The foreign-dominated mining and manufacturing sectors present similar problems in that expropriation would be a direct challenge to international capitalism which the young state could hardly sustain. But meaningful national independence (let alone self-reliant socialism) will not exist until a large part is under local control.

It will therefore be necessary, as in dealing with white farmers, to show sufficient determination to persuade foreign interests to cut their losses, but also to offer sufficient incentives so as to persuade those producing output that is needed for local consumption or export earnings to maintain production levels. Again 'compensation' might be increased in relation to the extent of training of blacks and reorganisation into co-operatively managed units, that occurs. Thus foreign companies would gain from avoiding outright expropriation, but Zimbabwe would avoid the loss of major export earnings and needed output at the worst possible time.

Beyond this Zimbabwe will need expert negotiating assistance and help with policing the interim stages to avoid expatriation of profits through transfer...
pricing and similar accounting devices. It will also need experienced advisors from countries such as Tanzania, Yugoslavia and China to aid transformations into self-managed enterprises. Special problems may also occur in the cases of industries at present dominated by settler as opposed to foreign capital. Here there has been greater exclusion of blacks from the better jobs, and assets are likely to be more portable (in the form of simple machinery, tools and vehicles) or destructible (for example furniture workshops). So even if some key sectors of the economy can be kept running through agreements with foreign capitalists who have decided to cut their losses, there may be more severe disruptions in other sectors. It is here that Zimbabwe will have to seek initial help from neighbouring African countries, or allow foreign capital (for example in the spinning, weaving and clothing sector) to take over temporarily the concerns abandoned by settler capital.

One other major problem that would have to be dealt with promptly is that of wage and salary differentials. Zimbabweans would have to accept that with the departure of whites on salary scales around $6,000 would go those salary scales as well. Income differentials are already too wide inside black employment: in 1976 average agricultural wages were $201 whilst in finance, insurance and real estate they average $1,351 (a ratio of 6.7:1) and some teachers earned $4,000. Plainly returning graduates as well as the small number of internal high earners will expect salaries comparable with those that whites are earning. They should understand that a doubling of agricultural (and mining) wages is a much higher priority.

Concluding remarks
The present Rhodesian economy has been designed by foreign capital and the white settlers. Up to UDI it served the interests of a small, almost exclusively white elite, and international capitalism, very efficiently, supplying not only strategic minerals but also an increasing flow of investment income. UDI produced only a minor modification to this picture. The Anglo-American proposals are only marginally concerned with the interests of the settlers (whether they stay or leave), but they are centrally concerned with preserving a structure which is both of strategic benefit in regional terms, and produces considerable profits in its own right. Such a structure is incapable of meeting the interests and needs of more than a small fraction of the black population of Zimbabwe. There is, however, the possibility of transforming the existing industry and infrastructure into the base for a self-reliant socialist economy which would meet the basic needs of all the people in the quite near future, and provide an inspiration throughout Africa.

Appendix
The round figure of $1,000m for the increase in Rhodesia's foreign liabilities since UDI is probably as near as we can hope to get without more reliable official information. It is not inconsistent with the magnitudes of known individual investments, although there is no question of checking the figure to any accuracy by aggregating such investments, for many are unknown, secret, or concealed (as the case with most re-investment). Even accepting the figure, however, it is not a simple matter to combine it with the £500 to £600m estimated as the stock before UDI, because of the divergence in exchange rates which has occurred. We could say that the total in Rhodesian dollars is between $2,000m and $2,200m, or at the pre-1967 exchange rate of 1$Rh = 0.50, £1,000 to £1,100m. However the present exchange rate is about 1$Rh = 0.77 which would give £1,300 to £1,400m. For two reasons, however, it seems safer to prefer the lower figures – firstly because the pound sterling has been losing value relative to the Rhodesian dollar gradually over the period, so that a conceptually appropriate calculation should of course involve use of
different exchange rates for every year in question. But secondly because the exchange rates for the Rhodesian dollar is not really very meaningful under present circumstances in any case, in which it is restricted to internal use, trade being carried out using Swiss francs or other foreign currencies.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Net capital inflow</th>
<th>Negative of Current Balance</th>
<th>Investment Income Payments Abroad</th>
<th>Estimates of Reinvestment</th>
<th>Net capital inflow plus Reinvestment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1966</strong></td>
<td>-4.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1967</strong></td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1968</strong></td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1969</strong></td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1970</strong></td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1971</strong></td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1972</strong></td>
<td>-2.3</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1973</strong></td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>130.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1974</strong></td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>153.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1975</strong></td>
<td>101.7</td>
<td>118.0</td>
<td>(55)</td>
<td>(95)</td>
<td>(196.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1976</strong></td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>-17.7</td>
<td>(65)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>(125.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 1966-74</strong></td>
<td>237.2</td>
<td>238.4</td>
<td>369.5</td>
<td>463.1</td>
<td>700.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 1966-76</strong></td>
<td>364.6</td>
<td>338.7</td>
<td>(489.5)</td>
<td>(658.1)</td>
<td>(1002.7)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Notes: Re-investment estimates are half of undistributed profits as taken from Table 26 of *National Accounts and Balance of Payments of Rhodesia 1974* (Values for 1975 and 1976 are guesses). Capital inflow and current balance figures are taken from Table 31 of *Monthly Digest of Statistics* (July 1977, supplement). Investment income payments abroad are from *National Accounts op.cit.*, Table 15. (Values for 1975 and 1976 are guesses based on net payments being $36.7m and $45.1m respectively, and receipts having been approaching $20m in the 1970s).

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
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<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>(7)</th>
<th>(8)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black employees</strong></td>
<td>659</td>
<td>177.2</td>
<td>293.5</td>
<td>470.7</td>
<td>2774</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(thousands)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>783</td>
<td>256.3</td>
<td>484.5</td>
<td>740.8</td>
<td>3387</td>
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### TABLE 3

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Bibliographic Notes

WESTERN SAHARA: A WAR ZONE
John Howe
Decolonisation – Recolonisation

The occupation of Western Sahara by Moroccan forces began in a small way before the signing of the tripartite agreement between Morocco, Mauritania and Spain on 14 November 1975. Covered by the smokescreen of King Hassan’s so-called Green March, which focused world attention, and the attention of the colonial Spanish army, on the Morocco-Sahara border at Tan-tan, the Moroccan armed forces at the beginning of November were infiltrating the eastern end of the territory around Mahbes in an attempt to seal off the border with Algeria. The fighting which took place went largely unreported in the world press.

The tripartite agreement, signed in Madrid, stated that the territory would be administered jointly by Morocco, Mauritania and Spain until the final Spanish withdrawal, scheduled for 28 February 1976. Moroccan administrators and military moved into Sahara immediately in large numbers, and the Moroccans were in effective control of the two largest towns, El Ayoun and Smara, within a month of the agreement. The Spanish also handed over the phosphate mining complex at Bu Craa directly to the Moroccans. But wishing to pull out quickly, and to avoid involvement in any fighting between the Sahraouis and the new occupants, the Spanish had already withdrawn the bulk of their forces from most of the other inland towns, leaving at best small skeleton units. This left the Polisario Front in possession of these towns, though they lacked the numbers and equipment needed to defend them against heavy mechanised assaults. But it also confronted the new occupants with armed resistance from the beginning. The Polisario Front was particularly well entrenched in La Guera, a fishing port a few miles from Nouadhibou, and Guelta-Zemmour, where the broken and mountainous terrain provides natural fortifications.

Despite their failure to cut the Polisario off from its rear bases in Algeria, the Moroccans moved fast in November and December 1975, dislodging the Sahraoui forces from the eastern settlements: Mahbes, Jdiria, Haouza, Amgala, Tifariti, Bir Lahlou. As the Moroccans moved in, much of the population moved out. Some of the refugees crossed the border into Algeria, but many at this early stage settled in Polisario camps in the desert. A large concentration formed at
the Polisario's stronghold and provisional capital, Guelta-Zemmour, which was sheltering some 25,000 Sahraoui refugees by March 1976. Initially, the Mauritanians took no action and the Polisario, which held most of the posts in the southern part of the territory, left them alone. In mid-December, however, the Polisario attacked military posts in north-east Mauritania, probably to secure alternative supply routes to Guelta-Zemmour as the Moroccans were threatening the routes through Western Sahara itself. Mauritania responded by attacking La Guera, which it took after a week-long battle in which both sides were badly mauled.

The Spanish abandoned Villa Cisneros, 'capital' of the southern or 'Mauritanian' part of the territory, a week earlier than the announced date of 18 January 1976. Both the Mauritanians and the Polisario failed to occupy the town, and the Moroccans moved in (they are still there). This proved a serious loss both to the Polisario and to the Mauritanians. A Mauritanian governor was appointed and the Mauritanian army set about driving the Polisario out of its strongholds in the region, which took three weeks of bitter fighting. The Polisario captured Ain-Bentili in northern Mauritania, and there was a sharp battle at Amgala in which the Moroccans captured about 100 Algerian troops supporting the Polisario. A second battle at Amgala freed a large number of civilians in a nearby refugee camp, who were then taken to Tindouf in Algeria. A fortnight later, somewhere near Bir-Lahlou, the Polisario announced the formation of the Sahraoui Arab Democratic Republic (27 February). Moroccan operations at this time seem to have been concentrated on terrorising the civilian population by bombing their refugee camps in Western Sahara, rather than on harassing the continuing refugee operation as the Polisario and the new Sahraoui administration moved the civilians to the relative safety of Tindouf. The movement of population out of the territory served the Moroccan thesis that there are no Sahraouis.

The final stage of the occupation came with the fall of Guelta-Zemmour, which occurred in mid-April following the signing on the 14th of the 'Rabat agreement' dividing the territory very unequally between Morocco and Mauritania. The battle of Guelta-Zemmour lasted five days and involved massive artillery and air bombardment of Polisario positions. Napalm and phosphorus were freely used. Moroccan reports alleged that Algerians were supporting the Polisario in this battle, but none were killed or captured. The Sahraouis lost their Minister of Health, M. Ahmed Zine.

The Maquis
Once expelled from the towns, the Polisario resorted to the classic guerilla tactics to which they, and the terrain, are perfectly adapted. In June 1976 they said that the whole of Western Sahara and Mauritania and the southern part of Morocco-Sahara border close to the Atlantic. Officially, Morocco denies that of the Polisario's lightning attacks have been concentrated on Moroccan and Mauritanian posts inside Western Sahara, on the Mauritanian iron mine at Zouerate and the railway between Zouerate and the Atlantic port of Nouadhibou. Polisario ranges freely over the empty spaces of Mauritania and has twice attacked the capital, Nouakchott, it has captured fishermen off the coast of Western Sahara on at least three occasions, the last time in mid-April 1978; and a few attacks deep into southern Morocco have backed up its June 1976 declaration — in July 1976, for example, it took 23 Moroccan prisoners near Tan-tan, on the Morocco-Sahara border close to the Atlantic. Officially, Morocco denies that
there is any serious insecurity in the south. But visitors to Morocco are not allowed to bring cross-country vehicles into the country, which suggests that the authorities are keen to keep visitors on the surfaced roads where the army can keep an eye on them and turn them back if necessary.

The Polisario's strategy varies in emphasis from month to month, but certain themes run through it continuously. Its main objectives are to harass the occupying forces enough to keep them in their barracks and strongholds, to hamper the economic exploitation of Western Sahara, and to put military and economic pressure on the Mauritanian government to provoke either its downfall or a change in its Sahara policy. Tactically, the Polisario operates in units of six to eight men equipped with small-arms and a Land Rover. Many of its vehicles are mounted with heavier weapons: .50 calibre machine guns, mortars and 105mm recoiless guns. Officially, Polisario says that 80 per cent of its weapons and equipment has been captured from the enemy, and its battle communiqués usually give lists of captured equipment. Both Algeria and Libya have supplied weapons — notably the SAM missiles with which the Polisario has kept the Moroccan air force at bay — and vehicle maintenance and fuel supplies are most probably arranged via Tindouf. Modern automatic rifles, including Kalashnikovs, have replaced the traditional desert armament of old Lee-Enfields.

During 1976 and early 1977, the Sahraouis launched a number of long-range attacks with columns of up to 100 vehicles, afterwards returning to Tindouf or the liberated areas of the eastern end of the territory. These long-range attacks made the Polisario vulnerable to its more numerous and heavily equipped enemies, and on one or two occasions — notably the raid on Nouakchott in June 1976, when it lost 450 men killed or captured, including the Polisario's first Secretary-General, Sayed El Ouali — it suffered very severe losses. The arrival on the scene of French Breguet and Jaguar jets from bases in Senegal, which took place at the end of 1977, seems to have forced the Front to resort increasingly to its other main tactic: converging on the objective from small, movable bases in the desert in Mauritania and Western Sahara, scattering after the attack and seldom travelling en masse, at least in the daytime. The Moroccans have made repeated attempts to clear the northern part of the territory, which they claim is now part of Morocco. Polisario documents refer to a scorched earth policy, murder and intimidation of Sahraoui civilians, poisoning of water holes and livestock in an attempt to deny the Polisario food, water and civilian backing, and to civilian refugees grouped, Vietnam style, around El Ayoun and Smara.

These moves have all failed, except in so far as they have caused suffering to the Sahraoui population. The Sahraouis know the territory, including large numbers of wells and oases unknown to anyone else. They are mobile and their information is good. Moroccan convoys between posts are harassed as a matter of course; Moroccan attempts at winkling the Polisario out — for example, the major operation announced at the beginning of 1977 -- usually have to be abandoned after a few Moroccan units have been ambushed. Where they are not abandoned, they come up with little or nothing. Even when the Moroccans know more or less where the Polisario are, they cannot attack on the ground for fear of ambush, and their aircraft cannot fly low enough for accurate bombing or strafing for fear of the Polisario’s SAM-7 missiles. The result is that the Sahraouis have the run of the territory, as they had under earlier Moroccan and Spanish occupation, while the Moroccans only venture out of their forts in heavily armed convoys. Even in the settlements, the Polisario moves freely outside the barrack walls; one of its representatives in Europe visited Haouza
and Mahbes in January 1978.

On the economic front, the Polisario has concentrated on the phosphate mines at Bu Craa and the 100km long Krupp-built conveyor belt for carrying the ore to the coast near El Ayoun and, in Mauritania, on the Zouerate iron mine and the very vulnerable 600km railway for carrying the ore to Nouadhibou. The phosphate conveyor belt has been out of action virtually all the time since the occupation, and is being supplemented by lorries with Spanish drivers. These drivers, the Spanish technicians at Bu Craa and the 800 French engineers and technicians at Zouerate have been the object of much Polisario action and propaganda, which came to a head in May 1977. On 1 May a large Polisario force — one of the last heavy, long-range attacks from Tindouf — raided Zouerate, put the Mauritanian garrison to flight and captured six French technicians (two French nationals, a doctor and his wife, were killed apparently by accident).

At the end of the month, a major attack on the Bu Craa mines killed one Spanish technician and wounded another, as well as doing extensive damage to the installations. The RASD Prime Minister, Mohammed Lamine, said on 21 May that foreign nationals or firms coming to ‘reinforce the potential of the aggressor countries’ would be ‘regarded as mercenaries and treated accordingly’.

Following these raids, 129 Spanish technicians and 450 French dependants were evacuated from Bu Craa and Zouerate respectively. French public opinion was much exercised over the fate of the French captives, even more so when a raid on the Zouerate-Nouadhibou railway netted two more technicians in October. This eventually led to the French military intervention in November (see below). But a more immediate effect was the virtual merging of the Moroccan and Mauritanian high commands under Moroccan control, which occurred in mid-May, and the stiffening of the Mauritanian forces by large numbers of Moroccan troops — 8,000 by February 1978, according to Le Monde. Despite, or perhaps partly because of, its expansion from 2,000 to 15,000 in two years, the Mauritanian army — much of it related by blood to the soldiers of the Polisario Front — is suffering serious problems of morale. But it is unlikely that the presence of Moroccan troops on Mauritanian territory will help with these problems, since it tends to confirm Mauritanian fears that Morocco has territorial designs on the entire region. Relations are not good between the two armies, and there were several reports of fighting between them — notably at Dakhla and Bir-Moghrein — in 1976. Following the incident at Bir-Moghrein, the Mauritanian authorities arrested 20 of their own troops.

French Intervention

The government of Giscard d'Estaing, recently returned to power for a third term by the French electorate, continuously proclaims its ‘neutrality’ in the Western Sahara conflict. In practice, it has encouraged the Moroccan-Mauritanian seizure of the territory from the state, lending its weight to the so-called ‘Moroccan lobby’ of big businessmen in Spain in November 1975, supplying arms and diplomatic support to the Moroccans and Mauritanians and, according to some reports, guaranteeing Mauritanian borders against any possible Moroccan invasion to persuade a hesitant Mauritanian to take part in the adventure. The Algerians were pointing out early in 1976 that the Giscardians seem to have abandoned the Gaullist policy, carefully constructed over more than a decade beginning with the granting of Algerian independence, of encouraging a ‘non-aligned’ tendency in Europe in alliance with progressive and democratic forces in the third world, reverting instead to an increasingly open, NATO oriented ‘neo-
imperialism'. This view may be over-schematic, but is largely borne out by recent French actions in Africa. France gives substantial support to some of the continent's most reactionary régimes including those of South Africa, Zaire, Gabon, the CAE, Morocco and the Ivory Coast. The Paris-Rabat-Nouakchott-Kinshasa-Pretoria axis hypothesised by Algerian officials has made two appearances: in the 'mercenary' raid on Cotonou and in the Franco-Moroccan intervention to counter the Shaba rebellion in Zaire in 1977. Libreville played a part in both incidents; Saudi Arabia has been secretly involved in the Sahara conflict and played some part in the Shaba intervention. South Africa, France, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Zaire are among the states known to have supported the FNLA and UNITA, still engaged in a long-term attempt to destabilise Angola by armed violence.

France has never officially endorsed the Moroccan-Mauritanian contention that they are under attack from Algeria and that the Polisario Front is an instrument of Algerian policy, largely manned by Algerians. But it does give tacit support to this line by speaking to the Algerians, rather than the Sahraouis, when it wants to communicate with those opposing the annexation of Western Sahara. At the time of the annexation in 1975, Giscard d'Estaing made it clear that he was not committed to obtaining self-determination for the Sahraoui population, adding that he was opposed to 'the multiplication of micro-states' in Africa. Following the capture of the two railway technicians last October, however, French public opinion became so vocal that the government entered into direct dialogue with the Polisario Front for the first time, in two series of negotiations in Algiers. The talks achieved little for the Polisario apart from this de facto recognition of its existence. It wanted two things in exchange for releasing the eight French prisoners: a list of Sahraoui prisoners in Mauritania, and the withdrawal of French military and technical aid from Mauritania. Neither was granted. Instead, the French stepped up their military aid early in November, sending a total of 75 military experts into Mauritania, reinforcing their permanent garrison at Cap-Vert (Senegal) and making preparations to use the Breguet-Atlantique and Jaguar squadrons also stationed at Cap-Vert.

Many of the experts sent into Mauritania at this time were telecommunications technicians, who set about improving the Mauritanian army's radio network to enable it to respond faster to raids. Before they arrived, there were already some military instructors training Mauritanian officers, and 30 more had arrived at the beginning of October. In addition, there are probably officers and troops in the country on active combat service. There are at least 150 French military in Mauritania, probably several times that number.

During November, Breguets made a reconnaissance of the whole of Mauritania, photographing its unmapped wastes from high altitudes. In December, French Jaguars were used several times against the Polisario Front over Mauritanian territory, using napalm, phosphorus and explosive rockets. Jaguars have sophisticated missile-defence systems, unlike the Moroccan T-6 jets of which the Polisario claims to have destroyed at least 14. Even so, some appear to have been hit by missiles, although the French deny that any Jaguars have been destroyed. The Mauritanians admitted at one stage that a French jet had crashed as a result of 'pilot error'. Exact figures are difficult to establish, but it is clear that the French air force has not operated in Mauritania completely unscathed, and that it has also indicated casualties on the Polisario's forces. On one occasion a column of Mauritanian prisoners, taken by the Polisario in an attack on the
Zouerat-Nouadhibou railway, was napalmed by French jets killing more than 50 of the prisoners in addition to a large number of guerillas.

At least two of these air strikes were carried out after the Polisario had indicated its willingness to release the French captives, which suggests that the captives were used by the French government as a pretext for increasing their commitment. The French press at the end of November mounted a hysterical campaign against the Polisario, urging the authorities to take some forceful action and drawing on the powerful but confused emotions generated by the German commando raid on the hijacked airliner at Mogadishu, in which all but one of the hijackers were killed. When released, the captives themselves embarrassed both sides by admitting that some of them had carried out repairs to Mauritanian military vehicles in workshops belonging to SNIM, (the Mauritanian state-owned, French-run iron mining corporation) and saying that they thought they had been held in an army barracks in southern Algeria.

Mauritania damaged
The cost of expanding the army and fighting the war, the disruption to the mining and transportation of the iron ore which supplies over 80% of its foreign exchange earnings, and the disruption of economic activity as a result of the war have placed an intolerable burden on the Mauritanian economy, never especially strong and always dependent on French aid. The war has never been popular in Mauritania. One reason for this is suspicion of Morocco’s long-term intentions, thought to include a territorial claim to the whole of Mauritania (although Morocco has dropped the claim officially in return for Mauritanian participation in the Western Sahara adventure). A more pressing reason, and one which helps to explain the poor performance of the Mauritanian army against the Polisario, is the ethnic overlap between the two populations. Much of northern Mauritania including the iron-mining town of Zouerate, Atar and Bir-Moghrein, is inhabited by people of the Reguibat federation of tribes, which also comprise a large part of the Sahraoui population. Several prominent Sahraouis, including the first Secretary-General, Sayed et Ouali, and Ahmed Baba Miske, at one time a Mauritanian Minister, are former Mauritanian nationals. Desertions from the Mauritanian army to Polisario are reported frequently. One of the French captives released on December 24th last year, reproached by SNIM for breach of contract when he refused to return to Zouerate, explained that the Polisario had told him he would be killed if they ever saw him there again. When SNIM told him he would be protected, that the security arrangements had been improved, he still refused to return claiming that half the population of Zouerate belonged to the Polisario Front.

Whether or not it was French persuasion which induced him to take part in the Sahara adventure, instead of allying himself with the Sahraouis — a move they initially encouraged — and maintaining his good relationship with Algeria, President Mokhtar Ould Daddah must have been aware that he had made a bad mistake. He was dependent on the French for his territorial security as well as the functioning of the iron mines; worse still, Moroccan troops were present in his country in large numbers. Even with this foreign presence, the Polisario moves freely both in the ‘Mauritanian’ part of Western Sahara and in Mauritania itself. The Algerian support which improved Ould Daddah’s standing in Africa and the Arab world during the 1960s and early 1970s which enabled him to nationalise the country’s minerals and leave the franc zone, is unlikely to be resumed. As a final humiliation, his conservative southern neighbour, Senegal —
the least warlike of states — threatened to occupy southern Mauritania if his régime collapsed and the Sahraouis took over.

**The Big Battalions**

Both Morocco and Mauritania insist that there would be no Sahara war without Algeria. Algerian support in arms, money, rear bases and diplomacy has certainly been valuable to the Sahraouis, but it is not true to say that the war is an Algerian enterprise. On the contrary, it is the Moroccans and Mauritanians who have made war on the inhabitants of Western Sahara by trying to seize their country by force of arms. Algeria, a developing country with its own problems, has given support to the Sahraouis at their request: they are poorer, less well-equipped and far fewer than their aggressors. There is nothing whatsoever in what passes for international legality to forbid this support, while the actions of Morocco and Mauritania are openly illegal. Both the UN and the International Court of Justice at the Hague supported the Sahraoui right to determine their own future. Since the first battle of Amgala there has been no hard evidence of the presence of Algerian troops in the ranks of Polisario, despite regular Moroccan and Mauritanian allegations. They have also alleged the presence of Russians, East Germans, Cubans, Vietnamese and Koreans in the Polisario, again without evidence.

Some commentators have suggested recently that some Algerian leaders do not support the war and that the régime would like to disengage from its commitment to the Polisario and the RASD. This may well be true, as it is true that there are differences between Algerian and Sahraoui analyses of the strategic background. But the Sahraoui cause is extremely popular with the Algerian masses; Moroccan threats to involve Algeria in hot pursuit of the Sahraouis have annoyed the Algerian armed forces, who still remember the short ‘war of the sands’ of 1963; and an Algerian *volte-face* would damage Algeria’s reputation for progressiveness and seriousness. Certainly the US-Saudi scheme of September 1977, which included a massive financial sweetener to develop Algeria’s Gara Djebilet iron deposit and Moroccan ratification of the Treaty of Ifrane (ending Moroccan claims on the Tindouf region) has no chance of success without some concession to satisfy the Sahraouis. They are holding out for control of their own territory, with foreigners present by invitation only. It is difficult to see how the present Algerian government, which enjoys solid popular support, can abandon the Polisario.

Libya has given some support to the Sahraouis in weapons and money, but has never recognised the RASD. It is said that Libyan support for Mauritania has recently diminished or stopped its support for the Polisario Front. Another factor may be Libyan jealousy of Algeria, whose conception of Arab nationalism is very different from that of Col. Gaddafy.

The Soviet Union has spoken officially in support of Sahraoui self-determination and recently refused to sign a fishing treaty which failed to respect Sahraoui sovereignty. It has good relations with Algeria. But it has also signed a major phosphate contract with Morocco. The US, which probably encouraged the annexation for strategic reasons — Morocco, which commands with Spain the entry to the Mediterranean, is a close ally — has not had to get its hands dirty so far; France has done so instead. The massive natural gas contracts with Algeria, now beginning to come into operation, may be one reason for US caution. Moroccan demands for $100m worth of jet fighters and helicopter
gunships are at present being 'considered' by Washington. It appears the considering process may last until the Sahara war is over.

France has apparently been scaling down its air attacks on the Polisario Front (according to a Sahraoui spokesman in late April). There have been no reports of raids by Jaguars in 1978, although Breguets have been used. This could be a result of a scaling down of Polisario military activity this year, although it has certainly not stopped. Iron ore trains were derailed at least four times in March; in mid-April, there were reports of major fighting near Oum Dreiga, in the northern (Moroccan-occupied) region of Western Sahara.

Also in March, at a Spanish parliamentary hearing on the circumstances surrounding the Spanish withdrawal in 1975, two very senior officers in Franco's army, one of them the commander of all the troops in Sahara in November 1975, the other the former Secretary-General of the colonial administration in the territory, flatly contradicted the official Spanish government line on Sahara, which holds that the Polisario Front was just one of many Sahraoui movements. After saying that the Polisario was the only convincing representative of the Sahraouis at that time, General Gomez de Salazar added that the population was virtually unanimously in favour of self-determination, and that the pro-Moroccan faction — held by the government to be significantly large — actually consisted of 'a handful of shopkeepers'. The other witness, Colonel Rodriguez de Viguri, said that there had been a sudden reversal of Spanish policy in the autumn of 1975 as Franco became moribund and the 'Moroccan lobby' — certain service chiefs, big businessmen with Moroccan interests and 'a member of the Franco family', became dominant in government. He had been replaced as Secretary-General in Sahara because he wanted to continue 'preparing the population for self-government'. These statements confirm a picture that emerged dimly at the time, of a Spanish colonial army bewildered by the turn of events and wounded in its military 'honour' by losing the change to fight its own enemy, Morocco. Prince (now King) Juan Carlos was despatched to the territory to bolster the troops' morale with a windy speech on Spanish bravery and steadfastness. This induced the troops to obey orders, though not without audible complaints. It is now clear, however, that not only the army but the entire Spanish Left and the enlightened wing of the Spanish business community was opposed to the tripartite agreement, or would have been if the agreement had not been signed in secret. One painful result of the move is Spain's difficult relationship with Algeria, a potentially valuable trading partner; another is the militancy of the Canary Islands separatist movement whose leader, Antonio Cubillo, narrowly escaped with his life on 5 April when two Spanish secret service agents stabbed him in the street in Algiers. They are now awaiting trial.

**International recognition**

The Sahraoui Arab Democratic Republic has been recognised by nine countries: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burundi, Guinea, Madagascar, Mozambique, Togo and Vietnam. All these countries recognised the RASD within six weeks of its proclamation on 27 February 1976; none have done so since then. Meeting in Maputo in January, the OAU Liberation Committee had recommended that the Polisario Front be recognised as a genuine liberation movement, but Moroccan and Mauritanian threats to leave the organisation resulted in a compromise
decision: recognition was left to individual countries. 17 countries recognised the Front, the rest of the OAU voted against or abstained. The 27th Ministerial Council of the OAU, meeting in Mauritius in June, passed a strong resolution favouring self-determination for the Sahraoui people and demanding the withdrawal of occupation troops. But Moroccan and Mauritanian threats prevented its adoption by the July summit conference. A compromise was again reached: the issue was postponed to an ‘extraordinary summit’ later in the year. Although several new dates have been suggested, the special summit has been repeatedly postponed and has not yet taken place. The meeting due to take place in Libreville at the end of March 1978 was rescheduled for the Sudan in August. So although there is a substantial lobby sympathetic to the RASD within the OAU, Morocco, Mauritania and their allies have prevented the issue from being discussed. Both the Non-Aligned Conference and the UN have chosen to defer to the OAU, limiting themselves to expressing the hope that a ‘just and lasting solution’ be found; the Arab League, meanwhile, has refused to admit the RASD.

A POLISARIO COMMUNIQUE ON REPRESSION OF MAURITANIAN WORKERS

The General Union of Sahraoui Workers wishes to inform international opinion of the ferocious repression recently carried out against our brother workers in Mauritania by the Moroccan army and its Mauritanian helpers. Following the launch of a general strike at the Mauritanian iron mine and in the towns of Zouerat and Nouadhibou the authorities, already engaged in the repression and genocide of the Sahraoui people, appear to have answered the workers’ demands with a barbarous and inhuman repression.

The workers and the entire people of Mauritania are reacting forcibly against the war situation being imposed on them by the Rabat expansionists and their lackeys in Nouakchott. They are demanding an end to the war against the Sahraoui people which is in fact a war against the Mauritanian people, they are demanding peace and security and can not support the widespread suffering created by the war.

Sahraoui workers are worried by the dangerous turn of events in Mauritania, by the abandonment of any concern for their sovereignty and their people by the leaders of that country, and by the black terror sown by the soldiers of Rabat among innocent Mauritans and their Sahraoui brothers.

Our solidarity with the struggle of these workers is total, and we are sure that the Mauritanian people will prove capable of defending its achievements and driving the aggressors of the Sahraoui people out of its fatherland.

Hauza, 7 April 1978
SECRETARIAT-GENERAL of UGTSARIO
(L'Union Générale des Travailleurs Sahraouis)
Debate

AFTER SOWETO: A RESPONSE

Ruth First

Archie Mafeje's *Soweto and its Aftermath* deals not only with the student struggles in South Africa of the last few years but also with some of the questions which are critical for an evaluation of the tasks of revolutionaries in that country. Whether directly or by implication these questions include: (1) the analysis of the character of the student movement and struggle, and the relationship of the student movement to the national and working class organisations, and, by extension, the role of classes, and the class leadership of the revolution; (2) the relationship of internal to external forms of organisation; (3) the relationship of the armed struggle to political struggles; (4) the national revolution and the socialist revolution, that is, notions of two-stage revolution.

An important set of questions. However, although these issues are posed, they are barely confronted and such treatment as they get, where it is not merely superficial, is highly contradictory. The argument also distorts the evidence in some cases, or, alternatively, does not substantiate its assertions. The distortions and omissions are serious precisely because Mafeje is, quite rightly, not content to reflect on the issues of Soweto as part of the struggle's recent history, but he advances propositions for future revolutionary action which he would like all sectors of the movement in South Africa to take seriously.

In this response to this article I do not propose to encompass the issues he raises; these could be the subject of debate in future issues. What I do propose to do is to argue that in the Mafeje article the problems are badly formulated, to the point that they cannot confront the questions they purport to deal with. The article may be examined on two related levels: first, such analysis of social forces as it contains; and secondly, the assessment of the capacity of organised movements to analyse and lead these social forces.

First, what elements of social analysis are present? Correct revolutionary practice, Mafeje argues, is impossible without a guiding theory, a coherent programme and a clear strategy. The South African struggle is a class struggle not merely an anti-racist struggle, and it must have a perspective of social transformation. Fine. Mafeje then proceeds to draw certain conclusions about (1) the importance of the working class as the leading class of the revolution and (2) the limits of
student struggle. Understandably, the importance of the working class is drawn out of the limits of student struggles as demonstrated by the Soweto events: Mafeje argues that the students did not consult the workers in advance; that their tactics were initially to stop the workers physically from going to work rather than to enrol them as conscious partners in the struggle; that not until the beginning of August (some two months after the start of the student upsurge) did the students begin to approach the workers as such. Only very late in the day, then, did the students 'start a dialogue with their worker-brothers in the streets'. This Mafeje, rightly says, opened a new phase in the student struggle. He argues that, based on the account of student spokesmen in Botswana after two months of struggle the students knew 'where real power lies... but for the problem of organisational methods and tactics'. (An important reserve, but let it rest for the moment.)

I am at one with those, including Mafeje, who argue that this was the most important outcome of the Soweto struggles: the experience in practice, of a generation of young student militants, of the need to forge links between students and workers — and, it should be added, with other forces in struggle. Mafeje contrasts the limits of the student movement to the importance which socialists give to working class ideology, organisation and action. Students, he says, lack class consciousness. Black consciousness is a diffuse nationalist ideology. Accordingly its adherents are 'handicapped ideologically and organisationally'.

Given this evaluation of the relative revolutionary capacity of workers and students, where does Mafeje take his conclusions? Many of the student militants of the Soweto struggle — though a minority, of course — left the country, some to take up scholarships but others to join political movements, especially the ANC and Mafeje's position is to argue against the current 'co-optation of the rebellious youth' by what he calls variously the older, expatriate or traditional organisations. He criticises both the students who have entered political movements, and also the attempts of these movements to enrol student militants within their ranks and, since he concedes elsewhere in his article, that they have an important worker presence, to join them with worker and other organised militants. Suddenly Mafeje's insistence upon working class leadership is abandoned; the leading role of the class, and the principal thesis of his argument, vanishes without a trace. Are we then left with these 'ideologically vacuous students', moved by a diffuse nationalism? The militant youth inside South Africa, he says 'should take seriously the question of ideology, theory and organisation'. But how? In the meantime if 'the co-optation of peoples' organisations (apparently more than student movements, though the others are not specified) should be condemned' what should these activists do? They should, it seems, wait on the outcome of some rather unspecified and indefinite shifts within and between organisations.

Mafeje pins his thesis to the possible emergence of a 'new left' within existing organisations, though he concedes that much depends on if it emerges, for then there would be 'reason to believe' that there would be changes. Is there a new organisation in the offing? A new alliance? A new grouping within existing movements? On what programme? Mafeje considers in his final paragraph that this is something for 'the critical cadres within the movement rather than for inter-party exchanges'. The reference is so elliptical and vague that it is impossible to evaluate. This means that we are left with little or nothing to go on; and so, unfortunately, are the students. It is one thing to tutor them for their political
limitations, but another thing to virtually freeze their potential for the struggle; is this not a dereliction of revolutionary guidance if ever there were one?

Of course, this strategy of *attentisme* is calculated. It hangs on the necessity, in Mafeje's case, for a break from the established political organisations. For if the first leg of his argument stands on his judgement of workers and students for revolutionary action, the second stands on his evaluation of how the various organisations score by his criteria of judgement.

The trouble is that Mafeje offers only class labels but does not analyse class relations or class struggle. The situation that the working class, apart from the migrants, is not analysed at all despite the assertion that the working class is the leading class of the revolution. This assertion is based on some ever-present revolutionary readiness which merely needs to be set in motion by the 'proper' approach. Hence, as Mafeje argues, in the first phase of Soweto the students, acting as detonators (not his word, but his notion) failed to activate the working class because they had an incorrect approach; but later they opened a dialogue and the workers responded. For all the insistence on worker leadership of the struggle and on proletarian consciousness, students (or some new left, or militant youth) given the 'correct' policy will activate this class. It is a thoroughly idealist conception.

It is also thoroughly mechanical. Classes are reduced to carriers of pre-conceived roles. Mafeje has nothing at all to say about the experience of the working class in South Africa *in class struggle*. And here it is necessary to analyse the condition of the working class as a result of the structural divisions imposed on the class by ruling class and the state; to analyse the effects of the present day crisis in SA capital accumulation on the African working class, including the massive increase in unemployment, declining real wages, the increased use of force against the black working class at the same time as the installation of collaborationist machinery in the factories, in an attempt to cultivate reformist options within the class.

Migrant workers get longer treatment because they were enrolled as strike-breakers in Soweto, but the reasons adduced for their role are similarly derived from a thoroughly non-materialist analysis. What is said about the migrants? (1) They are Zulu; (2) their families have been left in the reserves therefore strike action does not come easily to them; (3) unlike the precipitate urban youth, the migrants' traditions dictate long deliberation before decisions can be taken (shades of romantic anthropology!); (4) they are despised in the cities for their lack of sophistication; (5) they still have a vested interest in the land. These are mostly subjectivist explanations for the structural divisions induced within the African working class by state and capital. They are, of course, part of the argument that migrants should be classed as peasants, not proletarians, and part of Mafeje's advocacy of the Non-European Unity Movement. I must confess I am unsure about who has theorised the migrants simply as workers as Mafeje claims. If the test is the actual organisation of migrants at their peasant base, the evidence points several ways: if the work of the Unity Movement in the Transkei and Northern Natal points to their theoretical grasp, does the African National Congress not likewise qualify by virtue of its part in the struggles of Pondoland, Sekhukhuneland and, even earlier, the Communist Party in the Zoutpansberg? And what does the 1946 African mine strike, perhaps the greatest proletarian action ever in South Africa, tell about the class action of migrants?

But this is to fall into Mafeje's method of dealing with the question of migrants,
and what is missing altogether is any attempt to come to terms with an extremely complex issue of a peasantry which has been semi-proletarianised over an extremely long historical period, so that it spends part of its lifecycle in industrial production, and the other in peasant production, though I wonder at the notion of a vested interest in land for this group as a whole. There is no question that the driving historical process is one of proletarianisation, which has produced a workforce confined to the rural areas, and with differing access to means of rural production. The point is that the migrant’s consciousness has been shaped by his peasant but also by his proletarian experience, and he has an ideological outlook which necessarily borrows from both. It is not a matter of deciding how peasant or proletarian the migrant is, but of grasping the essence of the condition of the group as it appears, necessarily differently, even for a single migrant, when at the point of industrial production; in segregated bachelor barracks in the urban townships; at home between work spells in the stricken countryside where ‘traditional’ forms of consultation have been incorporated into the Bantustan authority structure; or as a reserve army of labour semi-permanently excluded from both industrial work and access to land. No glib classification, whether as peasant or proletarian, will do.

Here Mafeje is absolutely right: abstract theory apart, it is at the level of strategy that any alliance between workers and peasants must be forged. But deterministic theory necessarily forecloses appropriate strategy. And if the article’s first problem is the mechanistic, reductionist use of class categories, a second problem, and one intimately connected with the first, moving from an analysis of social forces to political strategy and practice, is the absence of any conception of forms of political struggle for immediate and for longer-term demands, and the relation between these.

Soweto, after all, although it reached unprecedented heights, is in the long tradition of mass struggles in South Africa which began by asserting often fairly minimalist, immediate demands — and precipitately found themselves in full-scale confrontation with the power of the state. It happened in the 1946 mine strike (for ten shillings a day and union recognition); with the Defiance Campaign of the 1950s (for the repeal of some of the more blatant discriminatory laws); it goes further back still to struggles in the immediate aftermath of World War One; there is no space to enumerate. As Mafeje says, in the course of such struggles, bitter lessons are learnt at the expense of their defeat by state power. (Even so, as in the case of Soweto, it is possible to win victories, and the students triumphs must not be minimised: their struggles have continued into 1977 and 1978; they have caused the virtual collapse of secondary Bantu education, with almost 200,000 students still boycotting classes in October 1977, 375 schools shut down in the Venda Homeland alone, and 475 teachers resigning in response to student demands; and Soweto at the time of writing remains virtually ungovernable).

But while Mafeje salutes Soweto as an historical event of great significance, his overall handling of the student struggles is nonetheless condescending. This is not, I believe, because what he argues about the limitations of student struggles is incorrect, but rather because this is part of the larger problem of how to assess mass struggles this side of the revolution, and thus the leadership of the masses in the course of actual political practice. Mafeje criticises campaigns of the masses which are ‘ideologically and organisationally handicapped’, and in this instance he sees the student movement as generally so, in the nature of students, and without ‘real revolutionary commitment’, lacking a ‘guiding
ideology, a coherent programme of demands and a clear policy'. The question is: in his view, has any significant mass struggle ever come up to scratch?

For the approach is redolent of the purist, theoreticist reservations which made the 10 Point Programme of the Unity Movement abstractly immaculate, perhaps, but irrelevant to mass struggles, from the Defiance Campaign and before, and onwards to Soweto. And if one is to isolate the theoretical differences between South Africa's various political organisations, it is crucial to identify the revolutionary puritanism which is fluent on important notions of revolution, but which fails to make connections in political practice between immediate demands which mobilise, or more spontaneously ignite mass struggles, and the longer-term programmatic conception of the revolutionary alternative society. The assertion of only maximalist perspectives at the cost of tactics for immediate struggle produces an outlook that is adventurist and quietist at the same time. This revolutionary abstinence from struggles which are not revolutionary enough is no transitory or occasional phenomenon. It was argued at the time that the Defiance Campaign was ill-conceived for the state was bound to smash it. It was also argued that its programme was for democratic demands which could easily fit into the framework of any capitalist state. The point is, firstly, that they do not fit into the SA framework, and it is from this that the masses grasp revolutionary theory, not merely by reading State and Revolution, but from their experience of political action, that demands which would be consistent with capitalism elsewhere cannot be met without far-reaching revolutionary societal change. This is part of the essence of the SA case, that it is a capitalist social formation but one without the features of a bourgeois-democratic state precisely because forms of labour coercion, buttressed by race and national oppression, are essential to the processes of accumulation, and the politics of race rule. And secondly, the point about the practice of mass struggles, is that revolutionary programmes have to be won not only in the head, but in the streets, townships, factories and countryside, and by engaging in struggle, not abstaining from it because it does not start with a perfected long-term programme.

Which brings us back to the tradition of revolutionary puritanism with its abstract theoreticist reservations and its record of abstinence rather than engagement. And here it must be said that while Mafeje is absolutely right that the Unity Movement does not and cannot claim responsibility for the boycott actions of Coloured students in Cape Town, more than this needs to be said: that in these schools, notably Trafalgar, which have been the stronghold of SOYA (Sons of Young Africa), the Anti-CAD and Teachers' League of SA (all Unity Movement affiliates), its teacher ideologues argued the limits of Black Consciousness and the student use of the boycott tactic to the point of disassociating from the student struggles. Yet for all the shortcomings of Black Consciousness as an ideology it should be said that it defines Coloureds as part of the oppressed blacks and offered unprecedented scope for African-Coloured-Indian unity in struggle.

To sum up at this point: it seems to me that an approach which uses class categories in mechanistic fashion, and forms of struggle without regard to their structural context, which judges struggles to be reformist because they do not carry complete long-term programmes on their banners, this regardless of any analysis of the content of their actual demands or of the class leadership of such struggles, must invalid itself out of political practice. And while I think that Mafeje is justifiably critical of the notion of any two-stage revolution (a notion long overdue for rejection, in my view), he is really incapable of countering
it. This is because his own misgivings about ongoing mass struggles and their demands 'informed by simple slogans' in fact convey a similar conceptual break. I see Mafeje's approach to so-called reformist and revolutionary struggles as being situated in a very similar category as the two-stage revolution approach. All struggles this side of the revolution are not necessarily reformist, they have to be analysed for their programmatic content, and their class base and leadership, and their significance for mass mobilisation. In the same way, on the two-stage revolution approach, I agree with those who argue against the conception of a revolution having to pass through a national-democratic before a socialist stage. This is because I do not see any such thing as 'pure' national or 'pure' class oppression/exploitation. The national and the class struggle are not part of some natural order of succession, but take place coterminously. This is because workers are exploited as workers and also as members of a nationally oppressed group, and not even their national demands can be met without the destruction of the capitalist order. It is because national demands cannot be met under capitalism that the proletariat is the essential leader of the SA revolution, and the struggle for national liberation, given this political leadership — which has, I agree, to be asserted — will at the same time be part of the struggle for socialism.

Reading and re-reading Mafeje I have been puzzling over the problem of why an article that poses relevant and important things about the SA struggle is at the same time so elusive, confused and inconclusive, especially on the principle issues it appears to want to tackle. Is it not because what purports to be an analytic, programmatic assessment in fact declines into partisan organisational competition? Mafeje opens with a sarcastic sally at those who stake proprietary claims to the Soweto struggles. Like Mafeje I feel strongly about the importance of organisational commitment but I also have a strong distaste for the levels of sectarian rivalry which appropriate mass action merely to confirm a movement's assertion of its own primacy. But it seems to me that Mafeje's method is to reinforce such political proprietorship by lodging competing claims. The result is that an effort to examine the social identity of movements and their organisational form and programmes and strategy is undermined by a partial and incomplete assessment of the available evidence. One example is the already mentioned selective record we are given on the organisation of migrants and peasant struggles. Another is the notion that only the leaflet issued by the Coloured students carried a political line; I found a political line in the ANC 16 June 1976 leaflet; the specifics are not detailed and are clearly a matter for discussion and not foregone conclusion. The selective and incomplete presentation of programmatic material is even more serious. One can no longer evaluate ANC policy merely by the Freedom Charter, which was drawn up in response to the conditions of legal struggle two decades ago. And if one looks at the ANC's Strategy and Tactics document of 1969 important issues are handled: the leading role of the working class, and the relationship between armed and political struggle. Under a section on 'The Working Class', this document speaks of a speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation as a result of the actions of the working class and its class consciousness, in its struggle for liberation and socialism.

On armed and political struggle Mafeje is, of course, right on the dangers of militarism, and in the swing from the tactics of the pre- to the post-1961 periods, armed struggle has sometimes been stressed by some propagandists without an elaboration of its continual reliance on all-round political mobilisation. The
ANC policy document stresses the dangers: it goes on and on about its explicit rejection of militarist manifestations and says 'when we talk of revolutionary armed struggle we are talking of political struggle by means which include the use of military force. Our movement rejects all manifestations of militarism which separates armed peoples struggle from its political context. The relationship between the two is a difficult and complex matter, requiring not only a recognition of the ever-present need for political struggle but also a movement's capacity to respond to struggles even those it does not initiate. Mafeje argues a logic of precedence: that sustained political warfare should precede guerilla warfare; that the best time for insurrection would be 'when the economy is in chaos and the workers are in a high state of preparedness'. It is a view of economic crisis prompting labour action as a necessary pre-condition for guerilla action. Again the approach runs the risk of attentisme. Must the struggle wait for some deep crisis in the enemy camp which opens the road to immediate all-round insurrection? (Some socialists in many countries have long been waiting for the capitalist crisis to make the revolution for them). It is a deterministic theory of economic crisis creating spontaneous revolution. The lessons of the mass struggles of the 1950s were that in the conditions of SA, mass political mobilisation, including the organisation of the working class, and principally the latter, cannot advance beyond a certain point without the reinforcement of forms of armed struggle; that movements with a strategy of mass mobilisation have the responsibility to devise accompanying preparations to enable armed militants to defend the struggle from the attacks of the state, and thus to carry it to greater heights. So it is not a matter of sustained political strikes rather than military action; or of the postponement of the guerilla war until the insurrection, but of their complementarity. The problem of the relation of armed to political struggle is, of course, exceedingly difficult in practice, and is not yet necessarily solved.

The ANC itself has been engaged in the difficult phase of the installation of armed groups and the reconstruction of the underground in the cities as well as in the countryside, and has asserted these two tasks as the pressing imperative to which militants thrown up by all struggles should devote themselves. This is not to say that these are the only tasks of the present stage of the revolution, nor that any single organisational form is adequate to embrace the diverse forms of struggle necessary in SA conditions. I would agree with those who argue that there has been too little creative thinking about the forms of above-ground organisation which are still possible, however precariously so, and the brilliant organisational achievements of the students should prompt a careful study and assimilation of their example.

It is always necessary to re-think the politics and the strategy of the SA struggle. I have responded rather sharply to some of the points in the Mafeje article not out of any appetite for acrimonious exchange, but in order to sharpen issues, and to argue that a heavy responsibility attaches to any proposal for an 'independent marxist-leninist party formed within the black liberation movement'. (Why 'black' if class and ideology are the criteria?) Movements under criticism can defend themselves, preferably by the assertion of revolutionary leadership in the struggle. Admittedly there are difficult problems, notably the question of class and national struggle. I agree that national liberation is not self-defining; African nationalist ideology devoid of class analysis could become the instrument of different classes among the African population. At the same time the assertion of working-class leadership of the liberation struggle is too often reduced to
worker-boss struggle, and such a workerist approach fails to confront the fact that the state carries out the purposes of capital. In this sense the great political strikes of the 1950s, 1960s, and again, 1976 — the stay-at-home — were the use of the working class strike weapon for political demands that challenged the hegemony of state and capital both. Though the urban townships remain the strongholds of this working class, factory industrial organisation of the class has lagged behind: what are the conditions under which this front of the struggle can be conducted?

I also agree that it is important to analyse and identify the class tendencies without a national liberation movement in order to be alert to the influence of a petit-bourgeoisie and its interests. But Mafeje’s castigation of petit-bourgeois influence is far too unspecified to deal with at the level at which the accusation is made. Is it that the social origin of leaders and cadres is petit-bourgeois and how far can this pedigree classification be taken? Is it that political demands assert the interests of this stratum; if so, which and in what context? And a similar query: what does it mean that the South African Communist Party is ‘historically a white party’? That it was formed on the initiative of white socialists from Europe? Right. That it has consistently been composed of a majority of white members? Wrong. That it represents and asserts the interests of a white minority group? Wrong. It is true that the Communist Party early had to face the fact of white workers who were co-opted by the ruling class into superintending black labour; after some nasty errors that date from the early 1920s, from the 1930s onwards it turned to organising black workers. What does Mafeje mean when he suggests that it cannot hope to recruit ‘black workers who are not short of black leaders’? Are we back with blacks organising blacks; and where are class and ideology now?

Despite my many disagreements, and my regret that in the end some important questions are put but then abandoned by Mafeje, many of the issues he raises need debate, but above all in the course of the struggle. I can’t say that I’m surprised at his statement in his penultimate paragraph that the moves towards something new are deadlocked; perhaps the ways in which the issues have been posed are a large part of the problem?
Books of the 1976 Revolt by Baruch Hirson

The revolt of 1976 in South Africa was, by any standards, momentous. Tens of thousands of people in over 150 towns and villages responded to calls from the youth and demonstrated, marched, boycotted, and clashed with armed police over a period of six months. Their heroism, their unflinching stand against armoured cars, tear gas, and bullets introduced a new era of politics in South Africa. Inevitably there has been a desire to learn more about these momentous events — and to read again of the march of June 16, of the joint demonstrations of Coloured and African youth in Cape Town, of the massive stay-at-home that paralysed industry and commerce in many of the main urban centres, and of the boycott of shebeens and of Christmas celebrations.

The scale of the revolt was vast and it was necessary, in the first instance, to gather together stories from the many towns and villages of what happened. Some were recorded in the national press and, in the absence of radical journals, journalists of the World recorded and published accounts which would otherwise never have become known. They witnessed the first shootings and they heard police direct the hostel dwellers in their strike breaking action. Many cables were sent overseas but few were printed. It was, however, from such a source that the Counter Information Services, a collective of journalists, were able to reconstruct part of the story of what occurred. Theirs is probably the fullest chronology yet printed, starting from May 17 when 1,600 pupils of the Orlando West Junior Secondary School walked out in protest against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in the upper junior and lower secondary schools.

Their monograph, entitled, *Black South Africa Explodes*, traces the events in Soweto after this strike. There is a day by day account of events following the march of 16 June, the confrontation with the police, the shootings and the retaliation as Soweto was turned into a battleground. Rioting, arson, stonings and death that shook this large urban conurbation of 1.2 million people. From Soweto the revolt spread to surrounding towns, bringing to a head local discontent and establishing a national solidarity with the youth of Soweto.

The CIS report discusses the use of migrant hostel dwellers by the police as a strike breaking force. The authors ascribe this ‘spontaneous’ backlash to police provocation but do not report the close alliance that had been established
between leading members of the Urban Bantu Council and the police, nor of the ambiguous position of Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief of the Zulu Bantustan, who had attacked the student violence and called on law abiding blacks to 'stand up and be counted'.

The revolt spread and new fociii appeared in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and the CIS account highlights the shift of focus by concentrating, temporarily, on the new centres of action. In Cape Town, more than elsewhere, the police provocation was obvious and access to letters written by Cape Town teachers printed in the British press are used to show the nature of police action. The extent of police provocation, to a point of over-kill in Cape Town's centre is graphically described, and the horror of a shopping crowd, forced out of shops by tear gas, and then peppered with birdshot or battered by batons is effectively told with a minimum of emotion. There can be little doubt that the police meant to pre-empt the students' strike actions and attempted to stifle it by means of a massive show of strength. This was followed by the detention of thousands of men, women and youth, and by the arrests and charges preferred against over 3,000 demonstrators.

The role of foreign firms and countries in arming the police is described: The Landrovers from Leyland; integrated circuits from Plessey; radio from Racal Electronics; computerised military communications network from Marconi; tear gas from ICI; are a part of the British contribution. France provided mirage aircraft, ground-to-air missiles, container ships and nuclear plant. Germany dispatched chemicals, military vehicles and tanks. Israel, the USA and NATO all added items to keep the South African army and the police force fully equipped to suppress all opposition. Some of this was used internally to quell the revolt — the rest in the fighting in Namibia, the incursions into Angola and the guarding of the borders. The two-page register of major arms imports, 1970-75, is a clear indication of the offensive nature of the South African army.

There is some social background to Soweto as a residential area: the account is however short and fails to provide more than an impressionistic picture of a housing policy that is designed to not only segregate the African but also to ensure the workers have no permanence and to cut back the rentals so that wages can be minimised. Even then the whole problem of the reproduction of the working class — so calculatedly considered to be the concern of the Homelands, and other problems relating to official housing policy is not, and cannot, be discussed inside this short news summary.

The entire account cannot fail to move even the most hardened and convinced opponent of the apartheid system. We thought we knew it all: but this unarmed combat with a trigger happy police force that was ordered to kill surpasses any previous struggle in the country. The CIS report in fact ends on an optimistic note. The students, it declares

are numerous, fearless, and their political awareness, mirrored by their organisational ability and the level of their demands, grows daily. Although hundreds have been killed and thousands wounded and arrested, their voice has not been suppressed. The struggle continues.

Rousing stuff this: the kind of message delivered at the barricades or at least from the soap-box, but begging all the most obvious questions. What was the nature of this 'political awareness'? Where the 'organisational ability'? What was the political philosophy of the 'leaders'? Were there other groups in the townships? What programme shaped the tactics or the strategy of the leadership? The book is silent on these topics.
As a document designed to win sympathy for the black youth of South Africa (or should we start using the name the youth used — Azania?) this merits high rating — but as a monograph designed to help the reader understand the factors which led the youth into revolt, or to help unfathom the ideas that shaped the young leadership, this is quite unsatisfactory.

A shorter account of the 'disturbances', (to use the description of the editors), appears in the 1975 Survey of Race Relations in South Africa. Only 37 of the 496 pages are devoted to the chapter on the revolt, but this brevity is deceptive. In the first case, there is a wealth of information, and an uncovering of some of the class alliances in Soweto, which do not find a place in the CIS account. Furthermore large sections of the Survey provide subsidiary accounts which are invaluable in piecing together the story of the Revolt. There are reports on Black Consciousness movements, on the South African Students Organisation, and on the Black People’s Convention (with an interesting note that is not without significance that the BPC recognized the Muzorewa wing of the Rhodesian ANC and urged Mr Nkomo ‘to stop dividing the people’). There are sections on the Homeland leaders with comments on their attitudes towards the revolt; an item on the Makgotla (tribal courts) in the townships; on detentions; Urban Bantu Councils; and other issues that were closely related to the events of 1976. A source book for research work and a mine of information (selective as it is) and a book to which the student will turn.

The Survey tends to view the revolt itself as having a bearing only on schools and as the report is descriptive seeks no further casual explanation. Only in the concluding pages, when the government appointed Cillie Commission is described, are other possible causes mentioned. This was, in great part, a revolt that was led by school students and the revolt did revolve to large degree around the issue of language and then the structure of Bantu education itself. This does have to be underlined and when the long history of student revolt is written, extending back to the strikes at Kilnerton and riots of 1920 at Lovedale, the nature of student revolts in South Africa will be seen as endemic to the black school and college system in the country.

The reader wishing to obtain more information about the black consciousness movement will find much of interest in earlier volumes of the Survey of Race Relations, copies of which are in some university libraries. An even more valuable account, written and edited by members of organisations that adopted the black consciousness slogans was the annual Black Review produced since 1972 by the Black Communities Programme, Durban. Their last volume, covering 1975/6, only includes background material on the revolt, but the five volumes taken together provide an extensive account of all the movements associated with black consciousness. Copies of Black Review, are not generally available, but dare not be overlooked by any student interested in South African affairs. Any document on the revolt which fails to examine the meaning of Black Consciousness and fails to ask how this philosophy affected the politics of BPC-SASO will be grossly deficient.

There are many essays which do offer a definition and an explanation of Black Consciousness, and if they differ in stress, it is because there seems to be more than one interpretation of what individual writers meant by the term. Amongst the more representative of the collections are those gathered together in the collected papers of the Black Renaissance Convention in Hammansrkaal in December 1974, edited by Thoahlane Thoahlane under the title Black Renais-
sance (Ravan Press, 1976) and Black Theology: the South African Voice edited by Basil Moore (Hurst, 1973). The book, compiled in 1976, for the SAIRR by J.G.E. Wolfson, Turmoil at Turfloop provides a summary of the Snyman & Jackson Commissions of Inquiry into the University of the North and includes the SASO Policy Manifesto which is also a restatement of the tenets of Black Consciousness. There are also more personal statements including Allan Boesak's Farewell to Innocence: a socio-ethical study of black theology and black power (Ravan, 1977) and N.C. Manganyi's Being Black in the world (Spro-cas/ Ravan, 1973).

Perhaps it is Manganyi's observation (p.21) that 'the relationship (between consciousness and action) is often neglected by exponents of black consciousness' which has led commentators, to date, to avoid a discussion of this philosophy. Black Consciousness, to most of its followers, is an attitude of mind, a liberation from psychological oppression, the building of a new awareness, a cultural revival, a resurrection of the past through history, and a return to the economy of the communal village as well as urging that black entrepreneurs be supported. Its members are often deeply religious (many of its exponents urge a reconciliation between ancestor veneration and Christianity) and call for inner purification. This call for the recognition of the worth of a person inevitably directs attention to individual action and away from concrete organisational tasks.

To varying degrees members of the black community could be drawn to this all pervading call for 'Black Power'. The young students and intellectuals who rebelled against the social and cultural stultification; the workers who sought relief from economic oppression and the township community which felt the lack of political expression; all hated the white administrators and felt that domination was decided ascriptively in colour terms.

Growing up in a country where the older political organisations had been banned, the youth sought an outlet and partly because of the deep feeling on colour issues turned to a philosophy which extolled the black community. Some government officials believed that they could incorporate black consciousness movements into the apartheid system, and there is evidence that some movements were established with administrative blessings. Part of this story is told in Surveys of Race Relations from 1973 through to 1976 and part is recounted in Turmoil at Turfloop SASO was favoured by the African university's hierarchy because it had broken contact with the liberal-left (white). The National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), and BPC, together with the Union of Black Journalists and other groups were allowed to grow (or even encouraged) because they preached black separativeness, and had no organisational links with White associations.

SASO spread to all the black campuses (and this included the African, Coloured and Indian universities); BPC had the support of SASO (and was partly led by these students), and also won over the journalists and writers, the members of black theatre and other similar groups. Theologians played a prominent part in the organisation (partly bolstered by the black clergy of the USA) and black businessmen also lent the movement their support. Whether any appreciable section of the proletariat was ever won over seems doubtful and it is quite evident that there was no attempt to organise men and women in the rural area. Nonetheless, the men and women who assumed leadership during the revolt were in part imbued by Black Consciousness and that alone (irrespective of any other consideration) makes it vital that the concept be discussed.
A philosophy which can attract every class, is also a philosophy which must contain contradictory elements. What needs to be discussed are the main strands of this thinking, its relevance for the population, and more centrally, the ability of these movements to provide a programme of action and a policy for directing a political struggle, even if little real organisation can come out of a system of thought which is turned inwards to self identity and a search for personal values.

In a period of struggle, the many slogans based on ‘Black Power’ tended to conceal the divergent strands of Black Consciousness, but the class interests of those who led the movement could be discerned behind the rhetoric. Leaders of Black Consciousness were anti-Marxist, and reformist and this was expressed in part by the pro-Muzorewa stance of the BPC in 1976. By examining the ideas of individuals with strong vested interests it can be shown where the philosophy can lead.

Mr Motsuenyane, president of the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce, presented a paper at the Black Renaissance Convention and commenced by paying tribute to Black Consciousness and to the ‘flowering of the African personality’. He proclaimed ‘Black is Beautiful’, the slogan of the times, but he was very clear that the concepts must ‘not end with empty expressions of pride and discontent or disenchantment with existing conditions’. He wanted something ‘more positive; more self-prompting; more self-reliant and creative’. By this the speaker meant that the African had a ‘right to take part as an entrepreneur or co-participant in national projects’. To achieve this the domination of the economy by Whites would have to be scaled down (not removed!) and Africans offered a larger share of commercial and industrial life. As a first step he wanted to see the African consumer buying and banking in black firms and banks, and it also seems that one reason for his supporting the need for trade unions and wage increases was that this would expand the African’s buying power . . . which hopefully would flow into the hands of the black businessmen. (Black Renaissance, p.51).

The theologians approached the concept from a different angle. They identified Christ with the oppressed and the poor and finally with black liberation — but always through the ‘total commitment to every black person in a corporate black life “in Christ”’. (Black Theology p.118 & 125). These different strands of the philosophy were gathered together by some speakers and welded into a comprehensive programme of self-assertion and self-sufficiency and provided a platform for cohesion, on the grounds of colour, around which the population could, hopefully, be rallied.

Black Consciousness was a new term, borrowed from America, to clothe an old philosophy that (in modern political history) can be traced back in South Africa to Anton Lembede. He first spoke of ‘Africanism’ in 1943 and also enunciated the ideas that were later taken up by African leaders of the newly independent states under the title of ‘African Socialism’. A comparison of his articles written in the mid-forties bear a remarkable similarity to the documents produced in 1970-1975. There was the same black exclusiveness, the same call for a rewriting of history, the same talk of economic advancement, and the same religious commitment. These ideas were taken up by the young students of 1944, in the same way as they were adopted by the students of the seventies, and the similarities suggest that the African urban communities turned to black consciousness when no alternative political programme was available. Black identity as a rallying call certainly needs discussion but the accounts offered to date conspicuously fail to link it to the revolt of 1976.
The book *Southern Africa after Soweto* written by Alex Callinicos and John Rogers (Pluto, 1977) is not a book about Soweto, but an attempt to provide an analysis of Southern Africa, and the basic contradictions contained in the dominant mode of production in South Africa. They first discuss the nature of capitalist production in South Africa and then proceed with a description of the political and military developments in Angola, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Above all else however they see South Africa as the pivot of the entire region and therefore concentrate their attention of the development of the liberation movement in the South in the 1970s and discuss the 1973 strike wave as well as the revolt of 1976.

This book is not meant to provide a chronology of the revolt, but rather to offer an analysis of the total society and find a meaning for the various political manoeuvres around ‘detente’, the Kissinger ‘shuttle’ and guerilla warfare. Here indeed is the first attempt to provide a full account of recent times, and the Soweto revolt appears as only one of the many conflicts in the South, even if it is one of the most important clashes of recent times. The book is so wide in scope that it merits discussion of several of its chapters which are far from satisfactory. This, however, is not the place to discuss the authors appraisal of Mozambique and Angola, nor of Zambia and Zimbabwe, because this would take us too far from our subject, and would require a lengthy discussion. Sufficient to say, that despite many criticisms of the chapters on those regions, it does at least provide a setting for what happened in the black townships in 1976. The revolt in 1976 in Soweto emerged from the local student discontent, the financial crisis that had started in 1973 but deepened in 1975, the strike wave of the black workers of 1973-4, and the wave of elation that followed the installation of black governments in the former Portuguese colonies. All this had to be described and the authors do show that these many factors affected the African population, and were crucial factors in the development of black militancy.

Nonetheless on reading the book, it does seem very much as if the Soweto revolt was not central to the author’s intent. They do say, in passing, that the BPC and SASO were influenced by the Africanism of the Pan Africanist Congress but claim that the major influence was the Black Power groups of the 1960s. Yet earlier in the book there is a chapter devoted to ‘Black resistance and white oppression’ in which no attempt is made to trace the origin of ‘Africanism’ or indeed to discuss the nature of this concept in African political development. There is no indication that the authors are aware of the long history of student riots and demonstrations, and little to connect the history they provide with the revolt in 1976. Yet these authors must be aware that no revolt ever takes place without long gestation, and no set of ideas come into being if they do not reflect dominant features of the existing society. Callinicos and Rogers believe that the black proletariat will be the motive force for change in the future, but they cannot on that account ignore Black Consciousness without leaving out a crucial element in the forces that helped shape the revolt that did take place.

It is not my contention that Black Consciousness was a necessary ingredient of the struggle — and it is more than likely that this introspective ideology led the young students to underestimate the need for solid organisational work. It is also most likely that the failure to understand the class nature of the struggle (without denying the importance of the division along the colour-line) hampered the leaders and led to illusions about their ability to change the structure of South Africa. It does seem, however, that the partisanship of the authors has allowed them to dip into their file of cuttings and accept statements from
leaders of the students' movement in order to berate the underground South African movements. Do they really believe Tsietsi Mashinini's assertion that the 'ANC and PAC are extinct internally'? If the authors did wish to criticise existing movements they would have done better to have some sound analysis rather than from ill-informed and prejudiced statements.

The authors also seem to have an inconsistent attitude to class relations inside the townships. They are aware of the role of the African petty bourgeoisie who found themselves in conflict with the young militants, even if they have gathered very little information on the complex set of alliances between the Urban Bantu Council members, tribal leaders, and police during the revolt. They are not aware of the conflict between the Black Parents Association and leading members of the UBC, although this is chronicled in the *Survey of Race Relations of 1976*. They also assume that the youth was homogeneous and do not seem to be aware of the fact that Mashinini's repeated call on the students to return to school was rejected by the majority of the youth. Was there a split between students and the 'push-outs' (as the non-school goers were called in Soweto)? Once again political considerations seem to have dulled the author's critical perceptions, and the students are not discussed in class-terms — even though the gap between the youth (students?) and workers is referred to (p.168).

Finally the authors dismiss the new call to sabotage and guerilla activity. They criticise this method seemingly on the grounds that it has been inefficiently employed in the past — but do not seem to have considered it necessary to discuss the strategies analytically in terms of the South African social and political system. Nor were they aware of the fact that the school students set up their own sabotage group in September 1976. The problem needs discussion in serious terms — and any contribution by Marxists to such a debate would be more than welcome. Impressionistic comments do not however deepen our insight, and it is the facile journalist approach of the authors which make it so difficult to accept their strictures. Poor organisation of military groups, the speedy arrest of saboteurs, an inclination to adventurism (and personal terrorism?) need to be criticised — but this does not necessarily negate the need for armed struggle. The latter point is dismissed — but not analysed in the South African context, and this presumably because the authors had long since decided that the struggle should be conducted inside the factories. This is an exercise, more in belief, than in reality.

The books discussed constitute only the beginning of a stream of accounts of the revolt of 1976. Four books on the revolt, and three accounts of the murder of the black consciousness leader, Steve Biko, are being written or are already in the hands of publishers. All are by Whites, and there has as yet been no news of a book or even an extensive account or personal reminiscences from the pen of an African who took an active part in the revolt. Any such writings will have to come from those who fled into exile — and it is these accounts which are most needed if we are to understand many of the problems that were raised by the revolt. There can be little claims to consciousness, 'black' or otherwise, if such analyses do not appear.

*Postscript, October 1978:* The above article was written approximately one year ago, and new documents that have become available indicate that SASO/BPC played a relatively minor role in the actual revolt, and that the importance of the ANC has been neglected in all available publications to date. It has not been
possible to incorporate this new information without altering the review very radically, and I have agreed, somewhat reluctantly to the publication of this work, if only because the ideology of the black consciousness movement still needs serious discussion.

I have tried to correct what I now consider to be the many false interpretations of the revolt in the forthcoming book, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash*, published by Zed Press and due to appear in March 1979.


One of the ironies of formal higher education in Africa is the almost universal dependence on textbooks written by authors from metropolitan areas. In economics, it is true that in Anglophone countries at least, reliance on straight British or American texts for at least introductory courses has declined somewhat with the appearance of texts written specifically for African students. Nevertheless, the authors of these texts, even if they have worked and taught in Africa for many years, are of metropolitan origins (one thinks of names such as Livingstone and Ord, Seidman, Todaro, etc). This short booklet is probably unique: it incorporates explicitly the Marxist-Leninist approaches to political economy, yet has been written, printed and published in Lesotho, in the heart of Southern Africa.

It is perhaps worth dwelling a little on the author and the booklet’s origins. Michael Sefali is a Basotho was received his university training in economics in Moscow. Returning to Lesotho shortly after independence, he was denied professional employment for political reasons for seven years, and spent some time in detention following the 1970 events. However, in 1974 there was no official objection when he was offered an academic post at the Roma campus of the then University of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, and within a year of the nationalisation of that campus (as the National University of Lesotho) he had been elected Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies. The three main features of the booklet are largely explained by these origins: the strict adherence to orthodox soviet interpretations of Marxist-Leninist political economy can be attributed to the author's university training; the ad-mixture of some highly conventional neo-classical economic concepts and theories can be attributed to the fact that the author works in a University dominated by staff whose training and inclinations are Western and strongly conventional; and the emphasis on Lesotho and Southern Africa in the empirical and institutional sections to the author's location and nationality.

What Sefali has tried to do is ‘to explain in a simple manner, some basic concepts of economic theory and problems of economic policy of possible interest not only to university students and academics, but also to all those in Africa, who in their study of the economies of Africa and the alternative paths of economic development in the continent, wish to take account of the Marxist-Leninist approach to political economy’. One should emphasise that in only 50 pages of text, only basics can be covered; but that the exposition really is simple, in the sense that it is extremely clear and straightforward. This is the great potential value of this booklet: not that readers of this review can expect to learn any-
thing new from it (apart from some facts about Lesotho), but that this is an outstandingly clear and easy-to-understand exposition of the orthodox Marxist-Leninist view of political economy, easily accessible to any first year university student in an Anglophone African country. As such, it fills a void which has been conspicuously empty.

The booklet is divided into ten sections. I shall give the title of each and briefly indicate the content. Section I is titled 'The Subject-Matter of Economics'. Sefali defines and briefly discusses 'Primitive Communism', and the means, forces, relations, and mode of production, and then contrasts his Marxist approach to economics with the capitalist scarcity and choice approach. Section II, 'The Development of Economic Systems', explains the materialist conception of history, and then discusses Primitive Communal, Slave-Owning, Feudal, Capitalist, Imperialist, and Socialist systems. The view is taken, in accordance with Soviet orthodoxy, that in Africa the Asiatic mode lasted in most areas until colonialism arrived. The discussion of capitalism includes definitions of constant and variable capital and surplus value, and the rate of surplus value. The discussion of imperialism is strictly Leninist, and the discussion of socialism is based on a laudatory description of the USSR.

Section III is called 'The Factors of Production'. Western and Marxist views are contrasted, after which follow brief discussions of Land and Natural Resources, Labour, Capital, and Entrepreneurship. Sefali takes the orthodox position again that population growth is not a development problem at all, and urges against fostering an African bourgeoisie, arguing that the role of 'entrepreneur' be given to the state of 'workers, peasants and patriotic sections of the population'.

Section IV discusses the price mechanism. The core of this section is a very standard Western exposition of supply and demand; it is preceded by a discussion of the relationship of value to price, and followed by a discussion of the imperfections of markets in state monopoly capitalist economies of the West.

Section V concerns economic planning. It adopts the classic Marxist-Leninist view that planning is only possible when the means of production have been socialised. It nevertheless briefly describes planning in the Soviet Union, 'economic programming' in capitalist countries (seen as state articulation of economic policy in the interest of the ruling class), and the 'partial planning' in developing countries.

Section VI is titled 'National Accounts'. Micro and Macro are defined, and then GDP, its calculation, GNP, National Income and the distribution and use of National Income are discussed. Although at the outset Sefali admits that 'fundamental methodological differences' exist between Western and Marxist-Leninist political economy in this area, so readers are warned, this is one of the places where clarity has been sacrificed to brevity. It is doubtful if a reader, not already familiar with the concepts and the differences involved, would be able to follow the details here.

Section VII concerns 'Commodity Production, Money and Banking'. This is perhaps the least satisfactory chapter. It starts by describing the forms of exchange and value and their development in the Marxist tradition, very clearly. However, the discussion of money that follows is incomplete, since it ends by telling the reader that the gold exchange standard broke down in 1971 without saying what the present basis of the monetary system is, and the section on the banking system and financial institutions merely describes those in Lesotho.
Section VIII deals with Public Finance, and is very short. It consists of some essential definitions, some polemical comments on expenditure patterns in capitalist states, and a summary of Lesotho's state finances.

Section IX is titled International Trade. Ricardian comparative advantage is mentioned, but emphasis is placed on the international capitalist division of labour to explain trade patterns. The balance of payments and terms of trade are clearly explained, alternative trade policies briefly discussed, and Lesotho's international payments position briefly described. Section X, entitled 'Paths of Economic Development in Africa', contrasts the capitalist road, (exemplified by the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria and Zaire), the State-Capitalist Way (Egypt, Algeria, Guinea, Mali, Ghana and Tanzania) and the Non-Capitalist Path of development (Congo, Mozambique, Angola and 'possibly' Benin, Ethiopia, Somalia).

The contents of the booklet have been described in detail since it will not be easy to obtain. However, it should be reiterated that this is the clearest exposition of the orthodox Soviet Marxist-Leninist point of view with respect to economics in an African context known to this reviewer, and as such may be very useful as a supplementary text or for general non-academic readers in Africa. Persons outside Lesotho desiring to obtain copies should probably write to the author at N.U.L., P.O. Roma, Lesotho.

James Cobbe
### CURRENT AFRICANA No.16

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