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There is no pervasive theme in this issue. Topics included cover numerous theoretical and political themes, in widely differing geographical areas. Nevertheless, questions raised by Cohen in the first article, relating to ‘labour consciousness’, are fundamental to issues in other articles.

Case studies presented in *The Development of an African Working Class* and in *African Labour History* illustrate the wide range of interpretations and conclusions reached by ‘radical’ writers considering the political implications of labour action, in specific historical epochs and national settings. Obviously, the political significance of labour action depends largely on the class character of the state, and the concerns of observers will differ accordingly. For example, within a state claiming to pursue a socialist strategy there is the need to determine the ability of the working class to provide a political base for leadership. In regimes which attempt to entrench a capitalist system, the strengths and weaknesses of working class attitudes and actions will be viewed quite differently. Some commentators consider the political potential of the working class to be achieved by their radicalization at the workplace being strengthened by political leadership, enabling them to bring about structural changes within the state to end the exploitation of the working class. Others advocate a temporary commitment of organized labour to the task of bargaining with the neo-colonial state for incremental gains for labour. Despite these diverse political objectives amongst ‘radical’ observers, there has tended to develop a common consensus as to the positive political significance of working class action in challenging political authority within the colonial and post-colonial state. There has also developed an awareness of a common need to analyse more deeply and accurately the nature of worker protest and rebellion, before any attempts can be made to articulate political conclusions about its significance.

The relationship between the nature of worker consciousness and the political significance of worker protest is of crucial significance in any setting. On the African continent this relationship is perhaps made more complex by the varying intensities of the penetration of peripheral capitalism resulting in uneven and sometimes divergent patterns of labour protest. In analysing the significance of labour protest there is always the danger of equating the political development of labour consciousness with immediate political victory or defeat in open struggle with the employer class or the
state. This tendency is perhaps more tempting because it is easier to collect data on overt forms of political worker action such as strikes. But over-concentration on familiar types of protest can lead to their being regarded as central indicators of worker militancy. Emphasis on overt actions, and ignorance about local, cultural conditions affecting these displays of militancy can result in misinterpretations of political and class consciousness, significant not only in their immediate contexts, but also in their relevance to future political strategies.

Cohen's article is an attempt to redress this inaccurate perspective and elaborate on the concepts of 'class consciousness' and 'class action', by pointing to varieties of covert as well as overt forms of working class protest (both types being crucial to an overall assessment of the significance of worker militancy). He describes forms of hidden worker protest and resistance ranging from desertion and sabotage to more positive examples, such as the creation of individual, anti-employer work cultures and the adoption of religious beliefs as forms of resistance to the demands of the capitalist mode. These individual examples illustrate the often temporary synthesis of specific combinations of levels of worker consciousness in particular circumstances. This underlines the fact that there is not necessarily any unilinear sequence of development between hidden and overt forms of worker resistance, as for example along the lines of progression suggested by Mann in his theoretical analysis of the development of class consciousness amongst the Western Working Class. Mann suggests a development of worker consciousness consisting of four main elements, each giving way to the other in a progressive, linear fashion; these main elements consist of class identity, class opposition and class totality, which eventually culminates in the workers conceptualizing the need for an alternative society in which revolutionary consciousness can reach political fruition. In contrast, Cohen's examples show that, depending on the politico-economic situation, hidden forms of resistance and rebellion can be either curtailed or curtail themselves to sporadic and spontaneous forms of worker militancy, or could lead to increased group or class opposition to the system. A combination of hidden and overt resistance within a specific situation could change worker consciousness of their situation in either a positive or negative political direction. Thus rather than conceptualizing these different forms of worker militancy within a 'unilinear' or 'dual consciousness' framework, it should be recognised that there is the possibility, or even likelihood, of a reaction between the two in specific situations which could produce a unique effect on the workers' perception of their own position. As a result, in order to understand worker consciousness, it is necessary to perceive worker reaction in terms of the particular situation in which they find themselves: i.e. it is necessary to understand fully the workers own experience as an experience of a particular reality filtered by their cultural heritage within a given, present context. Rather than measuring a particular worker movement against a Leninist ideal of proletarian consciousness and organization, it is necessary to see consciousness in its own context — as arising from particular circumstances. An evaluation of the significance of worker protest arising from such analysis is essential in order to gauge whether latent forms of protest in everyday work situations can be amplified and given political meaning by responsible labour leadership.
Cohen implies that, generally, African trades union organizations have failed to provide this in the past.

One particularly important variable affecting the process of proletarianization is the short history and distance between the African working class and its prior position in peasant society, which involved the possession of the means of production. From this background many workers have seen wage labour as a transitory experience towards the end of regaining economic independence. Several studies of wage workers in Nigeria have identified a pervasive aspiration for economic independence, specifically through the establishment of small businesses (e.g. Peace in Choice, Class and Conflict, 1979). Wage employment is seen, at best, as merely a means of acquiring income, and sometimes, skills and contacts, which can be used in independent economic activities. No social status is lower than that of permanent labourer, even though many, perhaps most, Nigerian men earn wages on a daily, seasonal or annual basis at some time in their lives. Many poor Nigerians regard wage employment as analogous to slavery, in that one surrenders control over one's time to a master. 'Free wage slavery' is not yet accepted as the normal way to earn a living. Clearly then the aspirations of Nigerian workers have a 'petty bourgeois' aspect; yet at the same time worker solidarity has the potential for transforming them into something more than this. Peace found that the need to save in order to escape wage employment gave an added sharpness to workers' demands for wage increases to catch up with, and stay ahead of, ravaging inflation. He also shows how, increasingly workers find it difficult to save enough to establish themselves on their own. Therefore the pervasive frustration of their aspirations might lead to a heightening of worker militancy. Moreover, whilst the aspiration for individual advancement exemplifies what we mean by a 'petty bourgeois' consciousness, it also involves a rejection of the norms of wage labour, and the authoritarian discipline which this involves — a problem for socialist states as well as foreign capitalists. It also gives rise to general, popular demands for social justice, pursued through strike actions and through electoral policies, as well as through the less direct forms of resistance which Cohen identifies. 'Petty-bourgeois' consciousness is a two-edged sword, 'progressive' and 'reactionary' at the same time. Lubeck's article in Review 13 reminds us that people's social and political ideas, in Africa as elsewhere, commonly take a religious form. In that instance, the workers demanded time for Muslim prayers, thus resisting arbitrary managerial authority. Similarly, the popular appeal of the PRP was cast in Islamic terms.

Jewsiewicki, in this issue, identifies religious movements and practices as the most important form of peasant political consciousness in the Belgian Congo, and as a means of diffusing ideas of 'denial of oppression'. Peasant resistance took other 'hidden forms', some similar to those which Cohen identifies amongst African workers: ' . . . boiling cotton seeds before sowing them . . . choosing infertile soil in which to plant the crops forced on them by compulsory cultivation . . . fleeing into the forest to avoid a census, or medical team . . . retaining initiation practices and dances'. (Cf. Coulson in Review 10). Peasant revolt against the 'white' order took more direct forms in the number of risings in different parts of the colony. They were repeated after independence on a much larger scale. Protests against oppression did
not give rise to a common, national movement or programme.

In an important recent book, Religion and Social Change in Zambia (1980) van Binsbergen controversially suggests that peasant movements have been more radical than religious sects and political parties with their bases in the urban proletariat. He argues that the impact of colonial rule and capitalist economic relations leads to a disjuncture between existing ideologies and the material basis of society. Religious movements, including the European missions and the African churches which reject their authority, offer forms of 'ideological' reconstruction through which people try to make sense of their experiences and establish rules of appropriate conduct in a world over which they have little control. The more radical religious sects, such as the Lumpa in Zambia, attempted to create a new material basis for their new community, bringing them into conflicts over land and the recognition of the local authority of chiefs and national authority of party and state. By contrast, the proletarian response, in both its religious and secular forms, is oriented to improving their position within the new, capitalist social order. Again we see the ambiguities of political consciousness. The most 'radical' movements divide the peasantry by their sectarian claims, and prove tragically ineffective against the military power of the state. Alternatively they may learn to accommodate to the demands of state authority. An ideology of denial does not provide a viable strategy for establishing, for all, a new social and political order.

Thus whilst its material base informs the level and substance of the political consciousness of a class, it may also limit the effectiveness of its associated political strategy. In this issue, Pool takes up this theme with respect to the Eritrean situation, arguing that the differences between the ELF and the EPLF can be accounted for largely by their differing bases of support. Drawing its initial support from the pastoralist population, the ELF, he contends, adopted a military practice closely akin to banditry: it relied heavily on coercion, and perpetuated the traditional rivalry between the pastoralists and their settled neighbours. Moreover, the structure of the ELF was anti-national insofar as it heightened social and cultural differences, rather than minimizing or transforming them. In miming the insularity of the pastoral society, it created a formidable military opposition to external control without, however, evolving a political strategy capable of leading to the elimination of that control, nor creating an alternative political system capable of unifying the entire indigenous population. The EPLF arose as an alternative movement, as much in response to the limitations of the ELF as towards the goal of national liberation. As Pool explains, its support was centred not amongst the pastoralists but amongst the workers, the intelligentsia and peasant farmers. Composed of classes thus integrated into, and in some cases created by capitalist production relations, its strategy was less negation of the system of oppression through reliance on traditional, insular forms of organization, than attempted transformation through the creation of new, collective forms.

Caution must be exercised in contriving to see too rigid a determination in the relationship between material base and political consciousness or strategy. But an assessment of the relationship between a class and the polity, whether in the context of a liberation struggle or that of an independent
state, is surely aided by an understanding of its material base. This is nowhere so true as in the case of the peasantry and as regards assessments of whether and to what degree the independent state has succeeded in ‘capturing’ this class.

A recent volume by Hyden *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania* (1980), has portrayed the peasantry as relatively autonomous of the state as well as of capital, by virtue, in part, of its possession of land and its capacity for producing its subsistence needs more or less independently of other classes. Its autonomy, for Hyden, is manifested in an ‘economy of affection’ — the particularist demands of friends, family and locality — which has in turn served as a stumbling block to state control, largely in consequence of its having spread over from the peasantry into the larger political culture of the Tanzanian system. Escape from dependency requires utilization of the peasantry’s potential for surplus production. And for Hyden a failure of capitalist strategies to achieve this end leaves a socialist transformation, by implication, as virtually the only viable alternative. In the *Reviews* section, Cooksey questions the possibility of this course emerging, and sees its advocacy as idealist, rather than derived from rigorous class analysis. Moreover, he questions how the structural constraints faced by a state embedded in an international market will allow for such a possibility. Essentially, for Cooksey, whilst Hyden affirms the difficulty of the Tanzanian state capturing the peasantry and its surplus, he underestimates the ability of a solely political solution to affect a viable change irrespective of the structural limitations imposed by the presence of foreign capital.

The relation of state to class and the possibilities for autonomous development also inform the ongoing Kenyan debate, a number of contributions to which have appeared in the *Review* (8 & 17). In this issue Beckman assesses the applicability of the dependency/anti-dependency positions as they appear in this debate. He contends that both are limited by their confinement to the problematic of underdevelopment theory and more specifically by its false perception of the nature of the contradiction between foreign and national capital. In contrast, Beckman argues for a focus on the underlying logic of capital accumulation and calls for an understanding of the requisites of capital in general as a preliminary to the questions of whether and how autonomous capitalist development might take place. Referring to Leys’ earlier dictum (in *Socialist Register 1978*), that studies of individual cases should be pursued simultaneously at the level of the logic of capital, the level of capitalist geo-politics (imperialism) and the level of class relations and class struggles in particular social formations, his criticism of the dependency/anti-dependency debate is that it is too theoretically confined to the third of these. And if to make his point Beckman lays disproportionate stress on the first of Leys’ three levels, he clearly argues that any comprehensive analysis must integrate all three.

Beckman’s article alerts us to the need to situate an argument in a broad and adequate theoretical framework. As with Cohen, he emphasises the possibilities for misperception which might arise from too narrow an understanding of the issues at hand. Even more important, Beckman alerts us to the need for an understanding of the political implications of particular theoretical positions. If, as Cohen argues, consciousness can be
underestimated by ignoring the existence, pervasiveness and significance of covert forms of class conflict, so too, as Beckman argues, the limited terms in which the Kenyan 'dependency' debate is posed can yield too quickly to the advocacy of dubious political strategies, such as 'sit back and wait' or 'promote indigenous capital in its progressive push against foreign capital'. A rather different, though critical, aspect of the Kenyan debate is taken up in the next issue of the *Review*, a special issue on the Nairobi debate on the peasantry in Kenya. This issue will be edited and produced by Kenyan socialists.

Whilst, as Beckman notes, none of the participants of the Kenyan debate deny that Kenya is enmeshed in a process of capitalist development (however distorted), the same consensus does not exist for the case of Zimbabwe and its prospects (see Yates *Review* 18). Yet the possibility certainly remains that Zimbabwe may experience something similar to the Kenyan pattern of development, i.e. the rise to political prominence of indigenous capital and the adoption of an unambiguous capitalist orientation. In an important sense ZANU has inherited the Rhodesian state and economy, with their dependence on multinational capital and predominantly white command over black labour power. As Marx said in *The Civil War in France*, 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purpose'. How much less can it do so with the inheritance of a ready-made capitalist economy! Munslow's article in *Debates* identifies the source of an African bourgeois class within the inherited capitalist political economy, already exhibiting a tendency to use state office and political power to consolidate its economic position.

Evaluation of the prospects for socialist transformation and of factors limiting those prospects is common to present consideration of the former Portuguese colonies as well as to Zimbabwe. Some observers of the situation in Angola have pronounced that a betrayal of the socialist revolution has occurred and find the source of that betrayal in the 'petty bourgeois' nature of the Angolan state. It must be pointed out that no matter how 'petty bourgeois' the state in Angola might be regarded, or 'neo-colonial' its economic arrangements, it can hardly be equated with the state in Kenya or even Zimbabwe.

This issue contains two responses to pieces previously carried which have debated the nature of the Angolan state and the ongoing political tendencies in that country (*Review* 14, 15/16). Whilst not wishing to foreclose discussion of the subject, we feel that the terms in which the debate has been set are limited in their explanatory capabilities. There has indeed been a tendency for the debate to be based upon controversies generated within and with respect to the Soviet Union and it might be suggested that this is a less than useful way of gaining insight into the specific situation which Angola faces. It is questionable that a debate about the class character and nature of the state in the Soviet Union in the 1930s — or the present — can be directly translated and applied to the conditions prevailing in Angola in the 1980s.

To date the debate has taken up two themes: that the state is not creating socialism and that it is not possible anyway to create socialism in a backward country. Both would seem to rest on *a priori* assumptions rather than on rigorous analysis of the problems involved in trying to move society
in a socialist direction. Moreover, whilst focusing on whether the state has become 'petty bourgeois', analyses have too often failed to take sufficient account of the real and formidable problems faced by the Angolan state. They often seem to be preoccupied with events in Luanda as though these were unconnected with the situation of the peasantry, the bulk of the population and source of local food production as well as crops for export. Indeed, in Angola, as in many other cases, the most critical problem for constructing socialism may be the failure of the state to elicit increased production and deliveries by peasant producers — itself requiring a flow of consumption goods to the peasantry. (Arguably, this was a crucial failure of the socialist government in Guine-Bissau). In Angola, oil revenues may allow food imports to replace peasant output, in part and for a time, as a source of food to Luanda and other towns. Again, in Angola, as for example in Nigeria, oil revenues increase the power over society of the central state, which becomes less dependent on the people to provide its own sources of income and expenditure; such revenues do not, of course, increase the capacity of the state to win the co-operation of peasants and workers in achieving its production and other goals. Angola’s continuing dependence on foreign capital, and particularly on Gulf and other oil companies, is obvious. What is not obvious is how else, at the moment, Angola can secure its access to its major market in the United States. The most critical problem facing the Angolan state, and its people, is the continuing aggression by the South African regime (who have recently invaded Mozambique as well), as Munck pointed out in Briefings in Review 18.

Angola now faces the threat of a renewal of more direct American intervention and support for South African militarism. Rather than view the Angolan state only in terms of who its personnel are, or identifying which class is represented by the state, we think that an attempt should be made to examine the state in its own terms, that is its need to consolidate, reproduce itself, and ‘develop’ the economy in a situation of an unevenly developed economy in which productivity remains low and external (and internal) threats endanger it.

We have no wish to treat the case of Angola, or any other socialist state, uncritically. Absence of comradely criticism in the past has proved very damaging to socialism. Nor do we wish to excuse the inadequacies of the party and state in Angola by referring to external threats and internal non-compliance with state directives. We do not, however, think it helpful to criticise attempts to construct socialism from a utopian socialist standpoint, nor to ignore the self-criticism and modified strategies which have emerged from the MPLA’s party conferences. We are well aware that it is extremely difficult to construct a socialist society, particularly in the conditions faced by MPLA in Angola or FRELIMO in Mozambique. Measures taken by party and state leaders may prove to stand in the way of socialist goals. We are not convinced that it is impossible for people to build the foundations for realising these goals, nor do we accept that these foundations can best be laid by developing the ‘forces of production’ along a capitalist path. As the debate on Kenya shows, these arguments will continue to be contentious among socialists. We plan to organize a meeting later this year to stimulate discussion on the dynamics, possibilities of and obstacles to transition.

*Carolyn Baylies, Dianne Bolton, Gavin Williams*
Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness Amongst African Workers

Robin Cohen

A major weakness in the interpretations proffered by many ‘radical’ commentators on African labour protest and worker consciousness has resulted from their efforts to define the characteristics of the African proletariat by the use of traditional ‘formula dichotomies’ — the theoretical bases of which have not been elaborated upon adequately for application within an African context. The methodological limitations imposed by these formulas (examples of which are ‘false versus true consciousness’, ‘economistic versus revolutionary consciousness’, ‘a class in itself or a class for itself’ etc), have led to an over-emphasis on data which has been easily accessible to measurement, and which has also been familiar and comprehensible within the framework of accepted marxist theory. Consequently there has been too much reliance on data relating to strikes, unionisation and overt political militance, and for the most part a failure to discover and evaluate the silent, unorganised, covert responses of African workers. An imbalance caused by analysing overt worker militancy without paying adequate attention to the covert type could result in an overall false conception of labour consciousness. It is therefore necessary to widen the range of resources to include more data illustrative of how local cultural influences and social pressures can shape the workers’ perceptions of their own exploitation. These individualistic forms of protest within specific work situations might not be immediately familiar to the observer; neither might they lend themselves easily to categorisation. Nevertheless they will contribute decisively to the overall process of determining worker consciousness at both an economistic and political level.

At dusk, two Mauritian sugar-cane cutters carefully cut off the long central stem of an aloe plant. They discussed briefly the appropriate length, then determined on a piece about 15 inches long. One end was carefully hollowed out and stuffed with nearly two boxes of tightly packed matchsticks. This incendiary device, with the slow-burning pith of the aloe acting as a fuse, was strategically placed to catch the strong gusts of wind coming in from the sea, while the matchsticks were covered with a handful of wilted strippings from the cane. Back at the village the two men drank quietly with their companions in the local store. When the dull glow appeared on the hillside, they walked home. Work tomorrow. The estate-owner, one of the score of Franco-Mauritians who owned the sugar industry, had laid off many of his workers the previous day. Too much cane had been cut and there was a logjam at the estate mill. Now the burnt field had to be cut within forty-eight hours if anything was to be rescued. The sirdar would be rounding up the labourers in the morning. (Field Notes: Mauritius, 1976)
A pungent odour streamed from one corner of Mokola market. An old woman was selling newspaper wraps of dried 'Indian Hemp' for one shilling a piece. Labourers, mainly from the Public Works' Department, squatted at the side of the road and sucked deeply on their joints. 'It is our reward for a day's work', they said. (Field Notes, Ibadan, 1968)

Initially the workers' conflict with the technical manager (of a Hausa-owned textile firm in Northern Nigeria) concerned allocation of time for prayer. Some time during 1961, a worker was caught praying without permission and was penalized by a seven-day suspension from work. He was able to arouse support for his position among fellow-workers, so that an appeal was made to the Emir resulting in the worker's reinstatement along with the provision for proper prayer breaks. (The Union Secretary recalled). . . 'I told them that we should not agree to this ruining of our religion by the company'. (Paul Lubeck in Sandbrook & Cohen, 1975: 146)

Retiring workers would inform those in the villages of their experiences and this would in turn affect the labour flows in subsequent seasons . . . Parties who left the rural areas with some knowledge looked forward to gathering more recent information along the route . . . returning parties took considerable care to warn new workers of bad employers and in case they missed anybody making their way to Rhodesia, they took the precaution of pegging notices to various trees en route. Sometimes written in Swahili, these notes, addressed to Africans in general or individual workers in particular, warned of mines to be especially avoided. For the illiterate, a system of signs carved on trees served the same useful purpose . . . The African names (for mines) were (also) rich in meaning . . . most helpful of all the prospective workers were those names which gave ready insight into management policies and practices . . . The total absence of generosity in food and wages at the Ayrshine mine was reflected in the name Chimpadzi — meaning small portion . . . And while Chayamataka — 'hit on the buttocks' — was hardly a name to make the Masterpiece mine popular, the fact that the Celtic mine was known as Sigebenga (a murderer or cruel person) made certain that the manager there was never plagued with work-seekers. (Charles van Onselen, 1976: 234,5)

The opening quotes are designed to highlight forms of labour protest in Africa that are 'hidden' or 'covert' — forming part of the everyday forms of consciousness and action by the African proletariat, but rarely systematically considered in the literature on workers and trade unions in Africa. It is in fact only recently that studies of everyday forms of resistance by American and British workers have led to a drastic revisal of the often-repeated conventional wisdom that workers in these countries lacked 'class consciousness' (Sennet and Cobb; Gutman; Beynon). The major impediment to the study of working class consciousness in whatever country was the lack of theoretical elaboration of the concept itself, particularly by those of a narrowly orthodox marxist persuasion. Working with a set of formula dichotomies (false vs true consciousness, economistic vs revolutionary consciousness, a class-in-itself vs a class-for-itself) such views could not encompass the levels and variety of class consciousness, its fluid and mercurial character, its infusion with, and relationship to the more general categories of a working class 'culture', 'sub-culture' or 'contra-culture' (for an elaboration of these terms see Yinger). While it is tempting to follow the conceptual trails laid by such terms as 'contra-culture', the limited number and character of ethnographic studies on African workers, dictates that the discussion must be confined to more randomized examples of the theory and practice of everyday resistance by African workers, both within the confines of their work situation and in the wider labour process.

The previous literature on African labour protest has for the most part been confined to those indices or worker dissent that are easily observed, or accessible to measurement. The number, scope and duration of strikes, the number of man-days lost, the rate of labour turnover, the extent of worker participation in union organizations, radical social movements and street demonstrations — all these are, quite rightly, considered as evidence of
labour protest. Within the factory, pro-management studies of the ‘human relations’ school, have employed indices such as workers’ productivity, job satisfaction and the rate of absenteeism to test the extent of habituation to the industrial ethnic (see e.g. Backer). Workers’ resistance is seen as an impediment to be subdued or manipulated — through job incentive schemes, productivity deals, the sponsoring of house unions, consultative committees, and the like. As to studies of the more overt forms of protest (predominantly strikes, unionization and overt political activity), these have secured, in recent years, a wider scholarly attention (see Sandbrook and Cohen). This book, covering the work of some eighteen scholars working in a dozen countries, can be seen as representative of the conceptions prevalent in the late sixties and early seventies. The concentration on obvious forms of dissent is explicable in terms of the dialectic that several of this group of scholars established with the earlier literature in the field. They sought to define the characteristics of an African proletariat where others had denied its existence, to show the extent of self-organization of workers where others had insisted that beneficial colonial labour officers or metropolitan parties had brought unions into existence; they insisted that workers were engaged in various forms of political bargaining where others sought to restrict the workers’ political role to a formal alliance between a party and a central union. To be sure, several scholars (Stitcher, Iliffe, Lubeck, Peace and Jeffries) represented in the Sandbrook/Cohen volume envisaged a more pervasive picture of the relation of the worker qua worker to the labour process, but none was interested in the social relations of production per se. What little interest had previously been shown in this subject was by way of an occasional anthropological account (e.g. Epstein) or paternalist concern about the poor conditions under which African labourers toiled (e.g. Davis). A more detailed and specialized account of the social relationships of African workers in an Indian-owned factory in Zambia appeared in 1972 (Kapferer), but the author is so preoccupied with spinning the complex webs of exchange and network theory that few clear findings emerge. It is virtually entirely in the context of ‘closed institutions’, i.e. the mining compounds of southern Africa — that the most directly relevant work has been undertaken. The most recent account was made possible through the unlikely circumstance that the author was a personnel officer in a Namibian mine as well as being a doctoral student at the University of Illinois and a sympathetic observer of the workers in the mining compound (Gordon). But while providing good ethnographic information, the more theoretically satisfying is the work of an economic historian of the Rhodesian mines (van Onselen). In the concluding chapter of his book van Onselen maps out what he considers are the special features of labour protest in the ‘labour coercive’ economy he surveys, which is that of the Rhodesian mines. His comments can, however, be widened in applicability and seen as laying the groundwork for a richer approach for the study of African labour protest. He writes:

In a labour-coercive economy ... worker ideologies and organizations should be viewed essentially as the high water marks of protest: they should not be allowed to dominate our understanding of the way in which the economic system worked, or of the African miners’ responses to it. At least as important, if not more so, were the less dramatic, silent and often unorganized responses, and it is this latter set of responses, which occurred on a day-to-day basis that reveal most about the functioning of the system, and forward the woof and warp of worker consciousness. Likewise it was the unarticulated, unorganized protest and resistance
which the employers and the state found most difficult to detect or suppress.

To discern the ‘silent’ and ‘unorganized’ responses of African workers in the face of the limited number of ethnographies and social histories that are available is no mean task, but it is possible to widen the range of our sources beyond the area normally considered to be part of ‘labour history’ or ‘labour studies’ by shifting the problematic, that is to say by decomposing older paradigms and recomposing known data into a new paradigm. To do this, it is necessary to provide a generalized model of the labour process and the pattern of workers responses within which our categories of discussion can be organized.

The Labour Process and Worker Responses

In specifying a new problematic it is first necessary to isolate some generic features of a capitalist labour process before identifying characteristic worker responses, and their particular African manifestations. It is postulated here that the labour process under capitalism involves both the creation and control of a working class and its habituation to industrial production in five major ways:

a. The potential worker is forced to abandon his own forms of subsistence or income (land-holding, petty trade, craft-production) and to rely, increasingly fully, on wages. This is the language of industrial relations’ experts is known as ‘labour-commitment’ — a notion which typically misconceives the problem by presenting it as if it were a matter of psychological choice for the worker. In fact, of course, there is more typically a high element of compulsion in what is more accurately perceived of as the creation and control of a stock of labour-power (for short, Enforced Proletarianization).

b. Once at work, the worker has to accept the unequal authority structure of the workplace — with directors, managers, gang-bosses, foremen and supervisors installed in a relationship of superordination (Managerial Control).

c. The worker has to adapt to the physical and psychological conditions of employment that obtain in the workplace (Psychological Adjustment).

d. The worker has to accept an unequal distribution of reward for the labour power extended. (Differential Reward).

e. The worker is forced to recognize the overall political and juridical structure that permits, or encourages, the growth and establishment of capitalist social relations. (Political Control).

Even within the most advanced capitalist modes of production not all elements of the labour process are fully comandeered by ‘capital’. In the case of Africa one would anticipate that the element of control would be much reduced in view of the incomplete character of capitalist penetration, and the remaining (through drastically reducing) possibilities Africans have for producing a wage supplement. It is important to emphasize, as do the editors of a recent volume on African labour history that ‘the spread of capitalism even to a peripheral zone detaches man from his product, man from his habitual environment, man from the right to dispose of his labour-power and his agricultural goods in his own right. It is in the scale and intensity of this dislocation and decomposition of domestic modes of produc-
tion, distribution and exchange, that the colonial presence manifests itself'. (Gutkind, Cohen & Copan (eds.) 1979). The opposite side of the coin the face which shows incomplete capitalist penetration is that which would suggest that workers are not always able to mount an effective challenge to all elements of the labour process. Nonetheless, historically and experientially, African workers have (and do) resist incorporation into capitalist production in many ways. Before citing the African data directly it is necessary to tabulate and group these responses and show their relationship to the five elements of the labour process previously specified.

Table 1: Workers' Responses to the Labour Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of the labour process</th>
<th>Characteristic Workers' responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enforced Proletarianization</td>
<td>a. Desertion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managerial Control</td>
<td>b. Community withdrawal or revolt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Adjustment</td>
<td>c. Target working</td>
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<td>Differential Reward</td>
<td>d. Task, efficiency and time bargaining</td>
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<td>Political Control</td>
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<td>f. Creation of 'work-culture'</td>
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<td>g. Accidents and sickness</td>
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<td>i. Belief in other-wordly solutions</td>
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<td>j. Theft</td>
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<td></td>
<td>k. Unionization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>l. Economistic strikes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>m. Participation in rallies, riots, demonstrations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>n. Support of anti-status quo parties</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o. Political strikes</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: The toned area is singled out for subsequent discussion.

Even a superficial examination of the table will help to further ground the initial distinction between hidden and overt forms of worker protest: categories a.-j. comprising the former; categories k.-o, the latter. In the first set, we need to establish and draw together existing African data; in the second case the literature is already in a much more theoretically elaborated and empirically demonstrated state. But the distinction between the two sets of categories and between individual categories should not belie the fact that real events are not always containable within the confines of a single form of response and often show a mixed and even paradoxical character. Let us take, for example, the vignette from Mauritius that open this paper. Here Mauritian workers are committing sabotage, not as in the normal case to delay production and evade work, but precisely to ensure that they would be permitted to work. How is this to be explained? Given the destruction or emasculation of all prior modes of production on the island, the indentured Indian labourers and freed African slaves, had perforce, to adapt to the capitalist mode. A few ex-slaves became fishermen (not their previous occupational specialization) in an attempt to escape work on the estates, but nearly all the remaining workers had little alternative but to sell their labour-power merely to survive. The estate-workers, for their part, neither wanted nor needed a stable labour force — far better to rely on a seasonally employed and unorganized group, with a large reserve army hovering in the wings. (Though this was in essence the estate owners' strategy, it also had its
problems: e.g. reproduction costs had to be met by estate housing and by permitting a small planter class to develop). In such circumstances workers' protest needed to be directed towards fostering stabilization, a strategy which in other contexts has been fought under the slogan 'A Right to Work'. In other contexts, workers, far from demanding that their surplus value be expropriated from them, may well be engaged in leading the revolt against work.

The combined and paradoxical (i.e. dialectical) character of nearly all of the stated categories could *pari passu* be demonstrated. To continue this exercise in full would lead to too complex a theoretical elaboration: suffice it to remind the reader that the dialectical character of each category of workers' response in Africa should be borne in mind in the following examples, which are organized simply by discussing the identified responses a.-j. in sequence.

**Workers' Responses in Africa**

a. *Desertion.* This was a common means of escaping habituation into the capitalist mode all over Africa. Stichter (in Sandbrook & Cohen) regards desertion as the 'chief mode of protest' once labour recruitment in Kenya had begun. One report from Nyanza, in 1907, said that railway workers were 'extremely apt to throw down their tools and run away on the slightest pretext'. Another from the Kikuyu area complained 'no man can run a farm with monthly relays of raw natives: labour of this kind is always capricious and liable to desert'. In 1909, 31 out of the 48 complaints received by the Nairobi Labour Office all concerned cases of desertion. A year earlier on the other side of the continent, the British were attempting to push through the Baro-Kano railway line in northern Nigeria. According to Mason 'resistance spread and became more determined'. Mr Gill, a political officer on the railway in southern Zaria province reported 300 desertions from the line while another officer complained of 800. The Acting High Commissioner counselled caution but not, of course, the abandonment of the enterprise: ‘It is madness to take large levies during the farming season from pure agriculturalists like the Gwaris, far better go slow till dry weather . . .' (Mason in Gutkind, Cohen & Copans, 1978). Desertion of soldiers from colonial armies, often used as 'labour brigades', was also common, as were cases of self-mutilation to escape conscription. Both these forms of protest are extensively documented in the case of French West Africa (Echenberg, 1975). In the case of southern Africa, a similar structure exists. van Onselen quotes the lament of Mashonaland mine owners: 'The police use every possible effort, but the fact remains that whole gangs can, and do, abscond and are never traced or heard of again'. He goes on to show that where total contraction out of the wage-labour system was not possible, workers deserted in one mine after another to try to secure better wages and working conditions.

Colonial governments and mine owners alike responded to the high rates of desertion by attempts to control and supervise both the recruitment and mobility of workers. In the French colonies highly supervised forced labour was used until the 1930s. In the British colonies, Masters and Servants' Ordinances and other legislation (registration bureaux, work certificates, like *kipande*, etc.) were all designed to criminalize worker mobility, and reduce
The rate of desertion depends on the degree of control exercised, but also, more saliently, on the degree of viability that remains to the pre-capitalist mode of production. Herein, as has previously been argued, lay a contradiction for the underdeveloped form of capitalism prevalent in Africa. 'The ideal solution... was one in which agricultural production remained sufficiently virile to produce an exportable primary product and absorb return migrants, but not so viable that it threatened the supply of cheap unskilled labour. Such a delicate balance was impossible to achieve and may indeed be considered one of the central contradictions of the colonial political economy'. (Cohen in Gutkind & Wallerstein, eds.; 1976: 161)

b. Community Withdrawal or Revolt. This, *par excellence*, is a category where there is an enormous weight of historical evidence to reinterpret. Most of the colonial historical sources have rich and bloodthirsty descriptions of the early wars of 'pacification'. Usually, of course, some higher purpose is adduced such as destroying 'barbarity', 'spreading the light' or preventing 'tribal wars'. The reasons for such adventures may not be totally reducible to the need for the fledgling colonial states to create a reservoir of cheap and available labour (the colonial authorities did need to reaffirm their political hegemony internally and against their metropolitan rivals), but this was clearly a motivating factor and was certainly the major effect of colonial wars. The necessity for the colonial authorities — especially in the areas of white settlement — to create and control a substantial quantum of labour power, is further demonstrated by the constant repetition in colonial sources that such and such a chief or headman needed to be deposed or killed for failing to honour his treaty commitments to provide labour. The local communities had two alternatives: to withdraw into regions so inhospitable that the birdbirder (labour recruiter) or raiding party couldn’t reach them e.g the Pygmies or many nomadic peoples, or to organize a communal revolt against the authority of the colonial state, its agents or its local collaborators. Examples of these forms of protest are legion, but the degree to which a protest against forced labour was the core of a communal protest has not always been emphasized. Witness however, van der Post's account of the withdrawal of Bushmen into the Kalarhari:

Everywhere they (the Bushmen children) were in great demand as slaves because, when they survived captivity, they grew up into the most intelligent, adroit and loyal of all the former servants. Even long after slavery was abolished and until the supply was dried up their service was exacted under a system of forced labour. From the earliest days, all along the frontier, the more desperate and adventurous characters among my countryside added to their living by kidnapping Bushman children and selling them to labour-hungry farmers. Hardly a commando came back from an expedition without some children... Many tried to escape and if recaptured, were flogged heavily for their pains. Others... would try furtively to signal by fires to
As to evidence of communal revolt, a recent history of the Igbo documents a not untypical story. The people of Udi, who had given only a token resistance when the British first came, took advantage of the outbreak of World War I to rise in rebellion. According to Elizabeth Isichei '... It was a protest against forced labour on the roads ... where the unpaid workers, who were expected to feed themselves, often went hungry — sometimes they used to eat leaves. The survey of the railway line seemed to threaten their ownership of land, and herald more forced labour'. When the revolt was brutally crushed the peace terms included the supplying of two thousand unpaid workers for the railway.

After 1915 they were forced to work in the mines as well. In Kenya and Giriama revolt of 1913-14, which resulted in the deaths of 400 Giriama, was a direct result of the government's attempt to use Giriama labour on the European and Arab sisal, cotton, rice and coconut plantations. Again in Kenya, millenarian cults, like the Mumbo cult, whose believers refused to pay tax or labour for the administration, grew up precisely amongst those groups, like the Gusii which had their first exposure to labour demands on a large scale (Stitcher in Sandbrook & Cohen). European depredations of African land were associated with European demands for African labour and it was for control of their own land and labour-power that such well-known revolts as Maji-Maji (1905-7) and Mau-Mau occurred. In short, there was a high element of labour protest in events that have been interpreted by colonial historians as wars of pacification and by the post 1950s Afrianist historians as 'proto-nationalism'.

c. Target Working. This rather old-fashioned and now discredited notion was first used by colonial officers to justify the payment of low wages. New workers, they argued, preferred 'leisure' to income, once they had reached a certain 'target' commensurate with their desire to purchase certain established consumer goods. A backward-bending supply curve was thought to result — the supply of labour drying up, and the return to the country speeding up, as wage levels increased. With other commentators, I have criticized this notion arguing that 'in fact the targets that workers set themselves were much more elastic than the colonial administrators realized (or were prepared to admit), and there appears to be solid evidence to support the view that wage-earners responded favourably to monetary incentives one these were offered'. (Cohen, 1974: 189)

This 'liberal' critique (the African as 'economic man') needs to be supplemented by the more plausible argument that elastic targets are ultimately determined not so much by choice, as by the increasingly limited possibilities for a return to rural life. The subjectivist element in the notion of target working can, however, be usefully refashioned to explain the undoubted fact that many urban workers perceive their employment as temporary, not because they can now hope to return to the land, but because they hope to become petty entrepreneurs and independent craftsmen. These petty bourgeois aspirations are thought by Lloyd to inhibit class consciousness: 'Rather than identify with wage employment, the migrant aspires to be his real master; he sees society as a ladder up which individuals have risen to various levels of success; he does not see an irreconcilable an-
tagonism between rich and poor'. Target working is thus an important element of what Lloyd calls the 'ego-centred cognitive map' of workers. But as Lloyd concedes in theory, a sociologist cannot explain the world simply in terms of men's intentions and decisions. In practice, there is a crucial difference between young, single men who are seeking to establish themselves of converting their savings to independent proprietorship, and on the other hand, the bulk of workers with family commitments confronting a situation of rises in rent, transport and the general cost of living. For such workers, the mythology of successful petty entrepreneurship has replaced the rural idyll as an object for escapist. Subjectively such fantasies are part of the workers' resistance to the objective reality that most of them will have little chance to avoid selling their labour-power, whether it be in the public sector, modern industry or in the open-air sweatshops of African cities (euphemistically now designated the informal sector).

To summarize this first set of forms of resistance: to implant capitalist social relations in an area previously characterized by pre-capitalist modes, it is necessary to create and control a stock of labour-power. In Africa, this was achieved particularly violently, through wars of pacification, the imposition of hut and poll taxes, the use of forced labour, and the application of a legal code equating worker mobility with criminality. Africans responded by desertion, by withdrawal or by revolt. But acquiescence of the loss of control over labour-power and its product was inevitable, even where symbolic escape was possible. Equally, one might have to accept the fact of wage-labour without accepting the conditions under which labour power is utilized. It is to these forms of resistance that attention is now directed.

d. Task, Efficiency and Time Bargaining. What is meant by task bargaining? Here a worker deliberately seeks either to restore his traditional skill or craft in the face of management attempts to detail, deskill and massify the productive process, or (more commonly) he seeks to reduce his exploitation by adhering overstrictly to job specifications and rules detailing his work. A 'work to rule' and job-demarcation dispute are typical examples of this form of protest — often triggered off by the managerial redefinition. Witness, for example, the indignation of an African tailor in an Indian-owned factory in Zambia who was accused of stitching a pair of trousers badly: 'If you continue to treat us like animals you will find your work in this factory becoming very difficult. I have been a tailor with Narayan Brothers, for over seven years and have never during this time sewn short trousers like that pair we are talking about now'. His co-workers supported him 'If you (the foremen) do not stop treating us like learner tailors we will walk out. Now! Now!' (Kapferer, 1972: 243). Time/Efficiency bargaining is a closely related form of resistance and may be seen in the workers' characteristic and frequently successful attempts to bamboozle the time and motion men, the planner and the job-setter. The collective solidarity ('Brotherhood') in time/efficiency bargaining on a Namibian mine is well described by Gordon:

White supervisors attribute quota restrictions by the workers to 'laziness' and point out that in terms of cash earning it is illogical behaviour since it cuts into the underground workers' bonus. Thus, it is felt that laziness must be inherent. But quota restriction, from the workers' perspective, has a logic of its own. It enables them to avoid fatigue by allowing them to work at
a comfortable pace. They are thus able to establish a degree of control over their own work targets . . . Quota restriction prevents competition at the work-place which would disturb established interpersonal relationships and protects slower Brothers thus alleviating white pressure because it is believed that if one worker works harder, the white will also expect other workers to put more effort into their tasks . . . walk offs were quite frequent and entailed considerable Brotherhood solidarity.

As well as for the reasons adduced by Gordon, go-slows may reflect the difference between rhythms of work derived from agriculture, craft production and seasonal employment and those conducive to industrial production or office routine. In his discussion of the prolonged disputes that led to the workers’ seizure of the Mount Carmel Rubber Factory in Tanzania. Pascal Mihyo shows how the employer tried unsuccessfully to use the workers’ committee to discipline the workers and secure greater efficiency. They responded by ‘a perpetual go-slow’.

e. Sabotage. As a form of resistance this carries time/efficiency and task bargaining to a more extreme conclusion. Sabotage is, in other words, rationally based in the determination of workers to slow down the production process and to prevent redundancies with the introduction of labour-saving machinery. Sabotage can also be seen as a means of levelling down profits to reduce inequality rather than, as in a wage demand, attempting to reduce inequality by levelling-up. A series of incidents witnessed in a Lagos plastic factory by the author (December 1968) demonstrated this clearly. After a wage demand had been refused, the workers systematically jinxed the machinery, the vats, the moulds and the firm’s transport. Subsequently, when the workers’ consciousness escalated and they decided to occupy the factory and sell the goods themselves, they regretted their earlier enthusiasm; but there is no doubt that the initial outburst was directed against what workers perceived of as excessive managerial profits. Sabotage therefore is linked with the other forms of resistance to the differential reward inherent in a capitalist labour process.

f. Creation of a ‘Work-Culture’. The structure of workplace authority is also frequently undermined by the deliberate creation or amplification of social distance between the worker and manager. Frequently the creation of a contra-culture is subtle and difficult to assess even after long participant observation. In-jokes, private linguistic codes, wall slogans and the like are most common; but the creation of a work culture takes many forms. In the Namibian mine Gordon was employed in, workers had four or five names, including a ‘white’ name, used mainly for interaction with the management. The proliferation of names obstructed the whites. If a ‘name’ was sought, the confusion gave the worker an opportunity to start an investigative relationship; if trouble loomed, the ‘name’ could disappear. On the other hand some workers stuck to their indigenous names. If the name was difficult for the white foremen to remember or pronounce then the worker could be anonymous and immune from singling out. In East Africa, Grillo points out that within the East African Railways an esprit de corps or ‘corporate ethos’ evolved around the use of Swahili: ‘Railwaymen whatever their national background, were willing and able to use Swahili as a means of communication — even Ganda, who in Kampala tried to ignore other languages except English’. Work-songs to break the monotony of the labour and to mock the gang-boss, dances, drinking patterns all take on the character of a distinct moral universe, a private culture where, as Gordon notes, blacks
can 'be themselves’ and be masters of their ‘own’ actions. The dialectic between ‘resistance’ and ‘adaptation’, an issue that is discussed in the concluding section of this paper, is seen most clearly in the case of a work-culture, which can act either as an insulative force or a set of symbols to mobilize the hunger of workers. A sensitive study by Ranger of the Beni dance societies for example, shows how the symbols of white power (hierarchy, discipline, barracks, uniforms) were combined with an African-based language and music to create a new and vibrant art form which spread over much of East and southern Africa. van Onselen surmises that the organization of the early mutual aid societies in Rhodesian mine compounds among workers owed much to the influence of the Beni dance societies. At another point van Onselen shows how mine dancing was generally approved of by the management as a means of social control and as a reinforcement for their beliefs in happy tribesmen, and only evoked disapprobation when an inter-tribal character and the dance organizers began to look more like an embryonic strike committee.

The control that managers attempt to effect in the workplace is challenged, in sum, by four principals means: i. attempting to repossess the definition of the task, ii. evading or deluding management as to the level of possible 'productivity', iii. by engaging in sabotage and iv. amplifying social distance and creating a work-culture. The degree to which many of these actions can be considered a serious challenge to the managerial authority depends on the local circumstances. Some may be no more than pin-pricks; others, particularly cultural manifestations like mine dancing, may be sanctioned by management as a form of repressive tolerance. The work-culture created is, however, of fundamental importance in providing the organizing symbols around which a grievance located elsewhere may be galvanized (i.e. given appropriate leadership, organization, an 'issue', etc.).

g. Accidents and Sickness. The next set of responses are those which are normally conceived as having little relation to the labour-process itself and are often thought of as extraneous to the relations of production, even by workers themselves. A closer examination will, however, reveal that, while there may be an element of unconscious reaction involved, these forms of behaviour do indeed constitute forms of worker resistance and adaption. Take first the question of sickness and accidents. The incidence of seriousness and distribution of illness and 'accidents' are, despite the verbal paradox, neither fortuitous nor random. The type of industry, the track speed-ups by management, the particular time of the day and time of the week; if all these factors are taken into account, accidents are far from being accidental (see Wrench, 1974). In a like manner morbidity is closely related to housing conditions, conditions at work, the distribution of health care, etc. Accidents and illness are, like Durkheim’s Suicide, social facts: facts to which workers are expected to adjust. In the South African gold mines, Wilson reports that in 'the period 1936-66 no less than 19,000 men, 93% of them black, died as a result of accidents'. The white death rate was 0.97 per 1,000 men, the black death rate 1.62 per 1,000 men. By 1967, medical compensation for miners was paid at the rate of R10 million a year, but two thirds of the total went to black workers. Beri Beri (heart failure due to lack of thiamine), for example, first extensively documented amongst young able-bodied Chinese working in Malaya, was found largely
among male hostel workers in the Johannesburg mines — and barely among other workers (S.A. Medical Journal, 1972, cited by Wilson, 1972b: 186). The disease is caused by bad food and heavy drinking, particularly of the ‘Bantu Beer’ produced by the Johannesburg municipality — which lacks the traditional ingredient sorghum, which contains thiamine. Municipal beerhalls were the first targets of the 1976 Soweto rioters. Far from destroying their social facilities workers were smashing the very symbol of social control and (less consciously) destroying what, it transpires, is a positively lethal form of ‘nutrition’.

With regard to reported sickness, what for managers constitutes ‘malingering’ may for workers constitute an attempt to deny their labour-power to the employer while coping with debilitating conditions the employer has provided. Equally, accidents are deliberately (or even unconsciously) used to evade work or slow it down. The self mutilation by army recruits mentioned earlier in the case of French West Africa, is obviously an act of volition; but accidents such as clothing caught in moving machinery, eye grit, fainting and muscular injuries have the effect of acts of resistance even were they not consciously so directed.

h. Drug Use. Almost invariably this represents a form of psychological resistance but social quiescence by workers. Drugs tended to be used as means of ‘ironing out’ emotional peaks and troughs. Some stimulants, for example, the widely used West African kola nut, are taken as food substitutes and simply to keep going, but more often ‘downers’ like alcohol and cannabis are simply used as a means of relaxation and enjoyment — a form of compensation for an unrewarding work experience. Worker-initiated drug use as illustrated by the opening vignette from Mokola market, should however be distinguished from managerial and public provision of drug centres as in the large beer-drinking facilities in mining compounds and townships of southern Africa. Alcohol was sometimes provided in a company store operation, but more often it was designed to prevent the recreation hours of workers being used for anything more harmful. van Onselen recounts an interesting managerial variation; a beer brewing monopoly was granted to favoured workers as a bonus. As van Onselen points out, this increased productivity, while the reward was financed by the workers themselves (van Onselen, 1976: 169). A second example can be cited. Partly under the pressure of local wine interests, the sale of alcohol, other than beer was permitted in South Africa in the early 1960s. This had the anticipated effect. During the period 1963-1871 the Cape Town City Council bottle stores recorded an increase in sales of over 500% (Wilson, 1972b: 180). Despite the undoubtedly quiescent effects of alcohol consumption (violence being predominantly intra, not inter-class directed) there is no doubt that it can also provide a form of companionship and solidarity. Gordon observes that drinking together is one of the most important rituals of friendship in a Namibian mine. Friendly relations and mutual trust is engendered by drinking together from a common pot in a context where tales of poisoned beer abound. ‘Everyone, young and old, sits within conversational range around the beer bins which emphasises the egalitarian basis of compound society’.

i. Belief in Other-Wordly Solutions. A common form of psychological
resistance to work is the adoption of religion or other-worldly beliefs, particularly those that stress relief from suffering in the next world. Often this might not be a coherent set of religious doctrines but simply a belief in chance, fate, a lucky break or the evil machinations of such other person whose actions are wholly beyond control — all forms of withdrawal which Lloyd records in Yoruba society. Yet, while undoubtedly an opiate for most workers, religious belief and practice might also provide some elements in the construction of a workers' ideology (asceticism, solidarity, retribution) and some practical experience of organization. Because many African workers followed Islam or African Christian sects, employers were often suspicious of 'nativism' or 'Ethiopianism' being fanned by religious practices. This was undoubtedly the reason why at first all the independent churches were outlawed in the Rhodesian mine compounds (van Onselen). That the colonial authorities and employers did not mis-apprehend the danger from independent religious movements is confirmed by Hodgkin's remarks in his classical study of *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. According to Hodgkin, the main achievement of the independent churches was 'to diffuse certain new and fruitful ideas, in however confused a form, among the African mass, the peasants in the countryside and the semi-proletarianized peasants in the towns for the most part: the idea of the historical importance of Africans; of an alternative to total submission to the European power . . . '.

When discussing forms of psychological resistance to the labour process, it is difficult to disentangle motive and intention from unconscious or dimly apprehended action and reaction. But the question of volition is less important, than the capacity of workers to create some private domains and psychological 'space' free of the insistent pressures of the capitalist labour process.

j. *Theft*. The last of the categories of 'hidden responses' considered here is that of theft. Many large industrial concerns calculate on a given proportion of raw materials, tools and product losses and simply pass on the increased prices to the customer. Worker theft can be usefully considered as a wage-supplement, which varies in volume with the rise or fall in real wages. To take one example from the Rhodesian mines, it appears that 'the volume of illegal gold trade increased as the wages of black miners fell' (van Onselen). Besides the gold amalgam that was caught on large canvass strips under the mill, or by running a finger-nail across the copper plate over which the crushed gold passed, workers were engaged in many other 'crimes':

Daily, hundreds of petty crimes were committed on the mining properties with the specific objective of rectifying the balance between employees and their employers. African workers constantly pilfered small items of mine stores — such as candles — or helped themselves to substantial quantities of detonators and dynamite which they used for fishing. Wage rates were altered on documents and hundreds of work and 'skoff' tickets were forged by miners who sought to gain compensations for what they had been denied through the system.

In the much larger and more valuable diamond mining areas of South Africa and Namibia it is deemed necessary to have daily screenings of employees including anal searches and X-rays in order to reduce the numerous occasions when diamonds have been secreted in strange places or swallowed. In white settler societies any club room conversation will reveal the elaborate charades domestic workers play with their employers —
watering down the gin, moving the mark on the bottle, putting flour into the sugar and rice, etc. Theft has here been interpreted not as a legal or moral offence, but as a form of labour protest which has the effect of reducing the rate of exploitation of the workers by an informal wage supplement. Seen in this view ‘theft’ becomes an act of recovering some ‘surplus value’, which would otherwise be appropriated by the employer.

**Hidden and Overt Forms of Class Consciousness**

A quick glance at Table 1 will reveal that the sequential discussion of worker responses has stopped abruptly before category k, the subsequent categories being those that are both better argued and documented in the existing literature and represent more obvious forms of class consciousness and action. By way of conclusion it is now necessary to relate the hidden to the overt forms of consciousness. Three theoretical positions can be briefly considered. i. The hidden forms are both more pervasive and more important, they are a ‘bedrock’, ‘grass-roots’, ‘genuine’ sorts of consciousness. van Onselen seems to be inclined to this view, though by limited his theoretical elaboration to a ‘labour coercive economy’ (for a discussion of this concept, see Trapido, 1971), that of a mining compound, it is easy to reply that in that context only the hidden forms were possible. Certainly, those disillusioned with the iron law of oligarchy, and shall we say the copper law of co-optation of trade union leaders, might well find some attraction in the ‘grass-roots’ view. It is a view, however, that would tend to the romanticization of everyday events that by their very nature cannot but be often disconnected, spontaneous, individualistic and with short-term effect. There is no sense here in which workers can combine for a sustained long-term programme, or seize the instruments of production or govern themselves, let alone establish themselves as what Marx called ‘the general representatives’ of their society. ii. The hidden forms are at a lower level of consciousness but can be seen as part of an incremental chain of consciousness leading towards a ‘higher’, more politicized, form of consciousness. This seems a somewhat more plausible position, though any incremental process cannot be viewed deterministically. In the absence of leadership, organization and a galvanizing issue (and in the presence of a repressive state or employer), there is little reason to assume that the process cannot be side tracked or aborted. If protest can be kept on a sporadic and informal basis, it can ultimately be seen as a form of adaptation to the conditions of capitalist production. Nonetheless, those informal acts that do involve collective solidarity (e.g. feigning illness) can lay the basis for an organization and leadership, if not a consistent ideology. iii. The idea of a step-by-step consciousness if often now challenged by Marxists who, following Lukacs, have pressed for a theory of ‘dual consciousness’ (New Left Review, 52, 1968). The dualism is derived from Marx’s contrast in The Holy Family between what any proletariat or even the whole proletariat imagines to be their aim, and, on the other hand, what the proletariat is and what it consequently is compelled to do (full citation in Mann, 1973: 45). Marx’s dualism is instructive in exposing the generally weak versions of subjectivism (attitude surveys, etc.) which some sociologists advance as a ‘refutation’ of class consciousness. But it is unsatisfactory in its underplaying of volunteristic forms of social action. Suppose, however, we reconstitute a ‘dual consciousness’ theory in another,
related, sense. Overt forms can represent an extant, readily observed consciousness — (which may be revolutionary or conservative to any degree between the two), whereas the forms of resistance described above can represent a latent and subterranean reservoir of consciousness. Workers can transcend the prosaic limits of everyday actions and reactions in given circumstances, and with a leadership that is able to amplify and glavanize forms of dissent that have not previously gained a conventional expression. To prescribe, the manner in which such a transition might take place — from latent to 'becoming' to actual consciousness — would take us beyond the realm of an academic paper into the world of practical politics. Nonetheless, one might conclude by arguing that the variety of responses and tenacity of purpose shown by African workers in their attempt to resist the capitalist labour process have thus far exceeded the capacity of African trade unions and revolutionary parties to channel such dissent for progressive or revolutionary ends.

Bibliography

Political Consciousness among African Peasants in the Belgian Congo

B. Jewsiewicki

Peasant political consciousness in the Belgian Congo took a variety of forms ranging from millenial religious movements to disobeying instructions, to flight into the forest, various forms of 'the refusal to recognize the authority of the colonizer'. They responded to the appropriation of their land and labour-time by Bula Matari, the colonial administration. The African petite bourgeoisie mobilized both ethnic support and nationalist sentiment in order to gain access to the power of the state. Post-colonial peasant rebellions, like their predecessors, rejected state authority but lacked a coherent social project of their own.

It is a hazardous exercise to reflect on the evolution of peasant political consciousness in the Belgian Congo during the colonial period. Such an undertaking assumes the existence of a peasantry, both as an objective social class with a social awareness, or even with class consciousness, and with common political objectives beyond 'tribal' cultures and consciousness. To the present, none of these prerequisites has been satisfactorily demonstrated. What follows, therefore, can only be some general thoughts, clearly more of a 'working hypothesis' than a systematic demonstration.

Neither willing nor able to enter into the details of a long and tortuous debate on the existence of a peasantry in Africa, I will temporarily adopt a definition which draws on the experience of Wolf in Latin America. Peasants are rural cultivators whose surplus production is transferred to the dominant groups for their conspicuous consumption and for redistribution. Peasant groups (and societies) are integrated in larger (state) formations which provide the legal frame and administrative means for the expropriation of surplus value from the peasants.

The dominant mode of production determines the relation of the peasants to their basic means of production — the land — as much as it determines the appropriation and distribution of their surplus value. Markets (controlled or free) constituted an important linkage between peasant societies and the dominant global society; nonetheless, non-economic constraints to participation in the market economy were always present. During the transition to industrial society (capitalist or socialist) peasant producers generally lose control of the means of production as much because of non-economic
mechanisms legitimated by the state (see Bettelheim) as, in the case on capitalism, from the penetration of the market economy. The expansion of the market economy, usually accompanied by technological changes, simultaneously provides the legal support of individual property rights, thus destroying the corporate bonds within rural units of production, and necessarily requires investments which the peasants cannot meet from their own resources.

The elaboration of the objective conditions of existence of the proletariat and the emergence of class consciousness are probably inseparable from the emergence and the differentiation of national society. As Vilar maintains, class consciousness and national consciousness emerge at the same time. The contradiction between the two principles of cohesion is characteristic of industrial society. Primitive accumulation by destroying ethnic cultures and regional particularisms prepares the ground for national culture and ideology (an important element in the legitimation of the State as arbiter, supposedly above social conflicts) and for the raising of consciousness of fundamental social inequalities which divide national society. The particular nature of primitive accumulation in colonial Africa explains in large part the abortion of the classical process of class formation.

The Belgian colonial regime gradually separated the units of production found within the precritical modes of production from control over their means of production: their labour and their land. Belgian legislation concerning vacant land and claims to the natural products of their environment (such as rubber, ivory and minerals) resulting from this law were but the first steps in this direction. Even if after 1908 property rights of corporate communities (clan- or village-based) were recognized for lands necessary for survival, in practice these rights remained subordinate to the right of the colonial state to dispose of all land which they designated as 'vacant'. Village displacement and legalized expropriation (with the so-called 'agreement' of the recognized local authority and a token compensation) prove that the colonial power ultimately controlled all land.

The system of compulsory cultivation (built up from 1919 to 1935) permitted European capital (under the cover of the state) to take control of peasant production and to create two sectors of activity: subsistence production and commercial production. The first allowed the rural community to reproduce rural and industrial labour which remains essentially migrant despite its stabilization. Contrary to the character of subsistence production, compulsory cultivation imposed the individual producer as economic agents in the commercialized sector. This way, the costs of the social reproduction of labour could not only be dissociated from the economic calculation of the capitalist sector but, moreover, could practically be held to be non-existent.

The combination of head tax, obligatory cultivation, and the pass-system (where permission was required to leave one's local area, thus reducing geographic mobility) provided for the direct expropriation of the surplus value of peasant production. The system built up between 1910 and 1933 gave the colonial state the character of a type of contemporaneous 'Asiatic' super-structure, or as I called it Etat-Providence. By appealing to an overriding public interest and to the collective well-being ('civilization'), the
state, ‘Bula Matari’ qualitatively different from its subjects imposed its own ‘superior’ social and economic order. To protect this order, it declared itself as supreme judge and neutral arbitrator. The ideology of Bula Matari (the breaker of rocks) — the nickname once given to Stanley — was cultivated by the colonial administration as a symbol of the State. Legitimizing and incarnating the State it expressed the allmightiness of the European (particularly those associated with the state apparatus) and his superior qualities. Concerning their relations with Africans, this term was employed to designate an agent of the administration, particularly those of a superior grade, as well as to designate the State as an institution. For example, the natives were obliged to work for Bula Matari, to obey his justice, etc. This was the quintessence of Belgian paternalism; its symbol and incarnation of the State in its agents.

By legislation as well as by political and social practices between 1920 and 1933, the central administration tried to suppress social differentiation and differences in legal statuses among the colonized by reducing everyone to the status of ‘native’. All Africans were defined as members of one of the ‘native’ groups and ruled in rural areas by local chiefs. As such, they were attached to the land, the cultivation of which became their obligation towards the state. Only wage-earners temporarily removed from their rural communities escaped cultivation, by offering instead their labour in the industrial sector. Participation in this economic sector as an active subject and not as a work-force was legally reserved by the biases of the Civil Code, for the racially distinct ‘white’ social group (supposedly a qualitative difference).

Africans were only wage earners in a temporary capacity: at least during the 1930s every African was essentially a ‘native’ and an agricultural producer — a peasant. Surplus value was still primarily derived from peasant production (including both agriculture and the collection of natural products). This was done by means of both direct and indirect instruments of control over production, by the reproduction, within the village communities, of a workforce to serve in the industrial sector, and by the state control over the market mechanisms (with both prices and access to the market in goods monopolized by the state). The golden age of this formation controlled by the all-powerful ‘welfare state’ (read paternalistic state) were the years between the onset of the Great Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War. During the war, this structure began to erode and gradually the administration of this welfare state lost control, first of the social transformations and later of political and economic changes going on within the colony. Almost simultaneously, there emerged an urban proletariat and a petite bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, in the final analysis, over 80% of the population of the Belgian Congo were still part of the peasantry in the 1950s.

Class consciousness and class interests inevitably took the form of opposition to the colonial state in its most visible forms of domination: the ‘national’ Belgian character of the colony and its ‘white’ character. But opposition to racial segregation, or to Belgian domination, or to the symbolic power of the colonizer (in local parlance, ‘bula Matari’) was no substitute for class struggle. It was instead a particular type of struggle within colonial
society whereby social divisions only covered over class conflicts without eliminating them. Under the welfare state, racial barriers divided the society into producers of surplus value (blacks) and those who obtained benefits from the redistribution of this surplus value by the colonial state (whites). White society was divided into 'grande bourgeoisie' and 'petite bourgeoisie'. The former included the elite technocracy and the upper levels of administration, associated with the bourgeoisie of the metropolitan country; the latter was composed of lower administrative personnel, traders, settlers, and skilled workers. Because the latter were essentially direct agents of the larger structure and overseers in direct contact with the African population, their interest separated them from the black proletariat when this latter made its appearance.

Even if the interests of the African petite bourgeoisie (made up of office workers and commercial employees, auxiliary personnel of the administration, teachers, traders and individual planters) were to appear similar to those of the white petite bourgeoisie, the colour-bar would make the two groups incompatible in the short term. Only with great difficulty can a colonially-structured race based society coexist with a class-based society, and the economic as well as the social evolution led to the only possible solution, that is, the replacement of the externally-structured society by one based on class. At independence, the local bourgeoisie (essentially of administrative origin — and hence an instrument of the state and the technocracy) took the place of the white bureaucratic bourgeoisie. In the logic of the colonial mode of production, the position of both the grande bourgeoisie of the industrial world and that of the local peasantry remained unchanged. Because of the nature of the colonial productive system, based on the extraction of the surplus value from the peasants, the urban proletariat is unable to take coherent shape.

The African petite bourgeoisie held an ambiguous position in colonial society: drawn by their class interest towards the colonial state, but forced by the interests of the colonial social order towards the black peasantry. This ambiguity explains the hesitation apparent in the emergence of the political consciousness. For a long time the African petite bourgeoisie was an agent of the development of a 'horizontal' type of consciousness stressing the interests of brothers within the African social order. Tribal solidarity together with the anti-colonial struggle (against racial domination) were the outward demonstrations of this horizontal consciousness which both prepared the replacement of white order by a tiny proportion of the black order, at the same time that it prevented the crystallization of a vertical type of consciousness, that based on class.

Social and political consciousness among the peasantry was demonstrated above all at the level of denial of the colonial system, of refusal to participate, as much as this was possible. It couldn’t be otherwise, since the colonial state forced itself upon and moulded every fragment of socioeconomic, political, and cultural space; the introduction of such an external force arbitrarily united geographical units and denied positive action in the class struggle, leaving no alternative but passive resistance. In this context, an awareness of common interests could only be based on the denial of Belgian domination and white domination. If religious movements, whether
of traditional origin or Christian origin, provided the necessary means for the diffusion of this consciousness, the contents of the message diffused remained the same: the denial of oppression. Thus the destruction of an existing society more often serves as a focus for political action than the construction of a new society. A positive programme is even missing in the movements of Christian origin except for what is implicit in the spiritual message (such as the presence of a black God) and the realignment of the traditional instruments of influence over the concepts of ‘Good and Evil’: healing, divination, and protection against bad fortune. The popular message urged a clean sweep of the world of evil to await the return of the golden age, that of the ancestors, that of divine rule. The fact that the traditional values were often, and for so long, perceived as anti-colonial is certainly in part responsible for this attitude. In the attempt to ‘rationalize’ (in the ‘liberal’ economic sense of the word, see M. Godelier) to the maximum the time of the ‘native’ the administration waged a long and costly struggle against precolonial culture: initiation practices, dances, charms, etc. These practices and particularly religious movements in the broadest sense of the word, were seen as much by the African peasantry as by the Administration and the European, as a defensive and as a destructive posture.

The first collective demonstrations of a peasant political consciousness occurred at the end of the First World War and the beginning of the 1920s. During the revolt of Maria Nkoi, which occurred in the southern parts of the central Congo basin, the ‘Djermani’ were to liberate the blacks from the Belgian yoke; while in 1921, the Kimbanguist Church promised in the Lower Congo spiritual liberation in the message of a black God. The revolt of Maria Nkoi was contained within a single cultural region, and even though some of the same elements reappear in the Pende revolt of 1931, neither of these two movements ever produced a universal message to which every African would respond. Movements derived from the Christian spiritual context such as Kimbanguism, differed from these two movements (the Maria Nkoi movement and Pende revolt) and probably from many others emerging from the traditional milieu alone. Those stemming from Christian contexts carried a universal message, one that related to the universal character of colonial oppression, claiming a God viable and relevant to their social context, served as an important element from which to reject the racial superiority of the European. The expansion of Kimbanguism as well as Kitawala (Watch Tower) was facilitated by the integration of local elements within the practices of these faiths, and achieved along similar lines to those by which earlier traditional religious movements were diffused. Their strength against colonial repression lay in their decentralized structures, in the diversity of their leadership, and in the pragmatic flexibility of their practices (which included the struggle against sorcery, the rehabilitation of certain charms, the sense of social purification, etc.).

Their ideological message prepared them intellectually as well as spiritually, for other forms of opposition; more than anything else it was this which enabled them to resist the impact of the symbolic aspect of the colonial power (the cultural, psychic, and intellectual domination of the colonial Behemoth). God was black, and therefore there was nothing innate about racial segregation; on the contrary, racial segregation was specifically a result of men’s actions. The anti-racial message of Kitawala was the clearest
and the most radical of all; this helps explain its deep roots in the working camps and in the urban centres. Much more directly than Kimbanguism, Kitawala directly confronted all forms of colonial authority, which itself was seen as the work of Satan. The authority of the Church alone of its leaders and elders: these were the only legitimate forms of authority.

Aside from the wide spread of the message of Kimbanguism and Kitawala, there were various other indications of the increasing awareness of the colonial reality, and of colonial exploitation, during the 1930s. The rapid decline of the European population during the first years of the Great Depression gave rise to rumours which spread throughout the country and which greatly disturbed the Administration. The Belgians were about to abandon the country, and would be replaced by Americans. The message repeats that of the ‘Djermanis’ (of the 1920s) but this time it was a message which spread across the entire country. Were these Americans to be blacks? It is difficult to say in what degree this possibility accounted for the popularity of the rumour. The Administration accused the Protestant Missions of being at the root of these rumours, and in their eyes it was not impossible that underlying such rumour-mongering were certain black Protestant missionaries, and the photos of US blacks in western dress and occupying positions which in the Congo were considered of ‘European’ status.

At the same period, the lower Congo, Africans flocked to stations and ports to watch the Europeans leaving the country; it was said that they took with them the souls of deceased Africans who would then serve as workers in Europe. Local explanations accounted for the purpose of hospitals for Africans in the same light. Africans were sent to die there so that their souls could be stolen and sent to Mputu (Europe) so that they could then produce goods to sell, in turn, to the blacks in Africa. Added to that was the message present in the Tupelepele which served as the ideological foundation of the Pende revolts (in the 1930s), but also in other movements: whites have stolen the wealth and the secrets of the ancestors and used them for their own profit. However, these belonged legitimately to the blacks and would return to them only when society was once again purified and reconciled with the ancestors. Then the whites would be punished: they would be thrown into the sea, and reduced to slavery; their women would be taken by the blacks, etc. The refusal to recognize the innate superiority which the white claimed over the black, as much as in the church as in the working place, the public domain, and before the law, was an extremely important element in the growing awareness of colonial exploitation.

The legend of Mitumbula or Simba Bulaya provides yet another facet of the same ideology of refusal to recognize the superiority which the European claimed. This myth of the cannibalistic European is not new in central Africa, but it is still significant that from the end of the 1930s and in spite of the struggle that the Administration, and probably also the church, carried out against this sentiment, it was propagated right across the entire country. In the countryside, children fled the cars which approached, women threw away their loads to flee into the long grass. The image of the European as civilizer, it seems, was found wanting.

Another aspect of the resistance and of the growing awareness of the situation (an awareness without which resistance would not be possible), was the
passive opposition to the orders and to the presence of the administrator, of the missionary, of the white in whatever guise. It was not a question of open refusal to carry out orders, but of flight, of lack of zeal, and of deception: it was these forms of opposition against which the police operations and military operations were most often launched. Boiling cotton seeds before sowing them; cutting the roots of coffee trees beneath the earth; choosing infertile soil in which to plant the crops forced on them by compulsory cultivation; stopping work at the point where (before 1947) the coercion ended (that is, before the harvest); fleeing into the forest to avoid the census, or a medical team; refusing European medicine; refusing to receive a troop of Force Publique which passed through a village; retaining initiation practices and dances: these were the various forms of passive resistance, of the refusal to recognize the authority, the power, the superiority of the colonizer.

The importance of these two elements: the image of the dishonest white as nothing more than barbarian thief on the one hand, and the passive refusal to submit to his orders (that is, the apparent indolence and laziness) of the other, promoted the larger and more all-embracing denial of the colonial world that was illustrated from 1941 to 1945 in the revolts of Masisi (Kivu) and Manono (Katanga), or in the rural reactions tied to the revolt of Lulua bourg (Kasai) and that of Matadi (Nas-Congo). However, in every case the absence of a positive and more constructive message continued, and was deeply embedded within the negative ideology of denial — rejection of 'white' order. Bushiri, leader of Masisi revolt, and his partisans sought to purify the world and to prepare the departure of the whites, or even their enslavement, by killing both the pretended sorcerers and the collaborators of the whites. In his revelation, Bushiri received only the message of denial; the copy of the world modelled on the colonial material world (but without the colonizers) would follow later. At Manono, the crowd was satisfied with lowering the Belgian flag from the pole in front of the territorial centre and to await the miracle to come. During the dispersion of the Lulua bourg rebels (mutiny of black soldiers) and during the urban revolt at Matadi, there were clear demonstrations of a strong undercurrent of hostility against the Europeans sympathy for the insurgents.

The Second World War seems to have constituted a turning point as much for the social evolution as in the formation of a political and social consciousness of the colonized peoples. The African petite bourgeoisie (being essentially bureaucratic this group is well represented by 'évolués') became increasingly aware of its own existence as a social class witnessing the struggle of black workers (Elisabethville, Katanga and Leopoldville, as well as Matadi in Lower Congo) and white workers (Katanga) during the Second World War. Nevertheless this class presented itself as being above the general opposition of classes, above the conflict which opposed the black peasantry and proletariat on the one hand to the white bourgeoisie on the other. Although tied to the peasantry by their interests within the colonial social order since they were both black, the African petite bourgeoisie felt itself closer to the European bourgeoisie by virtue of its inherent class interests. Consequently, members of this class first sought to carve out a place in association with the white petite bourgeoisie. They demanded the suppression of racial segregation which would have cleared their way for higher
levels in the state’s and capital’s administration in colonial society. They sought the removal of the colonial structures based on race in order to reinforce the class structures even if they presented themselves as the guarantee of political harmony. The African petite bourgeoisie’s (évolués) search for this hoped-for political harmony as a price of integration into the colonial (white) petite bourgeoisie explains in part the atrophy of a political consciousness among the Africans at large (especially among the peasantry).

Two factors demonstrate the political choices made by évolués and clearly show the consciousness of its interests as a social class. First is the abortive dream of a coup d’état (during 1945s social unrests) which would carry the African petite bourgeoisie to the commanding heights of the colonial structures, replacing the European administration, in the process. The second is the so-called Luluaborg declaration of évolutés, which followed colonial repression of the Luluaborg mutiny, offering class solidarity of white and black petite bourgeoisie to prevent social unrests. During the 1950s, often with the encouragement of the colonial authorities, sometimes without being entirely aware of their common interests, the petite bourgeoisie helped to smother peasant political consciousness and participated in the dismemberment of the urban proletariat. Horizontal social identities, those of ethnic solidarities and black solidarity in the face of racial segregation, were rapidly developed and used by the black petite bourgeoisie. The dominant preoccupation of the petite bourgeoisie was their potential integration within the colonial bourgeoisie after the removal of social barriers, especially racial segregation. This fact explains the absence of political demands on the part of the Congolese Africans prior to 1956. Discouraged by the dilatory manner by which racial segregation was being dismantled and thus the speed at which its own integration within the colonial bourgeoisie was proceeding, which was understood as white refusal to share a class position and privileges the black petite bourgeoisie finally set about to mobilize the peasantry, as shown in the 1950s in the Lower Congo in the case of ABAKO, an ethnic association which became the first political party. One might further ask in what measure the revolt of the sous-proletariat of Léopoldville (on 4 January 1959) spelled the political ends of colonial by forcing the African petite bourgeoisie to act hastily and thereafter to take more radical steps in order to benefit from the situation and to replace whites before the destruction of state’s apparatus.

The growing importance of solidarity and of tribal consciousness, from the Great Depression on, is to be explained by three factors. Colonial ideology and practice emphasized the so-called ‘race’ factor, presented as a criterion for the division of colonial society into blacks and whites as well as that of the internal division of Africans into ethnic groups. The partial proletarianization (which profited the industrial sector) withdrawing individuals from rural communities, imposed upon them (in the artificial social space of the towns) a search for a new principle of cohesion and solidarity. Finally, the competition in the struggle for the meagre advantages which the colonial regime offered to the évolués pushed the latter into a search for political support by exploiting the ethnic factor.

The rebellions of the Congo, the revolt of the peasantry against the old (colonial) state in new clothes, which means against the African petite
bourgeoisie, marked its political awakening. The scenario of 1944/45 was repeated on a larger scale. Denied an effective role within any positive model of a new society, the peasantry was, above all, aware of its rejection from the post-colonial society. In the process of sweeping away all signs of oppression, both past and present, and drawing on a profusion of traditional mechanisms, both for diffusion of the message as well as in the struggle itself, the peasantry drowned its revolt in the anarchy of the nihilist programme. Such a diffuse political consciousness, formed above all in the negation of the existent social order, did not lead to any positive programme, nor to the development of a constructive political awareness. The revolt drowned itself in internal conflicts and contradiction. The inability to mobilize the masses around any constructive social project condemned the rebellions to failure. Otherwise, the alliance of a tiny proportion of the petite bourgeoisie which took possession of the movement with the local (clan and lineage) authorities fastened themselves to the remains of and even the resurgence of the structures of the lineage mode of production; and this would inhibit the emergence of any positive common programme. The struggle against the bourgeoisie, both at the level of the central government and the provincial governments, remained their sole common objective.

The failure of the rebellions sanctioned and assured the effective replacement of the European colonial bourgeoisie by the local bourgeoisie and the maintenance of the colonial mode of production. The place assigned to the peasantry within the wider social structures, and indeed the mechanisms of peasant exploitation, remained the same as before independence. The ineffectiveness of the administrative structures was to lead to the loss of certain mechanisms of administrative oppression, such as obligatory cultivation, and give more importance to the market mechanisms. This is why, in spite of the will of the political leaders, social conflict became sharpened still more. As long as opposition to exploitation took essentially the form of negation — flight, evasion, the ineffective execution of orders and indifference to the survival of the state — then social consciousness would remain dominated by the horizontal divisions among the groups which retained tribal interests. The artificial continuation of the peasantry half-way between the capitalist mode of production and the lineage mode of production as well as the maintenance of the wage-earners suspended between the urban proletariat and the peasantry, and the appropriation of surplus value from peasant production (in terms of the price mechanisms, the market of goods and services and mechanisms of reproduction of the work force): all these guaranteed the continuation of both the domination of the local petite bourgeoisie and the economic dependence of the industrial economics.

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3. Social Movements


Revolutionary Crisis and Revolutionary Vanguard: The Emergence of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front

David Pool

While many commentators on the splits in the Eritrean liberation movements fall back on factors of tribalism, sectarianism or regionalism, Pool argues that a more accurate explanation must look to material factors. Regions and classes in Eritrea suffered differing experiences under colonization and were incorporated in varying degrees into a wage-labour economy. The ELF was grounded upon one specific experience, having as its base the pastoralists of the western region. Pool contends that this social base influenced the development of a military strategy which functioned well within a pastoral society with peasant societies at its periphery but was unable to promote an effective national struggle. The structure of the ELF, moreover, proved incapable of incorporating other groups and organizations incapable of developing a political reaction to the limitations of the ELF and was based on the urban centres of the highlands and the east, the more advanced peasantry, the urban working class and the intelligentsia. This social base has been a factor in its evolving a very different form of organization, political orientation and military strategy from those of the ELF.

Until very recently, the Eritrean struggle for independence from Ethiopia has elicited limited political interest, reportage or serious analysis. Not surprisingly, liberation movements are seldom open to academic political research. Of necessity they are secretive and sensitive about internal divisions. Frequently, analysis of internal conflicts and splits is avoided or propaganda of a simplistic and sloganistic type is issued. But at the same time, crises within liberation movements bring out of the shadow the veiled conflicts and illuminate the qualitative nature of a particular movement. The Eritrean fronts are no exception to these general comments although the division between the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) and Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) has been more obscure than that between the Palestinian, Zimbabwean or Angolan Fronts.

Obscurity does present problems. The analysis presented here is based on a handful of pamphlets collected over the last several years, an uneven set of political histories of Ethiopia and Eritrea, UN Commission reports and anthropological monographs written under the auspices of the British military administration. Problems of research require a stretching of the available
evidence and a large element of speculative interpretation. The paucity of information, degree of misinformation, and the richness of the Eritrean experience act as combined pressures to undertake a more systematic analysis.

Although interest in Eritrea has usually focused on topics like the right to self-determination, the tragedy of the half million refugees and displaced persons or the intervention of the Soviet Union, the aim of this paper is to present an understanding of the nature of the ELF and the EPLF by examining the crisis which led to the split and the emergence of the revolutionary EPLF.

Understanding the division between the two is important for several reasons. First, most analyses of splits in liberation movements have involved explanations which attribute primacy to tribalism, sectarianism or regionalism, on the one hand, or to the personalities or ideological formation of the leadership on the other. Second, the split and consequent conflict between the movements have significantly affected the Eritrean struggle. The prolonged crisis which brought about the split saw hundreds killed and the formation of the EPLF in 1972 brought about a civil war with sporadic fighting for more than two years. Unification of the two Fronts has not been achieved and armed clashes between the two have continued to the present.

It has usually been asserted and received wide credence that the ELF is Muslim and nationalist and that the EPLF is Christian and Marxist-Leninist. Without discounting the importance of religion or ideology, the explanation presented here rejects sectarianism or formal ideology in favour of material conditions as causative of the internal crisis which gave birth to the EPLF. Religion did become intertwined with divisive issues of political and military strategy and ideological differences did become pronounced in the 1970s. The development of ideological differences, however, was more a consequence of the crisis than causative.

The discussion which follows is founded on an analysis of the historical development of two pre-capitalist forms of production: pastoral nomads and peasantry. The differential transition which these two contrasting, indeed conflicting, societies experienced under the impact of colonialism and colonial capitalism provided the social base for the liberation fronts. The argument is threefold. Firstly, the original social base of the ELF shaped its political and military strategy. Secondly, the expansion of the ELF through all of Eritrea incorporation a contradiction between, on the one hand, its original social base of pastoral nomads and recently settled pastoralists and, on the other hand, a society composed of settled peasants in the rural areas and a proletariat, sub-proletariat and petty bourgeoisie in the urban centres. Thirdly, the contradiction was resolved by the formation of the EPLF because the ELF did not formulate a political strategy to absorb the pressures for change resultant from its expansion. It was the violent and protracted crisis between 1967-70 which reflected in very concrete terms the clash of these two societies.

In brief, Italian colonial rule forged the basis of an Eritrean state and began the process of social, economic and political integration, but the penetration of colonial capital forged different transitions on the two pre-capitalist
forms of production. Parts of the settled peasantry of the highlands and coastal area of Massawa and Harkiko were transformed into an urban proletariat, sub-proletariat and petty bourgeoisie within and around the modern manufacturing and export centres established by the Italians between 1890 and 1941. Sections of the pastoral nomads of the west, northeast and southeast became settled peasants and some clans established themselves as traders in livestock and grain. The majority, however, remained untouched by the deep changes occurring in the highlands and the east. It was this historically differential transition and its relationship to the fronts which lay at the core of the split. For the ELF emerged from the Bani Amir, the predominant tribe and core of western pastoralism. The EPLF was based on the urban centres of the highlands and east, the more advanced peasantry, the urban working class and intelligentsia. To understand how the issue of religion became intertwined with the division, it is necessary to give a brief description of Eritrean religious communities and nationalities and their geographical distribution.

Nationalities and Religion
Eritrea is a small country with a varied terrain and climate: savannah, temperature highlands and a desert coastal plain. This mainly arid coast, stretching for over a thousand kilometres along the Red Sea, gives Eritrea its strategic significance, for there are the ports of Massawa and Assab, coveted by Ethiopia. The northern coastline, together with the Dahlak Islands, lie on the Red Sea approaches to the Suez Canal and at its southern extremity the coastal strip extends to Djibouti and the straits of Bab al-Mandab.

The central area is dominated by the Plateau, the northern extension of the Ethiopian highlands, and comprises the provinces of Hamasin, Serai and the Akalai Guzai, with altitudes between 6,000 and 8,000 feet. The Plateau, cut by both deep and shallow fertile valleys, stretches northwards to the Northern Highlands, more stark and arid that those of the centre. It is these areas that provide excellent guerilla country.

To the west are the Barka lowlands which stretch to the Sudan border. The seasonally flowing Barka river brings strips of fertile land to this area of scrub and semi-desert. To the south-east is a richer area between the Gash and Setit rivers, the latter, with the Mareb, forming the southeastern border with Ethiopia.

The variety of terrain is matched in variety by the linguistic and tribal groups. In the highlands, the majority of the inhabitants are settled subsistence peasants. The coastal areas of the Red Sea are inhabited by nomads: Afar (or Danakil) in the south and Tigre-speaking Sahel tribes in the north. The western lowlands are populated by nomads, semi-nomads and recently settled cultivators. In the Gash-Setit delta there are settled village peasants. Although the bulk of the population is rural, Eritrea is quite highly urbanized with about 20 per cent of an estimated three million population living in cities and towns.*

*These figures have been changed by the ravages of the twenty years war.
Eritrea is frequently categorized as being divided between Christian highlanders and Muslim lowlanders. Most commentators have accepted this as the fundamental social given. The ethnic and sectarian make-up of Eritrea is, however, rather more complex than that of Christians in the highlands and Muslims in the western lowlands. It is more accurate to describe the different groupings in terms of languages.

**Tigrinya:** Most of the Tigrinya speakers live on the plateau and are almost all Christian but a significant proportion of the merchants in the highlands who are Muslim speak Tigrinya, as do Muslims who have migrated to the highland cities.

**Tigre:** Spoken in the northeastern coastal plains and western lowlands. Most are nomads and semi-nomads and are Muslim. It is the language of the Bani Amir of the western lowlands and the Sahel tribes of the northeastern coastal plains and semi-lowlands. The Mensa clan are, however, Christian.

**Sahho:** A small proportion are Christian. They live on the eastern edge of the highlands and in the foothills of the coastal plain in Akalai Guzai province. Most are nomads or semi-nomads with some settled agriculturalists.

**Danakil:** All Muslim, they inhabit the area of the Dankalia Red Sea coastal plain. The overwhelming majority are nomadic.
Beja: Spoken by a small number of tribes in the northeast and northwest, the majority of whose tribal relatives live in the Sudan.

Baza: Spoken by the Kunama who are Christian and Muslim and adherents of traditional religion, inhabiting the area between the Gash and Setit rivers.

Barya: Spoken by the Barya of the eastern Gash, in the western lowlands. They are mainly Muslim but with a few converts to Christianity.

Bilayn: Spoke by Eritreans in Keren and the surrounding semi-lowland area. They are equally divided between Christian and Muslim.

Most of the linguistic groups have their own distinct cultural forms in their songs and dances and many Eritreans speak two of the languages. Some Eritreans also speak Arabic, particularly from those areas which have had contact with the Arabs of the Sudan and the Arabian peninsula. A number of educated Eritreans speak Arabic or Amharic as a second language, depending on their place of education.

Table 1: Nationalities in Eritrea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tigrinya</td>
<td>524,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tigre</td>
<td>329,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahho</td>
<td>66,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilayn</td>
<td>38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danakil (Afar)</td>
<td>33,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barya</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunama</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,027,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: British Administrative Statistics for 1952.

The Differential Transformation of Eritrean Society

If sectarianism was only a symptom of the crisis within the front and the relationship between the front and the Eritrean masses, what was at its root? To answer the question requires references to the changes which have taken place in Eritrea since its establishment as an Italian colony in 1890. Such a lengthy period can only be treated at the costs of missing the complexity of the interrelated social, economic and political processes. Nevertheless, it is the social and economic transformation of different parts of Eritrea under the Italian, British and Ethiopian regimes that establish the different social bases of the fronts.

Until 1890, Eritrea was a contested area. The Ottoman Empire, and later Egypt, its successor to the Ottoman positions on the coast, the Sudanese empires in the west and the Ethiopian empires to the south fought with each other for tribute. With the waxing of European power the contest was for territorial control, a battle which ended when Italy, with the encouragement of Britain, established its colony on the Red Sea and named it Eritrea.

The colony was divided into two different societies: settled peasants and pastoral nomads. The peasantry was concentrated in the highlands and semi-lowlands of the Keren region, the coastal area of Massawa and Karkiko and the southern part of the western region. It was formed of dif-
different nationalities and included Muslims and Christians although the latter predominated. The pastoral nomads, Muslim with varying knowledge of and interest in Islam, inhabited the western lowlands, the northern environs of Keren up to the Sudan border, and the Red Sea coast as far as the border with Djibouti.

The impact of colonial rule brought about two transitions: the creation of manufacturing industry and a service sector in the highlands and coastal area around Massawa and increasing trade between the pastoral nomads of the west and northeast involving a tendency toward the settlement of some sections in predominantly pastoral areas. The low level of urbanization in the west in 1940 is indicative of the relatively slow transition of the western pastoralists. The settlements there were little more than large villages with limited internal division of labour: Tessenei, a market town close to the Sudan border, had a population of 5,000; Agordat 4,000; Barentu 1,000. Of a population of roughly 100,000 in 1940 only 12,000 were permanently settled. In the north, small towns like Naqfa and Afabat were then seasonal camps for the pastoralists. While those from the highlands and Massawa coastal plain were sucked into the modern economic sector created by the Italians, a limited process of settlement continued in the west though a shift did occur to casual labour on plantations in Sudan.

Differential dependence on the regions on the modern sector developed. The peasantry of highlands and Massawa became increasingly urbanized and proletarianized. Village economics became dependent on income from labour in the Italian owned factories and on road and railway construction projects. At the same time, the limited educational institutions became more accessible in the highland areas than in the pastoral west. Some change in this pattern of development occurred during the period of British military administration (1941-52) with the end of the war boom, the rundown of factories and the dismantling and auctioning of Italian war industry, when the proletarianized peasantry was forced to return to their villages. The peasantry of the highlands and coastal areas thus contain an element of an earlier working-class.

In the west, the main change was the settlement of some sections of the pastoralists with their involvement in migrant labour. In addition, the chiefly clans moved into the cattle trade and, in a system of indirect rule, acted as administrators.

Besides an intensification of the differences between societies of pastoral nomads and peasants, there had been an underlying conflict between the two.* The dominant clans of the west, the nabitab of the Bani Amir, had for years feuded with the villages on the western sectors of the highlands and with the settled Kunama, a peasant nilotic group, of the southwest. In the past, the fighting between the settled Kunama and Bani Amir had included raiding for slaves. On the eastern escarpment there had been a similar conflict between the pastoral Sahho and the settled peasants and of eastern Serai. Seasonal migration, the search for pasture and the historic

*John Saul and Roger Woodis include pastoralists in the peasantry. See "African Peasants" in T. Shanin (ed.), Peasants and Peasant Societies. This assumes away the importance of different transitions of varied pre-capitalist forms.
background of the marauding nomad preying on the settled peasant searching for spoils of cattle and property underlay the relationship.

The two transitional economies were frequently in competition for land and grazing. Population pressure in the highlands, increased by Italian alienation of land, forced highlanders to pasture their cattle on the lowlands and resulted in migration to the cities for work. The double change intensified the traditional clash between settled and nomad, on the one hand and, on the other, brought a greater inter-relationship between peasant and the new capitalist sector. For the nomads, failure of rains and pressure on grazing with its attendant loss of livestock brought either increasing settlement, migrant labour or the continuing clash between nomad and settled groups in the peripheries of the highlands.

The Crisis Within the ELF
Nationalist activity took an organised form in the 1940s, and continued in the urban areas after 1952 when Eritrea was included in the Ethiopian state as a federal unit. The first movement of the armed struggle, the ELF, was founded in 1961. It was formed from a group of political exiles in Cairo led by Idris Mohammad Adam, an old nationalist of the 1950s, and a small armed band in western Eritrea led by Hamid Idris Awati, who had a history of 'banditry' and resistance to the British. Both were from the Bani Amri and distantly related and it was this link which was crucial in shaping the relationship between the external leadership of political exiles and students abroad and the fighters inside the Eritrean field, the core of whom were Bani Amri. Initially, the ELF comprised only a handful of fighters and their military activities reflected their size and rural base of operations, the sporadic attacks on isolated army and police posts. Recruitment from harassed and badly organized urban nationalist groupings increased as news of the armed struggle spread. In 1965 the growing number of armed bands was reorganized by the external leadership into four zones under relatively autonomous regional commanders. The basis of the zonal organizations was the tribal or ethnic group. In the west were the Bani Amri and in the centre the Bilayn of Sanhit, while the Sahho commanded Hamasin, Serai and Akalai Guzai and in the east the Tigre dominated Red Sea. A sectarian tinge was added to the zonal organization when a fifth zone was carved out for the highlands in 1966 with the appointment of a Christian commander for Hamasin and the redistribution of Christians from other zones. Although there was a single military training centre, fighters were distributed to the zonal commands on the basis of religion, nationality and tribe.

An internal crisis occurred between 1967 and 1970 when demands by dissidents within the ELF brought about a series of conferences at Aradib, Anseba, Adobha and Sadoho. The key demands were encapsulated under the broad slogans of 'Unity of the Forces', 'Democracy for the Fighters', 'Leadership in the Field' and 'Problems of the Peasants'. The issues ranged from military strategy to internal democracy and from the relationship between the fighters and the leadership to that between the fighters and the peasantry. The coalescing of such fundamental issues was a mark of the depth of the crisis. They were also a mark of the failure of the ELF to transform as it expanded.
The demand for unity of the forces was directed at correcting the contradiction between a national movement with national goals and a military organization which recognized and perpetuated the narrowest of social divisions. The demand grew as much out of military necessity as out of political principle. The regional commands were given carte blanche to generate their own sources of finance and to conduct military operations. There was no overarching political leadership with the result that not only was there an absence of military co-ordination but even competition and rivalry between the different units. Furthermore, the lack of co-ordination facilitated the Ethiopian ‘pacification programme’ of 1967; offensives undertaken against the ELF were organized region by region.

The introduction of zonal organization was a higher form of struggle: the ELF had expanded from the peripheral west to the industrial and population centres; it was national in scope and recruitment; and it had increased its military capacity bringing a large scale Ethiopian counter-offensive. But its structure was anti-national: it heightened social and cultural divisions rather than minimizing or transforming them. The ELF embedded and reflected a traditional practice in its political and military structures. Now national in military scope, the reorganized front was simply the early armed bands writ large. Unification of the zones reflected a new political and military consciousness.

The slogans of ‘Democracy for the Fighters’ and ‘Leadership in the Field’ concerned political organization. They were partly a reaction against the external leadership, partly a reaction against the tight relationship between the external leadership and the military command of western Eritrea (controlling supply lines from Sudan), and partly a call for greater participation for the rank and file fighter in shaping a national political strategy for the front. The demand for leadership in the field was not simply the traditional conflict between besuited cocktail-sipping diplomats and those who bear the hardships and shed their blood in guerilla warfare. It was a reaction against the propaganda of the external directorate, the Supreme Council,* whose members portrayed Eritrea as a predominantly Arab and Muslim society and the Eritrean liberation struggle as a fight for Islam and Arabism. Such propaganda served to raise finance and political support in Arab capitals but did little to portray the reality of the struggle or of Eritrean history and society. Furthermore, it only served to entrench a hostility between Christian and Muslim within the ELF — a hostility which had already begun to take a savage turn in the mid 1960s. In the Asmara region the problem of the relationship between the fighters and peasants involved not only issues of peasant and pastoralist, of Muslim and Christian, but brought into question the total political and military strategy of the ELF.

The expansion of the ELF into the highlands in the 1960s has introduced there an element of coercion which had already been a characteristic of the ELF’s politics in the west. The early armed bands of Bani Amir within the zonal organization of the Barka regions had continued to prey on the settled Kunama, rustling cattle and attacking villages. It was a perpetuation of the

*Osman Salih Sabbe, a member of the Supreme Council, remained with the EPLF later forming the ELF-PLF, a small front not now recognized by the ELF and EPLF.
traditional rivalry of the Bani Amir and their settled neighbours under the auspices of the front. Because of the early dominance of the Bani Amir in the ELF, few Kunama joined and the problem was not confronted.

The beginning of military activities in the highlands had gone along with pressure on the population to supply food, water, intelligence and other assistance to the front. There had also been instances of cattle rustling by the Sahho group from villages on the eastern escarpment and by the western zonal unit from the valleys which stretched westwards into the highlands. A further problem resulting from the military expansion of the ELF was increased Ethiopian army reprisals against villages co-operating with the ELF and, in classical fashion, the peasants were pinched between the two. The front was not strong enough to provide military protection and the possibility of clandestine co-operation between front and peasants was constrained by the coercive practices of some of the ELF commanders. Many villagers were either neutralized or alienated and ceased providing assistance. Because the villages around Asmara were crucial for clandestine night time attacks into Asmara, the issue became central for the dissidents and particularly for fighters within the Hamasin group. The problem of the Asmara villages had a sectarian tinge insofar as the villages around Asmara were Christian.

These then were the major dimensions of the internal crisis of 1966-70. The playing out of the crisis itself took on the dimensions of a Christian-Muslim struggle in that a significant proportion of the early dissidents in the first period were Christian Tigrinya speaking highlanders. Initially, the conflict was managed within the military zones: the demand that if the Sahho, Tigre and Bilayn had their military zones, why not the Tigrinya speakers. The political demands that have been mentioned were far broader in scope and demanded a wholesale change of the internal nature and external relations of the front, its tactics and strategy. The pressure for change did not come from Christian Tigrinya speakers alone: of the three groups which formed the EPLF in 1970 only one was wholly Tigrinya speaking and of Christian highland origin. Yet from the mid-1960s onward, there had been an increasing number of recruits from the urban centres and the villages of the highlands and Massawa-Harkiko areas, of students, peasants and workers. These demands reflected not simply their higher level of political consciousness but the impact of a movement based on a backward social core expanding into a more highly developed region.

The process of the crisis was prolonged and bloody and from 1966 onward the ELF leadership characterized demands for change as sectarian. Opposition was identified with the Christian highlanders. Tensions, personal and political, exploded — Christians were assassinated and many deserted. It has been estimated that between 1966 and 1969 about 400 to 450 were either killed, surrendered to the Ethiopian authorities, or fled to Sudan.

A pamphlet distributed widely in the Eritrean field shortly after the formation of the EPLF was an attempt to counteract the sectarian depiction of the dissidents. A key section entitled ‘We are Freedom Fighters and not Prophets of Christianity’ stated their position:

It is an incontestable fact that besides a few who do not espouse any religion, the Eritrean
population is about equally divided between Christianity and Islam. Instead of promoting our national cause, the leaders of 'Jebha' (ELP) declare that the population is 80 per cent Muslim and the remaining 20 per cent Christian. We also very well know that they rally in the name of Islam rather than in the name of the Eritrean people.

Our conviction is that the Eritrean people were and still are oppressed. How many Christians or Muslims exist in Eritrea is of no importance or concern to us. Let this be the worry of those whose interest is to spread the Bible or Koran. We do not recognise that oppression discriminates on the basis of religion.

Should there be any struggle in Eritrea whose aim is to liberate only those who are Muslims we will oppose it. We are also opposed to any effort made by the 'Jebha' to oppress or exploit Christians. We are unequivocally opposed to all forms of oppression. We will not close our eyes and remain silent when we see Christians being oppressed for fear that we may be labelled as the defenders of Christians. We will actively oppose it. We oppose it not because we are advocates of any religion but because it is oppression. We are freedom fighters who will not forget our revolutionary responsibility for fear of what might be said about us. (Our Struggle and Its Goals. No author, probably issued in 1972.)

This pamphlet is quoted at some length because it is relatively contemporaneous with the split and, although now outdated, gives a flavour of the conflict. It is illustrative of the way in which sectarianism was utilized by the ELF leadership to quell demands for transformation and also of the intertwining of two factors: the expansion of the ELF and the crisis generated by that expansion. Unlike FRELIMO where internal crises were temporally spaced, all the crises came together and the reaction of ELF leadership was not simply that of tactical responses but of physical liquidation and the mobilization of sentiments which found an echo in the breasts of its core group: the pastoral nomads and their recently settled brothers whose traditional practices were to rustle the cattle of the settled and move into their grazing areas when the grasses were insufficient and who were, only incidentally, Muslim. These practices did not cease with the expansion into the highest concentration of the Eritrean peasantry — indeed they continued. Because the ELF did not or could not cast off the burden of an armed struggle which was linked to banditry and looting, the accretion of a new core led to a crisis the resolution of which was a split and the formation of the EPLF.

The pamphlet cited previously stated the harsh choice eloquently:

Conditions being such, should one opt to face butchery in the hands of the 'Jebha' simply because one was born a Christian or should one surrender to the enemy, the Haile Selassie government? Which option is better? Dying at the hands of religious fanatics or giving one's hand to the enemy? Both are abominable; both are poisonous pills to swallow; both mean death. Moreover, to make neither choice is tantamount to sitting on the edge of a sharp blade. But rather than choose either of the two alternatives, it is better to sit on the edge of a sharp blade.

The Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front
Those who chose to sit on the edge of the blade formed the EPLF, although originally called the Popular Liberation Forces.* The internal bloodletting brought together three different groups: the Obel group which established itself in South Eritrea, the Popular Liberation Forces (PLF) which was composed of Eritreans who had escaped to Sudan, crossed to South Yemen

*They formed the PLF in 1972, taking the name of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front in 1977. Although the Front changed in nature over this period, I shall refer to it as the EPLF for convenience.
and landed on the Eritrean coast and a group of largely Tigrinya speakers who established themselves in the highlands.

The early hegemony of the ELF derived from the failure of the nationalist movement in the urban areas. The strikes and demonstrations which occurred in Keren, Asmara and Massawa were effectively crushed by the Ethiopian security forces and the clandestine movement which emerged turned to peaceful struggle. The field was left open to the nationalists of the west, the core of whom came from or were linked to the dominant clans of the pastoralists. Although the ELF did gain working class support, it was from the Eritrean working class in exile and in the form of financial contributions from work in Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Mediated through the ELF leadership in Cairo, the Supreme Council whose origin lay in the Muslim political organizations of the 1940s, this Eritrean diaspora had no influence. The social base of the ELF, its political and military strategy and its expansion into the peasant regions shaped the dimensions of the crisis. The class base of the new movement, and the requirement of formulating a new political strategy in the context of the settled peasantry and its alienation from the ELF, shaped the EPLF. True, the approximately 300 which united to form the EPLF studied their Mao, Giap and Guevara, but more decisive was the struggle which shaped them.

The new strategy of the EPLF was directed at fully incorporating the peasantry, the urban worker and intelligentsia into the nationalist struggle. To establish the liberation struggle firmly in the peasant highlands and east coast through coercing a subsistence peasantry to provide sustenance and information had failed disastrously. Central to the new strategy were land reform for the peasants and political education for the fighters and EPLF mass organizations.

Although land reform in liberated and semi-liberated zones was based on the principle of private ownership with an emphasis on distribution to the landless, in villages where the EPLF had had a long presence and had established peasant organizations, collective ownership and co-operative production were introduced. Within such villages, the middle and poor peasants, the numerical majority for the most part, acquired the dominant voice in the village assemblies.

All recruits to the front and its associated organizations were required to participate in political education. For the mass organizations it was combined with classes in literacy and for fighters with military training. With the dramatic expansion of the EPLF between 1975 and 1979 and particularly with the liberation of towns, political education became somewhat repetitive and formal, lacking either innovative or creative style and method. At the same time, however, it gave a basic grounding in the tools of class analysis and the analysis of the Eritrean struggle in class terms. Classic shorter texts of Marx, Lenin and Mao were translated into Tigrinya. In the villages and towns emphasis was placed on basic literacy skills. The size of the classes made it difficult to make much progress; but for the women, attendance at such classes, involving discussion of politics and learning the alphabet, brought dramatic changes to their daily lives.

Political education within the front was much more concentrated and for-
mality was reduced by the camaraderie of shared life in the rear base areas, making for continuous discussion. It was combined with military training, lasted six months and was compulsory. No matter the level formal education or technical skill, peasant and PhD did both political and military training. In the early stages of the growth of the front, priority was given to training in paramedics and veterinary skills. ‘Barefoot doctors’ and armed propaganda squads would enter villages at night to discuss their goals and village problems, give literacy classes and provide simple medical assistance. The whole purpose was to counter the consequences of ELF’s practices and forge a more direct relationship with the peasantry through the establishment of EPLF cells within the village. Propaganda and organization work were also pursued in the Ethiopian controlled towns through the EPLF’s cells. Since many of the workers of Asmara lived in village suburbs and commuted to work, the organization of factory workers took place in the villages.

Interaction between military and political work expanded both active support and membership. It played a significant part in the growth of the front, one index of which was magnitude of activities in the rear base area. More recruits and supporters required a greater infrastructure. Raids into the towns were organized through the secret cells specifically to capture material to develop the activities of the front. Cells in factories co-operated with secret cells in the towns and the front to capture textiles for the workshop which made uniforms, agricultural implements for distribution among the peasantry and typewriters to expand the propaganda work of the information department. Political work was indissolubly linked to military success.

The front followed an active policy of breaking down the rooted distinctions between Muslim and Christian, rural and urban, worker and intellectual and man and woman. Songs and dances from the different regions became part of the cultural activities of the front. A strong emphasis was placed on the virtues of the spartan life of the village, necessarily reinforced by the harsh life in Sahel, the base area, to which those of urban background found adaptation very difficult. There was an emphasis on the need for all to participate in work. On a mundane level, this meant that the central committee member like the rawest recruit had his share of daily duties such as making the fire and preparing food for his squad.

Women came to play an important role, possibly in reflection of their importance in the peasant economy; they comprised 30 per cent of the front as a whole and around 13 per cent of front line fighters. Although none were elected to the central committee at the 1977 congress, women have high positions as political organizers and are not confined to support roles. Women’s political and literacy education has been stressed in the liberated areas and they have benefited as well from land reform measures: if divorced, women receive an equal proportion of land to men. In the rear base area women were trained as mechanics alongside men and in the villages young peasant girls were members of the people’s militia units. These changes might seem minimal in western terms but in the context of Eritrean society where the majority of women follow lives of domestic drudgery within a male dominated society, they have been dramatic.
The EPLF emerged as a qualitatively difficult liberation from the ‘mother organization’, the ELF. Although many of the changes came about as a result of influences arising after 1971, the capacity to forge a different movement was directly linked to the formation and social base of the ELF, its sundering as it expanded into the urban and peasant agricultural areas without any adaptation of its strategy. The crux of the problem for the ELF was that its original social base determined a military strategy which functioned well within a pastoral society with peasant societies at its periphery and as enclaves. Yet a military strategy of armed struggle divorced from a political strategy was fundamentally reactionary in a peasant society based on subsistence agriculture. Feeding another mouth is a problem; feeding a band of fighters is a catastrophe. It was under the weight of this pressure that the EPLF forged a strategy in which the military and political were symbiotic.

Bibliographic Note
Imperialism and Capitalist Transformation: Critique of a Kenyan Debate

Björn Beckman

The question of whether or not a dependency model is applicable to Kenya has been subject to considerable recent debate. Beckman offers a critique of the overall terms in which the debate has been cast. He argues that the critics of underdevelopment theory have failed to transcend its problematic and its misdirected identification of contradictions. They have in consequence placed unjustified emphasis on the state as a instrument of ‘factual’ interests. Defenders of the dependency position have for their part been unable to place their analysis within the framework of the logic of capital accumulation, imperialism and class formation. But for Beckman, it is only in terms of the general requirements of capital accumulation that the relation of the state to underlying class forces can be adequately understood.

The Anti-Dependency Position

Colin Leys’ ‘Capital Accumulation, Class Formation and Dependency’ (1978) is an attempt to assess current development in Kenya in the light of a theoretical reorientation since his main work Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism (1975). This reorientation reflects a widespread unease with some of the basic propositions of ‘underdevelopment theory’, including the notion of ‘blocked capitalist development’. Attention has been drawn to the poor fit of such theory with Marxist analysis of the development of capitalism and imperialism. Partly the unease was prompted by the inability to predict the rapid changes in some parts of the Third World, particularly in industrializing southeast Asia. Ad-hoc revisions of the theory to accommodate such changes (for example, the shift in emphasis to technological dependence) have done little to appease the critics, as the revisions merely draw attention to the theoretical weaknesses of the positions.

Leys’ observations on the advance of capitalism in Kenya, with the key role attributed to the domestic bourgeoisie supported by the state, are therefore clearly set within a theoretical debate which goes far beyond the empirical evaluation of the Kenyan case. This is despite Leys’ (1978) insistence that each case should be examined on its own merits, as ‘the debate about dependency and underdevelopment has not shown either that capitalist development cannot occur at the periphery . . . or that it is eventually bound
to’. Studies of individual cases according to Leys should be pursued at three principal levels — ‘the level of the “logic capital”, the level of capital centrality, and the level of class relations and class struggles in particular social formations, even level determining and being determined by the others’. In his observations on Kenya, however, he only deals with the last one. As we shall see, this limitation is probably a major source of the weakness of Leys’ argument.

Let me first summarize the main propositions and the critique they have met. Kenya, according to Leys, appears to have the prerequisites for a ‘transition to the capitalist mode of production’. The principal force of this process is the emergent domestic bourgeoisie and the state apparatus under its control. The preconditions for this relative ‘success’ are thus the specific factors which led to the creation of this domestic class. Leys traces the dialectics of capital accumulation to the impact of settler capital and the way in which it radically undermined pre-capitalist relations of production, preparing the way for the take over by an indigenous bourgeoisie. From its landed base, this class has assumed a dominant position in an economy which already was quite advanced in terms of the development of capitalist relations of production. It used its position to ‘set about recovering from international capital a good part of the field of accumulation which it had succeeded in occupying’. Control of the state apparatus by this class has been central to the advances made in the post-independence period. Most recently, this control has been used for the purpose of establishing a significant and growing stake in the manufacturing industry. The indigenous bourgeoisie can therefore now be seen as playing a leading role in the transition to industrial capitalism. In his understanding of this historical process, Leys draws support in particular from Michael Cowen’s work on agrarian class formation and on Nicola Swainson’s studies of the relations between the state and the development of international and indigenous capital in Kenya. At the level of theory, Leys has been particularly impressed by Robert Brenner’s emphasis on the critical role of local class relations and class struggles in understanding why capitalism emerged at some ends (England) but not in others (Poland) of the International trading system preceding this transition.

The Dependency Position Reasserted

Leys’ identification of major qualitative changes in the Kenyan political economy and the theoretically oriented interpretation given to them constitute a challenge to basic stands in the dominant radical analysis of African neo-colonialism. To one defender of the dependency position, Steven Langdon, the implication seems to be that ‘the indigenous bourgeoisie is dynamic and autonomous, in control of the Kenyan state, and consequently leading relatively successful capitalist development in the country’. Although Langdon admits that this is an oversimplification of the Leys-Swainson position, as he calls it, it is clearly in this vein that the challenge is perceived. Raphael Kaplinsky, another student of Kenyan capitalism, has similarly come out with a major critique of Leys (Review 17) who, according to Kaplinsky, contends that:

i. there has been sustained economic growth in Kenya.
ii. an indigenous industrial bourgeoisie exists.
iii. this bourgeoisie has squeezed out foreign capital in manufacturing and tourism.
iv. the state has assumed an antagonistic position to foreign capital.
v. sustainable accumulation in large scale industry will continue in the future at historic rates.

Now, this is clearly a caricature of Leys’ position. My concern here, however, is less whether or not the two parties give each other a fair hearing, than with the underlying theoretical assumptions on both sides. For that purpose, the perception of the argument on the other side, however distorted, is also relevant.

Let us first summarize the main elements of the established radical dependency position which seem to be under challenge. I am drawing here on the general ‘neo-colonial’ interpretation of state and bourgeoisie in Africa, especially as it has been formulated by radical critics of the Nigerian situation. I return to the specific points raised by Kaplinsky and Langdon below.

1. The indigenous bourgeoisie has not transcended its essentially petty-bourgeoisie or comprador character; it is largely unproductive, not capable of spearheading a transition to real capitalist development.
2. The principal source of this incapacity is the complete dependence of this indigenous bourgeoisie on foreign capital for which it operates either as an agent, a transmission link or as a junior, subordinate partner. This applies to the bureaucratic as well as to the private domestic bourgeoisie, although there are certain patriotic or technocratic elements among the former which seek to protect national interests. These, however, are likely to lose out in view of the overall balance of forces.
3. The unproductive, inefficient, corrupt and dependent nature of this domestic bourgeoisie is compounded by its extreme sectionalist tendencies, further diminishing its ability to generate the appropriate conditions for a successful capitalist transformation.
4. The nature of its relationship with foreign capital is therefore essentially one of harmony or ‘symbiosis’ (Langdon), a mutually profitable relationship, which the domestic bourgeoisie is very unlikely to challenge. Far from being a threat to foreign capital, this ‘national’ bourgeoisie, despite its occasional outburst of anti-foreign rhetoric, is firmly in the pocket of foreign capital, although its rampant sectionalism and other vices may at times render it a liability to the foreign masters and scare them away.
5. The state power in such a dependent neo-colonial context is either seen as a direct instrument of the foreign bourgeoisie, the only real ruling class, or as an organ of international capital in a more abstract sense. Alternatively, state power is defined as being in the service of the symbiotic relationship, performing an important mediating role within it. If and when disagreement arises between the unequal partners, the state either seeks appropriate compromise solutions, or, if any real interests of the foreign, senior partners are at stake, comes down firmly on the side of the latter.
6. This constellation of class forces is the basic source of underdevelopment as it ensures continued subordination to international capital. The domination of the latter obstructs any significant development in the direction of a more self-centred, more autonomous, capitalist development. The economy continues to be integrated internationally, blocking productive internal sector linkages. Whatever industry is established does little to change this pattern. It is highly inefficient and requires high levels of protection, it depends heavily on imports, which in combination with the outflow of profits, leads to a deteriorating balance of payments. Little industrial employment and linkages are created. In the meantime, productivity in agriculture stagnates or declines. Foreign exchange earnings from exports are undermined by their fluctuations, with destabilising switches between inflationary spells when the going is good and recessions when it is not.

Kaplinsky and Langdon may not agree with all the formulations ventured above. The purpose, however, is to outline the general analytical tradition in which their own more specific contributions are set. Let us now turn to these. In both cases, the argument is essentially empirical, not theoretical. Both marshal an impressive array of figures and other evidence in support of their rejection of Leys’ position. As Leys’ observations were rather im-
pressionistic and preliminary and not based on any any amount of current research of his own (which he also duly acknowledges), one may be easily impressed by the empirical strength of the critique. Occasionally the evidence is not very conclusive in lending support to the points made. But, again, my concern is not primarily with the accuracy of the evidence brought forward on each side, but more with the theoretical premises on which such evidence (whatever its quality) seems to be selected and thought to be supportive of a particular position.

Continued Dominance by Foreign Capital
Let me begin with Kaplinsky, whose ‘Capitalist Accumulation in the Periphery — The Kenyan Case Re-examined’ (1979), was first on the field. Kaplinsky has been following the Kenyan scene over a long period, monitoring foreign capital and the development of ownership and control in industry. In reasserting the dependency position, he points first of all to the limited achievements, which according to him, characterize Kenyan economic development in general and that of industry in particular. Manufacturing contribution to GDP had only moved from 10 to 13 per cent between 1964 and 1977 and the effort to move into export manufacturing has been unsuccessful. Productivity in manufacturing is very low and there is heavy protection. Outflow of dividends on past investments is greater than the inflow of new ones (this is not supported by Langdon) and a significant proportion of surplus generated seeps abroad. Industry has been financed largely from gains in agricultural productivity which can now be seen as tailing off. ‘Kenya remains a predominantly agricultural economy exporting primary products and importing manufactures’. As can be expected, balance of payments difficulties are growing.

The bulk of Kaplinsky's presentation deals with much useful evidence to demonstrate firstly, the great variety of links which most indigenous industrialists have with foreign capital and secondly, the extent of foreign domination and control in the industrial sector. He points out that indigenous ownership does not imply a change in the structure of industry. Types of investments are indistinguishable from those of foreign capital and have the same import reliance, tendencies to evade local reinvestment, manipulation of transfer pricing etc. He sees no evidence in support of 'the hypothesis that there has been a significant shift in ownership (let alone control) from foreign capital to an indigenous industrial bourgeoisie'. However, he sees 'a trend towards the establishment of new Kenyan owned and controlled enterprises and an advance in parastatal participation', which somewhat undermines his critique of Leys on this central point.

The last piece of evidence forwarded by Kaplinsky is directed against the view that the state is controlled by the indigenous bourgeoisie. Kaplinsky quotes four cases, in some detail, which according to him show (not very clearly, though) that the state has sided with foreign capital when it has been in conflict with indigenous capital.

The empirical material presented by Kaplinsky is useful. However, as evidence, it is rather inconclusive and the argument becomes to a great extent one of differences in interpretation of quantitative changes and of whether they should be considered significant, either in qualitative or quantitative terms. Kaplinsky’s limited aspiration to theorise and predict is
underlined in some of his concluding observations. Essentially, he is sceptical about the performance of the Kenyan economy in the past and whether present rates of accumulation can be sustained. He is similarly sceptical about 'the extent to which indigenous capitalists have been able to squeeze out foreign ones' while such scepticism may be justified it hardly solves the important theoretical issues raised by Leys' article.

**Foreign Controlled Industrialization and Stagnation**

Steven Langdon's contribution, 'Industry and Capitalism in Kenya', is theoretically more ambitious. He places his critique of Leys more explicitly within the framework of the wider dependency/anti-dependency argument. He has also made major contributions to the study of foreign capital in Kenya and can draw on much significant research of his own in support of his critique.

The major part of Langdon's paper is devoted to a review of post-independence industrialization in Kenya 'so as to test the extent of transformation to capitalist social relations which it is generating, and to prove the spread effects associated with the sector'. The first aspect is studied from the spread of wage employment. The critical relevance of this factor is assumed because it was 'at the heart of the new capitalist relations of production that emerged in Western Europe'. Langdon quotes figures indicating a slow down in wage employment since 1974. But he attributes greater weight to the fact that manufacturing employment has not kept pace with the growth in manufacturing output. While the latter has grown at a pace of 10 per cent per annum during the 1970s, employment has increased by only 7.5 per cent. Dramatic increases in output 1976-78 (an average of 16 per cent p.a.) brought increases in employment at little more than half of this rate.

The second aspect relates to the domestic linkages of manufacturing industry where he sees no significant improvement when measured by the import content of industrial output. Both aspects, according to Langdon, underline the limited capacity of the current pattern of industrialization to promote the expansion of capitalist relations of production and generate a more self-centred economy.

The pattern itself can be traced to the control exercised by the transnational corporations, with their 'product transfer' strategies, including 'developed-country product choices', and 'product-differentiation' efforts which heavily influence technological choice, employment generation and import-dependence. With examples from soap and shoe manufacturing he demonstrates how transnational penetration actually blocks and kills off smaller-scale domestic enterprises with a high employment yielding capacity and strong local linkages. Using the relative rates of profitability of transnational subsidiaries and local capital Langdon shows that the transnational sector 'is growing from strength to strength'. Looking at some new major domestically controlled enterprises, no difference can be seen between them and the transnationals in terms of the 'employment-minimizing, linkage-limiting style'. The overall conclusion is that 'growing industrialization is having only limited effects on social transformation in Kenya, because of restricted employment and linkage effects'.
Langdon also reviews the general performance of the Kenyan economy in recent years. As does Kaplinsky, he emphasizes growing balance of payment problems, import bills and debt service charges. The economy suffers from 'a stop-and-go cycle that makes sustained capital accumulation very difficult'. It lacks the 'export capacity to sustain the high level of imports which accelerated growth of investment set off, and this regularly chokes off the accumulation process'. This points to 'the fundamental fact that Kenya has not developed its own autonomous capacity to sustain capital accumulation through internal interaction among sectors of the economy'.

As does Kaplinsky, Langdon emphasizes the declining ability of Kenyan agriculture to finance the present type of development (not to speak of the growing food deficit). So Kenya relies increasingly on external government borrowing. A familiar, Latin American, pattern emerges:

the interplay of dependence on a few export crops, agricultural stagnation, growing balance of payment pressures, rising external indebtedness and slow growth except in a highly-protected, inefficient and capital-intensive industrial sector (p.39).

The result is 'explosive inequalities and imbalances'. The evidence suggests, according to Langdon, that Kenya is moving in the same direction.

He examines finally whether export manufacturing is a possible way out. He finds that it is not, mainly due to high cost structure. The 'optimistic view' of Kenyan capital accumulation taken by Leys and Swanson must therefore be questioned. Rather Langdon concludes that Kenya is becoming increasingly dependent on external factors, commodity prices and international finance.

An Inconclusive Argument
Langdon and Kaplinsky have provided us with useful evidence on the continued domination of foreign capital in Kenya's industrial economy, on the dependent nature of the indigenous bourgeoisie and the state, and on the distorted pattern of industrial development which follows from this foreign domination. The evidence suggests that great caution must be adopted when evaluating the indices of quantitative and qualitative changes which have taken place within this overall pattern, such as the growing prominence of the domestic bourgeoisie and the state in industrial production, as documented and theorized by Swainson and Leys.

I believe that a wealth of additional evidence can be marshalled to highlight other aspects of the dependency syndrome, not touched on by Kaplinsky and Langdon. On the whole, I believe that the overall picture of a dependent, neo-colonial economy and its ruling class, as summarized above, can be sustained by contemporary Kenyan evidence more or less point by point, just as it could in the case of Nigeria. I also believe that the evidence summoned by Leys and Swainson to indicate new elements in the situation can be largely incorporated into the dependency perspective as changes which do not significantly alter the overall pattern of dependency and underdevelopment. It may even be shown, as ventured by Kaplinsky and Langdon, that some of these changes, such as indigenous private and state participation industry, may in fact reinforce the underdevelopment syndrome as defined by the dependency line.

However, the opposite also seems true. It seems quite possible to integrate
the empirical evidence quoted by Kaplinsky and Langdon into the anti-dependency pursued by Leys. The continued (or growing) presence of foreign capital, the close links between foreign and domestic capital (private and state), the low employment and linkage generating capacity of the present pattern of industrial growth, are all compatible with an emphasis on the growing influence (power) of the domestic bourgeoisie, on its own and via the state apparatus. The figures clearly show a high rate of growth in both manufacturing output and employment, although the latter is lower. While the import dependence of manufacturing continues to be high (an average of 34 per cent 1966-74, according to Langdon) there certainly are quantitatively significant domestic linkages, which grow in absolute (if not relative) terms as industry expands.

The differences of emphasis in the interpretation of the overall growth performance and growth potential of the Kenyan economy are inconclusive. Both sides, in fact, see agricultural output and productivity as a major source of future weakness. But it is not clear, on either side, how this is related to the controversy over foreign dominance and the changing nature of domestic class forces. Similarly, the rising balance of payment difficulties (which we have no reason to doubt) may well lead to growing foreign borrowing (and dependency). But what conclusions can we draw about the performance of Leys' and Swainson's emerging class forces in this situation?

The evidence on its own is neither here nor there. Its significance depends on the interpretation given to it, which again is determined by the theoretical position taken. The inconclusive nature of the argument is caused not be contradictory or inconclusive evidence but by the weaknesses of the theoretical positions from which such evidence has been selected, ordered, and interpreted. So let us examine these positions.

The Notion of Successful Capitalist Development

The most important question of all those which are at stake in the debate about 'dependency' is whether or not there are theoretical reasons for thinking that the ex-colonies cannot (as Marx put it) 'adopt the bourgeois mode of production' and develop their productive forces within it. This is how Colin Leys introduces the problematic of his 1978 article. Kaplinsky quotes it approvingly. It is within that problematic his own response is set. While Leys sees such development taking place on a modest scale in Kenya, Kaplinsky and Langdon do not. Behind both positions, however, lingers an unspecified notion of the development of a real, national capitalism as being a precondition for such transformation. Ann Phillips has effectively demonstrated the ideological character, of underdevelopment theory. It involves contrasting the present state of affairs in the Third World with a notion of 'normal' capitalist development which draws partly on the historical experience of advanced capitalist countries and partly on an idealized conception of a rational system of utilization of resources and allocation of surplus. This historically derived ideal-type picture of capitalism is then contrasted with underdeveloped capitalism. By demonstrating the impossibility of such normal, 'autocentric' capitalism under foreign economic domination, the case against the capitalist option can be established, and thus the case for a brake with the world capitalist system and for socialism.
The relevance of much of this to the Kenya debate seems clear. Focusing on the low employment and linkage generating capacity of the foreign dominated manufacturing industry, Langdon concludes that ‘Kenya has not developed its own autonomous capacity to sustain capital accumulation through internal interaction among sectors of the economy’. But which advanced capitalist countries, one may ask, have or ever had such an autonomous capacity? While Langdon perceives of the possibility of capitalist transformation through very close integration with Western Europe, this, according to him, could result in nothing but dependent development as distinct from broad, national capitalist development, including the rapid expansion of wage employment, characterizing Western European capitalism in its early phases.

The point here is not to de-emphasize these historical differences, but to point at the absence of any effort to theorize them and thus specify the content of this ‘broad capitalist transformation’ on historical lines. One is left with the impression, that such genuine transformation is not compatible, for example, with balance of payments crises as if crises, stop-go, and stagnation were alien to the ‘normal’ behaviour of capitalism. ‘Widenin; inequalities’ are similarly quoted as evidence for the dependency position, implying that genuine capitalist transformation would not have such consequences. Inefficiency and a high degree of protection in the manufacturing industry, are identified by both Kaplinsky and Langdon as important aspects of the failure of capitalist transformation. It is by no means clear, however, why such protection and subsidies should be incompatible with capitalist transformation.

It may seem as if Leys seeks to avoid such idealist and ahistorical notions of capitalist development by speaking of the development of productive forces. We may also recall his own critique (1977) of the concept of development, meaning the capitalist development experienced by the metropoles. My impression is, however, that Leys is as committed as his critics to the underdevelopment problematic of whether or not real capitalist development is possible in the Third World. As nobody denies, as far as I know, that some type of capitalist development takes place (however distorted or distorting), it must be a qualitative notion of such development which is the subject of their debate.

Leys fails, as do his critics, to provide a satisfactory theoretical basis for identifying his type of capitalist development. The choice of criteria and measurement for judging whether or not capitalist development takes place becomes subjective. This is, as I see it, a principal cause of the inconclusiveness of the Kenya debate. The way the problematic has been formulated is obstructive of an effort to analyse the nature of ‘actually existing capitalism’ and its consequences for class formation and political organization.

Let us examine some of the specific aspects of this false problematic.

**The National Bourgeoisie as a Prerequisite for Real Capitalist Development**

The principal expression of a faulty underdevelopment problematic, in Leys as well as in his critics, is the way in which the issue of the national
bourgeoisie is handled. The question whether or not real capitalist transformation takes place becomes in this debate inseparably linked to the question of the emergence or not a real indigenous bourgeoisie. This leads to a misdirection of attention from the nature of the process actually taking place and its principal contradictions, to a preoccupation with secondary issues without relating these in a systematic way to primary ones.

The position of underdevelopment theory has been, to put it crudely, that without a national bourgeoisie there cannot be a genuine transaction to capitalism in the third world, the reason being the obstructive role of continued foreign domination. The way in which imperialism has moulded the domestic bourgeoisie, however, precludes it from becoming genuinely national. It is, in fact, the local bulwark of imperialist domination, and thus a source of continued underdevelopment. It is therefore necessary to fight both imperialism and the domestic bourgeoisie. As a political position this may be perfectly sound but it becomes easily vulnerable due to its weak theoretical base.

As the argument has been set, it is inevitable that any evidence of a domestic bourgeoisie growing in strength and independence is perceived as a challenge to the position of underdevelopment theory. It becomes necessary to prove that, despite everything, the domestic bourgeoisie is still weak and still dependent on foreign capital. While this may be true, the argument is gradually undermined as the position is poorly prepared for accommodation, analyzing and theorizing the changes in the relations between the sections of the bourgeoisie. On the other side, those dissatisfied with the ability of underdevelopment theory to explain the capitalist transformation that takes place, are encouraged to trace the roots of the changes to the rise of domestic class forces rather than in the wider process within which these local forces operate.

This, I believe, is what has happened in the case of Colin Leys. The growth of the indigenous bourgeoisie is treated as separate or even in contradiction to that of the development of international capital. It never becomes clear how the distinction between indigenous and foreign capital relates to the development or non-development of the capitalist mode of production. In what way does Kenyan ownership of industries, for example, alter the prospects for the generalization of capitalist relations of production?

We learn about the high ‘rate of penetration by African capital’ in different sectors without being told how it relates to the simultaneous expansion of international capital. We learn that indigenous capital (with the help of the state) is engaged in an assault on the barriers of capital scale and technology. The impression is given that in the process the Kenyan economy emancipates itself from the domination of foreign capital. But what does such emancipation imply? Who is actually overcoming what barriers? Is the buying into foreign firms by local capital and the proliferation of partnerships with such increasing financially and politically strong local partners not as much related to the expansion of foreign capital, its domestic sources of finance and its need for political protection to expand its control over markets, to overcome its barriers of scale? If partnership is in fact the dominant strategy of penetration by foreign capital, how shall we understand this increasing African ‘penetration’ of the manufacturing sector? Who
The general impression given by Leys is that there exist an 'indigenous' as distinct from 'foreign' process of capital accumulation and that it is from the rise of the former, at the expense of or in contradiction to, the latter that Kenya's prospects for a capitalist transition must be understood. The period of decolonization, he argues, was governed by the neo-colonial class project of international capital. The subsequent period, on the other hand, has been 'determined primarily on the class project of the indigenous bourgeoisie'. What, one wonders, has been the class project of international capital during this later period and, most specifically, in what way does the class project of the indigenous bourgeoisie distinguish itself from that of international capital?

As we have seen, Langdon and Kaplinsky emphasise the dependence of the African bourgeoisie and its integration with foreign capital. But their denying of 'autonomy' to indigenous capital does not stem from an understanding of the unity of the process of capital accumulation, but from their view of the complete subordination of one 'fraction' of capital to another. The preoccupation with the dichotomy indigenous-foreign is as fundamental to the perspective on the process of accumulation as to that of Leys. To them it is the dependent nature of the domestic bourgeoisie which blocks the road to 'autonomous' capitalist development. Underlying the positions on both sides are assumptions about the nature of the contradiction between this autonomous, self-centred development and imperialism. Let us turn to these.

Imperialism as Opposed to Real Capitalist Development

Behind the notion of real capitalist transformation requiring a national bourgeoisie (whose existence therefore must be proven/disproven) lies the fundamental assumption of a contradiction between imperialism and real capitalist development. I accept that there is a fundamental contradiction between national development and imperialism, but contend that the question of the 'national' can only be defined in its articulation with contradiction of class. My objection is to the structural definition given to this contradiction in the tradition of underdevelopment theory. By structural I mean a preoccupation with the manner in which the domination of international capital imposes constraints on the direction of production, for example, by favouring the mere extraction of primary commodities to their processing, the importation of goods to domestic production, assembly to real manufacturing, light consumer goods to capital goods, etc. Langdon’s concern with employment generation and domestic linkages is clearly an expression of this national, 'structuralist' view of the nature of the contradiction. But I believe that also behind Leys' focus on the rise of the indigenous bourgeoisie lies an assumption that this class, somehow, is the one likely to fight these structural barriers in opposition to international capital. While Kaplinsky and Langdon correctly draw attention to the identical structural features of indigenous and foreign investment in manufacturing industry, this is not being explained in terms of the logic of capital but merely by reference to the domination of foreign capital.

It seems quite correct to explain, as Langdon does, the backward structure of Kenyan industry, whether owned by foreigners or indigenes, as a logical
outflow of the product strategies of the transnational subsidiaries. But this logic fails to relate to the dynamics of the process of capitalist industrialization. It is as static as an earlier believe that any type of industrialization could be achieved in opposition to imperialism.

It is not clear at all why manufacturing industry in Kenya must be expected to retain its present high level of imported inputs, why it is unlikely to go into increasing production of domestic inputs. It is easy to see that such a move may not be encouraged as long as it is possible to draw on readily available international supply lines. But what if the accessibility of such supply lines declines relative to domestic ones? This may be caused both by positive and negative factors, such as growing domestic industrial capacity and foreign exchange scarcity. The balance of payments problem features prominently in Kaplinsky's and Langdon's argument as the ultimate obstacle to a continuation of the present pattern of industrialization, which therefore will grind to a halt. But if excessive foreign exchange utilization becomes a threat to capital accumulation, is capital itself not going to seek solutions for overcoming such obstacles? There is clearly nothing inherently unprofitable in having a high level of local value-added!

We are told that manufacturing for exports is obstructed by the high level of protection and consequent inefficiency which goes with the import substitution pattern of industrialization. But under what condition is foreign capital against export production? We have seen elsewhere how the 'right' conditions favoured such transformation. We are left with an impression that capital is committed to the upholding of its present uncompetitive cost structure and that any attempt at, for example, reduced protection would be 'deeply threatening' to transnationals as well as large-scale African capital. It is clear that the current conditions in individual countries favour particular strategies of accumulation by foreign capital, but these must be seen in a dynamic perspective. As one strategy is exhausted, others will be generated.

Most importantly, transnational capital does not represent one strategy, but a series of interacting and partly competing ones, which have very different consequences for linkages, both locally and externally. Alongside the direct investors we have a wide variety of pedlars of technology, management, consultancy services, and capital goods none of whom have any necessary commitment to the interests of already established transnationals in a particular territory. On the contrary, there is intense competition between major and minor foreign firms, more or less aggressively backed by their respective home states.

These are forces pushing capitalist transformation. They will carry along new forms of 'dependence', probably more deeply rooted ones. So in that sense the dependency position still holds. But this is not sufficient to explain the nature of the transformation taking place, to predict the directions likely to be taken, and to guide political action.

The State
Before I attempt to spell out some of the political implications of this view of the contradiction between 'national' and 'dependent' capitalist develop-
ment, there is a need to comment on the way it has been analysed of the level of the state.

Leys attributes a key role to the state in the emancipation of the domestic bourgeoisie. This role may be easily documented from various support measures taken. However, he goes further and argues that the state is controlled by the indigenous bourgeoisie. He criticises Langdon and his own earlier position for viewing it merely as a mediator between powerful international capital, on the one hand, and a weak and dependent local bourgeoisie, on the other. He now sees the state as the ‘register of the leading edge of indigenous capital’ in its assault on the barriers of capital scale and technology of the inherited neo-colonial economy. The local bourgeoisie is said to have assumed an hegemonic place within the power-bloc controlling the state.

We are thus left with the impression that state support for the domestic bourgeoisie is the specific class project of that bourgeoisie itself, as distinct from the one of international capital. This assumes, that the interests of domestic and foreign capital are significantly opposed, and that international capital has no interest in the creation of a domestic bourgeoisie. As I have tried to argue above, this position obscures the nature of the contradiction and the degree to which foreign capital depends on domestic class forces for its own penetration (partnerships etc.). How, for example, are we to understand the leading role of international finance capital (World Bank, IFC, CDC etc.) in state support schemes for domestic capital from such perspective?

The position of Kaplinsky and Langdon is that, although the state ‘is not an homogenous entity’, it is likely to side with foreign capital in case of dispute with local capital. Kaplinsky goes on to demonstrate that this is so in four specific cases studied by him. Langdon argues that the state possesses ‘relative autonomy’ from both local and foreign capital, based on a ‘symbiosis’ — or mutual interdependence among the senior state bureaucracy and political leadership, indigenous capital and foreign capital. State support for the formation of the local bourgeoisie is envisaged as long as it does not conflict with key foreign interests. While Langdon’s concept of symbiosis seems more realistic than Leys state of the local bourgeoisie, both have a conception of an hegemonic interest. In fact, Langdon’s symbiosis is merely a function of the dependent nature of the domestic bourgeoisie, whether state or private. So the symbiosis is clearly internal to the structures of foreign domination. The unity of state power is thus defined in terms of this domination, not in terms of the process of capital accumulation as such.

On both sides, therefore, an unjustified emphasis is placed on the state as an instrument of ‘fractional’ interests at the expense of its functions as determined by the general, ‘non-fractional’ requirements of capital accumulation. It is only in relation to that general role, however, that we can understand its way of relating to various class forces in society, capitalist and anti-capitalist, as defined by their relative strength of organization. From such a perspective it may be easier to understand the manner in which the state is accommodating various ‘fractional’ pressures and demands, than from the perspective of fractional hegemony. This is, if you like, a position of ‘capital logic’, without, however, robbing social forces of their autonomy
through class struggle and class organization.

The weakness of Langdon's concept of symbiosis is clearly demonstrated in his ability to handle the phenomenon of the nationally-minded technocrats except from an idealist or, alternatively, very crude materialist perspective. Their progressive inclinations and potential for challenging the interest of both foreign capital and their local dependents, are seen partly as a result of their limited share in the loot derived from the symbiosis, partly as a matter of a commitment to a more genuine national development. While individual experiences and convictions no doubt will determine individual actions and commitments we cannot understand the social role such inclinations will be allowed to play except from an understanding of their interaction with objective, materially based social forces.

Within the context of the overall logic of capital accumulation, however, the 'national' urges of these technocrats can be more easily grasped, but only, of course, if we are able to abandon a perspective where it is in the interest of capital to keep itself underdeveloped. Their bitter doses of cost-squeezing medicine may indeed be what heavily protected foreign and domestic capital require in order to be pushed over existing barriers of scale and technology. But who is actually pushing whom? Who is on what side of what contradiction? It is when we examine the political implications of this understanding of the state and the nature of the contradictions in which it is involved that the most disturbing aspects of this dependency perspective emerge.

Some Disturbing Political Implications of the Kenyan debate

The appeal of radical underdevelopment theory to progressive intellectuals in the Third World and elsewhere was the way it provided a theoretical basis for understanding the unity of the struggle against the two forces which could easily be identified as oppressing the people: imperialism, as represented by foreign capital and its military and political support system, on the one hand, and the domestic ruling class and its state institutions, on the other.

What are the political implications of the Marxist-oriented critique of underdevelopment theory as well as the attempts to reassert the dependency position? The Kenyan debate can, I believe, be used to illustrate how in the course of such critique and counter critique theory is largely disarmed of its potential for providing scientific support for the ongoing revolutionary struggles of the oppressed people of the Third World.

The implications of Leys' analysis seems to be that the African bourgeoisie is gradually overcoming, on its own and through its control over the state apparatus, the constraints on national capitalist development imposed by imperialism. What is the role of the revolutionary intellectual in this situation? To put his shoulder behind the wheels of 'progress' in the legitimate struggle against foreign domination? Or is it to disengage from the current struggle and wait for the real class contradictions of real capitalist development to unfold? (While perhaps in the meantime being a bit useful by monitoring these developments, for example, the growing differentiation of the peasantry or the various stages in the emergence of the African bourgeoisie)? I do not suggest that these are implications spelt out by Leys
or informing his own position but merely that they may easily suggest themselves to others in this fashion.

Langdon is more explicit of his own reassertion of the dependency position. The deepening crisis of the present dependent mode of accumulation (foreign exchange constraints, inefficiency, high costs etc.) will generate a political crisis. While it is hard to anticipate the dynamics of such a crisis, he suggests that it is not inconceivable that leaders of those technocrats (BB: = the progressive nationalist elements in the state apparatus) would be forced to try to widen their base of support by introducing redistribution policies that respond to urban workers and small-scale entrepreneurs, to peasants in less prosperous regions, and to the growing number of landless and unemployed in Kenya.

While this will not mean an end to international dependence, it would still be possible, according to Langdon, that such a strategy would accelerate capitalist transformation: redistribution would build a broader internal market which in turn could ‘support more sustained local capital accumulation’.

The problem of this position is not its explicit reformism — any strategy which seems to concern itself with the alleviation of the suffering of the oppressed classes must be seriously considered. The problem is its idealism, its failure to identify any objective forces which will push these ‘progressive technocrats’ into pursuing the interests of the oppressed classes. There are surely more logical strategies for expanding the markets for international and domestic capital as well as for increasing its efficiency and reduce its high cost structure; for example by increasing the rates of appropriation and exploitation in society, by pushing further its class differentiation, including the appropriation of peasants and petty-producers for the purpose of expanding rural surplus and ‘freeing’ labour for direct subordination to capital. All of this is consistent with the class logic of the capitalist state. It is ‘progressive’ only in the sense of the grim, destructive and oppressive logic of capitalist ‘development’.

Any improvement in the material conditions of the oppressed classes within this process is not part of the logic of capital but as a result of the struggles of these classes to defend themselves in the face of this oppression. The preconditions and dynamics of such struggles can only be grasped from an understanding of the nature of the contradictions in which they are involved. The structuralist, dependency perspective with its preoccupation with sectoral imbalances and obstructed linkages is barren of any attempt to identify or relate to such contradictions.

While having dropped the idealism of this dependency position, the Marxist-oriented anti-dependency stand has not succeeded in transcending this misplacement of contradiction. At the theoretical level (and I do not suggest that wrong theory is the ultimate cause) the principal expression of this failure is the misplaced preoccupation with the contradiction between national and international capital, without placing this contradiction within an attempt to understand the over-riding logic of capital accumulation and the nature of the class contradictions and class struggles which it generates.

In my initial summary of Leys’ position, I quoted his view that each national case must be examined at three levels:
1. the level of the logic of capital;
2. the level of capitalist geo-politics (imperialism);
3. the level of class relations and class struggles.

His decision to pursue the analysis, as he himself suggests, at the last level only, despite the explicit recognition of the interconnectedness of all of them, seems to be the main reason for Leys' inability to transcend an underdevelopment problematic, which he rejects in principle, and the political implications of which he is obviously concerned. As a result, we get a class analysis which lacks foundation in either the analysis of the logic of capital or in an attempt to integrate 'capitalist geo-politics' (= imperialism) into such analysis. It is not surprising that such a method may result in misplaced identification of contradictions and inability to transcend the fixation of underdevelopment theory with the absence of a 'national' bourgeoisie.

Bibliographic Note
This paper was originally read at the Conference on the African Bourgeoisie, the Development of Capitalism in Nigeria, Kenya and the Ivory Coast, Dakar, December 2-4, 1980, sponsored by the Joint Committee on African Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. It is intended to be the first installment of a three-legged discussion of capitalist transformation in Africa. Subsequent sections will attempt to reconstruct an alternative theoretical approach out of the principle elements of the present critique and to apply this theoretical understanding to the case of Nigeria.


Editors Note: This paper was presented at a conference in Dakar on 'The African Bourgeoisie: The Development of Capitalism in Nigeria, Kenya and the Ivory Coast', 2-4 December 1980, sponsored by the Joint Committee on African Studies of the SSRC(USA) and the American Council of Learned Societies, in conjunction with CODESRIA, Dakar. It was written before the publication of the debate among Kaplinsky, Henley and Leys in the Review No.17 and the author has not been able to revise it in the light of that debate. We believe that the argument pursued here goes beyond that debate and have therefore obtained the author's permission to publish it with only minor editorial changes.
ZIMBABWE'S EMERGING AFRICAN BOURGEOISIE

Barry Munslow

Much has already been written concerning the various development strategies being proposed for Zimbabwe (see Review No.18). This article would like to explore a hitherto neglected dimension in the literature. The various proposals are concerned with transforming, in one way or another, existing production relationships within the overall social formation. Development strategies in other words have implications for the future class structure of Zimbabwe. But development strategies are also determined by class forces, acting independently within society as well as at the level of political parties and the state. In considering possible development strategies we should examine what those class forces might be and where they might be going, perhaps irrespective of the stated wishes of the government. In this regard our prime concern here is to discover if and where there is an embryonic indigenous bourgeoisie in Zimbabwe which may find the chance for growth previously denied it.

The government of Zimbabwe has stated that its intention is to pursue as socialist option, but its approach is a cautious one intended to disrupt actual production as little as possible. ‘Creeping socialism’ clearly has a number of obvious and palpable benefits, avoiding the chaos and disruption which a massive flight of settlers and capital would inevitably provoke in the short term. Equally it carries a number of dangers, not least that by pursuing equivocal policies the intended goal may never be reached. The world is littered with unfulfilled development plans, and this paper attempts to show one crucial area that should be monitored closely, if another is not to join them.

Zimbabwe is the largest industrial power in Africa after South Africa and possibly Nigeria, and it clearly has the potential at least for indigenous capitalist development. Recent studies of Kenya have chartered the early origins of an emergent African bourgeoisie there. Their findings are pertinent to our own investigation. Cowen has argued that surplus was originally accumulated in pre-colonial times by Kikuyu occupation of the central Kenyan highlands and was stored in land and cattle. Under colonial rule there was a certain transformation from indigenous agrarian capital to commer-
cial capital; but through the chieftanship system sanctified by colonial rule, the ability to 'loot' the local population was guaranteed via unregulated taxes and fines and a further accumulation of land occurred. A final area for indigenous investment was education and this was perhaps most crucial of all for the growth of the Kenyan bourgeoisie.

Settler power had in all sectors restricted an indigenous capitalist class emerging. But through the judicious use of the state a settler bourgeoisie is also growing, made possible (again) by control of the state apparatus. There is presently a fierce struggle going on for control of the Zimbabwe state: between settler interests and the two major nationalist movements, a struggle between both these movements and a struggle within each (which remain national fronts of various classes). In the Kenyan case, according to Leys and Swainson, the indigenous bourgeoisie was able to use the state to promote its own growth. It achieved this politically by asserting its hegemony over the other classes in KANU, and by using state mechanisms for giving preference to local capitalists through licensing (in the commercial sector), credit facilities, loan provision (such as the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation), etc. Faced with enormous popular pressures for Zimbabweanization on the one hand and the constraint (stressed on virtually all sides) not to rock the economic system on the other, relatively favourable conditions for the growth of an African bourgeoisie may exist — the socialist commitment of the government notwithstanding. The government may judge this to be in their short term interests; all we would say is that attention should be focused on this hitherto neglected area because of the potential problems for the future that it creates.

To what extent then does an indigenous bourgeoisie already exist and what are the prospects for its expansion? The evidence is difficult to produce because the established research paradigm has not directly addressed the issue. Undoubtedly during the colonial period settler interests predominated. They halted and constrained the process of indigenous capital accumulation with the white 4% of the population owning half the land. But what concerns us here is the future, and identifying where, if at all, an indigenous capitalist class might appear.

The Settler land expropriation did not succeed in creating a uniform African poverty. Prior to the Unilateral Declaration of Independence some relatively modest, but nonetheless significant, differentiation occurred in the rural areas. Basically 30% of the African peasants owned 60% of the land and produced 70% of the major cash crop, maize. In 1960, 35% of marketed production came from the peasantry, most of this from the richer peasants, whose production levels were much higher than the others: 10½ bags of maize per family on the small scale plots compared with 37½ bags from the larger scale African farmers. By 1960 a distinct class of African farmers had developed which employed 56,000 African labourers. But the emergence of an agrarian African bourgeoisie had a slow and a chequered history. Steven Thornton (1978) has shown how a small but nonetheless significant burgeoning African capitalist class was created around Bulawayo in the first quarter of the century. As a result of settler fears of competition, African accumulation was soon restricted to economic activities in the location and landowning around the city. We would question
his assessment that all traces of an African bourgeoisie of petit bourgeoisie were wiped out after the 1920s, although its growth was certainly impeded.

From World War II onwards the state began to dismantle some barriers to indigenous capital accumulation and the class resumed its growth. The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 permitted the establishment of individual tenure in the TTLs (Tribal Trust Lands). A similar measure, the Swynnerton plan, was adopted in Kenya (although there it went much further) and in both cases the emergence of a stable, prosperous peasantry was predicted. The plan failed in Zimbabwe to meet the targets set; it received widespread African opposition and it was eventually abandoned in 1962, by which time 17 million acres of land had been transformed (see Bulman). We simply do not know how much land in the TTLs remains under private tenure. Between 1950 and 1960 a considerable core of potential African capitalist farmers had emerged: the number of Master Farmers rose from 1,665 to 8,966 and the number of Plotholders from 3,287 to 5,327. A Master Farmer was defined as one who had reached certain defined standards of crop and animal husbandry laid down by the Agricultural Department. Plotholders were those under tuition to become Master Farmers. The ideology of rural development attached to this programme was linked up with a global British colonial policy of creating yeoman farmers as a buffer against rising insurgency, particularly threatening in Malaya and Kenya. A stabilized petty commodity producing peasantry would replace the semi-proletarianized subsistence peasantry of the reserves, producing also of course a landless proletariat — the concomitant class construct. The African Purchase Areas provided the citing for the most 'progressive' African farmers, and it is interesting to note that many of those chosen were ex-servicemen or ex-civil servants, people closely tied to the system who would act in its support. The Purchase Areas had originally been set up following the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 which legally demarcated half the century, including the most fertile zones, for the whites.

In the post-UDI situation a setback in the formation of this class again occurred as a result of two measures. First, in response to sanctions the settlers switched from tobacco to maize which was the major crop of the African farmers. The latter were unable to face the new competition given the vast disparities in resources and the overall weighting of the system towards settler agriculture. Secondly, the Land Tenure Act was implemented. By 1969 African farmers employed only 17,000 African labourers and their power of accumulation was severely reduced. From 1973 onwards though, there was a reopening of credit for African farmers. By 1975, a thousand farmers in the Purchase Areas owned an average of 450 hectares each and drew half of the total credit allocated to Africans. In spite of the severe restriction on Africans imposed by the state, a quarter of the settler farmers owned less land than the average Purchase Area Farmers. We should note however that soil fertility, irrigation and other factors might produce differing levels of productivity on the land. Within the TTLs the top 30% of families had ten times the land per family than the bottom 17%.

With independence, there is the potential more than ever before for the rapid growth of an African agrarian bourgeoisie. They have an organization, the African Farmers Union, which proposed almost immediately after
independence that its members should be the first to be moved onto the white farming areas, as they were the ones with the knowledge and capacity to use the land productively. This sentiment was echoed and endorsed by Minister Nyandoro of the Muzorewa government who argued that in general, 'Our available financial resources must not be wasted by farmers who do not understand the best way in which to use crop input items such as fertilizer, for example to the best advantage'. This is a potentially persuasive argument, and one that is also made by the Whitsun Foundation and the Rhodesian National Farmers Union (representing the settler farmers). Broadly the strategy put forward by these groups is based on the assumptions that there must be continuity and that any change must be predicated on individual tenure. The two problems to be overcome are the underutilization of white land and overcrowding in the TTLs. A vigorous development programme in the TTLs is proposed, alongside of a limited resettlement programme of the better farmers on the unused white land. The plan for the TTLs is essentially one of creating individual land tenure throughout, completing the 1950s programme. The obvious problems associated with these proposals mirror those found in the Kenyan case — although many of the resettled farmers may benefit, the majority do not and there is the serious possibility of the growth of an indigenous agrarian bourgeoisie. Displacement of many of the rural population would produce a drift to the cities and the growth of slums and shanty towns — a lumpen-proletariat and a thriving 'informal' sector.

Ridden proposes a policy based on socialism and self-reliance. He calls for a decisive shift of population to the better agricultural land; at present European land has an average density of 34 acres per person compared with 10 acres per person on the African land. He proposes nationalization of land and a move towards a system of communally owned farming units. The multinationals are seen as being a complex problem for such a policy as simple nationalization of their land may produce adverse repercussions in other sectors where they have interests. In addition, the multinationals bring technical know-how and managerial skills as well as capital into the country. Riddell proposes hard bargaining to get the best deal possible from them.

The United Nations (Chidzero) report looks as though it in fact will provide the guidelines for policy in many different areas. On land, as on other issues, its recommendations tend to be vague: 'Land reform should allow for different tenure systems, different sizes of holdings and a wide variety of agricultural practices'. It spells out what these should be and warns of the need to ensure the minimum disturbance of agricultural producers, with reallocation being initially applied to abandoned farms and those taken from absentee landlords. Although the report suggests that the government be vested with absolute freehold title to land: 'The freehold tenure held in European farm land would continue and would have to be purchased in order to facilitate acquisition of land for redistribution . . .'. Under the constitution adequate compensation has to be paid at the highest market price over the five years before notice of intention to acquire is given. At 1977 land values the total amount payable for the European farm land would be $US400 million! One economist considered that in the face of this the government would find it 'well nigh impossible' to carry out a comprehen-
sive land programme (Financial Times, 14 October, 1980), and the UN report says 'The cost of acquisition would have to be passed on by the State to intending purchasers'. The report also warns that the Kenyan model of purchase through externally borrowed funds only postpones the solution as the loan would ultimately have to be repaid. Internally generated funds might have to provide a part of the answer, in particular because international loans have not been forthcoming to the extent expected. Britain's £20 million loan which has to be matched one to one by the Zimbabwe government will involve the purchase of 1.1 million hectares of commercial farming land and the settlement of only 18,322 peasant farmers. Given the uncertainty over the type of tenure systems to be employed and the availability of credit, it is possible to envisage the potential for the steady growth of an indigenous agrarian bourgeoisie. One could ponder whether this might have been a conscious consideration of the loan givers when restricting their favourable terms to such small sum. Of necessity, therefore, the new government might be obliged to consider the proposals of the Master Farmers.

It is somewhat ironic that the settlers have themselves created the precedent and foundation for indigenous capitalist development. In spite of the massive extent of foreign capital's penetration into Zimbabwe from the metropoles as well as from the centre of the regional sub-system, the share of domestic capital rose from 20-30% in 1945 to 27-33% in the 1970s (Clarke). Before UDI, at least a half of total investment came from national sources and the rate of nationally generated investment increased post-UDI to at least 60% (Stoneman). Not only did the settlers unwittingly and ironically create the conditions for the emergence of their rivals in a post-independence situation, a section also see their future interests in supporting and creating an alliance with their African counterparts. An early indication of this occurred when the Association of Chambers of Commerce of Rhodesia and the Rhodesian African Chamber of Commerce together formed a Confederation of Business in November 1978. It is significant that in Zambia no such merger occurred, indicating a lower level of development of indigenous capital in Zambia than in Zambia at the time of independence. Further proof of the relative strength of indigenous capital in Southern Rhodesia compared with Northern Rhodesia are public overtures made to indigenous capital by the settlers. An article in the influential monthly Commerce, February 1980, urged: 'with political power now shifting from Rhodesia's white minority to Zimbabwe's black majority the white business community is anxious to ensure its place in the new scheme of things. Its interests can be served by aligning itself with the emerging class of black business entrepreneurs, some of whom will have ready access to those who take power'. The same magazine reported that 20,000 black businessmen existed: 5,400 general traders in the TTLs; 5,900 other traders running mills, repair shop services, service stations, butcheries, bottle stores and beer halls; 4,000 miscellaneous business enterprises in the TTLs; and 5,000 urban businessmen. The black business sector is estimated to account for 10% of gross output of manufacturers and commerce and provide 7.5% of employment in the rural areas and 3% in urban areas. According to the 1969 census, African businessmen employed 16,910 workers. A small but significant core exists, concentrated as in Kenya in commerce, which could
provide the nucleus for an indigenous bourgeoisie. To grow, they need a
change in the land laws to allow them property ownership, protection and
preference in respect to settler and Asian competition, training facilities and
above all capital and credit. Febco (Financing Emerging Businessmen Com-
pany) was set up at the end of 1978 and is a syndicate of commercial banks
operating under the auspices of the reserve bank and this provides small
loans to retail businesses. The Industrial Development Corporation started
in 1979 (and headed by Bishop Muzorewa’s brother Basil) also provides
credit. A beginning has been made.

The most significant development in credit is the increasingly high profile in
the post-independence period of the dynamic African Business Promotion
Association (formed in 1978) which was set up in consultation with all Zim-
babwean political organizations and recently toured Europe to raise funds
to establish the first African Zimbabwe Bank (African Business, September
1980). It will raise funds for Africans going into business, supervise their
projects until funds are repaid, appeal for scholarships to train Africans in
business, etc. It has a membership of four and a half thousand businessmen
or potential businessmen. To illustrate its ambitions, the association’s
secretary, Mr P.J. Mpofu (who is also an official of the Patriotic Front)
even contested attempts by two foreign-controlled companies to gain ex-
clusive prospecting rights in the country (Rand Daily Mail, 11 October
1980).

The growth of the indigenous capitalist class naturally depends on whether
the economy as a whole prospers. Clark’s cautious assessment is that, ‘it is
feasible to consider Zimbabwe’s long-term future up to 1990 as being one
which might set it on the road to recovery to past levels of income and
growth’. A stock exchange already exists which could harness local in-
vestments.

Or great future potential would be Zimbabwe’s role in an alternative con-
stellation of southern African states, where it could hope to replace South
Africa as being the new centre. An immense floating reserve army of labour
exists with more than one million dislocated persons and they could be
employed at low levels of remuneration. The tightness of international aid
to Zimbabwe will only increase pressure to rely on internally generated
capital, in partnership, probably, with foreign firms. Poor relations with
the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc make alternative provision of invest-
ment a slim possibility. These then, are some of the reasons why the poten-
tial for the growth of future indigenous capitalist class as an intended or
unintended feature of development strategies should be considered. We find
Riddell’s and Stoneman’s alternative radical strategy unconvincing, as it
relies upon the various fractions of the settler bourgeoisie (industrial and
agrarian) overseeing a transfer to workers self-management and communally
controlled farms. Such a class has historically never willingly overseen its
own demise, even for financial rewards. The relation between labour and
capital is antagonistic — the best laid radical development strategies cannot
overcome that fact.

Settler political power is decidedly on the wane and the war and election of
ZANU (PF) and the PF have put an end to settler barriers to the growth of a
rival bourgeoisie — it remains to be seen what socialist barriers may be
erected.

Speaking to the Zimbabwe Economic Society in September 1980 Prime Minister Mugabe affirmed the socialist orientation of the government but said that he recognized the existing reality of the economy and the country:

At a time when our main concern is the resettlement of our peasantry, the rehabilitation of our economy and social services, we have determined that any measures disruptive of the economic infrastructure must at all costs be avoided. Our socialist thrust will thus restrict itself for now to the area of land resettlement and organization of peasant agriculture.

To concentrate on the rural area alone is certainly to meet a central issue of the armed struggle — the land question — but it does not indicate a decisive overall strategy for socialism; by default the country’s development might take another course. All governments have to establish their priorities and land must be highest on the list; this much is clear, but other sectors will continue to develop in their own way however much a government might like them to be frozen until it has time to deal with them. We have tried to show that an emergent indigenous bourgeoisie exists in Zimbabwe and that it may be in a position to profit from the situation of compromise existing in the country. A Kenyan solution is certainly not inevitable, but the new government will have to pay close attention to the de facto developments taking place on the ground. At this time, defeating settler power remains the priority in every sphere, but a socialist development strategy will only succeed if it becomes a real social force for change and opposing indigenous class forces are in rapid process of organization and growth.

Bibliographic Note


The material on Kenya referred to is taken from C. Leys, ‘Capital Accumulation, Class Formation and Dependence’, Socialist Register 1978, which lists M.C. Cowen’s papers on which he draws, and N. Swainson, The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya, 1980.

IN DEFENCE OF THE ANGOLAN MASSES

Claude Gabriel

I read with interest the comment by Paul Fauvet on my book Angola, le tournant Africain? (see Review No.15-16, pp.148-52). In the first place Fauvet concerns himself with my analysis of the MPLA as a petty bourgeois
nationalist leadership. To do this he pretends not to understand me and makes play with the petty bourgeois ‘origins’ of Lenin and Trotsky. There are more than 50 pages in my book on this question. Fauvet should have been more careful in his reading of these. Precisely what is explained there is that the complex history of the national liberation struggles in Angola did not allow this particular leadership to break with its social origins and to adopt a revolutionary socialist programme. The conditions which permitted a leadership like that of Castro in Cuba to become a working class communist one did not exist in Angola: (and Paul Fauvet would have a hard task to show us that the Neto leadership was an authentic revolutionary communist one). I have taken great care to argue this partly on the basis of the MPLA’s programme and partly around the relationships of this leadership with the mass movement. I have specifically detailed some of the similarities between this leadership and those of the neo-colonial African states. But whilst Fauvet criticizes my point of view, he fails to tell us what is the actual political and social nature of this leadership ... proletarian ...? He asks ‘How have MPLA leaders ... enriched themselves?’ (p.148). But he doesn’t answer this question. He seems to argue that by their origins as intellectuals Agostino Neto or Lucio Lara are no more petit bourgeois than Lenin or Trotsky. But Fauvet neglects two key factors here. In the first place Lenin and Trotsky were committed in theory and practice to the conquest of power by the working class and to the setting up of a workers state founded on the power of its councils (Soviets). In addition these figures were the leaders of a revolutionary state that abolished private property in the means of production, broke the stranglehold of the imperialist world market and internally extinguished all possibility for private capital accumulation that could lead to the re-establishment of the old ruling class.

Is any of this to be found in the policies of the MPLA? Is there not still an whole sector of the economy that remains in the hands of the urban petty bourgeoisie? Are there not still imperialist interests in Angola that keep this country under the control of the laws of the market? Is there not a perspective of opening the country to western investment for the most part of its industrial projects? All this is clear, but Fauvet sees none of it. He’s content to pose questions. But does he not see what happening in Mozambique which prefigures the road which will be travelled in Angola in the near future? Political power for the working class does not exist in either of these countries. MPLA and FRELIMO have installed themselves in government. They have destroyed the embryonic forms of popular power born during the turmoil of 1974-5. In this situation is it not logical that little by little, using the machinery of state and the strong element of corruption that already exists today, a petit bourgeoisie is going to begin to accumulate, to speculate and to consolidate itself? The absence of any real rights for workers and the weight of the imperialist market will favour this process. The only question which is still at issue is how rapidly these new layers will consolidate themselves and how soon we shall see the first ‘millionaires’ in Angola. Is Angola the first country where ‘theories’ about the nationalization of certain industries, control over internal and external trade etc., have been put into practice? Have they not already been preached in Guinea and even in Algeria and Tanzania? Are they not still in operation in Mozambique, Ethiopia and Guiné Bissau! Have bourgeois social relations been destroyed
there? Is the construction of socialist economies taking place? Surely not. In all these countries respect for the laws of capitalism, the maintenance of links with and dependence on the imperialist market, have produced the same effects: structural crises of the state enterprises; development of private capitalist businesses; continuation of abject poverty for the working masses; total dependence on imperialist investment. But Paul Fauvet seems never to have heard of state capitalism and covers up his embarrassment by making fun of the term ‘workers state’.

Marxists who still use the USSR as a workers' state, recognize a workers' state by the fact that a revolution had destroyed the political and economic power of the bourgeoisie and that the new state organizes production on the basis of state ownership of the means of production. Nationalization of a section of industry does not constitute a fundamental change in property relations. Paul Fauvet fools nobody by stating that Gulf Oil ‘belongs’ 51% to the Angolan government and that for Diamang the percentage is 62%. These figures do not prove that the Angolan economy has escaped from the control of imperialist capital and the laws of the capitalist market. The most widespread dispossessions in Angola have been of Portuguese capital where the government benefited from the three years of chaos which beset the former’s home base. But American, British, South African and French capital remains. The Luanda government appeals to these (in the same way as has Mozambique’s Samora Machel of late) not for necessary assistance within the framework of a centralized state plan but as the motor of development. When Lenin himself made an analogy between the transition to socialism after October 1977 and ‘state capitalism’ he took good care to emphasise that ‘this contains nothing that the power of the Soviets should fear for the Soviet state is a state in which the power of the workers and the poor is assured’. ‘The power of the workers and the poor!’ A very different problem for Fauvet’s arguments. And strangely his critique of my book totally ignores the one hundred pages that are devoted directly or indirectly to the question of democracy for the masses. Nothing about the hyper-repressive labour laws; nothing about the explicit battle of the state against the Poder Popular committees from October 1975; nothing on the totally repressive role of the trade union, the UNTA; nothing on the suppression of strikes supposedly organized by UNITA; no mention of that part of the book where are collected the quotations from those in power, the articles from newspapers, the official statements, that all reveal a real fear on the part of the regime when confronted with the working masses attempts to further extend the social gains made in the war of liberation. Fauvet doesn’t indicate whether the workers in Gulf Oil have any power whatsoever to impose their demands on its foreign owners, because he knows that those workers, just like those in Diamang or any other enterprise in Angola do not have such decision-making powers. He says himself (on p.149) that they ‘must be consulted’. Nothing could be more clear!

In this neo-colonial economic structure the power of the MPLA is therefore that of the petty bourgeoisie for whom the state structures serve as the means for their becoming the dominant class. That the government model is that of the ‘peoples’ democracies’ shouldn’t surprise Marxists. Still very weak, not yet having acquired the economic base that would enable it to reproduce itself like an established bourgeoisie, this social layer finds in the
'party', in the state and in bureaucratic centralism, the mechanisms for its
defence, homogenization and reproduction. The authoritarian bureaucratic
and repressive model of the Stalinist dictatorship corresponds perfectly to
the ideological needs of the MPLA. But only to its *ideological needs!* For it
is necessary to emphasise that for all it is called ‘Marxist-Leninist’, it is only
a pale imitation. How can one compare Angola to states like Russia or
Poland where the bourgeoisie has been destroyed and where there exists no
private property in the substantial means of production? But the petty
bourgeoisie finds there a single ideological model that expresses their wish
to militarize the working class, and to suppress any democratic rights. As
Fauvet says, the mass organizations are channels for the transmissions of
the Party’s orders to the masses. Our critic still has time to draw the lessons
from events in Poland by observing the determination of a working class to
have its own *independent* trades unions!

It is true that Fauvet has one excuse. It is possible to confuse Angola with
the ‘peoples’ democracies’. In both cases it is necessary to be in the Party to
have a job and decent accommodation. In both it is necessary to be part of
the administration apparatus to enjoy some of the spoils. But Fauvet does
not tell us what he thinks of the lot of the workers in Russia. This allows
him to play with words and to suggest that we have in Angola ‘a revolu-
tionary state’.

Was Fauvet amongst those who in 1977 said that the Somalia of Siad Barre
was ‘a socialist country’? Were there not nationalized industries in that
country, a government that liberally used Marxist phraseology etc? Is
Somalia still then a ‘socialist state’ after the departure of the Russians? If
not then it is necessary to explain exactly what has changed about the struc-
ture of that country. The concept of ‘socialist country’ applied to all
regimes that nationalize a part of their economy and that adopt a foreign
policy close to that of the Kremlin is fraught with all sorts of problems. The
only thing that Fauvet can demonstrate is that the Angolan political regime
is not identical to that in the ‘classic’ neo-colonial states like Zaire or the
Cameroons and that the form of neo-colonial domination over the Angolan
economy is not precisely identical to that in Zambia or Kenya. But that is
precisely something that is strongly underlined in my book. Consequently it
would be appropriate for Fauvet to try to make a stronger defence of the
MPLA. He ought to defend the one party state. He ought to support the
abolition of any independent trades union. He ought to defend the absence
of all democratic rights in the country. How is he going to do all this? Will
he explain, as did Sekou Touré in 1960, that it’s because there are no social
class antagonisms in Africa? Or will he tell us that it’s because the working
class agrees with this form of state as in Poland or Czechoslovakia? Fauvet
must also explain some other things: the two crises of the government since
1976 involving the elimination of Nito Alves and later of Nascimento. Were
these not indications of intra-bureaucratic conflicts amongst the petit
bourgeoisie? It is also necessary to speak of the Maoist militants released a
few weeks back after more than three years in jail without trial. We don’t
support the position of the Maoists of the Amilcar Cabral committees, but
we should not forget that the MPLA vigorously combatted them because
they had a strong influence in the popular committees in the slum areas of
Luanda. To eliminate these committees it was therefore necessary to deal
with the Maoists. But did these people not participate in the battle against the FNLA in Luanda? Did they not also speak of a struggle against imperialism? How does Fauvet explain that the MPLA which he says was the founder of the Poder Popular committees was forced to divest itself of a political current whose line was that of the committees in the slums and the factories?

Fauvet accuses us of sectarianism. Sectarianism in relation to whom and what? To the MPLA or to the Angolan masses? To the Angolan state or towards the workers and peasants? Fauvet sets himself up as ambassador of a political regime over which the masses have no power. That's his affair. For our part we are not 'sectarian' towards MPLA. That word is incorrect. We are against this state and this government. We are on the side of the masses in their struggles, on the side of their desire for democratic rights. We favour a resolution that will evict imperialism from the country. For his part Fauvet is certainly not sectarian towards the MPLA. He is in fact a faithful propagandist for the regime. But what hides behind this is contempt for the workers and peasants who struggled against Portuguese colonialism to obtain democracy, the right to freedom, the right to work! Fauvet is doing in 1980 what many others did in 1960 for Guiné Conakry. He confuses a government and a state with the masses of this country.

Finally Fauvet finds it contradictory that I speak of a mass movement that wasn't controlled by the MPLA after 1974 but which nonetheless gradually accepted the Netoist leadership during the civil war period. In order to further this argument he seems to give credence to the absurd idea that the political leadership accepted by the masses at a given moment necessarily corresponds to their objective needs. On the subject of this 'rapport' between the masses and the MPLA Fauvet makes some generalized criticisms of my arguments, but he says nothing about the signing of the Alvor accords which allowed the UNITA and the FNLA to operate throughout the whole country. He says nothing on the decrees made by the ministries of which certain were under the control of the MPLA during the period of the coalition government, against the workers of Luanda or Benguela. He says nothing of the fact that the MPLA called for the creation of neighbourhood committees only after they had already been born during the mobilization in the towns from which it was itself then absent. My book contains a large number of documents on these questions, amongst them the motions of works committees that denounced the negotiations with the FNLA and UNITA. I clearly explain there that the movement of these committees was not strong enough to form the basis for the alternative state power of the working class and that in the situation of a full civil war against the reactionary forces the population allowed these structures of self-organization to be emptied of their revolutionary content and to be integrated into the state machinery, only for them eventually to disappear.

How does Fauvet explain the different phases in the propaganda of the MPLA on the question of the popular neighbourhood committees? Firstly silence, then apologetics, later attempts at incorporation, more threats and denunciations and finally once again apologetics — immediately before the elections by which they were effectively extinguished. This is a problem that doesn't seem to worry our critic. By contrast as a revolutionary I am con-
cerned overwhelmingly with the conditions of the masses. The absence of elementary democratic rights in Angola, the outlawing in practice of the right to strike, the right to demonstrate, the right of assembly, freedom of the press etc., is for me the clear sign that power is in the hands of a group that stands outside of and in opposition to the masses. It is enough beside to note that the Angolan economy maintains capitalist social relations in order to have no doubts at all about the nature of the state created by the MPLA. The corruption which is today rife in that country, the business dealings of leading elements, the bureaucratization and administrative chaos, the permanent intrigues at the heart of government and administration are the unfortunate proof that the struggle of the working masses for their liberation remains uncompleted. It is precisely because Trotskyists have faith in the movement of the masses that they do not need to rest their hopes on the slogans of the MPLA. We unconditionally supported that movement in its war against the Portuguese and in the Civil War, and demonstrated and propagated against the imperialist sponsored coalition that it faced. But we never promoted any illusions that this leadership would achieve anything beyond formal independence. As soon as the MPLA assumed power and began to create the elements of a bourgeois state apparatus we emphasized that we stood on the side of the Angolan masses, against those who wanted to cut short the development of the revolution.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE MPLA AND ANGOLA

W.G. Clarence Smith

Paul Fauvet’s and Basil Davidson’s comments in Review No.15/16 are both too polemical and defensive really to advance the debate on the nature of the Angolan régime. (My own view of the literature on Angola in the 1970s is about to come out in the Journal of Southern African Studies, but I would like rapidly to take up the main points raised by Fauvet and Davidson).

Firstly there is the question of the petty bourgeoisie and the MPLA. It is true that Gabriel never defines very clearly what he means by the petty bourgeoisie, but partly because he assumes a knowledge of the considerable marxist literature on this topic. There is in fact a great deal of very interesting analysis of different fractions and strata of the Angolan petty bourgeoisie in Gabriel’s book, and it is only unfortunate that Gabriel was not able to consult Henrique Lopes Guerra’s Angola, estrutura económica e classes sociais (Luanda 1975 and Lisbon 1979). Moreover, Fauvet’s term ‘intellectual’ is not a term of marxist theory and says nothing as to the class position of the MPLA’s leadership. It would be more accurate to say that the MPLA leadership was drawn mainly from the employee fraction of the petty bourgeoisie, whose class interests lay in the expansion of the state apparatus. In contrast, the FNLA leaders were Kinshasa businessmen and northern Angolan coffee kulaks, whose class interests lay in the defence of private property.
Secondly, the enrichment of the MPLA leaders: Fauvet misses the general theoretical point that under state capitalism it is the party which collectively controls the means of production and collectively benefits from this control. A small but telling example in Angola is the use of official cars. In Cazals' postscript to Gabriel's book (p.317), it is noted that Nito Alves denounced the use of luxurious official cars as part of the propaganda leading up to his abortive coup. It was confirmed personally to me by an employee of the airline concerned that 48 Alfa Romeos were air-lifted to Luanda for official use at a time when people were suffering from starvation in the slums. In more general terms, it would be misleading to state that MPLA leaders live like the average peasant or worker, even though the living standards of the leadership are undoubtedly much more frugal than is common in Africa. Moreover, party membership involves many unquantifiable advantages, such as access to scarce goods, various services, power and prestige. This is not to say that the MPLA is hopelessly corrupt, but merely to point out that there are very definite advantages involved in being a party member.

Thirdly, the MPLA and 'imperialism': Fauvet's assumption that because the state has a majority share-holding in a mining company it therefore controls those means of production is a little naive. The recent history of Africa abounds with situations in which partial or even total nationalizations have left effective control in the hands of the Trans-National Corporations, owing to the complexity of mining operations and the weakness of the state apparatus. Furthermore, the degree of foreign ownership in Angola, encouraged by a decree of 1979, is such as to make Fauvet's analogy with Fiat in the Soviet Union inapplicable. This being said, Gabriel is too extreme in his statements on Angola's relationship with the capitalist world, which has certainly changed to a marked degree since independence.

Fourthly, the MPLA and the masses: This is a vast topic which cannot be dealt with in a few lines. However, neither Fauvet nor Davidson can effectively refute the kernel of Gabriel's fascinating and detailed account of the emergence of autonomous working-class movements, the original poder popular (popular power), and their gradual recuperation by the MPLA. Fauvet's use of the term 'transmission belts' and his rather embarrassed comments on democracy show clearly that he concedes Gabriel's central point. The real problem is whether it could have happened any other way. Rather than embarking on flights of speculation, it is important to stress that Gabriel's account suffers from too much emphasis on the proletariat and a sketchy and often incorrect analysis of the peasantry. Franz-Wilhelm Heimer's recent book, Der Entkolonisierungskonflikt in Angola (Munich 1979, shorter English version, Geneva 1979) provides a great deal of vital information on the Angolan peasantry, which helps to underline how small a part of the masses is made up by a true proletariat. Angola has a small population but an exceedingly complex and varied class structure, in which pre-capitalist relations of production still play an important role. Much of the argument of Gabriel, Southall and their critics suffers from the use of the word 'masses' to cover up this extreme complexity of class structure.

It is impossible at this stage to pretend to put forward any kind of balance-sheet of the record of the MPLA régime, especially as it has proved so dif-
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(We intend to close the present debate on Angola with these contributions, but in the hope that the issues raised (see Editorial) will be taken up in rather different terms and on the basis of more substantive analysis in the future — Editors.)
erected.

Speaking to the Zimbabwe Economic Society in September 1980 Prime Minister Mugabe affirmed the socialist orientation of the government but said that he recognized the existing reality of the economy and the country:

At a time when our main concern is the resettlement of our peasantry, the rehabilitation of our economy and social services, we have determined that any measures disruptive of the economic infrastructure must at all costs be avoided. Our socialist thrust will thus restrict itself for now to the area of land resettlement and organization of peasant agriculture.

To concentrate on the rural area alone is certainly to meet a central issue of the armed struggle — the land question — but it does not indicate a decisive overall strategy for socialism; by default the country’s development might take another course. All governments have to establish their priorities and land must be highest on the list; this much is clear, but other sectors will continue to develop in their own way however much a government might like them to be frozen until it has time to deal with them. We have tried to show that an emergent indigenous bourgeoisie exists in Zimbabwe and that it may be in a position to profit from the situation of compromise existing in the country. A Kenyan solution is certainly not inevitable, but the new government will have to pay close attention to the de facto developments taking place on the ground. At this time, defeating settler power remains the priority in every sphere, but a socialist development strategy will only succeed if it becomes a real social force for change and opposing indigenous class forces are in rapid process of organization and growth.

Bibliographic Note

The material on Kenya referred to is taken from C. Leys, ‘Capital Accumulation, Class Formation and Dependence’, Socialist Register 1978, which lists M.C. Cowen’s papers on which he draws, and N. Swainson, The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya, 1980.

IN DEFENCE OF THE ANGOLAN MASSES

Claude Gabriel

I read with interest the comment by Paul Fauvet on my book Angola, le tournant Africain? (see Review No.15-16, pp.148-52). In the first place Fauvet concerns himself with my analysis of the MPLA as a petty bourgeois
nationalist leadership. To do this he pretends not to understand me and makes play with the petty bourgeois ‘origins’ of Lenin and Trotsky. There are more than 50 pages in my book on this question. Fauvet should have been more careful in his reading of these. Precisely what is explained there is that the complex history of the national liberation struggles in Angola did not allow this particular leadership to break with its social origins and to adopt a revolutionary socialist programme. The conditions which permitted a leadership like that of Castro in Cuba to become a working class communist one did not exist in Angola: (and Paul Fauvet would have a hard task to show us that the Neto leadership was an authentic revolutionary communist one). I have taken great care to argue this partly on the basis of the MPLA’s programme and partly around the relationships of this leadership with the mass movement. I have specifically detailed some of the similarities between this leadership and those of the neo-colonial African states. But whilst Fauvet criticizes my point of view, he fails to tell us what is the actual political and social nature of this leadership ... proletarian ...? He asks ‘How have MPLA leaders . . . enriched themselves?’ (p.148). But he doesn’t answer this question. He seems to argue that by their origins as intellectuals Agostino Neto or Lucio Lara are no more petit bourgeois than Lenin or Trotsky. But Fauvet neglects two key factors here. In the first place Lenin and Trotsky were committed in theory and practice to the conquest of power by the working class and to the setting up of a workers state founded on the power of its councils (Soviets). In addition these figures were the leaders of a revolutionary state that abolished private property in the means of production, broke the stranglehold of the imperialist world market and internally extinguished all possibility for private capital accumulation that could lead to the re-establishment of the old ruling class.

Is any of this to be found in the policies of the MPLA? Is there not still an whole sector of the economy that remains in the hands of the urban petty bourgeoisie? Are there not still imperialist interests in Angola that keep this country under the control of the laws of the market? Is there not a perspective of opening the country to western investment for the most part of its industrial projects? All this is clear, but Fauvet sees none of it. He’s content to pose questions. But does he not see what happening in Mozambique which prefigures the road which will be travelled in Angola in the near future? Political power for the working class does not exist in either of these countries. MPLA and FRELIMO have installed themselves in government. They have destroyed the embryonic forms of popular power born during the turmoil of 1974-5. In this situation is it not logical that little by little, using the machinery of state and the strong element of corruption that already exists today, a petit bourgeoisie is going to begin to accumulate, to speculate and to consolidate itself? The absence of any real rights for workers and the weight of the imperialist market will favour this process. The only question which is still at issue is how rapidly these new layers will consolidate themselves and how soon we shall see the first ‘millionaires’ in Angola. Is Angola the first country where ‘theories’ about the nationalization of certain industries, control over internal and external trade etc., have been put into practice? Have they not already been preached in Guinea and even in Algeria and Tanzania? Are they not still in operation in Mozambique, Ethiopia and Guiné Bissau! Have bourgeois social relations been destroyed
there? Is the construction of socialist economies taking place? Surely not. In
all these countries respect for the laws of capitalism, the maintenance of
links with and dependence on the imperialist market, have produced the
same effects: structural crises of the state enterprises; development of
private capitalist businesses; continuation of abject poverty for the working
masses; total dependence on imperialist investment. But Paul Fauvet seems
never to have heard of state capitalism and covers up his embarrassment by
making fun of the term ‘workers state’.

Marxists who still use the USSR as a workers’ state, recognize a workers’
state by the fact that a revolution had destroyed the political and economic
power of the bourgeoisie and that the new state organizes production on the
basis of state ownership of the means of production. Nationalization of a
section of industry does not constitute a fundamental change in property
relations. Paul Fauvet fools nobody by stating that Gulf Oil ‘belongs’ 51% to the Angolan government and that for Diamang the percentage is 62%.
These figures do not prove that the Angolan economy has escaped from the
control of imperialist capital and the laws of the capitalist market. The most
widespread dispossessions in Angola have been of Portuguese capital where
the government benefited from the three years of chaos which beset the
former’s home base. But American, British, South African and French
capital remains. The Luanda government appeals to these (in the same way
as has Mozambique’s Samora Machel of late) not for necessary assistance
within the framework of a centralized state plan but as the motor of
development. When Lenin himself made an analogy between the transition
to socialism after October 1977 and ‘state capitalism’ he took good care to
emphasise that ‘this contains nothing that the power of the Soviets should
fear for the Soviet state is a state in which the power of the workers and the
poor is assured’. ‘The power of the workers and the poor!’ A very different
problem for Fauvet’s arguments. And strangely his critique of my book
totally ignores the one hundred pages that are devoted directly or indirectly
to the question of democracy for the masses. Nothing about the hyper-
repressive labour laws; nothing about the explicit battle of the state against
the Poder Popular committees from October 1975; nothing on the totally
repressive role of the trade union, the UNTA; nothing on the suppression of
strikes supposedly organized by UNITA; no mention of that part of the
book where are collected the quotations from those in power, the articles
from newspapers, the official statements, that all reveal a real fear on the
part of the regime when confronted with the working masses attempts to
further extend the social gains made in the war of liberation. Fauvet doesn’t
indicate whether the workers in Gulf Oil have any power whatsoever to im-
pose their demands on its foreign owners, because he knows that those
workers, just like those in Diamang or any other enterprise in Angola do
not have such decision-making powers. He says himself (on p.149) that they
‘must be consulted’. Nothing could be more clear!

In this neo-colonial economic structure the power of the MPLA is therefore
that of the petty bourgeoisie for whom the state structures serve as the
means for their becoming the dominant class. That the government model is
that of the ‘peoples’ democracies’ shouldn’t surprise Marxists. Still very
weak, not yet having acquired the economic base that would enable it to
reproduce itself like an established bourgeoisie, this social layer finds in the
‘party’, in the state and in bureaucratic centralism, the mechanisms for its
defence, homogenization and reproduction. The authoritarian bureaucratic
and repressive model of the Stalinist dictatorship corresponds perfectly to
the ideological needs of the MPLA. But only to its ideological needs! For it
is necessary to emphasise that for all it is called ‘Marxist-Leninist’, it is only
a pale imitation. How can one compare Angola to states like Russia or
Poland where the bourgeoisie has been destroyed and where there exists no
private property in the substantial means of production? But the petty
bourgeoisie finds there a single ideological model that expresses their wish
to militarize the working class, and to suppress any democratic rights. As
Fauvet says, the mass organizations are channels for the transmissions of
the Party’s orders to the masses. Our critic still has time to draw the lessons
from events in Poland by observing the determination of a working class to
have its own independent trades unions!

It is true that Fauvet has one excuse. It is possible to confuse Angola with
the ‘peoples’ democracies’. In both cases it is necessary to be in the Party to
have a job and decent accommodation. In both it is necessary to be part of
the administration apparatus to enjoy some of the spoils. But Fauvet does
not tell us what he thinks of the lot of the workers in Russia. This allows
him to play with words and to suggest that we have in Angola ‘a revolu-
tionary state’.

Was Fauvet amongst those who in 1977 said that the Somalia of Siad Barre
was ‘a socialist country’? Were there not nationalized industries in that
country, a government that liberally used Marxist phraseology etc? Is
Somalia still then a ‘socialist state’ after the departure of the Russians? If
not then it is necessary to explain exactly what has changed about the struc-
ture of that country. The concept of ‘socialist country’ applied to all
regimes that nationalize a part of their economy and that adopt a foreign
policy close to that of the Kremlin is fraught with all sorts of problems. The
only thing that Fauvet can demonstrate is that the Angolan political regime
is not identical to that in the ‘classic’ neo-colonial states like Zaire or the
Cameroons and that the form of neo-colonial domination over the Angolan
economy is not precisely identical to that in Zambia or Kenya. But that is
precisely something that is strongly underlined in my book. Consequently it
would be appropriate for Fauvet to try to make a stronger defence of the
MPLA. He ought to defend the one party state. He ought to support the
abolition of any independent trades union. He ought to defend the absence
of all democratic rights in the country. How is he going to do all this? Will
he explain, as did Sekou Touré in 1960, that it’s because there are no social
class antagonisms in Africa? Or will he tell us that it’s because the working
class agrees with this form of state as in Poland or Czechoslavakia? Fauvet
must also explain some other things: the two crises of the government since
1976 involving the elimination of Nito Alves and later of Nascimento. Were
these not indications of intra-bureaucratic conflicts amongst the petit
bourgeoisie? It is also necessary to speak of the Maoist militants released a
few weeks back after more than three years in jail without trial. We don’t
support the position of the Maoists of the Amilcar Cabral committees, but
we should not forget that the MPLA vigorously combatted them because
they had a strong influence in the popular committees in the slum areas of
Luanda. To eliminate these committees it was therefore necessary to deal
with the Maoists. But did these people not participate in the battle against the FNLA in Luanda? Did they not also speak of a struggle against imperialism? How does Fauvet explain that the MPLA which he says was the founder of the Poder Popular committees was forced to divest itself of a political current whose line was that of the committees in the slums and the factories?

Fauvet accuses us of sectarianism. Sectarianism in relation to whom and what? To the MPLA or to the Angolan masses? To the Angolan state or towards the workers and peasants? Fauvet sets himself up as ambassador of a political regime over which the masses have no power. That’s his affair. For our part we are not ‘sectarian’ towards MPLA. That word is incorrect. We are against this state and this government. We are on the side of the masses in their struggles, on the side of their desire for democratic rights. We favour a resolution that will evict imperialism from the country. For his part Fauvet is certainly not sectarian towards the MPLA. He is in fact a faithful propagandist for the regime. But what hides behind this is contempt for the workers and peasants who struggled against Portuguese colonialism to obtain democracy, the right to freedom, the right to work! Fauvet is doing in 1980 what many others did in 1960 for Guiné Conakry. He confuses a government and a state with the masses of this country.

Finally Fauvet finds it contradictory that I speak of a mass movement that wasn’t controlled by the MPLA after 1974 but which nonetheless gradually accepted the Netoist leadership during the civil war period. In order to further this argument he seems to give credence to the absurd idea that the political leadership accepted by the masses at a given moment necessarily corresponds to their objective needs. On the subject of this ‘rapport’ between the masses and the MPLA Fauvet makes some generalized criticisms of my arguments, but he says nothing about the signing of the Alvor accords which allowed the UNITA and the FNLA to operate throughout the whole country. He says nothing on the decrees made by the ministries of which certain were under the control of the MPLA during the period of the coalition government, against the workers of Luanda or Benguela. He says nothing of the fact that the MPLA called for the creation of neighbourhood committees only after they had already been born during the mobilization in the towns from which it was itself then absent. My book contains a large number of documents on these questions, amongst them the motions of works committees that denounced the negotiations with the FNLA and UNITA. I clearly explain there that the movement of these committees was not strong enough to form the basis for the alternative state power of the working class and that in the situation of a full civil war against the reactionary forces the population allowed these structures of self-organization to be emptied of their revolutionary content and to be integrated into the state machinery, only for them eventually to disappear.

How does Fauvet explain the different phases in the propaganda of the MPLA on the question of the popular neighbourhood committees? Firstly silence, then apologetics, later attempts at incorporation, more threats and denunciations and finally once again apologetics — immediately before the elections by which they were effectively extinguished. This is a problem that doesn’t seem to worry our critic. By contrast as a revolutionary I am con-
cerned overwhelmingly with the conditions of the masses. The absence of elementary democratic rights in Angola, the outlawing in practice of the right to strike, the right to demonstrate, the right of assembly, freedom of the press etc., is for me the clear sign that power is in the hands of a group that stands outside of and in opposition to the masses. It is enough beside to note that the Angolan economy maintains capitalist social relations in order to have no doubts at all about the nature of the state created by the MPLA. The corruption which is today rife in that country, the business dealings of leading elements, the bureaucratization and administrative chaos, the permanent intrigues at the heart of government and administration are the unfortunate proof that the struggle of the working masses for their liberation remains uncompleted. It is precisely because Trotskyists have faith in the movement of the masses that they do not need to rest their hopes on the slogans of the MPLA. We unconditionally supported that movement in its war against the Portuguese and in the Civil War, and demonstrated and propagandized against the imperialist sponsored coalition that it faced. But we never promoted any illusions that this leadership would achieve anything beyond formal independence. As soon as the MPLA assumed power and began to create the elements of a bourgeois state apparatus we emphasized that we stood on the side of the Angolan masses, against those who wanted to cut short the development of the revolution.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE MPLA AND ANGOLA

W.G. Clarence Smith

Paul Fauvet’s and Basil Davidson’s comments in Review No.15/16 are both too polemical and defensive really to advance the debate on the nature of the Angolan régime. (My own view of the literature on Angola in the 1970s is about to come out in the Journal of Southern African Studies, but I would like rapidly to take up the main points raised by Fauvet and Davidson).

Firstly there is the question of the petty bourgeoisie and the MPLA. It is true that Gabriel never defines very clearly what he means by the petty bourgeoisie, but partly because he assumes a knowledge of the considerable marxist literature on this topic. There is in fact a great deal of very interesting analysis of different fractions and strata of the Angolan petty bourgeoisie in Gabriel’s book, and it is only unfortunate that Gabriel was not able to consult Henrique Lopes Guerra’s Angola, estrutura econômica e classes sociais (Luanda 1975 and Lisbon 1979). Moreover, Fauvet’s term ‘intellectual’ is not a term of marxist theory and says nothing as to the class position of the MPLA’s leadership. It would be more accurate to say that the MPLA leadership was drawn mainly from the employee fraction of the petty bourgeoisie, whose class interests lay in the expansion of the state apparatus. In contrast, the FNLA leaders were Kinshasa businessmen and northern Angolan coffee kulaks, whose class interests lay in the defence of private property.
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Briefings

THE BRANDT REPORT: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

Gavin Williams

The Brandt Report offers a strategy for resolving the present crisis of the financial system of international capitalism. One of its main concerns is the increasing inability of Third World countries to meet their debts to private banks. This situation is seen as grave because it creates further crises when individual governments are unable to maintain consistent import policies, thus adversely affecting their own development strategies and causing chaos in the system of world trade. Solutions suggested are two-fold. Firstly, the Report sees the necessity for an expansion of trade between 'North' and 'South', initially made feasible by increased funding to Third World countries by multinational institutions. Secondly, it emphasises the necessity to extend free trade arrangements. However it fails to acknowledge, much less come to terms with contradictions within the strategies which it advocates. Its suggestions for the restructuring of international financial institutions and national trading policies, (necessary because 'if left to themselves economic forces tend to produce a growing inequality'), fail to take any account of the nature of contemporary capitalism and the problems and contradictions involved in its reconstruction. By ignoring these problems and by giving them a timeless quality (e.g. by stating that they could only be implemented when the battle against inflation is resolved in the West), this report contains little of real substance, constituting a collection of 'well intentioned' formulas with substantive moral posturing.

Nevertheless there are important political side issues which emanate from its conclusions. The report’s advocacy of a social democratic ideology supporting multinational institutions, an expanded World Bank role and extended free trade (with implications for the control of multinationals), is consistent with the policies of the World Bank’s forthcoming World Development Report, but severely contradicts the overall emphasis of Thatcher and Reagan governments, which advocate narrowly defined national and strategic commitments.

But political reaction against Reagan’s policies should not be equated inevitably with support for the extension of quasi-World Bank activities at an international level. There has been ample evidence of the effects of World
Bank policies and of the pressure which they can exert on individual development strategies, for there to exist an understanding of their negative political consequences in the past. Even if these policies were clothed with the humanitarian concerns implicit in the Brandt Report, it is unlikely that they will be substantially different.

The British state has long used government commissions as an instrument for shaping the development of state policy by taking it out of the arena of party political dispute and public debate. Contentious issues are turned over for deliberation to a suitable panel of eminent persons to outline an authoritative and agreed solution. Commission findings, whether or not they are accepted by the government of the day, define the terms in which the issues they deal with are debated. Commissions both mould state policy and manage public opinion. Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank has followed this example by initiating two successive international commissions, chaired by Lester Pearson and Willy Brandt in 1969 and 1980 respectively. They considered and reported on the international crises of development finance and international management.

The Brandt Report, North-South, offers a readable overview of the current crisis in the international, capitalist economy and its disastrous consequences for millions of people in both developed and underdeveloped countries, and a set of recommendations for restructuring international economic relations and, by extension, national economic policies. It argues cogently that we all share a common interest in the solution of these problems; ultimately, we cannot defend our own interests at the expense of others. Although the World Bank did not sponsor or finance it, its arguments closely resemble the thinking and strategies developed by the World Bank in the last decade, though its recommendations go beyond the politics of the Bank. The book proceeds from a broad outline of the major problems facing the Third World — hunger, population growth and military spending — to a clearly focused discussion of its central concerns, the management of international finance and trade. The reader is therefore advised to read the book from back to front.

Brandt’s Basic View
To be more specific, the reader should start from Appendix 2, which tells us how the commission set to work and what were its terms of reference (296-7). These determined its recommendations, summarized in Appendix 1. The terms of reference of the commission give priority to problems of international trade and finance. The first priority of its ‘emergency programme’ outlined in the concluding chapter (277) is to deal with the inability of governments of underdeveloped countries to pay their debts. More generally, the report is concerned with the need to restructure international financial institutions and national trading policies to solve the problems caused by the breakdown of the financial and trading agreements created at the end of the Second World War (36-41, 201-6), and by the end of the era of plentiful and ever-cheaper oil on which industrial growth was based.

The first chapter can be taken next. It lists the catastrophic problems which threaten the world (46-7), and states the social-democratic assumptions from which it proceeds to try and solve them:
In the world as in nations, economic forces left entirely to themselves tend to produce growing inequality. Within nations, public policy has to protect the weaker partners. The time has come to apply this precept to relations between nations within the world community. (32)

' Economic forces ' are described in abstract and general terms as if they exist separately from the social relations through which they operate, and as if they work in the same ways in all societies. The state in turn is conceived as an autonomous body, independent of these 'economic forces', which corrects rather than accentuates their biases. The record of social policies, let alone other forms of government intervention, in capitalist countries and their impact on income distribution invites a certain scepticism on this point. The commission also outlines its solution in chapter 1

... overall the North can expand employment by a balanced increase in its trade with the South. The South needs to buy from the North, and to repay its debts, but for that it must earn foreign currency in the North by selling its goods there. (35)

The 'North' can find markets for its products, and thus provide jobs for its workers and use its unemployed resources, by creating money for the South to buy them this in turn expands the northern markets for the products of the South — agricultural, mineral and industrial. It may appear ironic that the commission should recommend the 'Keynesian' solution of increasing government's expenditure to expand demand and thus employment, to the problems of international recession at a time when national governments and their advisers have lost faith in such policies. However, it may be that 'Keynesian in one country' is impossible, and that national policies or expanding demand depend on international policies to create demand. This may, of course, simply increase inflationary pressures internationally, an issue which the commission touches on rather lightly (68).

To go back to the end of the report: the concluding chapter warns that recession and unemployment, now as in the 1930s, will lead governments to protect their home markets from international competition, especially from manufactured products from the Third World (269, 272). Developing countries themselves are warned against pursuing protectionist policies since these raise internal prices and affect the competitiveness of their exports (272). The commission's solution then is two-fold: transfer money to Third World governments to stimulate international demand and encourage all governments to maintain and extend free trade arrangements. 'Free trade' has been a central objective and the basis of policy recommendations by the IMF and the World Bank since their inception.

Throughout the report countries are aggregated into blocks; North (sometimes divided into West and East), and South (divided into the poorest countries, middle income countries and the capital-surplus, oil-exporting countries). This enables the Commission to argue that the 'North' as a whole will benefit from an increase in the capacity of the 'South' to import, financed by money transfers from the 'North' (and the oil producers) and increased Third World exports of manufactured goods (e.g. 70-1). If 'northern' governments transfer resources to 'southern' governments to spend as they wish, the latter may choose to spend all their money in, say, Germany and Japan. As it is Germany, Japan and the USA receive more money in contracts paid for by World Bank loans than they finance, thanks to the generosity of smaller, and more liberal capitalist countries —
Canada, The Netherlands and Scandinavia. Similarly, not all ‘southern’ countries are equally well placed to take advantage of expanding markets for primary commodities or manufactures in the developed capitalist countries, and they must compete with one another, lowering the prices they get for their commodities, to do so. It is not evident that all countries stand to benefit from the proposed combination of free trade and international demand expansion.

The report treats governments and countries as virtually synonymous. In this way the interests of people are identified with the interests of their governments. The ‘international community’, to whose problems the report is addressed, does not consist of the peoples of the world, but of their governments and the burgeoning network of international agencies. International agencies are seen as the major instruments of ‘development’ activities. International agencies are clearly thought to be less tied to narrow interests than national governments. Consequently, Aid can be more fairly allocated, with less consideration of politics and strategy, if it is largely channelled through multinational institutions. (243)

To this end, the report suggests various sources of revenue which are not dependent on the changing policies of national governments, some (e.g. taxes on international arms exports) less realistic than others (IMF gold sales). (244-6) They further suggest, without going into detail, changes in the voting patterns in the World Bank and the IMF, over which the US has been able to exercise strategic control, and an increase in the number of staff drawn from Third World countries. The aim appears to be to give ‘Third World’ governments a greater say in the policies of these institutions and the way they spend their money, in the hope that this will promote ‘genuine consensus’ rather than more vocal conflict (248-51). Such changes seem likely to increase still further the independence of the international bureaucracy from any forms of democratic control, though not to release them from the fear of offending national governments.

Another Great Crash?

Chapters 14 and 15 deal with the central issue of the book, the increasing current-account deficit of underdeveloped countries. This is not a short-term problem, arising from temporary phenomena such as fluctuations in commodity prices or droughts, though these may accentuate the difficulties of particular countries. Rather, it has arisen, firstly out of the expansion of government spending on arms administration and ‘development’ projects. Secondly, it has been the ironic consequences of industrialization policies which aimed to replace imports of manufactured goods with local production, but which have intensified the dependence of most Third World countries on imports of capital goods, oil and raw materials, technology, and management personnel as well as burdening them with profit repayments. The sharp recovery in the international price of oil in 1974 and the rising costs of industrial imports multiplied the problem for oil-importing countries. Consequently, many countries, which did not receive better prices for their own commodity exports, simply cannot pay for their current imports and expenditures without going into debt, and then have to borrow more money to pay for their debts (222-3).

In the early 1970s the boom in the prices of certain commodities gave some
governments, Zaire for example, the chance to raise huge loans from private banks. In 1974 and 1975, most governments in underdeveloped countries borrowed money to pay the increased prices for oil and manufactured goods. These loans were provided by private banks with funds temporarily accumulated by oil-exporting countries. At the same time, several East European countries took advantage of the availability of loanable funds to pay for huge imports of technology and capital goods. Had these governments not borrowed to maintain their imports, the recession in the industrialized countries would have been far more severe.

However, this solution merely reproduced the problem on an enlarged scale. In future more loans and export earnings would have to be used to pay debts, so that less would be available for imports. It is not clear how several countries are going to repay their debts. They would have to be provided with the means to do so, one way or another, since unilateral repudiation of debts would set a nasty precedent and undermine the flow of international lending, not to mention the authority of corrupt, but 'pro-Western' governments like Zaire. Consequently, private bankers pressed for an increase in official lending to governments of underdeveloped countries, and even for the governments of developed countries and multinational agencies to take over some of the liabilities of commercial lending. In this way public agencies would provide governments with the money to pay back private banks. As debts mount, the private banks will be more reluctant to lend to countries without the means to repay them in the absence of public guarantees for their loans (212-3). Many poorer countries have not had access to private bank loans but have had to rely on official agencies and loans from 'aid donors' all along. Several countries wrote off their debts from the poorest countries. Hence the Brandt Report's call for 'massive transfers' to assist the poorest countries and finance the debts and deficits of the middle income countries (227-9, 241, 277).

Neither of the two main international public banks are, however, organized to fund the long-term debts of underdeveloped countries. The IMF is charged with providing short-term loans to countries in temporary balance-of-payments difficulties. They have tended to impose a standard package made up of reductions in government spending and in the supply of money, liberalization of trade and payments, currency devaluation and reductions in real wages. In the words of the Brandt Report, they may 'reduce domestic consumption without improving investment; productive capacity sometimes falls even more sharply than consumption' (216).

With certain exceptions (e.g. post-war reconstruction loans to Nigeria and Bangla Desh), World Bank loans, at both commercial and concessionary rates or interest, have until now been restricted to the payment of the foreign exchange costs incurred by specific projects. The Pearson Report's recommendations that 'programme' loans, not tied to specific projects, and that funding of local costs be allowed, were rejected. Both recommendations are revived by the Brandt Commission. As it is, governments cannot borrow money from the World Bank without spending it on the import costs incurred by new projects. World Bank loans are repaid out of general revenue and not out of the additional income, if any there be, generated by projects. Many projects do not contribute directly, or substantially, either
to government revenues or to exports. Thus they simply add to the tax burden on producers and the debt burden on governments. Hence the report’s proposal for a World Development Fund to provide long-term ‘programme’ loans to governments (252-3; see also 232-4). A similar suggestion from governments of underdeveloped countries was rejected in the 1950s. Instead the World Bank established the International Development Association in 1960 to provide project loans at concessionary rates of interest. It seems quite likely that McNamara, the President of the World Bank, initiated the Brandt Commission because existing World Bank and IMF procedures prevented them tackling the debt burden of underdeveloped countries. The Brandt Commission’s proposal to establish a World Development Fund gave the World Bank the opportunity to propose instead to make ‘structural adjustment’ loans to countries with large debts.

Chapter 13 outlines the creation and breakdown of the system of stable exchange rates established at Bretton Woods (202-6; also 36-41). The report suggests the development of IMF Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) into a stable, international currency at the expense of gold and national currencies, though they note that ‘the further demonetization of gold will depend upon more stable currencies and reducing inflation in the major countries’, which suggests that the report’s solution to the problem can only be implemented when the problem is solved! The report also suggests that SDRs should be allocated to those governments most likely to run into balance-of-payments difficulties and least able to borrow money from commercial sources. In other words, the IMF should expand the international money supply by giving money to poor countries in need to buy goods from rich countries. Together with expanded programme lending, this would give governments ways of meeting their debts without undertaking the savage, and often counterproductive, policies currently imposed by the IMF. Perhaps the IMF leopard will change its spots, and debtor governments will then use the breathing-space afforded them to make the necessary adjustments. Perhaps not.

Multinationals: In Whose Interest?

Chapters 9 to 12 are concerned with the need to create a more predictable climate for investment in Third World countries and to bring more stability into international trading arrangements. In recent years, multinationals have tended to move away from direct investments and the costs and risks involved, to supplying expensive managerial and technical services and other commodities to nationalized firms and government projects. This has created a new, and often lucrative, basis for collusion between corporations and government officials. It has also led to a decline in new foreign investment, and especially in the exploration and development of mineral resources which national governments are unable to fund. The report seeks to find a basis for firm co-operation between multinationals and governments which will protect each of their interests and to make public funds available for the exploration and development of mineral deposits. It also proposes measures which are designed to protect and increase the export earnings of Third World countries and to stabilize prices of minerals and agricultural commodities.

The report accepts that multinationals will be a major source of investments
and technology for underdeveloped countries. It recognises that they can abuse and have on occasion abused their commercial and political power to manipulate financial flows and subvert governments. It proposes that relations between corporations and governments be regulated by codes and laws in 'home' and 'host' countries which would guarantee corporations the right to transfer profits according to terms agreed when they made their investments and, in return, restrain unethical and monopolistic practices on their part (192-3). The main purpose in creating multinational corporations has been to control both the supply of, and markets for, commodities. They tend to vary between competing among one another to gain control of an improved share of particular markets, and colluding with one another to maintain prices and protect profits. As Lenin argued in 1916, 'Monopolies everywhere introduce monopolistic principles; the utilization of "connections" for profitable transactions takes the place of competition on the open market'. They are hardly likely to return to the mythical era of competitive capitalism. International codes are unlikely to succeed in eliminating monopolistic practices where American anti-trust laws have failed.

Similarly, the transfer of appropriate technology will be promoted and regulated by various international agencies and codes of conduct (195-7). The report does not explain how they will resolve the complex problems of pricing information and technologies (194). The report recommends as a model for research in the Third World the network of international agricultural research institutions (initiated by American foundations) in the Philippines, India, Nigeria, Peru and Mexico (199). Their high expatriate salaries, forms of organization and research priorities, and perimeter fences insulate these institutions from the problems of farming under the conditions in which peasant smallholders live. But perhaps these aren't the people for whom technology should be appropriate.

Chapter 11 argues against protectionism and for an export-oriented economic strategy. Even in countries with large internal markets and natural resources, domestic markets and foreign exchange shortages limit the scope for industrialization (173-4). This calls for a continual process of adjustment by industrialized societies if they are to make room for cheaper imports from developing countries and develop new, competitive industries for themselves (175-8). The institutions for negotiating international trading agreements should be strengthened, preferably under a new international trade organization encompassing the provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the wider forum offered by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (178-9).

The report argues that the direct impact of imported manufactured goods from developing societies on jobs in industrial countries has been small, relative to the impact of technical changes and the expansion of exports to developing societies (70-1, 176-8). Nevertheless, not all industrial countries will be able to find compensatory export opportunities elsewhere. Nor will all developing countries be able to find a suitable niche for their comparative advantages within the international division of labour, however much they reduce government expenditure and industrial wages. Again, it is not obvious that free trade and convertible currencies, policies consistently
promoted by the IMF and the World Bank, are the most appropriate for all governments to follow, even if the general arguments against protectionism are well taken.

Some of the 'unused' capacity in 'northern' industries is in sectors which compete with exports from Third World countries or which Third World countries are trying to establish themselves (e.g. textiles, shipbuilding, steel). Other 'northern' industries are keen to export sophisticated products ranging from processed foods through luxury cars to missiles and nuclear power plants. They benefit if Third World governments are provided with the means to buy these products. Poor people in the Third World do not.

Chapter 10 outlines the need for energy conservation, particularly in the wasteful countries of the 'North', notably North America (162-3). And the development of non-oil energy sources (166-7). It stresses the urgent need for reliable supplies and, thus remunerative and stable prices (164). They are second only to debt financing among the report's 'emergency priorities' (277). It proposes 'programme loans' to help poorer countries pay for their oil imports (170).

Similarly chapter 9 argues the case for stable and remunerative commodity prices. It outlines the conflicts of interest between producers and consumers which have made it difficult to arrive at effective agreement on intervention prices (149) but argues for the funds necessary to finance buffer stocks and the need for agreements. It does not explain how to distinguish, in advance, 'long-run market factors' from the 'short-and-medium-term vagaries of the market' (197) for which intervention is appropriate. Ignoring the millions of peasant producers of export commodities, the report tells us that 'of course, the benefits of a new regime for commodities must reach the real primary producers, namely the men and women working on the plantations and in the mines' (152). It does not tell us how this is to be enforced. It recommends international finance for mineral exploration in the Third World. This will make it easier to reach stable agreements between mining companies and governments and encourage renewed production.

Controlling Economic Disorder
Chapter 8 outlines the 'tasks of the South', that is, of the governments of underdeveloped countries. They are advised to follow the strategy outlined by the World Bank in _Assault on World Poverty_ without specifically mentioning it. This includes policies to redistribute income and assets and expand employment and social services, invest in agriculture and assist the so-called 'informal sector', improve technology and encourage 'participation' in government development activities (139-40). There is no assessment of the record of the World Bank's highly publicised strategy. There is considerable evidence from three continents that World Bank loans have not helped the rural poor, and have not even been designed to do so. Such subversive questions are not raised in the report.

Governments are encouraged to assist the 'informal sector' and subcontract purchases to it (130-1). Such intervention changes the nature of 'informal sector' production requiring producers to adapt to the formal procedures of government agencies and raises costs! Chapters 4 and 5 extend the discussion of agricultural policies. It is blithely assumed that agricultural produc-
tion will be increased by directing funds to ‘rural areas for infrastructure, credit, storage, marketing, extension services, research, agricultural implements, and production inputs such as fertilizers and improved seeds and pesticides’ (129) though it does caution against inappropriate transfers of mechanical and chemical technologies. Priority is given in the poorest countries to irrigation and water management (80-1, 94, 228-9). All these policies, currently practised by the World Bank and other rural development agencies, assume that the sources of rural change and agricultural productivity are found outside the rural areas. They may require peasant producers to adapt themselves to the requirements of input technologies and management systems. They have often proved expensive and ineffective, and have undermined peasant food production. However, these interventions are suitable for expanding bureaucratic employment and administrative control of the countryside, government patronage, loans from international agencies and advice from international experts. Like the World Bank, the commission seems to identify ‘development’ with the amount of money spent on it (e.g. the discussion of IFAD on p.94). Consultants for international agencies, among others, benefit greatly from this attitude.

Survival games
Chapter 7 tells us about the enormous number of nuclear weapons targeted against us, among others, and the dangers of nuclear proliferation and the massive sales of arms to Third World countries, of which the USA, USSR, France, the UK and Italy together supply three-quarters. People who buy them often use them. Clearly the arms trade ought to be stopped. However, it has been one of the main ways in which oil-exporting countries have recycled their revenues to industrial countries, and will surely continue to provide industrial countries with a major source of demand for their products. Development aid is not likely to offer as lucrative and extensive a market.

Chapter 6 asserts the dangers of uncontrolled population growth and the need for population programmes and greater economic development to restrain it (105-8). It records the massive expansion, and benefits, of international labour migration. It regrets the failure to protect the rights of migrant workers and recommends inter-governmental agreements to regulate international migration (110-11). However, this may be used to control migrants and tax them, rather than to protect their rights. The report supports compensation to governments for the foreign exchange losses they suffer when unemployed migrants are shipped home (111). The report comments briefly on the need for governments to share responsibility for refugees (112-3) and to protect the environment (114-5). Chapter 2 outlines the hardships suffered by women, and the need to include them in development efforts (59-62). They do not appear later.

Mutual interests?
Chapter 3, where the reader may conclude the argument, emphasizes the mutual interests of ‘North’ and ‘South’ and, by assumption, people and their governments, in development. It warns us against protectionism (70-1) and of the need to improve commodity prices (71-2), recognizes the ‘very
substantial mutual interest... in harnessing the economic strength and experience of the multinationals for development' (73) and the need for the governments of the rich countries 'to continue lending and expanding their markets' (67).

The report takes for granted the capacities of government and development agencies to promote development. It does not analyze the different policies adopted by either capitalist or socialist countries, nor the reasons for their many failures and occasional successes.

Although the public are invited to support its recommendations, the report is addressed to governments, international agencies and multinational corporations. It seeks to identify their mutual interests to find a basis for resolving their problems. Societies are absent from the report. So are their class structures and the class interests which their governments serve. The 'task of the South' is a list of policies which their governments ought to follow in the interests of the 'rural and urban poor' (128-9). There is no suggestion that, as in Nicaragua, removal of the government, and the clique it served, through popular revolutionary action, can be the prior condition of implementing any policies to help the 'rural and urban poor'. Nor is there any analysis of the political conditions necessary for such goals to be entertained by governments, let alone achieved.

Bibliographic Note


WHAT FUTURE FOR GHANA?

Ghana’s need for a social revolution should be apparent to any visitor to the presently strife-ridden West African country. Two preconditions for such an event, however, are missing; these are first, the recognition by the people of the need for structural reform and second, agreement as to the nature of this upheaval.

It would be wrong nevertheless to say that there is not a feeling of immense frustration among both rural and urban poor; but there are at present no channels through which these feelings can be carried. Even less is there any agreement as to the way forward out of the present economic disarray Ghana finds itself in. Indeed, since independence, regimes of a variety of different complexions ranging from 'left' civilian rule to 'right' military rule have come and gone, leaving in their wake a great accumulation of unfulfill-
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ed promises. It was within this context that on 4 June 1979 a rebellion involving mainly NCO's and led by Fit. Lt. Rawlings brought down the incumbent Akuffo regime in protest against its corruption and its apparent inability to obviate the ills plaguing most Ghanaians.

It is important to note at the outset that the overthrow of Akuffo was seen by its perpetrators less in terms of the need to modify economic policies away from the interests of international capital than to improve the military's reputation of being incapable of ruling without widespread corruption and profiteering. Akuffo had failed to disentangle himself sufficiently from the web of corruption which had enmeshed Acheampong, and his ascendency to the head of the Supreme Military Court (SMC) had done little to placate increasing unrest based on the belief that Ghana's ills lay with the history of corrupt military intervention. There was no recognition that the responsibility for Ghana's economic and political crisis lay not in mismanagement alone but in its increasing dependence upon the capitalist world economy. The anti-imperialist rhetoric of the National Redemption Council (NRC) and the SMC, then, obscured an ongoing process whereby an adequate institutional framework for the penetration of foreign capital was being progressively established.

Akuffo's popularity had waned following state of emergency measures imposed in November 1978 with his failure to prosecute the deposed Acheampong and subsequent claims that corruption was going unpunished. The military insurrection of 4 June can be seen, then, not as a social revolution attempting structural change in the processes underpinning Ghana's political economy but, as noted in *West Africa* (11 June 1979), more in the nature of 'a house cleaning exercise (to) put the reputation of the armed forces on an even keel before handing over' to civilian government.

Having ousted General Akuffo, it was apparent from the beginning that Rawlings was not going to be the promoter of a revolutionary movement. This was especially so when the killings of the corrupt men stopped and there was no political consolidation of even the minimal gains achieved, with an attempt at a fresh start in reducing Ghana's ills. Further developments saw the handing over of power to a 'democratic constitutional government' in September 1979 in accordance with Rawlings earlier action of allowing the previously planned civilian elections to be held just two weeks after the 4 June uprising. But did this handover mean the rebellion had succeeded in its aims? For Rawlings the answer was simple: the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) had shown Ghanaians that they had been in bondage and now that these chains were broken, Ghana's future direction lay in their own hands. In fact, all the AFRC had managed to do was momentarily create hope in the minds of thousands that at last 'justice' would be coming their way following the assassinations of Afrifa, Acheampong and Akuffo and the demolishing of Makola number one market in Accra. The latter though had been naively seen as the *cause* of *Kalabule* — the hoarding of precious basic commodities by the ill-fated market women and their consequent increase in price — rather than seen as a *symptom* of economic decay and bureaucratic bungling. Success was consequently short lived. The market women had been made scapegoats to placate misled, seemingly more progressive, elements of the AFRC who
believed the destruction of this parallel distribution system dominated by the ‘market queens’ would solve overnight Ghana’s crisis of political economy without the need to try and abrogate, among other things, the link between the post colonial state and international finance.

The handover of power to civilian government by the AFRC must not therefore be seen as the culmination of a revolutionary strategy to transform the Ghanaian economy. The inter-related dominance of multinational finance, the scheming petit bourgeoisie and bureaucratic national elements remain at the expense of an increasingly impoverished mass of peasantry and urban proletariat. Rawlings’ earlier promise thus enabled him to extricate himself from a situation where structural changes in the relations of production would have been necessary to sustain his developing rhetoric of greater equality for all. The AFRC had failed, moreover, to develop the much needed links with the rurally deprived and urban poor. There were few, if any, political cadres to back up and spread the word to a people hitherto deprived of participation in a political system preserved for only those ‘who know’.

Gone as well was the opportunity opened to Rawlings to harness the tremendous enthusiasm which his seizure of power brought in its wake, an enthusiasm made more intense by the use of the gun against those associated with the wrongs of the past. Throughout there was a failure on the part of the instigators of the events of 4 June to recognize that the success of the gun per se is momentary and partial, its targets being terrorized into compliance without different ideas rather than encouraged to ‘co-operate’ through mutual recognition of common enemies. The result was that as early as the changeover to ‘constitutional’ rule, Kalabule was raising its ugly head again — if it had ever completely died away — and any hope of new and better things to come had been dashed.

Given the obvious failure of political consolidation by the AFRC, Johnny Hansen’s suggestion at a meeting on the first anniversary of 4 June that a revolution in Ghana was just around the corner could justifiably be regarded with some surprise. Hansen spoke to about 3,000 predominantly young, male Accra workers in a self-convincing talk, punctuated by the call of ‘Are you ready for the revolution — are you ready?!’

Flt. Lt. Rawlings lively and energetic speech was much more guarded about Ghana’s political future. It was an outline of Limann’s attempt to bribe him with an apartment and motor car to encourage his taking on an increasingly low profile in Ghanaian society, especially as there was now a constitutional, duly elected regime. The paradox is the similarity with which both Rawlings and Limann view the legitimacy of the Third Republic. A regime founded in the midst of corruption sustains political processes which in turn enhance the continued domination of international finance capital and thus an internal climate conducive to continued subjugation of the majority of Ghanaians to a few bureaucrats in Accra. For Rawlings, like Limann, social change (and in the former’s case, the ‘revolution’) must wait and be directed through the ballot box, legitimising institutional government and politics, until the next Presidential elections. The peoples’ struggle not to be divided can only be realised by the democratic adherence to the constitution and not to government and parties.
These comments place the now uninfluential 4 June ‘movement’ in an ambiguous situation, implicitly relegated to an impotent political group while the constitution rules supreme. This comes at a time when the most important precondition for social revolution required to alleviate Ghana’s condition is the development of greater links between the small number of workers in urban areas and the rural suppliers of foodstuffs. Development schemes must be worked out with villagers and farmers, and not imposed from the top; though Limann’s recent much criticized two year agriculture programme does precisely the latter in the hope that a beleagured people will blindly follow an increasingly aloof and bureaucratic regime. His is a government, moreover, which while showing rhetorically great interest in the plight of Ghanaians in practice sacks ‘militant’ workers. And it is one which, according to a Government’s spokesperson, imposed a curfew on Tamale (the capital of the northern region) ‘in the interest of public order, public morality, public health . . .’ following a demonstration by workers and peasants against an ineffective ‘supply’ of daily water and electricity for the past six months. These are actions of an administration which advocates equality for all but is party to the voting of 4,050 cedis a month for parliamentarians at a time when the minimum daily wage was 6 cedis, increased to 12 cedis only on 29 October 1980 following threats of strike from different sectors of the workforce.

The astronomical cost of basic foodstuffs highlights this ridiculously low minimum wage; it is necessary for someone to expand her/his labour for half a day to buy a small tuber of yam and to toil for three days to buy a kilo of meat. Such prices illustrate the ineffectiveness of destroying Makola market, for apart from the fact that trading still persists alongside its ruins, one of the many roots of Kalabule remains untouched. This is the ability of authorized retailers to purchase supplies at fixed prices and then market only a small proportion of the total purchases — the majority of goods being successfully hived off at grossly inflated prices.

The cost of eating a sufficiently nutritious diet is thus prohibitive. In consequence there is a large proportion of children in need of medical aid which, unless sought at private clinics at 20 to 50 cedis consultation fees, involves long waits at public hospitals in the vain hope that the right medicines may be available. Such prices make life difficult even for the average paid workers on 300 cedis gross a month, and the ‘elite’ mine workers who before the increase in minimum wage received only 13 cedis in Tarkwa at the end of the State Goldmining Corporation.

Kalabule is thus still the order of the day to most Ghanaians, indeed this term is being replaced by Gynabu — literally, ‘standing to con’ — where buyers and sellers meet outside the market and bargain over increasingly scarce commodities of food and non-foodstuffs including items like soap, kerosene, lamps and batteries. Corruption is rife, ranging from airport officials confiscating smuggled goods only to return them at a price the following day, to the policemen who guard roadblocks enforcing their own penalty and thus gaining the obligatory ‘dash’. It is reasonable to say that unless you are in a job where you can exercise Kalabule or be the recipient of bribes — e.g. a member of a civil service department — your survival in Ghana is problematic.
It is absurd then for the editor of *West Africa* magazine to have asserted that Ghanaians are not starving but merely having difficulty finding three meals a day. Such a comment could only have been made from an hotel room or airport lounge for it is uninformed and out of touch with reality, a reality which at present does not fortunately witness mass starvation but *does* leave Ghanaians hungry and in need of much food aid.

There seems little short term hope for the plight to be improved while President Limann pursues a policy based upon externally oriented development stimulated by 'developed' countries' demand for raw materials and tropical products financed by foreign capital. The rejection of this policy entails a depressing future, however, given Ghana's dependence upon a monocultural economy subject to the internationally fluctuating price of its cocoa. This dependency on world markets is aggravated by low producer prices paid to Ghanaians which, among other things, encourages smuggling of the product to neighbouring Ivory Coast; Ivory Coast's 'economic miracle' and its competitive plantation agriculture further penalises the profitability of the Ghanaian sector which is aggravated also by Ghana's aging cocoa trees. Compound with these difficulties for Ghanaian farmers is the insurmountable problem of transporting their product to the urban areas for movement to the coast. For feeder roads barely exist and those that do are in a state of total disrepair. The ailing transport system coupled with shortages of all kinds of spares for vehicles had led to large scale wastage of foodstuffs which have been left to rot in different areas of the country.

The only viable alternative to another round of dependent development seems to be some form of 'self reliance' which focuses upon the rehabilitation of agriculture and the production of foodstuffs as the basis of obviating the parasitical role of the urban areas. A stop has to be put to the draining of agriculture for the benefit of growth in minority sectors which bring no advantage to the rural masses. Such a strategy, however, is not the over-riding concern of the PNP or Owusu's opposition Popular Front Party. Though at the level of rhetoric agriculture is a major concern of Limann, in practice it remains subject to the dominant private investment in industry and the technological dependency which this engenders.

This outline of the problems facing Ghanaians is obviously piecemeal but is an attempt to show that although the people in the urban areas are being asked if they are ready for the revolution, a very large number of steps must first be taken before awareness, consent and support of the rural masses is gained. There must be greater incorporation of the rural population into any future policy decisions before any structural change in Ghana can be long lasting. This can only be achieved with the development of political cadres, education and new democratic structures to highlight the essential need for an harmonious relationship between the peasantry and the small urban proletariat. Such issues are not being confronted at the moment and will not be even open to discussion while the present regime remains in Accra.

The short-term economic and social future for Ghana is thus cheerless. However, there is always the possibility of an emerging revolutionary potential necessary to harness forces for social change. For as FIt. Lt. J.J.
Rawlings did say at a press conference in June 1980:

We are many they are few.
We are strong they are weak.
We are strong if we do not give way to their only weapon, their intrigues to divide us.

What people looking for social change in Ghana must realise is that ‘the many’ include masses of hitherto neglected and forgotten rural poor and not simply the more vociferous groups of urban workers.

Raymond Bush

SOUTH AFRICA: IS BOTHA’S TOTAL STRATEGY A PROGRAMME OF REFORM?

Cabinet Reshuffle
In September 1980 South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha announced a major cabinet reshuffle to take effect from the 7 October 1980. Among the new appointments were:

Magnus Malan, formerly chief of the Defence Force, becomes Minister of Defence. This appointment of a serving officer to the Cabinet is unprecedented in recent South African history and clearly reflects the growing importance of the military in policy formulation.

Gerrit Viljoen, Administrator of Namibia and former head of the Broederbond, becomes Minister of National Education. Viljoen is widely regarded as one of Afrikaner Nationalism’s best strategists and his appointment clearly foreshadows some attempt to restructure the education system, a site of much recent unrest.

In addition several loyal ‘Botha lieutenants’ received promotions to key positions, among them:

Chris Heunis, Minister of Transport, who becomes Minister of the Interior.

‘Cobie’ Coetzee, Deputy Minister of Defence, who becomes Minister of Justice. Also noteworthy was the change in the status of Andries Treurnicht, Transvaal leader of the Nationalist Party and leading verkrampte (extreme right-winger) within the Cabinet. He was formerly Minister of Public Works, Statistics and Tourism and now becomes Minister of the Public Service and Statistics — an apparent demotion.

President’s Council
At the same time the Nationalist Party’s nominee for Vice State President and Chairman of the President’s Council was announced. He is Alwyn Schlebusch currently Minister of the Interior and Justice and head of the Commission which recommended the establishment of the President’s Council. This is a body consisting of appointees drawn from the white, coloured and Asian communities whose principal task is to ‘negotiate’ a new ‘constitutional dispensation’ for South Africa. The original idea was that the President’s Council was to liaise with a separate black (i.e. African) council but with the rejection of the black council by even the stooge bantustan leaders the proposal was dropped. It is not yet clear what formula the regime will come up with to try to incorporate some stooge black leaders into the process.

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In the western press and other media these changes have been widely interpreted as an attempt by Botha to clear the way for the more effective pursuit
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In the western press and other media these changes have been widely interpreted as an attempt by Botha to clear the way for the more effective pursuit
of a programme of internal reform. The cabinet changes are seen as strengthening the position of the verligte (enlightened) elements within the ruling Nationalist Party at the expense of the more reactionary verkrampte, thus giving Botha, as leader of the verligtes, a freer hand to pursue his policies of 'enlightened change'.

This type of interpretation sets out, of course, from the assumption (now being made in liberal as well as overtly conservative quarters) that the Botha regime is indeed involved in, or at least committed to, ending the apartheid system. It would not be surprising to see this view expressed in more conservative or reactionary circles. It corresponds, after all, exactly to the image that the Nationalist Party regime under Botha has been trying to create for itself. What is more noteworthy — though under current conditions of heightened mass struggle perfectly understandable — is that the same basic thesis has also become the 'conventional wisdom' in the liberal press, that is to say, the press loyal to and owned by major foreign investors and domestic monopoly capital. There may be some doubts expressed in more liberal quarters as to the pace of change or as to whether Botha will really be able to push the process to its 'logical conclusion' in view of opposition from verkrampte elements in his own party. Nevertheless, there is common agreement among both conservatives and liberals that a process of genuine reform, however belated and however slow, has been initiated by the regime.

What, however, is the reality? Is the Botha regime really engaged in what can seriously be considered as a process of reforming apartheid? What do the differences in the Cabinet between verligtes led by Botha, and verkramptes led by Treurnicht, amount to? And what, in the light of the above, is the real significance of the recent reorganisation of the Cabinet and governmental structures?

The Current Changes: Adaptation not Reform

The first point to be made about the changes currently being introduced by the Botha regime is that they are essentially an attempt to adjust the machinery of the apartheid state so as to make it more effective under present conditions of heightened mass struggle as a means of bolstering up and preserving the political and economic power of the ruling white power bloc. All changes that have already been made and all changes that are envisaged for the future have as their objective not the conceding of power to the oppressed masses but on the contrary the preservation of the political and economic power of the current ruling bloc. In other words the process of restructuring going on in South Africa at present can in no way be regarded as a process of dismantling of the machinery of apartheid. Rather it is an attempt by the rulers of the apartheid state to fine tune that machinery so that it can act more efficiently on their behalf.

Thus far the major adjustments to the apartheid machinery have taken place in the following areas:

The relaxation of certain job reservation regulations so as to permit the greater use of black labour in certain skilled jobs;

The granting of certain limited rights for african trades unions to register and participate in formal bargaining processes with employers;
An attempt to cultivate a supportive ‘black middle class’ by removing certain forms of discrimination and oppression affecting what apartheid strategists have called ‘useful blacks’;

An attempt to create some ‘confederal Constitutional Dispensation’ in which it will appear that all have some political rights but which will, in reality, leave effective political power in the hands of the present rulers.

Why is it that such adjustments are now being made to the apartheid machinery and what is their real content?

The Context: Heightened Mass Struggle
The fundamental context within which all current adjustments by the rulers of apartheid South Africa have to be understood is the heightened mass struggle of the period since June 1976. Currently the ruling power bloc is facing a concerted challenge from the popular masses on a number of fronts. The armed struggle led by the ANC has scored a number of recent successes, the most notable being the attack on the Sasol oil from coal plant in June 1980. On the industrial front, black workers have been engaged in a number of important large-scale strikes, such as the strike in the Volkswagen car plant and the strike by municipal workers in Johannesburg in August. At the same time there has been the continuing school boycott by black students and there have been many other less publicised forms of intensified mass resistance as well.

In acting to defend its interests in the face of this heightened mass struggle the ruling power bloc has basically had two options.

1. To respond with direct repression alone, or
2. To combine increased repression with a ‘hearts and minds’ campaign designed to divide the oppressed masses and win the support of, or at least neutralize, key sections.

Basically, it is the second of these two options that the Botha regime has selected. This is clearly expressed in the slogan ‘total strategy’ that the regime has coined to express its intention to mobilise economic, political and psychological (ideological) as well as military resources in response to what it calls the ‘total onslaught’ against it. This is the option favoured by the top military leadership well-schooled in the techniques of ‘counter-insurgency’ and to whom Botha is particularly close. It is also the option favoured by foreign investors and domestic monopoly capital which accounts for the fact that, for example, Harry Oppenheimer of the Anglo-American Corporation is now collaborating closely with the Botha regime on a number of projects aimed at winning black support for the ‘free enterprise system’.

The Limits of Changes Being Made
None of the changes currently being made by the regime can be regarded as simple reforms in the sense of being the straightforward relaxation of certain oppressive measures in response to mass demands. Rather, each and every modification that the regime is being forced to make to the oppressive apartheid laws by the pressure of mass struggle is being co-opted into its counter-insurgency strategy. Where concessions are being made they are made selectively to some particular sections of the oppressed masses whom the regime hopes to win over or to neutralize and are, furthermore, generally accompanied by measures aimed at intensifying divisions among the
masses.

This emerges clearly from an examination of the changes that were made in labour and pass laws following the Reports of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions. In the labour sphere trades unions with African members were given the right, for the first time, to be formally recognized in negotiations with employers. However, this right was carefully tied to a strategy aimed at domesticating black trades unions and snuffing-out worker militancy. Unions are now able to obtain formal recognition but only if they are registered by the state. Registration is only granted if unions have 'approved' constitutions and methods of internal organization which in practice limit the role of rank and file workers. Similarly, in the sphere of pass laws the modifications made following the Riekert Commission Report have clearly been intended to intensify divisions between different categories of Africans resident in urban areas. For a minority, a certain number of restrictions on movement from one urban area to another will be lifted, but at the same time controls are being tightened up on the entry of all other Africans into the towns. The intention here is clearly to try to 'accommodate' the black middle class and a minority of more skilled black workers, whilst at the same time placing all other categories of African workers more firmly on a controlled migrant labour basis. The same co-optive and divisive intention is also evident in a number of other changes that have been made. Relaxations of so-called 'petty apartheid' regulations have all taken place on a selective basis with the clear aim of creating a supportive black middle class.

As well as noting the basic co-optive and/or divisive intention underlying recent changes made by the regime it is also important to note the clear limitations of the process of change as a whole.

Firstly, the fact that the regime is relaxing a certain number of oppressive regulations (on a selective basis) in no way means that the state has renounced the use of force as a means of responding to mass struggles. This emerged with perfect clarity during the recent strike by municipal workers in Johannesburg. Despite all the post-Wiehahn talk about 'a new labour dispensation' and a 'climate of negotiation', the state's eventual response was to resort to its traditional method of dismissing the strikers and forcibly deporting them to a labour reserve area. What this incident makes clear is that any modifications being made to apartheid regulations and/or the regime's image are, in typical counter-insurgency style, a complement to not a substitute for vigorous action by the repressive apparatus.

No Surrender of White Power

Secondly, it is important to note that whatever 'co-optive' moves the regime may make towards a black middle class it will never surrender the monopoly of political power held by the present white power bloc. The present white power bloc, and particularly those fractions within it (settler agriculture, the settler petty bourgeoisie, white labour) directly represented by the governing Nationalist Party, stands to lose too much in terms of vital class interests from any political arrangement which undermines its present monopoly of political power. Thus, as always, the basic demand of the masses — political rights for all within a unitary state — has been repeatedly rejected
as non-negotiable and outside the scope of the current restructuring process. It is noteworthy in this connection that the new President's Council system, apart from the fact that it excludes all Africans, does not even provide for power-sharing between all the groups included on it. The coloured, Asian and Chinese groups to be included in the Council will be delegated certain powers; they will not share power with whites.

**Divisions within the Nationalist Party and the Significance of the Recent Governmental Changes**

What, in the light of the above, is the significance of the divisions in the Nationalist Party between the *verligtes* led by Botha and the *verkramptes* led by Treurnicht, and what is the significance of the recent governmental changes?

First, the differences between Botha and Treurnicht are essentially about *means* not ends; about the best means under current circumstances to defend the basic structures and institutions of the apartheid system. As should be clear by now, the Botha regime is not involved in the implementation of a programme to eliminate apartheid but rather in the development of a 'total strategy' to defend the essentials of that system. However, whilst Botha is prepared in the best traditions of counter-insurgency to make *some adaptations to certain secondary aspects* of the system in the hope of thereby winning the support of sections of the masses, Treurnicht doubts the effectiveness of such measures. As one commentator put it in the Johannesburg *Financial Mail* of 23/5/1980 'the difference between Botha and Treurnicht, finally is this: the first is seeking an accommodation with (certain blacks) — but only on white terms. The second is contemptuous of such an accommodation — it is seen as weak'.

**The Total Strategy**

To a small extent the recent governmental changes signal a clear determination on the part of the regime to continue to pursue the 'total strategy' option favoured by Botha rather than the option favoured by Botha rather than the option favoured by Treurnicht. The latter's demotion in the cabinet reshuffle would appear to indicate that his influence has diminished to some extent. However, the governmental changes also have a significance far beyond the factional conflicts within the ruling party. More fundamentally they have to be seen as a response to the inherent risk in any strategy of 'change from above'.

Essentially, in a context of heightened mass struggle, the ruling power bloc is taking the risk that the adaptations it is making will serve as a signal to the masses to launch an intensified struggle to push the process of change beyond the limits set by the ruling class. Thus, again in the best traditions of counter-insurgency, the process of restructuring from above is being matched by *increased* control and repression. This is clearly evident in the further erosion of democratic rights for all those outside the parameters of 'the debate' as defined by the regime. For example, there are now increased restrictions on reporting (banning of newsmen from troubled areas), detentions of strike leaders etc., etc. The trend also emerges in the evident move towards more authoritarian government, and it is in this context that the recent governmental changes have their major significance. The inclusion of
Magnus Malan in the Cabinet means that for the first time in recent South African history the military are to be directly involved in policy formulation. Also the establishment of the President's Council and the nomination of Members of Parliament now means in effect more power for the Cabinet (Executive) and less for the Legislature (Parliament). This trend towards more authoritarian government has been captured by the phrase 'Verligte Dictatorship'. The verligtes, those in the ruling party committed to effecting a 'total strategy' in order to ensure their survival as members of an exploiting, dominant class, are asserting their position in a more direct authoritarian manner. To present the process of change underway in South Africa in any other light is to play directly into the hands of the Nationalist Party and its allies. Above all, to argue that there is underway a process of genuine reform in South Africa is at best to gravely misunderstand the reality of the situation and at worst a deliberate attempt to demobilize the mass struggle against apartheid.

CEA/CEDIMO 1980

MALAWI AFTER PRESIDENT BANDA — CHAOS OR FREEDOM?

Speech by Dr Attati Mpakati, National Chairman of the Socialist League of Malawi (LESOMA) at a meeting of the Malawi Support Committee, hosted by Miss Joan Lestor MP in the House of Commons, London, on Wednesday, 15th October 1980.

To begin I shall explain the background to the formation of the Socialist League of Malawi (LESOMA). Although LESOMA itself was formed in 1974, the history of its development stems from the Cabinet crisis that occurred in Malawi two months after Independence was granted on July 6th 1964. It was from this time that President Banda established his autocratic rule over the Malawian people.

As a result of the crisis a number of ministers were forced into exile, this being the genesis of opposition to President Banda. The opposition, however, suffered many setbacks; lack of unity, political immaturity, and the underestimation of Banda's ruthlessness. These factors combined to weaken any organized opposition to Malawi's dictator. Indeed the opponents of Banda's rule remained fragmented lacking the co-ordination and direction of an organized grouping. During this period of confusion Banda consolidated his power and entrenched his personal control throughout Malawi.

Thus in 1974 after a number of abortive attempts to overthrow President Banda, the Socialist League of Malawi was formed to achieve both the reorganization of Malawi's exiles and to build an internal party network within the country itself. In this way we are working to create the conditions necessary for the successful overthrow of the Banda regime and the creation of a democratic and socialist society.
Magnus Malan in the Cabinet means that for the first time in recent South African history the military are to be directly involved in policy formulation. Also the establishment of the President’s Council and the nomination of Members of Parliament now means in effect more power for the Cabinet (Executive) and less for the Legislature (Parliament). This trend towards more authoritarian government has been captured by the phrase ‘Verligte Dictatorship’. The verligtes, those in the ruling party committed to effecting a ‘total strategy’ in order to ensure their survival as members of an exploiting, dominant class, are asserting their position in a more direct authoritarian manner. To present the process of change underway in South Africa in any other light is to play directly into the hands of the Nationalist Party and its allies. Above all, to argue that there is underway a process of genuine reform in South Africa is at best to gravely misunderstand the reality of the situation and at worst a deliberate attempt to demobilize the mass struggle against apartheid.

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In 1974, LESOMA set up a steering committee and began to develop the party organs through a constitution and a statement of aims and programme. This culminated in the Party’s first Congress which was held in March 1980 at Dar es Salaam. A full Central Committee was endorsed and a formal constitution adopted. Since the party’s formation we have developed substantially, both externally and internally. We have formed wings in Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and more recently in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, we are in the process of developing an underground internal wing. Overall, LESOMA has become the only legitimate and authentic representation of the Malawian people.

Given the obvious repression and exploitation existing in Malawi, it remains for us to elucidate how we shall succeed in providing the Malawian people with the true independence and freedom denied them in 1964. As can be seen from our statement of ‘Aims & Programme of Action’, LESOMA has both immediate and long-term targets. When we take power we shall strive for the creation of a progressive and democratic state in which the people enjoy both the benefits and security of just and fair government.

In contrast, today Malawi is suffering under a ruthless and exploitive system. Since Independence Banda has actually strengthened the colonial style of economy. Truly Malawi is a model of neo-colonialism. A minority ruling elite of blacks have joined with the expatriate community to continue the growth of commercial estate farming at the expense of the landless majority. If the colonialists failed to create a rural proletariat, then Banda has actually succeeded!

The most notorious example of Banda’s fraudulent mismanagement of the Malawian economy is the giant conglomerate Press Holdings, virtually wholly owned by Banda himself. It is estimated that Press in conjunction with its subsidiary General Farming, accounts for almost 30% of Malawi’s total economic activity. As Banda’s development strategy neglects the social services, education and health, he embarks upon prestige projects designed to boost his political image rather than benefit the majority of the population. Indeed this year as Malawi faces a serious downturn in the economy, Banda has bought four aircraft to ferry his teams of dancing women — the Mbumba — around the country to sing and cheer wherever he goes. A further example of his politically motivated patronage are the private school and hospital being built at Kasungu, Banda’s home district in Central Malawi. Banda himself suggests that the school is necessary due to the poor quality of the existing educational system under his own government!

As a priority LESOMA seeks to remove this national disgrace. We will create a health and education service that is free and open to all, according to need and not status. In addition, we shall halt the cruel exploitation of Malawi’s agricultural workers. Malawi’s tea industry, for example, has been subject to international criticism due to poor wages and child labour. LESOMA, however, will encourage the formation of genuine and representative trade unions in which the freedom to organize and bargain are respected.

Malawi has suffered an extraordinary isolation within Africa as a result of President Banda’s reactionary foreign policy. Geographically speaking...
Malawi is a front-line state and should have been in the forefront of support for the liberation movements of southern Africa; yet Banda has abandoned this historic role in exchange for cheap alliances with the racist minority regimes. Naturally LESOMA will reinstate the lost prestige of Malawi — gained as early as 1915 with the heroic uprising of the late John Chilembwe against British colonial rule. LESOMA’s foreign policy shall be one of strict non-alignment, support for the Organization of African Unity and the cause of African liberation. Specifically we wholeheartedly support the struggles of SWAPO in Namibia and the ANC in South Africa. Furthermore we would participate as fully and as effectively as possible in the Southern African Development Co-ordination Council, in their attempt to secure true economic independence from the racist regime in South Africa and establish economic integration throughout the entire southern African region.

In the short term, of course, LESOMA intends to free the people from Banda’s dictatorship and bring true democracy and social justice to Malawi. At this stage we cannot outline a specific strategy since events in Malawi are fluid. We have been forced to embrace the concept of armed struggle since all avenues of normal political expression have been violently suppressed. It is Banda who has brought the violence to us. Our strategy is conditioned by Banda’s aggression and contempt for human rights. Armed struggle is not inevitable, however, and we certainly do not desire conflict for its own sake. At this moment we are prepared and willing to face the electorate. It is 17 years since Malawi last enjoyed a truly free and fair election. The time has come for the Malawi Congress Party to face accountability. Currently, given the insecurity and unpopularity of the Banda regime such an election is out of the question. Banda is determined to rule until his last breath.

Our strategy must adapt itself to Malawi’s uncertain future. Today beneath Malawi’s facade of stability is a volcano about to erupt. Banda himself is responsible for the tensions growing beneath the surface. Since the beginning of 1980 a number of political figures have been sacked and detained, in particular, Aleke Banda, Gwanda Chakuamba and General Matawere, three of the most important figures in the Banda government. Indeed the press have completely ignored the fact that Gwanda Chakuamba, the head of the notorious Young Pioneers, is to face a treason trial and was planning a coup immediately before his downfall — and people refer to Malawi’s stability!

As a measure of his insecurity, Banda is falling back upon a tribal clique from his home region in Central Malawi. Currently in the ascendency are the Tembo brothers and their niece Cecilia Kadzamira, Banda’s common-law wife. In addition, the new head of the armed forces, and the head of the police likewise come from Banda’s home district. In the event of Banda’s death a wave of bitter hostility will sweep this elite from power. Quite apart from this source of unrest, Malawi’s economy is in decline with zero growth predicted for 1980 and average wages down by 10% in real terms.

It must be a serious concern for all those who seek peace and stability in southern Africa that Malawi is heading for chaos. Banda’s rule has been a dictatorship pure and simple and the consequences will be tragic. An analysis of the different sectors within Malawi’s ruling structure; namely,
the army, the Young Pioneers, the Malawi Congress Party and the phenomenon of provincialism, all point to an inevitable power struggle — and pity the Malawian people caught in such a trap. There is too much to lose and too much to gain for the transition to be smooth. Malawi’s human rights record is appalling and was outlined in detail in the Amnesty International Report of August 1976. It is foolish to think that there has been any significant change in Malawi today. We fear that Amnesty International will soon be required to prepare another report. We cannot imagine that, whoever seeks to replace Banda will fail to employ the techniques of repression, which they will have learnt from the President himself. We cannot remain silent at the prospect of chaos.

LESOMA’s strategy is flexible in response to this changing situation. We are prepared to attempt to resolve the chaos. Given worldwide understanding and support we would be prepared to face an internationally acceptable solution to the crisis that will occur in Malawi. Our demands, however, must be understood. For 17 years Malawi has forced a major refugee problem upon the front-line states of southern Africa. Yet another burden that they have nobly and selflessly shouldered. Thus there cannot be any genuine democracy and peace, and stability, in Malawi until all political exiles are unconditionally allowed to return to their homeland. Our determination should not be underestimated or our plea ignored.

Having now developed the necessary political infrastructure, we will not stand idly by as Malawi descends into anarchy. We will make all efforts to intervene in the cause of social justice and democracy. Our major concern, however, is what obstacles will be placed in our path. A recent article in South Africa’s Financial Mail (June 6th 1980) predicted that following Banda’s death there was a strong possibility, ‘of LESOMA stepping into the breach’. But what will the South Africans be prepared to do in order to prevent such a return to freedom and democracy in Malawi?

This, finally, is the point I wish to emphasise. The time has come for Malawi to be left alone. There is no longer any need to manipulate Malawi in defence of racism and colonialism. Allow Malawians to determine their own future and destiny, free from the intrigues of world politics. Given such independence, as opposed to that granted in 1964, we are confident that political freedom and social justice can prevail in Malawi.

For further information contact the Socialist League of Malawi: London Representative LESOMA, c/o MSC, Starr House, 57 Church Road, Richmond, Surrey.
Goran Hyden has written a well-documented, clearly argued and powerful polemic against those who seek to locate the underdevelopment of the African peasantry in the predatory activities of a unitary and all-embracing imperialism. Like all polemicists he tends to overstate his case. For example, early on he makes the bold assertion that ‘The problems of underdevelopment do not stem from an excessive penetration by world capitalism. Rather they stem from the inability of capitalism to produce the same dynamic transformation of the material base as it once did in Europe and America’. (pp.3-4). In actual fact his real target is not dependency or Marxist development theory per se, but their uncritical and naive employment in conceptualizing the rural political economy of Africa: ‘While the social realities of Asia and Latin America are such that the Marxist paradigm can be used without any major modifications, the same cannot be said of Africa’. (p.250). What does he suggest instead?

The answer is spelt out with insistence and clarity: the ‘peasant mode of production’ should be studied in its own right and not just as an adjunct of colonial-capitalist penetration. By so doing we discover that the African peasant remains relatively free, not just of landlords and moneylenders, but also of the state and world capitalism. Hyden rejects Kay’s well-known dictum that lack of exploitation rather than its excess explains underdevelopment in Africa. He points out that the present, both during the colonial period and since independence, has actively, and so far successfully, resisted the penetration of capital. It is refreshing to be presented with a picture of an active and innovating agent rather than the usual peasant-as-passive-and-helpless-victim theme which is the starting point of much current writing on the peasantry. Admittedly, the peasant is a long way from controlling his natural environment, and productivity and the division of labour are extremely rudimentary within the peasant mode of production. But the peasant is still relatively free to concentrate on protecting his own security, to assure the complex and fragile equilibrium which he has established with an inhospitable environment and to get on with the job of simple biological and social reproduction. (The peasant is always a ‘he’: Hyden never acknowledges the importance of female labour in the
In the development strategy which he advances. The peasant's relative autonomy of the state and capital is not difficult to understand: he has solid rights in the land and is capable of producing the necessities of life with little or no help from other classes or the state. When the demands of the state become excessive, and returns to the investment of labour in the production of cash crops negligible, then the peasant votes with his hoe, reverting to semi-subsistence production and the satisfaction of his precapitalist 'economy of affection'.

Hyden documents in detail the attempts of both colonial and post-colonial governments to 'capture' the Tanzanian peasant. Whilst the latter was not averse to the introduction of new crops if they could be integrated into the existing agricultural patterns, he was not prepared to be shown how to farm by extension officers or grow crops which reduced his ability to satisfy subsistence needs. The political stick of taxation and the law (75,000 convictions before 'native' courts in 1946 alone!) and the economic carrot of cash incomes were nowhere effective enough mechanisms to lock the peasant irrevocably into the cash nexus of international trade. From the Maji Maji War (1905) onwards, colonial agricultural policy met with resistance and eventually led to the growth of the nationalist movement. Colonialism meant peasantisation on a wide, though highly variable scale, but not the radical transformation of rural productive techniques, social relations or individual and communal objectives. The post-independence government took over the thankless task of trying to reduce peasant independence, but with the vital difference that the petty bourgeois leaders were (and largely still are) the products of the economy of affection which they set out ostensibly to destroy. This constitutes one of the main weaknesses of the post-independence state: the economy of affection which they set out ostensibly to destroy. This constitutes one of the main weaknesses of the post-independence state: the economy of affection transcends the objective class contradiction between the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, which holds back the expansion of capitalism. In articulation parlance, neither the capitalist nor the peasant mode dominates. In such a perspective the post-Arusha policies — forced villagization, abolition of local governments and co-operatives, decentralization, the introduction of the village manager — designed to further the political penetration of the peasant mode by party and state, have been frustrated not only by peasant resistance, but also by clientalist horse-trading typical of local-level politics in Africa. Compliance with state directives has been bought with schools, tractors and other forms of 'aid', and the criteria used to define rational implementation of policy such as those of efficiency, feasibility and viability have gone by the board. In spite of the more draconian repression of the recent period, 'Agriculture still remains largely unaffected by the efforts to introduce new production techniques and achieve a rise in productivity on the land'. (p.152).

The economy of affection — the particularistic demands of friends, family and locality — also holds up the advance of capitalism within the state and parastatal bodies. Urban manual workers and civil servants have not severed their links with the rural areas: most of them still have access to land and remit money home regularly. The Mwongozo (Party Guidelines) of 1971 'effectively destroyed the flimsy fabric of modern organization that
had been institutionalized in Tanzania'. (p.166). Lack of managerial authority and low work discipline combine with shortages of foreign exchange to buy spare parts and with frequent power cuts to make the Tanzanian state manufacturing sector a huge net consumer of public funds. In the public service and export crop parastatals incompetence, corruption and inefficiency frustrate the efforts of the leadership to spearhead economic transformation through state initiatives. The World Bank, IMF and bilateral aid save the Tanzanian government from international insolvency, but inevitably more pressure is put on the peasant in order to pay off the debts thus incurred. An uncaptured and untransformed peasantry means dependency on foreign capital. Increased agricultural production and productivity are essential preconditions for any self-centred, self-reliant development strategy. Recent poor harvests (Tanzania is likely to have to import 200,000 tons of maize this year) underline Hyden's point. Hyden agrees with Amin and others that only socialism is capable of bringing about this transformation, 'to achieve exactly those things that capitalism has failed to attain'. (p.200). Only the peasantry is capably of replacing Western sources of capital and to do this force will have to be used on a massive scale. Nothing could be further from the official ideology of participatory development, man-oriented and freedom enhancing. But who is to lead the socialist transformation? Assuming for the moment that the untransformed peasantry is the main source of underdevelopment: who will constitute the party and administrative cadres needed to capture the peasants? Hyden maintains that the economy of affection permeates all levels of the social formation, which helps explain the limited success of forced villagization and the mediocre performance of the civil service and the parastals. The idea that a dynamic, modernizing party and administration can emerge from the ineptitude and chaos which characterize existing structures is, to say the least, unconvincing. Hyden, so quick to fish out the ethnocentricity of Western radicals, seems to be committing the same error: his own inner yearning for order, efficiency and progressive change gets the better of his earlier circumspection and dismissal of class analysis. Socialism is predicated on the basis of 'reason' alone; it is the solution of the idealist, not something originating in the social structure itself. To many it seems premature to talk of a meaningful socialist option in Tanzania: the processes of class formation have a long way to go before objective contradictions become deep enough to provide a viable basis for a socialist option, should one every emerge. Nyerere's (and Hyden's) 'rational choice' (socialism) is not just around the corner.

There is another basic inadequacy in Hyden's model. He sees the peasantry as the only alternative source of surplus for state accumulation to dependence on foreign capital. The ruling classes (his term) can only 'reduce their dependence on the metropolitan bourgeoisie by forcing the peasants into more effective relations of dependence'. (p.232). He takes it as axiomatic that the ruling classes are eager to distance themselves from the metropolitan bourgeoisie. Let us assume this to be true. It is obvious that the state which is successfully subordinating the peasantry will be using peasant surplus for investment in other sections, e.g. basic industries, economic and social infrastructure. It goes without saying that the sale of cash crops will provide the necessary foreign exchange for essential imports of technology,
capital goods, etc. In other words, an intensification of trade with the West is a necessary precondition for long-term autonomous development. The World Bank and the IMF would be the first to agree with this formulation, indeed the World Bank, as is well known, is one of the major sponsors of efforts to capture the peasant and turn him into a permanent export crop producer. In this policy the Tanzanian state and international capital co-operate unconditionally. There is, then, already a strong and pervasive set of ties linking Western sources of capital with the Tanzanian state and acting to limit the freedom of the latter in its policy options. The latest IMF loan, conditional inter alia on putting some order in the chaotic finances of the parastatals, is a case in point. Joint state-foreign capital ventures designed to soak the only sources of value — land and labour — which Tanzania can offer; this seems a more realistic scenario than Hyden’s romantic and valiant socialists struggling for desengagement. His formulation fails to confront the basic issue of unequal exchange, the nature of the industrial strategy, the form of technological transfer, the daunting technical problems of agricultural transformation and all the other sticky substantive issues of development theory and practice.

In the final analysis, Hyden’s avowed political economy approach gives systematic casual priority to the political, thus exaggerating the range of options open to the political authorities. No doubt, as Hyden points out, the Tanzanian state has a greater relative autonomy vis-a-vis the peasant rather than vis-a-vis international capital. This is precisely why we can expect joint ventures between foreign capital and the state to continue and the long drawn-out struggle to subjugate the rural masses. At the moment the results of the joint venture are so unimpressive (the dramatic decline in the production of export crops during the last ten years strongly supports Hyden’s claim that the peasant does have an effective exit option) that it is not impossible to imagine the World Bank et al. cutting their losses and giving up all hope of ever making money out of the Tanzanian peasantry. As a precondition for self-reliant development that might be a major step in the right direction!

Brian Cooksey


The second volume of this collection will be welcomed by all those concerned about the operations of Western intelligence agencies in Africa. Somewhat misleadingly the title refers only to the American secret service but some of the most interesting chapters are on the activities of the French, British and Portuguese security services. René Lemarchand remarks in one of the introductory essays that it is not sufficient to regard the CIA simply as a ‘spook factory’, rather it should be seen as ‘an institution which in varying degrees and through different instrumentalities has had and continues to have a largely negative effect on the process of development of Third World countries’. In a collection of mainly short pieces of varying
quality, the 'instrumentalities' of these operations are spelled out in detail. These include activities involving Afro-American and African scholars, African trades unions, the media, the payrolling of politicians (with President Mobutu of Zaire the most glaring example), and the employment of mercenaries to overthrow independent African governments.

Many of the cases dealt with in the book will be familiar to readers, the overthrow of Nkrumah in Ghana, the installation of Idi Amin in Uganda, collaboration with the South African intelligence agencies, providing nuclear and conventional weapons to the apartheid state, the assassinations of Eduardo Mondlane, Patrice Lumumba and Amilcar Cabral and intervention in the Angolan revolution. Others will not be so familiar and one in particular casts an interesting slant on the 1980 coup in Guinea Bissau. In the early 1970s the Portuguese and French intelligence services, respectively PIDE (Polícia Internacional De Defensa Do Estado) and SDECE (Service de Documentation Exterieure et de Contre-Espionage), collaborated in a plot to destroy both the PAIGC leadership and the government of Sekou Toure in neighbouring French Guinea. The plan was to foment divisions between the Cape Verdians and the mainland Guineans within the PAIGC liberation movement. Unfortunately for the plotters, the April coup of 1974 in Portugal neutralized these plans and the relevant documents were unearthed and published in a Lisbon newspaper. Extracts from PIDE reports were published verbatim, and one stated explicitly that the aim was 'exploiting to the maximum the antagonisms existing between Guineans and Cape Verdians'. Without insinuating that the recent coup in Guinea Bissau was entirely the work of Western intelligence agencies, it is undoubtedly the case that they have been operating over a period of time fomenting just such divisions — which appears to have been one of the motivations at least behind the coup.

Much has been heard about the US role but Hutton and Block turn the spotlight on 'What Britain Did in Angola' and show that the go-ahead was given by government departments for mercenary recruitment in Britain at the time of the second liberation war (1975/76). The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to which the British Trades Union Council contributes a large proportion of funds, financed the Angolan League of Workers, a FNLA front (the FNLA was the Angolan nationalist movement financed almost from its inception by the CIA). The British Labour Government’s complicity did not finish with the MPLA victory. Late in 1977 a series of meetings took place in various European capitals attended by movements opposed to the Mozambican and Angolan governments, namely the Mozambican Resistance Movement and UNITA, as well as by officers from the security forces of South Africa, Rhodesia and Britain.

These are just two of the many examples of intervention by Western intelligence agencies in the affairs of African states and liberation movements. With the election of Ronald Reagan to the American presidency a more vigorous overt and covert involvement in Africa must now be expected. This book is edited by the people who produce the bi-monthly Covert Action Information Bulletin. They provide material on the activities of Western security services around the globe and urge readers to contact them to provide further relevant information. Their address is PO Box

Barry Munslow


This autobiography is an entertaining and illuminating account of the life of a leading Zimbabwe nationalist politician, now Minister of Mines in the Mugabe government. The manuscript was written in prison, where the author spent all but two and a half of the last twenty years. It was finally smuggled out after earlier versions of the book had been confiscated in the course of raids carried out by warders. John Conradie, a fellow Zimbabwean who spent twelve years in prison, carefully edited the final version of the book and the end result provides an important inside view of the Zimbabwe struggle.

Leaving home and school at an early age, Maurice travelled to South Africa where he was to work for many years. His accommodation ranged from the modest but comfortable servants quarters of private homes and hotels to an ancient disused pipe where he ate meals of dried orange peel. The hardship of those early years schooled him for the rigours of imprisonment later in life. His political awakening was slow to develop and his early connection with the South African Communist Party he openly acknowledges to have been motivated by a keener interest in its social life than in politics per se. For a period, ballroom dancing weened him away from politics completely. By the mid-1950s, however, he had developed a serious commitment to the nationalist cause.

The example of personal defiance shown to the settlers by early nationalist figures like Nyagumbo was of tremendous importance for instilling in the people self-confidence in their power to resist. In spite of the modesty of his writing, the courage and unbroken spirit of resistance displayed by Nyagumbo shine through. This frequently took the form of direct physical assault on one or other senior official of white settlerdom. Such an incident occurred whilst Nyagumbo and others were in Lupane restriction camp. Here they were obliged to stay within the confines of a specified remote area, but could live without guards. Great problems were experienced in communicating with the local people; first, because the Native Commissioner threatened retaliation to anyone who spoke with the detainees; second, the restrictees were all Shona and the locals were Ndebeles; and finally, in this remote part of the country the nationalist movement had not yet then arrived. After a dispute with the Native Commissioner in which the detainees gave him a sound beating, all this changed. For the first time the local people came around and they even offered financial support for the
impending legal case, 'they told us how grateful all the farmers were to us for having beaten up what they called umtakati, the devil'.

Echoes of tactics used to discredit the nationalist movement in the recent Zimbabwe election are to be found in this account. In May 1962, Sir Edgar Whitehead organized some African thugs in a 'Build a Nation' campaign. Its youth wing was involved in widespread intimidation in the townships, which the settler press highlighted as 'nationalist' activity. Muzorewa's auxiliaries posing as ZANLA guerillas were similarly employed prior to independence. The book ends in 1974, and could not of necessity cover the twists and turns that have taken place since then. The reasons for the early split between ZAPU and ZANU are discussed as well as the decision to remove Sithole from the leadership of ZANU, in which Nyagumbo played an important role.

Barry Munslow

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