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Two of the articles in this number of the *Review* address themselves to the continuing debate on the nature of capitalist development in Africa. Much of this debate has centred on the existence or non-existence of an independent capitalist development led by an independent national bourgeoisie, on the progressive or non-progressive character of whatever type of capitalist development was deemed to be taking root, and on the nature and role of the post-colonial state in this process. In their contributions to this number, both Depelchin and Beckman return to these issues albeit from the different perspectives of on the one hand, Zaire and on the other, Nigeria.

Depelchin's historical analysis of the rise of the Zairean bourgeoisie documents the struggle between two main factions of the domestic bourgeoisie: that based on private capital accumulation and that based on the state and state property. He charts the dialectics of the relationship between the international bourgeoisie and these fractions of the domestic bourgeoisie, and shows how all three groups make use of the others to strengthen their own position within Zairean social relations and within the state. Beckman continues the argument he began in No. 19 of this *Review*, where, in a consideration of the debate on Kenyan capitalism (*Review* 8 and 17), he proposed that the whole discussion had been misconceived. The discussion of the existence or not of a contradiction between national and international capital was 'misplaced'. What was crucial was to draw together the logic of capital accumulation on a world scale, imperialist intervention and developing class relations and struggles. Only by examining each case in terms of these interconnected levels could useful theory be constructed and a more complete understanding of what was going on be gained.

In this number, Beckman lays emphasis on the ways in which domestic bourgeoisies are able to strengthen their position within the social formation by allying with international capital, while at the same time international capital secures monopoly positions within the national economies, paralleling that security gained by imperialism as a ‘geo-political’ relation. It is the buttressing of repressive domestic bourgeoisies which secures the development of capitalism and imperialist interests, but it is the repressive character of the domestic bourgeoisies which prevents that capitalist development from assuming a progressive character. The reactionary and corrupt domestic bourgeoisies are not forced into granting reforms which
would improve the lot of the oppressed and create space for democratic development.

Both Depelchin and Beckman raise important questions regarding the political conclusions which it is necessary to draw from their analyses. Depelchin stresses the importance of not seeing Zaire as simply a corrupt dictatorship, a country whose basic political problems would be resolved by the removal of Mobutu's clique. The Mobutu dictatorship, corrupt and inefficient as it is, has stewarded a developing capitalism such that a simple anti-imperialist position is quite inappropriate for any 'Left' strategy for a socialist Zaire. Beckman is also concerned that the 'Left' should have an alternative to the body of dependency theory that underscores anti-imperialist political activity, an alternative which he does not believe is provided by those analysts who see capitalism as a progressive force, and who therefore may simply be inviting the 'Left' to wait until capitalism has changed social relations of production sufficiently to put the struggle for socialism on the agenda.

What is implicitly suggested by both authors is the unification of anti-imperialist and democratic socialist struggle. The 'Left', while continuing to oppose imperialist intervention and to expose the character of advancing capitalism, must also support popular struggles in which workers, peasants and their allies seek to force repressive states to engage in elements of social reform and create more space for democratic politics. All of which suggests the oft-repeated need for more research and documentation of workers' and peasants' struggles. In this number of the Review, we publish an account of the Nigerian General Strike of May 1981. Originating in disputes about car loans, rent allowances, other fringe benefits for civil servants, and a national minimum wage, the strike only lasted for two days. However, it involved 70 per cent of the organised working class in Nigeria and, as Otobo reveals in his account, the strike demonstrated the widespread distrust of Government and awareness of the corrupt relations between sections of Government and business. The events leading up to the strike, in particular the attempts by bourgeoisie and state to split the unions, demonstrated the lengths to which Nigeria's corrupt and inefficient ruling class will go to protect its own position and stave off reform from below. Nevertheless there is ample evidence from this short but effective strike, that there is a strong groundswell of popular resistance which deserves support and solidarity.

The other major article in this number is an account of the problems which have been posed in Mozambique since the winning of independence in 1975 by the need of Frelimo to transform its ideology of liberation into a national development strategy. Meyns, via an account of the colonial inheritance and the post-colonial experience, tries to discover the extent to which the experiences of the struggle against the Portuguese have helped policy formation and execution in the struggle for agricultural and industrial development. It has been a commonly held view that the liberation struggles of movements like Frelimo instill values into the cadres fighting for liberation which should result in a much more effective and sensitive post-liberation mobilisation for development. But even some trusted cadres of the liberated areas have succumbed to values other than those on which the struggle for liberation was based, thus leading to the conclusion that questions such as those of the balance of class forces have to be reintroduced into the discus-
sion and that the 'values gained' during the liberation struggle do not necessarily have a life of their own outside of these political factors.

Readers' attention is also drawn to the review article by Ogundipe-Leslie of Iyayi's *Violence*, hailed, as she points out, as the first Nigerian 'proletarian novel'. Aside from the thorny question of what constitutes a 'proletarian novel', there can be little doubt that fiction can put its finger on the pulse of a society as effectively, if not more so, than dry academic investigation. Readers are encouraged to respond to the issues raised by this review of *Violence*.

*P.L.*

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**Thomas Hodgkin**

We were extremely saddened by the death of Thomas Hodgkin, doyen of radical African scholars in Britain, and one of our Contributing Editors from the beginning of this *Review*. His influence will be sorely missed. (See Issue 23 for an expanded obituary by Chris Allen).
Imperialism and the ‘National Bourgeoisie’

Bjorn Beckman

This article takes up some of the major issues surrounding the development/underdevelopment debate, as taking place in Kenya and Nigeria in particular. While underdevelopment theory as exemplified in Amin and Frank has been found wanting, the ‘return to Marx’ via analyses of the internationalisation of capital and class formation in the periphery has not answered the questions raised by underdevelopment theory because it has not an adequate analysis of imperialism, one which integrates the study of class formation in the periphery with its effects on the system as a whole and vice versa. An analysis of the Nigerian case shows how this might be done. Most importantly it shows how imperialism protects local bourgeoisies from the demands of the oppressed classes, while local bourgeoisies through control of the state provide monopoly conditions for imperialist expansion.

This is a follow-up to my contribution to the Kenya debate (Review 19). It is set within the framework of the argument between underdevelopment theory and its critics. The Kenyan debate revealed the basic weaknesses of the current dependency/anti-dependency polemic. Here I formulate some propositions which seem to follow out of the critique. They relate in particular to the relationship between imperialism and the domestic bourgeoisie. I argued that this was an area where both parties in the Kenyan debate tended to misconstrue the nature of contradictions. On the one side, we found the domestic bourgeoisie reduced to an appendage of imperialist dominated stagnation. On the other side, we were shown the prospects of the domestic bourgeoisie asserting itself in opposition to imperialism and thereby allowing for some degree of ‘real’ capitalist development. Underlying both positions was an assumption that there will be no real capitalist development unless there is a national bourgeoisie. The basic difference was that one side saw evidence of such a class emerging and doing its job while the other saw nothing of the sort. I argued that the evidence was neither here nor there (it could be interpreted both ways) and the inconclusiveness was caused by the phantom of real capitalist development obscuring the capitalist development actually taking place.

Imperialist Lackeys or National Liberators?
Both the Kenyan and Nigerian debates relate to problems in the Marxist tradition of evaluating the character of the domestic bourgeoisie in col-
onies, semi-colonies and ex-colonies in the epoch of imperialism. The issue at stake is whether the domestic bourgeoisie of this period is a progressive force capable of promoting the development of productive forces and oppose imperialism in the interest of national development or a reactionary force collaborating with imperialism for the oppression and retardation of development. Seen from the perspective of the struggle for national liberation and socialism there are two types of important implications. If the domestic bourgeoisie is an anti-imperialist force the struggle will be a two-staged one; first with this 'national' bourgeoisie against imperialism for national liberation; second, against the same class for socialism. On the other hand, if the domestic bourgeoisie is an agent of imperialism, the struggle for national liberation must be waged also against this class. The struggle for socialism and the struggle for national liberation thus coincide. Similarly, if the domestic bourgeoisie is capable of developing the productive forces, the class struggle would take on a character specific to the capitalist mode of production. If not, the anti-imperialist struggle would create conditions for bypassing the capitalist stage.

Concrete struggles have not, of course, been pursued in these abstract terms but from the evaluation of the balance of forces at work in a specific situation. The ambiguous character of the domestic bourgeoisie has often been stressed, distinguishing between comprador and national elements on objective as well as subjective grounds. Political strategies have aimed at linking up with patriotic or national democratic elements and isolating and combating those likely to collaborate with imperialism. However, the influence of theory and doctrine has no doubt been important in structuring the reading and interpretation of concrete situations.

In Nigeria, as in many other parts of Africa a main source of theoretical influence in recent years has been underdevelopment theory as represented by Frank and Amin, popularised by Rodney and reinforced in important respects by Fanon's earlier devastating exposure of a subservient, imitative, corrupt, parasitic and unproductive 'national bourgeoisie'. But, as the Nigerian debate demonstrates, such underdevelopment theory is selectively incorporated into the ideological arsenal of the aspiring domestic bourgeoisie itself. Its radical critics are threatened by co-optation onto the platform of bourgeois nationalism by which sections of the ruling class seek to legitimise their ascendancy.

**The Domestic Bourgeoisie as a Leading Force**

Bourgeois nationalism is a crucial political force in the third world today. It plays a central role in the structuring of the world capitalist economy, including the development of productive forces in the periphery. It is therefore vital to understand the class character of this social force, its relationship to imperialism, as well as the nature of national development it generates. It is a force in ascendancy, not in decay. It is growing in strength and independence.

In this situation, the notion of comprador, agent and lackey may obscure the independent sources of power and strength of this class in its own societies and in the world economy. It is often 'progressive' in traditional Marxist terms of advancing productive forces. On the other hand, it is clearly not a class of national liberators, in the sense of being an anti-imperialist
force capable of overcoming the injustices and oppression created by imperialism. On the contrary, this class continues to be part and parcel of imperialist domination and oppression directed against the masses of the third world. Its alliance with imperialism makes it in fact into one of the most brutally oppressive and unreforming capitalist ruling classes the world has seen so far.

The essence of continued underdevelopment in the third world is not the inability of imperialism and such 'national' bourgeoisies to develop productive forces, including capital goods industries, sectoral linkages, and the production of sophisticated goods for the world market. It is the ability of this transnational class alliance to protect its monopoly profits against popular pressures which may otherwise have forced the domestic ruling class to concede social and democratic reforms. This obstacle to reform is the source of sharpening cleavages and contradictions. But, for the same reason, also the source of revolutionary change. Let me try to indicate some of the main elements which constitute the basis of this position.

**Marxism and Underdevelopment**

The key role attributed to the presence or absence of a 'national' bourgeoisie in the dependency anti-dependency polemic is closely related to assumptions about what imperialism is and what it is up to. A common misconception is that imperialism, as incarnated primarily in transnational corporations and foreign capital, is against capitalist development in the periphery. Historically, there is of course much evidence which shows how foreign economic and political domination have prevented the establishment of manufacturing industry despite the existence of large domestic markets. We know how colonial monopolists blocked the advance of indigenous trading houses by political means. Similarly, colonial settlers sought to block the development of commercial agriculture, not just by ousting indigenes from the land but by forbidding the cultivation of certain commercial crops. The destruction of domestic textile industry by state supported foreign monopolists is of course common knowledge.

On the other hand, post-war industrialisation in the third world has been pioneered by foreign firms. Unilever’s United Africa Company turned from produce buying to manufacturing in Nigeria well before there was any real nationalist pressure for such transition. Since independence, the Ivory Coast has experienced a significant capitalist development in both agriculture and industry under the auspices of French capital. So what is imperialism up to? What are the limits to capitalist transformation under imperialism?

Underdevelopment theory has provided a series of *ad hoc* positions which have had to be successively revised. The original position that imperialism was opposed to industrialisation in the third world, has to be abandoned. The next defence line was that only import substituting industry was compatible with imperialist interests. Real industry (whatever that is) and capital goods industry in particular was the reserve of the metropoles, ensuring continued dependence and subservience. The emergence of aggressive export industrialisation in some parts of the third world was treated as exceptional or enclave phenomena. The final revision relates to the continued technological monopoly of the metropoles through patents, licensing
agreements etc., ensuring an all-pervasive dependence. The constraints imposed on the development of capitalism by such dependence can be easily demonstrated as it affects choice of technology, product design etc. However, the constraints relate to the form and direction of this capitalist development rather than to the development as such.

A basic weakness of underdevelopment theory as a contribution to a Marxist-oriented argument was its failure to relate systematically to the Marxist theories of capitalist development and imperialism. The imperialism of underdevelopment theory is often either a general ideological category of no analytical consequence or something reduced to what some specific actors, foreign firms, the US government are doing. There was little effort to root a discussion of the impact produced by foreign economic and political domination in studies of the laws of motion of capitalism on the world scale. The problem, of course, was that Marxist political economy, being essentially a theory of the capitalist mode of production, had paid little attention to the manner in which ‘peripheral’ societies were incorporated and transformed by capitalism. A major exception is Lenin’s *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. It was primarily concerned, however with demonstrating that capitalist relations of production were actually developing in the various sectors of the Russian economy and that a home market for large-scale industry (and thereby a modern working class) was being formed. He was certainly not out to show that capitalism did not develop in Russia because of the domination of foreign capital. His work on imperialism, on the other hand, paid little attention to the likely course of capitalist development in the semi-colonies and colonies being shared out between the major imperialist powers. The subsequent pronouncements and discussions in Comintern were marked by the conjunctures of the political struggles. Standpoints were taken and abandoned without producing much of lasting value in terms of scientific analysis.

When underdevelopment theory emerged in response to the demand for radical theory created by the upsurge of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles in the post-Second World War period it had thus little directly applicable theory to draw on. It shared this lack of solid basis in Marxist theory with the simultaneous effort within Soviet Marxism to articulate its own response to third world struggles. The effort to legitimise theories of non-capitalist development with reference to Lenin’s pronouncements on developments in Soviet Asia did not strengthen their theoretical foundation and was essentially irrelevant to the problem of understanding imperialism and its relationship to development in the third world.

Underdevelopment theory and the theories of non-capitalist development (later ‘socialist-oriented development’) shared assumptions about imperialism blocking capitalist development and therefore creating the conditions for a transition to socialism on an anti-imperialist platform. The view of the domestic bourgeoisie, however, differed radically. While underdevelopment theory saw the domestic bourgeoisie as the lackeys of imperialism and a primary target for revolutionary struggle, Soviet Marxists were more concerned with its progressive, anti-imperialist features. Patriotic or ‘national democratic’ elements were expected to link up with popular forces using state capital as a platform for industrialisation leading
to the strengthening of the working class element in the anti-imperialist alliance. Support from socialist countries would facilitate gradual disengagement from the world capitalist system and thus enhance the prospects of a transition to socialism.

Both positions emphasise the deficiency of the domestic bourgeoisie, underdevelopment theory its total subservience to imperialism, Soviet Marxism its weakness as a result of low development of productive forces consequent on imperialist domination. In the latter case, it is the combination of such weakness and the contradiction between national development and imperialism which makes the aspiring bourgeoisie into a potential anti-imperialist force. Underdevelopment theory arrives at the opposite conclusions from roughly the same definition of the situation.

From the point of view of Marxist theory, the main weakness of the Soviet position is the subjective character of the 'patriotic' or 'national democratic' elements. The material basis for their readiness to oppose imperialism in any fundamental respect is not clear. As far as I can see, the underlying assumption must be that they are unable to realise their aspirations as a fully fledged bourgeoisie because of imperialist domination. It is easy to see why this may encourage state capitalist solutions. It is less easy to see the socialist-oriented potential of such solutions. In this respect, underdevelopment theory appears to be more materialist in identifying the interests of the domestic bourgeoisie with imperialism. Both lines, however, fail to define the scope of national bourgeois emancipation within the framework of imperialism.

The rapid development of Marxist scholarship in the universities of the capitalist countries in the 1970s has created a basis for overcoming the theoretical weaknesses of underdevelopment theory. Rethinking has also been encouraged by the way in which its positions have been co-opted by bourgeois nationalism for its own purposes. Similarly, the disappointing outcome of the 'non-capitalist' experiences of regimes such as those of Nasser, Nkrumah, Modibo Keita, and Sekou Touré, have encouraged Soviet Marxists to study more closely the class basis of nationalist forces. Great strides forward have been taken in the study of the restructuring of capitalism at the centre and much solid work has been produced on the internationalisation of capital, including the growth of export enclaves and industrial free zones. Similarly, in the spirit of Lenin's study of Russia, a growing number of solid empirical studies show the spread of capitalist relations of production in agriculture, the changing organic composition of capital, the growth of industry, the bourgeoisies and the proletariat.

To certain Marxists this reorientation brings comfort. Things are back to normal. They can return to the task in which they are most skilled and where they can draw on the most authoritative models, that is, the study of capitalist development and the restructuring of social relations of production to which it gives rise. The confusion brought by underdevelopment theory with its lack of theoretical rigour and its ideological concept of development can be left behind.

But has underdevelopment theory really been transcended? Does the combination of these new studies of the internationalisation of capital and the
study of class formation in third world countries really answer the questions posed by underdevelopment theory? I do not think so. A major problem is that they are not really combined. The studies of the internationalisation of capital are just as centro-centric as was Lenin's theory of imperialism. They suggest much about the laws of motion at the centre and the international movements of capital to which they give rise. They tell us less about the way such internationalisation interacts with the development of capitalism as the periphery, except in terms of penetration and imposition. The role of class struggles in the third world in structuring the preconditions for the development of the system as a whole is given little attention. On the other hand, students find it difficult to integrate into their studies of concrete third world societies an understanding of transformations at the world level. At that end, imperialism remains the external agents, the foreign firms.

The failure to locate contradictions and class struggles in a particular social formation in the context of the development of the mode of production, which is a global process, is clearly revealed in the Kenyan debate. It becomes particularly debilitating when the focus is on the relationship between the domestic bourgeoisie and foreign capital. Neither the new study of imperialism (as the internationalisation of capital) nor the new interest in accumulation and class formation in the periphery provide what underdevelopment theory seems to offer third world radicals: a theoretical platform for the combined struggle against imperialism and the domestic ruling class. The platform itself may have been undermined, its deficiencies exposed, but many will continue to cling to it, as long as the alternatives offered seem to be unable to address themselves to the strategic issues at stake.

Those issues are not defined by academics but by political forces to which academics can choose to relate or not relate. Let me first summarise what I believe are the issues.

Under growing Marxist impact academic studies on imperialism and the third world have shifted the emphasis from underdevelopment to development. However, the new 'internationalisation of capital' and 'capital accumulation' seem embarrassingly weak in inspiring useful political analysis, as compared to less scientific notions of imperialism and national development. Some of the resentment against the ascendancy of Marxist theory in this field is no doubt caused by those who have an interest in keeping the distinction between (petty-) bourgeois nationalism and anti-imperialism blurred. But there is more to it than that.

In order to judge, we need to go back to the substantive political content of the underdevelopment position. Academics may have contributed in articulating it but the tremendous diffusion of its perspective can only be understood as a response to specific historical experiences and the development of social forces at the world level, including the realities of colonialism and neo-colonialism, the rise of socialist countries and armed liberation struggles. It is not a specific political line with a uniform theoretical basis. It is a position held by millions of anti-imperialist militants most of whom may never have heard of or read the works of Andre Gunder Frank or Samir Amin.

The position reads roughly as follows and I draw primarily on the prevailing
radical view at Nigerian universities: The Nigerian people suffers from the continued and intensified domination by imperialism. Only a tiny minority benefit. Nothing substantial is done to change the backward conditions which characterise the material situation of the masses. Multinational corporations and other agents of imperialism aggravate the situation by distorting the use of national resources for the benefit of the imperialist countries and their local allies. The domestic bourgeoisie is essentially in the service of imperialism or is out to enrich itself at the expense of the people. Real national development, in the interest of the masses, can only come about through a combined struggle for socialism and national development. Socialism means in the first place socialist planning to direct the utilisation of national resources towards the eradication of mass poverty. National liberation means a radical restructuring of links with the world economy as to allow for self-centred, nationally integrated development.

To my understanding, nothing in the recent Marxist critique of underdevelopment theory justifies the revision or abandoning of such a position. The justified critique of the scientific basis on which such a position has drawn merely suggest the need to look for more adequate theory. It is in the context of that search that the present discussion of imperialism and national bourgeoisie is pursued. I suggest that Marxism still provides an appropriate point of departure. The gap in Marxist analysis which underdevelopment theory sought to fill is still there. Marxism has yet to provide a scientifically adequate and politically appropriate analysis of imperialism, capitalist development and underdevelopment, as it affects the third world. Why the gap came into being in the first place is easy to comprehend in view of the Eurocentred political horizon of classical Marxism. There is nothing Eurocentred, however, as far as I can see, in the basic theory and methodology of Marxism which could prevent it from becoming a powerful scientific tool in the struggle against imperialism and underdevelopment.

The Nigerian Debate

In the Nigerian context, a natural point of departure for discussing the domestic bourgeoisie and its relationship to imperialism is Segun Osoba's widely circulated lecture on 'The deepening crisis of the Nigerian national bourgeoisie', also published in this Review (No.13). It is a powerful formulation of an underdevelopment position. Its conclusions are revolutionary. The national bourgeoisie has to be stoutly opposed and overthrown because 'literally it is good for nothing' (except, of course, as a predatory agent of imperialism!). The manner in which Osoba arrives at this conclusion, however, suffers from some of the weakness endemic to this tradition, thereby undermining the conclusion itself.

This is what he proposes: 'It is objectively in the interest of our national bourgeoisie to be able to create a relatively independent and autonomous domestic capitalist economic order in Nigeria'. If they did so, 'they might be able to retain all, or at least most, of the surplus value generated in the Nigerian economy'. The bourgeoisie is well aware of the continued havoc caused by imperialism. Its leading members make the correct diagnosis. Osoba quotes Waziri Ibrahim, the millionaire politician, and the former head of state, General Obasanjo at length. But they are incapable of changing themselves from mere agents of imperialism.
Why is this so? First, it is the international division of labour. 'In effect, the role predetermined for us within the framework of the global imperialist economy is that of an exporter of raw mineral and agricultural materials and an importer of finished or semi-finished manufactured goods'. To challenge this world order is highly dangerous and would involve sharp retaliatory measures. The bourgeoisie, despite its objective interests, does not have the guts ('revolutionary discipline and a self-sacrificing nobility') to mobilise the people to this end. The most Nigeria can count on is the multiplying of assembly-type industries, 'where nothing of consequence is fabricated locally and the inflated prices of whose inferior products are protected by high tariff walls'.

The sheer profitability of the role as a commission agent for international capital, also prevents the bourgeoisie from emancipating itself and the nation. It is also unable to unite within itself in defence of national interests because of rampant sectionalism. Its collaboration with imperialism places it in contradiction to the people of Nigeria. The end result is a disastrous failure to 'uphold and defend the genuine interests of their people, nothing, literally nothing, really works in the country'. Osoba paints a picture of urban congestion, scandalous opulence and stinking poverty, 'the chaos, misery and disaster that they, the leaders, have inflicted on their people through their intellectual and physical laziness, their lack of patriotism, their indiscipline and their moral and spiritual decadence . . .'

Despite the strong condemnation of the Nigerian bourgeoisie and its despicable behaviour as an agent of imperialism. Osoba's position may easily provide an ideological platform for the rising Nigerian bourgeoisie which has no inhibitions in using nationalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric. First of all, the contradiction which he sees between the bourgeoisie and the oppressed classes in Nigeria is seen as a function of its role of imperialist agent, not of a bourgeoisie. In fact, we are given the impression that if the bourgeoisie pursued its objective interests as a national ruling class it would be able to gain in stability and legitimacy and the people would benefit from efficient government, less congestion, less squalor, more real industry etc. Objectively, the bourgeoisie and the people are on the same side of the contradiction with imperialism.

The essence of Osoba's case against the bourgeoisie is that it is not national enough, that it is comprador. While this may be true, the case for an antibourgeois revolution hinges on the inability of the bourgeoisie to become more 'national' and on the relevance of the criteria used to measure the distinction.

The primary criterion in Osoba's argument is obviously the degree of subservience to imperialism, its significance being measured in terms of its effects on national development. Here two factors are particularly stressed, the siphoning off of national wealth and stunted industrialisation.

Osoba's argument is vulnerable on both counts. There is a heavy outflow of legal and illegal profits to foreign capital which a more efficient and nationalist government could reduce. Still, partly through nationalisations and partly through increases in oil prices the government has had exceptional resources to its disposal for national development. Yet this massive
expenditure has done little to remove mass poverty. It is generally agreed that social injustices have been greatly enhanced. If the government had been able to retain more funds would this situation have significantly changed?

Assuming that the government also had been more efficient, what could have been expected? Perhaps, a more rapid development of new state capitals and the new federal capital, more efficient airports and telecommunications, less port congestion, better urban traffic systems, some more and better equipped universities and hospitals. In production, the steel works may have been completed much earlier, the plans for petro-chemical industries and gas liquifying plants, long on the draft board, may have actually been realised, more Bakolori dams and irrigation projects established.

The point is that neither the profit outflow of the inefficiency argument really enter into a discussion of the nature of national development which actually takes place and its class character. What is it that a national bourgeoisie would like to do if it had more money (less profit outflow) and was less dependent on imperialism? Or the other way round, what is that imperialism prevents the national bourgeoisie from doing by keeping it dependent?

Clearly, it would be in the interest of foreign capital if the Nigerian bourgeoisie was more efficient, if there was less congestion, and telephones worked. Surely, West German firms would not mind building more Delta Steel Works, and the Italian ones would similarly be happy to multiply the number of large irrigation schemes in the north.

This takes us to the question of industrial structure which is central to much underdevelopment theory. The root cause, we learn, why the Nigerian bourgeoisie is unprogressive is that it takes the side of imperialism in obstructing real industrial development. This point is argued, as we have seen, with reference to a global division of labour, where imperialism is against the development of petro-chemical, chemical, steel, agro-allied industries etc.

It should be clear for all except the Nigerian political decision-makers to see that for Western capitalist entrepreneurs to respond to such demands by us would mean facing their lucrative export market in a wide array of products including processed food, petroleum products and synthetic fibres.

But if the absence of slow development of such industries is the essence of the contradiction with imperialism where should the anti-imperialist intellectual find themselves? I doubt that such analysis would prompt them in joining the organised struggles of the masses to overthrow the 'national bourgeoisie'. A more rational (and certainly more comfortable) line would be to join ranks with the numerous Nigerian technocrats and administrators who are presently engaged in planning and negotiating for increasingly sophisticated industrial investments in the very lines argued by such scholars as being beyond the entitlement of Nigeria in the international division of labour.

Despite the overt anti-bourgeois orientation of this type of critique of the present order, it fails to transcend bourgeois nationalist thinking in impor-
tant respects. This is because the barriers to national development which are identified, are not beyond the scope of bourgeois strategies. The implications are certainly not anti-imperialist in the sense that they confront the contradictions between imperialism and the oppressed classes in Nigeria. But even in bourgeois nationalist terms its anti-imperialism is undermined by the manner in which the contradiction between imperialism and national capitalist development is being misconstrued. Rather than being an anti-imperialist force such radicalism may in fact contribute ideologically in preparing the conditions for further integration in the world capitalist economy and for further penetration by foreign capital.

The Ascendance of the African Bourgeoisie

The bourgeoisie of the third world is coming of age. The material basis of this bourgeoisie is partly the sale of primary commodities in the world market, to a much lesser but growing extent the export of manufactured goods. But more important for the rise of this class is the growth of home markets for both domestic agriculture and manufacturing industry, sparked off and partly sustained by production for the world market but developing on its own momentum. The compradors who at an earlier point dominated the class outlook of the bourgeoisie is superseded by bourgeois elements with direct responsibility for owning, planning and managing capitalist production. State capital performs a leading role in this transition in many countries, including Nigeria.

Far from being a force in opposition to imperialism this bourgeoisie is a product of imperialism. It continues to develop in close alliance with foreign capital. It seeks partnership in order to ensure access to technology and management. In return, it offers access to markets and investment opportunities as well as political protection.

Partnership does not imply harmony or identity out of interest. The parties struggle between themselves to get the most out of the bargain. Foreign firms capitalise on superior ‘know-how’ and resources. But they are not alone in the market. Competition restrains their bargaining power. The local partner capitalises on territorial political monopoly, its knowledge of local conditions. There is much cheating and subterfuge. But it is a profitable arrangement for both parties. Corruption may cause profits to disappear from official accounts. It does not mean that production is not profitable for the local bourgeoisie. The national, territorial and political basis of its bargaining power may justify that we speak of this bourgeoisie as ‘national’, as distinct from a foreign or international one. National or nationalist arguments are used to strengthen its bargaining position.

The national issue enters as well when it comes to competition between foreign and local firms, for market shares as well as for financial and state patronage. Domestically based firms will use national arguments to fend off competition or cut in on the markets of foreign firms. The national factor involved may be spurious. The ‘Buy Nigerian’ argument benefits firms like the Peugeot plant in Kaduna importing CKD-cars (‘completely knocked down’) by air from France. However, the national factor is real in capitalist competition everywhere. Contradictions take on a national ideological form.
It is misleading to speak of a ‘symbiotic’ relationship between the domestic bourgeoisie and international capital. It obscures the way in which capital is fractionalised and the importance of fractional struggles and rivalries.

While recognising the existence of domestic capital and domestic bourgeois class interests in this sense it is, however, a more serious mistake to assume that the emancipation of this class is in opposition to imperialism, despite the occasional anti-imperialist fervour of its agitation for better bargains or for national monopoly protection.

The basic misconception is that imperialism is opposed to capitalist development or that imperialist interests are served better by a weak and inefficient comprador-type bourgeoisie than by a strong, efficient domestic bourgeoisie.

**Imperialism and Capitalist Development**

It is time that we examine more closely what imperialism is and what it is doing, in order to be able to judge the way it relates to the domestic bourgeoisie. Imperialism, in the Marxist tradition, refers to the international form of advanced capitalism. The central feature is the degree to which capital has been concentrated and centralised, the way finance capital has acquired a separate and leading role, the crucial importance of monopolistic arrangements to protect profits, and the increasing role of the state in providing the appropriate political (and military) conditions for such monopoly. The purpose of Lenin's analysis was to explain the material basis of the intra-imperialist rivalries which resulted in the First World War. It was a struggle for control over raw materials, markets and investment outlets. Struggle for colonies was one element in this but by no means the most important. Colonialism in this context served to bolster profits and thus strengthen the ability of the ruling class to pacify the working class at home by wage increases and social reforms. The relative contribution of colonies and other dependencies in this respect has been disputed but does not need to concern us here. The important thing is that this analysis had little to say directly about the impact of imperialism on the development of capitalism in the territories brought under its control.

The imperialism of underdevelopment theory, bent on blocking the development of capitalism in the periphery, has little basis either in Marx analysis of capitalist development or in Lenin’s analysis of imperialism. The underdevelopment version of the relationship between imperialism and capitalist development, on the other hand, drew on the concrete historical experiences of colonial or semi-colonial oppression and exploitation. There was little attempt to connect such interpretation with Marxist theory.

If the summary of the ‘Leninist’ position given above is accepted we must ask how raw material, markets and investment outlets are best secured by means of state supported monopolistic arrangements (in the context of fierce intra-imperialist rivalry) at particular times and places and the roles assigned for the domestic bourgeoisie. Take Nigeria. The securing of peasant produce and mineral exports under colonial military occupation was based on an alliance between a colonial bureaucracy and traditional or aristocratic elements. To protect such an alliance it was necessary to suppress the emergence of a domestic bourgeoisie. But there were limits to the
usefulness of such suppression as accumulation in commercial agriculture proceeded. Commercial bourgeois elements rose to ‘threaten’ the monopolies of colonial firms. Old class allies were abandoned in favour of new ones.

Colonial monopoly was a temporary arrangement. Fortunes shifted in the continued intra-imperialist struggles. Imperialist relations were multilateralised. Rearrangements were speeded up by the interaction of such shifts at the international level and the emergence of bourgeois class forces within the colonial economy. The growing centralisation of peasant surplus under national control broadened radically the scope for accumulation by foreign and local capital. Imperialist competition made investment in local manufacturing a necessity in order to secure control over markets. The investments, in turn, required political protection to secure access to imported inputs and the outflow of profits. Partnership was sought with state institutions and private Nigerian businessmen. International finance institutions, acting as the state institutions of multilateralised imperialism, played an active role in supporting the state and the domestic bourgeoisie. Economic infrastructure expanded, a national banking system, a stock exchange, schools of management, market research institutes, financial newspapers, in all, the entire paraphernalia of the capitalist system emerge. The oil boom gives a powerful push. The market expands and the bargaining power of the bourgeoisie is greatly strengthened.

Foreign firms compete among themselves on several lines, first of all on the basis of individual firms in the same line of business, secondly on national lines as far as national monopoly protection can be secured from home countries (tied aid, state credits, trade agreements, economic unions etc.); thirdly on the basis of business sectors with different interests because of different positions in the production chain. Those, for example, who buy unprocessed commodities for the metropolitan processing industry have interests contradictory to those who trade in processing technology. Management consultancy firms compete with those who sell packages where ownership and control of management are closely tied.

It is within this competitive international environment that the domestic bourgeoisie pushes ahead, using its political monopoly to strike bargains with international capital. It is not a zero sum game where my gain is your loss. In pushing ahead it strengthens its own position but advances simultaneously the interests of international capital. Its own capacity to generate appropriate conditions for accumulation is enhanced to the benefit of capital in general.

The local bourgeoisie assists international capital to overcome contradictions which have been built into the imperialist system. Crude forms of imperialism, for example, may profit from extracting value from pre-capitalist forms of production. The political form of appropriation (e.g. alliance with feudal elements) may assist effectively in tapping this source of value. At a later point, however, such political arrangements may be obstructive of more advanced forms of appropriation and transformation on capitalist lines. Here bourgeois state intervention may assist in destroying social barriers (communal property relations etc.) which shield the peasantry from such transformations.
Similarly, highly protected import-substituting industrialisation may provide adequate monopoly profits to a point. However it easily hits market ceilings related to high costs and expensive products. A bourgeois state may perform the double service of depressing costs (e.g. by suppressing labour) and expand markets (e.g. by raising the purchasing power of high income groups).

The more advanced the forms of appropriation by foreign capital, the greater the need for a strong domestic bourgeoisie capable of managing capitalist state institutions. Peasant produce can be appropriated under crude commercial and political arrangements. The production of manufactured goods for a highly competitive world market, on the other hand, may need more advanced capitalist class institutions.

In order to gain the territorial protection of a strong local bourgeoisie, foreign capital is prepared to make major concessions at the level where it finds itself in contradiction with this class. This, I believe, is the perspective from which to understand the politics of 'indigenisation' in Nigeria and elsewhere. It has been suggested that foreign firms were willing to tolerate a high degree of indigenisation because they knew how to dodge or circumvent the new regulations. While there may be much truth in this, the need to make real concessions does not only reflect the actual strength of the Nigerian bourgeoisie but also the need to strengthen it.

Imperialist concern with building up the domestic bourgeoisie is also reflected in the numerous schemes for training, financing and advising local 'entrepreneurs', first mostly private, but also increasingly state. The World Bank including the International Finance Corporation have played a crucial role in national 'development companies' which perform such functions (in Nigeria, the NIDB and the NNDC). Bilateral aid institutions are also active in this field of forging international class alliances.

Apart from building up the members and institutions of the bourgeoisie such world development bodies concern themselves with wider political conditions necessary for the growth and survival of the class. The intense preoccupation of the World Bank with the Nigerian middle peasantry ('integrated rural development') should be understood not only in terms of the commercial potential of this stratum but also from the need to stabilise the rural class basis of an industrialising bourgeoisie at the national level.

Imperialism needs a domestic bourgeoisie. It does not mean that the latter always or mostly performs efficiently or to the liking of foreign capital. It may even develop into a major stumbling block. In its nationalist enthusiasm or greed it may greatly overestimate its own capacity and tax excessively the patience of its foreign partners. The fact that it does not perform well in the interest of foreign capital does not mean that it performs in the interest of the nation. It is not its nationalism as such which provides the stumbling block to imperialism but its inefficient performance as a capitalist ruling class. In such a situation, the domestic bourgeoisie, not imperialism may be the obstacle to the development of productive forces. Imperialist intervention (e.g. IMF & Co in Zaire) may thus be an attempt to reform such an obstructive and inefficient class and its state institutions.

Much inefficiency, on the other hand, is the result of the very mode of im-
Imperialist intervention. The way foreign firms, for example, bribe their way through Nigerian state institutions to overcome 'bottlenecks' leads to major irrationalities in the allocation of resources. The resulting disturbances in production may be harmful to the overall interests of foreign capital.

This takes us finally to the contradictory character of imperialism and the role of the national bourgeoisie within those contradictions. It is here we can reassert the link between imperialism and some of the backward features of third world capitalism associated with the notion of under-development.

**Imperialism, National Bourgeoisie and Underdevelopment: Conclusions**

Imperialism is both reactionary and progressive. I am now speaking only of its role in the development of productive forces. Certain unprogressive features originate in monopoly. Monopoly gives the capitalist an escape route from the iron law of competition which forces him constantly to advance the productive forces in order to survive. But monopoly is rarely complete. Competition continues in monopolistic forms. Imperialism, however, means the backing of monopoly interests by the military and political power of advanced state institutions in an highly unevenly developed world capitalist system. The essence of imperialism is political:

the policy of conquest which financial capital pursues in the struggles for markets, for the sources of raw material, and for places in which capital can be invested. (Bukharin and Preobrazhensky 1919.)

Imperialism is concerned with territorial monopoly through political (or military) means. The empirical study of imperialism in the third world today should therefore be the study of the manner in which state power is used to protect the monopoly interests of international capital. The relationship between imperialism and 'underdevelopment' is therefore the extent to which such state protection holds back the development of the productive forces. The domestic bourgeoisie through its control over state power plans a strategic role in providing the territorial monopoly conditions for imperialism and is therefore pivotal in the maintenance of such imperialist generated aspects of underdevelopment.

But it is not only the domestic bourgeoisie which provides monopoly protection for international capital. It is also the other way round. The political monopoly of the former is reinforced and protected internationally by imperialism. This enhances the reactionary features of this class at the expense of its progressive ones. The advancement of productive forces are not just a result of the competition between capitalists. It is also the outcome of the class struggle. As workers struggle to improve their conditions capitalists are forced to introduce more efficient machines which can reduce the need for direct labour power. In this way the capitalist can either block improvements in the workers conditions (the threat of redundancy) or he must reduce the damage to his competitive strength caused by concessions to the workers.

The reactionary character of imperialism in this respect comes from its way of protecting the local bourgeoisie and its state institutions from the demands of the oppressed classes. The repressive capacity of the state is enhanced. It is under less obligation to undertake social and political
reforms to pacify popular forces which may threaten accumulation and class appropriation. The brutal, predatory, and oppressive aspects of capitalist development are intensified.

Bibliographic note
This paper was originally read at the annual conference of the Nigerian Political Science Association, Kano, April 1981. It is a development of the argument presented in the Review No.19 (Björn Beckman, 'Imperialism and Capitalist Transformation: A Critique of a Kenyan Debate') which in turn related to the debate on Kenya in the Review No.17. For references to the contributions by Leys, Kaplinsky, Langdon and others to that debate, see No.19, p.62. See also A. Phillips, 'The Concept of Development', Review of African Political Economy No.8, 1977. For references to the literature on 'non-capitalist development’, see Mai Palmberg (ed), Problems of Socialist Orientation in Africa, Uppsala 1978. For a major radical Nigerian text see Ola Oni and Bade Onimode, Economic Development of Nigeria: The Socialist Alternative, Ibadan 1975. Important contributions from a historical materialist perspective, avoiding the fallacies of the underdevelopment approach, have been made by Eskor Toyo, for example, in his ‘National interest and structural contradictions in the Nigerian economy’ (Paper read at ABU, Zaria, February 1980). Segun Osoba’s paper discussed here was also originally read at ABU, in 1978.
The Transformations of the Petty Bourgeoisie and the State in Post-Colonial Zaire*

Jacques Depelchin

In this overview of the changing character of class relations in Zaire, the author traces the origins and development of the Zairean bourgeoisie. A distinction is made between the 'rising' or 'new' bourgeoisie and the 'state' bourgeoisie and there follows an analysis of the struggle for control of the state between these two sections of the Zairean bourgeoisie and the role of international capital in this struggle. International capital is seen to play a role which is used to reinforce the position of the state bourgeoisie, but the contradictions between these two fractions are still being played out, not least through the changing economic policies of the Mobutu regime. Depelchin argues against the tendency on the left to view Zaire merely as the personal and corrupt fiefdom of Mobutu without proper consideration of the obstacles to socialist change embedded in the developing capitalist relations.

Over the last few years Zaire has been more often in than off the front pages. Through this exposure, most people have some vague idea of the kind of regime that is headed by Mobutu. In 1977 and then again in 1978 Mobutu himself faced what seemed at the time the severest challenge to his personal and autocratic rule since he took power on 24 November 1965. Through the press too, the news reading public has been relatively well informed of the financial and economic bankruptcy of the régime. Indeed it could be argued that the magnitude of corruption and bankruptcy has significantly contributed to the lack of serious analysis. Moral righteousness has always been a safe ideological and political rallying point.

It is therefore not so surprising that, for the opposition (among them many Marxists), corruption and cases of mismanagement and incompetence have become the most important reasons for calling for an end to this regime without, aside from the ritualistic pronouncements about vague socialist goals, any thought whatever or any discussion of what would follow.

* This essay is an attempt to provide an historical overview of the various transformations of class relations that have characterised the recent history of Zaire. Because it is an overview, this essay will most certainly not satisfy those who would like to see fuller elaboration of the various arguments or issues presented here. An attempt has also been made to address, indirectly and incompletely, some of the dominant issues discussed in the last numbers of the Review.
At the basis of all this is a failure to come to terms with class formation and the history of class relations in Zaire and their transformation under the various phases of their history. Furthermore, ever since Zaire became independent as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the central issue for the various factions of the emerging bourgeoisie and the international bourgeoisie has been control over the state.

The basic assumptions of this essay are close to those of Leys (Review 17),
with two major qualifications. First, Leys applies the concept of primitive accumulation ambiguously. More emphasis is given to the quantitative aspects of the accumulation of wealth rather than to the dialectical relationship between the process of primitive accumulation and the emergence of specific class relations. Secondly, by single-mindedly focusing on the rising bourgeoisie, to the exclusion of the economic, social and political relations obtaining between the local bourgeoisie and the other classes, most analyses blind themselves to those forces which partly account for the origins of the local bourgeoisie as well as for the particular forms of exploitation and oppression to which it has resorted in order to assert itself. Finally, at a more academic level it is unfortunate that P.P. Rey’s *Colonialisme, Neo-colonialisme et transition au Capitalisme* has not been given the due recognition that it deserves especially in view of the fact that his concrete study shares the same theoretical and methodological perspectives as those found in the works of Leys, and, for example, Swainson (*Review* 8).

The same could be said with regard to the concept of primitive accumulation. In current analyses and discussions of primitive accumulation, the aspect of quantitative accumulation is often given precedence over those of property and class relations. And yet, in Marx’s treatment, the latter is given equal if not greater emphasis: ‘The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production’. Later on when dealing with the Modern Theory of Colonisation, he identified a similar process at work, but found it necessary to identify it in quotation marks: ‘It is very characteristic that the English government for years practised this method of “primitive accumulation”, prescribed by Mr Wakefield expressly for the use of the colonies’.

Twenty years after the end of colonial rule and well into neo-colonialism one is at a better vantage point to decide what to do with those quotation marks. By plundering the African continent through slavery, colonialism and now neo-colonialism, the capitalist metropoles propelled themselves out of primitive accumulation, but the plundered social formations themselves, by the very fact of having been plundered, could not and did not begin to emerge out of their plundering state until it was realised that these different modes of plundering were also shackles on the expansion of capital in those regions. Once the shackles of slavery and colonialism were removed, a new history of primitive accumulation began to unfold, but this time with emerging new propertied classes. For this reason it might be appropriate to speak of colonial primitive accumulation and neo-colonial primitive accumulation, with each of these phases representing not the so-called classical phase, but a variation of it. A variation because the central feature of primitive accumulation, namely the separating of the producers from their means of production has not been consumated. Moreover, in those cases where it was consumated, attempts were made to strip the producers of the few political and legal rights they had gained while being proletarianised during colonial rule. These attempts were part and parcel of the process through which the emerging post-colonial bourgeoisies were establishing the class relations without which their accumulated wealth would remain wealth and not be transformed into capital.

As long as conditions of private appropriation exist, emerging national
bourgeoisies will more than likely go through their own phases of primitive and expanded accumulation. But it would be wrong to see these phases as delayed repetitions of a similar, earlier so-called ‘classical’ phase, and yet historical analyses of African social formations tend to be flawed by rigid, structural, a-historical abstracting exercises to see whether or not the social formation under study fits what has been said of earlier historical processes analysed in classical texts.

The Historical and Social Origins of the Zairean Bourgeoisie
The general agreement about the Zairean bourgeoisie at the time of independence has been that it was non- or hardly existent. This was sufficient, for some, to explain the subsequent take-over of the country by the international bourgeoisie. However, if one accepts that it was non- or hardly existent at that time but appeared later, then the political, social and economic basis of this later appearance must be investigated. Generally speaking, such investigation has been bypassed by going straight to the social group that was known under colonial rule as the évolutés. Évolutés referred to a group of Congolese who had been able to differentiate themselves from the rest of the masses essentially through higher levels of education, thereby fulfilling one of the strategic objectives of Belgian colonial rule. Because of the social, economic, political, cultural and ideological characteristics of this group, Marxist writers labelled it the ‘petty bourgeoisie’, as if the difference between the Marxists and the bourgeois researchers were merely a question of resorting to a different terminology. Moreover, this methodological error reproduces the ahistorical notion that the petty bourgeoisie was the sole and direct product of colonial rule. Finally it also reproduces the erroneous notion that there was a sharp distinction between the so-called modern Congolese (i.e. the évolutés) and the so-called traditional chiefs, despite evidence to the contrary showing, at times, quasi-organic links between the two. In short, the methodological error was to understand the petty bourgeoisie through the sociological and political categories imposed by the discourses of colonial historiography. Once this is realised it will immediately become apparent that the economic social and political basis of the petty bourgeoisie was not only restricted to the cities and that its roots went much deeper than the more apparent levels of the economic social and political relations imposed by the colonisers.

Schooling could not be taken as the most determining characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie since, in the colonial context, contrary to colonial propaganda, access to secondary schools and higher education was not easy and depended heavily among other things, on the financial means and social position of the parents. In many parts of the country, colonial officials argued that the schools had to serve first the sons of chiefs. It is for these reasons that the évolutés must be seen only as a small fraction of the petty bourgeoisie, and that their history does not start with urbanisation.

By 1910 the colonial officials had realised that in order to make the repressive state apparatus more efficient they would need the active support of the customary chiefs. A decree was passed which in effect made them functionaries of the colonial state. A few years later the colonial state sought to make them even more dependent on the colonial state apparatus by abolishing the tribute system and instituting local taxation and a form of
remuneration which depended, as in the case of cotton cultivation for example, on the level of cash crop production. The more the subjects produced, the more the chiefs were rewarded. But while the colonial state, hand in hand with the large colonial companies, managed to get the co-operation of the customary chiefs with regard to the smooth functioning of capitalist relations of production, there were entire sectors of the economy which, while determined by the capitalist relations of production, were not transformed by them. In many areas access to cattle and land was still governed by quasi-feudal relations, and as long as these quasi-feudal relations did not interfere with the capitalist process of appropriation, they, in turn, were not interfered with by the colonial state apparatus.

The appointment of customary chiefs as agents of the colonial state never meant the total destruction of those social, economic and political relations which had in the first place brought these chiefs to power. In fact, to call the customary (and not so customary in those cases where they were imposed) chiefs mere agents, is not entirely correct precisely because the political role they were given under colonial rule increased rather than diminished the opportunities for reproducing the pre-capitalist relations of production on which their original power rested. Indeed, the colonisers themselves gave so-called customary law a new lease of life by institutionalising it as part and parcel of the colonial legal system. By the end of colonial rule, customary law had become an academic discipline studied at the University of Kinshasa not because it was academic, but because it served an important function in the resolution of conflicts in those areas which had remained, purposely or not, unaffected by capitalist relations of production. Thus if a worker committed a felony at his or her place of work he or she would be judged according to the penal code, but if the same person had failed to comply with bridewealth or matrimonial regulations he/she would be tried by customary judges.

Colonial rule neither completely eradicated the pre-colonial economic and political relations, nor preserved/destroyed such relations. Arguments along these lines are incomplete. In those areas where feudal and quasi-feudal relations had existed before the formal imposition of colonial rule, the latter provided a new basis for reproducing and sometimes expanding, the pre-colonial relations. Contradictory as this may seem, it was not the first time it had occurred as the co-existence of slavery and capitalism in the US had shown less than a century before.

Thus, before the constitution of political parties in the Congo from the mid-fifties and especially from 1958 (barely two years before independence) the situation with regard to the petty bourgeoisie was as follows: a very small fraction had struggled to make itself acceptable to the colonisers. It was from the ranks of this urban based petty bourgeoisie that emerged the most radical representatives. In great part this radicalism stemmed from realising that short of a drastic change in the relations between the colonisers and the colonised, their economic future would remain bleak. For example, they did not see, and rightly so, why a Congolese with the same academic competence should receive a lower salary than a Belgian. It was this fraction of the petty bourgeoisie which felt with the greatest intensity and frustration the consequences of racial discrimination. However, it is important to
qualify this radicalism by pointing out that the conceptions of power of this fraction of the petty bourgeoisie was far from radical and coincided, in fact, with that of the colonisers.

This fraction of the petty bourgeoisie was so concerned about its own interests that throughout its own history it always sought to differentiate between itself and the rest of the colonised population. In 1944 after an army mutiny in the city of Luluabourg (now Kananga), one group sent a petition to the colonial authorities requesting a different treatment from the rest of the population, and arguing that this request should be granted if only because it had helped the colonial authorities to re-establish law and order. A similar reaction occurred after the 4 January 1959 insurrection in Kinshasa. Then members of the petty bourgeoisie were at pains to point out that the political maturity of the Congolese people would not be demonstrated by destroying schools, dispensaries, police stations and social centres. However, these same representatives of the petty bourgeoisie realised, through that insurrection, that their political power did in fact come from the pressure exerted (violently or not) by the people and not from their own individual and personal qualities, whatever these might have been. Many political leaders realised also that the colonial officials did not want a repetition of the 4 January ‘troubles’. The idea that these could occur hung like a Damocles sword whose fall was feared not only by the colonial authorities, but also by the petty bourgeois political leaders because their occurrence could have endangered, that is, lengthened or modified, their access to power. Typically, the political petty bourgeoisie proclaimed its solidarity when it was no longer necessary by declaring after independence, that 4 January be the day of the ‘Martyrs of Independence’. Such momentary and opportunistic radicalism must be distinguished from the radical and popular nationalism voiced most clearly by Patrice Lumumba.

During the few months preceding independence, more precisely from the time of the Round Table Conference of January 1960 to Independence Day, the apparent divergences between the petty bourgeois political leaders and the customary chiefs remained superficial. There are reasons to doubt that the conservative political stands of the customary chiefs were only due to political submissiveness and lack of political consciousness. In fact, they could more easily be explained by very concrete economic considerations. Whatever the evils of the colonial system, from the point of view of the chiefly class, it had created more than acceptable conditions for reproducing the social and economic basis upon which its political and ideological power rested. Quite often, as already pointed out earlier, the property relations upon which the chiefly class lived were not capitalist even if some of them had managed to make the transition from being mere feudal landlords to becoming capitalist farmers while still resorting to feudal and semi-feudal relations of production, based on property relationships constructed around cattle and/or land.

So strongly embedded were these pre-colonial relations that the largest majority of political parties were organised around an ethnic base. In this very fact alone can be seen the general congruence between fractions of the same class which gave the superficial appearance of being at odds with each other. And this concordance was to be confirmed over the years with many
a ‘politician’ resorting to the same methods of economic exploitation and political domination as those feudal chiefs. It was in this perspective that it made political and economic sense for the one time Minister of Agriculture, Zamundu, to say six years after independence: ‘we must rely as best as we can on the customary authorities’ (Le Progrès, 15.3.66). In 1973, a researcher at the University of Kinshasa was pointing out that although traditional authorities had been abolished by law, they maintained all their prerogatives (Kamanda, 1973).

Finally, the chiefs’ conservatism came from realising that if the urban based petty bourgeoisie got hold of the state apparatus, they might use that power against them, and they were proved partly right because the emerging Zairean bourgeoisie in its struggle to establish its economic legitimacy found it easier to move against their own time allies operating in the most backward sector of the economy than taking on the international bourgeoisie heavily entrenched in the more capital intensive sector of the economy, especially mining.

Within a few days of independence the army mutiny provoked, among other things, a mass exodus of all the Belgians who were still manning the various branches of the state apparatus. In other words within a few days even the visible structure of the state literally disappeared. The army was practically non-existent, so that when Mobutu engineered his first coup in September 1960 in order to get rid of Lumumba, he could not even dream of holding on to power. To readers of C.C. O’Brien’s To Katanga and Back it will not be difficult to recognise the whole period from 1960 to 1964 as unique in the history of Independent Africa, in the sense that while sharp struggles were going on within the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie in order to decide which faction was going to take control of the state, UN officers and western powers’ ambassadors (particularly that of the USA) were busy not only determining which faction was going to take over but also shaping and moulding the state apparatus to suit their own needs.

Economically, the sector which survived the independence shocks best was the mining sector. On the other hand, both agricultural production and productivity fell dramatically. This fact and the collapse of the colonial state cannot but be seen as directly related. With a higher organic composition of capital the mining sector represented the most strategic and least dispensable for western capital. The mining sector, in contrast to the agricultural sector was characterised by unencumbered capitalist relations of production. No wonder then that the western powers encouraged the secession of the richest mineral province in order to bring down Lumumba’s government. Even though a large portion of agricultural production was based on capitalist relations of production, these could not be reproduced without the constant resort to the repressive machinery of the state. It was only logical that the collapse of the colonial state should have directly affected the production and productivity of agricultural production, much more so than mineral production. Confirmation of this was given in December 1967 when the then Minister of Agriculture argued that forced agriculture would have to be reinstated (Le Progrès 19.12.67). Five years later, the Director of the Agriculture Ministry supported the same idea by stating that although colonial agriculture was conceived in the interests of the colonizers, it also
contributed to raising the standard of living of cultivators (Salongo 28.8.72).

The Democratic Republic of the Congo from Independence to Mobutu's Seizure of Power, 24 November 1965

In chronological sequence this period is characterised by the complete and total collapse of the colonial state as already mentioned; the secession of the richest mining province of Katanga, now Shaba, under the leadership of M. Tshombe; the secession was endorsed by the western powers but only as a makeshift solution (brought to an end in January 1973) toward and until the elimination of Lumumba; the peasant insurrections at one time led by P. Mulele and culminating in a direct military intervention of the NATO powers in November 1964; and finally, the military coup of Mobutu a year later and backed by the same powers was firstly a response to the continued pressure provoked by the insurrections, and secondly a move to strike against all the various fractions of the emerging bourgeoisie by firmly securing state power.

The picture given of the major characteristics of the fraction of the petty bourgeoisie that assumed political power at independence would be incomplete without a brief discussion of the position of Lumumba. Lumumba emerged as the leading nationalist leader because he was the only one who realised the political importance of creating a party not based on purely ethnic allegiance. Unlike most of the other political leaders he fought for a unitary state as opposed to all kinds of federal and confederal schemes which surfaced at the time. Interestingly Lumumba's position was also the one favoured by both international capital and the colonial state. His defence of a unitary state ran counter to what the rest of the petty bourgeoisie perceived as their economic interests. A unitary state structure would have made it more difficult for the emerging bourgeoisie to use their ethnic enclaves as the basis for the accumulation of wealth. This ethnic splitting of the Congo did not take place, but something akin to it took place when the original six provinces of the colonial state grew to 21 (reduced to nine soon after Mobutu's access to power). Although Lumumba's political strategy was seen as running counter to the longer term interests of the petty bourgeoisie, in the more immediate future of gaining independence, his radical and popular nationalism was seen by the same petty bourgeoisie as the best leverage against the Belgian colonisers.

From the point of view of the Belgians and especially the cold war crusading Americans, Lumumba's radical nationalism was seen as a potential threat to a stable future of the Congo under NATO. Thus, even before independence had been won manoeuvres were initiated in order to keep Lumumba out of power. This having failed, the army mutiny provided the needed opportunity for Katanga to secede thereby cutting the main source of funds for the state, and thus politically destabilising Lumumba. For the western powers, this was the main purpose of the Katangese secession (Emmanuel, 1972). Unfortunately for the west it took a while for Tshombe and his southern white allies to realise this.

Until 1964, the problem of who controlled the state was never in serious discussion since the USA through the UN troops took care of it. However,
within months of the departure of the last UN troops (June 1964), the insurgents under the leadership of Lumumba's followers raised the spectre of the Congo being controlled by a fraction of the petty bourgeoisie whose allegiance to the west could be put in doubt.

In spite of all the efforts of various UN generals, but in retrospect one may wonder how hard they really tried, no serious reorganisation of the Congolese army was ever undertaken. There were at least two reasons for this. First of all, from the point of view of the petty bourgeoisie and its political representatives such a reorganisation would have broken (or at least threatened) the little control that many of them had over various sections of the army. From the point of view of the imperialist powers, there was no pressing need to rush and reorganise the army since a better army could also have meant greater potential for relative independence from the imperialist powers by whichever fraction that would emerge. This particular tactic was not lost on Mobutu who has applied the reverse tactic of never letting a single country assume a dominant role in the never ending reorganisation and training of his army. This task is currently divided up between the USA, Belgium, France, Italy, Israel, Morocco, and now, China.

With regard to class relations inside Zaire, the 1960-1965 period illustrated without any doubt the intrinsic weakness of the rising bourgeoisie in relation to the working class and the peasantry, which in spite of being poorly organised politically and poorly equipped technically were, by April 1964, controlling more than half the country. Their progress was stemmed and finally crushed only through the direct military intervention of NATO troops. Aside from revealing the weakness of the rising bourgeoisie, the resort to sheer brutal force against the exploited classes demonstrated the determination of the rising bourgeoisie to create the conditions necessary for its own neo-colonial primitive accumulation.

As already pointed out, the so-called classical conditions of primitive accumulation of which Marx or even Lenin were writing about cannot be used as a sort of yardstick or model by which to decide whether or not primitive accumulation has or has not yet taken place. In the post-colonial, neo-colonial history of class struggles, rising bourgeoisies or fractions of them must, in order to reproduce and expand as a class, seek to create or recreate conditions favourable to their own primitive accumulation. This process has usually meant increased reliance on the repressive apparatuses of the state.

The state is not just a register of class forces. According to circumstances, it can be less or more than a register. More precisely, at times it can be the subject of struggles while at other times it will be the object of intense struggles. At the risk of distorting the reality of those concrete struggles, it can be said that Zaire has gone from the first stage (i.e. till more or less the early 1970s) to the second stage (from the early 1970s forward).

The period from 1960 to 1965 was a period of intensive struggles both within the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie as well as between the bourgeoisie and the exploited and oppressed classes. Such was the intensity of the struggle that it temporarily eradicated the political significance of the exploited and oppressed classes. Thus in spite of the proclamations for a unitary Con-
go, following in this what was dictated by the interests of the international bourgeoisie, the dominant practice of the petty bourgeoisie was to divide the country.

Administratively, the tribalism that had lain at the basis of the constitution of the political parties was used to divide the country from the original six provinces into 21, each one with an administrative structure similar to that of the central government. The proliferation of provinces was apparently the best way of opening up the rural areas to the exploitation of the peasantry by the urban petty bourgeoisie. This process was strengthened at another level by the well known Bakajika law, named after a deputy who thought it shameful that large tracts of land and abandoned plantations were still legally in the hands of foreigners. It was argued at the time that abandoned plantations should be given to deputies who would thus be freed of the anxieties of facing unemployment at the end of their term (Annales Parlementaires 1966). It has already been explained above why the petty bourgeoisie found it easier to move into the agricultural sector of the economy. What appeared at the surface as political squabbles between various sections of the emerging bourgeoisie (rural vs. urban based for example) was nothing else but a struggle to gain access to the existing means of enrichment in the rural areas.

From the point of view of the rising Zairean bourgeoisie the period starting with independence must be seen as a phase in the process of neo-colonial primitive accumulation for itself. As for any other such class, this period has and will always be written in letters of blood and fire. It is only in this perspective that for example the appeals to western military interventions, the OTRAG deals, unbound corruption, outright thefts of public property, and the intervention of ‘authenticity’, can be understood. Historically, all bourgeoisies have behaved in the same manner, no matter how different the historical circumstances. It is therefore sheer idealism to expect that the ending of Mobutu’s rule will put an end to this process.

The problems (internal opposition, dissatisfaction of certain sections of the international bourgeoisie) faced by the current ruling class in Zaire stem from the contradictions between, on the one hand, the modes of economic exploitation and political rule shaped by the economic and political practices typical of the phase of neo-colonial primitive accumulation, and on the other, those which are typical of a bourgeoisie reproducing itself through neo-colonial expanded accumulation and which, thus, stands to lose by the practices of the former. In the history of the country, this is not the first time such a situation has occurred. During the days of Leopold II’s personal rule, he drew fire from sections of the Belgian bourgeoisie as well as from sections of the international bourgeoisie, especially the British as so well exemplified by E.D. Morel’s famous Red Rubber. This is not to say that Zaire has returned to the times and practices of Red Rubber, although some would argue that it has even gone beyond. Rather it is to point out that the resolution between two contradictory developments does not mean that such a contradiction may not recur again. Moreover, as Marx pointed out, it should not be forgotten that while sectors of the economy may be dominated by conditions of extraction of relative surplus value (e.g. mining), others (e.g. agriculture) may be experiencing the complete opposite.
Sometimes too, the contradiction may exist within the same sector as for example in mining if one compares the most backward mining operations of Kivu province with the most modern technologies used in Shaba province. Although this was not quite so visible during the 1960-65 period, it became more and more so during the subsequent years: the contradiction between an emerging bourgeoisie still in the throes of neo-colonial primitive accumulation and one which not only no longer needed it, but was actually threatened by it, has been intensified by the fact that this contradiction is no longer one which goes along national/foreign lines.

A question will be raised as to how to proceed from an economy apparently dominated by conditions of extraction of relative surplus value to one where those of extraction of absolute surplus value are easily reintroduced? First of all, the collapse of the state has already been referred to. Its collapse showed, ex post facto, the extent to which the colonial economy could not properly function without resorting to its repressive apparatuses. It has also been pointed out that in some rural areas semi-feudal and feudal relations of production had continued, not just in the sense of ‘preserved’, but in the sense of reinforced.

The emerging bourgeoisie, in order to rob undisturbed, had to strip the exploited and dominated classes of those little rights they had gained under colonial rule. The highway robbery that was begun by the emerging bourgeoisie right after independence could only take place under the protection of the army and all the repressive forces including those of their international allies. Thus when workers and peasants were lamenting the end of colonial rule, to the great delight of former colonisers, they were expressing with accuracy what had been their fate since Independence. This had nothing to do with false consciousness or lack of revolutionary politics as suggested by some Marxist researchers who, for purely ideological reasons and as a matter of principle, would prefer to ignore or deny the existence of problems or facts especially if they are raised by ideological enemies.

As recently as 1977, in the eastern part of the country government officials did not dare ask peasants to cultivate cotton without the protection of a military escort. The proletariat has not fared much better than the peasantry. Very quickly it was stripped of the very few rights it had earned during the colonial period; it saw itself increasingly repressed, first through suppression of strikes, then through pure and simple abolition of even the right to strike, and finally through fusing unions and their officials with the state.

1965-1975: The State as a Subject and Object of Struggles within the Emerging Bourgeoisie

It was said earlier that one can distinguish between two phases with regard to the state: one during which the state is merely an instrument for accumulation of wealth and then one during which it is treated by various classes and/or fractions of classes as an object of struggles. The state is no longer the instrument of the fraction which is actually operating it, but is transformed and shaped from outside of the state apparatus itself. Clearly the argument of this essay is that such a distinction can be seen, but also that it would be wrong to interpret each phase as totally excluding the other. Moreover, for the purposes of analysis it is important to divide the above period into two: 1965 to 1973 and 1973 to 1975.
Generally speaking this period was characterised by the consolidation of Mobutu’s military rule. In the context of the struggles going on both within the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie and between itself and the other classes, Mobutu used the army to settle all accounts. This was facilitated by the fact that he personally controlled the best trained and best equipped section of the army: the two battalions of paratroopers trained between 1961 and 1964 in Israel.

The most significant aspect of this period, although it is now almost forgotten, was the attempt by this section of the rising bourgeoisie to impose its own ideology, the so-called ‘recourse to authenticity’, best described as a populist attempt to identify itself with the masses. Generally speaking, the ‘invention’ of authenticity can be seen as part of that process by which the petty bourgeoisie holding state power sought to enforce its own rule on all other classes, and in particular all other fractions of the petty bourgeoisie. Ironically, several aspects of this ideology like the change of city names, and later, Christian names had been inspired in part by former radical university students for whom Lumumba was still the hero of a truly independent Zaire.

By adopting some of the avowedly Lumumbist nationalist slogans, Mobutu was able to further thin the ranks of those who had vowed to continue and struggle for the kind of country of which Lumumba had dreamed. This process went hand in hand with the official proclamation of Lumumba as a national hero by the very same man who, at the height of the 1964-5 repression of the peasant uprisings, had decided to remove the name of Lumumba from one of the streets of Kinshasa. As might be expected, the emergence of ‘authenticity’ coincided with an increased entry into government and state positions of a significant number of those former university students who had most closely identified with Lumumba’s radical nationalism. Very few were able to resist this process of co-optation. By adopting some of Lumumba’s ideas, Mobutu was able, at least momentarily, partially to defuse the potential hostility against his own regime. At the level of international politics and especially African politics, he clearly hoped to also establish himself as one who restored law and order in Zaire as well as one who continued Lumumba’s work.

The ideology of authenticity or of ‘resorting to the values of our ancestors’ fitted very well with the economic struggle to re-institute conditions of primitive accumulation reminiscent of the worst years of colonial economic exploitation and political repression. It fitted very well because at the centre of it all was the political doctrine of the African chiefs. Time and time again, Mobutu has hammered at this notion of the supremacy of the single chief. During the times of our ancestors, so he would argue, no one would dare dispute the authority of the chief. Democracy was just one of those European imports which had no relevance in Africa. To be authentically African meant in Mobutuesque parlance to draw lessons from the African past and not from Europe. Those who did the latter were still displaying a colonial mentality; and one of the strongest as well as deceptive appeals of authenticity was precisely its call for the decolonisation of mentalities. Ironically, those most in need of such treatment were the very initiators of ‘authenticity’. This concept’s retrograde nature buttressed the economic strategy of seeking to re-create conditions of primitive accumulation even in
areas where these conditions were about to give way to expanded accumulation.

1973-1975: Zaireanisation, Radicalisation, Retrocession or the Sharpening of the Struggle Between Two Fractions of the Emerging Bourgeoisie

No economic system, and by implication no state can survive if its ruling class live principally by pillaging. After so many years of using the state as a way of spoiling public funds the rising bourgeoisie and the swelling numbers of the petty bourgeoisie made such a strategy increasingly less rewarding. Along with the obvious negative ratio of growing spoilers in relation disappearing spoils at least within the reach of state bureaucrats, came the drop of copper, and the rise, of oil prices. The latter and not the former were quickly latched upon as the central causes of the disastrous state of the economy. The diminishing returns from using the state as one of the principal sources for wealth accumulation prompted the state operators to move in two apparently different directions, but which were part of the same strategy; first, making the state more productive of wealth and secondly, moving into new areas in search of additional sources of wealth.

Both moves were bound to require some form of nationalisation of the economy. With regard to the first move, nationalisation, or to be more precise Zaireanisation, went hand in hand with attempts to render more efficient the traditional methods of filling the public coffers such as a more efficient system of tax collection. This was done either by improving the existing system or by using disguised force such as the 'voluntary' contributions of 'one Zaire for a greater Zaire' (Zaire being the currency unit) a slogan which was in great use especially after the second so-called invasion of Zaire in 1978. Then there was the effort in 1972 to revive the National Savings Account. Among the measures used for doing this was the compulsory saving by parents of school age children; not such an original idea since it had already existed during colonial rule. It was also suggested, but difficult to know whether it was implemented, that the National Pension Account be made a credit institution, not out of concern for workers well-being, but as a means of again, taking advantage of all possible sources of 'lootable' wealth.

The other identifiable strategy was the one which took place between 1973 and 1975: Zaireanisation, radicalisation in 1974, and finally retrocession (or the return) of some businesses to the former owners. The first steps of Zaireanisation went in the direction of sectors of the economy which, it was thought, could be managed by Zaireans just as competently as by foreigners. The aim was to ensure that all small and most medium size businesses fell in the hands of Zairean nationals. Sectorally, it affected especially transport and services. However, very quickly, the move encompassed more important businesses, in part because the nationalisation of small and medium businesses did not and could not satisfy the basic economic interests of the section of the emerging bourgeoisie formally controlling the state, whose central concern was to use political control as a means of consolidating it through ownership of the means of production.

The initial Zaireanisation of 1973 was followed in November 1974 and in November 1975 by, respectively, 'radicalisation' and so-called 'retroces-
Overall, these steps transferred to state ownership around 120 large industrial and commercial firms (IBRD, 1975). From the various official and unofficial accounts it would be fair to say that radicalisation (November 1974) was provoked by the realisation that Zaireanisation had not produced the desired effects. First, in many cases the Zairean businesses, far from prospering under the new owners, saw production decline. Secondly and, perhaps in terms of class relations more importantly, the nationalisation led to bitter fights within the ranks of the rising bourgeoisie over who was going to own what. Moreover, as some were emerging tremendously wealthier, they were perceived as a danger to the still dominant fraction of the state bourgeoisie. Indeed, when Mobutu made his radicalisation speech this group of profiteers was specifically singled out as a target. Outwardly, radicalisation was aimed at the new owners who had proved themselves incompetent as well as against those who had appropriated the businesses so skillfully that they were perceived as a threat to the very group which had opened up this new cornucopia. Within another year the continued poor performance of the nationalised, then ‘radicalised’, businesses forced the government to introduce ‘retrocession’, i.e. ceding the radicalised businesses to their original owners on a 60 per cent foreign/40 per cent Zairean basis.

The reaction to this whole process and in particular to retrocession has generally been one of ‘I told you so’, be it from the right or the left. From the right this is not so surprising since each failure of the African bourgeoisie is seen as a vindication of their reactionary position according to which blacks, bourgeois or other, are incapable of governing themselves. From the left, mere denunciation or prediction of failure is not sufficient. The authors of Le Dossier fall into this category except for the allusion to the fact that Mobutu’s radicalisation was implemented for fear of seeing a local economic bourgeoisie develop and threaten the absolute power held by the head of state (Comité Zaire, 1978).

Left at this the failure is attributable either to the failings of the president or the president’s entourage who are only interested in enriching themselves. Radicalisation might have been a failure, but looked at from the point of view of the emerging Zairian bourgeoisie as a whole it would be shortsighted to see it as such. True, Zaireanisation through to retrocession did not quite bring even to the emerging bourgeoisie the expected prosperity, but it did intensify and quicken the changing relationship between the local economic bourgeoisie and its state counterpart, and in the process markedly affected the nature of the state. This will be discussed below. In short, the failure must be looked at in relative terms, but the causes of it cannot be just incompetence, greed or any other moralising explanation. It is crucial to also examine meticulously the state of the businesses that were nationalised.

Such an examination is being carried out, but not completed yet. The following lines are provisional conclusions whose main objective is to draw attention to very specific aspects, and as yet unstudied, of colonial Belgium based joint-stock companies. Before going further it cannot be repeated too often, even at the risk of saying the obvious, that the nationalisation of foreign firms by a neo-colonial bourgeoisie can never be looked at as if it were more or less the same as the concentration or centralisation of capital
by capitalist firms. In order to understand why production and productivity of the nationalised firms declined it is essential to look at the history of those firms. If the economists of the regime had done their homework properly they would have realised that Belgian financial interests had ever since 1960 prepared themselves against such an eventuality by 'nationalising' their own businesses (Joyce and Lewin, 1961). Of course this legal procedure of transforming Congolese joint-stock companies into Belgian joint-stock companies was never admitted or denounced as pure and simple nationalisation. Since the companies continued to operate in the Congo, it was easy for the Belgian owners to present the adoption of Belgian legal status as a purely juridical matter without consequences with regard to production. On the surface there was nothing wrong with all this. After all these were Belgian joint-stock companies even though they had seen the light of day because of their economic activities in the Belgian colony. However, within months of passing that law most of these firms had almost all transformed their original Congolese company into two companies: the Belgium based joint-stock company had now become something similar to a financial holding company controlling 99 per cent of the 'newly' created Congolese subsidiary. In other words, what was left in the Congo by all these joint-stock companies was a shell whose substance had been used to create a financial company, thus transforming the original 'mother' company into a mere vegetating subsidiary.

The economic history of these subsidiaries still has to be written, but their situation in the Zairean economy of today can by no means be assumed to be the same as during colonial rule. Moreover, the uncertainties about the economic future of the Congo led most company executives to adopt, at best, a wait and see attitude combined with precautionary measures such as the nationalisation preceding independence as a way of insuring against losses should nationalisation by the Congo occur.

Moreover the pattern of investments by the Congolese companies during colonial rule reveals certain things which to this date have not been sufficiently stressed. It is generally accepted that the economic crisis of 1929 and the Second World War led to modernisation processes. While it is true that some firms did engage in a modernisation effort immediately following the War, it cannot be said that this was the case for all the sectors of the economy. Partial confirmation of this can be drawn from the way in which the Ten Year plan (1949-1959), which was part of the modernisation drive, failed heavily.

With regard to the companies, an obvious fact acknowledged by non-Marxist economists (Bézy, 1957), deserves repeating: the capitalist firms operating in the Congo enjoyed such a monopoly that they used the situation to reap exorbitant profits, and more importantly, to prevent new and more competitive investment from being made (Bézy). Most colonial companies resorted to reinvestment of profits, a means of financing new investment which has been recognised to encourage conservative economic strategies (CRISP). In short, throughout the post-colonial period, most of the companies, by now depending entirely on the Belgian finance holding, failed for the above reasons plus — in their jargon — political instability, to carry out the necessary and badly-needed investments.
In other words while it might be ideologically understandable to castigate the current ruling class in Zaire it would be shortsighted to single it out for political condemnation. The causes of its failure are not just those of a corrupt and incompetent class, but also the delayed results of tactics adopted by multinational firms in order to anticipate the moves by the emerging national bourgeoisies. It would be wrong to attribute the decline of production and productivity of the various Zairenised/radicalised units of production solely to the incompetence, corruption and greed of the rising bourgeoisie. The Belgian joint stock companies had well prepared themselves for such moves by only leaving in the Congo subsidiaries which could not operate without a lifeline to the Belgian financial holding. Thus, when nationalisation finally took place it did nothing to them since the Zairean subsidiaries had by then been reduced to dead branches of a tree.

The period from 1973 to 1975 brought out very sharply two contradictions which the President’s populist speches sought to make appear as only one, i.e. the Zairean people versus the ‘nouveaux riches’. Within the emerging bourgeoisie, there exist two distinctly separate fractions, one which is still in command of the state apparatus and which is seeking to maintain its dominance in the economic arena. This dominance was clearly shaken by the Zairenisation-Radicalisation-Retrocession. How shaken it was can be deduced from the various speeches against the ‘new 300 Zairean families’, an allusion to the 300 Belgian families who were supposedly in control of its colonial economy, (Jua 24.1.75).

For the President, the radicalisation measures were aimed above all at ‘avoiding the formation of a class of ‘nouveaux riches’ which was becoming more and more a real fact! Therefore no citizen may own goods which would allow him or her to laugh at the popular masses’ (Salongo, 13.1.75). The new owners, or at least the greediest among them were castigated because ‘they had reached the point of forgetting that it was by caring for the community that one most easily achieve progress and social promotion.’

One of Mobutu’s explanations of radicalisation is worth quoting at length:

The state sought an end to (this) deteriorating situation by radicalising the nationalised firms: Radicalisation had to carried out because the situation was about to become like the one was had known at the political level before the second Republic (November 1965) during which the provincial powers laughed at the central authorities, in short the state. Thus some owners turned bourgeois were behaving like uncontestable and uncontested owners of the Zairenised businesses allocated to them, to the great contempt of the Zairean state which they were unscrupulously spoiling.

Engaged in a sharp struggle with these new bourgeois, Mobutu sought to present himself as the guardian of public interest while discrediting as well as protecting these bourgeois against ‘un enbourgeoisement intempestif’ (Salongo, 21.5.75). Elsewhere he described himself as the one who will prevent the emergence of a ‘fistful of fatty and pot-bellied bourgeois next to the misery of the people’ (Salongo, 2.2.75). As if to prove his good faith, he went as far as introducing measures to combat this new bourgeoisie. However, while announcing these measures (a ceiling on cadres’ salaries, official cars only for state guests, and a special tax on revenues and turnover) others were specifically invented, such as the removal of import taxes on chemical fertilisers and other goods for SGA (owned by one of Mobutu’s uncles) and other Zairenised firms, in order to boost the profits of those
businesses in which the state bourgeoisie was involved. Thus, on the one hand Mobutu would publicly declare war on the new bourgeoisie, but on the other he would reassure them as he did with regard to the ownership of private houses: 'the houses continue to belong to their owners even if they were built with stolen money, for by building them they were building up Zaire . . .'

This ambivalence came in part from the realisation on the part of Mobutu and the state bourgeoisie that they could not really stem the tide of this new bourgeoisie. Moreover, Mobutu himself through various investments has long been a member of this new bourgeoisie. Later on he clearly sensed that his political future lay on the side of the latter. In a speech known as Le Diagnostic du mal Zairois (26 November 1977) the principal target was no longer the new bourgeoisie but 'those people who use the state or the party as instruments of personal enrichment (Salongo, 26.11.77). Those who were castigated were the cadres who hid behind the Président-Fondateur in order to achieve an abusive juridical and political immunity. Then the failures of Zaireanisation and radicalisation were attributed to 'the psychology and action of a certain Zairean bourgeoisie which wants to get rich without working, to consume without producing and to rule without being controlled — in short replace the colonisers without 'colonising'.

To be sure, Mobutu was not unaware of the links that existed between the new bourgeoisie and the state 'untouchables' who were accused of being the first to quit the ship when things went relatively badly, as they did in 1977. After quitting and, at least for some of them, becoming part of the new bourgeoisie, these former 'untouchables' would most vociferously denounce the poor management of the state.

This aside, the November 1977 speech was a direct appeal to the new bourgeoisie. As such the speech could be seen as a turning point in the relations of the two fractions of the bourgeoisie with respect to the use to be made of the state apparatus. On the one side there was the fraction which turned to the state as its privileged instrument for accumulation of wealth and on the other there was the fraction for which such use of the state apparatus could only impede the process of expanded accumulation.

Evidence of this changing relation can be deduced from the increasing number of interventions of businessman (les hommes d'affaires) in areas previously reserved for the state: at the state hospital of Isiro (North Eastern Region) the sick were saved from starvation by a food donation from a private firm (Salongo, 8.1.76); a similar case was reported for a hospital in Kivu region which ran out of fuel and was helped out by another 'humanitarian' capitalist (Jua, 24.3.78); it became commonplace to read it in newspapers about businessmen taking upon themselves the maintenance of road (Salongo, 24.11.76); near Rutshuru (Kivu region) a prosperous businessman was planning the building of a mini-dam (Jua, 23.6.78) in Bukavu (Kivu region) a Woman's traders association provided the needed three tons of cement to complete a city market (Jua, 24.3.78); and one could go on and on with more examples. All this does not mean that the changes were solely a result of internal changes. The international bourgeoisie, as a whole was also interested in a state more atuned if not to the needs of ex-
panded accumulation, certainly to the alarmed international bankers who were pressing for repayment of their loans.

One of the results of pressures brought about by the international bourgeoisie has been the acceptance by the Zairian government to implement some economic and political reforms. The Zairean government had to accept various measures imposed by the IMF; from 1978 this included the supervision of the Central Bank by an IMF appointed official. The Customs Department and the SNCZ (National Railway Line) both received new department heads from Belgium. The official and urgent tasks of all these foreign experts was to increase efficiency and eradicate corruption, but in theoretical terms it can be seen as an attempt to increase the productivity of invested capital by improving the circuits of circulating capital.

It is a bit more complicated to analyse the political consequences of these changing relationships. The growing strength, still very weak in comparison to the international bourgeoisie, of the new bourgeoisie is paving the way for new contradictions one of which will be between a national and a comprador bourgeoisie. On the one hand many Zairean nationals are being appointed to the boards of directors of several foreign joint-stock companies. With regard to Belgian joint-stock companies alone, and as of 1974, a total of 28 individuals occupied positions on the boards of directors of 16 different companies. With the 1973-75 shake-up, this figure is likely to have jumped dramatically (Le Receuil Financier). And on the other hand some Zairean capitalists have begun to question, and some to clash with, the quasi-monopoly positions enjoyed by foreign firms. The distinction made here between a national and a comprador bourgeoisie should not be seen as a contradiction which is constantly given. This is being said in part because the line which divides the national from the comprador bourgeoisie is a constantly shifting one. Assuming the analogy could be useful one could say that the comprador bourgeoisie is somewhat in the same position as the petty bourgeoisie: on the one hand the former is drawn between the international bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, and on the other the latter is drawn between the bourgeoisie and the working masses.

Given this role of the international bourgeoisie in the transformations of the new Zairean bourgeoisie, and given what has been said earlier with regard to the state bourgeoisie's attempt to stem its rise, must one conclude that the state bourgeoisie has opted to ally itself with international capital in order to safeguard its dominant position? It seems so, and to a certain extent understandable. Understandable if it is assumed that foreign capital within the context of Zairean political economy was sensed as politically less menacing. In the long run, Mobutu has clearly realised that it will be easier to contain a foreign bourgeoisie whose political weight would depend on its Zairean allies than a national bourgeoisie with a political and social basis in Zaire. At present, however, the international bourgeoisie through its economic weight can exercise more political and economic pressure than the emerging Zairean industrial bourgeoisie. It was through the pressure of the international bourgeoisie that Mobutu reinstated Nguza Karl I Bond as his foreign minister even though he had been accused of high treason, judged, found guilty and sentenced to death. Along with the pardon and subsequent reinstatement of Nguza Karl I Bond, the international bourgeoisie also re-
quested the introduction of democratic reforms. Mobutu craftily used this as a way of first spotting the actual and potential dissenters, and then of appointing them to the highest positions in order to make them directly accountable to himself. But there were limits to how far Mobutu would accede to the demands for more democracy. He expressed them in his famous speech of February 1980 when he baulked at the suggestion coming from Zaireans, but attributed to the international bourgeoisie, that an opposition party should be allowed in the Zairean political system.

The Economic Basis of the New Bourgeoisie
Throughout this essay various illusions have been made to the agricultural basis of the new bourgeoisie, but so far without elaboration. We have seen why agriculture more than any other sector of the economy constituted the favourite target of the rising bourgeoisie. Much more than any other sector, the agricultural sector relied on the repressive apparatus, and this was one of the reasons why it was also more affected by the collapse of the colonial state. In the agricultural sector this event also meant the almost total disappearance of highly qualified personnel who, in 1959, numbered 418 (Jurion and Henry, 1967). The following will concentrate not so much on how the emerging bourgeoisie established its economic basis in agriculture, but on showing how it sought to consolidate this economic basis.

One of the most visible signs of this process has been the creation of financial institutions to help in and accelerate the transition from primitive accumulation toward expanded accumulation. Thus, in 1970 it was decided to create, with the encouragement of the World Bank, within SOFIDE (Société Financière de Développement) a new bank — SOFIDAG — (Société Financière pour le Développement Agricole) whose sole objective was to be the financing of agricultural projects. It was made clear from the very beginning that financial help would only go to large projects (Banque du Zaire, 1974). By 1977 the SOFIDAG experiment was considered such a success that it was suggested in some corners that it should be expanded by studying how unused resources such as those of SONAS (National Insurance Company) and INSS (Social Security) could be mobilised for agricultural development (Salongo, 24.11.77). Insofar as the transition to expanded accumulation under neo-colonial rule is also linked to the problem of capital formation, it is not surprising to see the emerging bourgeoisie seriously turning its attention to the ways and means of collecting money not just from existing banking and financial institutions, but also from new ones to be created. Already in 1970 the governor of the Central Bank had drawn attention to the increasing resources which needed to be tapped, failing which they would find their way abroad (Banque de Zaire, 1969-70). The compulsory saving imposed on school children, workers of private enterprises and government employees were part of the same scheme which had been encouraged by World Bank experts after they had noticed that savings deposited in financial institutions averaged 25 per cent of GNP between 1960 and 1970 as compared with 40 per cent between 1950 and 1960 (IBRD, 1975).

Another financial and credit institution, the COFIKI (Compagnie Financière de Kinshasa) began to operate in October 1974 (less than a year after Zaireanisation). One of its objectives was defined as ‘assisting national en-
trepreneurs in the acquisition of large units of production, by acting as an intermediary between these entreprises and foreign financiers' (Banque du Zaire, 1974). Five years before Mobutu decreed the five-fold increase of the Ministry of Agriculture budget favourable financial terms began to be granted to agricultural firms. Private banks were authorised to grant credit without any limitation; preferential interest rates for commercial agriculture and agro-business were introduced; in 1972 the Central Bank introduced a preferential re-discount rate of 5 per cent in favour of agriculture (Salongo, 27.8.72).

Clearly while all this can be seen as part of the process of transition from neo-colonial primitive accumulation to expanded accumulation, it ought to be equally clear that it could be another way of carrying on neo-colonial primitive accumulation as exemplified by the use that was made of the CNECI (Caisse Nationale d’Epargne et de Crédit Immobilier), a credit institution created in 1972 and which began to run into difficulties five years later because the debtors were failing to repay their loans. As the top executive of the CNECI lamented: 'the rate of defaulting is highest among the wealthiest and most well advised debtors' (Salongo, 5.12.77).

In November 1975 a journalist reminded his readers that no year had gone by without the President reminding everybody that agriculture was the highest of priorities (Salongo, 27.11.75). But it was not until 1975 that appropriate budgetary allocations were made to match the political pronouncements. Then President Mobutu announced that the budget for agriculture should be increased five-fold. In other words government subsidies and aid to agriculture was increased at the very moment when agriculture was no longer the business of small poor peasants, but of citizens with substantial means. The history of post-independence agriculture is the history of the marginalisation and pauperisation of the peasantry and its losing battle against the emerging bourgeoisie.

In 1967, the then Minister of Agriculture had spoken of mechanising agriculture, but then suggested that it should wait. In 1969 another Minister of Agriculture pointed the way to a policy which was not concerned with the individual peasant household, arguing that agricultural growth would depend on 'our will to modify outdated structures' (Le Progrès 20.1.69). Almost ten years later, the move against the peasant producer had gone so far that it led some to ask 'the private capital injected in this (agricultural) sector will not risk leading to an increased marginalisation of peasants in rural areas? (Azap, 1.3.78).

While the general trend was toward paying more attention to large scale agricultural projects, one also finds now and then some preoccupation with the fate of the single peasant family. Thus in 1978 a department for rural development was created aptly described as the department of the new ‘missionary’ which shall be called upon to ‘carry on to the populations of the most remote corners, the good news of the revolution' (Salongo, 12.6.78). But this concern, reminiscent of colonial paternalism, is not necessarily for the peasant as an independent producer, but rather as the potential labourer for the new plantation owners. The constant calls for return to the land are not made out of concern for the well being of independent producers, but reveal the anxieties of plantation owners who are increasingly complaining
about the lack of labour, itself the result of plunder by the very same class which is now crying for labour. As mentioned earlier, this class found no better way of resolving the labour shortage and declining agricultural production than reintroducing wherever and whenever possible the colonial practices of forced cultivation.

The extreme pauperisation of rural workers has been identified even by the World Bank researchers as one of the contributing causes of labour shortages on plantations. However, while noting that 'actual wages in medium and large plantations often exceed minimum levels; even so, absenteeism rates are high', the World Bank report goes on to point out that the main problem concerning wage legislation hinges on the existence of social contributions which create a wide divergence between the cash return to the worker and the actual cost to the employer. Without questioning the merit of social benefits provisions, it might be worth reviewing if a nearly 100 per cent tax on wages is compatible at the present state of development of the country with increasing economic and social pressures to expand employment opportunities and output (IBRD, 1978).

This argument illustrates very well a point made earlier with regard to the necessity of the rising bourgeoisie, in its phase of primitive accumulation to force the producing classes into that phase. This meant stripping the working masses of those small, limited advantages gained under colonial rule. But it is interesting to note that while the World Bank is making the case for extraction of absolute surplus value, other Zairean capitalists have castigated those employers who are failing to pay full social and pension benefits to their workers. But then the World Bank experts may have known better for in another report published later, they pointed out that between 1968 and 1973, the highest growth rates occurred in manufacturing, construction, services (including government). Growth in the agricultural sector (2.5 per cent) was lower than the population growth over the same period (IBRD, 1975).

However, there is nothing contradictory in these developments. They reflect the processes of primitive accumulation and the tensions created by fractions of capital (local and foreign) which are aware of the political dangers contained in these fetters preventing the full scale development of expanded accumulation. It was pointed out by a researcher that 'new' relations in agriculture have meant, especially in regions with high demographic intensity, the resurgence of feudal potentates (Kamanda). In Kivu province, the local weekly directly linked endemic starvation with very well entrenched feudal practices (Jua, 15.3.74). Five years later, in 1979, almost twenty years after independence a reader, exasperated by the social and economic conditions, wrote to the editor of the same paper asking if colonialism had returned to Kivu province (Jua, 8.6.79). This was a telling reminder of the sad state to which the largest section of the petty bourgeoisie has been driven and is for this essay, an appropriately open-ended conclusion.

Conclusion
This essay has primarily focused on the fraction of the petty bourgeoisie which has secured state power. In the process it has tended to ignore or underplay the concrete struggles waged by the oppressed and exploited classes which included large and growing numbers of the petty bourgeoisie. This neglect was in part deliberate not because these struggles were con-
sidered secondary, but because of the political priority of first understanding the characteristics of the ruling class. It was also deliberate because of the paucity of reliable information on the organisation, ideology, strategies and tactics of the opposition movements. Such movements as they exist have been and are speaking for themselves in various ways.

More than never before, Zaire's future will play a key role in the future of the southern part of the continent, and for this reason alone a discussion and analysis of the political struggles cannot be carried out within the same parameters as those used throughout this essay. As long as the Zairian bourgeoisie cannot stand on its own feet, the struggles of the oppressed and exploited will always be against the emerging Zairean bourgeoisie and their imperialist allies. Only by taking this into account can a consequently organised opposition seriously hope to achieve victory.

Bibliographic Note:
In addition to the press reports cited, the following works are referred to in the text:


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**Zairean Detained**

Ernest Wamba dia Wamba is a history lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam. In December 1981 he returned for a family visit to his home country, Zaire, and was then detained for some weeks. However, though released from prison, the Zaire Government will not allow him to leave the country again to resume his teaching and to re-unite with his family in Dar es Salaam.

A ‘Free Wamba Campaign’ at that University is urging that people send written protests about Wamba's treatment (if possible in French), urging that he be allowed to return to Tanzania, to the following:

Son Excellence Citoyen Mobutu Sese Seko  
Président-Fondateur de MPR  
Président du Comité Central du MPR  
Présidence de la République  
Mont Ngaliema, Kinshasha 2, Zaire
Liberation Ideology and National Development Strategy in Mozambique

Peter Meyns

At the beginning of 1980 Mozambique's President Samora Machel declared that the coming decade would be 'the decade of Mozambique’s victory over under-development'. By 1990 the country would be well on its way to advanced socialism. Speaking on the same issue before the People’s Assembly in December 1979 Samora Machel had said: 'To win this war we must fully and consciously assume the values that we gained during the national liberation struggle'.

These two statements set the tone for this article. Looking ahead to the aims of national development strategy in the 1980s Machel refers the people of Mozambique back to the values gained during the national liberation struggle before 1974. The focus of this article is precisely on the process of transforming liberation ideology into national development strategy underway in Mozambique since 1975. Objective and subjective factors, the colonial legacy and liberation ideology, are of relevance in analysing the process. The article begins by briefly outlining the colonial legacy as the point of departure and the material foundation of Mozambique’s development after independence. It then turns to the 'values gained' during the armed liberation struggle from 1964 to 1974, and discuss theoretical issues which were raised during that period and which related to the perspective of Mozambique’s post-independence development. Finally, it looks at the new phase of national development after 1975. Dealing with the key areas of political mobilisation and organisation, the state sector and rural development, the focus here is on the political-administrative and socio-economic problems of transforming the values gained, the experiences made, the political line developed during the preceding 10 years into a national development strategy.

The article is based on a dialectical relationship, whereby the colonial legacy, liberation ideology and post-independence development strategy can be looked upon as thesis, antithesis and synthesis. This framework of analysis is considered to be helpful in understanding the complex and contradictory process of development which Mozambique has been undergoing since independence.

The Colonial Legacy
Independence left Mozambique with an economy geared to the interests of the former colonial power, Portugal, as well as other international capitalist
interests, and largely integrated into the economic structure of southern Africa under the domination of South Africa. The main features of this colonial legacy were plantation and settler dominated export-oriented agriculture and the entrepôt character of the economy dependent on the provision of services, such as railway and harbour facilities, and migrant labour to neighbouring countries, in particular South Africa. This legacy of necessity conditioned the Mozambique Liberation Front's (FRELIMO) initial endeavours to formulate a development strategy at national level after taking over power at independence.

For decades Portugal geared colonial agriculture in Mozambique completely to the task of propping its own backward economy. This policy involved isolating the colonial economy from other external relations. Production of agricultural cash crops for export and the promotion of Portuguese settlement of the colony were the main characteristics of a policy directed towards the integration of the ‘Overseas Provinces’ into the ‘metropolis’ Portugal. The system of exploitation of indigenous peasants is best described by forced cotton cultivation. The decisive function in this system affecting half a million peasant households was exercised by the commercial enterprises who bought the cotton. They had a trade monopoly for the area allocated to them and their agents operated in close co-operation with the local colonial administration and the traditional chiefs. In 1960, twelve commercial enterprises with cotton monopolies were operating in Mozambique. As cotton producer prices were kept extremely low, there was no incentive for the peasants to engage in voluntary production. Cotton became Mozambique’s most important export product accounting for 27 per cent of the country’s total exports in 1961. Peasant food production suffered as a result. The advantage of the ‘cotton regime’ for Portugal’s textile industry, for a long time the country’s main industrial sector, was two-fold: it saved considerable amounts of foreign exchange, and the price of cotton exported from Mozambique to Portugal was fixed at a level far below the world market price. The colonies were also reserved as the main market for the export of the finished products of the Portuguese textile industry.

The production of sugar, another of Mozambique’s major export crops, was similarly tied to the Portuguese market by export regulations. However, sugar was grown on large plantations from the start. From the early 1960s plantations and settler farms came to the fore in the field of cotton production, too. One reason for this development was that greater productivity could be achieved by cultivating larger areas. Another factor, however, was that the advance of the national liberation struggle together with growing international condemnation of the practice of forced labour forced the Portuguese colonial regime to change its policy, as far as the form of exploitation was concerned.

The African peasants continued to receive hardly any support from the colonial administration in order to prevent them from competing with the settlers, and, at the same time, to make and keep them available as cheap labour for the plantations and settle farms. Plantation and settler agriculture remained predominant in Mozambique until the end of colonial rule. Plantation owners and Portuguese settlers were two major factions of the colonial bourgeoisie and as such determined the agricultural policy of
the colonial administration. The distribution of land at the end of colonial rule in Mozambique aptly sums up the situation. Close to five million hectares, i.e. only about 10 per cent of potential agricultural soil were actually in use; 0.2 per cent of all units of production, namely the plantations and the settler farms, owned nearly 50 per cent of the cultivated land, which, in addition, is the most fertile land in the country. At the other extreme the small peasants with less than two hectares of land each, while totally 76.2 per cent of all units of production, cultivated only 23.7 per cent of the land.

Industrial development of any significance did not start in Mozambique until the 1960s after the beginning of the liberation struggle. In 1965 Portugal abolished the remaining restrictions on foreign capital investment in order to win over its allies, in particular the USA and South Africa, for a stronger involvement in its colonies. Initial processing of agricultural products for export still accounted for 35 per cent of total industrial production in 1973. However, industries aimed at the home market showed a rising tendency in this period and by 173 accounted for 65 per cent of industrial production. Industrial development in colonial Mozambique however was not based on the country’s own resources, and was not geared to the consumption needs of the mass of the people, but to those of the colonial power, the settlers, the colonial army, and the white South Africans and Rhodesians who used to flock to Mozambique on business and holiday. In the face of a large and increasing structural trade deficit Mozambique depended on other sources of foreign exchange income to pay for its imports and to avoid overall balance of payments deficits. These were port and railway facilities for neighbouring foreign countries, money spent by tourists in Mozambique and the transfers of Mozambican migrant labourers employed outside the country. These features of Mozambique’s external economic relations show the specific characteristics of the dependent economic structure which Portuguese colonialism bequeathed to this country.

**Structural Dependence on South Africa**

They also reflect Mozambique’s inherited ties to South Africa. Cooperation between the Portuguese colonial regime and the white settler regimes in southern Africa dates back to the 19th century, and South Africa was always the driving force in this relationship. The two main aspects of Mozambique’s dependence on South Africa are migrant labour and the use of its port and railway facilities. After the opening of the gold mines in the Transvaal in the late 19th century southern Mozambique was the main source of cheap labour. Recruitment was organised by the ‘Witwatersrand Native Labour Association’. Mozambique continued to provide a proportion of more than 25 per cent of mine labour in the Transvaal until the early 1970s. An agreement limited the recruitment of migrant labour to the area south of the Save river. Portugal insisted on this limitation in order to prevent labour forces being drawn away from the plantations in central Mozambique and from the forced cultivation of cotton further north.

Sending migrant labour to South Africa was a profitable affair for the colonial administration. According to the system of ‘deferred payment’, the Mozambican workers only received 40 per cent of their wages during their contract period of up to 1½ years. The rest was transferred to the colonial
administration which deducted outstanding tax payments and other costs, and paid the workers the remaining sum in escudos when they returned to Mozambique. ‘Deferred payments’ were to be made in gold and when the unofficial gold market was created in the 1970s this brought in added revenue. For the independent government of Mozambique the issue of exporting migrant labour is a structural problem. Given the backwardness of the economy it inherited from Portuguese colonialism it will need time to create productive employment for the migrant labourers within Mozambique. Initially, the economic sabotage of Portuguese settlers after independence and the economic difficulties resulting from the applications of sanctions against the illegal Smith regime reduced the employment opportunities within Mozambique even further. In the meantime, the FRELIMO government benefited from the terms of the 1928 Mozambique Convention. The number of migrant workers going to South has, however, been going down since independence. The figures for official recruitment were 1975: 91,356 and 1977: 34,817. This reduction compared to pre-independence figures seems to be related to a reduced demand for migrant labour from South Africa as a result of its own internal economic problems as well as a drop in recruitment in Mozambique by the mines in protest against the ‘expensive’ gold payments.

South Africa has avoided putting Mozambique under direct economic pressure after independence though by supporting the illegal Smith regime and the Smith-Muzorewa coalition until their end it was also indirectly working towards the isolation and weakening of Mozambique’s stand. Principally, however, South Africa is trying to break through its own isolation by co-operating with its African neighbours. The issue of the gold payments was solved by South Africa in April 1978 with out a direct confrontation with Mozambique. South Africa declared that it had decided to re-value its gold reserves as from 10 April 1978 in accordance with the abolition of the official gold price by the International Monetary Fund in 1976 which left it to all IMF-member countries to fix their gold price in line with the market price. This South African decision meant that Mozambique immediately lost the advantages from which it had benefited as long as payments were made according to the lower official gold price. Given its precarious balance of payments situation this was quite a loss. In 1975 Mozambique had received an additional foreign exchange income of about 150-175 million US dollars as a result of the old agreement.

South Africa does have economic reasons of its own for maintaining relations with Mozambique. Not only do the mine’s continue to need migrant labourers, but South Africa wants to continue to use Maputo’s harbour facilities as an outlet for the external trade from the Transvaal.

As far as Mozambique is concerned the expansion of Maputo harbour was another reflection of the lack of independent development in the colony. The same was true of the development of the country’s two other main harbours, Beira and Nacala, further north. Maputo harbour was geared to the needs of South Africa. Numerous facilities there specifically serve South African foreign trade. In 1973 over 14 million tons of goods were shipped through Maputo harbour, over 6 million of them to and from South Africa. Though the tonnage handled went down after independence, South Africa’s proportional share has remained at about 40 per cent.
As a result of these links South Africa became Mozambique’s most important source of foreign exchange. Colonial Mozambique depended, and independent Mozambique continues to depend, on economic relations with South Africa to pay for at least part of its chronic external trade deficit. Therefore, Mozambique continues to put its transport facilities at South Africa’s disposal. Another more recent link between South Africa and Mozambique was established by the Cabora Bassa hydro-electric dam in Tete province. Early in 1977 Cabora Bassa started supplying electricity to South Africa and will continue to do so for years to come. The Portuguese are still in charge of the enterprise until all commitments resulting from the construction of the Cabora Bassa scheme have been met. Thereafter Mozambique will take over the majority of shares, and three years later will become the only shareholder, i.e. Cabora Bassa will then be transformed into a state enterprise. It is likely to be 30 or 40 years before that is achieved.

The existence of a second white minority regime across Mozambique’s border in Southern Rhodesia has now become part of history. In April 1980 Zimbabwe proclaimed its independence after a protracted armed liberation struggle. In the preceding years, particularly since its own independence, Mozambique has not spared any effort to support the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. With independence now achieved the conditions for the establishment of new ties of mutually advantageous co-operation between the two countries exist. The after-effects of past relations between Mozambique and Southern Rhodesia nevertheless continue to influence national development strategy in Mozambique.

Much of what has been said about South Africa was also true about Mozambique’s relations to the white settler regime in Southern Rhodesia before Mozambique applied the UN sanctions against the Smith regime. Around 100,000 migrant labourers went to Southern Rhodesia annually. Well over one half of the Smith regime’s foreign trade went through Mozambique, via Beira as well as Maputo. By 1975, the Smith regime was already beginning to redirect its foreign trade through South Africa, obviously expecting Mozambique to support UN sanctions once it achieved its independence. Nevertheless, when Mozambique did announce its decision to close its borders with Zimbabwe in March 1976 and to apply UN sanctions comprehensively this was a severe blow for the regime.

For Mozambique itself applying sanctions against the Smith regime meant accepting considerable economic burdens, because given the externally oriented structure of its economy sanctions were bound to have repercussions. The most important factor was the loss of earnings from transport and harbour traffic. Migrant labour to Zimbabwe was also interrupted causing a loss of money transfers by the labourers to their families in Mozambique. This, in turn, made immediate measures of support for the labourers and their families necessary. Other fields where sanctions caused losses to Mozambique were tourism, trade, and employment generally due to lower production in various economic sectors. All in all a UN mission sent to Mozambique in 1976 concluded that the economic consequences of sanctions on Mozambique would total an estimated 139 to 165 million US dollars in the first year, and between 108 and 134 million US dollars for each following year. In addition, the damage caused by the countless incurr-
sions of the rebel Rhodesian army onto Mozambican territory between 1976 and 1979 has to be taken into consideration. Not only were infrastructural installations, roads, bridges, railway lines etc., worth millions of US dollars destroyed in these attacks but hundreds of innocent people in the border provinces died and many villages and fields were ransacked. Later UN reports showed that Mozambique had received only little international help to offset these losses. Basically, it had to rely on itself to face the consequences of sanctions.

The last, but certainly not least important, aspect of the colonial legacy in Mozambique to be mentioned relates to the consequences of the colonial bourgeoisie’s widespread acts of economic sabotage before and after independence, which caused great damage and disrupted the country’s economy. The colonial bourgeoisie were not prepared to relinquish their political and economic power and their privileges without a last-ditch struggle. Sabotage with the aim of crippling the economy, creating chaos, discrediting the new government among the people and preparing ground for a coup against FRELIMO was their line. They used their ownership and control over large parts of the economy, particularly industrial plants and agricultural farms, to this effect. The main forms of economic sabotage used by the colonial bourgeoisie were:

— capital flight, i.e. the transfer of all liquid assets out of the country. During the pre-independence period, when FRELIMO was not yet in power, whole factory units were taken out of the country;
— the escape of settlers and factory owners to Portugal or South Africa leaving their employees to their own fate;
— the outright destruction of factory and farm buildings, machines and other fixed assets which were left behind;
— the running down of production, thereby creating bottlenecks and crises, particularly in the distribution of consumption goods;
— disseminating fear among white employees by organising criminal acts, murders and so on in order to precipitate their flight from the country and thereby further cripple the economy and throw it into chaos, as these people had hitherto supplied the manpower in nearly all fields of government administration and economic enterprises in industry, trade and agriculture.

In their political aims the colonial bourgeoisie failed outright. Economically, capital flight and destruction and the exodus of the greater part — over 90 per cent — of foreign manpower led to a marked reduction in production in many fields of economic activity and to distribution difficulties. The initial problems the independent government of Mozambique faced in order to keep the economy going were therefore considerable.

The ‘Values Gained’ from the National Liberation Struggle

The national liberation struggle in Mozambique was initiated and developed as a complete negation of the established Portuguese colonial system. FRELIMO, the Mozambique Liberation Front, was founded in 1962. The Front’s platform centred around the demand for unconditional and complete independence. The intransigence of Portuguese colonialism, however, quickly made it apparent that peaceful means would not achieve that aim. 1964 saw the launching of armed struggle in northern Mozambique by the
first FRELIMO guerilla units. In the following years the war expanded into the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa, Tete, Manica e Sofala and Zambezia, and by 1974 FRELIMO controlled about 20-25 per cent of Mozambican territory.

The advance of the liberation struggle was not purely related to military achievements. It was equally, if not more fundamentally, related to the establishment and consolidation of liberated zones in which political control had largely passed out of the hands of the colonial administration. In these zones, particularly in the northernmost provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa, FRELIMO and the guerilla units of its liberation army proceeded to lay the foundations for new forms of economic production, social services, political administration and self-defence. It was here that the ‘values gained during the national liberation struggle’ were developed on the basis of the collective effort of the peasant masses and the cadres of the liberation forces, and as a result of an intensive process of ideological struggle within FRELIMO partly characterised by acute and antagonistic contradictions.

The crucial elements of FRELIMO’s liberation ideology which emerged during this period were the close association with the people in every situation, the principle of independent and self-reliance and the priority of politics over technical solutions. These principles were seen as the guidelines which facilitated the determination of a clear political orientation and the establishment of the unit of the people needed to advance towards national liberation.

Some FRELIMO statements illustrate these crucial values. In an editorial published in 1973 on the occasion of the 9th anniversary of the launching of the armed struggle the FRELIMO organ ‘Mozambique Revolution’ raised the question how the successes of the past year could be explained. It said:

There are some who would confine the answer to the technical sphere: a more sophisticated weapon here, a better organisational device there, these are seen to be the secrets of our advance. While not under-estimating the importance of correctly adapting new techniques to the military task which confronts us, FRELIMO’s own experience nonetheless suggests a rather different answer. For, ultimately, it has been our clear and correct political orientation which really has made these victories possible. It might have been easy for us to fall into a crucial error here precisely because of the advanced nature of our struggle — the error of considering that stronger weapons and better techniques are basic to our continued success. But had we done so and neglected other tasks we would have risked cutting ourselves off the the real source of our strength — the people.

A further point of great importance for FRELIMO’s ideology is the idea of the necessary relationship between the political line, and knowledge and cognition generally, with practice and their further development to more profound insights through practice. The creative activity of the masses finds its expression in practice and, therefore, so does the association of the cadres with the masses. In his directive for the production campaign 1971-72 Samora Machel elaborated of the relationship of knowledge and cognition:

How can the people improve their production methods, how can they know what is wrong and what is right, unless they produce? We are in the habit of saying that it is in the war that we learn war, which means, in fact, that it is by carrying out a revolution that one learns how to carry out a revolution better, that it is by fighting that we learn to fight better and that it is by producing that we learn to produce better. We can study a lot, but what use is tons of knowledge if it is not taken to the masses, if we do not produce? If someone keeps maize seeds in a drawer, will he harvest ears of maize?
By implication Samora Machel's words point to the continuing struggle of two lines which first came to a head in 1969 and 1970. The issue of whether people or technique and weapons are decisive appears in different forms everywhere, including diverse spheres of national reconstruction. The fact, therefore, that Samora Machel elaborated detailed directives for the main spheres, namely economic production, education and health services, during this phase of the liberation struggle shows how thoroughly FREMLIMO tackled the solution of this contradiction. In each of these directives the specific tasks of each sphere are determined on the basis of the primacy of politics, of the mobilisation of the mass of the people for the liberation of Mozambique.

After independence the 'Economic and Social Directiveness', adopted by FRELIMO's 3rd Congress in 1977, reviewed the experiences gained in the liberated zones and restated them as the basic guidelines for development under the new conditions after independence. What the document emphasises is the aim of eliminating exploitation and the significance of organising production in collective forms. It stresses that the popular line of relying on the masses was not merely a way out dictated by circumstances, but 'a fundamental achievement of the people in the liberated zones'. The related principle of self-sufficiency is also referred to as a decisive element in 'the struggle against the spirit of dependence on foreign countries'.

The Relationship between the National and the Social Question

FRELIMO has differentiated the following stages in the development of the liberation struggle in Mozambique since 1960/62: national liberation struggle national-democratic revolution and people's democratic revolution. The stage of people's democratic revolution which began with independence has the task of preparing the ground for socialist construction. Nevertheless it is defined as being part of the socialist stage of development already, rather than a stage prior to socialism.

In the analysis of Mozambican development FRELIMO places particular stress on the transition from the national liberation struggle to the national-democratic revolution. This transition coincides with the victory of the revolutionary line in the struggle of two lines in 1970. On this point Samora Machel, speaking to a symposium in honour of Amilcar Cabral, said in 1973:

>The establishment of liberated zones creates the material basis for the transformation of the anti-colonial liberation struggle into a revolutionary struggle, a struggle for the establishment of new political, economic, social and cultural structures which give expression to the complete power of the masses over society in its totality.

In the same speech Machel refers to the transition as one from 'national unity' to 'ideological unity' whereby the latter transforms national unity into 'an instrument for the fulfilment of the interests of the broad exploited masses'. In FRELIMO's analysis, therefore, what characterises the beginning of the revolutionary struggle is the tackling of the social question in contrast to the national question'. 'Ideological unity' which 'follows' upon national unity is understood as class unity of the people. In the crisis FRELIMO went through between 1968 and 1979 the ideological struggle
played a central role without doubt marked a juncture following which the
liberation struggle reached a new level. However, the characterisation of
this juncture by FRELIMO seems to be rather schematic. The issue is the
determination of the relationship between the national and the social ques-
tion. Machel's words imply that he uses the term 'revolution' only in rela-
tion to the social struggle. The liberation struggle before 1968/70 is not
referred to as 'revolutions' apparently because it was 'only' national.

It is certainly true that not every national struggle is revolutionary. It must
indeed meet the condition of serving the liberation of the oppressed and ex-
ported classes and strata if it is to be called revolutionary. A national strug-
gle which pursues the aim of conquering or subjugating foreign territories is
not revolutionary, but rather expansionist or imperialist. But as long as it is
directed against imperialism, whether consciously or not, it is revolutionary
in the sense of serving the national and social liberation of the people. The
national liberation struggle in Mozambique no doubt had this quality from
the beginning.

The juncture which occurred 1968/70 was characterised by a more
developed awareness within FRELIMO about the importance of the social
question in the national liberation struggle. The establishment of Liberated
areas over which the colonial administration had lost control as a result of
the armed struggle since 1964, had brought the social question to the fore.
Contradictions about the way to tackle reconstruction in these zones arose.
Should development there serve the people or would FRELIMO simply take
the place of the Portuguese colonial bourgeoisie? Individual FRELIMO
cadres had already taken the posture of new master in the liberated zones
giving rise to increasing dissatisfaction among the people. The removal of
these individuals from power and the conscious decision for a process of
development serving the interests of the people in turn contributed to the
mobilisation of new forces for the national liberation struggle.

The close relationship between the national and the social struggle comes
our very clearly here. FRELIMO has already taken a stand for the improve-
ment of the material living conditions of the people at the First Congress in
1962. However, initially this issue has not been looked upon as an import-
ant one in the national liberation struggle. As a result there were signs of
stagnation in the guerilla war from 1966. Only when the decisive importance
of the close association with the popular masses had been recognised and
steps to put this into practice initiated, were new advances made. To
characterise this development FRELIMO also talks of the transition from
'armed struggle' to 'people's war'. However, it is not a transition from na-
tional to social struggle, but a transition to the determination of the rela-
tionship between the two on a higher level. The undifferentiated unity of all
nationalists, which some FRELIMO leaders called for in the crisis of
1968/70, was no longer an adequate basis for the struggle. What was needed
was the unity of all nationalists prepared to side with the mass of the people.
But the struggle was still a national one even after 1970.

The determination of the character of a struggle is based on the analysis of a
concrete historical situation and its principal contradiction. In Mozambique
the period from 1970 up to independence was still determined by the con-
tradiction which opposed the people to Portuguese colonialism. Therefore,
the national contradiction was still, as it had been before 1970, the principal contradiction. This observation underlines the point that a national struggle is revolutionary, if it is directed against colonialism and imperialism.

What is important is the concrete analysis of a situation because it can change under the influence of international and national factors necessitating a new determination of the principal contradiction. For instance, in the liberation struggle in China there were different phases; national struggle against Japanese occupation, civil war against the Kuomintang, the national front with the Kuomintang against Japan, and finally again civil war against the Kuomintang. In each of these phases there was a struggle of two lines within the Communist Party of China about the concrete analysis of the situation. A schematic sequence in which the national liberation struggle is followed by the social, i.e. class struggle is not in accordance with the uneven and erratic process of historical development in which the relationship between national and social struggle has to be defined in each specific situation.

To characterise the new features of the phase after 1970 FRELIMO spoke of ‘revolutionary nationalism’. But it maintained the definition of the liberation struggle in this phase as being principally national, even against positions in favour of a more clear-cut definition of the aims of the revolution in terms of class struggle. Such a position, had it been adopted, would have narrowed the social basis of the national liberation front and would, therefore, have weakened it. The FRELIMO programme adopted at the Third Congress defines the main aims of the national-democratic revolution as ‘the achievement’ of political independence thereby putting an end to foreign domination over our fatherland, the destruction of the feudal and colonial-fascist structures of oppression and the expansion of democratic liberties to the whole country’. These aims are regarded as having been achieved at independence. Thereafter a new stage began — the people’s democratic revolution.

The main aims of the people’s democratic stage are defined essentially as the continuation of the preceding stage: the final elimination of all forms of foreign domination, in particular of economic dependence, the continuation of the process of destroying the remains of traditional-feudalistic and colonial-capitalist societies, the expansion and consolidation of people’s democratic structures, etc. The new element is the explicit reference to the perspective of development. The people’s democratic stage is defined as the state ‘in which the political, ideological, scientific, technical and material foundations for the transition to the socialist revolution are created’.

After independence the principal contradiction had to be re-defined. The documents adopted by FRELIMO’s Third Congress do not contain an explicit definition. However, the terms ‘intensification of class struggle’ or ‘sharpening of class struggle’ which are used in those documents and which have since become the main expressions used by FRELIMO to characterise the situation after independence give an indication of the direction of the analysis. In 1973 already Machel had said that after the elimination of colonial rule a new conflict would arise. His words were:

Class struggle on the international level, between our people and colonialism and the im-
perialist enemy, is followed, on the internal level, by a class struggle against national forces with exploitative tendencies.

Again, the assumption of a sequence from the national (international level) to the social (internal level) is made. Talking to the People’s Assembly in December 1977 Samora Machel explicitly re-defined the principal contradiction in Mozambique. He referred to the changes which had taken place in the first year of independence and declared that as a result ‘the struggle of the whole Mozambican people against colonialism, against imperialism, for the liberation of the occupied fatherland, for the achievement of national independence had come to an end’. The nationalisation of apartment houses, Machel argued, had eliminated one of the last bastions of the foreign bourgeoisie, and he concluded:

*The contradiction which antagonistically confronts the exploited against the exploiters, the people against the enemies of the people, the labouring classes against capitalism and its internal and external agents then became the principal contradiction.*

This determination of the principal contradiction puts colonialism and imperialism generally on the same footing. However, this is an oversimplification. Portuguese colonialism has been eliminated in Mozambique. But due to the economic structure Portuguese colonialism left behind, Mozambique remains dependent on the existing international economic order in a multitude of ways, and its national independence continues to be threatened by those relations. These are facts which FRELIMO does refer to elsewhere. But by putting Portuguese colonialism and imperialism on the same footing, they tend to be obscured in Machel’s definition of the principal contradiction. As a result the national contradiction (Machel’s international level) is pushed into the background. It would not be correct to assert that FRELIMO has now lost sight of the national contradiction. For instance, in the FRELIMO programme adopted by the Third Congress ‘the dependence in which our economy finds itself in relation to foreign monopolies’ is described as ‘the main obstacle facing economic development’. But it does remain notable that these observations are made in the economic ‘sharpening of class struggle’, particularly in the introductory section of the programme where the new stage of Mozambique’s struggle is characterised.

**The Radicalisation Thesis**

An issue of considerable importance is the analysis of the changes the people involved in the liberation of Mozambique and in FRELIMO, as an organisation, underwent in the course of the struggle and, in particular, the dynamic of such changes. This issue is discussed in a number of writings relating the importance of revolutionary violence to the social development of Mozambique, an approach influenced by the ideas of Frantz Fanon. Explicitly referring to Fanon, Museveni says that through revolutionary violence the new man emerges ‘cleansed of all former imperfections’. Saul discovered in the armed liberation struggle in Mozambique ‘a completely different world’ from the rest of Africa. From the revolutionary solution of the 1968/70 crisis by the leadership of FRELIMO he concludes that the development of neo-colonialist forms of African nationalism becomes ‘increasingly unthinkable’ as the liberation struggle advances. In a further contribution to the subject, this time relating to the liberation struggle in all
former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Saul introduces the concept of "radicalisation". Through increasing radicalisation, he argues, the leading forces of the liberation movements, the revolutionary sections of the petty bourgeoisie, as Saul characterises them, put themselves in a position to lead the popular masses to complete liberation, and even to socialism.

Campbell generalises Saul's thesis still further. She sees the basis of Saul's 'different world' in the very 'needs of armed struggle'. She describes the liberation struggle as 'a cumulative process' which 'produces its own dynamic'. Following the logic of this process, according to Campbell, a growing section of the petty bourgeoisie undergoes a transformation and, 'after its end as a class', turns out to be the vanguard of the interests of the workers and peasants.

Saul, Campbell and other writers quote Amilcar Cabral, the leader of the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau and a major African theoretician of the liberation struggle, as the main source of their views. However, though Cabral did coin a misleading phrase when he spoke of the petty bourgeoisie 'committing suicide' as a class he analysed the petty bourgeoisie essentially in terms of its ambivalence as an intermediary stratum. He underlined the important role which it has to play in the national liberation struggle and also after independence because of the specific characteristics of colonial class structure. But he hastens to add 'that it is precisely these specific, disadvantageous circumstances which represent one of the weaknesses of the national liberation movement'. In their analysis of the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Saul and Campbell disregard this essential part of Cabral's analysis because they believe that the objective logic of armed struggle, as the necessary reply to the particularly backward character of the Portuguese colonial system, increasingly transcends the ambivalence of the petty bourgeoisie.

In practice, such a straightforward transition from the struggle against colonial rule to national liberation and then to the construction of socialism has not occurred anywhere. Those African countries which achieved independence through armed struggle are by no means 'a completely different world' compared to the rest of Africa. The leadership of the MPLA in Angola, even though it had been involved in armed struggle for many years, was unable to prevent Angola from sliding into a new independence after the retreat of Portuguese colonialism. Algeria and Kenya, too, countries which also witnessed armed struggles against colonial rule, have not developed in a way fundamentally different from the rest of Africa. Both are independent national bourgeois states. Algeria's development has features which we find in a number of countries where the indigenous bourgeoisie is still weak. In these countries the petty bourgeois forces which took over state power as leaders of the independence movement frequently develop into a state bourgeoisie in a principally state capitalist system. Though it is still in an early phase of its development Mozambique also shows features of this kind, as do other African states which did not experience an armed liberation struggle such as Tanzania. What was common to the majority of African states, whether they gained independence through armed or other forms of liberation struggle, was the petty bourgeois character of the leadership of their independence movements which took over power at independence.
The analysis is rendered more difficult by the fact that many African countries and not only those which had engaged in armed struggle committed themselves to socialism after independence. Kenya published a government document on ‘African socialism’. Algeria reaffirmed its socialist aims in the ‘National Charter’ of its state party FLN in 1976. These and numerous similar declarations are an expression of opposition to colonialism, against the imperialist system associated with it and against the old international economic order in which the under-developed countries continue to be kept in a position of neo-colonial dependence. In political-ideological terms they should, therefore, be looked upon as an expression of those countries’ desire to achieve full national independence. In political-ideological terms they should, therefore, be looked upon as an expression of those countries’ desire to achieve full national independence. They also reflect the importance which the national contradiction still has for their development.

However, abstract commitments to socialism do not by themselves lead to a change in the class character of a government or a state party in a certain country. What happens in practice is decisive. In Kenya the government declaration on ‘African socialism’ had underlined the importance of private property. Since then the indigenous capitalist class has developed in industry and agriculture, frequently in close collaboration with international companies, and ‘African socialism’ has more or less been forgotten. In Algeria development in characterised principally by the state capitalist construction of a national economy, frequently also in co-operation with international companies.

Does Mozambique represent a different quality in the broad spectrum of African countries? The Third Congress FRELIMO held in 1977 explicitly committed itself to scientific socialism — applied to the conditions of Mozambique — rather than to a specifically African socialism. But then FRELIMO developed, as did other African liberation movements, as a national revolutionary mass organisation uniting all classes and strata of the people and led by petty bourgeois forces, though it is interesting to note that FRELIMO itself, in contrast to Amilcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau, does analyse its leadership in these terms. Furthermore, the new party was not created outside the liberation front and organisationally separated from it, but emerged from within and as the continuation of the front.

The formation of the party and the pertinent documents of the Third Congress indicated that the new FRELIMO Party has numerous new features in respect of its programme and, in particular, its organisational structure as a cadre party, but that as far as its class character is concerned it is a continuation of the old FRELIMO. The radicalisation of a national-revolutionary movement led by petty bourgeois class forces and propelled by the liberation struggle will not automatically, by a simple act of renaming, produce a proletarian party. Also, while every ruling party has the undisputed right to define itself and its path of development according to its own convictions, there is not a priori reason, given the similar class nature, for example of the FRELIMO Party and Tanzania's Chama cha Mapinduzi, to assume that a policy defined as ‘scientific socialist’ is more advanced or more likely to succeed than one defined as ‘African socialist’. Similarly a country which achieved independence through armed liberation strug-
gle holds no guarantee which secures in advance the progress of the revolution. Social processes follow a much more complicated path than is suggested by such notions.

After independence FRELIMO was confronted by a quite new situation. The importance of the liberated zones had been less in the establishment of objectively irreversible social facts, than in the fact that experiences gained therein provided reliable guidelines for the solution of contradictions and problems in new situations. That is the significance, for instance, of the principle of associating closely with the mass of the people or the principle of self-reliance. Having gained this experience in the liberation struggle is certainly an advantage Mozambique has over many other African countries.

The new situation facing FRELIMO on taking political power at independence represented a drastic change from the conditions of the liberation struggle. From the hardships of life in the liberated zones the FRELIMO leaders moved into the "cidade de cimento", the cement city, the glittering, erstwhile colonial metropole of Lourenco Marques, today Maputo. From the parts of the country most neglected during centuries of colonial rule and, therefore, most characterised by poverty and backwardness focus was switched to the centres of colonial and imperial interests and presence. From the approximately 25 per cent of the country where liberated zones had been established over the long years of the war FRELIMO now had to devise a development strategy for the whole of Mozambique, in particular for those three quarters of the country most strongly penetrated by the colonial system and largely untouched by the liberation struggle before independence.

Political independence had been achieved, now national reconstruction was the order of the day. This was a quite new battle in which liberation ideology had to confront the colonial legacy and its entrenchment in political and socio-economic structures nation-wide. Solutions to problems not encountered in the liberated zones had to be found. Devising a national development strategy was not a matter of further radicalising liberation ideology, but of applying and extending it to the conditions prevailing in Mozambique, thereby transforming it in accordance with the post-independence stage of development. The process gave and continues to give, rise to numerous new contradictions in all fields of activity.

**Political Mobilisation and Organisation**
The basic tenet of FRELIMO's ideology is the involvement of the people in all fields of national development. This made the political mobilisation and organisation of the population in the whole of the country, apart from the liberated zones in the north, a task of prime importance. As soon as the Lusaka Agreement had been signed in September 1974 FRELIMO set about establishing political structures throughout the country. Given the low level of political development of the large mass of the population who had until then lived under the oppressive Portuguese colonial system, FRELIMO introduced a new form of organisation, the "dynamising group". As the most important instrument for FRELIMO's work at grassroots level, these were established in all walks of social life, in places of work and training, in
residential areas, in towns as well as in the countryside. Dynamising groups were defined as preliminary forms of organisation prior to the formation of party cells and were therefore said to have a transitional character. Through the dynamising groups FRELIMO was present in diverse spheres of social life. Their tasks were primarily political, but in reality they also assumed a state-administrative role as the first organs of the new power to be established at the lowest levels. A new system of local government was not introduced until after the elections in later 1977 when ‘locality assemblies’ were established.

In the context of the government’s endeavours since 1976 to increase production and productivity the dynamising groups also played an important part in the campaign to improve work discipline. As a result their role as instruments of discipline tended to become their main feature in the eyes of many workers. And in consequence the relation of persuasion and political mobilisation, on the one hand, to the application of administrative means of pressure, on the other, becomes an issue of importance. FRELIMO’s line is that of persuasion. But if the level of political consciousness within the dynamising groups is still fairly underdeveloped persuasion often tends to be replaced by administrative coercion.

‘Unity, work, vigilance’ — this was the slogan FRELIMO propagated for national development immediately after the defeat of Portuguese colonialism. Vigilance was required not only in face of external attacks, such as the acts of aggression committed by the Smith regime, but also in respect of attacks and contradictions within the country which undermine the capacity to defend national independence. The mobilisation of the masses on which FRELIMO put great stress immediately after the installation of the transitional government had to face serious contradictions from the start in view of the animosity of the colonial bourgeoisie against the new government and the continuing influence of colonial society on many people. The measures taken by FRELIMO to dismantle the colonial system and to strengthen independence, such as the nationalisation of land, and of the educational and health systems, the abolition of private law practices and undertaking businesses, led to a further sharpening of contradictions.

External and internal contradictions must be seen in close relationship with one another. Even during the transitional period FRELIMO noted that ‘the enemy acts under cover by carrying division into the ranks of the masses, by engaging in economic sabotage and thereby discrediting FRELIMO in the eyes of the people. The dynamising groups were a frequent target of such activities. In the process of checking on members or choosing new members attention was directed principally to direct links with the colonial system, to ways of behaviour adopted from colonial society, to capitalist activities and economic sabotage.

On the other hand, raising the consciousness of the population proved to be a much longer and more arduous task than FRELIMO appears to have foreseen in its initial enthusiasm. Effective methods of checking new members were difficult to implement in the haste of the transitional period. As a result numerous opportunististic elements who wanted to secure advantages and privileges for themselves as quickly as possible under the new power managed to penetrate the dynamising groups. A rapid transforma-
tion of the dynamising groups turned out to be impossible. Rather, FRELIMO had to intensify the process of raising the political consciousness of the members and at the same time of purifying their ranks from infiltrated elements so that the dynamising groups were fit to take care of the tasks which had been allocated to them. For these reasons the dynamising groups continued operating for some time. The necessity of intensifying the ideological struggle among those forces who had actively participated in the armed liberation struggle became increasingly clear as units of the liberation army (FPLM) and political cadres were transferred to parts of the country where colonial society was still visible and its influences still present, contrasting with the hardships of life during the liberation struggle. Cases of lack of discipline, corruption, drunkenness etc. within the FPLM became more frequent. Even a few leading and trusting cadres, with years of experience in the armed struggle, proved not to be without fault — thereby disproving the Fanonist thesis of people being irreversibly cleansed of all former imperfections through revolutionary violence.

The most decisive change in the overall political structure in Mozambique was initiated in February 1977 when the Third Congress of FRELIMO decided to transform the ‘Mozambique Liberation Front’ into the FRELIMO party. The new party was called the ‘Vanguard Party of the Socialist Revolution’, and is defined as the party of the worker-peasant alliance. It adopted scientific socialism as its ideology and proclaimed its intention to combine ‘the revolutionary experiences of the Mozambican people with the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism’. The FRELIMO report to the Third Congress relates the need to transform the front into a vanguard party to meet the requirements of ‘the new stage of intensification of the class struggle and the creation of the foundations for the future transition to socialism’, the stage of the people’s democratic revolution. The resolution to transform the front into a party referred to the conviction, which had ripened in the course of the liberation struggle, that the construction of socialism is not possible without a revolutionary vanguard party. It was pointed out that as early as 1973, following the Fifth Session of the Second Central Committee of FRELIMO, party cells had been established in the liberation army (FPLM) and that in January 1974 the party school had started its work.

Research needs to be done into the emergence of FRELIMO as a vanguard party and the characteristics of that party, particularly in the light of current international debate and experiences (such as Poland) questioning the role of the Leninist party as defended by Soviet dogma, as it is this party model that FRELIMO appears to look upon as a ‘universal principle’. Certainly, the FRELIMO Party’s endeavours to raise political mobilisation to a new level throughout Mozambique and especially in the strategic sectors of society cannot yet be said to have borne fruit. 1978 was declared the ‘Year of Party Construction’. The people were called upon to participate actively in the construction of the party by voicing their opinion about each candidate during public meetings at their place of work and in their residential areas. In fact numerous candidates were turned down by the people. The most frequently quoted reasons were drunkenness, sexual and moral corruption, and polygamy in recent times (i.e. since 20 September 1974, the day of the installation of the transitional government led by FRELIMO),
membership of colonial-fascist organisations, lack of discipline, personal ambition, bureaucratism etc. This list shows that individual attitudes played an important role in the scrutiny of the candidates. If a candidate has been accepted by the people in the public meetings, the final decision on his membership in the party remains with the party itself.

In 1980-81 a second campaign to strengthen the party and recruit new members was launched. In between, the campaign against negligence, incompetence and irresponsibility showed that the FRELIMO Party and dynamising groups were still far from inculcating the people with the desired attitudes. On the contrary, in the face of continuing serious economic problems disinterest and apathy were widespread.

**The Role of the State Sector**

Mozambique's main instrument for implementing the restructuring of the national economy will be the state sector. FRELIMO has laid down that 'the state sector of production must become dominant and determinant' controlling all strategic sectors of the economy.

Though FRELIMO had a definite view about the leading role the state sector was to play in the context of its overall development strategy the speed with which it was obliged to take over was determined principally by the colonial legacy. The economic sabotage by the colonial bourgeoisie and the exodus of the larger part of the more than 200,000 Portuguese settlers obliged the new government to take immediate measures to prevent the complete standstill of the state apparatus and industry, agriculture and commerce. These measures involved:

— setting up intermediary 'administrative commissions' in abandoned factories and settler farms to ensure continued production and employment.

— taking control over large enterprises and plantations, e.g. Sena Sugar Estates, whose owners and management were guilty of economic sabotage.

— finding solutions to the breakdown of transport and commerce due to the exodus of Portuguese traders. These were crucial for the marketing of the cash crops of thousands of small commodity producers in the countryside, as well as satisfying increasing urban consumption. The establishment of a chain of state shops (*lojas do povo*) and the encouragement of consumer co-operatives were two solutions adopted.

— filling the vacuum in the state apparatus following the exodus of the Portuguese who had occupied the posts before. This was of crucial importance not only to establish structures to direct those economic and social (health, education) areas where the FRELIMO government had intervened immediately after independence, but also to create the state infrastructure for the longer-term co-ordination and planning of economic and social development and national development strategy.

These measures required a rapid expansion of the volume of responsibilities, i.e. of power, concentrated in the state apparatus and the state economic sector, at a time when the new government suffered from a severe lack of qualified and experienced manpower to look after all the new
responsibilities it was creating. In this situation there was inevitably room for very fast promotions for those few Mozambicans who had some education and training, people who had served in the colonial administration in junior capacities and whose commitment to the new government's development strategy was, in most cases, unproven. FRELIMO's preference for a highly centralised system of political organisation as well as state administration paired with the traditions of Portuguese colonialism's inflated and unwieldy administration quickly allowed the office-holders in Mozambique's state apparatus to assume considerable power, difficult to control. Bureaucratic malpractices and abuse of power were frequently criticised, and at the beginning of 1980 gave rise to a major campaign against negligence, incompetence and irresponsibility.

In February 1977, FRELIMO adopted the 'Economic and Social Directives' at its Third Congress which set the aim of re-establishing the overall level of production of the economy in 1973, i.e. the last full year of Portuguese colonial rule, by 1980. Though no comprehensive figures are as yet available it is obvious that this aim was not achieved. What are the reasons for this? No doubt, the main reason is that the sum total of the colonial legacy, in particular the collapse of large sectors of the economy as a result of economic sabotage and the exodus of Portuguese settlers, presented the government with much greater problems than initially anticipated. Limited quantities of foreign aid also played a part.

But reasons for the continuing serious economic problems Mozambique faces — long queues outside shops are the most visible indicator — must also be sought within the system. The inter-relationship between external and internal factors must be pinpointed, otherwise the effectiveness of the external factors cannot be fully understood.

In July 1977, in a lengthy document entitled 'How the enemy acts' the Mozambican Council of Ministers analysed the economic and social situation in the country. In particular, it looked at the political reasons for the difficulties and methods of solving them. The document refers to a 'coordinated operation against our power', in which the acts of aggression of the Smith regime, the forgery of currency and air tickets, hoarding and speculation of indigenous capitalists with consumption goods, the propaganda radio station 'A Voz da Africa Livre' (broadcasting from Southern Rhodesia) and numerous other activities all find their place. However, the document also deals emphatically with 'inadequacies' and 'inefficiencies' within Mozambique itself. The example of an accident in the iron ore harbour of Matola, close to Maputo, is quoted to show 'that the disaster occurred because favourable conditions existed for it to happen'. The aim is to eliminate such conditions. The Council of Ministers located them principally in the state apparatus itself, in the bureaucratic attitudes of a large number of government functionaries. Indifference towards the people's problems is criticised, as well as elitist and paternalistic attitudes, lack of thriftiness and attitudes of wastefulness towards the goods of the people and try to drive a wedge between central power and the people.

Though the document 'How does the enemy act?' pinpointed the internal deficiencies of the system its main stress was still on external factors. It was not until the 1980 campaign that full focus was put on internal factors. In a
speech on 18 March 1980, following numerous surprise visits to state-run factories, public institutions such as the harbours, people's shops, government departments and so on, Samora Machel declared: 'On 25 September 1964 we declared war on the foreign enemy — Portuguese colonialism. Here today, 18 March 1980, we declare war on the internal enemy'. He located the latter principally in the state apparatus:

Our state apparatus is corrupted. It is sick, full of parasites, some clinging to the skin and others internal . . . We are going to define tasks for everyone to carry out. We will be ruthless with the undisciplined, the incompetent, the lazy, the negligent, the careless, the corrupt, those who go in for red tape, for inertia, those who cultivate a spirit of routine, those who despise the people. Who misappropriate state property or damage the property of the people. We are going to implant iron discipline everywhere. We learned the value of discipline during the armed struggle. Our freedom fighters won because they were disciplined. Our people won because they learned to value discipline. It was with organisation, discipline and struggle that we overcame colonialism. It was with unity, with work, with vigilance that we consolidated and built people's power. It is with work, discipline and organisation that we will win the battle against under-development.

The solution of the problems Mozambique faces is to be sought in two directions. For one, a partial reprivatisation of state enterprise was initiated. Given its limited forces the state cannot continue to be entrusted with a multitude of business ventures. In particular, small businesses such as retail shops can hardly be run profitably when fixed costs for state employees etc., are too high in relation to turnover. This is, therefore, a field for consumer co-operatives and private traders. State-run people's shops, for instance, will be closed down or privatised. But more generally, Samora Machel announced that the state will create conditions to help not only private traders, but also farmers, manufacturers, businessmen in the service sector (restaurants, hairdressers, etc.) whose activity is within the framework of national objectives. He encouraged Mozambicans living in neighbouring countries to return to Mozambique for that purpose. The greater interest shown in foreign capital investment in Mozambique is also part of this attempt to use private capital for the benefit of national development.

The other line is the strengthening of the state apparatus, the purification of its ranks and the imposition of strict discipline based on a centralised system of allocation of responsibility. This is directed against what is labelled as 'petty bourgeois egalitarianism', an attitude Samora Machel had criticised in December 1979 when talking to health service personnel. Such an attitude 'eroded the command structure' and led to a 'dispersion of power' so that individual employees did not know any more where their place was. Inefficiency was the result. In March 1980 the Minister of Health was dismissed because of these deficiencies in his field of responsibility. The hierarchical order, discipline and respect for the responsible cadres involved here is illustrated by a discussion on the question of the use of the lift in the Bank of Mozambique which took place in 1978. If the Governor enters the building in the morning and finds numerous employees waiting for the lift what is the correct attitude? Do they all squash in, do those who were there first enter first, or does the Governor enter first to use the lift alone? It was suggested that respect for authority demanded that the Governor use the lift first. The need for a well-planned division of labour is undoubtedly a necessary condition of a system's success. However, without a coherent and
generally accepted plan a purely disciplinary *tour de force*, backed by exhortations to work hard and so on, will only lead to a repetition of the same inefficiencies. Mozambique would be far from the first country having that experience.

**Rural Development**

Rural development is a sector of national development in which the process of transforming liberation ideology into a national development strategy led to a two-pronged approach incorporating communal villages ('aldeias comunais') and state farms. The colonial legacy in agriculture was a structure dominated by plantations and settler farms. Exodus and economic sabotage led the Mozambican government to take over first, abandoned settler farms and later numerous huge plantations where sugar, tea and other cash crops were cultivated. In addition, it took over large-scale agricultural projects initiated by the colonial administration, such as the Limpopo valley irrigated settlement scheme, and transformed them into state enterprises. The result was a rapidly growing state farm sector on which high hopes were placed for the satisfaction of local food requirements (rice in the Limpopo valley, for instance) and production of cash crops for much needed foreign exchange.

The liberation struggle had brought forward a different form of production, co-operative agriculture. In the liberated zones the people, who had lived in dispersed homesteads before the war, joined together in communal villages and produced food for themselves and also for the guerilla fighters on co-operative fields. Though such communal villages were strongly determined by the need for self-defence against the attacks of the colonial army the advantages of communal living and co-operative production were recognised as being of a more general nature. As such they were essential elements of FRELIMO's liberation ideology.

After independence the concept of communal villages was elaborated by FRELIMO as a nation-wide one in a resolution adopted by the Central Committee in February 1976. Communal villages were defined as 'the backbone of Mozambique's rural development strategy' providing the perspective of development for the well over one million peasant households in the countryside. The 'Resolution on Communal Villages' cites the disadvantages if these peasants continue to live in dispersed homesteads. They would remain isolated. Exchange of experiences and co-operation would hardly be possible. In communal villages, furthermore, provision of economic infrastructure (roads, water, electricity) and social services (schools, dispensaries) will be much facilitated. Though government agencies may be expected to provide support for such measures, the resolution underlines that communal villages must principally be built through the villagers' own work and in the spirit of self-reliance.

Numerous communal villages were founded in the first years of independence, many of them in areas devastated by natural calamities in 1977 (southern Mozambique) and 1978 (Zambezi valley) and in the northern provinces as a result of resettlement of refugees from Tanzania, transformation of colonial 'protected villages' and the incorporation of the original villages already established during the liberation struggle. By 1980 over 1,000 communal villages with about one million inhabitants had been registered throughout Mozambique.
More substantial amounts of government funds, however, went into the state farm sector. It increasingly became apparent that there was a contradiction between the state sector and the co-operative sector which is of decisive importance for the rural development strategy in Mozambique. After independence FRELIMO had pointed out explicitly that in face of the fairly well developed means of production which the colonialists had left behind the political line of giving priority to technical solutions which also involves the spirit of dependence on foreign countries appeared again in its ranks and that an ideological struggle had to be led against such positions.

In August 1977, with regard to rural development, the Director for State Farms in the Ministry of Agriculture had this to say: ‘We want to concentrate our forces on the state agrarian sector so that agriculture becomes the basis for the development of our productive forces’. And he added: ‘. . . to make agriculture the basis of our economy we have to introduce a high level of technology.’ A far as the family sector was concerned he said ‘we have no direct influence’ on it. The predominance of his views in the Ministry of Agriculture at that time became clear one year later when the issue of rural development led to the most profound contradiction in the leadership of FRELIMO since independence. The differences came to a head during the Fourth Session of the Central Committee since the Third Congress and led to the exclusion of the then Minister of Agriculture, Carvalho, from the Central Committee and later his dismissal as Minister. Carvalho’s ‘wrong concept of development’ was criticised. The communiqué issued by the President announcing his dismissal argued that, ‘in particular, he tried to block the process of construction of communal villages and thereby drew into question one of the decisive options of our development. By systematically giving priority to technical solutions he neglected the initiative and the participation of the people.’

The contradiction is one which also includes the mass of small peasant households. They are still the main source of agricultural production in Mozambique. Promoting the development of communal villages, therefore, of necessity involves the support of the family sector as it is the peasants in this sector who are to be convinced of the advantages of communal villages and collective production for the betterment of their living conditions.

There is room and, given the inherited structure of agriculture, need for state farms as well as co-operatives and the family sector in Mozambique’s rural development. However, concentrating substantial inputs of farm machinery principally on state farms to the neglect of the family sector is what led to serious disproportions in the development process. While state farms can make an important contribution to food production for national consumption and to cash crops for export markets, it is unrealistic to expect them to fully satisfy national requirements. Therefore, FRELIMO policy making bodies re-emphasised in 1978 the large importance the family sector has in the present phase of the country’s development, while encouraging individual producers to engage in co-operative farming.

The contradictions concerning Mozambique’s rural development strategy have a further, not immediately apparent dimension. Agricultural co-operatives are established on a voluntary basis by peasants within a communal village. Therefore, only a small number of the members of a com-
munal village as the administrative unit will generally be organised in the co-operative. There are some indications that in some cases those peasants who had already entered cash crop farming before independence and/or had benefited from the Portuguese settlement schemes tend to dominate the new co-operatives.

Such petty capitalist tendencies among the indigenous peasantry were also fostered under colonialism by the system of migrant labour which led to the availability of some money in the rural areas for investment into agricultural improvement. The dominance of this section of the peasantry in the co-operatives would explain why other members of communal villages appear reluctant to join. On the other hand, as FRELIMO policy favours collective farming, co-operatives have privileged access to government support. This lends an additional dimension to this contradiction within the communal villages, involving the state apparatus.

While stressing the primacy of the mass of the people the ruling party and the state apparatus are in constant danger of losing sight of this principle. This is due to the specific conditions of development provided by the colonial legacy in Mozambique as well as to certain policy options, relating to the state sector for instance, taken by FRELIMO after independence. Given the strength of the state apparatus in the Mozambican system and its direct concern and responsibility for the state farms, communal villages and the small peasants will always need firm political backing to prevail.

Conclusion
The main purpose of this article has been to analyse the specific features of the development process in Mozambique since independence. In broad terms, the two principle features are the colonial legacy and FRELIMO’s experiences in the liberation struggle.

Apart from Angola, there are perhaps only two other African countries which had a similarly difficult start into dependence: Sekou Toure’s Guinea and Algeria where the French colonial administration and the settler bourgeoisie respectively also left behind a tabula rasa of destruction and chaos crippling the emerging national economies. The preceding analysis of Mozambique has shown to what extent such adverse conditions have influenced post-independent development.

However, they cannot be made responsible for all difficulties encountered, in particular not in a country like Mozambique whose ruling party pursues far-reaching social revolutionary aspirations based on its experiences in the liberation struggle. This, of course, is where the analysis treads uncertain ground, and conclusions must remain tentative.

The rapid establishment of a dominant state economic sector at this stage of development would appear to be giving rise to technical rather than popular solutions. The lack of an adequate infrastructure and of trained and experienced manpower has made the state sector in numerous African countries economically inefficient and the domain of a small number of experts, often from foreign countries. In 1980, when FRELIMO launched its campaign against negligence, incompetence and irresponsibility, it was directed at the very bureaucrats in control of state capital and the state apparatus
generally, whom the party had installed in their positions of power. The corrective of liberation ideology can be seen in the frankness with which Samora Machel castigated ‘the marginalisation of the people’ during this campaign.

How is this state of affairs to be corrected? The ‘sharpening of class struggle’ or ‘war against the internal enemy’ are concepts which remain vague, in terms of class analysis, in the Mozambican context. What can be said, however, is that the struggle or war FRELIMO refers to is being conducted from above by the party, not by the people, with the ‘sharpening of class struggle’ providing the rationale for the need to assert more strongly centrally controlled authority and discipline. It may also be asked whether FRELIMO’s predominant stress on class struggle to the, at least partial, neglect of the national question has not prematurely antagonised some sections of the people. Machel’s call in 1980 to indigenous businessmen to return to Mozambique would seem to bear this out.

On the other hand, a strong state sector, the inculcation of the spirit of hard work and discipline and so on clearly aim at improving the performance of the economy. Indeed, the victory over under-development has been the main aim of the decade. Looked at in this perspective Marxism-Leninism in Mozambique comes to earth principally as an organisational frame to provide a strong and highly centralised system geared towards economic development, similar to other African countries but with a different name. While this conclusion will be pure heresy to some, it does provide an answer to the analytical problem mentioned above of explaining FRELIMO’s transition from a liberation movement to a Marxist-Leninist party.

Bibliographic Note


The Nigerian General Strike of 1981

Dafe Otobo

This is an account of the Nigerian General Strike of May 1981 and of the events leading up to it. It highlights the struggle between the Nigerian military regime and organised labour, and the attempts by the former to incorporate the trades union movement. It traces the formation of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the struggle between different groups within the NLC, culminating in the attempt by one group to break the General Strike. The success of the strike reveals the underlying distrust of the governing elites, including those of the trades unions, and the seething discontent which pervades the Nigerian working class.

In the early hours of Monday 11 May 1981 about 700,000 (according to the Nigerian Labour Congress) of the estimated one million organised Nigerian workers began the third and shortest general strike ever in Nigerian history: it lasted for only two days. But its duration hardly reflected the seriousness of intent and often desperate tactics of a rattled government and business community. This paper attempts to present a straightforward account of events leading up to the strike, how it was conducted, and an evaluation of its effects.

Background
Few general strikes have spontaneously occurred in history and they are decidedly not monocausal. For our immediate purpose 1975 would be a useful starting point revealing, in broad strokes on a soiled canvas, misguided policies and confused priorities of an absolutely disoriented government, the true grit of the Nigerian industrial landscape and the nature of its national development efforts.

Before the formation of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in 1975, the military government seemed to have decided on a course of action with the aim of the greater incorporation of the labour movement. First, it cancelled the registration of the existing four central labour organisations,* then an-

*The four rival organisations were the United Labour Congress (ULCD), the Nigerian Workers Council (NWC), the Labour Unit Front (LUF) and the Nigerian Trades Union Congress (NTUC). The ULCN was affiliated to the ICFTU, the NTUC to the WFTU while the NWC had links with the World Confederation of Labour (WCL). The Nigerian labour movement has, since 1949, been a hot-bed for 'cold war' unionism.
nounced the appointment of an Administrator for Trade Union Affairs; banned all international labour organisations from operating in Nigeria (with the exception of the ILO and the Organisation for African Trade Union Unity); and finally publicly unveiled its 'new' policy on labour. The policy included among other things: a) 'guided democracy based on limited government intervention in trade union matters'; b) 'the creation of a new image and sense of direction for Nigerian trade unions'; c) 'eradication of ideological and external influences from Nigerian trade unions'; d) 'restructuring of Nigerian trade unions into industrial unions'; e) 'financial self-sufficiency to be based on the check-off system of collection of union dues.' and f) 'the promotion of trade union education as a means of improving the quality of trade union leadership'.

To give force to these measures and to undercut the NLC, which had been formed by workers in December 1975, the military government announced its decision to probe the four central organisations that had now formed the all-embracing NLC, including their officials. The announcement coincided with the launching of the NLC and during the previous night police had occupied the offices of the four centres, removed documents and files and arrested about 100 trade unionists (including all the top labour leaders), who were all released soon afterwards (West Africa, 5.1.1976). At the launching, therefore, signatories to the merger (that is, representatives of four centres) could not append their signatures on the merger instrument because vital documents were inaccessible, having been kept in one of the offices raided by the police. Signing was not done till the next day, and for added measure Wahab Goodluck (the president of the NLC) was arraigned with two others before a Lagos magistrate court on charges of transacting activities of a banned political party and was remanded in custody until 30 January 1976. The case was later thrown out for want of evidence and it was clear that the authorities were trying to intimidate the new leadership of the NLC.

While announcing the institution of a judicial tribunal to investigate the activities, finances and administration of the four central bodies, Brigadier (later Major-General) Adefope, the Commissioner of Labour, deprecatingly noted 'it is sad to observe that the trade union movement has in the recent past become a haven for ill-informed and ill-motivated persons masquerading as trade union leaders (New African, June 1977). The Commissioner also thought that labour leaders had engaged in unwholesome rivalry, based upon foreign ideology and inspired by the lust for financial and material reward which foreign governments and their agents are prepared to offer for the sake of establishing their influence over the socio-economic and political policies in Nigeria.' The government later annulled the elections conducted by the NLC and then imposed a ban on the organisation itself.

The drive towards unity among top labour leaders generated opposition from within the labour movement itself. A group of younger men, mostly located in the middle rungs of the leadership of all central labour centres, took strong objection to the way and manner in which the top leaders literally shared out the top positions of the NLC among themselves. In order to accommodate every one of their colleagues in the executive of the
new NLC, there were five deputy presidents, twenty-five vice-presidents, four deputy secretary-generals, and thirty-one assistant secretary generals. The most common defence offered by interviewed top labour leaders was the necessity to ensure strong representation of every centre, a virtual guarantee of ‘unity’ from their perspective. These dissenting young men formed two organisations; the Progressive Front for the Labour Movement and the Committee of Trade Unions in Defence of Trade Union Rights. Be that as it may, it would seem to be the case that the government took advantage of potential or expressed support within the labour movement and the confusion which reigned in trade union circles to appoint a Commission of Inquiry with Mr. Justice Adebiyi, the Lagos High Court Judge, as the Chairman (herein referred to as Adebiyi Tribunal).

The judicial probe lasted till 1977, and upholding some of the recommendations of its report, the military government in its White Paper banned from trade unionism for life 11 top trade union leaders while impounding the assets of the four central bodies. A reconstituted NLC was inaugurated on 18 February 1978 by the government, its representative at the ceremony, Brigadier (later Major-General) Yar Adua left no one in doubt as to the military administration’s definition of the NLC’s future role (Ministry of Information, 1977):

the relationship between the Federal Military Government and the NLC should be one of partnership in progress, without prejudice to the over-riding responsibility of the government to preserve the security and peace of the nation. The Congress (NLC) should adopt a rational and conciliatory approach in industrial disputes. Conflicts should not be resolved either by artificially imposed conditions or by free play of economic forces, and union leaders are warned against restrained use of economic power, and exhibitions of intransigence, violence and blackmail in the conduct of trade disputes . . .

The determination of the Federal military government to influence the ‘election’ of the executive members of the reconstituted NLC was obvious right from the start. As at the inauguration in 1978, less than half of the constituent forty-two industrial unions had elected their own officials, partly because these new-type unions embraced workers from different industries and economic organisations varying in size and ownership. Consequently, various interest groups, including private employers, sought to influence the kind of leadership that emerged in individual trade unions. It is thus not entirely clear just how representation of these unions was decided upon and how voting rights or number of votes per union had been allocated at the inaugural ‘conference’ of the NLC. This would seem to have opened up a lot of possibilities, including interested parties drumming up delegates to influence voting. Whatever else happened, the executive that emerged, especially the president, Alhaji Hassan Sunmonu, was hardly endeared to the authorities. Sunmonu was hitherto a member of the NTUC, one of the central bodies that has dealings with the communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), a fact that consistently earned the NTUC attention of the intelligence organisations, and sporadic detention of some of its officials. There was considerable disquiet in official and business circles.

This simply fuelled the government’s determination to infuse its men into the leadership of the unions that still had not elected their officials. The process of electing such leadership was held up by the predictably ensuing
disagreement between trade unionists and the government over the issue of 'outsiders' as union officials, a suggestion that would have enabled candidates outside the labour movement to assume executive positions in respective trade unions. A compromise solution of advertising each position and conducting interviews was reached but this did not prevent union after union from electing 'insiders' or 'outsiders' of their own choice, some of whom had acquired advanced academic qualifications in various disciplines. Such elected officials, however, had to be 'recognised' by the government, coercive powers that were effectively neutralised by a rash of strikes consequent on refusal to extend recognition.

Some Contradictions and the Build-up
About two months after the NLC had been re-inaugurated amidst fanfare and with an instant grant of one million naira by the military authorities to enable the organisation to pay salaries and purchase ancillary items, all Nigerian undergraduates took to the streets in protest against the government's ill-conceived and poorly implemented educational policy. The arbitrariness on the part of the police led to the death of a student in Lagos, which sparked off further demonstrations. The brutality of the police led to many more deaths in Zaria. The protests that swept the country not only drew in secondary and primary schoolchildren, but also attracted many elements of the urban poor. A clearly shaken government employed every trick of the trade to defuse the situation, including getting traditional rulers to undertake what could rightly be described as pacification tours and establishing a judicial inquiry. Throughout this period, the NLC maintained a studied silence, although its executive was torn into two camps; those that desired workers' sympathy strikes as against other that wanted a stay of action. Although some trade union leaders were utterly disappointed by the NLC's non-involvement in this 'crisis'. Two views proffered by interviewed leaders of the organisation turned out to be of more than passing interest: first they had to make sure that the organisation itself survived given the government's misgivings and they were not about to provide a golden opportunity for 'fascist elements' to ensure the proscription of the NLC; Secondly, the leadership felt that it would have been difficult to mobilise the mass of workers given the issues involved. Even if mass participation were secured, the outcome was unknown except that the collapse of the military regime and the emergence of a more reactionary regime remained a distinct possibility. This latter argument was to be invoked in calling off the general strike.

As soon as the demonstrations petered out, the military hurried the pace at which various bodies dealt with constitutional issues with a view to handing over power to an elected civilian government. Thus both 1978 and 1979 were taken up by the constitution-drafting constituent assembly, ratification of the constitution, various elections and the swearing-in of the President by 1 October 1979.

But the various government economic and industrial policies were not that tidy nor were their consequences as pleasing to senators and parliamentarians as were their election victories and prospects of the spoils of office. The prices of essential food items had more than doubled thanks to 'ad-
justmental' reaction to wages awards by traders and middlemen and to a rather confused agricultural policy. The government had for many years slapped a ban on the importation of food items, a measure that had to be modified as prices soared. The government relented by placing items such as rice, chicken and beef under special licences. The demand for food items, conditioned by the consumption-pattern of the urban rich that hinged on imported items and the gradual emergency of wheat-based food (bread, for example) as cheapest items the mass of urban workers can now afford, outran supply as long delays in the granting of import licences created a situation of scarcity.

The twists and turns of the government's agricultural policies did not appreciably help matters. For one, the few large-scale farms set up by both government and retired top military officers and civil servants, especially in the northern parts of the country, had not taken off. Secondly, the attempts to get loans and agricultural extension services to peasant farmers had failed largely as a result of corrupt bank officials and the fact that mostly only the new crop of influential 'farmers' succeeded in securing such loans. Even some of the recipients of such loans seemed to have diverted such funds into other areas, such as the buying of luxury cars and the building of personal houses. To cap it all, prices offered by the state-controlled marketing boards for produce such as palm oil and groundnuts were too low, acting more as disincentives. For other items, including vegetables, yams and gari, only the urban-based profiteering middleman appeared to be benefiting as peasant farmers found what is described in conventional literature as 'subsistence agriculture or farming' increasingly uneconomic, as they themselves were faced with soaring prices of the goods they purchased. In consequence Nigeria has become a net importer of every conceivable food item and a large proportion of the population is immiserised. The acute shortage of various food items hit the lower paid workers hardest as they had to seek for and purchase them at the same prices as the relatively better paid and well-fed Nigerians. The peasant is getting poorer but he at least grows some food items and does eat even if it remains an unbalanced diet. The workers are urban-based and have to depend solely on their earnings and on what could be bought. Hoarding, extensively practised by a sizeable proportion of the business community (most economic activities are largely commercial and trading, reflecting the structure of a dependent capitalist economy) gravely exacerbated the situation. The price for a bag of rice rose from 25 naira to 120 naira. Even the government's stop-gap measure of importing several thousands of tons of rice which it directly distributed to the governments of the 19 states hardly alleviated the scarcity: only the better placed (especially legislators and businessmen) in the respective states got bags of rice. The Federal Government even offered 5,000 bags of rice to the 95-odd senators.

Individual trade unions had demanded compensatory awards from employers in the private sector, most of who gave minor increases in money terms but reviewed 'fringe benefits' (rent, transport and leave allowances) — areas where the government could not effectively monitor, and the taxman could not touch, as employers were required by law to obtain permission from the government before any major wage awards could be made.
The newspapers exposed shady deals and racketeering over food items and the granting of licences. Several prominent politicians turned into importers of rice and of other commodities in short supply. Licences were granted on the basis of party affiliation and regarded as a means through which electioneering costs or debts could be met and an avenue for accumulation of wealth against the next elections. So did a sense of grievance on the part of workers become better articulated and increasingly given wide coverage by the media. The Nigerian Civil Service Union led by David Ojeli (who doubles as NLC’s deputy-president) set the ball rolling on 30 May 1979 at an emergency meeting of the National Executive Council of the union held in Owerri (Imo State) by simultaneously giving the Federal government twenty-one days within which to restore car loans and declaring a trade dispute. As car loans have little in common with food prices, it would appear that the union picked upon an issue that it could legitimately uphold, reflecting the major concern of the upper and middle echelons of the bureaucrats who comprise the bulk of the union membership. It would also seem to have been an attempt to expose the irrationality behind the government’s indifference to the workers’ plight while it reduced ‘politics’ to the award of contracts, licences and the handing out of political patronage, some of which involved staggering sums of money.

As it was the election period, and considering that the military and General Obasanjo were rather anxious to avoid any major social and political upheaval before handing over the reins of government by 1 October, the startled administration quickly referred the matter to the Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP). Before General Obasanjo presented his ‘farewell’ budget on 1 April 1979 he had apparently met and briefed the NLC executive and as far as could be ascertained from the NLC leaders, the organisation gave its blessing to the budget which included a continued ban on car loans and allowances and a continuation of the wage freeze. A few hours after the budget had been announced, David Ojeli (deputy President of the NLC) in his capacity as the National President of the Nigerian Civil Service Union publicly rejected and denounced it as ‘a slap on the face of workers’.

The Executive Council of the NLC hurriedly met, sanctioned Ojeli’s stance and formally issued a 21-day ultimatum to the military administration within which to restore car loans, review rent and transport allowances and fix a national minimum wage. The military government understandably expressed surprise over the ultimatum pointing out that the leaders of the NLC had approved the relevant sections of the budget before it was made public. Politicians, at the threshold of political office and canvassing for support, thought that the NLC’s demands ought to be looked into. Negotiations between the government (represented by the Minister of Labour) and the NLC (represented by Ojeli, Sunmonu and Dangiwa) began in June and were concluded on 4 July 1979. On rent subsidy, it was agreed that it should be a negotiable item and the agreement reached should not be referred to the Ministry of Labour, which has a long history of watering down agreements by invoking all sorts of clauses in various decrees. The Federal Ministry of Establishments at the press conference further added that details of the agreement could not be made public until the Federal and State authorities had formulated a uniform policy on rent subsidy.
Politicians, Union and Wage Bargain

There was a lull as civilian politicians prepared to assume direct political power on 1 October 1979. Trade unionists, like most other Nigerians, had differing political sympathies, voted for rival parties and presidential candidates. To this extent, it is difficult to estimate the impact of the controversy that almost marred the election of the President of the Republic.* However, as soon as the dust settled and the President was sworn in, the NLC incessantly attacked the President for not taking seriously the stalled talks. The President was clearly embattled: he had quickly to drum up an alliance between his party, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), and the Nigeria's People Party (NPP) in order to muster enough votes to pass his bills; the Senate and House of Representatives as legislative organs were busily and noisily 'checking' presidential encroachments on their constitutional rights; there was the 'opposition' mounted by states under the control of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) to the President's housing programme; then the cross-parties opposition to the appointment of Presidential Liaison Officers to every state; and not to mention the intra-party lobbying for and quarrels over political appointments and the award of contracts.

By 10 January 1980 the NLC gave another ultimatum asking the government to reach a settlement on or before 31 March or face a general strike. Other demands were contained in a ‘working paper’ dubbed ‘the Charter’ which was only delivered to the President on 22 February. But between October 1979 and January 1980, the Nigerian legislators (Senators and members of the House of Representatives) had incensed the people by proposing rather high salaries for themselves (15,000 naira per annum), the President (50,000 naira), Vice-President (30,000 naira) and judges of the Supreme Court. Attempting to establish their political superiority over top civil servants, the legislators rejected the temporary accommodation allocated them on the Badagry Express Way (a suburb of Lagos) and occupied the newly-completed complex of high-rise apartments in Victoria Island (the most prestigious residential area in Lagos) earmarked for civil servants. The distinct impression that came across, both from their utterings and actions, was that most of the legislators were in politics for what they could get for themselves. But critically viewed, it was also a question of rivalry and competition for status between fractions of the elites: the accretion of power to bureaucrats during the 13½ long years of military rule was all too obvious. Therefore, if they themselves were the bosses, the legislators seemed to have argued, they should get the best going.

Under the barrage of attacks over the news media legislators fought a rear-guard action by establishing a Parliamentary Labour Committee empowered to review the ‘plight of labour’. The legislators also voted for the restoration of car loans at both federal and state legislatures. Thus armed with popular resentment against ‘politicians’ and legal support provided by the legislators the NLC was in position to bring considerable amount of pressure to bear on the President and his men. The government proposed the sum of 100 naira per month as the minimum wage in order to stave off a

*The successful candidate for the Presidency had, according to the electoral regulations, to win at least 25 per cent of the vote in two-thirds of the 19 states. Shagari won in 12 states but gained less than the necessary percentage in the thirteenth, yet was declared the winner, a decision confirmed by the Supreme Court.
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general strike. The NLC suspended the threat to strike but insisted on a 300 naira per month minimum wage, pointedly making reference to what legislators had voted themselves. Representatives of both government and the NLC met on 9 April 1980 and after hours of hard bargaining, with over 200 union leaders laying siege to the premises of the Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity where the talks were being held, the following decisions were reached. On national minimum wage, both parties agreed that the matter be referred to a tripartite committee comprising the NLC, government and employers (that is, the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association — NECA) representatives, the first meeting of this committee to be convened two days thence. Very much aware of the opposition of private employers to the 100 naira monthly minimum wage, the parties also noticed that 'pending the outcome of the tripartite meeting, both parties urged employers in the private sector to implement the minimum wage.'

On car loans and Basic Allowance the NLC agreed with President Shagari’s undertaking to refer the matter to the National Economic Council, a body comprising all 19 state governors, former heads of state and chief justices and some prominent traditional rulers and chaired by the vice-president. Apart from the constitutional/financial implications involved in reaching a decision on behalf of the state governments, the President was no doubt protecting himself against the predictably divergent policies of states controlled by other political parties, especially those of the UPC. It could also have been a simple case of passing the buck by letting other bodies take on the blame that could have squarely been laid on the shoulders of the President and his party.

On rent subsidy, the NLC accepted the government’s offer of minimum subsidy of (a) 10 naira for employees on Grade Level (GL)* 01-02; (b) 15 naira for employees on GL 03-04; (c) 20 naira for those on GL 05-06; (d) and 30 to 40 naira a month for employees on GL 07, depending on their entry point. Those on GL 08 to 17 were not covered as they were not accorded ‘junior worker’ status.

On Transport Allowance both parties agreed on a minimum allowance of 10 naira per month for workers on GL 01-06, expressing the hope that both rent and transport allowances could be improved upon through existing negotiating machinery in both public and private sectors. Curiously enough, it was also agreed that leave allowances of employees in salary brackets GL 08-16 be doubled. One plausible explanation would be that in the trade-off that usually accompanies negotiations, the top bureaucrats were able to wrest this concession, arguing as they always did that even a permanent secretary was a ‘worker’. And it is not unlikely that David Ojeli saw this as ‘winning’ something for his union.

The reception to these agreements was generally favourable among workers, some of whom were already on strike to compel reluctant

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*The Udoji Commission of 1974 introduced a unified salary structure of 17 grades; GL 01: 1,200 naira per annum; GL 02: 1,230-1,416; GL 03: 1,284-1,524; GL 04: 1,500-1,752; GL 05: 1,740-2,172; GL 06: 2,196-2,772; GL 07: 2,832-3,552. Those earning between 3,600 and 12,000 (GL 17) were tagged as 'senior staff'. (1.2 naira = £1).
employers to accept the reality of a 100 naira monthly minimum wage. The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) sought to make political capital out of the deadlocked talks over the 300 naira monthly minimum wage proposal of the NLC by suggesting 200 naira in place of the going rate of 100 naira! In practice the UPN- and PRP-ruled states paid wages ranging between 102 and 120 naira depending on the establishment. One of the immediate consequences of the announced package was the less than enthusiastic support shown by lower level trade union leaders for the 300 naira minimum wage demand. The NLC had broken off talks describing them as a ‘waste of time’ but the orchestrated attacks on NLC’s stance in the news media, coupled with the workers’ warm reception accorded the recent agreements already mentioned (which workers were already having difficulty in getting employers to implement) forced the NLC leaders to indicate that the issue could be ‘negotiable’.

Naturally exploiting the goodwill among workers generated by the revised fringe benefits, the government promptly came out with an incomes policy, for want of a better expression, on 15 April 1980. Workers were classified simply as ‘junior workers’ and ‘senior workers’, the former category covering those earning up to 3,000 naira per annum. Seeking to bring fringe benefits under government control, the Productivity, Prices and Income Board was empowered to contact employers over these. Fringe benefits could not now be reviewed without the express permission of the Minister of Employment, Labour and Productivity himself, and even the creation of new types of fringe benefits had to be approved by him. Any employer of more than 50 workers was to inform the ministry about wages, salaries and fringe benefits earned by its work force. There would still be the traditional yearly increases for all workers but arrears from any pay negotiations could not be back-dated beyond the beginning of the financial year — a direct attack on previous Wages Commissions’ habits of back-dating awards to as far back as a year.

Concerning ‘professional incomes’, the non-homogeneity of the ‘senior workers’ group now being acknowledged, the government said that its rate for services of groups such as architects and engineers, should not be exceeded by the private sector. To enforce this, professionals were expected every four months to submit to their professional bodies details of the rates and charges payable by their clients. From this it would seem that the government remained unaware of the implications of managing a capitalist economy and definitely not conversant with how professional bodies operate in protection of the interests of their members.

On dividends companies could share out no more than 60 per cent of their profits after tax, or 25 per cent of the paid up capital (whichever was higher) provided the dividends were paid from current year profits.

There was to be no increase in rents for office and commercial accommodation beyond the 1979/80 rates, representing an attempt to reduce the earnings of the propertied fraction of the elites who seemed to have more than doubled rents since 1978 and asking for six months’ rent (in case of residential accommodation often a years’ rent) in advance. But it was also designed to lower the operating costs of companies and other enterprises.
Lastly, on prices, only one increase a year would be allowed providing it was not more than 5 per cent for which the Incomes Board had to be notified 30 days in advance. Permission had to be sought for increases above the 5 per cent norm. If the past performances of the Price Control Board were anything to go by it was difficult to see how price increases could be effectively monitored. Even given the will, the personnel available could not cope because of the size of the country. It was more, one suspects, a case of achieving symmetry to appear even-handed rather than a serious attempt at checking the often nefarious activities of commercial and professional organisations.

Anyway, the upshot of this was that the NLC became more strident over troubling rises in prices of most commodities, a situation that made nonsense of the incomes policies. David Ojeli, with the upper ceiling of 15 per cent wage increases in mind, called for a restoration of ‘free collective bargaining’ and labour representation on the National Economic Council. Soon after that the National Economic Council met and approved the restoration of car loans, a call that was heeded by a few state governments thereby putting pressure on the federal government. A week after, the federal government restored car loans but without the allowances (allowances are an ingenious colonial invention which enabled a civil servant car owner to pay back the initial loan with greater ease while having enough money left to offset the cost of running the car). And instead of those qualified for such loans, usually those in the ‘senior’ category, receiving them directly from their employers, in this case, the government or state, as used to be the case, they were now required to approach commercial banks, in which the state owned at least 60 per cent equity shares, for loans that would attract one-half per cent above normal lending rate which stood at eight per cent. The offer was rejected by the NLC and further discussions brought the interest rate down to 6 per cent with the issue of car allowances still unresolved.

In September 1980 the issue of car loan and car allowances were referred to the Industrial Arbitration Panel (AIP) which at least gave the impression that something was being done. Meanwhile the Labour Committee of the House of Representatives took the initiative on minimum wage issue by embarking on a well-publicised tour of industrial establishments in the country with a view to ‘determining a reasonable national minimum wage for the low-income workers in Nigeria and improving their living conditions’ (Daily Times, 22.9.1980). The chairman, Edet Bassey Etienam, was a former unionist and member of the NTUC who broke away to form a splinter Nigerian Federation of Labour but was denied recognition by the Federal government in 1968. He was the star witness at the celebrated Adebiyi Tribunal of 1977 at which his testimony incriminated most top trade unionists in the NTUC. In the interim rather intensive lobbying was being undertaken by the Chambers of Commerce, Nigerian Employers Consultative Association (NECA) and well-known figures of the business community against the very idea of a national minimum wage. When the President re-affirmed his belief in a national minimum wage, the massive campaign was now directed at ensuring the adoption of an amount far below what the NLC was asking for. The Labour Committee which ended its tour
with as much fanfare as it began, recommended a 120 naira monthly minimum wage and was very silent on 'living conditions'.

All these developments were however overshadowed by the impending NLC annual conference due to be held in Kano late February 1981. The point here for all vested interests would be the elections of officials. All of a sudden the information media, especially the newspapers, painted a picture of a struggle to the death between 'communists' and 'democrats' within the NLC, and not too subtly implying that Hassan Sunmonu, the President of the NLC, belonged to the former camp hence his 'intransigence' over any issue. David Ojeli was presented as a viable and more reasonable alternative and who naturally was also a 'democrat'. The issue was considered of such importance by vested interests that both men were offered one hour of prime viewing time on television to debate their 'manifesto'. As the conference day grew nearer press conferences were held daily by both men and seeking to create an image of a more 'dynamic leader' (his favourite phrase), Ojeli called out his union on a one-day strike in protest against the length of time taken by the IAP in reaching a decision on car loan and basic allowances. Almost too good to be true the IAP came out two days later with a verdict that favoured the Nigerian Civil Service Union; but it was all too neat. Although officially denied, it seemed more of a ploy to swing votes behind Ojeli for the government deliberately withheld its reaction to the verdict until well after NLC's conference when it had become clear that Sunmonu retained the Presidency of the NLC. The government rejected IAP's ruling and appealed to the National Industrial Court, the final arbiter. Of more relevance however was the resolution on a general strike by May 1981 unanimously adopted at the conference which was overlooked in the heat of the excitement generated by the election.

The General Strike
Both the events that led to the general strike and its conduct were coloured by reactions within and without the labour movement to all that happened at the Kano conference. To boot, Ojeli was a bad loser. As soon as the election results were announced he accused Sunmonu of having 'bought' votes with the sum of 500,000 naira allegedly provided by the Kano state government. On the other side there were also equally unsubstantiated claims, including the allegation that the federal government financed Ojeli's campaigns plus a personal gift of 30,000 naira. What probably made defeat more agonising for Ojeli was the 'winner-take-all' principle by which a presidential candidate nominated persons to stand for all other positions: in sum, all positions were won by Sunmonu's nominees. Ojeli's subsequent reaction was characteristic of unionists of the 'old brigade': he announced the formation of what he called 'National Committee for Democratic Trade Unionism', a body that would retain membership of the NLC and which dubiously claimed the allegiance of 22 out of 42 industrial unions. As events during the strike showed, Ojeli's organisation had the sympathies of only eight unions which shared two characteristics: (a) unions belonging to the establishment controlled by the federal government, and (b) leaders belonging to central organisations that had consistently affiliated externally to the Western-controlled International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
A notable exception to these was Alhaji Adebola’s union that blacked Sunmonu, an act Ojeli dismissed as ‘tribally motivated’ while conveniently ignoring country-wide support accorded Sunmonu even by unionists such as Ejiofor with whom he shared the same ethnic background.

Government officials, some politicians and members of the business community now publicly considered the possibility of having more than one central organisation in an attempt to weaken the NLC and the labour movement. The utterances of Ojeli and others of the Committee for Democratic Trade Unionism created a premature impression of the de facto existence of two central bodies, especially with their tendency to disagree with NLC’s position on other developments. The first of the series of strikes in March and April 1981 was that of the nurses who demanded to be put on GL 08 after training, a pay level the civil service regards as starting point for fresh university graduates irrespective of their disciplines or specialisation. Next came the doctor’s strike which the NLC found itself unable to support officially because the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) declined to appear before the IAP on the grounds that it was not a trade union and would rather deal directly with the federal government. Ojeli did not declare his support for the strike but attacked the NLC for ‘mishandling’ the issue! As the protracted negotiation dragged into April, the workers of the central bank embarked on strike action practically paralysing the banking system — a dispute that was only resolved on the day the general strike began. The Nigerian Medical Association held its annual conference, in late April, in Port Harcourt at which the resumption of suspended industrial action was ruled out following agreement, on overtime pay and other issues. A few days later Sunmonu confirmed to a beleaguered government and anxious public that a general strike would commence on Monday 11 May 1981 if outstanding issues were not resolved: these included the 300 naira monthly minimum wage, total restoration of car loan and basic allowances, and minimum pension not less than minimum monthly wage. On May Day, Sunmonu assured workers that NLC’s national executive council had met on 27 April and reviewed strategies to be adopted.

In a press release David Ojeli, on behalf of the Nigerian Civil Service Union, denounced the impending nation-wide strike as ‘unfortunate and ill-timed’. He further argued that:

the fact that this issue (car loan and basic allowances) is now before the National Industrial Court underlines the need not to do anything that will undermine the court and place in jeopardy the industrial relations system in this country. We cannot therefore support the action... It will be recalled that but for this union the abolition of car loan and basic allowances would have been a dead issue. Therefore, our present stand on the proposed industrial action should not be misconstrued for weakness or lack of sufficient interest in the affairs of workers, but as a proof of our belief in the rule of law. (Daily Times, 11.5.1981).

By 10 May eight industrial unions had denounced the strike, expressing

*The unions are: the Nigerian civil Service Union; the National Union of Banks, Insurance, and Financial Institutions Employees; Hotel and Personnel Services Workers Union; Printing and Publishing Workers Union of Nigeria; a faction of the Nigerian Union of Journalists led by Ralph Igwah; Radio, Television and Theatre Workers Union; Agricultural & Allied Workers Union of Nigeria; and the Metallic & Non-Metallic, Cultural and Allied Workers Union.
‘confidence’ in the leadership of the Committee for Democratic Trade Unionism headed by Ojeli and Okwese. The NLC Regional Secretary based in Calabar also opted out of the strike arguing that he was neither consulted nor was he present at NLC’s national executive meeting on 27 April which, as of right, he ought to have been.

On the night of the 10th the President called in Sunmonu asking him to call off the strike on the grounds of ‘national interest’ (Interview, Sunmonu, 15.5.1981). The strike went ahead as planned and brought most economic activities to a halt. Apart from the banks and insurance workers and civil servants, other workers stayed at home watching newscasters on television claim how unsuccessful the strike was. Even many civil servants could not get to their offices because there were no buses, trains or taxis as drivers too were on strike. Most cities were without water and electricity and many schools were closed down as teachers and cooks were not available. The situation was even worse in hospitals where doctors only had skeleton staff to take in very bad cases. Meanwhile the National Economic Council was meeting to discuss the report of the negotiating panel on demands of the Nigerian Medical Association and the strike: the meeting ended without a communique. In the house of Representatives the motion on the national minimum wage was unexpectedly withdrawn by Bassey Etienam, Chairman of the Labour Committee, who was quoted saying that his committee could not enter into any dialogue with the NLC over the current strike because ‘there could be other motives, perhaps political, behind the strike’ (Daily Sketch, 12.5.1981). He was later contradicted by the Speaker of the house who felt members needed time to go through the Labour Committee report as they had been on recess.

On the second day of the strike, which became more effective as more workers joined and ever-bustling industrial estates looked like ghost towns, government officials became worried. Even some civil servants, especially in Ondo State, defied Ojeli’s directives and joined in the strike action. Power black-outs caused one of the few violent incidents during the strike: the Nigerian Electricity Power Authority (NEPA) had deployed its senior engineers to substations deserted by ‘junior workers’ in order to maintain power supply. This strategy partially paid off in Lagos but not in other major cities. In Kano, for example, the junior workers always went back to turn off the switches that senior engineers had turned on. This went on for a while until both parties arrived at the same time at various stations and minor scuffles ensued. The police were informed, they ignored the workers involved, they ignored the workers involved and promptly arrested NLC officials who were detained until several days after the strike ended.

Hoping to take attention away from the strike and perhaps shore up Ojeli’s tarnished image, government-owned newspapers now played up the proceedings of the National Industrial Court which was now known to be considering the government’s appeal on car loans and allowances. The Civil Service Union, one was now informed, was demanding 3 per cent interest on the loans and arrears of two years, coinciding with when the Union first appeared before the IAP on 1 June 1979. On 12 May representatives of the government, the National Assembly and the NLC reached some compromise late in the night to enable the NLC to call off the strike the next
day.* The meeting ‘noted’ NLC’s rejection of the 120 naira monthly minimum wage proposed by the Labour Committee; agreed that the National Assembly conclude debate on the fixing of national minimum wage within 30 days; that the monthly minimum pension be increased from 33 naira to 50 naira; a review of pension for pensioners who served 15 years or more; review of car loans and basic allowance within two weeks; 5 naira increase in transport allowance for all employees, GL 01-06, from 10 to 15 naira a month; from 15 naira to 20 for those in GL 07 and 08; from 20 to 25 naira for GL 09 to 11 and 25 to 30 naira for GL 12 and above. It was also agreed that no employer should penalise any worker for taking part in the strike.

The Aftermath
The strike itself did not end on the 13th because many workers doubted the authenticity of the agreements announced over the radio and television given the biased and slanted coverage of the strike by these same organs. Some others felt insulted over the announcement as they correctly felt that the government had no right to call off a strike it did not initiate. In all it took another couple of days before the message came across from NLC headquarters and workers were back to work on the 18th following a presumably restful weekend. As tempers were simmering down, the Director of NECA, G.C. Okogwu was to raise the temperature more than a few degrees by insisting that employers would not pay workers for the period of the strike, a direct attack on the agreement just concluded. The Federal government issued a special press release reiterating its position on non-penalisation of workers but this did not stop some employers from withholding pay, an act that led to a few more stoppages.

As if to take the sting out of the material achievements of the strike, the judgement of the National Industrial Court that was to have been given on 21 May was brought to the 14th. The verdict was in favour of the Civil Service Union and as could be predicted, David Ojeli was always in the news for days running.

It soon however became clear that an incensed Assembly, totally ignored during the strike, was not about to co-operate readily: it announced how impossible it was to meet the 30 days deadline. Sunmonu’s sneer was biting: he noted that it took less than a week for the assembly men to determine their own salaries. The employer element among the legislators (quite a few are established businessmen) and the chairman of the Labour Committee, who has very close links with Ojeli, were blatantly anti-Sunmonu and the NLC. After a scuttled debate, the House of Representatives that had proposed a minimum wage of 150 naira now adopted the going rate of 100 naira to the amazement of everyone. In this it was backed by the Committee of Democratic Trade Unions and NECA and some employers who thought even the going rate was too high and would lead several firms into

*Representing the government were the Vice-President, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Senate Majority Leader (Dr. Saraki), Leader of the House of Representatives (Alhaji Yunusa Kaltungo — former unionist of the ULCN camp), the Minister of Employment, Labour and Productivity, and Secretary to the Federal government. The NLC was represented by Hassan Sunmonu, Dangiwa (secretary general of NLC), Ejiofor and 16 other labour leaders.
bankruptcy. The Senate criticised the House of Representatives and set its own minimum wage at 120 naira. Both bodies met to reconcile the difference and a few days after the deadline both houses finally agreed on 125 naira, a decision that was backed by the nine governors of the states governed by the UPN, Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) who earlier categorically stated that no state government could afford a 300 naira minimum wage but called on President Shagari to appoint a high-powered commission to deliberate on the issue — the call was rejected. Given the opposition from within the labour movement and concessions already granted by the government and appeals from ‘leaders of thought’ the NLC accepted the 125 naira minimum wage with minimum fuss.

The seemingly successful resolution of outstanding issues hardly led the government to pay attention to other crucial matters. A shift in government policy toward the NLC was first made public in faraway Geneva where the Minister of Employment, Labour and Productivity was attending the convention of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). He ‘confessed’ at a press conference that the Federal government was violating ILO convention 87 on the Freedom of Association by granting monopoly status to the NLC, and that attempts would be made to correct such anomaly. As it turned out, two senators, Uba Ahmed and Mahmud Waziri (both industrialists of note), introduced two draft bills to repeal Trade Unions Act No. 31 of 1973, Trade Unions (Amendment) Act No. 22 of 1978 and Labour (Amendment) Act No. 21 of 1978. In effect if passed, the bills would make possible the establishment of rival central organisations to the NLC, the automatic ‘check-off’ system for paying union dues would be abolished and workers would now be required to ballot in the presence of representatives of government, press and employers before going on strike. With a couple of good body blows, it was thus envisaged that the NLC would be ineffective, union finances in considerable disarray, and general strikes or major strikes a thing of the past. Perhaps more importantly, from another point of view, Ojeli could now convert his committee into a central body that would be more ‘responsible’. It is little wonder that Ojeli has thrown his weight behind the two honourable senators.

For its part the NLC has been lobbying and arguing the hollowness of the proposed bills. If the proponents were really so concerned about the ‘infringement of individual rights’, the NLC points out in a pamphlet, they should have considered repealing Trade Union Act No. 31, section II (i) which prohibits workers in insurance, banking, telecommunications, the armed forces and police from belonging to trade union. There is also the Petroleum Production and Distribution (Anti-sabotage) Act No. 15 of 1977 which classify strikes by tanker drivers and petroleum workers as ‘criminal’ and subjects them to imprisonment without trial. And, of course, the Trade Unions (Disqualification of Certain Persons) Act No. 15 of which prohibits eleven trade unionists (including veteran Michael Imoudu) from trade unionism for life. All these, needless to point out, contravenes Section 37 of the Nigerian constitution, the United Nations Fundamental Human Rights Declaration of 1966 and conventions 87 and 98 of ILO that seem so dear to the hearts of the senators.
Space will not permit a fuller discussion of the consequences of the general strike save for a few general remarks. Developments in Nigeria have consistently questioned conventional wisdom on such ideologically-tainted concepts as 'productivity'. What tends to make private employers uncomfortable is the point unceasingly made by 'crises' in the public sector that wages and salaries are mostly determined by distribution of power and no 'productivity': if this were not so, one would need to be a magician to justify convincingly the monstrous wages paid to expatriates by multi-national companies — just to cite an obvious example.

Equally crucial are the implications of widespread distrust of and often contempt for the governing elites in Nigeria. Widely held is the belief that most of the politicians and bureaucrats are professional 'mismanagers' who do not have greater moral or ethical standing (who else awards inflated contracts and supervises poorly, if at all, completed projects?). As a consequence no amount of privileges and private wealth seem able to command any halo of sanctity: hence the fragility of the state, the activities of multi-national companies aside. The legitimacy of the social order has thus become increasingly more problematic as income disparities increase: that so much money is siphoned into private accounts abroad is hardly a secret and renders hollow all those calls on workers to abandon strikes and other forms of industrial conflict in the 'national interest'. Little surprise that most legislators, top bureaucrats and business community violently opposed the bill prohibiting public servants from operating foreign accounts and that the bill was thrown out.

When legislators vote themselves 13 million naira for the purchase of air-conditioners and 50,000 naira for furnishing each of their flats and claim another 12,000 naira as car loan and proceed to scramble for import licenses to import rice, stock fish and other items, it is extremely naive to expect workers (if anybody else) in the public sector to await patiently the yearly 15 per cent wage increase — a figure falling far short of the rate of inflation.

The strike itself revealed the limits to what Lenin called 'trade union consciousness'. The 'economism' of Nigerian trade unions is partly reflected in the kinds of issues and general understanding on all sides that such conflict is temporary. Whereas the demand for more reasonable pensions, transport and rent allowances is attributable to the woeful absence of social security benefits and other relevant protective social legislation, the car loan issue reflects the orientation and nature of the membership of the centrally affected, namely, the white-collar dominated, Civil Service Union. The nature of workers' demands, white collar or not, is clearly rooted in existing social practice and values, usually determined by dominant social classes. Thus this type of general strike would be least likely to threaten the existing power structure or the capitalist system in spite of the recognisable fright of ideologues and benefactors of the status quo. Indeed, when a top NLC official was asked why the strike was called off on the strength of 'promises' made by the government, he noted that if the strike had been allowed to continue, and given certain passions, the leadership would not have been able to control events. At the worst they (the labour leaders) would have been killed or incarcerated: at best, the military would seize power and would by definition be more reactionary. Safety first, as was maintained
during students' demonstrations in 1978! But this disposition may have been based, given the nature of issues, on greater appreciation of the strength and viciousness of the opposition and thorough knowledge of one's own weakness: correct diagnosis is always invaluable to any struggle.

Then, was the strike successful? The answer is an emphatic 'yes'. In fact the strike may be regarded as the most successful ever for the following reasons. It has brought into sharper focus the direct connection between 'business activities', government socio-economic policies and the miserable existence of a large proportion of the population: thus, the mass retrenchment of workers in various industries was directly traceable to specific government policies and the not inconsiderable financial mismanagement and official corruption that also seem to have permeated the private sector. All this is reinforced by a multi-party system which has encouraged an often devastating critique of official policies and party manifestoes and thus a concommittant rise in general political awareness. Government by contracts and positions and inevitably based on party affiliations and class interests only serves to heighten feelings of absolute and relative deprivation.

Furthermore, workers are now only too aware of the life-styles of better-off Nigerians and their ideas of tolerable standards are necessarily affected. The upward pressure on wages could not therefore be based solely on 'productivity': the affluence of other social strata seem to have little to do with it as reflected in the conduct of legislators, 'emergency contractors' and in the ease with which multi-nationals generate 'contracts' and circumvent laws and policies.

The other point to note is the virtual disappearance, in times of conflict, of institutional separation of 'public' and 'private' sector unions: no issues are isolated or restricted to one or the other which all testify to increased class consciousness among workers. That the strike involved workers from the private sector, in spite of it originating in the public sector, has as its Director told the author, really bothered NECA a great deal.

Lastly, the material concessions (especially 60 per cent increase in pension rates) extracted gave workers a foretaste of what collective power could bring. Conversely, the economic and political elites, from all indication, seem to regard 'workers' as a factor to be reckoned with. In other words, there is now the unfamiliar feeling among the elites of a measure of accountability to the working class (in the face of a practically non-existent 'electorate'), a situation to which the Nigerian constitution hardly provides guidelines.

"Politics is stuck with the glaring absurdity that with one hand it builds for a future that with the other hand it prepares to destroy". Join CND/END now.
THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE OF MALAWI (LESOMA)

Malawi and SADCC
On 20 July 1981, President Banda was made to eat humble pie when he took part in a summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Countries of the Southern Africa Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) in Salisbury, Zimbabwe. It was a humiliated President seated next to President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania the architect of the Southern African liberation crusade and number one enemy of the fascist South African Boer regime. It was humiliating for President Banda to be in Salisbury as a guest of Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe and President Canaan Banana whose country's freedom and independence, and particularly the struggle wages by ZANU-PF, President Banda had consistently and openly worked to undermine in favour of a sham independence or a neo-colonial variant under Bishop Muzorewa. It was a humiliated President Banda who had to sit at the same conference table with President Samora Machel, a man whom he regards as a source of 'communist' influence in southern Africa and whose country's historic independence occasion on 25 June 1975, was not even mentioned as a news bulletin on the official Radio Malawi.

So what brought President Banda before this gathering of the Heads of State of SADCC in Salisbury? President Banda was conspicuous, for his absence at the 1980 April summit of the founding of SADCC in Lusaka, Zambia. He was then represented by his Minister of Education Dick Matenje, and not even by his Minister of Finance. The stated objective of SADCC are, *inter alia*, to increase economic co-operation among the countries of SADCC and to reduce their economic and communication dependence on the fascist Boer regime of South Africa.

But like the struggle for the independence of Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe prior to their liberation, the founding of SADCC in April 1980 with the stated objective of freeing the region from economic strangulation by South Africa was greeted with characteristic contempt by President Banda. As far as President Banda's thinking goes, Malawi in particular and the countries of southern Africa in general, cannot survive economically without the leverage of South Africa. And so the April summit in Lusaka was a sheer waste of time as far as President Banda was concerned.
But in the intervening months since the April summit, SADCC has shown that it can be a viable economic entity capable of attracting far greater international and multilateral aid donors than each individual state within SADCC and whose benefits far exceed those accruing to each individual country like Malawi from fascist South Africa. Thus, the aid donors’ conference in Maputo organised by the SADCC countries, for instance, was able to show in a most vivid way that Malawi’s communication links would benefit a lot more if financed regionally than the individual efforts of Malawi with Canadian aid would. The ministerial and experts’ subsequent meetings since the April summit have also shown the immense possibilities and potentialities that lie untapped within the borders and under the surface of the SADCC countries.

SADCC therefore is not a pipedream about which President Banda could only remain indifferent at his country’s own extreme disadvantage. On the other hand, the geopolitical situation in the region has been so transformed that President Banda’s much vaunted ‘prudent realism’ which made him a faithful ally of the white minority regimes in southern Africa is now so much political humbug. All Malawi’s communication links to the sea lie within a free and independent Mozambique. Zimbabwe is equally an independent and sovereign state. The political and strategic value of Malawi which endeared it to the imperialists and South Africa in a possible military confrontation between black Africa and white-ruled southern Africa no longer exists. Malawi, under President Banda, had thus assumed a ridiculous status of being a Bantustan in a sea of independent and sovereign African states, opposed to the fascist Boer regime in South Africa, stretching from the Indian ocean to the Atlantic Ocean.

Thus President Banda’s shame-faced appearance at the Salisbury summit of SADCC was an eloquent testimony of the historical and strategic impropriety of his policy of dialogue and fraternity with white ruled southern Africa. It is the pan-African policies of the opposition which President Banda has been persecuting since 1964 which have now triumphed and which he now shame-facedly wishes to embrace at SADCC.

We of the Socialist League of Malawi who have taken over the mantle of spearheading the popular opposition of the people of Malawi against the anti-people and the anti-African policies of President Banda do welcome Malawi’s place within SADCC. We welcome it not from an opportunistic point of view but from a principle viewpoint. We have always and consistently opposed and condemned the selfish and short-sighted policies of President Banda which identified the short and long term interests of Malawi with that of the fascist minority regimes of southern Africa. We are explicit in our Party manifesto about improving the communication as well as the political economic and diplomatic links with our African neighbours in the interest of African Unity, policy areas about which the regime of President Banda is notorious for their total neglect.

It should not be brushed aside lightly that President Banda took deliberate steps to conclude a trade agreement with racist South Africa in 1967 as a result of which Malawi’s dependence on imports from that country increase two-fold by 1973 from 8 per cent to more than 16 per cent. Indeed by 1974, South Africa had outstripped the United Kingdom, as Malawi’s chief
trading partner. The interesting thing about this self-imposed dependence is that while Malawi's imports have continued to outstrip imports from all other countries, Malawian exports to South Africa have been declining thereby creating a huge trade deficit against Malawi!

We of LESOMA welcome Malawi's entry into SADCC because it will mean a gradual but sure disengagement of the Malawi economy and its people on South Africa. Indeed, we of LESOMA have vowed to abrogate all contacts, trade and otherwise, with the Boer regime. And of course a LESOMA Government would bring about such a disengagement in as short a time scale as is practicable. In the case of President Banda's regime, however, the 1967 Trade Agreement with South Africa will have to be abrogated all the same as a condition for genuine identification with the stated objectives of SADCC. After all, what Malawi imports from South Africa was up until 1965 being imported from the then Rhodesia, and there is no doubt independent Zimbabwe still has the capability to assume its pre-1965 position as Malawi's number one source of imports at 39 per cent. There are triple advantages to such a policy of disengagement: first Malawi and its people would politically and morally be free of the spectre of dependence on a country whose policies are morally indefensible; secondly, Malawi would be indirectly assisting in the economic and industrial rehabilitation of Zimbabwe's economy by boosting her exports to Malawi to the pre-1965 levels and, lastly Mozambique too would be spared the discomfort of earning her foreign exchange on Malawi's imports from South Africa and, here too, as in the case of Malawi, helping to reduce the dependence of another SADCC member country on South Africa.

Malawi too, like other SADCC member countries will accrue some benefits from co-ordinated economic and industrial policies, communication and transport links and an expanded market for her farm and import-substitution industrial products. Malawi's internal market is particularly limited because of President Banda's economic policies which have emphasised the accumulation of scandalous wealth by a select few while the majority of the rural and urban populations wallow in abject poverty. As a result, Malawi has become a shopping paradise for the 'nouveau riche' from the neighbouring countries for both local and imported goods because Malawians themselves cannot afford to buy them, lowly-priced as the goods are. And so Malawian farm and industrial products are likely to find a competitive market within SADCC member countries, unlike its present trade relationship with South Africa where Malawian industrial products and semi-processed agricultural products are barred.

And yet another pointer about Malawi's choice as host for co-ordinating SADCC's Fisheries and Tourism policies which must be removed before she can faithfully do that. Malawi is a member of the so-called Southern Africa Tourism Board of which racist South Africa is the dominant member. It will stand to reason for other SADCC member countries to ask Malawi to disengage from this racist dominated Tourism Board before she can be allowed to co-ordinate SADCC's Tourism policies.

But what of President Banda the dictator and of Malawi as a nation in agony? We have stated above that LESOMA as a Party welcomes SADCC and Malawi's membership thereof because it adds to each in-
individual nation’s independence from external dependence, particularly that on racist South Africa. But we also wish to state categorically that, as a Party, we do not and shall never accept dictatorship and oppression for our fatherland. LESOMA as a Party and the people of Malawi whose emancipation we are championing are extremely apprehensive about the latest development without our region which has the semblance of wanting to reduce the grave and heinous crimes committed by President Banda both against our people and our brothers and sisters in Mozambique and Zimbabwe as innocuous misdemeanours ostensibly in the name of economic cooperation. The man must not however be allowed to get away with crimes committed against our race, the African race!!

We as a Party recognise and indeed are fighting for more meaningful and closer inter-state co-operation within the south African region and continentally. The very geographical location, leave alone the history and cultural bonds, dictate that Malawi belongs to SADCC. But President Banda has always behaved and acted as though Malawi shared common borders with South Africa. It is incomprehensible therefore that President Banda should be made to feel as if he has been right all along in his policies of fraternisation and collaboration with the racist against the African people. Malawi is not President Banda.

So while LESOMA and the people of Malawi welcome SADCC, we also express the very sincere hope that SADCC will not be reduced into a ‘trade union for the heads of state’ of this region instead of being a genuine union of its people for genuine political, economic, social and cultural emancipation from both foreign and domestic exploiters and oppressors.

LONG LIVE THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA!
LONG LIVE SADCC!
THE PEOPLE MUST BE FREE!

28 July 1981.

THE LOMÉ CONVENTION AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER
T.W. Parfitt

One of the most debated topics in North-South relation is the Lomé Convention. Since it was agreed in 1975 it has attracted the attention of numerous commentators, some of whom have been favourable in their analysis, whilst others have been critical. The literature generated by this debate has become sufficiently diverse and expansive (especially with the agreement of the second Lomé Convention in 1980) to warrant some attempt at clarification of its main themes and the essential differences between the various schools of thought. Below, I have examined some of the main arguments put forward by those in favour of the Convention and those against it and attempted to relate their comments to the actuality of how the Convention has worked. The focus of our analysis will primarily be on Lomé 1, which was operational from July 1975 to March 1980.

Before embarking on this analysis it will be necessary to summarise the main components that constituted the Lomé 1 regime and which have essen-
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Before embarking on this analysis it will be necessary to summarise the main components that constituted the Lomé I regime and which have essen-
tially been continued in Lomé 2. In short, both Lomé 1 and 2 are trade and aid treaties contracted between the EEC and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. The latter consist mainly of ex-colonies of the various EEC member states along with a few countries that had hitherto been outside these mainly Francophone and Anglophone spheres of influence, such as Liberia and Guine-Bassau. At the beginning of Lomé 1 the ACP states numbered 46, but this has grown so that at time of writing they number in excess of 60, one of the most recent accessions being Zimbabwe. The benefits gained by the ACP states under Lomé 1 included tariff free access for over 99 per cent of their exports to the EEC, the exceptions being certain products covered by the ACP, including maize, millet, sorghum, rice, etc. ACP production of these commodities was to be given preference over the production of third countries. Special commodity arrangements were made for ACP sugar, beef, rum and bananas, which involved the setting of tariff free quotas for the first three of these products and indexation of the price of ACP sugar to that obtaining in the Community. With regard to Lomé aid, they were granted a total of 3,390 million European Currency Units (ECU) or US $4,068 million. Of this amount 2,100 million ECU was to be disbursed in the form of grants, with 375 million ECU being allocated to the Stabex scheme. The rest was to take the form of loans (mostly soft) and risk capital. The total aid allocation has been periodically increased as new ACP countries have acceded to the Lomé Convention.

Apart from the project orientated aid, Stabex is worthy of note as it was something of a novelty in North-South relations. It was designed to compensate the ACP states for shortfalls in their receipts from exports to the EEC of certain products, these being groundnuts, cocoa, coffee, cotton, coconut, palm, palm nuts and kernel products, raw hides, skins and leather, wood products, fresh bananas, tea, raw sisal and iron ore. In 1977, the list was extended to cover vanilla, cloves, pyrethrum, gum arabic, ylang wool and mohair. The initial allocation of 375 million ECU was increased to 380 million ECU to provide for new accessions to the Convention. To qualify for a Stabex transfer an ACP state had to experience a fall in their export earnings from one of the specified products of 75 per cent (this was the trigger threshold) below the average of the previous four years' earnings on that product (this was the reference level). In the case of sisal the trigger threshold was 5 per cent and for the least developed, landlocked and island states the trigger and dependence thresholds were both 2.5 per cent. Transfers were made in foreign exchange and were not tied to the EEC. However, they must be repaid when export earnings on the relevant product again exceed the reference level, provided the volume of exports is not less than the reference volume and the unit value of the exports is higher than the reference unit value (both of which are calculated on a similar basis to the reference level). Stabex repayments do not bear interest and the least developed ACP states are completely exempted from repayments.

Lomé 1 is also notable from the commitment it included on industrialisation of the ACP countries. Indeed, Title III of the Convention on 'Industrial cooperation' was largely drafted by the ACP negotiators and accepted by the EEC at a conference in Kingston, Jamaica in June 1974. It committed the signatories 'to take all measures necessary to bring about effective industrial co-operation'. This co-operation was to have as its objectives the develop-
ment and diversification of ACP industries, promotion of trade links between EEC and ACP industry, increasing the linkages between the ACP's industries and agriculture, transfer of technology from Europe to the ACP promotion of ACP industrial products in foreign markets, encouragement of indigenous ACP entrepreneurs and encouragement of EEC concerns to participate in ACP industrial development. Provision was also made to set up a Centre for Industrial Development, (CID), which in turn was to be jointly by the EEC and the ACP. The Community, described the Centre as being mainly concerned with industrial information, the setting up of contacts and other industrial promotion tasks. It is through the Centre that it is helped to interest businessmen in the EEC in industrial co-operation with the ACP to bring the interest to the point of action.

Clearly, a large role was envisaged for European capital in ACP development.

**Perspectives on Lome: Reforming Angel or Neo-Colonial Devil?**

One of the most striking aspects of the negotiations towards Lome 1 had been the solidarity and concomitant success of the ACP block under the leadership of Nigeria. They managed to negotiate a substantial level of free entry to the EEC for their goods and won such innovations as Stabex, the industrial co-operation clauses the array of jointly manned ACP-EEC institutions that were supposed to govern the Convention. This led many commentators to identify Lomé 1 as a breakthrough in North-South relations. Variations on this rosy theme have been advanced by analysis such as Twitchett *Europe and Africa: from Association to Partnership*, Freideberg, Coffey, Gruhn, Zartman and most of those represented in Alting van Geusau’s compendium, *The Lomé Convention and the New International Economic Order*. One of the most notable contributions to the latter volume comes from a Nigerian commentator, Anyiwo, who saw ‘the Lomé Convention as a modern example in international co-operation between developed and developing countries’. His views must be regarded as significant for representing the hopes that many ACP observers invested in Lomé 1 during its initial period.

However there has been a wide variety of criticism aimed at the convention. Wall pointed out that the proliferation of commercial agreements between the EEC and other countries (most of the rest of industrialised Europe, the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Middle East) in combination with the progressive reduction of the Community’s Common External Tariff (due to GATT and the General System of Preferences) has substantially limited any preference of ACP might be said to gain from free access. Abby Rubin made the complementary point that approximately 75 per cent of ACP exports to the EEC would have entered duty free irrespective of Lomé. The effect of the free access provisions is also severely circumscribed by the rules of origin. These stipulate that 50 per cent of the value of ACP exports to the Community must have originated either in the ACP or the EEC if they are to qualify for preferential access. The 50 per cent minimum has been condemned as excessively high by various observers, particularly McQueen who commented:

When we consider that even in the more advanced countries such as Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria value added as a percentage of gross output in all manufacturing sectors is between 15 per cent and 52 per cent, then it is clear that the Rules of Origin substantially reduce the value of tariff preferences as enabling ACP countries to diversify their exports.
In addition we must note that the Convention included what was referred to as a safeguard clause which stated:

If as a result of applying the provisions of this chapter (trade co-operation) serious disturbances occur in a sector of the economy of the community or of one or more of its Member States, or jeopardise their external financial stability, or if difficulties arise which may result in a deterioration in a sector of the economy of a region of the Community the latter may take or may authorise the Member State to take the necessary safeguard measures.

This effectively empowered the Community to make derogations from the free access provisions whenever it considered them necessary. In other words, all the trading concessions made by the Nine under Lomé 1 could be unilaterally withdrawn by them.

The aid component of the Lomé regime has also taken its share of criticism. Wall calculated that the 3000 million ECU administered by the European Development Fund (EDF) 'represents a fall of more than 25 per cent in flows to the ACP states on a per capita receipt basis as compared to the funds allocated under the second Yaounde Convention (the predecessor of Lomé 1). Michael Dolan adds that between 1969-75 the purchasing power of the unit of account (now the ECU) fell some 40 per cent in real terms and 50 per cent capita purchasing power of the funds allocated under Lomé 1 is less than half as much as those allocated under Yaounde 2. Another problem is that the EDF’s project appraisal and aid disbursement processes are exceptionally long-winded. Hills has estimated that it can take anything from eight to sixteen months to get a project proposal through the painstaking appraisal process to the stage where the adjudicating body, the EDF Committee (consisting of representatives of the EEC member states) will make a decision on whether or not to finance it. Nor are the problems solved if the decision is a favourable one, for the process of tendering (both for contracts and material) is also involved and prone to delays. The tying of EDF aid to Europe is undoubtedly a contributory factor in these days, for it is not always easy to find the requisite inputs for particular projects within the boundaries of the Community. Certainly, such delays have a damaging effect since the Fund’s lack of ‘inflation-proofing’ means that the aid is constantly being devalued in real terms.

Not even Stabex has escaped the spleen of certain analysts. One of the most oft-repeated criticisms has been that the allocation of 75 million ECU per annum was inadequate to cover potential needs in any succession of bad years for primary commodities. Indeed, the ACP made demands on the Fund amounting to over 160 million ECU in 1978, an amount which could only be paid because claims had been low in the previous two years. Stabex has also been criticised for its inadequate product coverage since the products eligible for compensation consisted entirely of agricultural goods with iron ore as the sole exception. Another limitation to coverage was that only ACP exports to the Community were taken into consideration in establishing an applicant’s entitlement to compensation. The scheme was also criticised for not being inflation proofed or index linked to European commodity prices. Persaud suggested that a more relevant method of compensation would be to calculate shortfalls using a reference level based on a five-year moving average centred on the current year with the two future years being based on forecasts, rather than the four-year historical period used by Stabex. A rather more contentious criticism is that Stabex is too
bureaucracy ridden and slow. Both Persuad and Green have noted that payments sometimes take up to a year to process. However, it would seem that these delays have mostly been associated with cases where there was doubt as to whether or not the criteria for eligibility had been met. In actuality the average length of time taken over disbursement was some four months (see _The Courier_, No.61, May/June 1980). Indeed, Stabex has been known to give advances where an ACP state has been able to anticipate a fall in exports. Another serious criticism was that of Galtung, who argued that the Fund represented an inducement to the ACP to remain dependent on primary products rather than to diversity. However, since the transfers represented an inflow of foreign exchange to the ACP states that would otherwise not have been received and was freely allocable it can be argued that Stabex gave then a better opportunity to diversity. It would seem from this analysis that although there were problems with Stabex it can be regarded as one of the more positive innovations of Lomé 1. As Rubin notes it represented the first occasion on which a metropolitan consumer of primary products has recognised some degree of responsibility to the Third World producers.

One of the most fundamental lines of criticism aimed at Lomé 1 is that of Nabudere and Mytelka, both of whom attacked the assumption underlying the industrial co-operation clauses that industrial development can be achieved through a strategy dependent on European capital. Nabudere criticised apparent ACP acceptance of such a strategy as follows:

The several objectives spelt out in Article 26 (from Title III on Industrial co-operation, which the ACP had a major role in drafting) are the very things that the European monopolies have been avoiding doing in one way or another, and this for very objectively understandable reasons. No monopoly can entertain programmes, projects and schemes in the field of industrial infrastructure and ventures unless these assist it to reap a higher rate of profit in the ACP states than it is able to do at home. Neither can the monopolies engage in training, research, promotion, trade co-operation and furnishing industrial information if these would in the long run work against their monopolistic control of markets as well as raw material bases in the ACP states. For the same reasons they will not contribute to setting up industries and semi-finished goods.

**What Has Been and Remains to be Done**

Having seen that views of the Lomé regime have varied from extremes of approbation to extremes of condemnation it seems pertinent to make a few observations on what the Convention has actually achieved. With regard to the sphere of trade it would seem that there has been no real improvement in the ACP's position _vis-a-vis_ their partners. The preferences ceded by the Community seem not to have been the source of any impetus to diversification, for ACP exports to the EEC are still overwhelmingly primary-based with foodstuffs and energy generating products accounting for some 70 per cent of the total. Indeed, the most important ACP export is Nigerian oil which alone represents nearly one-third of all their European bound exports. It would also seem to be the ACP's only export for which European demand has grown over the period of Lomé 1. Between 1975-9 ACP exports as a whole marginally raised their share of the Community market from 6.7 per cent to 6.8 per cent, but if petroleum exports are excluded from this calculation the remainder of ACP exports experienced a decline from 4.6 per cent to 4.1 per cent (see the _Courier_, No.68 July-August). In view of the fact that oil would have entered the Community duty-free irrespective of...
Lomé 1 it seems clear that the free access provisions have been as ineffective in boosting ACP exports as anticipated by Rubin and Wall.

Although the safeguard clause has never actually been invoked its use has been threatened by the Community in order to limit ACP textile exports. The European Council decided in 1977 that due to the crisis of the European textile sector ACP exports of these products would have to be limited in accordance with the Multi-Fibre Agreement, even though these exports represented only some 1.8 per cent of total community textile imports of pullovers to the United Kingdom in 1979, the Community officially informed the Mauritians that if they refused to conclude a self-restraint agreement halving their exports in 1980, the safeguard clause would be invoked against them (see European Report, No.642, 1 December 1979 and Focke 'From Lomé 1 towards Lomé 2). This was clearly in violation of the spirit of trade liberalisation in which the Convention is supposed to have been concluded. Certainly, it put a brake on the expansion of one of the ACP's few dynamic export oriented industries and demonstrated that in any clash of interests between the ACP and European capital the Community would ally itself with the latter.

There was also problems with the various special commodity arrangements. The Sugar Protocol ran into difficulties over interpretation of the meaning and application of *force majeure*. Under the Protocol the ACP sugar producers were allotted an export quota, which they were obliged to fulfill. Failure to do so for reasons other than *force majeure* (this applies in circumstances that were unforeseeable, or inevitable such as natural disasters, war, strikes, plant disease, etc) entailed the penalty of having this quota reduced in subsequent years. Problems were hit in 1977-78 when Kenya, the Congo, Surinam and Uganda failed to meet their quotas, which the Commission consequently decided to reduce. Arguments immediately ensued between the EEC and the ACP as to whether *force majeure* should have been applicable. These arguments have still not been resolved. An even more serious problem stems from the Community's position as a substantial producer of beet sugar. The commitment to purchase ACP sugar has contributed to the surplus regularly produced by the Community and dumped on the world market. In the late seventies this practice had an adverse effect on world prices which meant that what the ACP gained from their privileged access to the EEC market was lost on their exports to other markets depressed by the Protocol. The ACP have also become increasingly concerned by the growing competition of British and European beet on their traditional British market. Their concern was raised when Tate and Lyle substantially cut back their cane refining capacity by closing their Walkers, Sankey and Hammersmith refineries. Although Agriculture Minister Walker assured the ACP that the UK will honour the terms of the Protocol such developments have caused the ACP some trepidation as they enter the regeneration of the Sugar Protocol schedules for 1982. This concern can only have been increased by the long delay experienced by the EEC and the ACP in arriving at a mutually agreeable sugar price for 1981/82.

Implementation of the other commodity has been similarly problematic. The commitment to raise ACP banana exports foundered in the face of competition from the Latin American product, which had the economic power of influential American MNCs, such as United Brands, behind it and
thus was able to undercut the ACP product. With regard to the special arrangements for beef, the Select Committee on Overseas Development noted that although the ACP quota of 27,000 tons per annum represented about one day's consumption for the whole of the EEC; the annual negotiations for renewal of the arrangement were conducted by the Community in such a way as to deliberately maintain uncertainty for the maximum legal period. The Select Committee described the EEC's handling of the arrangement as 'mean spirited'. Perhaps the most unlikely problem occurred with the Rum Protocol, for it would seem that during the negotiations the growth rates attached to the quotas for the UK and Continental EEC markets were inadvertently switched so that the UK was given a growth of 40 per cent whilst the other eight were given a growth rate of 13 per cent. As the Select Committee noted:

'There is thus the absurd position of an unnecessarily large quota for the UK which domestic demand cannot possibly fill and an unnecessarily restrictive one for the rest of the EEC which, ceteris paribus, domestic demand could be expected far to outstrip'.

This situation has never been corrected even in the context of Lomé 2 (although the Continental growth rate was increased to 18 per cent).

Disbursement of the EDF has been sluggish. Although 2,655 million ECU or some ninth-tenths of the EDF's total resources were committed by the end of the 1980 only 1,485 million ECU or 48.3 per cent had actually been spent (The Courier, No.65, January/February 1981). Since the process of tendering is, as we have seen, just as delay-prone as is appraisal, it cannot be assumed that the remaining commitments will be quickly disbursed. Despite these problems of delay it is worth noting that the EDF financed a wide range of projects and took care to pay adequate attention to basic needs. Social development inclusive of education and training, housing, water engineering and health received 14.2 per cent of total commitments, whilst about 20 per cent were directed towards rural development projects, many of which were at least partly designed to satisfy local food needs. Although Stabex operated a fairly quick efficient service throughout Lomé 1 it quickly ran into trouble in the context of Lomé 2. Under the terms of the latter agreement, the available resources were raised to a total of 550 million ECU (110 million ECU annually) and the trigger thresholds were reduced to 6.5 per cent for the more developed states and 2 per cent for the least developed. During 1980 the first year of Lomé 2, the ACP states put in justified claims amounting to a total of 261 million ECU, which was over twice the amount available for payment. This has meant that the Community has had to invoke a hitherto unused clause in the Convention enabling it to make cuts in payments. It decided on what has been termed a '50 per cent Stabex' under which 52.6 per cent of these claims put in by least developed nations and 40.5 per cent of other claims were paid. Two claims under one million ECU were paid in full. This situation would appear on the face of it to be damning confirmation of the criticisms of the inadequacy of the Stabex fund. Currently, there are considerable fears that this problem will be made again in future years.

The inadequacy of the new Stabex fund was mirrored by the rest of Lomé 2. During the negotiations the Commission had drawn attention to the constraints placed on the Nine (as they then were) by the renewed onset of
recession and their domestic economic difficulties. It transpired that these constraints were to be used as the Community's rationale for offering only the most marginal improvements under Lomé 2. Whereas the ACP demanded total free access for their products to the European market, the Community would only make piecemeal concession, such as fixing a 2000-ton import quota for tomatoes and a 500-ton quota for onions. The arrangements for beef were improved with the EEC guaranteeing the ACP quota for the duration of Lomé 2, thus resolving ACP worries on this point. The next controversial point in the negotiations was the Community's total aid offer of 5,100 million ECU, which the EEC representatives insisted was non-negotiable. The ACP had asked for 10,000 million ECU in the hope of getting at least 7,000 million ECU and they were outraged by what they regarded as an unacceptable offer. They continued arguing on this issue right up to the actual signing of the Convention, even suggesting that they might not conclude the agreement if the aid allocation was not improved. The Community responded by making a small amount of money from the European Investment Bank (EIB) available, thus boosting the offer to some 5,600 million ECU. This was an especially derisory response since the EIB gives loans at market rates to commercially viable operations rather than the development orientated aid needed by the ACP. In the final analysis it was this need that forced the ACP negotiators to swallow their pride and accept what was offered rather than foregoing a useful if inadequate source of aid.

Even the innovations of Lomé 2 are of doubtful benefit to the ACP. The Centre for Agricultural Development, which the ACP had requested as early as 1977 and which was provided for in Lomé 2, is not as yet operational even though we are in the third year of the agreement, nor does its role seem too well defined. The proposed measures for developing energy resources are clearly as much in the interest of the Community as the ACP since the Commission is anxious to boost European investment in this crucial sector. Sysmin, the fund for maintaining mineral production capacity which covers copper, cobalt, phosphates, manganese, bauxite and alumina, tin, iron pyrites and iron ore was also slow coming into operation and inadequately funded at 280 million ECU. Although qualification for a transfer is determined with reference to a dependency level of 15 per cent and a trigger threshold of 10 per cent, which work in much the same way as those of Stabex, the transfer is disbursed as project aid rather than in the form of cash. This project must be designed to restore the recipients productive capacity with regard to the mineral affected. It seems rather likely that this scheme will be considerably slower than Stabex since it will entail not only assessing the claim but also project identification, appraisal and implementation. Recently, the fund granted two claims in respect of copper by Zambia and Zaire.

There was much greater consensus among observers that Lomé 2 had fallen short of expectations than there had been over Lomé 1. The latter agreement had indeed presented many of the ACP states with a new source of various types of concessionary aid, even though certain of its aspects, such as trade co-operation, initially seemed more generous than they actually were. By the time of the second agreement the flaws of the existing regime had become obvious and it was clear that Lomé 2 had made only marginal
changes. Considering that Europe was in recession during both sets of negotiations one might ask why the ACP had been able to win comparatively more in 1975 than in 1980. Various explanations have been offered, with Cosgrave Twitchett noting that the ACP were less unified during the Lomé 2 negotiations, whilst Green observes that they lacked the clear and influential lead that had been supplied by Nigeria during the Lomé 1 negotiations. Valid as these points are, they concentrate upon the tactical aspect of the negotiations and fail to take into consideration the more determinant issue of the underlying balance of power prevailing between the EEC and the ACP. In 1974-75 this balance had been tipped in favour of the ACP by the OPEC price rises which had raised European worries about their access to raw materials. This had made the Community more receptive to ACP demands, since it was hoped that by making concessions the Nine could secure their supplies of primary commodities. However by 1978-80 the pendulum had swung back in favour of the Community for two main reasons. Firstly, it was becoming clear that very few primary commodities were of such strategic importance to the North as oil and this weakened the bargaining position of the South. Secondly, high oil prices and imported inflation from the North combined to weaken severely many ACP economies, which consequently became more dependent on Northern aid, inclusive of the Lomé Convention. This context of declining Northern anxiety about their sources of raw materials and increasing ACP economic dependency was not conducive to a victory for the latter. Instead the Community was able to take an intransigent stand offering only minimal concessions to their supposed partners.

The auguries for the negotiations towards Lomé 3, which are due to commence in 1983, are little better. Edgard Pisani, the recently appointed Development Commissioner for the EEC gas been canvassing the Community member states for their views on such liberal ideas as extending the geographical scope of the Convention (i.e. to the Indian sub-continent, South East Asia etc), extending the coverage of Stabex to all least developed states and concluding a more permanent agreement, which would not require an expensive renegotiation every five years. As yet, opposition to these ideas has been manifested by Germany and the United Kingdom, but it may be hoped that the French Government under Mitterrand and Holland will provide some compensatory support. It would seem that Pisani also wants to change the emphasis of the EDF from costly large-scale schemes to grass roots efforts. However, it is likely that the EEC member states, whose firms have profited from the EDFs traditional approach, will oppose him on this point also. Whilst Pisani clearly represents a progressive influence in the Commission it must be regarded as doubtful whether he will be allowed to substantially liberalise the Lomé regime in view of Europe's continued lapse into deep recession. Unfortunately, he is unlikely to receive much effective support from the ACP group whose economic dependency has worsened even further and who, as yet, have barely started preparing for the forthcoming negotiations. These circumstances do not seem conducive to any radical reform of Lomé.

In noting this decline of ACP power and advantages and the poor prospects for Lomé 3 one might ask whether it is still worth their while to remain a part of the Lomé regime. The answer must surely be affirmative, for Lomé
aid represents a substantial source of income on easy terms that the ACP countries can allocate in accordance with whatever developmental needs they wish (provided of course they can get their project through the appraisal procedures). Many critics have suggested that EDF aid was gained at the expense of bilateral flows from the Nine but the latest evidence tends to suggest that bilateral aid has continued to grow steadily (see The Courier No. 69, September-October 1981). Moreover there are very few strings attached to this aid. The EDF has not been known to make disbursement conditional on the ACP adopting particular economic policies as have the IMF and the World Bank. Similarly, it does not seem to discriminate against left-wing states. The ACP includes such ‘Marxist’ states as Benin, Guiné-Bissau, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia whilst Pisani has recently revived EDF attempts to recruit Mozambique and Angola into ACP ranks. The only states to experience difficulty in obtaining funds from the EDF have been those where there has been a genuine question of their violating human rights, such as Amin’s Uganda, Equatorial Guinea and Liberia immediately after the coup. We must also note that whilst the strategy of industrial development recommended by the EEC is designed to foster ACP dependence on European capital there is nothing in the Convention to prevent an ACP country raising protective barriers against European commodities and embarking on an indigenously financed process of development so long as this does not involve preferential treatment of any third countries. Thus the ACP clearly make gains from the Lomé regime.

Perhaps a central problem is that by giving the ACP trade preferences on the European market over other Southern countries, the Lomé regime is sowing the seeds of division in the Third World. Dolan and others have noted that the ACP states have repeatedly pressed the Community to curtail its plans for extension of its general system of preferences, the reason being that increased preferences for other Third World states will erode ACP preferences. This represents yet another limitation on the ability of the south as a whole to negotiate effectively with the north.

More recently, the ACP have turned their attention to the issue of Community relations with the Republic of South Africa. Although the Community maintains a public anti-apartheid stance it in fact has an extensive trading relationship with the Republic. This has by no means been a grudging arrangement on the part of the EEC, which according to Rogers and Bolton, grants a wide variety of trading privileges to South Africa. These actually exceed the preferences accorded to the ACP. The South Africans have even been allowed to benefit from the EDF aid allocated under the Lomé regime with tenders on at least one project in Swaziland being won by a South African firm. It may be hoped that this situation will now change since the ACP-EEC Joint Committee, composed of ACP representatives and members of the European Parliament, has called for economic sanctions ‘to be incorporated into a programme of increasing pressure on South Africa’ (The Courier, No. 72, March-April 1982). The ACP have even indicated that their acceptance of Lomé 3 may be contingent on such changes.

In conclusion, it would seem that although the Lomé regime is by no means the breakthrough in North-South relations that it was initially hailed as by many observers, it is some benefit to the ACP states. They are able to use the EEC-ACP fora that are supposed to govern the Convention as a means
to apply pressure on the Community for further concessions and they obtain trading preferences and some aid that can be used for development or basic needs. Unfortunately, the exact use that individual ACP states can and do make of EEC aid are areas that remain badly under-researched. It is only with such research that we can begin to determine with some exactitude the extent to which the Lomé regime is a reactionary or a progressive force in North-South relations.

Bibliographic Note

Monster
I saw it today
it was squatting
  poised
couched for the fray,
in a government office.
It perched on the desk
arrogant and sure
like an instrument of torture
  waits for the poor.
Its head was rutted
  with trenches
  palisades
teeth to gnaw
  grind
  and dig like spades
into people
  people
  revolutionary flesh
in this scorching hour
workers and peasants taking power!
One by one they came
queuing for its favours
  for hours
  and hours
to pass by its lair
and bow to its strength
  — it is making war!
The man who turned its wheel
seemed to serve it
  like a fearful retainer
too frightened to feel!
It wasn't like a machine
which a worker operates
  it was like a creation
which malignant, castrates.
It crushed the man who makes it
beats down his mind
  becomes his master
    makes him crawl behind.
Workers beware
like a fixed-eyed snake
  it is watching you
for your first mistake
Your enemies are hovering
wherever it goes
in its head
  are your mortal foes —
crushing your flesh
  the exploiter's charm
twisting its wheel
  the reactionary's arm.
Tedium
  passivity
  and delay
the watchwords
of the bureaucrat's day —
Swear you will never
  turn into its prey!
Chris Searle, *Red Earth*, The Journeyman Press (London, 1980), £1.95. His previous books as well as the compilations of his pupil’s writings have made schoolteacher, Chris Searle, a widely acclaimed writer on the Left.

Having spent over two years working in northern Mozambique, most of the poems in this new work vividly portray the feel of the revolution in all of its internationalist dimensions. Inspiring in their evocation of building people’s power they also portray the dangers it has to face, as in the above poem. The author is presently the co-ordinator of a Language Arts teacher training programme in Grenada.
Hector Peterson — The Young Martyr
(whose death triggered the Soweto Uprising)

The guns blazed
fired at unarmed school children,
the bullets hit their targets,
shattering the fragile skulls,
brains splashed in the gutter;
severed limbs and singed hair,
ears, eyes scattered on the dusty streets;
tender young hearts torn to shreds,
buzzing green flies jostling with ants
for blobs of dried-up blood,
a tug-of-war for a tendon and a ligament.

The air hung heavy with a pall
of acrid fumes from tear-gas canisters,
running noses and smarting eyes daubed
with urine from undefiled genitalia,
the castration of our future heroes and heroines,
their ambitions smothered before they blossomed,
the annihilation of a whole generation.

Hector Peterson, victim of wanton savagery,
You lay there serene in rivulets of blood and tears,
a weeping father hauling home his daughter’s corpse,
a swirling turmoil of black fury rising to a pitch;
then a string of official denials
and feeble assurances.

‘There’s no crisis in the land,
There’s no cause for panic;
We are not guilty!’
Guilty of what?
‘It’s only a bunch of young Black Power fanatics,
who are fanning the flames for a polarisation of races.’

The laughter of the wolf dried like vapour in the night,
even the dove on a branch stopped cooing,
the cough of a hyena hung suspended
on flimsy threads of sputum;
the demise of hallowed ideologies has begun,
the battering-ram of time and history is
pulverising the edifice of vaunted granite;
it creaks at the seams as it crumbles.

The ocean waves echo with screams of bereaved parents,
cries of anguish cut across the pillars of a tottering sky,
the ghetto was ablaze,
rising flames were gigantic tongues
licking the soft bellies of hovering helicopters,
whose searchlights scoured the dingy alleys of the Snakepit,
where defiant young warriors hurled rocks and Molotov cocktails.

When the young corpses were buried,
the buffalo horn rang louder than the church bell;
the world heard the booming tom-tom above the tumult;
‘Today we buried our beloved children; tomorrow is our enemy’s turn.’
NOMVUYO LERATO NTOMBKAYISE NZAMANE  
(Unpublished). (8 years old when written)

My Brother, Zizwe

They came knocking  
like the sound of a drum  
and grabbed him by the arm  
my brother Zizwe

I stood at one corner of the room  
and watched them treat him like dirt  
while at another corner mama wept  
I felt like spitting in their faces

They left for good  
and I said  
Mama don’t cry  
He’ll come back some other day.

Photo courtesy of IDAF.
Debate

RESISTANCE AND HIDDEN FORMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG AFRICAN WORKERS: COMMENT

Eddie Webster

Robin Cohen makes a useful, if now familiar point, (‘Resistance and hidden forms of consciousness among African workers’, Review 19) when he argues for the crucial importance of analysing ‘the silent, unorganised covert responses of African workers’ (p.8). In addition to the excellent references Cohen cites, further evidence of ‘informal resistance’ has been published on black workers in South Africa. (For example, D. Moodie, ‘The rules are there to protect those in power only’, History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand 1978, and S. Moroney, ‘Mine Worker Protest on the Witwatersrand 1978, and S. Moroney, ‘Mine Worker Protest on the Witwatersrand, 1901-1902’; Eddie Webster (ed.), Essays in Southern African Labour History, Ravan, 1978; and H. Alverson, ‘The Human Dimension of Industry’, in Morse, S. and Orpen, C. (eds.) Contemporary South Africa, Cape Town). Although this literature has often not made clear enough what it is in a particular act that defines it as resistance, rather than one of accommodation, ‘informal resistance’ is unquestionably crucial in any understanding of workers’ responses to tightly controlled situations. What is of particular interest is that some of this work has now been popularised and circulates within the workers’ movement in South Africa (see in particular, Chapter 16 of Luli Callinicos’ Gold and Workers, Ravan Press, 1981, which documents forms of early black worker resistance on the gold mines).

However, reading Cohen’s article I was struck by two points that arise directly from my own research on the nature and development of a South African working class. Although Cohen rightly challenges the ‘formula dichotomies’ of ‘economistic versus revolutionary consciousness’, he reproduces in his Table 1 a similar false dichotomy when he confines unionisation to challenging ‘differential rewards’. It is questionable whether such distinctions are possible in ‘advanced’ capitalism; they are certainly misleading in ‘semi-peripheral’ countries such as South Africa. In a recent study (Stoppages in The East Rand Metal Industry, 1981, mimeo, A. Sitas and E. Webster), we found that rejection of arbitrary control by
management, i.e., a demand for the reinstatement of dismissed workers, was the central demand in the majority of stoppages. (It is work adding that in all of these cases workers' demands for the reinstatement of dismissed workers were met). In only 25 per cent of the cases were wages, i.e. differential rewards, the cause of the stoppages. Yet in Cohen's Table 1 challenges to managerial control are only the subject of 'hidden and covert forms of class consciousness' and not the province of organised worker resistance.

The leads to my second, possibly more significant point. 'Informal resistance' is the dominant, if not exclusive, form of resistance in tightly controlled situations where 'only the hidden forms were possible' (p.21). However, the crucial feature of industrial conflict over the last eight years in South Africa is that it has moved beyond the 'hidden' to take a direct organisational form. In all of the 24 disputes we studied, the Metal Allied Workers Union (MAWU) was involved directly in the organisation and resolution of conflict in the factory. This shift in managerial and state strategy from one of repression to one of negotiation is the result of, inter alia, sustained shop floor 'resistance' to the state and management's alternative to unions, the liaison committee. State recognition of black unions has now opened up new terrains of struggle for black workers.

While we have tried to monitor this change in the nature of industrial conflict in the South African Labour Bulletin (SALB), it is questionable whether Cohen's assertion that unions and strikes are 'better argued and documented in the existing literature' (than 'informal resistance', p.21) is true of South Africa. With the exception of the Institute for Industrial Education (IIE) book on the Durban Strikes 1973, I can think of no other serious sociological study of contemporary strikes in South Africa. As for trade unions, with the possible exception of two recent books on SACTU, there are simply no serious sociological studies published. Clearly 'informal resistance' remains under-studied (and more difficult, as Cohen reminds us) in South Africa. It would be unfortunate, however, if Cohen's important article led labour academics to neglect the largely unexplored attempts by some organised workers in contemporary South Africa to match the 'variety of responses and tenacity of purpose shown by African workers in their attempts to resist the capitalist labour process' (p.22). Such a task is possible without 'measuring a particular worker movement against a Leninist ideal of proletarian consciousness and organisation' (p.2) by, as the Editorial wisely suggests, seeing 'consciousness in its own context'. For me this must increasingly involve the systematic investigation of the organisational form this resistance is taking on the shop floor.

REPLY TO WEBSTER

Robin Cohen

I do not want to challenge any of Eddie's substantive points and indeed accept much of his comments as a useful critique of my article.

I think it may illuminate my position to say that I was trying principally both to interpret, and draw the attention of researchers writing on labour north of Zimbabwe, to the relevance of the southern African work on
'informal resistance'. (Even then, as Eddie notes, I missed some of the relevant material). Nonetheless, I would hold to my argument that the many formal, organisational studies of African labour have seriously neglected consideration of covert patterns of protest. This does not mean that I dissent from Eddie's view that, at the present in South Africa, and more generally, organised protest remains crucial.

Perhaps I might make two positive suggestions. First, the trite one that the two groups of researchers may have a lot to learn from each other. While my article was addressed in one didactic direction, no doubt we could construct a second running in the other direction. Certainly, I would hope Eddie did not intend, and I hope his comment will not be read, as a statement of South African exceptionalism (the left takes over that fallacy from the right too often). Here is a quick check list of themes that might be included in the contraflow. How did African unions respond to registration in the British colonies in 1938? What organisational and political problems stemmed from the organisation of African and Asian workers in Kenya and from workers of different ethnic origins and national statuses elsewhere on the continent? What are the lessons to be learned about trade union leadership patterns, especially the problem of trade union entrepreneurship? What significance to South African labour studies is the more general debate on whether workers should be conceived of as, 'labour aristocrats' or 'general representatives' of their communities.

Second, while Eddie is quite naturally establishing a priority in his own work based on his appreciation of local needs, I think we would both agree that ultimately its the relationship between the two forms of protest that is crucial, not hierarchising one permanently over the other. I hinted at this synthesis and indicated some limitations on informal protest in my concluding paragraph, but clearly the formulations there are still very underdeveloped.

Capital and Class is the journal of the Conference of Socialist Economists (CSE) and is published three times a year.

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Reviews


Dan Nabudere has been a political activist during different regimes and in exile had time to reflect on the destruction of the productive capacity of Uganda while he taught at the University of Dar Es Salaam. From the table of contents the book promises to survey the impact of colonialism and resistance, neo-colonialism and revolution, the impact of the colonial economy on the rise of the working class, the rise of the National Democratic Revolution, the politics of dictatorship, and the neo-colonial economy, with particular emphasis on agriculture, commerce and finance. An epilogue attempts to bring the analysis up-to-date covering the period 1977-1980 when the author was ousted from political leadership by the May 1980 coup d'état. Yet, despite the impressive outline of the study the book suffers from three basic weaknesses:

1. the absence of primary research into the effects of imperialism on the Uganda masses;
2. an inability to root the analysis into the life and struggles of Uganda's history, i.e. unnecessary borrowings from other people's history;
3. a lack of self-critical analysis on the role of the intelligentsia in perpetuating the quagmire of violence and corruption in the heart of Africa.

The first two weaknesses stem from the absence of a scientific methodology which grasps the particularities of African politics for the borrowings are stamped within the first pages where the author by-passed the rich traditions of oral history to try to force the pre-colonial Ugandan societies into the framework of the Ancient Society of Morgan the anthropologist, simply because this work was approvingly quoted by F. Engels in the Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State. From this comparison of the ‘pre-contract’ society with the Iroquois Indian, Nabudere falls into the trap of trying to fit the pre-colonial societies into the geographical boundaries defined by the colonialists. These elementary problems permeate the work and the characterisation of Buganda and Bunyoro as 'feudal' founders on the reality of the collective ownership of land which continues to exist in the society as the people's own resistance to the individulisation of land tenure.
This contradiction is unwittingly brought out by the author later in the discussion (pp.200-206). The existence of tributary relations of the pre-colonial states and the forms of relationships between the central state apparatus and the village communities is still an area which needs to be researched. Primarily because for a long time for the European there was no history before the advent of Europe into Africa, thus the literature on this period remains sparse and intellectually underdeveloped. Nabudere may be excused for the paucity of information on the pre-colonial societies, but for one who has already published *The Political Economy of Imperialism* it was to be hoped that the book would depart from the generalities of the previous study to illuminate the particularity of imperialism in Uganda and Africa. Both Amilcar Cabral and Walter Rodney, in separate studies, outlined the need to specify the concepts of history, class, and state in an effort to be more precise when dealing with colonial peoples. In attempts to distinguish between the imperialist plunder of Africa and the massive export of capital which had engendered the development of the productive forces in Canada, Australia, South America and Eastern Europe, Cabral termed imperialism ‘piracy on land, piracy transplanted from the high seas on dry land, piracy reorganised, consolidated and adapted to the aim of exploiting the natural and human resources of our peoples’ (Cabral 1969 p.98). In 1970 Walter Rodney enriched Cabral’s formulation by showing that while the export of capital was one of the manifestations of monopoly capital, huge amounts of capital were not initially invested in Africa, hence the need for coercion, commandism and force by the colonial state. The evidence for Uganda shows that the amounts of capital invested in Uganda were minimal and really confined to investment in the Uganda railroad, a railway which was more beneficial to the Kenyan settlers than to the Ugandan poor, and it was the poor of Uganda who paid for the loan. The history of the implantation of the colonial economic infrastructure required forced labour, porterage, and compulsion. Forced labour was used for compulsory crops and unpaid labour was used to build the houses of the colonial officers and to extend the railway.

Nabudere, in his outline on the rise of the working class, fails to make the theoretical link between the form of imperialism in Uganda and its impact on the truncated working class. In presenting the colonial data on the size and composition of the working people, on the colonial preoccupation with a regular supply of labour, Nabudere does not reveal how the slowness of the process of proletarianisation, the migratory nature of labour and the restricted dimensions of the labour force were due to the limited amounts of capital expended in the society by the British imperial overlords. The characteristics of the Ugandan working class along with the incomplete crystallisation of the class showed that capitalism could not develop a modern proletariat in its colonial sector and that it required special forms of labour exploitation in the colonies. Fortunately, Nabudere did not fall into the dualism of the articulation of modes of production theory, but he did not bring to light how the absence of legal protection for the workforce placed civil disputes between ‘masters’ and ‘servants’ under the sanction of criminal law so that workers were imprisoned for such ‘crimes’ as ‘desertion’ — long after such practices had disappeared from European capitalist countries. No colonial report can bring to light the negation of basic human
rights and the continued use of obsolete equipment which rendered safety standards at the place of work inadequate. Occupational asthma, throat irritating gases and skin diseases such as tea planters dermatitis increased the immiserisation of the Ugandan toilers. Contrary to the evidence presented on the role of finance capital in the colonial economy the principal instrument of social control in Africa during the early period of colonialism was naked force. Not only did imperialism use force to capture, pacify and rattle Africa, but in addition, force brought to bear against Africans served a direct economic function by incorporating into the capitalist system value which initially lay outside the said capitalist system. Subsequent exploitation had to take the form of intensifying the exploitation of labour and herein lay the crux of the process of commandism and militarism in Uganda. Contrary to the exploitation on the foundations of the dictatorships (pp. 174-176) the political crisis of Uganda needs to be addressed to the manner in which imperialism stunted the growth of the most important of the productive forces — namely the working class itself.

That the colonial and neo-colonial economy remain uniquely lopsided is clear from the evidence presented by Nabudere. The data on Uganda indicated that each international economic crisis led to a transfer of a significant portion of the social burden on to the shoulders of the colonial working class and peasantry. However the material is presented in a manner which is very economistic. Nabudere does not show how the non-economic dimensions of expansion were just as important as the economic dimensions. Walter Rodney in his essay on 'Lenin and the Imperialist Partition of Africa' drew attention to the references made by Lenin to the military and ideological dimension of imperialism, especially where Lenin asserted that: 'the non-economic superstructure which grows upon the basis of finance capital, its politics, its ideology, stimulates the striving for colonial conquest'. For the Ugandan people the deformed ideas of religious intolerance bequeathed by the civilised missionaries remain a factor of Uganda politics, and the incessant references to finance capital does not incorporate properly the role of ideology in the cultural arsenal of imperial rule. And for African peoples the most important aspect of the superstructure of ideas was the rise of racism as a central component of capitalist ideology. Once colonialism was justified on the basis of the inferiority of Africans, an ideology manifest on the continent today in the practice of apartheid, it was inevitable that racial consciousness would be part of the consciousness of the African poor. By borrowing ideas on the rise of the 'National Democratic Revolution' the author does not elaborate how the racial hierarchy of the colonial order generated the 'nationalist' all class response of the 1949 revolt and acted as the smokescreen for the expulsion of the Asians in 1972. The conflicts generated by the position of European and Asian in the society presented a correlation between race, class and economic power. The racial hierarchy of the society obfuscated incipient class differences among Africans, hence the popularity of the commandist and under democratic expulsion of the Asians. The oppression of Africans on purely racial grounds meant that Idi Amin, with all the brutal macabre history of his regime, can still enjoy support in other parts of Africa. It is partly for this reason that the theorists of imperialism must address the issue of the cultural manifestation of racism so that in other parts of Africa one can penetrate the class
content of the formulations of racial consciousness.

The problem of class and state also remain in the work of Nabudere. The most interesting section of the reading is where the author's own experience as a political activist (pp.255-259) provides interesting insights into the intra-class struggles of the political careerists. However, the information is presented in simplistic terms of the right and left of the Uganda Peoples Congress. It is not clear what is the popular or material base of this right and left. It is clear that all factions perceived their interest as being able to hold on to state power. This is where Nabudere again founders for he does not properly analyse the relationship between the state and the development of the African petty bourgeoisie. The analysis of the petty bourgeoisie is formal and functional, separating the state initiations of ranches, dairy farms, co-operative loans, and maize mills from the attempts by the African petty bourgeoisie to increase their level of consumption. It is not clear why the class delineation of Uganda society is tacked on at the end of the book (pp.320-328).

One cannot separate the problem of state from the question of class and Nabudere's concrete treatment of the 'state' turns out to be an exposition of the legal foundation of Uganda's independence constitution (pp.176-179). As one who served in the supra-territorial state institution as Chairperson of the East African Railways Corporation (1971-73) Nabudere should have been aware of the fact that the Ugandan state, or the set of institutions which comprised the state, extended from the supra-territorial organs of the East African Community to the coercive apparatus of the Ugandan police, military, labour department and tsetse officers. An analysis of imperialism could have shed more light on the relationship between multilateral imperialism, the local African ruling class and the dehumanised proletarianised masses. The efforts of the petty bourgeoisie to strengthen the state, to build up its numbers and at the same time to increase its accumulation was bound to founder on the untransformed hoe technology of the society.

The essential militaristion of the state, which is documented and periodised from 1966, minimises the role of the African intermediate classes in the process of retrogression and corruption. However true was the fact that the granting of political independence was compatible with the continued influence of the 'financial oligarchy' the African politicians were not helpless victims who had no scope for developing popular institutions. It is now clear that imperialism implanted Idi Amin but the evidence of Israel's and Britain's machinations does not account for the hundreds of bureaucrats, civil servants and intellectuals who willingly served Amin and at times ingratiated themselves with the military at the cost of other peoples' lives.

**Militarism and Scholarship**

The fundamental weakness of the book is that there is an absence of empirical work by the author for an analysis which stridently seeks to assert itself as a Marxist study. The author was inordinately dependent on the published material of the modernising theorists who had flocked to see the Makerere Institute of Social Research. In his attempt to re-interpret the structural functional analysis of those who studied 'agricultural credit', 'progressive farmers schemes', the 'marketing of cash crops', 'industrialisa-
tion and mining’, the book makes for tedious reading with its structural information encrusted within incessant quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin. This weakness is even more startling in the second section of the book where the analysis is an exposition of three published documents of the Amin regime — the *Third Five-Year Development Plan* the *Action Programme* and the *Uganda — Five Years under Military Government*. Nabudere’s quotation from these three documents forms the basis of chapter 15, but those familiar with the literature of the Civil Servants under Amin knew that the information in the *Action Programme* bore little relevance to the material reality of the destruction of the productive capacity by the military. These documents could not bring to life the militarisation of the countryside where military governors commanded the double production campaigns and the soldier chiefs who told workers that they would be shot if they carried out industrial action. Ultimately the lack of empirical work led to imprecise documentation as in the case of the figures relating to the redistribution of Asian business during the economic war.

**The Epilogue**

The third major weakness of the book comes out clearly in the epilogue for throughout the reader is exposed to the personal nuances of Amin, Obote, Ibingira, and the brain of Mahmood Mamdani. A partisan and stridently sectarian narrative takes the place of scientific analysis. In the narrative of the epilogue the author sheds light on the kind of intrigue, deals, compromise and pettiness which resulted in the formation of the Uganda National Liberation Front to replace Amin. Instead of documenting the ideological and material weaknesses of those who aspired towards replacing Amin the book concentrates on the routed petty bourgeoisie which had simmered in London, Lusaka, New York, Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam, perpetuating the politicisation of ethnicity and regionalism in exile only to descend on Moshi, Tanzania in March 1979 to form a government of national unity. What the book does not reveal was how the writer could have been part of such a clique which earlier in the book he had lambasted as monarchists and agents of dollar imperialism. In this epilogue there is a clear absence of the kind of honesty and humility which one should expect from reflecting on the unholy alliance which foundered in the militarism which resulted in the May 1980 coup d'etat. Many questions remain unanswered from this addendum; by what criteria were the representatives chosen for the front? Why were there no representatives of the working people in the front? What efforts were made by the UNLF to unleash popular expression and participation? What were the features of commandism which infected the corps with the quest towards accumulation.

These questions continue to be pertinent, for the ongoing struggles in Uganda demonstrate that the Uganda crisis transcends the personalities of Amin, Lule or Obote. The discussion of the ‘New Democratic Revolution’ reads as a hollow borrowing from Chinese history, for the political activists of Uganda have shown that they were neither democratic nor revolutionary.

D. Wadada Nabudere nowhere explains in this epilogue how the UNLEF intensified the inflationary pressures on the poor by printing billions of shillings of unbacked notes, which made the monthly earnings of the poor worthless. More significantly, it was a strange twist to see the author as one of
the defenders of the Commonwealth report on the Rehabilitation of the Economy of Uganda. While thoughtful Ugandans inside and outside the territory were critical of the proposed sell-out of the national assets to former imperialist operators, the author defended the report before a gathering of Ugandan students in the United Kingdom in 1980, while he was still Minister of Culture and Chairperson of the powerful Political and Diplomatic Commission of the National Executive Committee.

The threatened disintegration of the Uganda centralised by the regional warfare and the clear dead end of neo-colonisation shows clearly that the crisis is not simply one of declining food production or political violence and magendoisim. The book Imperialism and Revolution in Uganda shows that the crisis of imperialism is at the same time a profound ideological crisis.

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Violence, a novel by Festus Iyayi is being hailed as the first Nigerian proletarian novel. This description of the novel should be examined before it becomes established in our literary critical vocabulary and taxonomy.

To discuss whether Violence is the first Nigerian proletarian novel, we may first ask what we mean by ‘proletarian’. The term is used to refer to the working class; and ‘working class’ does not mean everybody who goes out to work, as the term is often used in Nigerian newspapers! In Marxist political economy, ‘proletarian’ means workers of a specific nature, although this nature is often subjected and still subject to discussion and closer definitions. Of the workers in a society, Marxist analysis stresses the distinction between productive and non-productive workers. The former are exclusively wage-earners, sometimes termed direct producers, whose labour produces value and, especially, the additional or surplus value appropriated by the capitalist and constituting the return on capital (Jake, 1977). It should be noted that only the production of commodities, that is, material goods with an exchange value, can give rise to new surplus value. Thus, productive workers are those who produce such material goods and collectively constitute the working class. Jake argues that non-productive workers who contribute to the accumulation of capital belong with productive workers who struggle against capitalism and that together with the industrial working class they constitute what Marx defined as the proletariat, that is, all the workers who labour ‘increases capital’.

Now, we may ask if the proletariat exists in Nigeria. Some commentators on and scholars of Africa have been known to argue that there are no classes in Africa. Various reasons are given, ranging from a romanticisation of traditional African societies to a covert attempt to subvert socialism in African societies to a covert attempt to subvert socialism in Africa or the desire to maintain the economic status quo. The position that Africa in the past or present has no classes has been challenged and dismissed by social
scientists and African political theoreticians. Nkrumah, in fact, addresses himself directly to this fallacy, stressing that class structures which exist in other parts of the world exist in Africa (Nkrumah, 1970). He emphasises that a fierce class struggle has been raging in Africa. Class struggle exists in Africa and we need to identify correctly the kinds of classes which do exist and the nature of the class struggle going on in our continent. A useful and intelligent approach is not to seek correlations with classes and class dramas in other societies but to identify the class specifics of any particular African society. Such useful and original work is what Cabral attempts in his brief essay on the social structure of Guinea Bissau (Cabral, 1969). In avoiding mere imitation of orthodox Marxist terms, Cabral is careful not to use the word 'proletarian' but describes the various classes of workers and their relation to productive forces in Guinea. He introduces the term 'de-classes' to describe socially dislocated urban dwellers who are orthodoxyally considered lumpen-proletarian but who are not so because of the peculiar nature of the African kinship system which guarantees such people room and board in the city. Thus they are not as derelict as the European lumpen.

In contemporary Nigeria we have a society with a neo-colonial political economy divided into classes. Nigeria is neo-colonial because it has an economy dependent on and exploited by an external political economy—that of the international capitalist order. Internally, Nigeria has a dependent indigenous bourgeoisie or middle class made up of professionals, bureaucrats and merchants who through the political process have been able to 'accumulate capital and carve out monopolistic advantages for themselves within the neo-colonial political economy, and there form a 'bourgeoisie' (Williams in Gutkind and Watermann, 1977). Williams notes how the increasing intervention of the state in economic life has caused it to control lucrative contracts and the disposal of monopolistic advantages. This bourgeoisie, as Fanon had said before in the Wretched of the Earth, lacks the commitments of a religious, socialist or nationalist character of the rationalising, capital-accumulating, surplus-expropriating classes of Britain, Russia, Germany or Japan during the period of industrialisation. Dependent on Nigeria's consumerist and dependent bourgeoisie is the equally consumerist and imitative petite-bourgeoisie made up of service men, smaller traders and intellectuals. These have no control of power or the economy but sell their services and strive to join the bourgeoisie. Lower than this class, there is a working class of peasants and 'workers' in our definition and the 'déclassés', the unemployed in town and country. The description of social classes in Nigeria offered here is not complete, but we have a rough schema.

If classes exist in Nigeria, why is Festus Iyayi's Violence a proletarian novel? Is it a 'proletarian' novel at all? The novel presents a week in the life of an urban worker and his wife. Idemudia, the protagonist and his wife, Adisa are school drop-outs from the rural areas of Bendel State who go to Benin City to make a living. At first unemployed and déclassé, Idemudia lives on his wits in the city, washing cars, selling his blood to blood banks to make some money for meals. His wife Adisa, who received more education than, he, is jobless and totally dependent on him. Their economic life has severe effects on their emotional lives as a couple, just as Marx and Engels postulated in the Communist Manifesto. In discussing the deleterious ef-
effects of capitalism on the institution of the family, they had observed the practical absence of the family among the proletarians and the enforcement on them of various forms of public prostitution (Marx and Engels, 1962). The human and central drama of the novel Violence, in fact, turns on the effect of economic life on their relationship as husband and wife.

Idemudia, the husband, on a day of extreme hunger, goes out to find a job. He finds one, off-loading three trailers of cement owned by a woman merchant bourgeoisie, a contractor and owner of several hotels, the typical contemporary 'Cash Madam' of Nigeria. She is named Queen. Since this strenuous job was done in the rain, Idemudia falls ill and goes to hospital. He later becomes a worker and foreman for the 'Cash Madam' on her project to build a low-cost housing estate for the government, a contract she achieved by graft and the use of her body and beauty. She also tries to seduce Idemudia in order to break a strike on her building project. The Cash Madam's husband is also a businessman who tried to seduce Adisa, the worker's wife. She, in severe straits to find the hospital fees for her husband, falls naively into the trap of the male bourgeois's clutches. The final scene turns Idemudia's reaction to the moral dilemma of his wife. The plot thus has an ironic structure.

The novel, fast-paced and interestingly told, depicts a wider canvas of the social dynamics and reality of Benin society than the brief resume given above. Because the novel treats the experience of an urban worker and his wife and synchronically gives portraits of the lives and situation of other workers, it is a novel about the proletarian rather than a proletarian novel.

It is not a proletarian novel because firstly its author is not proletarian. From the little as yet known about the life of the author, a farmer's son and university teacher, he is a petite-bourgeois writing about proletarians and attempting to give a view of life in Nigeria from the point of view of the working class. Secondly, he seeks to identify with the proletarian view through the rhetoric of the novel, as for instance when he deals with the nature of social violence in Nigeria. The novel cannot be said to be meant for proletarians because of its style. Its language may not be accessible to the average proletarian though this remains to be seen from the sales pattern achieved by Longman's later.

Most importantly, Violence is not proletarian because it does not emanate from a working class culture. Not only is the proletariat, particularly its urban variety, still small in Nigeria, but it has no strong awareness of itself as a group and does not function effectively yet as a political force. Nor does the proletariat in Nigeria have a self-created culture as proletarians which produces its own politically conscious cultural artifacts. There are art-forms and art-products produced by members of the working class for themselves but Violence is not one such, although it may end up being appropriated by the working class because it so sensitively and arrestingly depicts their predicament. Violence is a novel which, if started, cannot be laid aside by the reader until finished.

Trotsky in Literature and Revolution discusses the difficulties the proletariat has in creating a culture of its own. He doubts that this can happen even in a society where the revolution has taken place. In Marxist theory,
the period in which a proletarian government is in power is seen as an intermediary period between socialism and communism. In this period, Trotsky feels the proletariat will be too taken up with the problems of restructuring a new society to create a culture of its own.

... because the years of social revolution will be years of fierce class struggles in which destruction will occupy more room than new construction. At any rate, the energy of the proletariat itself will be spent mainly in conquering power, in retaining and strengthening it and in applying it to the most urgent needs of existence and of further struggle. The proletariat, however, will reach its highest tension and then fullest manifestation of its class character during the revolutionary period and it will be within such narrow limits that the possibility of planful, cultural reconstruction will be confined.

Lenin did try to build a proletarian culture in the period of the revolution and many of the prejudices against Marxist thought and aesthetic theory spring from a misunderstanding of such political actions. Lenin and Stalin, in particular, had political jobs to do and needed to create a particular kind of society. The specific historical practice of Stalin need not be taken as model for all societies and as the only possible Marxist aesthetic attitude. Lenin, for his part, allowed for the free production of art by the individual artist, though the individualist artist could not be a member of his party. For a party is primarily a political machine and should not allow divisive or subversive members as he polemically and unashamedly wrote:

Everyone is free to write and say whatever he likes, without any restrictions. But every voluntary association (including the party) is also free to expel members who use the name of the party to advocate anti-party views. Freedom of speech and the press must be complete. But then freedom of association must be complete too.

He also says in the same essay that there can be no real and effective ‘freedom’ in a society based on the power of money: ‘Are you free in relation to your bourgeois publisher, Mr Writer’, he says, ‘in relation to bourgeois public which demands that you provide it with pornography in your novels(?) and paintings, and prostitution as a supplement to ‘sacred’ scenic art’.

The point being made here is that Marxist aesthetic theories encompass more than the specific artistic historical activity in the Soviet Union. Mao distinguishes between consciously political art and non-political art and admitted that the criteria of art must be of art.

Thus, what can be said to be the achievements of Festus Iyayi in Violence. It is the first novel to treat in a protracted and concentrated way the life of a Nigerian worker. Not even Cyprian Ekwensi, our urban novelist of the ‘déclassés’ and migrant city dwellers, has done this. The Nigerian novel has been primarily concerned with the lives of petty bourgeois protagonists like the authors, the ‘rags-to-riches’ story or the encounter of the educated middle class graduate with the West. An East African critic, Osotsi, has noted how African novelists often choose heroes of the middle class in the ironical present and heroes of the aristocracy in pro-capitalist Africa. Obi Okonkwo is the son of the Ozo Okonkwo in Achebe's No Longer At Ease (1960). Feulu is a priest aristocrat in Igbo society in Achebe's Arrow of God 1964). The critic identifies this tendency to choose nobly-born heroes as a basic elitism resulting from a commitment to Aristotelian aesthetics of the tragic. ‘The main characters in our written literature are petty-bourgeois male (his emphasis) when they are placed in contemporary African situation (sic).
Otherwise they are drawn from the ruling classes of the pre-Westernised African societies.

The ‘chap-books’* before Ekwensi dwell a great deal on money-making and the accumulation of wealth in a new urbanised situation but the kind of ‘hard labour’ which is being so repetitively pieticised is not clearly portrayed. Though the ‘chap-books’ concern themselves with work, the consciousness that permeates them is more petty-bourgeois than proletarian. So, Violence is the first novel about proletarian characters, handled from the world view of the proletarian.

It is effectively written in a realist mode. It is realist in several ways; namely in the traditional sense of mainstream bourgeois criticism rendered classic by Ian Watt and in the Marxist sense of critical and socialist realism. Marxist poetics of fiction identify two forms of realism; critical realism and socialist realism. The former is a school and method which originated in the middle of the 19th century and which is seen by Marxists to include many artists and writers of the capitalist period who are considered progressive for their critique of the bourgeois order of their time. Critical realists are considered to have revealed the vile nature of bourgeois society, wittingly or unwittingly, and to have played an important part in ‘developing the idea of man’s social and spiritual emancipation and in asserting democratic social ideals in the minds of men’. Stendhal, Balzac, and Dickens, Gogol, Turgenev and Tolstoi are counted among critical realists. In the 20th century, artists such as Charlie Chaplin, Hemingway and Graham Green are considered critical realists. The masterpieces of critical realism are considered to have contributed immensely to socialist realism.

An essential distinguishing factor of socialist realism is that workers become the heroes of its artistic products. Socialist realism is an artistic method which pre-supposes a truthful, historically concrete reflection of reality taken in its revolutionary development. It originated at the beginning of the 20th century in the conditions of the crisis of capitalism, the upsurge of the proletarian struggle in the Soviet Union and the preparation for the socialist revolution in the country. Seen as a logical continuation and development of the best realist traditions of past art, socialist realism is officially seen as ‘a new stage in man’s artistic progress’. The criticisms of Marxist aesthetics spring from this idea of socialist realism and its enactment under Stalin. Unlike critical realism, socialist realism defends a Marxist-Leninist world view and states a decidedly overt partisanship unlike the covert partisanship of bourgeois critical liberalism. The Soviets identify the chief ideological and aesthetic principles of socialist realism as: devotion to communist ideology, service to the people and partisanship, close bonds with the working people’s struggle, socialist humanism and internatinalism, historical optimism, rejection of formalism and subjectivism, and of naturalist primitiveness. A socialist realist writer is expected to have a thorough knowledge of human life, thoughts and sentiments, to be fully responsive to human experiences and to be able to portray them in good artistic form. Socialist realism is considered a powerful instrument for educating people.

*‘Chap books’ is a 19th century word meaning small pamphlets containing tales and ballads sold by ‘chapmen’ or pedlars (Editor’s note).
in a communist spirit and despite its basis in a Marxist-Leninist world view, it encourages writers to choose various forms and styles consistent with their individual inclinations.

From these definitions, Iyayi’s novel can be said to be of both critical and socialist realism. It is socialist realism because it is devoted to the cause of working people and is obviously partisan. It is humanistic in its concern with the human degradation of working people like Idemudia Adisa and the Jimoh family, by its concern with unemployment and poverty. It is historically optimistic, not in obviously stating that there will be a social change but in his tender and sensitive depiction of the relationship between the worker and his wife. Their hardships are not allowed to coarsen their lives irrevocably nor lead to a collapse of their relationship. Rather, their experiences are made to bring them to a higher state of awareness of themselves as human beings, as sufferers from external factors and as lovers caught together in a predicament. The resolution of the lover’s drama bespeaks an optimism in the author and a hope for the working people. He does not portray workers as bourgeois writers tend to do — as hopelessly depraved hominids.

However, this very ending of the novel can be faulted as a weakness. Iyayi leaves the more socially important and dramatic issue of a confrontation between Queen and her workers to end the novel on the nearly sentimental emotional re-union of the lovers. The approaching strike building up among the workers which would have crystallised a serious social fact of conflict in Nigerian society and which would have given Idemudia a significantly dramatic role to play, caught as he was as foreman between the ‘Cash Madam’ and the proletarian builders, is defused by the ending of the novel. This writer feels that Idemudia is somewhat too saintly a character; that his personality which expresses no negative reactions to his social oppressors is somewhat too idealised. Perhaps Iyayi, in making Idemudia express his existential rage against his wife, is making a correct point of social psychology that the poor and the oppressed tend to express their rage against their immediate and blameless associates, not against their true political enemies whom they do not have the political awareness to identify.

Instead of Idemudia’s reactions to his social experience, we have authorial intrusions, expatiating albeit correctly on the true nature of violence in an under-developed and dependent economy like Nigeria (Chapter 15). *Violence is not the violence of striking workers or demonstrating students as the establishment likes to think. Violence is the material effect of the social actions of the rich on the lives, psyches and personalities of the poor.* Although in the hospital Iyayi uses the narrative device of a play to comment on the social violence in Nigeria, the choice of this method by the author, the issues discussed and the manner of their discussion represent an authorial intrusion.

Finally, the use of the female protagonist, Queen, the ‘Cash Madam’ merits some discussion. This writer queries her use as the major protagonist in the socio-economic drama because it is a false rendering of the reality of the political economy of Nigeria. Although women are very visible in the comprador activities going on in Nigeria today, they do not represent the major
force and they do not have the economic and social power of men in the comprador bourgeoisie.

One wonders why Queen has been chosen as the vehicle for the actions of her class. This writer hopes it is not related to the contemporary trend in Nigerian society and the arts to ‘demonise’ women, to make them the devils that plague the society. Women are portrayed as the social villains and the source of Nigeria's problems in contemporary plays in the theatre and on the radio, in the newspapers, popular music and even in day-to-day conversation. One hopes Iyayi is not part of this trend. On the other hand, it can be argued that the use of a female character makes interesting reading and allows for a portrayal of the family life of the new intermediary bourgeoisie.

It cannot be argued, as a colleague once did to this writer, that Queen represents a new phenomenon in the society and therefore merits portrayal. This cannot be argued because it is nothing new in southern Nigeria for a woman to be economically strong, independent and wealthy, give the history of merchant princesses and well-to-do women in the society and the existence in the pre-colonial past of commercially successful women who were also members of the traditional feudal aristocracy. What we see in modern Nigeria is a modernisation of the traditional roles of women in southern Nigeria. The traditional economic structures which permitted women to be persons of material means have been simply transformed into the newer neo-colonial bourgeois activities of present-day women.

A more interesting proposition is that the use of a female character is an effort by the author to index the dehumanisation that capitalism can inflict on the person, if one accepts that the position and nature of women in a society is an index to the humanity of that society. In this regard, one may compare the use of women and Wanja in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*. Like Ousmane before him and as a revolutionary writer, Ngugi is fighting patriarchal ideology and the oppression of women in Africa through an art work. Ngugi has consciously given Wanja a significant role to play in the novel's structure and in the expression of his own ideological stance. And he has gone to greater lengths in this novel than in his earlier novels to explore the psychology of the woman and the meaning of her social experiences in Africa. Ngugi is definitely concerned with 'the kingdom of man and woman' which he makes his major male character, Karega seek, recognising that a society cannot save itself politically or attain human justice if it neglects the fate of its women-folk. Thus, a critic finds her not merely a vehicle for Ngugi's ideas but also possessing a genuine human dimension. The tragedy of her existence is that of many who are exploited and unfulfilled.

Is Iyaya using Queen in *Violence* in such an ideological manner? This writer feels the total canvas of the novel, being too narrow, does not permit one to be clear about the nature of the use of Queen. Of the members of her social bourgeois class, only her husband, Obofun, is given any protracted treatment. And it seems a twist in the social reality of Nigeria to make her more dramatically significant since her husband has more power, influence and money. She, however, emerges as the more devilish oppressor. Unlike Ngugi, Iyayi does not portray his characters in great enough detail to in-
timate to us the logic of their employment. One hopes there is no sexism involved in the use of Queen as a she-devil.

To conclude, is Iyayi’s *Violence* a proletarian novel? It can be said that it is not a strictly proletarian novel. But perhaps what we need to do is begin a political typology of novels emerging from Africa. We could have such a scheme:

1. Proletarian author and proletarian characters, e.g. Early Ousmane: *The Black Dockworker*;
2. Proletarian author and non-proletarian characters, e.g. local ‘chap-books’ not in Obiechina, *op.cit*;
3. Non-proletarian author and proletarian characters e.g. Alex La Guma;
4. Proletarian author with proletarian characters and a proletarian world view. Later Ousmane: *God’s Bits of Wood*;
5. Non-proletarian author with proletarian characters and a proletarian world view, e.g. Festus Iyayi;
6. Non-proletarian author with proletarian characters and a non-proletarian world view, e.g. Achebe’s *A Man of the People*;
7. Non-proletarian author with non-proletarian characters with a proletarian world view, e.g. Ayi Kwei Armah.

The permutations are obviously not exhausted. Iyayi belongs in the fifth category. Contributions to an commentary on this typology of African novels will be welcome.

**Bibliographic Note**

A breath of fresh air is to be felt in this book by Bayart on Cameroun. For one thing, the author, a political scientist, has welcomed ideas from sociology and anthropology (although less from economics). But in addition he offers us a new point of view on the politics of black Africa and an original and lively style of analysis. One can, of course, find in this book the headings of a classic monograph: presidentialism, the party, the state apparatus, the chronology of political life and its conflicts. But without falling into theoreticism (neo-functionalism or Marxism), Bayart takes seriously the construction of hegemonic power taking place in Cameroun and is careful not to reduce the process to the establishment of a repressive police state.

He gives the following definition of 'hegemonic power' (p.19): 'This pursuit of hegemony aims at the creation and crystallisation of a relatively stable balance of forces between the various dominant groups, old and new, and between the regional and ethnic fractions of these within the national framework established by the coloniser; the development of relationships between the dominant class in the process of formation and the mass of the population; the ordering of relationships between this dominant class and the poles of Western political and economic power; and the elaboration of an ethic or common feeling which gives coherence to the whole and which welds together the new system of inequality and domination at the same time as it conceals it.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, ‘The Hegemonic Alliance’ traces political history from the end of the colonial period to 1976. The second, ‘Power, Dependency and the Pursuit of Hegemony’ explains the nature of this phenomenon. Using documents of a type which have never before (to our knowledge), been exploited in African political studies (the reports of organisations at the base of the party structure, in this case of the Union Nationale Camerounaise, (UNC), Bayart passes imperceptibly from the periphery to the core of the political system and from a chronology of events to an explanation of them in terms of the domination of social juniors (cadets sociaux). A detailed periodisation enables us to understand the conditions under which the regime was ‘fabricated’: the coming to power of Ahidjo, the solution to ‘the problem’ of the UPC, the unification of English and French speaking Cameroun, the emergence of the one-party system etc. It is perhaps a pity that the description of the last decade is brief.

In the final analysis it is the President of the Republic who polarises and directs the process of fusion of the various dominant social elements in Cameroun. The state is no longer the client state of the colonial period. That state was founded on the relationship of the exchange of services and of the political equilibrium between the ‘centre’ and dominant social strata of local, regional and ethnic levels. As Bayart puts it: ‘what is at stake is the transformation of the various fractions of the national elite into one, homogenous, dominant class’. So the author approaches the themes of ‘the eclipse of autonomous powers’, of ‘the dependent party’, a truly subordinate apparatus incapable of producing either an ideology or symbolic
representation and, finally, of 'the pre-eminence of the administration'. But rather than take convenient refuge in the usual arguments about bureaucratic power, the author takes a more original line, even if inspired by Gramsci. He defines the bureaucracy as 'a site for the control of social juniors, an apparatus for political enlistment'. Its domination is at the same time coercive (the maintenance of order) and socialising (apprenticeship to the dominant social values). The infantilisation of the people is systematic (the text of the official documents is striking in this respect). Some may find Bayart rather too cursory with respect to the repressive machinery of state. Obviously he cannot analyse its workings on the basis of the same wealth of material as that available for others sectors of political life. He seems to get things out of perspective as a result and the reader has the impression that domination emerges more clearly from the domain of symbolic, rather than physical, violence.

But is is chiefly the notion of 'social juniors' that the author uses to explain the political system. Bayart believes that there is much greater continuity than is usually recognised between the colonial period and today and argues that 'the most important issues of contemporary black Africa are women and youth'. There are more interests in common than points of difference between the traditional and the modern 'elders', between village chiefs, clan chiefs, the rulers of kingdoms and the bureaucrats, merchants and politicians produced by the colonial and neo-colonial capitalist system.

Rejecting the classic opposition between traditional and modern in his own analysis, Bayart tries to show how a kind of 'united front' is being set up against the mass of 'no accounts' (an expression which he has taken up from the anthropologist, J.F. Vincent). Neutralising, peacefully, the social juniors is the first objective of the Camerounian state. But although the significance of social juniors appears to be self-evident from the empirical analysis, the theory does pose problems, partly because of the choice of anthropological terms and partly because of the question of specificity (there are social juniors throughout black Africa). A few pages of comparative analysis at the end, if only at the level of hypotheses, might have prevented the inevitable extrapolations and unwarranted theorising to which this book looks likely to lead.

J. Copans
(trans. by Penelope Roberts)

Bibliographic Note
Kwasi Wiredu on Science and Authoritarianism

In one of the essays in his book *Philosophy and an African Culture*, Kwasi Wiredu, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Ghana, Legon, attempts to provide the fundamental explanation of the tendency to authoritarianism hitherto noted in many Marxist regimes (p.86). I will not discuss here what relation, if any, regimes which call themselves, or are called, ‘Marxist’ have to Karl Marx’s theory. It is obvious enough that Wiredu wrongly assumes that a demonstration that Marx’s view is authoritarian is an explanation of the authoritarianism of some regimes called ‘Marxist’. My aim, in this review is simply to deny that the Marxist doctrine itself... has an authoritarian trait which can... be traced to the conception of philosophy to be found in Marx and Engels (p.70).

Wiredu states right at the outset that he regards ‘Karl Marx as one of the greatest philosophers’ and that he, Wiredu, is ‘engaged largely in criticism of his philosophy’ in his essay (p.3). In fact, Wiredu takes most of his quotations not from Marx but from Engels, as well as some from Lenin and Cornforth. The only quotations from a work in which Marx had a hand pertain to *The German Ideology* and exclusively from one section of the 700 pages of that work. *The German Ideology* is a very early work (1846) and is not a work entirely by Marx, but a joint work, as Wiredu recognises, by Marx and Engels. It seems fair to infer, then, that Wiredu also wrongly assumes that the views of Marx and Engels are identical in important respects. It may be that he thinks the views of Lenin and Cornforth are identical to Marx’s too, but this is not certain. An equally crucial mistake of Wiredu’s is the assumption that a judgment as radical as the one he makes on Marx’s theory can be made without reference to its most mature, coherent and comprehensive elaboration, the culmination of a life’s work, the three volumes of *Capital*.

Wiredu attaches great weight to Marx’s description in *The German Ideology* of ideology as an inverted, and therefore false, image as in a camera obscura. Yet it seems that by the time he wrote *Capital* Marx had elaborated and enhanced this simple model in terms of a critical distinction between ‘phenomenal forms’ and ‘essential relations’, laying a firm foundation for distinguishing between that part of consciousness which is scientific and that which is ideological (Mepham, 1972). Wiredu shows no awareness of this.

Anyway, in view of Wiredu’s approach, a demonstration that Marx himself did not, looking at his works as a whole and especially *Capital*, hold the views upon which Wiredu constructs his argument for Marx’s implicit authoritarianism would be sufficient to refute Wiredu’s argument. In fact, Wiredu has, into the bargain, severely misinterpreted *The German Ideology*. However, I shall not concern myself with that, nor with the question of the validity of Wiredu’s argument with regard to the views of Engels, Lenin and Cornforth. It seems quite likely that in this regard it would turn out to be partly valid and partly invalid.

Wiredu’s central argument runs like this:

‘Ideology’, for Marx and Engels, meant a set of illusory beliefs constituting a reflex of material conditions in the minds of those who held them (p.71).

*Cambridge University Press, 1980.*
That is, there is a 'deterministic correlation' between 'ideas and material conditions' and 'no exceptions are allowed' (p.71). The ideas so determined are always false, because 'inverted'. Philosophy is also ideological, inverted, false. Besides ideology there is science, and this is the body of true ideas. But because Marx's view of determination of ideas combined with his view of their necessary falsity does not in fact admit the possibility of science, he simply assumes, without reasoned justification, that his own view is scientific and not ideological, and gives no criteria for distinguishing between science and ideology. Thus in Marx's theory there is a tendency to present Marxism as true without justification and all others, 'bourgeois', aspects of consciousness as false without due consideration. This is an authoritarian tendency. Furthermore, having confused questions of value with questions of truth Marx dismisses morality and moral philosophy in characterising consciousness as ideological. He then 'assumed rather than argued a moral standpoint' and this 'led to a tendency for ambiguous amoralism' and consequently to 'some of the most unattractive features of communist and pro-communist tactics', one of these (presumably) being authoritarianism (p.79). Also, the ideological conception of philosophy tends to a crude class partisanship which decreases any 'bourgeois' philosophy false and any 'proletarian' philosophy or science to be true. This is also authoritarian.

One difficulty is that Wiredu leaves it to the reader to spell out the final steps from Marx's supposed view of philosophy as ideology to authoritarianism. Also, it is not clear whether the argument about morality and the argument about class partisanship are supplementary or intrinsic to the central argument. Another question is why Wiredu thinks it is Marx's conception of philosophy in particular that leads to authoritarianism. His argument actually tries to show that it is the way Marx deterministically presents a theory of ideology that leads to it. Yet another difficulty is whether Wiredu is simply saying that to maintain that a social theory which one holds is scientific is sufficient to stand accused of authoritarianism. It is hard to believe that he could mean this, because it is obvious that no-one would put forward a new theory which was felt to be false or unscientific and usually, or very often, it would be put forward to supercede other theories in the field. Wiredu must mean that (a) to claim one's theory is scientific without giving reasons or without adhering to certain basic conditions of scientificity is tendentially authoritarian, (b) to claim that all other theories in the field are false without giving reasons is tendentially authoritarian. In fact, Marx does painstakingly adhere to the basic conditions of scientificity and provides grounds for the superiority of his theory; but only a close study of Capital could persuade one of this. Certainly a theory is not refused on purely a priori grounds by a brief interpretation of a section of a work which represents a very early stage in the preparation of that theory. It would seem reasonable to say that such an attempted refutation might itself be tendentially authoritarian. On the second point, Marx provides a very detailed critique of all the major alternative theories, in the Grundrisse, Capital and Theories of Surplus Value. At the same time, he did not reject everything in these categories, either because they were 'bourgeois' or for any other reason, as Wiredu implies. Actually, it is little exaggeration to say that Marx built his theory on the work of Ricardo, and
he recognises this and fully acknowledges the great advances made by Ricardo.

It seems that Wiredu means that Marx cannot give adequate reasons for the scientificity of his theory, and cannot allow any truth to alternative theories, because of the way he frames his notion of the determination of ideas. Marx would have to assume that ‘scientific thinking is not part of consciousness’ (p.75). As this is absurd, Marx cannot, within the terms of his notions of determination and ideology, explain how his own view is not ideological but scientific — so he just asserts it — hence authoritarianism. In order to show that Marx not only can but does argue for the scientific truth of his theory as opposed to alternatives it is necessary to deal with his notions of ‘determination’ and ‘ideology’. In doing that we would be dealing with what I take to be Wiredu’s central propositions, which are that (1) For Marx, consciousness is wholly determined by material conditions; (2) Consciousness is wholly ideological, according to Marx; (3) Ideology is wholly false belief, according to Marx; (4) The scientific status of Marx’s theory is presented without reasoned justification. The best I can do in this forum is to give a summary of Marx’s view, focusing on some key methodological points, backing it up with some quotations. His theory can only be tested by empirical means and by the criteria of conceptual rigour, and it is impossible to do that here.

Marx does not conceive ‘material conditions’ and ‘consciousness’ (base and superstructure) as absolutely distinct spheres at all, but as a unity within which some methodologically relative distinctions can be made. In that case his conception cannot be casually determinist. The relation of consciousness to material conditions may more usefully be conceived as that of form to content, and it clearly does not make sense to speak of content as the cause and form as it effects or, indeed, of the form and content of an object as being absolutely separable entities. To show that the form/content distinction is more in keeping with Marx’s conception here one need go no further than the first three pages of the very first section of Capital, volume I: ‘The two factors of the Commodity: Use-Value and Value (Substance of Value, Magnitude of Value)’. Here Marx tells us how the commodity is both ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’, content and form, its content being use-value and its form in consciousness being exchange-value. Use-values, he says,

constitute the material content of wealth, whatever its social form may be. In the form of society to be considered here they are also the material bearers of . . . exchange value.

And,

firstly, the valid exchange-values of a particular commodity express something equal, and secondly, exchange-value cannot be anything other than the mode of expression, the ‘form of appearance’, of a content distinguishable from it. (Capital I, pp.126-7)

Within the unity of the social process we can, as human enlightenment progresses, become aware that human society is not fully grasped by human thought and will; that a dimension of human society unfolds autonomously relative to that which human thought and will does grasp. Indeed, to correctly understand the path of human history it is first necessary to put an end to that autonomous dimension in our conceptions. To do that it is necessary to pierce through the veil of false or distorted conceptions which have a structure which corresponds to the structure and movement of the
autonomous dimension. I use the word ‘corresponds’ here deliberately, and in the way in which Marx often uses it. It is not a matter of the autonomous dimension causally determining the conscious dimension. Indeed, the word ‘dimension’ is meant to indicate that we are dealing with two aspects of the same thing — the social process. The relations of production and exchange which human beings have with one another are inconceivable but with the mediation of consciousness. Some have seen in Marx’s theory a technological determination, in which these relations are determined by ‘forces of production’. Yet Marx explicitly maintains that the forces and the relations of production are but dimensions of the social process, are unified, appearing as both prerequisites and results:

Like all its predecessors, the capitalist process of production proceeds under definite material conditions, which are, however, simultaneously, the bearers of definite social relations, are on the one hand prerequisites, on the other hand results and creations of the capitalist process of production; they are produced and reproduced by it. (Capital, III, p.798).

Of course, as one dimension is relatively autonomous we should begin by grappling with that, if we are to fulfill a basic requirement of scientificity:

Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must rather be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. (Critique of Political Economy, pp.10-13).

For Marx the conscious form of social activity has a special kind of relation to the material content — it has an ideological complexion. Consciousness is ideological to the same degree that material organisation fails directly to satisfy human needs. As no material organisation fails completely to do this, no consciousness is utterly ideological. But as no material organisation has ever completely satisfied human needs so every consciousness to date has an ideological complexion. The ideological complexion is more pronounced with regard to the forms taken by law and religion. Even theories in, say, physics may be based on models suggested by the nature of a particular social formation; but that does not mean that there is no correlation between physical theories and reality. Marx is quite clear that it would be absurd to imagine a simple one-to-one correlation between each ‘item’ of material organisation and each ‘item’ of consciousness. Marx is talking about the general character of consciousness, consciousness taken as a whole:

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. (Critique of Political Economy, pp.10-13).

People, of course, are always born into a given mode of production, one which they did not choose, and thus it is not surprising that they tend to regard the relations under which production is organised as ‘natural’, ‘eternal’ and beyond question. Indeed, this is because these relations are in fact relatively stable for long periods of time, even millennia. When we speak of relations of production we are in fact already in part speaking of a certain form of consciousness, because, as I have said, human beings do not maintain specific relations except through language, consciousness, symbolism of various types. In this form of consciousness is embedded pathways of explanation, prediction, control and legitimation in a more of less coherent whole — essentially the same pathways that constitute the system of real ac-
tivity, but in a superficial form. In fact, a particular form of consciousness is self-fulfilling with regard to its object. If we believe that a certain individual is a king and has a divine right to rule, then 'rule' 'divinely' this 'kingly' individual does.

Let us focus on one aspect of this. A certain mode of production implies a certain mode of consumption and exchange, and these also have, or are, forms in consciousness. Again, one must be careful not to introduce a simplistic determinism here. Marx does not mean that a certain form of production causally determines a form of consumption and exchange in mechanistic fashion. He says in the *Grundrisse*:

The conclusion we reach is not that production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they all form the members of a totality, distinctions within unity. Production predominates not only over itself, in the antithetical definition of production, but over the other moments as well. (p.99).

Now, what forms does consciousness take with regard to exchange? Exchange is on the surface of social activity and takes on a greater role in consciousness. Here the distinction between 'phenomenal forms' and 'essential relations' becomes clear. On one hand, the capitalist system presents itself as a system based on the principles of *free contract* and *equal exchange* in the market, in which capitalist (factory owner, etc.) and wage-earner confront one another as *equals* — in-so-far as they are both equally buyers and sellers of commodities (labour-power being regarded as a commodity). On the other, a less superficial analysis reveals that there is a mechanism of exploitation (in a very precise sense) at work in which the very treatment of labour-power as a commodity entails the *inequality* of the distribution of value created by the wage-earners' labour-power. The surface system of exchange corresponds to the phenomenal notion of 'equality' despite the essential inequality of a relation in which surplus-value is privately appropriated; and the essential inequality is presented as inescapable, natural and stands as the unquestioned frame of reference within which all meaningful discussions of equality-inequality must take place. Says Marx sarcastically in the *Grundrisse*:

Thus if one individual accumulates wealth and the other does not, neither is doing it (apparently) at the expense of the other . . . If one becomes poorer and the other richer, it is of their own free will, and proceeds in no way out of . . . the economic situation in which they meet (p.247).

And in the third volume of *Capital*:

capital obtains this surplus-labour without an equivalent, and in essence it always remains forced labour — no matter how much it may seem to result from free contractual agreement (p.798).

Consciousness for Marx, then, is not wholly ideological. It is scientific to the extent that it pierces phenomenal forms (e.g. equality of exchange) to essential relations (inequality in the ownership of the means of production). Also, ideology is not, then, wholly false in the sense of simply being composed of negations of true propositions about reality. It is much more subtle than that. Ideology is in a sense *true*; for example, exchange relations in capitalist society are egalitarian taken in isolation; but insofar as we go no deeper than that we help to reproduce an essential inequality, an essentially forced labour. Now, every science is concerned with going beyond phenomena to essential relations and entities. Ideology stands to Marx's
theory like alchemy to chemistry, or phrenology to neurology. Whether Marx's theory does this successfully is to be tested by the same kind of criteria to which any theory claiming objectivity is subject — empirical correlation, simplicity, deductive rigour, mathematical precision and so on. Of course, I cannot demonstrate here that Marx's theory meets these criteria any more than I can here do the same for Einstein's theory (assuming I were well versed in modern physics). The point is that this must be attempted by anyone who is serious in challenging the scientific value of Marx's theory. That Marx is self-conscious in his procedure is perhaps illustrated by this passage about economic laws:

Such a general rate of surplus-value — viewed as a tendency, like all other economic laws — has been assumed by us for the sake of theoretical simplification. But in reality it is an actual premise of the capitalist mode of production, although it is more or less obstructed by practical frictions causing more or less considerable local differences, such as the settlement laws for farm labourers in Britain. But in theory it is assumed that the laws of capitalist production operate in their pure form. In reality, there exists only approximation; but, this approximation is the greater the more developed the capitalist mode of production and the less it is adulterated and amalgamated with survivals of former economic conditions (Capital, III, p.172).

The main point, in any case, is that Marx provides a precise criterion to distinguish between science and ideology, between his approach and that of the economists of his time and earlier — and this is his articulation of the phenomena/essence distinction:

If, as the reader will have realised to his great dismay, the analysis of the actual intrinsic relations of the capitalist process of production is a very complicated matter and very extensive; if it is a work of science to resolve the visible, merely external movement into the true intrinsic movement, it is self-evident that conceptions which arise about the laws of production in the minds of the agents of capitalist production and circulation will diverge drastically from these real laws and will merely be the conscious expression of the visible movements (Capital, III, p.307).

And in a letter to Engels of June 1867 Marx says:

it will be seen how the philistine's and vulgar economists' way of looking at things arises, namely, because it is only the immediate phenomenal form of these relations that is reflected in their brains and not their inner connection. Incidentally, if the latter were the case what need would there be of science? (Selected Correspondence, p.179).

The mistake of the phrenologist and the alchemist too is that they try to construct a science on phenomenal forms instead of inner connections.

This takes us to the question of the 'determination' of Marx's theory as an element of human consciousness. We have already said enough to be able to answer Wiredu's query which he poses in these words:

I would ask such a defender of Marx to explain how Marx, an individual whose consciousness is, by hypothesis, determined by some mode of production could possibly attain to an undetermined truth (p.75).

Of course, we do not have to assume that Marx claims to attain an undetermined truth because it is simply not the case, as we have seen, that all consciousness is causally determined as an effect or reflection of material organisation and that everything determined is ideological in the sense of being a direct negation of true statements. First of all, it is not determinism which we are dealing with here, but how social activity necessarily has its form in consciousness. Secondly, Marxist theory is itself such a form; it is a historically relative theory and corresponds only to capitalist society:
The theoretical conclusions of the Communists... merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very own eyes. (Manifesto of the Communist Party).

If that class society disappears, then Marx’s theory will no longer be true, no longer be scientific:

The veil is not removed from the countenance of the social life-process, i.e. the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their consciousness and planned control (Capital, I, p.173).

If we now glance back at the five basic propositions we extracted from Kwasi Wiredu’s argument we should see that they are all simplistic distortions of Marx’s position or plainly false. In conclusion, what Wiredu has rejected is not Marx’s theory as it is highly elaborated and empirically supported in the three volumes of Capital, but Wiredu’s own extremely tenuously supported, and consequently distorted, interpretation of Marx’s theory. Had Marx been faced with such a distortion he would surely have rejected it with as little ado as Wiredu, and probably with much less.

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Bibliographic Note

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